



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

THE UK'S #1 TRAVEL MAGAZINE

TRAVELLER

UK EDITION // NOV/DEC 2020 // £4.95

NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL

SAN FRANCISCO

Dive into the city's vibrant
neighbourhoods with the
locals who know them best

TRAVEL WRITING
COMPETITION 2020
WINNERS ANNOUNCED

India

Life on the lake: discovering
Kerala's colourful birdlife
and lush backwaters

Scotland

Embrace the great
outdoors with a wild
weekend in the Highlands



CAPE TOWN

SEVILLE

JAPAN



ALSO: CALGARY // CRETE // HELSINKI // URUGUAY // VIENNA // WALES

Gwlad.Gwlad.

#CaruCymruCaruBlas



This is Wales.

#LoveWalesLoveTaste



MORE



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II
SWAROVSKI OPTIK
SUPPLIER OF BINOCULARS

NL PURE
ONE WITH
NATURE

SEE THE UNSEEN



SWAROVSKI
OPTIK

Nov/Dec
2020

Contents

70

70 San Francisco

Get to know the City by the Bay's most captivating districts with the people who know it best

90 India

Ecological advances in Kerala's bucolic backwaters are providing a new future for the state

104 Japan

Winding through steep, forested landscapes, the Nakasendō is Japan at its most emblematic

120 Helsinki

The Finnish capital has become a true Nordic success story, driven by a passion for design



Issue 88

Golden Gate Bridge,
San Francisco, California
IMAGE: Getty

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER IS THE UK'S #1 TRAVEL MAGAZINE BY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Nov/Dec
2020

Contents



50

SMART TRAVELLER

13 Snapshot

Catch of the day in southwest France

14 Big picture

An out-of-this-world scene in Iceland

17 Power to the pedal

Royally good new cycle routes

18 A world of reimagination

The venues doing things differently this year

21 Go wild in the country

New, out-there adventures close at home

23 Food

A taste of the Cretan summer

25 On the trail

Scouting out street food in Jerusalem

27 Rooms

Calgary's best new hotels

28 Family

The top treehouses for a lofty escape



57

30 Inside guide

Tuneful traditions old and new in Vienna

33 Stay at home

Natural drama in Wales's Elan Valley

35 The word

A photogenic feast inspired by Wes Anderson

39 Author series

Nuala Ellwood on Yorkshire

40 Meet the adventurer

Explorer Mario Rigby on his intrepid travels

42 Online

Highlights from the website

INSIDER

44 Weekender: Scotland

A breath of fresh air in the Highlands

50 Eat: Montevideo

Following our noses in the Uruguayan capital

57 Neighbourhood: Seville

Where to get under the Spanish city's skin



134

62 Sleep: Cape Town

Some of South Africa's most stylish stays

TRAVEL GEEKS

128 Travel Geeks

The experts' travel manual

GET IN TOUCH

144 Subscriptions

Make the most of our latest offer

145 Inbox

Your letters, emails and tweets

146 Your pictures

This month's best travel photos

DON'T MISS

134 Travel Writing Competition

Read the entries that impressed our judges

141 National Geographic Traveller Food Festival

A weekend of globetrotting gastronomy

GO ONLINE VISIT [NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM/TRAVEL](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel) FOR NEW TRAVEL FEATURES DAILY



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

BOOK
NOW!

TRAVELLER

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE ITALIAN NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD

ITALIA

JOIN US FOR
THE GREAT ITALIAN
FOOD JOURNEY
WITH ALDO ZILLI
+ JOE HURD AND GUESTS



WHEN
19.00-20.00,
Tuesday 24 November

WHERE
Broadcast live online
from Aldo's home

TICKETS
• Free
• VIP* tickets: £25

ITALIAN PRODUCTS SPONSORED BY:



WINE IT

FOR MORE INFO & TICKETS, HEAD TO
NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/EVENTS

*VIP ticket includes a selection of premium Italian produce and exclusive time with Aldo

Contributors



Mario Rigby

When travelling in the desert, sometimes it feels like it would be easier to just sit down and die rather than keep going. That's where you have to be your own best friend. You really need to have perseverance to survive. **MEET THE ADVENTURER P.50**



Jamie Lafferty

I'm glad I waited until I'd returned from Uruguay to become vegetarian. Although tiny in size compared to Argentina and Brazil, the country more than matches its neighbours' appetite for slabs of flame-seared beef. **MONTEVIDEO P.50**



Julia Buckley

San Francisco feels like one of the few cities in America that still has genuinely defined character in every area. Forget Alcatraz or Fisherman's Wharf — while the tourists have been pushed to the city edges, the real fun is going on inside. **SAN FRANCISCO P.70**



Mark Parren Taylor

Walking the Nakasendō is a trip I try to do every autumn. Locals are stoking up wood fires, shingle roofs steam in the warm sunshine and the forest-covered mountains beyond are beginning to turn bronze — this is the Japan I long for. **JAPAN P.104**



Chris Leadbeater

This was my first trip to the Finnish capital in seven years and it had changed a lot. The city has always had a quiet charm, but now it has a fresh sophistication — boutiques, design stores, restaurants — that make it a truly thrilling destination. **HELSINKI P.120**



TRAVELLER



National Geographic Traveller (UK)

Editorial Director: Maria Pieri
Editor: Pat Riddell
Deputy Editor: Stephanie Cavagnaro (maternity leave)
Acting Deputy Editor: Amelia Duggan
Commissioning Editor: Connor McGovern
Executive Editor: Glen Mutel
Associate Editors: Sarah Barrell, Nicola Trup
Section Editor: Tamsin Wressell
Project Editor: Zane Henry
Online Editor: Josephine Price (maternity leave)
Assistant Online Editor: Nora Wallaya
Content Editor: Charlotte Wigram-Evans
Head of Sub Editors: Hannah Doherty
Sub Editors: Chris Horton, Ben Murray
Operations Manager: Seamus McDermott
Head of Events: Natalie Jackson
Art Director: Becky Redman
Art Editor: Lauren Atkinson-Smith
Senior Designers: Lauren Gamp, Kelly McKenna
Production Manager: Daniel Gregory
Special Projects Consultant: Matthew Midworth
Head of Partnerships: William Allen
Sales & Partnerships Team: James Bendien, Bob Jalaf, Kevin Killen, Gabriela Milkova, Adam Phillips, Mark Salmon
Head of National Geographic Traveller — The Collection: Danny Pegg

APL Media

Editorial Manager: Jo Fletcher-Cross
Contributing Editor: Farida Zeynalova
Project Editor: Mattie Lacey-Davidson
Editorial Admin Assistant: Angela Locatelli
Picture Editor: Olly Puglisi
Production Controllers: Karl Martins, Joe Mendonca, Drew O'Neill, Lisa Poston, Anthony Wright
Head of Commercial Strategy: Chris Debbinney-Wright
APL Business Development Team: Adam Fox, Cynthia Lawrence, Sinead McManus
Chief Executive: Anthony Leyens
Managing Director: Matthew Jackson
Sales Director: Alex Vignali
Office Manager: Hayley Rabin
Head of Finance: Ryan McShaw
Credit Manager: Craig Chappell
Accounts Manager: Siobhan Grover
Accounts Assistant: Jana Abraham

National Geographic Traveller (UK) is published by APL Media Limited, Unit 310, Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TL nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel
Editorial T: 020 7253 9906. editorial@natgeotraveller.co.uk
Sales/Admin T: 020 7253 9909. F: 020 7253 9907. sales@natgeotraveller.co.uk
Subscriptions T: 01293 312 166. natgeotraveller@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

National Geographic Traveller (UK) is published by APL Media Ltd under license from National Geographic Partners, LLC. For more information contact natgeo.com/info. Their entire contents are protected by copyright 2020 and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission is forbidden. Every care is taken in compiling the contents of the magazine, but the publishers assume no responsibility in the effect arising therefrom. Readers are advised to seek professional advice before acting on any information which is contained in the magazine. Neither APL Media Ltd or National Geographic Traveller magazine accept any liability for views expressed, pictures used or claims made by advertisers.

National Geographic Partners

Chairman: Gary E. Knell
Editorial Director: Susan Goldberg
General Manager, NG Media: David Miller

International Editions

Editorial Director: Amy Kolczak
Deputy Editorial Director: Darren Smith
Editorial Specialist: Leigh Mitnick
Translation Manager: Beata Nas

Editors: CHINA Sophie Huang; CZECHIA Ondrej Formanek; FRANCE Gabriel Joseph-Dezaize; GERMANY Werner Siefer; HUNGARY Tamas Vitray; INDIA Lakshmi Sankaran; ITALY Marco Cattaneo; SOUTH KOREA Bo-yeon Lim; LATIN AMERICA Claudia Muzzi; NETHERLANDS Arno Kantelberg; POLAND Agnieszka Franus; ROMANIA Catalin Gruia; RUSSIA Ivan Vasin; SPAIN Josan Ruiz; TURKEY Nesibe Bat

International Publishing

Senior Vice President: Yulia P. Boyle
Senior Director: Ariel Deiaco-Lohr
Senior Manager: Rossana Stella

Headquarters

1145 17th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036-4688, USA

Copyright © 2020 National Geographic Partners, LLC. All Rights Reserved. *National Geographic Traveller* and the Yellow Border Design are registered trademarks of National Geographic Society and used under license. Printed in the UK.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.



Unilever

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

If we want a cleaner planet as well as clean clothes, we all know change needs to happen. It's why we've introduced a new liquid formulation with effective plant-based stain removers, and all our main bottles are now made with recycled plastic, and are 100% recyclable. Change is hard work. Sometimes, it's dirty work. But at Persil, it's what we're all about. In fact, you could say it suits us to a tee. **TOUGH ON STAINS, KINDER TO OUR PLANET.**

NEW

**WITH
PLANT-BASED
STAIN REMOVERS**




100%
RECYCLABLE


CONTAINS
RECYCLED
PLASTIC

DIRT IS GOOD 



Editor's letter

We continue to take each day, week and month as it comes, hanging on to the knowledge that — hopefully sooner rather than later — some normality will return. Meanwhile, our desire to travel, see the world and gain new experiences remains undiminished. And with that in mind, this issue aims to stoke your imagination and fulfil your escapism needs.

In our cover story, we meet the locals of San Francisco, a city that's long been defined by the pioneering personalities and can-do characteristics of its people. Its past looms large — the earthquakes, the Gold Rush, the Summer of Love — entwined with its present, but this is a city that pushes determinedly forward.

Like London, Paris and New York, San Francisco is a city of villages and is many things to many people. Some will wistfully romanticise Haight-Ashbury's hippy era, others flock to the Mission for its nightlife; all want to gaze out over that famous Bay, and there's perhaps nowhere else on the planet that embraces LGBTQ+ culture like the Castro.

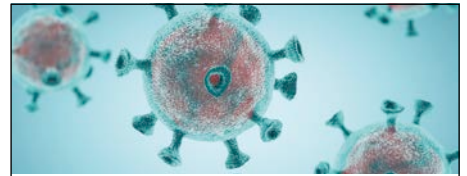
San Francisco's character is built on the people who founded the city, and those who continue to shape it. People are what make places — and as we've all lately come to realise, this applies equally at home, wherever that may be, as it does on our travels.

PAT RIDDELL, EDITOR

@patriddell
 @patriddell

AWARD-WINNING NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER

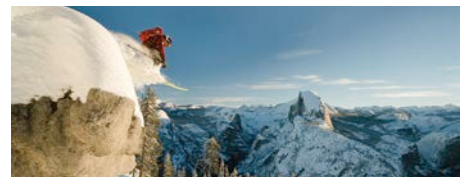
Visit USA Media Awards 2020: Best Consumer Travel Magazine Feature • British Travel Awards 2019: Best Consumer Holiday Magazine • BGTW Awards 2019: Best Travel Writer • BGTW Awards 2019: Best Europe Travel Feature • BGTW Awards 2019: Best Transport Feature • Travel Media Awards 2019: Young Writer of the Year • Travel Media Awards 2019: Specialist Travel Writer of the Year • AITO Travel Writer of the Year 2019 • AITO Young Travel Writer of the Year 2019 • French Travel Media Awards 2019: Best Art & Culture Feature • BGTW Awards 2018: Best Travel Writer • Travel Media Awards 2018: Consumer Writer of the Year • Visit USA Media Awards 2018: Best Consumer Travel Magazine Feature • BSME Talent Awards 2018: Best Designer • British Travel Awards 2017: Best Consumer Holiday Magazine • BGTW Awards 2017: Best Travel Writer • BGTW Awards 2016: Best Travel Writer • British Travel Awards 2015: Best Consumer Holiday Magazine



Coronavirus

The ongoing pandemic continues to affect travel. Please note, prices and travel advice are subject to change. Contact your travel provider for the most up-to-date information. For the latest news on safe travel and border restrictions, visit fco.gov.uk

DON'T MISS



Winter Sports 2020 guide

Escape to the slopes this season with our free guide, filled with thrilling ski stories, top tips and must-have kit — plus the latest travel advice to book with confidence this winter.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Get three issues for just £5!
natgeotraveller.com
imbmsubscriptions.com/NGT5
 or call 01293 312166 and quote 'NGT5'

SEARCH FOR NATGEOTRAVELUK ON FACEBOOK TWITTER INSTAGRAM PINTEREST

A person wearing a dark green quilted jacket, blue jeans, brown boots, and a tan beanie stands on a large rock, looking out over a coastal landscape with a bay and hills under a cloudy sky.

**FROM THE END
OF THE EARTH
SINCE 1870**

150 YEARS
Blundstone
TASMANIA · AUSTRALIA

**EVERYWHERE
LIFE TAKES ME™**

BLUNDSTONE.CO.UK



FUJIFILM

X | GFX

MASTERS OF CREATIVITY

FUJIFILM X Series cameras channel over 85 years of expertise in the photographic industry to deliver unrivalled creativity for both stills and video shooters



FUJIFILM-X.COM

SMART TRAVELLER


What's new // Food // On the trail // Rooms // Family // Inside guide // Stay at home // The word


SNAPSHOT

Louis Latrille, Cap Ferret, France

An hour west of Bordeaux, the peninsula of Cap Ferret and the nearby Arcachon Bay are renowned for their tradition of oyster farming, with about 315 oyster farms in the area. Lining the picturesque bay are around 80 *cabanes* (wooden cabins), many of which are restaurants and oyster bars run by the mariculturists themselves. Louis works for his mother Sylvie's oyster farming business and the two run the Cabane 57 restaurant out of their *cabane*, directly by the sea. Naturally there's only one thing on the menu — fresh local oysters — which are accompanied by bread, butter and drinks. Coming to restaurants like this and tucking into the tasty bivalves is a popular pastime for visitors and locals alike, who flock to this popular corner of southwest France.

CLARA TUMA // PHOTOGRAPHER

 claratuma.com



 [@claratumaphotography](https://www.instagram.com/claratumaphotography)





**BIG PICTURE***Landmannalaugar,
Iceland*

Hiking through the stark landscapes of Landmannalaugar is a walk like no other. In this geothermal wilderness in Iceland's southern highlands, volcanic activity has created an environment that's pocked with hot springs, lava fields, steaming pools, smoking soil and, most striking of all, multicoloured rhyolite mountains. Reaching the peak of Brennisteinsalda, this scene unfolded before me like an endless painting of colours and patterns, and I had the surreal and overwhelming sense of being on another planet. **ROGER BORGELID // PHOTOGRAPHER**

 borgelid.se [@rogerborgelid](https://www.instagram.com/rogerborgelid)



TENTSILE®

PORTABLE, VERSATILE, FUN

Our award-winning portable treehouses provide increased separation from insects, snakes and predators, while suspending campers comfortably above wet, rough or muddy terrain, creating a comfortable camp for all seasons.



WWW.TENTSILE.COM

20 Trees Planted

NEW ROUTES

POWER TO THE PEDAL

After an adventure on home turf? Grab your bike and set off on one royally good new cycling route

Ten thousand years of history, 220 miles, four counties, one cycle route — all hail the King Alfred's Way, southern England's new off-road cycling trail.

Named after the Anglo-Saxon ruler of the ancient kingdom of Wessex, the trail kicks off in England's former capital, Winchester, before winding its way through four counties. Riders can expect a score of the region's best-known historic sites on the way, including: Stonehenge, Avebury, Salisbury Cathedral and Iron Age hill forts at Old Sarum, before finishing up at Winchester Cathedral, where the ninth-century ruler was originally laid to rest. The region's natural beauty is highlighted just as much its heritage, too, with the route crossing a mix of terrains and ecosystems, such as Salisbury Plain, ancient Surrey heathland and challenging chalk uplands in the South Downs, making it a must for serious cyclists.

Three years in the making for charity Cycling UK, the launch of King Alfred's Way is good news for riders looking to seamlessly crisscross the South on two wheels. The route links up with other regional paths such as the South Downs Way, the Thames Path, and the riders' route along the North Downs Way, which launched in 2018.

The wider aim, however, is an ambitious one: to connect the whole country with a vast web of long-distance, off-road cycling routes that link the UK's landscapes and heritage hotspots — in much the same way the country has been open to walkers for decades.

A detailed map can be viewed online, where riders can check out an extensive guide to the trail and download route files (GPX format) to follow on the go. cyclinguk.org/kingalfredsway **CONNOR MCGOVERN**



Cycling in the Surrey Hills
BELOW: Cyclists meet at Winchester's Westgate before riding the King Alfred's Way



THREE MORE: NEW TRAILS ON TWO WHEELS

IRELAND

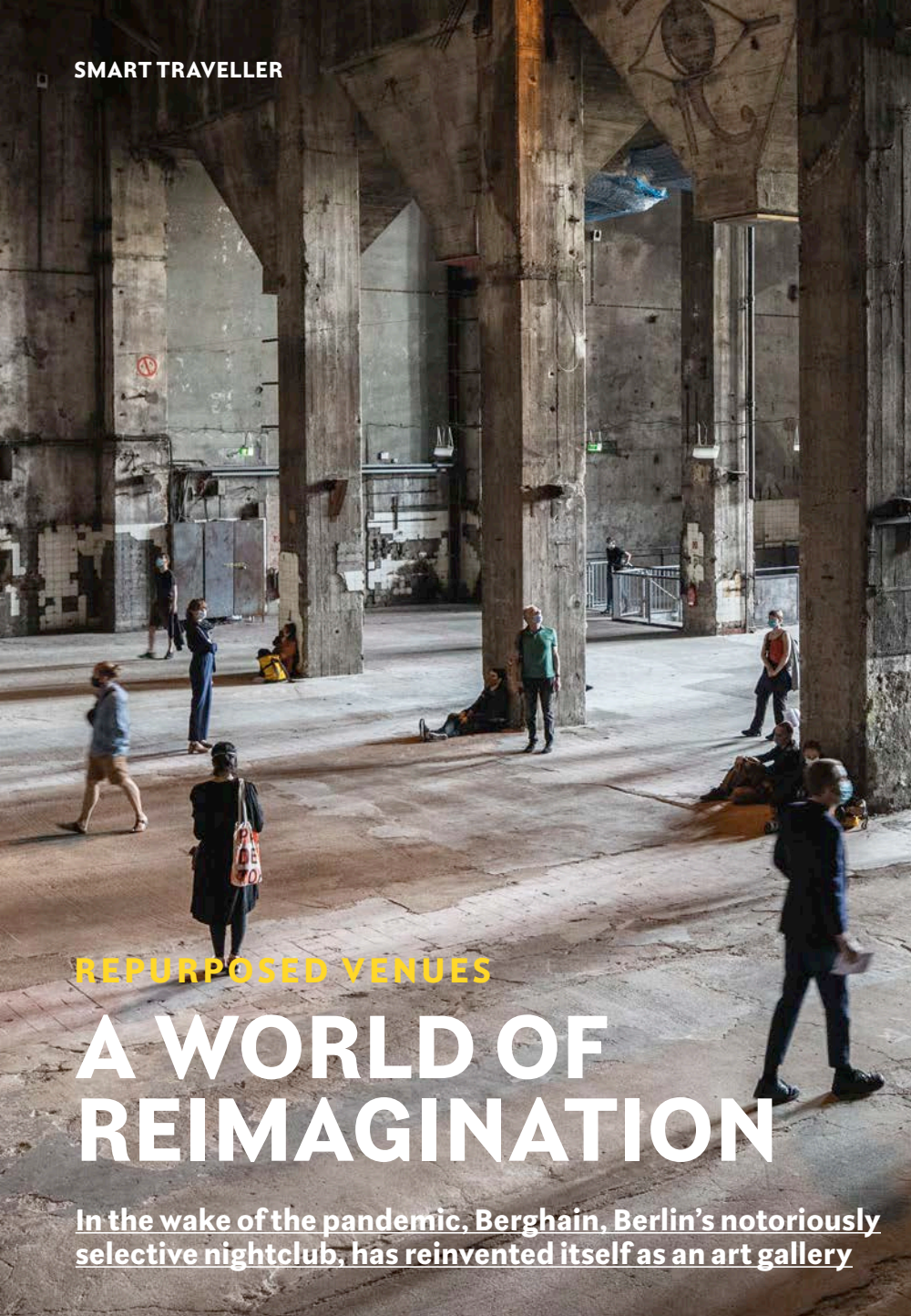
The new National Famine Way follows in the footsteps of the 1,490 local people who made the 103-mile journey from Strokestown, County Roscommon, to Dublin during the 1847 potato famine, with informative waymarks along the route. nationalfamineway.ie

NEW YORK

When finished by the end of 2020, the Empire State Trail will clock up a huge 750 miles, running from New York City north to the Canadian border, and east from Buffalo to the state capital of Albany, making it the longest multi-use trail in the nation. ny.gov

HEREFORDSHIRE

The two new Orchard Cycling Trails celebrate the county's fruity heritage, taking in local orchards, cideries, farms and producers. Two loops run for 40 miles through the countryside, and both start and end in the cathedral city of Hereford. visitherefordshire.co.uk



REPURPOSED VENUES

A WORLD OF REIMAGINATION

In the wake of the pandemic, Berghain, Berlin's notoriously selective nightclub, has reinvented itself as an art gallery

It's infamously tricky to get into Berghain — or, at least, it used to be. Like many venues across the world, Berlin's leading techno club — a preserve of the patient and persevering — was forced to close in March due to coronavirus restrictions, but the venue has since reopened as an arts space.

A former power station, the almost 40,000sq ft club is currently hosting Studio Berlin, an exhibition of 115 Berlin-based artists, including Tacita Dean, Olafur Eliasson and Wolfgang Tillmans — but given how exclusive Berghain was in the past, its hallowed halls are likely to be as much of a headline spectacle as the works adorning them. It's currently emblazoned with a banner created by artist Rirkrit Tiravanija that reads, 'Morgen ist die frage' ('Tomorrow is the question').

Visitors can book timed tickets for guided, socially distanced tours of the

contemporary art show that takes in both the club's dance floor and the legendary Panorama Bar. This is the venue's latest instalment of an unexpected artistic programme for 2020, following DJ events in its adjacent beer garden this summer.

It's a savvy move from the clubbing colossus, and one that other venues might be wise to copy. The recent report 'Global Nighttime Recovery Plan', by nightlife consultancy VibeLab and an international panel of night mayors, academics and music promoters, suggests that venues will have to find 'creative business model pivots' in order to survive during the pandemic. Berghain's innovation may lead the dance into a new night-time normal.

Studio Berlin runs until December 2020, with permanent installations and further exhibitions ongoing. studio.berlin

SARAH BARRELL

FROM LEFT: Interior of Berghain, Berlin; Eastgate Clock, Chester

INNOVATIVE UK VENUES

RETHINK IT



CHESTER

The city's High Street is currently being transformed from commercial strip to buzzing arts space. New community initiative PACH (Place for the Arts in Chester) negotiates with local landlords to secure galleries and artist studios in vacant premises, with the aim of bringing people back to the city's handsome medieval centre. The first two PACH arts hubs are on Bridge Street and Northgate Street. placeforart.co.uk

EDINBURGH

Inverleith House, longstanding home of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, is rebranding itself as 'Climate House' as part of a radical new plan to transform the 18th-century mansion. It will lead a three-year initiative to form a network of arts and science organisations, partnering with London's Serpentine Gallery, to explore ways to tackle climate crisis challenges. rbge.org.uk

SUNDERLAND

Beleaguered by lockdown's supply chain issues for vinyl, the ever-resourceful record store Pop Recs — founded by members of local indie band Frankie & The Heartstrings — has rolled with the punches, producing Sunderland-specific merchandise that celebrates local culture, artists and beloved Mackem phrases. Live music events are currently ruled out, but the venue holds regular workshops on everything from printmaking to photography. poprecs.co.uk

Travel Insurance with you in mind

Travel insurance designed by travellers

- ✓ Up to £10M medical expenses including COVID-19 cover
- ✓ One Way cover at no extra cost
- ✓ Extend cover whilst away
- ✓ Extreme sports and activities covered, including trekking, volunteer work and scuba diving to 50M

Get immediate cover
truetraveller.com
or call 0333 999 3140

★REVIEWS.io
★★★★★

truetraveller

A Modern Day Adventurer's Watch

The Haskell Field Standard is a modern day adventurer's watch; robust enough to withstand the daily rigours of the modern traveller and elegant enough for the urban adventurer. The Haskell has everything it needs to accompany you every step of the way, as you bustle through the daily commute or trek over the next peak.

It's ready to serve.



MARLOE
WATCH COMPANY

BEYOND EXPECTATION

WWW.MARLOEWATCHCOMPANY.COM



NEW ADVENTURES

GO WILD IN THE COUNTRY

Exploration once meant going to the other side of the world, but a host of travel companies are now championing local adventures right on our doorstep

FOR HITTING THE WAVES

Best tackled during the more clement summer season, a break in the surf hotspot of Croyde, courtesy of youth travel experts Contiki, combines the energetic rigours of boarding with the chilled-out, back-to-nature vibes of the Devon coastline. From £495 per person for four days, including surf lessons and wetsuit hire. contiki.com

For daredevil glamping

Launching in spring 2021, new company Wildnis combines adventures with transfers across the Highlands in classic Land Rover Defenders. Expect dinners around the campfire with stories from former soldiers about their time on the British Army's wildlife protection programme in Africa. From £3,000 for a four-night expedition, including activities. wildnis.co.uk

For two-wheel treks

From the Irish Sea to the North Sea, ride the 170 miles of Hadrian's Cycleway through the undulating North Pennines. The Roman wall isn't the only attraction along the way: stop off and rest at places like Carlisle Castle, Birdoswald Roman Fort and Corbridge Roman Town. Five-day group tour from £545 including bike hire and accommodation. explore.co.uk

For coasts and castles

Starting in Belfast, the first stops on this tour are Winterfell Castle (for archery and axe-throwing) and an expedition along the nearby coastline, including the iconic Giant's Causeway. The final days are spent exploring rugged Rathmullan on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way. From £1,610 per person for five nights, including flights, car hire and excursions. audleytravel.com

For wellness in the wild

Mindfulness and meditation are all on the menu at Adventure Tours UK's hideaway in hilly Corwen. As well as daily yoga, there are opportunities for standup paddleboarding on Llangollen, foraging, sauna sessions and stargazing. From £525 per person for three nights. adventuretoursuk.com

AMELIA DUGGAN

For rural retreats

Following the route of the restored 25-mile, narrow-gauge Welsh Highland Heritage Railway on foot (occasionally hopping aboard when legs get tired), it's possible to take in some of the finest ridges, woodlands and waterways in northern Wales. There's also the chance to summit Snowdon, too. Headwater offers group tours staying in guesthouses each night, from £999 per person for six nights. headwater.com



ADVERTISEMENT

Wine Dark Sea Villas

offer a unique vacation destination and experience



OUR BEAUTIFUL VILLAS, LOCATED IN BEAUTIFUL CRETE, GREECE, OFFER THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER A MEMORABLE ALTERNATIVE TO HOTELS, INCLUDING GORGEOUS VIEWS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Wine Dark Sea offers guests private luxury with private views of the of the Mediterranean, which was christened the 'Wine Dark Sea' by Homer. You'll bask in the area that Odysseus made famous. You can almost hear the song of the Sirens when you lounge on your balcony overlooking the glittering sea.

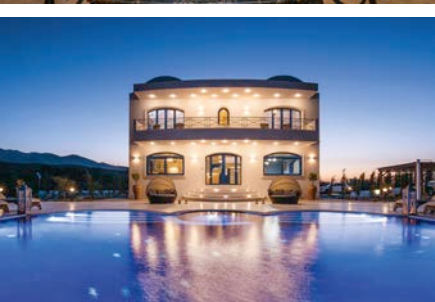
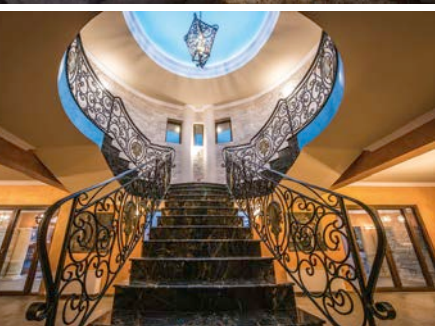
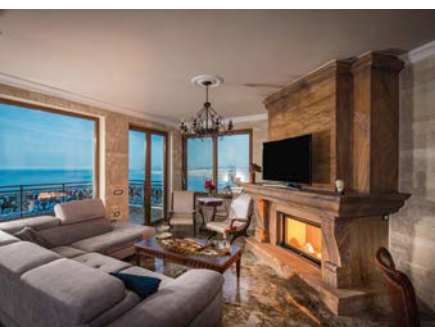
Our villas can be found in stunning and dramatic locations, offering private views of the sea and mountains. The stunning properties are situated just minutes away from gorgeous beaches and picturesque villages and monasteries. Around 15 minutes from Heraklion and 30 minutes from the airport, they're a universe away from the bland and mundane world beyond. At Wine Dark Sea, we provide guests with an escape from their busy world and offers them a sanctuary that will restore their tired souls.

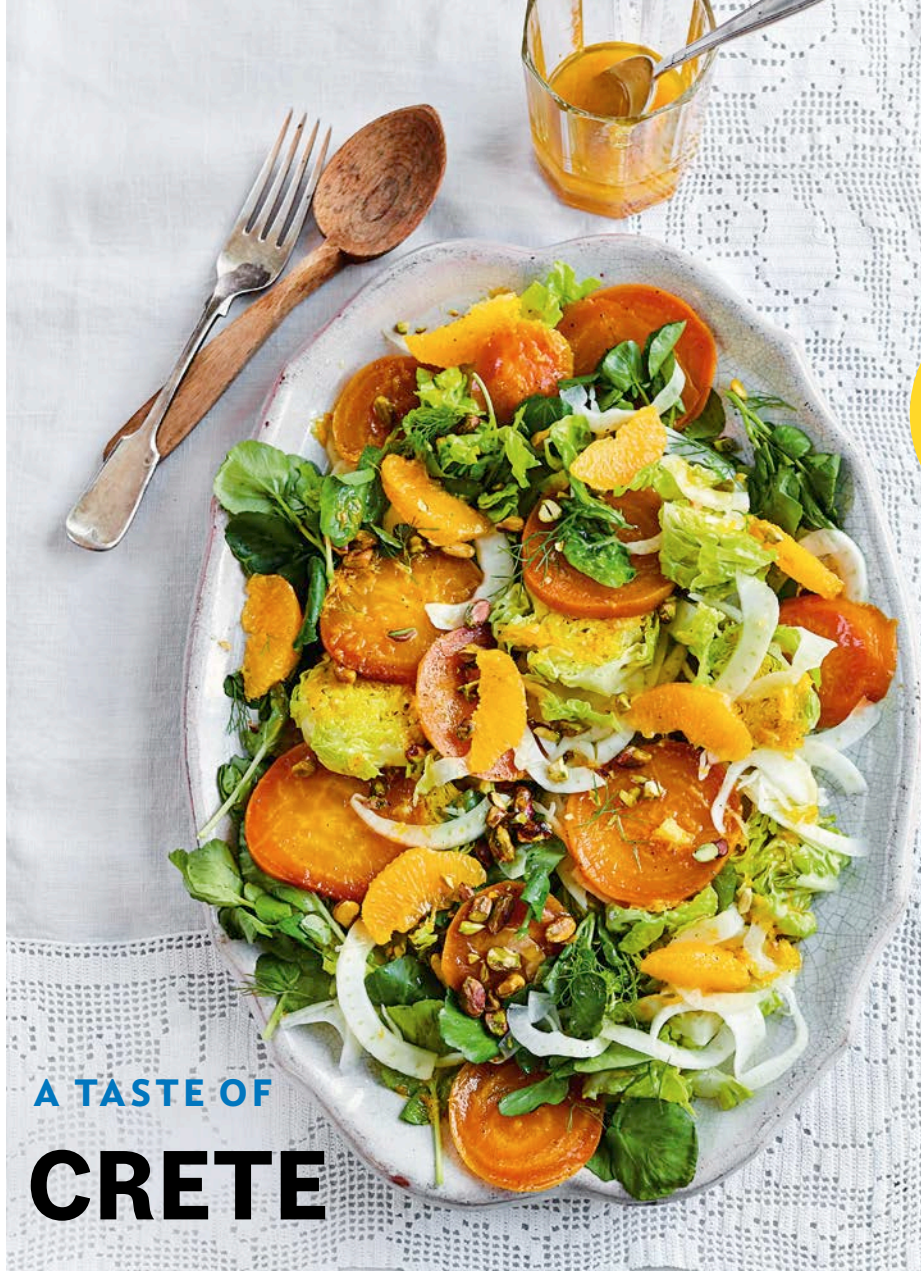
Our policy is to give travellers an alternative to the hotel experience while still offering them as much service as they desire. We can give you full privacy or full service, which includes a private chef. Your vacation is tailored to your desires. Wine Dark Sea Villas offers more than beautiful villas, we offer you a beautiful experience. Come visit us and let us show you the ancient law of hospitality.



WINE DARK SEA
VILLAS & RESORTS

E: info@winedarkseavillas.gr | T: +30 698 161 0050
winedarkseavillas.gr





A TASTE OF CRETE

MasterChef 2019 champion Irimi Tzortzoglou celebrates the flavours of her homeland

My life journey began in Ano Akria, in Crete. The village is tiny; when I was born the population was probably about 35 and if anything it's now even less. Our food was fresh, often gathered just before being put on the plate. The Cretan climate gave our fruit and vegetables an intensity of flavour that I've never known anywhere else. We had olive oil so pure it could be drunk. We were organic without knowing there was an alternative.

My father loved to entertain friends (and strangers), wining and dining until the small hours while making music on his bouzouki. In those days, every farming family in Crete would grow olives and grapes, so we had our own supplies, which my father would draw on liberally when we had visitors.

The Cretan climate consists of long, hot summers and short, mild winters, so even in the colder months, meals would involve fresh ingredients. Cauliflower, cabbage, beetroot and spinach would be in season, while pulses (lentils, chickpeas and various types of bean)

were also available. My mother would make pies; barley and wheat were grown locally and my grandfather, a mill owner, would mill the grain to produce flour.

Of course, in spring and summer we had plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. March would bring wild asparagus and greens, followed in April by spring onions, courgettes, artichokes and broad beans. By May, fruit would appear — apricots, cherries, early melons, strawberries, early figs and medlars. And for the rest of the summer, there was very little that wasn't available.

However, for a Mediterranean island with plenty of fishing villages, there was very little fish in our diet. I can only think that there was little incentive for fishermen and fishmongers to bring their catch inland — so I had to wait until later in life to discover the joys of fresh fish.

This is an edited extract from Under the Olive Tree: Recipes from my Greek Kitchen, published by Headline (RRP: £25).

IRINI TZORTZOGLOU is the author of *Under the Olive Tree: Recipes from my Greek Kitchen*



MUST-TRY DISHES

CRETAN VILLAGE SALAD

The difference between this and the usual 'Greek salad' is the use of *dakos* (a barley rusk), which, when it soaks up the tomato juice, olive oil and red wine vinegar, adds another dimension to an already delicious dish.

STUFFED VEGETABLES

Sun-ripened tomatoes — and sometimes peppers, courgettes and aubergines — are stuffed with rice and aromatics and covered in olive oil. A great plant-based dish that's full of flavour.

GRILLED OCTOPUS

A popular meze, grilled over charcoal and served simply with oregano, olive oil and lemon. It goes beautifully with fava bean puree — also served drizzled with good olive oil — plus sweet, finely chopped onion.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

Extra virgin olive oil is the pillar of the Mediterranean diet, and Crete, with its carpet of wild herbs and aromatics, produces some of the best in the world, mostly from the koroneiki olive varietal.



Grand Overwater Bungalow with Jacuzzi



AN EXCLUSIVE OASIS
OF SERENITY AND BEAUTY
IS WAITING TO BE EXPLORED

Stella Island Luxury Resort & Spa is an Adults only (15+) 5-star resort that put the romance into couples escapes. Bathed in natural light this stylish resort is located in Crete, Greece, combining extraordinary dining, sleek and spacious accommodations and services with an eye on detail.



ON THE TRAIL

JERUSALEM

Follow your nose through the Holy City's eclectic neighbourhoods and tuck into its delicious grab-and-go street food. Words: Angela Locatelli



1 HUMMUS AT ABU SHUKRI

Far more than a side dip, this chickpea creation is often a meal's *pièce de résistance*. Asking which joint serves the tastiest hummus is sure to fuel a fierce discussion among locals, but Abu Shukri, tucked away in the Old City, is a strong contender. So popular is this dimly lit spot, it's inspired countless imitations. No room? Nearby Lina is another renowned purveyor of the creamy delicacy.

2 KNAFEH AT JA'FAR SWEETS

Squeeze your way past the merchants and hagglers of the Muslim Quarter for a stop at Ja'far Sweets. This unassuming cafe isn't easy to find, but with a reputation as the best *knafeh* vendor in the country, it's worth the effort. Best eaten while still hot, this mouth-watering Middle Eastern dessert comprises filo pastry layered with cheese, drenched in syrup and topped with crushed pistachios.

3 BOUREKAS AT BOUREKAS MUSA

Pass beneath the imposing Damascus Gate, cut through the Old City's northern wall, and make your way towards the Russian Compound on a hunt for these flaky snacks. *Bourekas* are parcels of pastry made with fillings like salty cheese, mashed potatoes or sautéed mushrooms. Try them at this local haunt, an old-school storefront eatery that's been plying Jerusalemites with the pastries for over 60 years.

4 SABICH AT HASABICHIYA

Based on the breakfast that Iraqi Jews would traditionally eat on the morning of the Sabbath, *sabich* is made with thin slices of fried aubergine, hard-boiled eggs and crunchy salad stuffed into a pitta. It's the only option on the menu at this spot in the Downtown Triangle, but that doesn't stop the locals piling in — be prepared to join the long queues that often snake away from the counter.

5 FALAFEL AT SHALOM FALAFEL

Believed to have originated in Egypt, these deep-fried chickpea croquettes have become the quintessential Middle Eastern street food. Falafel vendors dot every other back alley, but for a safe bet head to Shalom Falafel on Bezalel Street. Sitting space isn't guaranteed, but with the winding lanes, stone houses and quiet courtyards of the quaint Nachlaot neighbourhood all around, that's hardly a drawback.

6 ME'ORAV YERUSHALMI AT MACHANE YEHUDA MARKET

Round off your ramble at the raucous Machane Yehuda Market, which houses everything from sweet stands to spice stalls. The Shuk, as it's known locally, is said to be the birthplace of *me'orav yerushalmi* (a mixed grill of chicken hearts, spleens and livers with lamb), although its origins are contested — many vendors, including nearby Steakiyat Hatzot, claim the creation as their own.



DON'T MISS

The Open Restaurants Festival is one of the city's key gastronomic events, bringing together top chefs, food personalities, producers and entrepreneurs for open kitchens, talks and workshops. Every November. open-restaurants.co.il

**Keep your soul wild.
And your body safe.
Maske 1**



Maske 1 is a handmade mouth and nose protection scarf made from layered membranes and with an inlay for medical and disposable protective filters.

*Get a 20 % discount
on Maske 1:
maske1.myl-berlin.com
Use code HEALTH*



MYL BERLIN.®



WHERE TO STAY

CALGARY

Hip new pads and revamped classics provide reason to linger in the gateway to the Rockies

1 ALT HOTEL CALGARY EAST VILLAGE

With snazzy rooms, restaurants and ample views of the Bow River and surrounding parks, this city-centre hotel blends urban chic with Canada's great outdoors. As the name suggests, it's in the East Village, the formerly industrial area where street art and trendy eateries pop up amid river views and playgrounds. The hotel's opening in 2019 was a sign that Calgary was joining the league of other big-hitting Canadian cities. No more dependence on run-of-the-mill chains — this is a town whose hotels have bite.

Today, the East Village is one of the trendiest parts of town, and the Alt Hotel — the second Calgary property for Canadian chain Germain Hotels — delivers all you could want from a hip hotel. Vast, photo-friendly windows? Check. Jazzy interiors, including foxes printed on shower doors, mono-patterned bedding and calming wood accents? Check. Covetable toiletries, in the form of aromatic Bella Pella products handmade in Quebec? Check. It's not just about appearances, though — other perks include flexible check-in and check-out times if you book direct.

Then there are the restaurants: the modern diner CHIX Eggshop, which serves breakfast and lunch; the Japanese-inspired NUPO, which is largely plant-based; and the chef's table-style EIGHT, run by acclaimed Canadian chef Darren MacLean.

Even better news is the price, which is far lower than you could expect to pay for this experience in other North American cities — so you can splash out on a river-view room, guilt-free. From C\$139 (£82). germainhotels.com

2 HOTEL ARTS

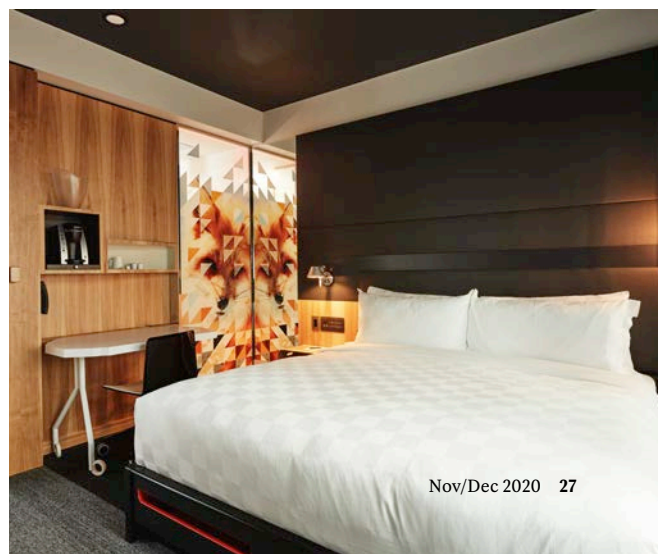
With its hypnotically patterned headboards, colour-splashed carpets and California-vibe pool, the Hotel Arts delivers on its promise to add 'a dash of whimsy into everything'. Join locals flocking to the onsite Yellow Door Bistro for brunch, then explore the city on the hotel's free bikes. From C\$144 (£85). hotelarts.ca

3 RESIDENCE INN CALGARY DOWNTOWN/BELTLINE DISTRICT

Opened in 2019, this is the largest property in Marriot's Residence Inn portfolio — and the brand has pulled out all the stops to make it a chic flagship. Gaze out at the cityscape through floor-to-ceiling windows and make yourself at home with the en suite kitchenettes (it's an extended-stay hotel, but takes single-night bookings, too). From C\$218 (£128), B&B. marriott.com

4 FAIRMONT PALLISER

Calgary's grande dame has had a modern facelift. Established in 1914, the historic hotel now has snazzy wallpapers and modish four-poster beds upstairs, and a retro gleam downstairs, where brass-legged barstools sit below gilded marble columns. From C\$239 (£140). fairmont.com. **JULIA BUCKLEY**



FROM TOP: Residence Inn Calgary Downtown/Beltline District; Fairmont Palliser; Alt Hotel Calgary East Village



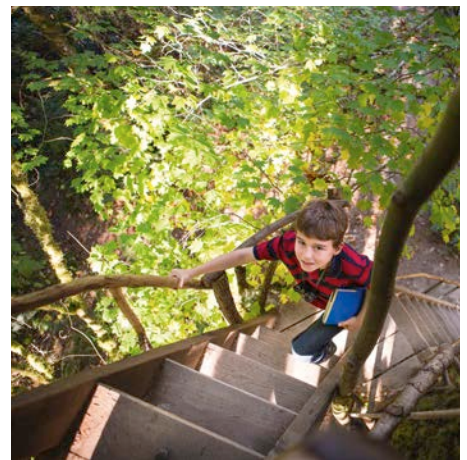
FAMILY

TALL TALES

If you've got a head for heights and fancy somewhere a little different to stay, bed down among the branches in a stylish treehouse. Here's our pick of the UK's best



Cheriton Treehouse
FROM LEFT: Cheriton
Treehouse interior;
youngster climbing a ladder



SOMERSET

The curved capsules of Cheriton Treehouse twist around a mature oak in this lavish, leafy hideaway. Step inside and you'll be greeted by a floating bedroom, a huge copper bath and a heated floor, all bathed in plenty of natural light. You'll almost feel like you're floating above the trees as you gaze across scenic Blackmore Vale. If you venture out, explore the spectacular gardens at National Trust property Stourhead, or wander around the nearby towns of Frome and Bruton.

HOW TO DO IT: Treehouse for two from £172 per night, with space for two additional children at £30 per child per night. Ages eight and over. canopyandstars.co.uk

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Rufus's Roost in Husthwaite, half an hour from York, offers views over the Kilburn White Horse, a giant hill figure cut into the ground amid a sycamore forest on the Baxby Manor estate. Built sustainably, this stylish treetop retreat includes feature windows, turrets and a cosy interior. Take the slide down into the Den or venture outside to the bat-monitoring station, where you'll also find a log-fired hot tub and wood-fired pizza oven.

HOW TO DO IT: From April to November, from £1,200 for three-, four- and seven-night stays. coolstays.com/rufus-roost

EAST SUSSEX

Overlooking a pond on the edge of ancient woodland near Wadhurst in the Rother Valley, Hoots Treehouse is a beautifully designed retreat. There's a wood-burner, king-size bed and mezzanine level with two singles.

HOW TO DO IT: From £204 a night, based on up to two adults and two children (ages six and over) sharing. Two nights minimum. qualityunearthed.co.uk

POWYS

On the edge of Snowdonia National Park, eight miles from the market town of Machynlleth is Living Room Treehouses. Set at heights of up to 30ft, each treehouse has an open-plan design featuring en suite compost toilets, forest showers and a water-powered fridge. Note: there's no mains electricity.

HOW TO DO IT: From £379 (for two for two nights); max occupancy: five. campsites.co.uk

DEVON

Accessed via a long rope bridge and with views to Dartmoor, the two-bedroom Lookout Treehouse lives up to its name. The vibe here is indulgent rustic, with reclaimed timber, wood burners, sumptuous furnishings and a whirlpool bath.

HOW TO DO IT: From £180 a night. Suits older children. oneoffplaces.co.uk **MARIA PIERI**

**Take two:
faraway forests**

FRANCE

Domaine de Mieslot, near Besançon, is set within a peaceful 160-acre estate and offers a range of cabins, a treehouse and a gypsy-style caravan, all of which are dolled up in rustic Burgundian style. Take a dip in the heated, natural swimming pool or let off steam on one of the treetop adventure experiences. From £132 a night. oneoffplaces.co.uk

SWEDEN

Of the iconic Treehotel's selection of exclusive treehouses, it's the Bird's Nest option families should go for (a gigantic bird's nest accessed via a ladder). Suspended 13-32ft above the ground, the treehouses are accessible by ramp, bridge or electric stairs and have all the creature comforts of a hotel, including air con and coffee machines. Book well in advance. Bird's Nest from SEK7,000 (£615) a night for two adults and two children. treehotel.se



GREEN COAST
RESORT AND RESIDENCES

IT IS IN OUR NATURE
TO LOVE LIFE!



Treasure the Mediterranean beauty | Appreciate the design | Enjoy the quality | Feel the freedom

Villas for Sale & Villas for Rent
Caesar's Beach, Palasa, Albania
sales@greencoast.al / www.greencoast.al

INSIDE GUIDE

VIENNA

The Austrian capital is truly alive with the sound of music, from raucous jazz clubs and three-day festivals to masterful violin makers

From the outside looking in, Vienna seems wrapped up in a bygone age. After all, this is a city famous for its three-month ballroom dancing season, and one where suited men and coiffed women regularly fill the city's three internationally renowned opera houses. Beyond the Austrian capital's ritzy reputation, though, is a city celebrating the rising stars of the contemporary live arts scene as much as the classical heavyweights. This is a city that's as in love with its present as it is the past.

Jazz is a big deal in Vienna, a passion sparked by homegrown artists like Hans Koller and Fatty George, who rose to fame in post-war Europe and the US. At **PORGY & BESS**, a low-lit, crimson velvet-clad club, a stellar lineup of Austrian and international artists regularly heads the bill. At the lesser-known **ZWE**, meanwhile, giggers practically stand elbow-to-elbow with musicians. As a result, the atmosphere is electric — so much so that the no-frills venue has been viewed by local musicians as a rival to New York City's Blue Note. porgy.at zwe.cc

Night owls head to the banks of the Danube when it's time to let off steam. Here, a string of clubs, bars and pop-ups attract a diverse crowd, from hip-hop heads to breakbeat buffs. **GRELLE FORELLE** is a two-floored nightclub that hosts some of the most exciting acts in techno, house and hip-hop, complete with hypnotic neon light installations and a booming sound system. Head south to find **FLEX**: it's the city's go-to for some of the biggest names in house and electro. People of all ages and tastes join the party at **DONAUINSELFEST**, a three-day, open air festival on Donauinsel, the narrow island between the Danube and the New Danube. Held on the last weekend of June every year, it's free to attend. grelleforelle.com flex.at donauinselfest.at

For something a little more high-brow, you're naturally spoilt for choice. Passion for the opera flows through Viennese veins, with the cheering at curtain call like the roaring at a football match. The city's most hotly

anticipated shows take place at **WIENER STAATSOOPER**. If you can't get a ticket, it's worth stopping by just to admire its neo-renaissance exterior. wiener-staatsoper.at

Vienna has no shortage of concert halls, but for sound quality lauded as 'perfect' by classical musicians, head to the **MUSIKVEREIN**, just off the famous Ringstrasse. Designed by Danish architect Theophil Hansen, the venue sounds as good as it looks — beneath the floor of the main concert hall is a level that's completely hollow; it's this that's behind the venue's unparalleled acoustics. musikverein.at

Austrian artisans have crafted violins and pianos for centuries, producing some of the finest in the world. **BÄRBEL BELLINGHAUSEN** is one of the city's most accomplished violin makers, her intricate creations made entirely by hand. Visit her inner-city workshop (by appointment only) to learn more about her time-honoured profession. bellinghausen.at

Alternatively, dive deeper into Vienna's orchestral history at the **COLLECTION OF HISTORIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**, where you can admire such treasures as the pianos once played by Liszt and Mozart. khm.at

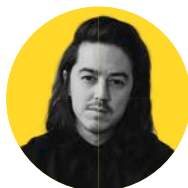
When it comes to composers, one name looms large across Viennese history: Beethoven. Some two centuries after the young pianist arrived in Vienna and made it his base, tributes to his life and legacy can be found all over the city. Don't miss the mosaicked treble clef set into the ground as you arrive at the **BEETHOVEN MUSEUM**, the virtuoso's former residence in Heiligenstadt, where exhibits trace his life. From there, head towards Karlsplatz, in the city centre, and spot the glinting 'golden cabbage' dome atop the **SECESSION**, a contemporary exhibition hall that displays the Beethoven Frieze. The huge masterpiece was painted by none other than Austrian artist Gustav Klimt as an homage to the composer. wienmuseum.at secession.at

NORA WALLAYA

LIKE A LOCAL

Jian Liew's (aka Kyson) top hangouts

Jian Liew, known professionally as Kyson, is an Adelaide-born, Vienna-based producer, singer and songwriter, whose sound is inspired by his travels. [facebook.com/kysonproductions](https://www.facebook.com/kysonproductions)



PHIL

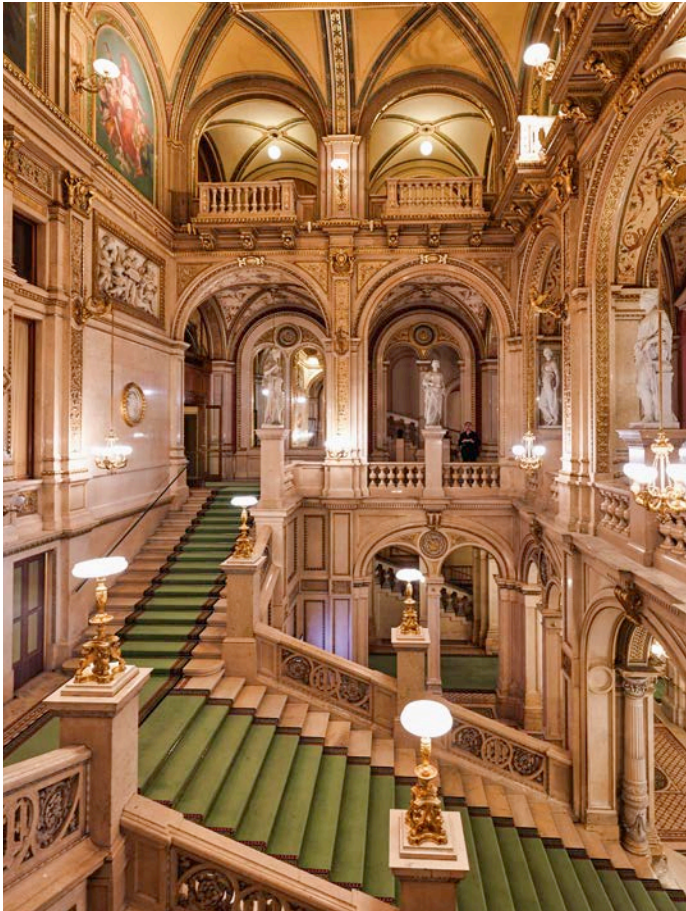
This is a cute little place with a fresh Viennese vibe. It combines a book/record store and a cafe, and sometimes plays host to live music and book readings. Arrive hungry and go for the Phil Good Breakfast — a hearty vegetarian spread. phil.business.site

METCHA MATCHA

One of my favourite restaurants in the city. It's a Japanese restaurant with a little courtyard inside. When I go, I always order the *teishoku*: a set meal including a main dish of the day and lots of pickled vegetables and miso soup. metchamatcha.at

PARKS AND GARDENS

The Burggarten is very Vienna with a butterfly house and tearoom. Otherwise, there's the Lainzer Tiergarten, which is a huge animal reserve, and the Vienna Woods — a beautiful forest just outside the city.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The Vienna State Opera (Wiener Staatsoper); Johann Strauss Monument in Viennese City Park; Kohlmarkt and Hofburg Palace in Vienna at Dusk; kaiserschmarrn (shredded pancakes) at Cafe Landtmann





SAVING ECUADOR'S CHOCÓ FOREST

HELP US PROTECT A NATURAL WONDER
BEFORE IT DISAPPEARS FOREVER

The world has lost 98% of the most important rainforest you've never heard of, a place with the Amazon's biodiversity and more bird species than North America and Europe combined. Make history by joining us as we save the last 2%.

Donate today at: worldlandtrust.org
or by phone 01986 874422



Registered charity no 1001291

STAY AT HOME

ELAN VALLEY

By day or by night, this dramatic swathe of rural Wales offers plenty of ways to embrace the great outdoors

Why go

The glacier-cut landscape cradled within Wales's Cambrian Mountains is beautiful during the day, but for many, it's all about the night. Whether explored solo or on one of the privately owned estate's events, this wild haven in the heart of the country is an International Dark Sky Park — one of just 10 in the UK recognised for their phenomenal night skies. It isn't the stargazing alone that draws more than 200,000 people to the valley every year — when dawn breaks, there's a new world of hiking trails, architectural heritage and pristine landscapes to discover. elanvalley.org.uk

What to do

The Victorian dams of the Elan Valley are formidable. Built to allow the flow of fresh, clean water 73 miles east to Birmingham, they're connected by a smooth, 16-mile hiking and cycling track that takes in the spectacular Craig Goch, as well as the fortress-like Claerwen. Experience one of the Elan Valley's dam open days, where you'll descend into the dark stone passages of Pen-y-garreg to the sound of the river colliding with its retaining wall. Emerge by the dam's crowning valve tower for a bird's-eye view of the reservoir, and acres upon acres of woodland.

Where to stay

In the nearby village of Builth Wells, follow a tree-lined road to the Grade II-listed Caer Beris Manor Hotel, a Tudor-revival country house flanked by hills and looped by the River Irfon. The lounge and bar are decked out in art nouveau wallpaper and furnished with wingback armchairs. A full Welsh breakfast using local Brecon ingredients is included. From £140. caerberis.com

We like

Discovering the wildlife — the valley is a region of Celtic rainforest, home to unusual insect and fungi species and more than 180 bird species. As you follow the marked trail through the landscape, you'll pass sessile oak, lucid patchworks of lichen and waterfalls. Join a ranger-led walk to spot some of the Valley's critters, including birds, bats and glow worms.

Where to eat

Get knockout portions of traditional fare at The Old Swan Tea Rooms, a cosy roost set at the market town crossroads in Rhayader. Further afield but worth the journey is The Felin Fach Griffin, a renowned pub in the Brecon region, for dishes such as lamb breast with white bean mash and sweetbreads. eatdrinksleep.ltd.uk **NORA WALLAYA**



DON'T MISS

A spot of birdwatching is a must. Chris Powell, owner of Gigrin Farm in Rhayader, has been feeding Wales's red kites daily since 1993 and their numbers have since flourished. Wait in one of the five hides and watch as a tractor scatters scraps for the raptors. gigrin.co.uk

OUR CRUISES ARE THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF ORDINARY



EXPEDITION CRUISES WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Join us for a National Geographic expedition to the Arctic or Antarctica. Paddle a kayak past towering icebergs, wander among penguins, or bask in the otherworldly glow of the northern lights. Our experts, naturalists, and photographers on board promise an unforgettable travel experience, rooted in our legacy of exploration. Travelling with us you'll not only be inspired by the breath-taking polar landscapes — you'll be doing your part to help protect it.

WWW.TRAVELWITHNATGEO.CO.UK



EXPEDITIONS

THE WORD

LOCATION
LITERATURE

Step inside the world of film director Wes Anderson via a new travel photography book, with a foreword by the man himself

In the past two years, a community of more than a million people has amassed around a social media account that celebrates a love of travel, photography, design and, ultimately, the celluloid universe conjured by director, Wes Anderson. The Instagram account, @accidentallywesanderson — set up in 2018 by self-confessed ‘Anderson fanboy’ Wally Koval — captivates its followers with shots of real-life places that seem plucked from the photogenic world of Anderson’s films.

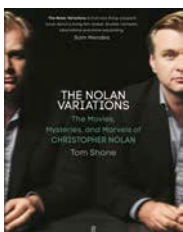
And now the director himself has written the foreword to Koval’s new book, *Accidentally Wes Anderson*. This visual journey through 200 of the account’s best shots is accompanied by the stories behind each Technicolor-tinged location — from Prague’s pink Hotel Opera, a double for Anderson’s *Grand Budapest Hotel*, to Roberts Cottages in California, a pastel-perfect parade of houses that could be straight out of any of his works.

With the release of Anderson’s latest flick, *The French Dispatch*, pushed back to 2021, we’ll have to wait a little longer to see the likes of Timothée Chalamet, Frances McDormand and Bill Murray playing a mob of American journalists plying their trade in a fictional 20th-century French city. But in the meantime, this collection of images provides a finely tuned aesthetic appetiser.

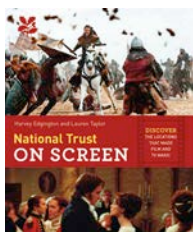
Accidentally Wes Anderson, by Wally Koval, is published by Trapeze (£25). SARAH BARRELL



THREE MORE... FILM-THEMED READS

**THE NOLAN VARIATIONS**

Film critic Tom Shone on the life and work of director Christopher Nolan, and his meticulous research into film locations. (Faber & Faber, £30)

**NATIONAL TRUST ON SCREEN**

The charity’s location managers Harvey Edgington and Lauren Taylor take readers behind the scenes at the 10 most-filmed National Trust sites nationwide. (National Trust, £9.99)

**ICONIC NEW YORK**

The Big Apple’s filmic cityscapes are showcased in detail in this glossy book by photographer Christopher Bliss. (teNeues, €35/£32)



LIECHTENSTEIN



Winter in the Principality of Liechtenstein



As soon as the first snow covers the landscape, the small mountain village of Malbun in the Principality of Liechtenstein transforms into a princely winter paradise for the whole family – far away from mass tourism. The village lies in a romantic valley basin and offers 23 kilometres of excellent ski slopes for every level. The small size of the Liechtenstein village

of Malbun has many advantages: one of them are the hotels that are located directly on the slopes and allow skiing fun without long journeys and queues. This leaves plenty of time to enjoy the coziness and family atmosphere in the inns to the full.

→ tourismus.li/winter



WIN

A THREE-NIGHT STAY AT A TREEHOUSE HIDEAWAY IN DEVON

To raise awareness of the plight faced by the UK's forests, *National Geographic Traveller* has teamed up with Friends of the Earth and Canopy & Stars to offer a luxurious arboreal escape

Did you know?

The UK's forests are in trouble. Although they play a vital role in the ecosystem by removing carbon emissions from the air, providing homes for wildlife and protecting us from flooding and heatwaves, our ancient woodlands have been disappearing. Once covering huge swathes of the country, woodland now accounts for just 13% of the UK's land area, compared to an EU average of 38%. In an effort to prevent climate chaos, Friends of the Earth — a grassroots environmental community campaigning for both people and planet — has made trees a key part of its latest campaign. Friends of the Earth believes one of the best ways to protect our environment, increase biodiversity and prevent a climate emergency is to restore our nation's forests and increase their presence across the UK. It's calling on the government to double tree cover across the country. Join the movement and find out how you can make a difference. friendsoftheearth.uk

The prize

To celebrate National Tree Week (28 November-6 December), Canopy & Stars is offering an unforgettable three-night stay for up to four people on a self-catering basis at an exquisite hideaway in rural north Devon. The winner and three guests will bed down at The Den Treehouse at Pickwell Manor, an incredible sylvan space near Croyde, where nature, traditional craftsmanship, chic design and technology come together. The Den Treehouse features a king-size bed and two bunks, plus everything guests need for an effortlessly luxurious break with a dash of wilderness. Unwind in the whirlpool bath to the sound of a crackling wood burner, wander out to the breakfast bar for a morning espresso or lounge in the wicker recliners as the acres of woodland around you bustle with life. After unwinding in the treehouse and taking in the views, the beach is just a short stroll away, making this the perfect place to truly reconnect with nature. canopyandstars.co.uk

To enter

Answer the following question online at nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions

What percentage of the UK's land area is covered by woodland?

Competition closes on 31 December 2020. The winner must be a resident of the UK, aged 18 or over. Full T&Cs at nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions





Ready to travel? We're here for you.

Travel with Confidence on a G Adventures small group tour.

Your safety has always been our top priority, which is why new physical distancing and cleaning measures have been put in place on all of our tours as part of our new Travel with Confidence policy. And if you want to feel even better about your choice to explore again, our **Travel with Confidence Plus Collection** of tours includes all of those new safety measures PLUS added steps that go that extra, physically distanced mile. Explore on great trips like:

Costa Rica Adventure — Plus | From £1,129

16 Days | San José to San José

- Spot wildlife while cruising through the canals of Tortuguero
- Hike through the cloud forest
- Enjoy the gorgeous beaches of the Pacific and Caribbean coasts

Ready to go? Book with Confidence.

Our Book with Confidence policy lets you cancel and rebook your tour with no change fees closer to the time of departure.

Find out more about all of our new health and safety measures at [gadventures.com](https://www.gadventures.com).

Terms and conditions apply.

 **ABTA**
The Travel Association
ABTA No. Y6125

 **G Adventures**
Our world deserves more you.

NOTES FROM AN AUTHOR // NUALA ELLWOOD

YORKSHIRE

In the wilds of the Yorkshire Dales, there's catharsis to be found in childhood memories of family outings and the calming, invigorating presence of nature

The Yorkshire Dales have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Much of this is down to my father, the TV journalist Luke Casey, whose award-winning ITV series, *The Dales Diary*, documented the lives of numerous locals over the years.

Fresh air and long walks were Dad's answer to almost every ill, so when, at the age of 11, I was struck with chronic insomnia, Dad sprang into action and took me on a series of bracing walks — or 'sleep inducers' as I liked to call them. We trounced across sparse, heather-covered moors, trying to avoid the ever-present cattle grids.

One day Dad drove us to Wensleydale, so we could walk the Circular Route to Aysgarth Falls. It was a perfect spring morning and I remember being mesmerised by the three waterfalls on the route. I don't know whether it was chance, the change of air quality or just sheer exhaustion, but that night I slept soundly, much to my parents' relief.

The insomnia that plagued me when I was a child never returned and I took it for granted that it would stay away. However, in 2018, it came back with a vengeance.

It corresponded with a period of intense change in my life: my marriage had ended and I'd left my home, a riverside house in York where I'd go to sleep listening to the water bubbling outside my window.

Determined to nip the insomnia in the bud, I found myself, one clear June day, going back to Aysgarth Falls in search of clarity and sleep.

Starting at the Aysgarth Falls National Park Centre, I passed through Freeholders' Wood. I knew I was on the right track as there, looming ahead, was the reassuring bulk of Bolton Castle, where Mary, Queen of Scots, was imprisoned in 1568. When I reached the end of the open field, I felt the air moistening. Then I heard it: a faint murmur of water.

Lower Falls, the first waterfall walkers encounter on this route, is gentle and unassuming. As I approached, memories of sitting on the rocks with my dad came tumbling forth: unwrapping cheese and tomato sandwiches and sipping milky coffee from a flask. I remember Dad chuckling as he handed me the coffee. "This isn't going to help the insomnia, is it?"



As I stood looking out at the waterfall, I wondered why the insomnia had returned all these years later. And I realised that it was change, or to be more specific, the fear of change, that had made my body go into hyper-alert mode. At 11, it was the fear of moving from primary to secondary school and now it was the fear of starting again. As I rejoined the path to Middle Falls, I smiled as I recalled one of the biggest hits of 1990, my first year of sleeplessness: Pavarotti's *Nessun dorma*.

Middle Falls is less accessible than its smaller sibling and can only be viewed from an observation area that gets quite crowded during high season. Still, it's worth braving the crush to behold the beauty of this waterfall. As I stood watching the white foam frothing over the rocks, I thought about the River Ure's course, how it would go east from here, and then south, where it would transform into the Ouse as it passed through York, and I realised that it was these same shape-shifting waters that had lulled me to sleep at night in my old house.

The observation deck soon filled with walkers jostling for selfies, so I slipped away and took the path back to Freeholders' Wood and the car park where my journey had begun.

The walk was almost over, but there was one last sight to see: Upper Falls, the third, and most formidable of the waterfalls.


Following the path down to Yore Bridge, from which the cascade can be viewed, I felt the air change once again. This time, however, it was a more dramatic shift, and the wind whipped around my face as I stood looking down at the water rushing across the rocks.

The expression 'a force of nature' is a rather overused one, but this waterfall, which explodes from the midst of a tranquil, woodland-enclosed piece of the Yorkshire Dales, is truly that. Watching it, something shifted inside me. Like a patient who's been given CPR, I felt myself surging back to life.

Later, as I headed back to the Wheatsheaf Inn, where I was staying for the night, I felt both reinvigorated and exhausted. One thing seemed certain: I'd sleep tonight.

“*As I stood watching the white foam frothing over the rocks, I thought about the River Ure's course, how it would go east from here, and then south, and I realised that it was these same shape-shifting waters that had lulled me to sleep at night in my old house***”**

The House on the Lake by Nuala Ellwood is published by Penguin, RRP: £7.99

 @nualawrites

MEET THE ADVENTURER

MARIO RIGBY

[The Canadian-Turks and Caicos Islander talks about his two-year walk across Africa and advocacy for a more diverse travel landscape](#)



What made you give up your career as a fitness instructor to become an adventurer?

I used to run professional track and field and I competed for Turks and Caicos. I travelled around a lot for events, but one competition in San Salvador really blew me away. It was the first time I'd seen people walking around with machine guns. It was kind of scary, but I was intrigued. So, at the end of the event, I stayed out there. I met a cab driver who showed me the country, introducing me to his family, and they really embraced me. The experience made me think, 'Wow, there's so much to the world'.

Tell us about the most poignant moment of your African odyssey.

In Mozambique, they put me on TV, and because there are only a few news channels, everyone saw it. People kept coming up to me and saying, "Hey, you're Mario!" One guy even wanted to cook me a meal, but his family's stove was broken, so as a thank you I bought them a new one. It was the least I could do, but it would really change their lives. They welcomed me like I was family.

What about the most challenging?

The loneliness. There were long stretches — along the coast in West Africa and in the Sudanese desert — where there were no other people for miles around.

Not only that, but these were areas of vast nothingness, where everything looked the same; that's where you really have to learn to become your own best friend. It's just you and the environment, and particularly in the desert, with heat stroke, often the easier option is to just sit down and die rather than keep going. You really need to understand yourself and have perseverance to survive.

And the most extreme?

I'd say Ethiopia, both culturally and geologically. I met so many tribal groups, from the Marsabit to the Dukana to the Hamar people, and the differences between them were enormous. Then there's the land; I climbed 6,500ft above sea level in the Simien Mountains, which run along the Great Rift Valley before dipping down to one of the lowest and hottest places on the planet further north.

What's the biggest change we need to make as a planet?

Bridging the gap. Both individuals and societies need to learn about other cultures and celebrate their differences. The more we share these things, the more we become empathetic to each other and the more we realise we're all living on the same rock. For me, it doesn't matter what we get done; if we can't get along, we're heading for disaster.

What's the most beautiful place you've visited?

The sunsets on Lake Malawi are breathtaking. The African sun is such a vivid bright orange, and because the water is so still, often you can't tell where the sky ends and the water begins. When the sun sets it looks like it's melting — slowly dripping into the lake.

Whom do you hope to inspire?

I'm working with a lot of young black communities, inspiring them to get out there. The narrative has always been that the explorer looks a certain way, and that's never like me, but I want to change that. I hope people will see me and think, 'Yes, I can do it too'.

Where to next?

I'm kayaking 220 miles across Lake Ontario. The aim is to promote local and sustainable travel, showing people how they can have a crazy, cool adventure in their own backyard. We're raising money for My Stand, a charity for at-risk youth who don't have access to the great outdoors.

INTERVIEW: CHARLOTTE WIGRAM-EVANS

Mario works with a number of charities including The Rainmaker Enterprise, which aims to transform lives in South Sudan by installing solar-powered water systems.

mariorigby.com

[@mariorigby](https://www.instagram.com/mariorigby)

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW ONLINE AT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. CO.UK/TRAVEL

Members only
adventure travel.



ESCAPE THE ORDINARY *with your own luxury fleet*

Meridian Adventure Sail creates tailor-made, bespoke sailing itineraries for those seeking to explore the wonder of the ocean and exquisite hidden gems. Gather your loved ones and closest friends, each on your own vessel, to create memories for a lifetime together. We create meaningful journeys in nature that are memorable, life changing and transformative. Our expeditions are filled with rare and extraordinary experiences that take guests as far as their minds can imagine and where few have been. In 2021 our voyage calendar will set sail to the turquoise waters of the Aegean.

[SAIL.MERIDIANADVENTURES.COM](https://sail.meridianadventures.com) • [ENQUIRIES@SAIL.MERIDIANADVENTURES.COM](mailto:enquiries@sail.meridianadventures.com)

MERIDIAN ADVENTURE  SAIL

MERIDIAN ADVENTURE CREATES EPIC JOURNEYS FOR PASSIONATE OCEAN ADVOCATES, LEADERS OF INDUSTRY, FAMILY OFFICES AND FORTUNE 500 BENEFIT ORGANISATIONS. SET OUT ON AN IMMERSIVE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY TO THE SUN-DRENCHED, CRYSTAL WATERS OF THE AEGEAN WHERE OUR TEAM WILL UNVEIL HIDDEN COVES, PRISTINE POCKETS OF THE OCEAN AND PICTURESQUE VILLAGES. TAKE IN THE BEAUTY OF EACH DESTINATION AND SAVOUR THE FLAVOURS OF LOCAL CULINARY DELIGHTS WHILE EXPLORING THE AEGEAN ARCHIPELAGO ON A 62' CATAMARAN. SIGNATURE SERVICE IS DELIVERED BY THE MERIDIAN ADVENTURE CADET PROGRAM.

WHAT'S ONLINE

WHY I CAN'T WAIT TO TRAVEL IN LEBANON AGAIN

In the wake of the explosion in Beirut's port in August, Sam McManus, MD of YellowWood Adventures, reflects on a trip to Lebanon and makes a case for the return of tourism

It's spring 2019 and I'm standing at the viewpoint of Saydet el Nourieh shrine, in Hamat, high on a cliff, looking out across the landscape. The turquoise breakers of the eastern Mediterranean meet the coast at the city of Tripoli, after which the land rises through foothills to brooding mountain peaks wrapped in a heavy coat of snow. The scene has some of the familiarity of Southern Europe: creamy stone houses, orange roof tiles, woodlands of windswept green poplars and Grecian trees with branches like smoke tendrils. Yet all the road signs are in Arabic and the unmistakable dust of the Middle East hangs in the air.

Lebanon is a balance between two worlds, which accounts for both its compelling history and cultural richness — and its

turbulence. The first time I went to Lebanon, I was supposed to stay for a week, but ended up staying for a month.

I was researching whether — and how — to launch a guided tour in the country. At the time, only a handful of British companies were offering itineraries in Lebanon, but its revised and improved safety credentials in the eyes of the British government's Foreign & Commonwealth Office meant there would soon be more of an appetite. So, I took a tiny apartment in Beirut on the top floor of a five-storey block with an open terrace, views of the sea and a malicious landlady, and began my research. My time in Lebanon was intoxicating. In November 2019, I'd be back again, leading YellowWood Adventures' first group of clients around the country.

The grand Roman ruins in Baalbek were astonishing, and I went snowshoeing among the cedar forests at the head of the Qadisha Valley. And in Byblos, one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns on Earth, I snacked on olives at atmospheric port cafes.

I found Beirut to be glamorous. In the centre, a mosque encircled by four minarets stands beside a church with a single tower supporting a crucifix constructed from bright, square lights. Some of the bulbs have blown and the effect always reminded me of the romantic aesthetic of Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet*. At nightfall, the lights from the city give a shimmering haze to the air, like a finely woven fabric.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ONLINE NOW AT [NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL](https://nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel)

TOP STORIES

Here's what you've been enjoying on the website this month



FROM MY CITY
Coventry through the eyes of Pauline Black
 Lead singer of The Selecter reflects on the city's musical past



CORONAVIRUS
Are your flight vouchers still valid for travel?
 We look into vouchers, cancelled flights and the small print



CONSERVATION
The impact of coronavirus on Australia's coral reefs
 Talking to eco trailblazers at Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort

DISCOVER THE NORTHUMBERLAND CAFE REACHABLE ONLY AT LOW TIDE

Inaccessible from the mainland during twice-daily high tides, Pilgrims Coffee, on Northumberland's remote Holy Island, offers home-roasted beans and locally sourced dishes with a side serving of adventure. Words: Aleesha Hansel

In the far northeast of England, just south of where the River Tweed flows into the North Sea, lies the remote Holy Island of Lindisfarne. For around 10 hours a day, it's cut off from the mainland by the tide, creating a semi-isolation that lends itself to monastic living. As such, the history of this small isle is one of religion, refuge and raids — and while marauding Vikings are no longer a concern, the island still offers challenges to those living or working on it.

"The weather changes when the tide moves in or out, so you can tell what's going on," says Andrew Mundy, who, along with his wife, Victoria, took over Pilgrims Coffee from his parents in 2016. "It changes the acoustics and feeling of the island. And the seals get up and start singing. It's eerie, but in a nice way."

Sitting a mile off the Northumberland coast, slightly south of Berwick-upon-Tweed,

Holy Island is just two square miles in size. The island's only village is home to 180 people and a handful of businesses catering to residents, as well as to visitors to the island's main tourist attraction.

Being cut off for almost half the day throws up challenges for businesses like Pilgrims.

"I've been trying to get organic milk for the last year," Andrew says. "Ultimately, we just get told, 'We'll drop it off if we can.'"

And it's not just deliveries that don't always turn up. Last year, the cafe posted a job ad, received 100 responses and lined up 100 interviews, but ended up with zero attendees. Despite lockdown, online coffee sales were so buoyant that chief coffee roaster, Joseph, moved to the island to cope with the burgeoning orders, making use of the cafe's emergency bed, normally used after missing the tide. **READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE NOW**

BEYOND THE TRAVEL SECTION



I ENVIRONMENT I

Earthshot: the 'most prestigious environment prize in history'

£50m set to be awarded in a global race for 'inspiring solutions' to help repair the world

I SCIENCE I

How do you measure Everest? It's complicated by frostbite — and politics

Nepal has remeasured Mount Everest and now China has to weigh in

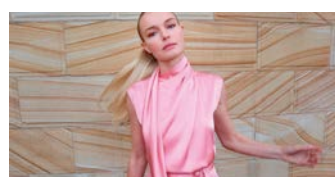
I HISTORY I

Oldest footprints in Saudi Arabia reveal intriguing step in early human migration

What landscape greeted Homo sapiens as they ventured into new lands more than 100,000 years ago?



IMAGES: GETTY; DEAN CHALKLEY; LAUREN PHILLIPS; HAMISH IRVINE PHOTOGRAPHY; ALAMY



INTERVIEW
My life in food: Kate Bosworth

The American actor shares her culinary passions



VISIT NOW
Six of London's best small museums

The capital has more than 100 quirky, diminutive institutions



FOOD
Seven distinctive delicacies from around the world

Run the gourmet gauntlet, from fermented fish to illegal cheese

SEARCH FOR NATGEOTRAVELUK

- FACEBOOK
- INSTAGRAM
- TWITTER
- PINTEREST

WEEKENDER

FORT WILLIAM & GLENCOE

In the shadow of Ben Nevis, the town of Fort William and the nearby valley of Glencoe offer a rugged springboard for outdoors adventures, with hiking, biking and Highland history all in easy reach. Words: Ben Lerwill

The Highlands weren't so named by chance. Their crowning glory, Ben Nevis, is famously the highest mountain in the UK, but it's no lonely monolith: the tallest 75 peaks in the British Isles are all found in Scotland (their nearest competitor, Wales' Snowdon, enters the charts at a lowly number 76). This swathe of the country is a steep-sided, cairn-clustered magnet for anyone with fresh air and adventure in mind — and one particular area of the western Highlands draws more attention than most.

In Fort William, on the shores of Loch Linnhe, the mountain biking is fabled, the climbing first-rate and the long-distance trails numberless. The town is also bristling with Scottish history — a trait it shares with the scenic valley of Glencoe, which lies less than half an hour's drive away. Combining these two spots makes for a bracing way to spend a short break. Expect deep glens, fearsome ridgelines and film-worthy panoramas — and lots of time feeling very small indeed.

Ben Nevis towering above the village of Caol, near Fort William
RIGHT: A red stag in Glen Etive, south of Glencoe, with snow-capped mountains in the background



TOP 5

Walks in the region



LOST VALLEY

A short, sharp climb from Glencoe's valley floor takes you past rushing streams to the so-called Lost Valley. This peak-ringed plateau concealed from view is said to be where the MacDonald clan hid their rustled cattle.

BEN NEVIS

An ascent of the UK's highest mountain remains hugely popular, but beware you'll likely need up to eight hours to make the 10-mile return trip to the summit. And don't forget the basics: a map, compass, water and appropriate hiking gear.

GREAT GLEN WAY

This 79-mile trail runs from Fort William to Inverness, broadly following the Caledonian Canal. Operators including Wilderness Scotland offer accommodation packages. wildernessscotland.com

BUACHAILLE ETIVE MÒR

Climbing the pyramidal bulk of Buachaille Etive Mòr remains a rite of passage for many hardened hikers. It has two peaks of Munro status (Scottish mountains over 3,000ft) and is a serious undertaking. Experience and the right kit are essential.

WEST HIGHLAND WAY

Marking its 40th anniversary this year, the 96-mile trail from Milngavie to Fort William follows old cattle routes and military roads. Wild camping is possible, but accommodation and luggage transfers are also available. ➔

DAY ONE HISTORY, HEIGHTS & HEAVENS

MORNING

Fort William might not be Scotland's most picturesque town, but it has some intriguing corners and acts as an ideal base from which to explore this part of the country. Head first to the compact West Highland Museum on Cameron Square, which is free to visit (although currently only operating in pre-bookable time slots). It leads you through the region's tempestuous history, with emphases on Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite Rebellion, and houses some stellar exhibits, including the dapper Highland outfit given by Queen Victoria to her attendant, John Brown.

The town's eponymous 17th-century fort was dismantled in 1860, but the site on which it stood is an easy stroll from the centre. All that remains today are grassy ramparts and bulky walls, but the views of Loch Linnhe are well worth the trip.

AFTERNOON

Around six miles from Fort William, Nevis Range is one of the UK's best-known mountain biking centres. The venue has hosted UCI Mountain Bike World Cup races since 2002, but you don't need to be a single-track demon to enjoy it. Although its two gondola-assisted downhill trails are for experienced riders only, a network of other well-designed tracks cater for beginners and intermediates. Onsite bike hire can be arranged at Nevis Cycles, which also has an outlet in town, and private and group lessons are available.

A direct bus travels between Fort William and Nevis Range several times daily. Meanwhile, for those who already have their own two wheels, the same journey can be made along a dedicated cycle path. The trails at Nevis Range are usually open between late March and October.

EVENING

Weather looking good? Fort William Sea Tours runs rigid inflatable boat tours on Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil, giving you the chance to spot local wildlife and soak up the oversized scenery. The 90-minute voyages take in the local Glen Etive seal colony and, if you're lucky, you might also glimpse dolphins, otters or golden eagles. Trips usually run several times daily between April and October, with additional evening departures in summer.

Back on land, and a five-minute drive from the town centre, stands the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre (formerly the Glen Nevis Visitor Centre), its surrounding glen a designated Dark Sky Discovery Site thanks to the lack of light pollution. When you're done admiring the night sky, the nearby Ben Nevis Inn occupies a converted dairy barn and offers an atmospheric spot for a pint.

SMARTCOVER

Take care of the planet with a reusable face mask

Travel can be long and tiring, with some destinations taking over 24 hours to reach. Due to the congested nature of many forms of travel — from crowded buses to busy planes — it's no surprise that global transport providers have asked everyone to wear masks in recent months. While in passage, exposure can be high and the risk of spreading coronavirus intensifies, meaning it's important to wear a mask. Scientific research has found that wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

SmartCover is a mask that allows individuals to travel the globe in comfort. It features three layers, the first of which is a UV-resistant nanotechnology material. Among the many unique properties contained within this nanotech fabric are silica particles, which create a water-resistant coating. Next is the advanced SMS layer, comprising chemical-resistant raw polypropylene fabrics. Because of the unique heat-bonding process used to merge the materials, the durability of SmartCover can provide travellers with confidence that their mask will last.

Ventilation was a focal point in the design process, with consideration given to travellers consigned to stifling conditions, such as cramped metros or full flights. In order to ensure proper circulation, a lightweight structure was formulated — and by using the chosen fibres, the material mass was significantly lowered. What's more, as well as repelling moisture, the mask also contains silver nanoparticles, which can inhibit bacterial growth. So, what does this mean for travellers like you? You'll arrive with a mask that looks good, feels good and smells good.

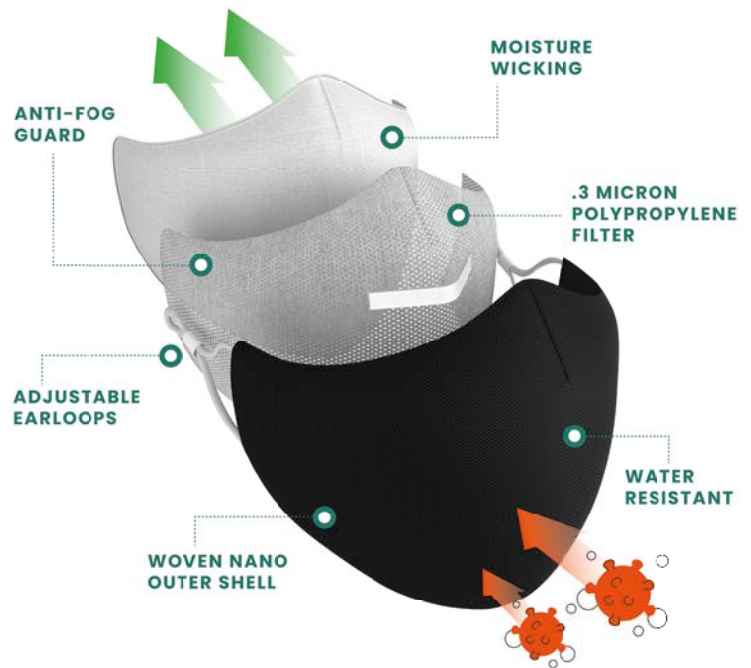
The final layer — made of soft organic cotton — was chosen with the ideas of reuse and environmental stewardship in mind. Organic cotton can offer breathability and may be of benefit while flying, as skin can become dry and feel sensitive. The fabric is naturally durable and easy to wash, which encourages reuse. By following the natural contour of the face, SmartCover offers a comfortable and breathable experience for everyone.

SmartCover offers worldwide shipping.
Join the family.

ADVERTISEMENT



SmartCover breakdown



SCAN TO LEARN MORE
smartcoverco.com

SMARTCOVER

Crossing the Coupall river,
Glen Etive, south of Glencoe



DAY TWO ROAD TRIPS & RAMBLES

MORNING

On to Glencoe, the valley that takes Scotland's mountain scenery and turns it up a notch. What you're looking at is actually the remnants of an ancient supervolcano, and the overall effect is one of awe-inspiring craggy drama: the mountains are vast green goliaths, gouged by glaciers, laced with waterfalls, and flanking both sides of the glen.

Many travellers simply drive through Glencoe, pulling over to take a few snaps, but it pays dividends to linger a little longer. A good first stop is the award-winning Glencoe Visitor Centre. As well as taking you through the geology, flora and fauna of the surrounding area, it also details the infamous Glencoe Massacre of 1692, when members of the MacDonald clan were killed by government forces.

AFTERNOON

Lace up your boots — there are countless trails to follow here, from short nature walks to full-day ridge traverses. If you're searching for a hike that falls somewhere between the two, an ascent of the 2,430ft Pap of Glencoe is a fine choice. It starts from the village of Glencoe itself, so you can fuel up on sandwiches and flapjacks at Glencoe Cafe before setting off. From there, stride along the glorious River Coe and into the hills. While the route is reasonably straightforward and well signposted, and you're likely to pass other walkers, bringing a map is always wise. Reaching the Pap's distinctive cone-shaped summit requires some basic scrambling, but the rewards are superb, with lochs in one direction and the glen's blockbuster topography in the other.

EVENING

The directors of the Harry Potter films were fond of shooting scenes in Glencoe, and it's still common to come across Potterphiles here seeking out the filming location of Hagrid's hut. Nothing remains of the hut itself these days, but the site is just minutes away from a Glencoe icon that's very much still standing: the Clachaig Inn. The former coaching inn dates back to the 16th century and has achieved legendary status among climbers, mountaineers and hikers. Its outdoor tables look out across the glen, but as the evening wears on, the best place to sample the inn's muddy-trousered ambience is the Boots Bar, whose flagstones, log-burners and local real ales have been drawing in outdoor-lovers for decades. And the food, as you might expect when catering for walkers, is well-portioned.

TOP 3

Places to eat in Fort William



CRANNOG

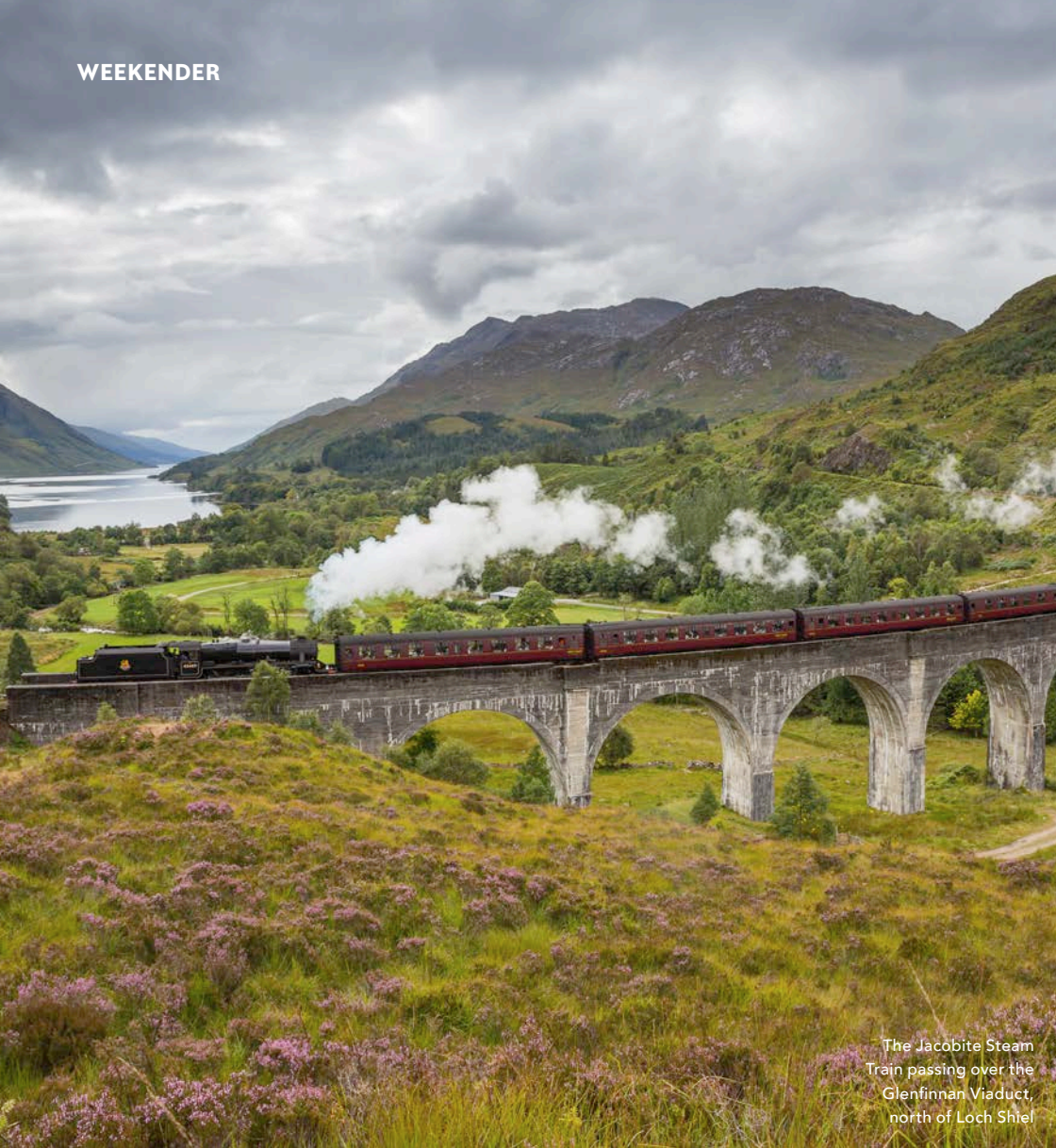
This quirky-looking scarlet-roofed restaurant sits on the edge of Loch Linnhe, meaning the delicious seafood for which it's famous doesn't have to be transported far. Crannog relocated for the 2020 season, sharing a town-centre premises with sister restaurant Garrison West, but it's set to return to its lochside location in 2021. crannog.net

THE WILDCAT

Situated halfway down the High Street, The Wildcat is a great little vegan cafe serving breakfast and lunch. Towards the back, there's a zero-waste, plastic-free health food shop, too. Open Wednesday to Saturday. wildcatcafe.co.uk

THE LIME TREE AN EALDHAIN

A short walk from the High Street, this hotel-restaurant offers top-notch dining, with locally sourced ingredients taking centre stage. The restaurant itself is an elegant space, with stained glass windows, potted plants and modern artworks, many by the owner, David Wilson. limetreefortwilliam.co.uk



The Jacobite Steam Train passing over the Glenfinnan Viaduct, north of Loch Shiel

EYES ON THE SKY

If you're planning to head to the mountains, check specialist weather forecasts, including the Mountain Weather Information Service and the Met Office mountain weather forecast. mwis.org.uk metoffice.gov.uk

THREE MORE GREAT RAIL JOURNEYS

Fort William has been served by the railway for nearly 130 years. Today, it's a stop on the overnight Caledonian Sleeper Highlander route from London and sits smack-bang on a world-famous stretch of track

FORT WILLIAM TO MALLAIG

This is the route that sends rail enthusiasts weak at the pistons. The Jacobite Steam Train winds between lochs and mountains all the way to Mallaig, a small fishing port and key hub for ferry travel to Skye and the Small Isles. On the 41-mile journey, attention tends to fall on the Glenfinnan Viaduct, the spectacular 21-arch bridge made famous by the Harry Potter films — but it's just one of many highlights in a moving canvas of impossibly rugged vistas. The service runs several times daily in season (usually April to October, but continuing to mid-November this year), but if you're more into the views than the vehicle, it's worth knowing you can take a regular passenger service along the same route for half the price. westcoastrailways.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM TO GLASGOW

This 122-mile route takes you south to Glasgow's Queen Street station. More than just a way of rumbling to and from Scotland's biggest city, the route serves up prime-grade Scottish scenery of its own. The moody, hill-bordered expanse of Rannoch Moor takes top billing — the mind boggles as to how a railway line was built across such a soggy, empty vastness — and the stations passed along the way are among the most remote in the country. One of them, Corrour, is the highest mainline railway station in the UK, and its isolated location saw it feature in the 1996 film *Trainspotting*, when Renton and friends resolutely refuse to leave the platform to venture into the nearby mountains. More fool them.

FORT WILLIAM TO OBAN

The journey to the coastal town of Oban requires a change of train in Crianlarich, a village within easy striking distance of several Munros. The 33-mile line from here to Oban is superb, passing a ruined castle on the banks of the aptly named Loch Awe and descending through woodland to reach the coast. Oban itself sits on a picturesque bay in the Firth of Lorn and provides plenty of reasons to linger, including a 226-year-old distillery, two Michelin-recommended restaurants (Baab and Etive) and the bizarre McCaig's Tower, a colosseum-style folly atop Battery Hill. If you really want to make a trip of it, Oban is also the setting-off point for ferries across to Mull and other Hebridean islands. ▣

MORE INFO

West Highland Museum. westhighlandmuseum.org.uk
 Nevis Range. nevisrange.co.uk
 Nevis Cycles. neviscycles.com
 Fort William Sea Tours. fortwilliamseatours.co.uk
 Ben Nevis Inn. ben-nevis-inn.co.uk
 Glencoe Cafe. glencoe cafe.co.uk

HOW TO DO IT

The Caledonian Sleeper runs between Fort William and London Euston every night except Saturdays, via Crewe, Edinburgh and Glasgow. From £45 for Comfort Seats and from £140 for Classic rooms. [sleeper.scot](http:// sleeper.scot)
 The Clachaig Inn in Glencoe offers accommodation, food and drink, as well as self-catering chalets and cottages in the surrounding area. Classic doubles from £120, B&B. [clachaig.com](http:// clachaig.com) [clachaigholidays.com](http:// clachaigholidays.com)

Jack
Wolfskin

AT HOME OUTDOORS



PACK AND GO!

PACKABLE
+
LIGHTWEIGHT

NOW IN STORE AND ONLINE:

JACK-WOLFSKIN.CO.UK/PACK-AND-GO

EAT

MONTEVIDEO

What the Uruguayan capital lacks in size, it more than makes up for in cuisine. This is a city busy carving out a new culinary identity, driven by a longstanding local obsession with its home-grown food and wine. Words: Jamie Lafferty



Of all the curious things about Uruguay's food scene, perhaps the most peculiar is that despite bodies of water marking its eastern, southern and western boundaries, no one eats fish. Or almost no one. Mercifully, Montevideo's Es Mercat restaurant goes against the grain by dedicating itself to seafood.

"This was the first fish restaurant in all of Montevideo," chef and owner Roberto Connio tells me before lunch service. I assume this means it was handed down through his family, generations of old seadogs, refining recipes to the art he presents today. "No, we opened in June 2011, so nine years old," he replies, sipping an espresso. "Now there are some other restaurants selling some fish dishes, but if you're serious about it, then we're number one."

Roberto explains that in the wake of the Second World War, people pushed further into Uruguay's interior, developing more of the land for agriculture. The main product people wanted was leather, so cattle

farms grew quickly, filling the cheap land available outside of the capital. Uruguayans also wanted the beef, of course; ironically, though, it was almost a by-product of the leather industry.

As the decades rolled by, the quality of Uruguayan beef grew to rival that of its gigantic neighbours: Argentina to the south and Brazil to the north. Its people continued to look away from the sea and, despite all that coastline, the locals seemed to forget about seafood.

Not that Roberto thinks his compatriots lack imagination. "They're very loyal — if they find somewhere they like, they'll go back every single day." All of which is to say, it's a bold play for him to focus so heavily on the ocean.

Es Mercat was initially opened, like so many establishments in Montevideo, as a 'resto-bar', focusing largely on drinks, with food presented almost as an afterthought. These days, the cellar remains excellent, but the food has come to the fore.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Street fair in Carrasco; Plaza Independencia and the Palacio Salvo building; barbecue pork with roast pumpkin and sweet potato, served at the Bodega Artesana winery; wine glasses at one of its tasting sessions

IMAGES: ALAMY; GETTY; JAMIE LAFFERTY



make SAINT LUCIA YOUR HOME *this winter*

*Enjoy a SAFE & HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
at our Luxurious, private & secluded Villa*



Special rates for extended stays from one to six months.



Concierge by

PREMIER CONCIERGE
SAINT LUCIA

www.premierconciergesaintlucia.com

Villa "C'est la Vie" has 3-bedrooms with an interconnected cottage and apartment available for additional guests as needed. Set amidst one acre of gardens with a large freeform pool adjacent to the warm Caribbean Sea. Amenities include private study/office, high-speed broadband internet, private excursions. Our Concierge will meet you at the airport, transfer you to "C'est la Vie" in a private vehicle and will be available to assist at all times throughout your stay. Butler and Chef services on request with grocery shopping service if preferred.

For information and customized packages,
please email: cestlavie@casalucia.com or
call +1 (758) 720-7550.



BOOK YOUR STAY
www.villacestlavie.com
Interactive Villa tour available.



FROM LEFT:
Cafe-cum-library
Escaramuza; tarta
pascualina with a poached
egg at Escaramuza

“Our most popular dishes are always the *merluza negra* [Patagonian toothfish], the *pulpo* [octopus] and the *bacalao* [salt cod], so we try to always have them on,” says Roberto. “The rest depends on the market.”

Es Mercat is dedicated to seafood, but not necessarily to it being local. The cod comes from Portugal, the toothfish from the deep waters off the southernmost tip of the continent, and the octopus from whichever ever supplier meets Roberto’s exacting standards. None of it tastes like it’s travelled far, however. The meaty octopus tentacle I’m served — seasoned with healthy pinches of rock salt and paprika, its little suckers singed on an open flame — is the most satisfying I’ve had anywhere in the world.

The charred, meaty octopus speaks to Uruguay’s love of barbecue, or *asado*, the intoxicating aromas of which waft through Montevideo’s tight-knit streets. Often said to be the most laid-back country in South America, liberal little Uruguay tends not to spend too much time trying to differentiate itself from Argentina, just across the Río de La Plata. The two countries have much in common, including a deep fondness for humongous steaks and dense red wines.

“In the end, I suppose they’re not so different,” says Karen Higgs, creator of the Guru’Guay travel guides to Uruguay and Montevideo, which focus on the nation’s best food and wine. “But the attitudes are very different and in Uruguay the produce doesn’t have to travel so far, so it’s fresher. The quality of ingredients sets it apart.”

Originally from Wales, Karen might seem an unlikely local expert, but she’s spent much of the past two decades searching for Uruguay’s culinary standouts. Her books have proved so popular that a second edition and corresponding audiobook were released earlier this year.

We meet for lunch in Escaramuza, in the capital’s Cerdón neighbourhood. Styled as a library-cum-cafe, it’s knowingly trendy, beautifully airy and absolutely packed. It takes a little pleading to get us a table amid the hubbub.

Karen has lived in Uruguay since 2000, but creating the Guru’Guay books coincided with an upswing in the country’s attitude to food. “There have been big changes over the past five years, mostly driven by millennials and people who’ve travelled then come back to set up their own business,” she explains. “There’s been a real interest in local ingredients and local produce, as well as more adventurous cuisine and palettes.”

Being something of an outsider has enabled Karen to clearly see where Uruguayans excel at cuisines hailing from beyond their own borders. There are several places here specialising in ersatz takes on Italian food, but at restaurants like Escaramuza there’s a big focus on seasonality, light salads and cleverly updated classics.

The ethos is similar at Sin Pretensiones, a city-centre cafe where eclectic furniture and cutlery are set out for patrons to enjoy a menu that might seem alien to Uruguayans from other parts of the country. Even its *chivito* sandwich — Uruguay’s national

A TASTE OF Montevideo



ESCARAMUZA

Don’t think the ‘library’ element here is a gimmick — if anything, the focus is more on literature than food. And yet, the brilliant courtyard restaurant at the back of the bookshop is no slouch. One of the most popular lunch spots anywhere in the city, it prepares some of the freshest salads in town and some heftier mains (including steak), too, but has really made its name with its great cakes, pastries and desserts. The coffee is predictably excellent, too. Mains from 290 pesos (£5.30). escaramuza.com.uy

MONTEVIDEO WINE EXPERIENCE

Transport from the city centre to the surrounding vineyards can be tricky to organise. With that in mind, why not sample vintages from the finest cellar in all of the city via the Montevideo Wine Experience. Armed with bottles from all over the country, staff from the wine bar can offer a crash course in the nation’s wine, from meaty Tannats to the coolest new kid on the block, the increasingly popular Uruguayan Albariño. Glasses from 120 pesos (£2.20). T: 00 598 92 939 992.

SIN PRETENSIONES

Based inside a vintage furniture store, Sin Pretensiones walks the fine line between kitsch and cool. Whatever you think of the decor, though, the food is excellent. Specialising in *tartas* (savoury pies) it also has a near-permanently blazing pizza oven and some of the city’s best coffee. It’s the gourmet *chivito*, though, that’s the true star. Mains from 320 pesos (£5.85). sinpretensiones.com.uy

Five food finds



1

TANNAT

These heavy, full-bodied wines originally came from France in 1870 but have proved far more popular in Uruguay. Too dense to be a sipping wine, they're an ideal pairing when ordering *asado*.

2

DULCE DE LECHE

How important is this sweet caramel spread to Uruguayans? Well, when their football team's 39kg supply was confiscated during the 2014 Brazil World Cup, the players cited it as one of the reasons they were eliminated.

3

CHIVITO

Uruguay's national dish, this fat sandwich is traditionally made with grilled beef, cheese, tomato, mayonnaise and often some boiled egg for good measure. An enormous commitment for one person, they're often shared.

4

CHOTO

Almost any cut of meat can become part of a great *asado*, and in Uruguay one of the most popular additions is *choto*, the large intestine. Grilled until the fat has rendered away, it's normally served crispy with a squeeze of lemon juice.

5

CAVIAR

Unlikely as it might seem, Uruguay is now one of the world's leading sturgeon caviar producers, with the warm, dark waters of the Rio Negro in the country's interior an ideal breeding ground for the fish.



FROM LEFT: Dulce de leche with chocolate; Cabaña Verónica, in the Mercado del Puerto

dish — is barely recognisable, having been improved far beyond its traditionally heavy, cheesy guise.

Yet while there are exceptions, there's no getting away from the fact that most menus in Montevideo centre around its two most famous products: beef and wine. In the heart of Montevideo, the Mercado del Puerto is a beehive of restaurants and bars, all vying for attention while offering almost every conceivable cut of beef cooked over blazing embers. In what's often a rather macho arena, Cabaña Verónica and its eponymous owner stand out in more ways than one. Having inherited the grill from her parents, Veronica patrols the bar, making sure everyone has what they want, whether that's mouth-watering *morcilla* sausage, intimidatingly massive sirloins or molten provolone cheese.

The atmosphere in the Mercado del Puerto — and indeed all of Montevideo — can feel intense over the austral summer, but outside the city the air seems lighter. When I get to Bodega Artesana, the temperature is a lovely 24C, with a whisper of a breeze drifting over the vines. While the capital hugs the coast to its south, it wears a green crown of vineyards to the north. The majority of these wineries aren't vast sprawls catering to the international market but modestly sized affairs set up to satisfy domestic demand.

Just as the French Carménère grape now thrives in Chile and, more famously, Malbec hopped across the Atlantic to find its true home in Argentina, so Uruguay inherited a

grape that it's since claimed as its own: the muscular red, Tannat.

At 80 acres, Bodega Artesana is an outstanding but fairly typical winery 40 minutes north west of Montevideo. Half of its vines grow Tannat, which is occasionally blended but more commonly bottled on its own. As well as tours of the vineyard, excellent six-course, *al fresco* lunches are also offered, with pairings from across the Bodega Artesana range. Co-manager Valentina Gatti explains that production has increased each year since the winery was founded in 2007, but that the "goal is to sell 50,000 bottles a year, and no more than that".

Bodega Artesana also sells grapes to other, larger vineyards, but with its brand gaining recognition, they plan to scale this back. The environmental spasms brought about by the climate emergency have caused concern for winemakers in other parts of the world, but not so in Uruguay. "We think 2020 could be one of our best vintages so far," says Valentina. "It's the same for everyone we've spoken to."

So, is the success story set to continue long into the future? Valentina smiles as she gives a reply about her wine that could easily apply to the nation's culinary scene, too. "Maybe, but there's work to do," she says. "We have to introduce people to us. We have to explain that we are Uruguay and this is what we do." □

✈ Iberia and Latam Airlines Brazil fly from Heathrow to Montevideo with connecting flights in Madrid or São Paulo. iberia.com latam.com guruguay.com



The beauty of life lies in nature.

THE HARMONY AND SILENCE OF THE MOUNTAINS ARE MIRRORED IN THE ARCHITECTURE. THE LIGHT FLOODED ROOMS CREATE A WONDERFULLY CALMING LIVING ATMOSPHERE.

Each room is furnished with style and filled with the fragrant scent of larch wood. Just outside your window lies a dramatic view of the gorgeous mountainscape of the Dolomites.

The position of our Larix Lodge is unique: we are situated directly on the ski slope (ski-in/ski-out), in the middle of nature with an open view of the mountains. At the same time we are only 5 minutes away from the center of the village.

LARIX Lodge



APARTMENT
CORF



45 QM² LOFT 2-3 PERS.

APARTMENT
OLP



74 QM² 4-5 PERS.

APARTMENT
LU

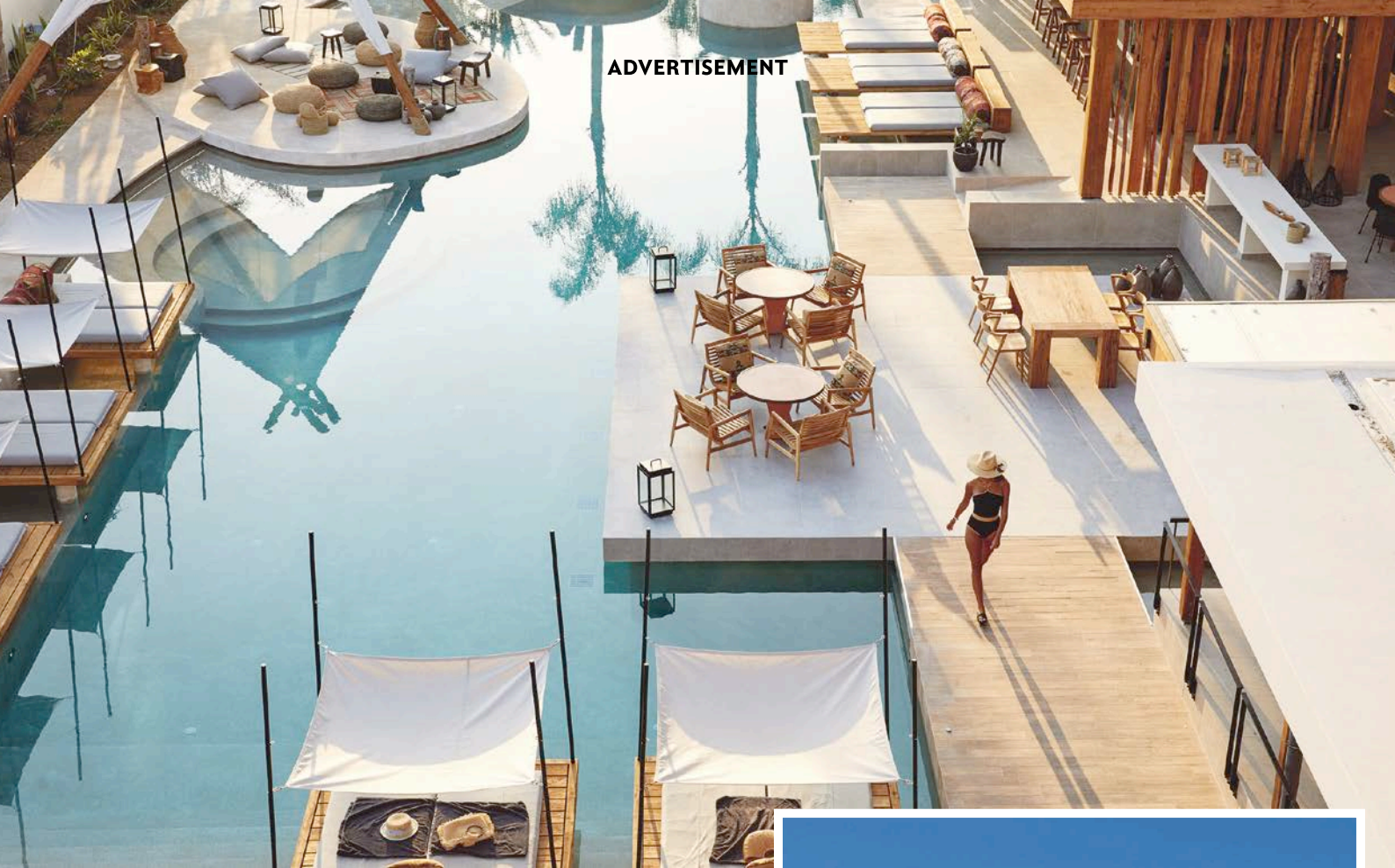


83 QM² 4-5 PERS.

LARIX LODGE · Straße Ninz 5C
La Villa 39036 Badia, South Tyrol - Italy
Tel. +39 0471 193 0334, info@larix-lodge.it

WWW.LARIX-LODGE.IT

ADVERTISEMENT



THE
SYNTOPIA

Slow down into the island pace of life at The Syntopia

A top hotel offers a whole lot more than just a place to rest your head at night, which is why The Syntopia has turned so many heads since it opened earlier this year. Located on the north coast of Crete close to the city of Rethymno, the adult-only property channels bohemian vibes in its decor and as such, relaxation is the order of the day. There are two pools ready for a leisurely dip, as well as fresh buffets and street food-style snacks in the restaurant. After getting your fill, you can find your zen in the wellness centre with indulgent spa treatments. Come the evenings, there's an array of events to enjoy, from live concerts and wine-tasting sessions, to an open-air cinema showing classic films underneath the Cretan sky. However you decide to spend your stay here, you won't fail to be won over by The Syntopia's luxurious and contemporary charm.

thesyntopiahotel.gr



FODELE BEACH

Wet and wild thrills meet laid-back relaxation at Fodele Beach

They may be the polar opposite of holidays, but if you want to be able to choose between a pampering or enjoying an activity-packed itinerary, check yourself into Crete's Fodele Beach & Water Park Resort. Just 25km west of Heraklion Airport, the site is carved into the cliffside overlooking the Sea of Crete. Those who prefer a horizontal holiday can relax with a full-body massage or spa treatment, or simply chill with a cocktail in hand on the Balinese beach beds. More energetic guests can take advantage of the slides, rides and 950m² of dazzling pools, or strut their stuff on the basketball and tennis courts. Add in a collection of restaurants that take inspiration from the world's culinary capitals and you've got a resort to write home about.

fodelebeach.gr

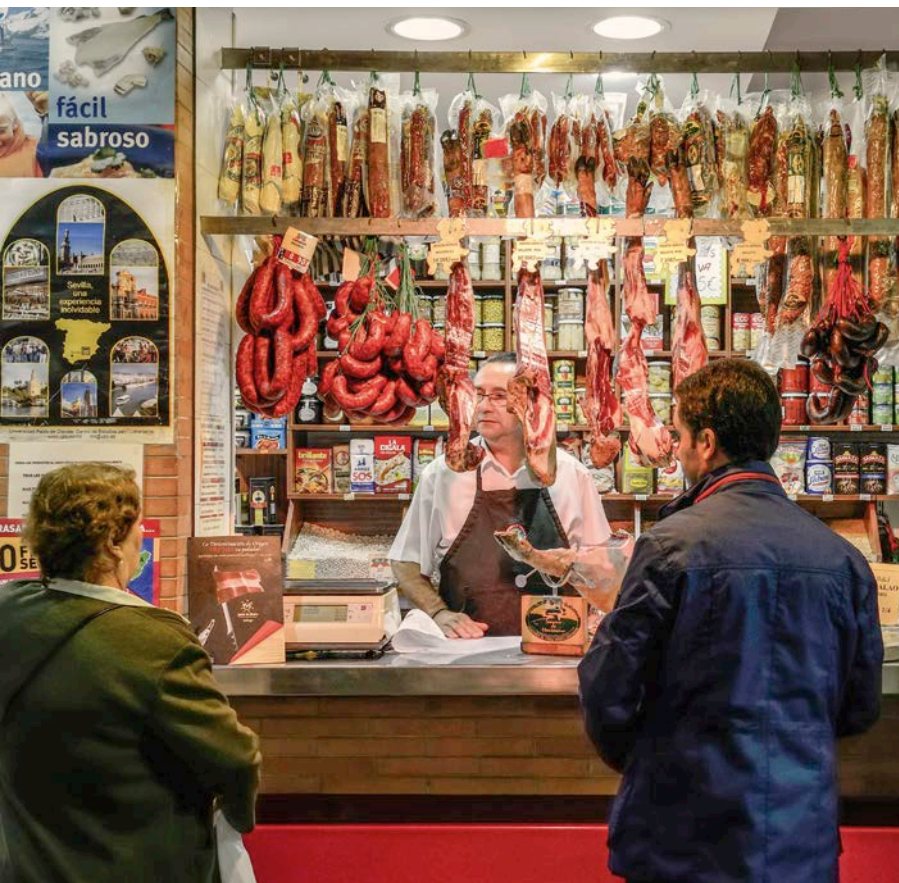
NEIGHBOURHOOD

SEVILLE

The Andalusian capital may have a collection of classic sights, but that's only half the story. Its atmospheric barrios, home to fresh flavours and burgeoning art scenes, are breathing new life into the city. Words: Josephine Price



Claiming the world's largest gothic cathedral and one of Europe's biggest old towns, Seville serves up historical superlatives as big and bold as its world-famous tapas. Of course, all that soul-stirring Moorish architecture and fine food plays a major role in the allure of Spain's fourth-largest city, but veering away from its historic centre reveals a cool, contemporary edge. Spread across the city are neighbourhoods that hum with an undercurrent of creativity; it's in these pockets that old traditions are given a new lease of life, artists' enclaves are springing up and new culinary traditions are being cemented. Make no mistake — this is a city that promises the best of modern Spain.



Triana

“People come to Triana and say there’s nothing to see,” Shawn says, nodding towards some nondescript apartment buildings from the 1970s. My guide admits her favourite neighbourhood has some shabby corners, especially when held up against the picture-perfect Old Town across the canal to its east. “But,” she explains, “you just have to know where to go.” Shawn Hennessey was born in Canada but has lived here for the past 27 years and knows the city intimately. She was one of the first people to start tapas tours here over a decade ago, after first launching an online culinary guide, *Azahar Sevilla*. These days, the site commands a loyal following for its knowledge of the city’s best kitchens.

In Triana, she’s showing me the lesser-known corners of the neighbourhood and the tapas worth detouring for. Triana is sandwiched between two channels — the Guadalquivir River and the Alfonso XIII Canal — and, as such, prides itself on its apartness, Shawn tells me. Cross the river and call a local a *sevillano* and they’ll correct you: these are *trianeros* through and through.

The area’s identity is wrapped up in its past, too. Historically, it was a magnet for wayward souls — gypsies, sailors, artists and flamenco dancers gravitated here — and was, until recently, defined by its ceramic industry, which dated back to Moorish rule.

The coal-burning kilns were discouraged in the 1970s to help improve air quality, and the last factory, Ceramica Montalvan, extinguished its furnaces in 2012. But the tradition of turning riverbed clay into art lives on in the artisan shops that dot the side streets. Colourful *azulejo* tiles still decorate the neighbourhood, from bridges and balustrades to window frames and facades — and even the stands of Mercado de Triana, the central covered market built atop the ruins of the Castle of San Jorge.

Our tour takes us to the counter of the family-run restaurant Las Golondrinas, a haven for all things porcine. The server laughs as I ask how long it takes to get through a leg of *jamón*; there’s a whole herd of them strung up behind the bar. “Less than a day,” he says as he plates up something special for us. It’s a *punta al galope*: a lard-soaked hunk of bread topped with bacon and pork loin. This is no place for vegetarians.

With our next stop, Shawn is showing off again. The delectable aroma of something cooking hits my nostrils as soon as we turn the corner. “I bring people here for a bird and a beer,” she tells me. At Casa Ruperto, a cheap-and-cheerful tapas bar founded in 1970, they do one thing and do it well: deep-fried quails. We tear the meat apart with our hands and mop up the juices with hunks of bread as day turns to evening, and local *trianeros* troop in for a post-work tippie.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

A butcher’s stall hung with legs of *jamón*, Mercado de Triana; the Giralda, the bell tower of Seville Cathedral; one of the chefs prepares a paella pan at Taller Andaluz de Cocina cooking school; Trompeta Verde, a collective based in Los Corralones in the Feria neighbourhood
PREVIOUS PAGE: Seville Cathedral’s Giralda bell tower with orange trees in the foreground



When in Seville

1

IN THE KITCHEN

Hands-on cooking classes in the heart of Mercado de Triana, Taller Andaluz de Cocina offers a window into the region's passion for paella. With ingredients sourced from nearby stalls, the results couldn't be fresher. tallerandaluzdecocina.com

2

TRY TWO WHEELS

The 75 miles of bike lanes that carve up the city have revolutionised the way its inhabitants get around. Discover the city from two wheels with the help of local company, See by Bike. seebybike.com

3

CRAFT WORK

Get a taste for the city's expanding craft spirits scene and meet the artisans behind the trend at Vermutería Yo Soy Tu Padre on Calle Conde de Torrejón in the Feria neighbourhood.

4

ISLAND JAZZ

Enjoy free live music on Sunday afternoons on the Isla de la Cartuja, an island in the Guadalquivir River, which takes its name from the old monastery that now houses the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo. caac.es

5

MUSHROOM CLOUDS

The striking arches of Metropol Parasol (nicknamed Las setas, meaning 'the mushrooms'), caused controversy when erected in 2011. The wooden wonder in the Old Town's La Encarnación square is home to a viewing platform, restaurants, a museum and a market.

Feria

If it's art you want, Seville doesn't disappoint. Beyond the architectural flourishes on show across the Old Town, the city offers up historically significant paintings and sculptures at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla (Museum of Fine Arts) and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (Andalucian Contemporary Art Centre), both housed in grand former monasteries.

But I'm on a mission to find the epicentre of the city's newest creative scene — a crowd of young artists, entrepreneurs and free spirits who have set up shop somewhere in the Feria neighbourhood. Los Corralones, as their headquarters is known, has an air of myth around it, and I'm struggling to pin down an address.

While searching, I meet Sonia in her zero-waste homewares shop, El Jarrillo Lata, set on the district's main drag, who sends me in the right direction. Her emporium of sustainable items chimes with an eco-ethos I also sense elsewhere: walking down Calle Relator, another main artery, I see sacks groaning with pulses and organic ingredients. There's no plastic in sight.

At the end of the street and past the cobblestone Plaza de Pumarejo with its former town hall overrun with artists, I find Los Corralones on Calle Castellar, a street

full of ramshackle studios, galleries and event spaces hidden behind peeling 17th-century facades that dwarf the narrow lane. A tinkling of live music slips out of open windows. Posters are plastered on doors advertising intimate flamenco gigs and dance lessons; graffiti-emblazoned alleyways lead to open studios that, by night, often hold parties into the small hours.

This is the vibrant home of the city's dancers, sculptors, inventors, painters, musicians, furniture restorers, designers, costumiers and goldsmiths. Each artist has carved out their space off this street, breathing fresh life into a complex that once functioned as the stables for the Duchess of Alba's horses and for the upholsterers who dressed her carriages.

I head, slightly furtively, up some stairs in one huge building into a bunting-strewn, smoke-filled room. This is the home of Trompeta Verde, a collective that broadcasts its own radio show and holds screenings and workshops on subjects as diverse as social action, new technology and creative writing. It's Sunday afternoon — siesta time, traditionally — but it's alive with conversation and live music.

As I leave, I notice that someone has amended the road sign: Castellar has become CastellART. It feels appropriate.





San Lorenzo & Alameda

“There’s a really interesting gastronomic experience to be had here. People are coming and starting to discover that something is happening in this area,” Cinta tells me. Bosco chimes in: “It really is happening, you know.” This pair of locals have a knack of either reinforcing what the other has just said or finishing each other’s sentences. Their charismatic partnership is probably why their new restaurant and first venture together, La Cochera del Abuelo, is working so well.

And then there’s the food. They serve me mackerel and melt-in-the-mouth rice, and a cheesecake that ensures I’ll never eat another cheesecake again unless it’s made by Bosco. Unlike the classic Seville tapas bars that sprawl out onto the pavements, this establishment keeps its patrons behind a huge wooden door, as if guarding a secret. It all feels different. But then again, this neighbourhood has a reputation for culinary surprises.

Nearby establishment Eslava was considered a trailblazer when it launched its experimental tapas menu in 1988; the cuttlefish and algae filo pastry cigarillo I try, followed by manchego ice cream, suggest that the chefs are still pushing the boundaries. What sleepy San Lorenzo lacks in volume of restaurants and buzz, it certainly makes up for in quality.

The riotous yin to San Lorenzo’s yang is the next door neighbourhood, Alameda. Famous for its nightlife, this formerly downbeat barrio unwinds from the central plaza of Alameda de Hércules. Built in 1574 as a public garden — thought to be the oldest of its kind in Spain, and also Europe — recent years have seen it become a paved playground for students and dedicated night owls, hosting live music sessions and dancing throughout the summer. It sets the tone for the rest of the area.

I stroll around after dark, taking in the shisha bars, live music venues, clubs, drinking dens and a rainbow flag-bedecked bookshop-cum-cafe. The energy is infectious. This is a place to bounce between venues, to discover a new gem around every corner, and where the life on the streets is almost as noteworthy as the action in the bars. It’s a whirlwind compared to my slow and sensual culinary adventures earlier in the day. Yet, like many great pairings, this contrasting duo of neighbourhoods is worth discovering in tandem. □

KIRKER HOLIDAYS offers three nights at Las Casas de la Judería from £598 per person based on two sharing, including flights from Stansted, return private car transfers, B&B accommodation, entry to the cathedral and the Royal Alcázar palace, and the services of the Kirker concierge to book expert local guides or a table for dinner. kirkerholidays.com

FROM LEFT: Alameda de Hércules is a square that plays host to al fresco drinking and concerts during warm summer evenings; the cheesecake at La Cochera del Abuelo

MORE INFO

- Azahar Sevilla. azahar-sevilla.com
- Mercado de Triana. mercadodetrianasevilla.com
- Casa Ruperto.
- Avenida Santa Cecilia 2, Triana. Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla.
- Plaza del Museo 9, Feria. Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo. caac.es
- El Jarrillo Lata. eljarrillolata.es
- Trompeta Verde. facebook.com/trompetaverde
- La Cochera del Abuelo. cocheradelabuelo.com
- Eslava. espacioeslava.com
- Spain Tourism. spain.info
- Andalusia Tourism. andalucia.org
- Seville Tourism. visitasevilla.es

IMAGES: ALAMY; JOSE LAGUNA



*A new style
in the eternal city*

HOTEL DE LA VILLE, SPANISH STEPS, ROME



ROCCO FORTE HOTELS

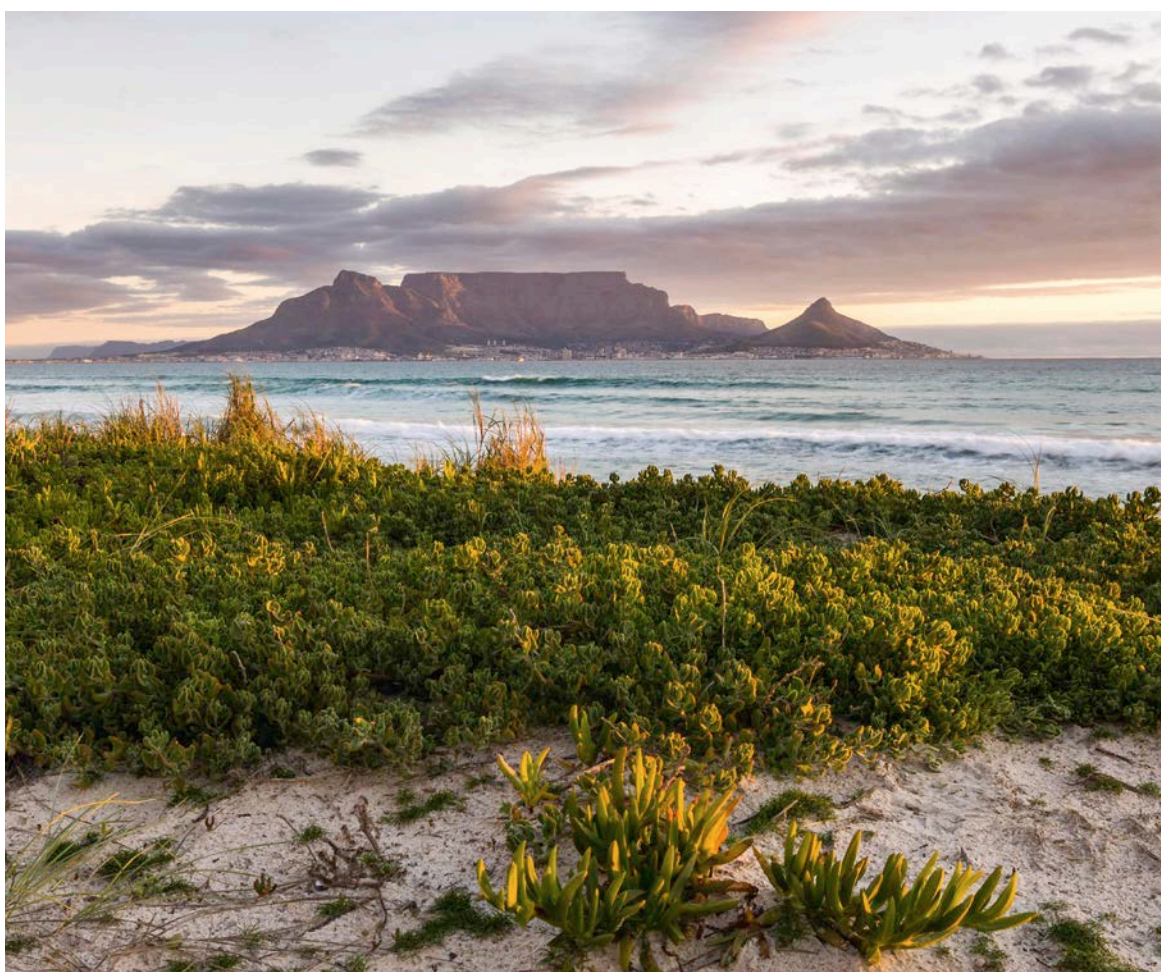
HOTEL DE ROME BERLIN HOTEL AMIGO BRUSSELS THE BALMORAL EDINBURGH HOTEL SAVOY FLORENCE
VILLA KENNEDY FRANKFURT BROWN'S HOTEL LONDON THE CHARLES HOTEL MUNICH MASSERIA TORRE MAIZZA PUGLIA
HOTEL DE LA VILLE ROME HOTEL DE RUSSIE ROME ROCCO FORTE HOUSE ROME VERDURA RESORT SICILY HOTEL ASTORIA ST PETERSBURG
FUTURE OPENINGS: VILLA IGIEA PALERMO THE WESTBUND HOTEL SHANGHAI THE CARLTON MILAN

ROCCOFORTEHOTELS.COM

SLEEP

CAPE TOWN

A dramatic setting and vibrant arts scene might steal the show, but the South African city's ever-growing choice of impressive hotels is reason enough to stay a little longer. Words: Hannah Summers



When it comes to stop-you-in-your tracks scenery, Cape Town knows a thing or two. On one side, Table Mountain gazes out over the city, while to the other, dozens of white-sand beaches tumble into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. But for all the hiking, surfing and sunbathing you can do here, some of Cape Town's simplest pleasures are to be found in its neighbourhoods. Take a stroll and you'll discover a truly sensational art scene, from world-class museums on the V&A Waterfront to tiny galleries in Woodstock. Independent bars and restaurants serve wine from some of the region's finest vineyards, and plates of seafood caught just off the coast. Handily, this is also a city that caters for all budgets, with everything from colourful guesthouses in Green Point to sprawling mansion hotels and luxe boutique boltholes in Bantry Bay.

IMAGE: AWL IMAGES
ALL RATES QUOTED ARE FOR STANDARD DOUBLES, ROOM ONLY, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED



Best for night owls

📍📍 **GORGEOUS GEORGE**

The clue's in the name: Gorgeous George is one handsome hotel. Located in two heritage buildings — one art deco, the other Edwardian — its 32 spacious, design-focused studios go big on exposed concrete, steel beams, and Victorian-style penny tiles in the monochrome bathrooms. It's very central — a short stroll from Bo-Kaap and a stumble from some of the neighbourhood's excellent cocktail bars, but its own bar and restaurant, Gigi Rooftop, is a real showstopper, with loungers, a plunge pool with city views and velvet sofas.

ROOMS: From 3,950 rand (£184), B&B.
gorgeousgeorge.co.za

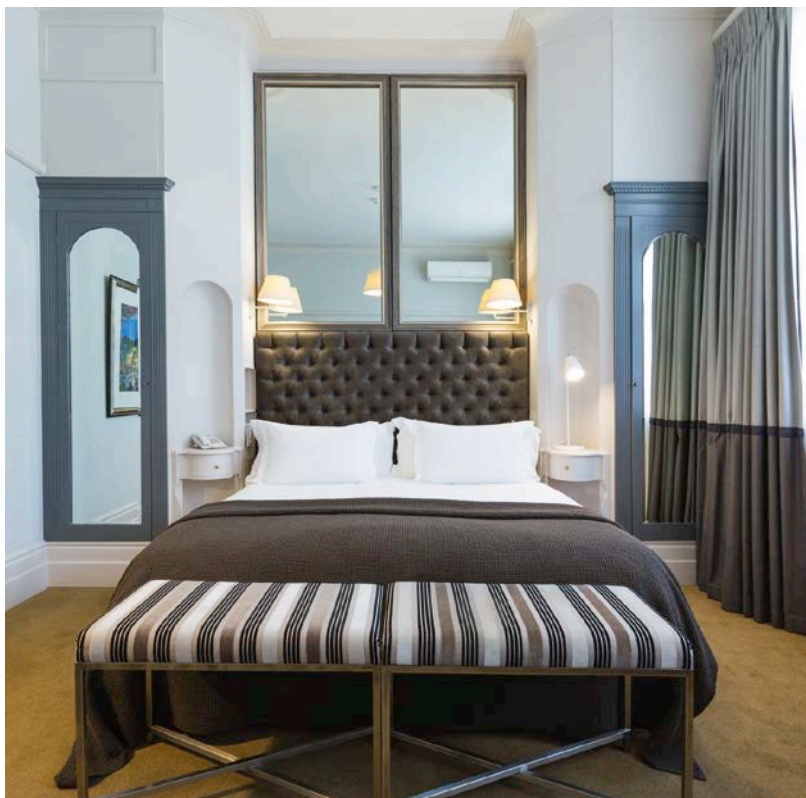


Best for local character

📍 STOCK EXCHANGE

Set in the former textile neighbourhood of Woodstock, a handy 10-minute taxi ride from the Waterfront, is the bright and bold Stock Exchange. Each of its 33 studios comes with a kitchenette to whip up your own meals in — when you're not hanging out in the nearby cafes and Neighbourgoods Market, that is. Whitewashed brick walls, acid-green light fixtures and jazzy abstract throws add to the playful feel, with most furnishings sourced from local designers — there's even an in-room map to tell you who created what, should you want to buy your own. A small pool and gym overlook the docks and Table Mountain, and there's also an onsite microbrewery.

ROOMS: From 1,505 rand (£70).
newmarkhotels.com

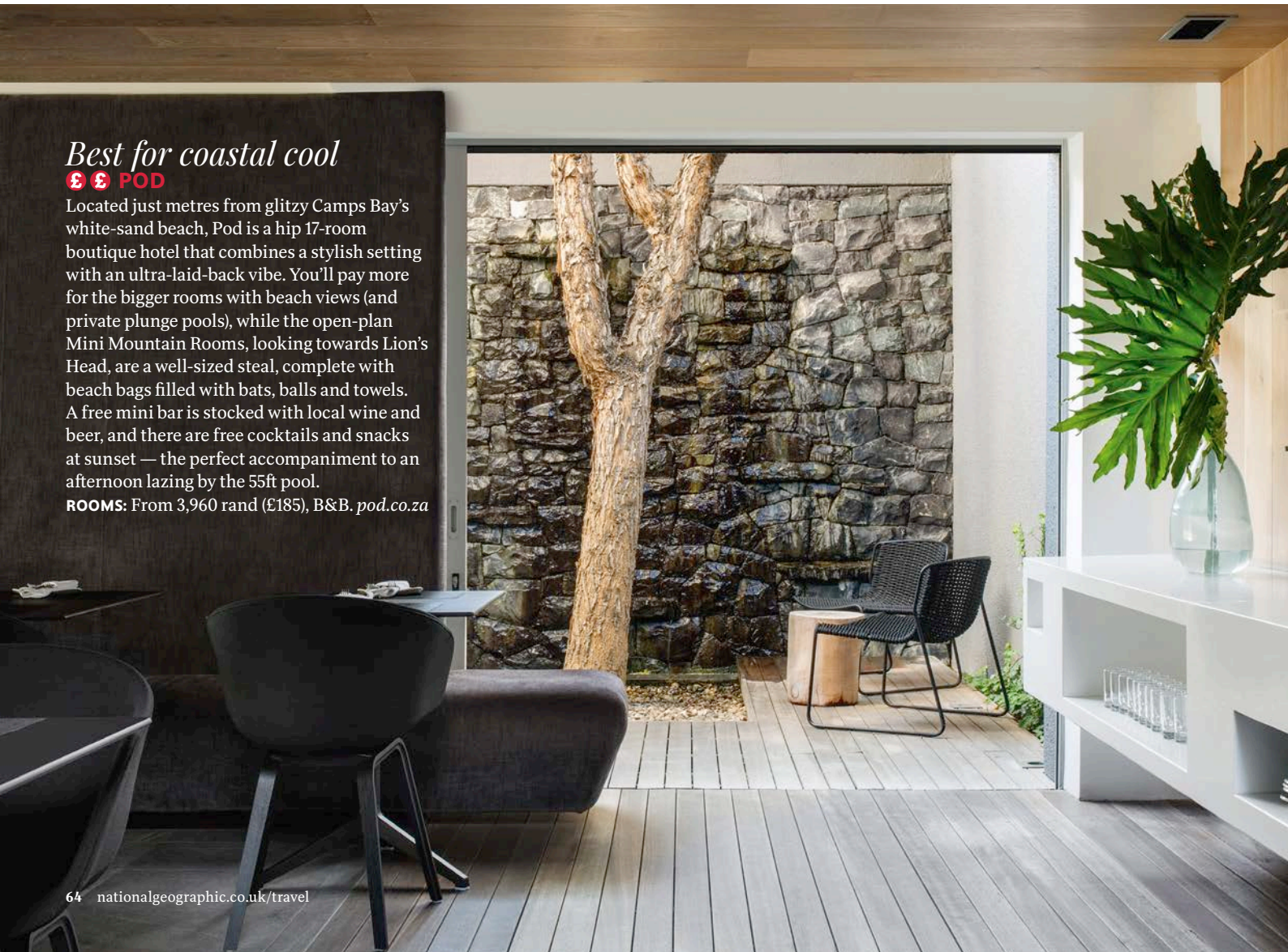


Best for coastal cool

📍 📍 📍 POD

Located just metres from glitzy Camps Bay's white-sand beach, Pod is a hip 17-room boutique hotel that combines a stylish setting with an ultra-laid-back vibe. You'll pay more for the bigger rooms with beach views (and private plunge pools), while the open-plan Mini Mountain Rooms, looking towards Lion's Head, are a well-sized steal, complete with beach bags filled with bats, balls and towels. A free mini bar is stocked with local wine and beer, and there are free cocktails and snacks at sunset — the perfect accompaniment to an afternoon lazing by the 55ft pool.

ROOMS: From 3,960 rand (£185), B&B. pod.co.za





For design-lovers

£££ THE SILO

Fancy a room with a view? Head to this 28-room boutique hotel, atop the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, on the V&A Waterfront. The striking facade of the former grain silo has been remodelled by British designer Thomas Heatherwick; inside is a celebration of art and colour, created by owner Liz Biden. Shimmering chandeliers, statement vases and super-sized headboards fill the bedrooms, while standalone bathtubs sit by floor-to-ceiling windows. Make for the rooftop to float in the spectacular infinity pool.

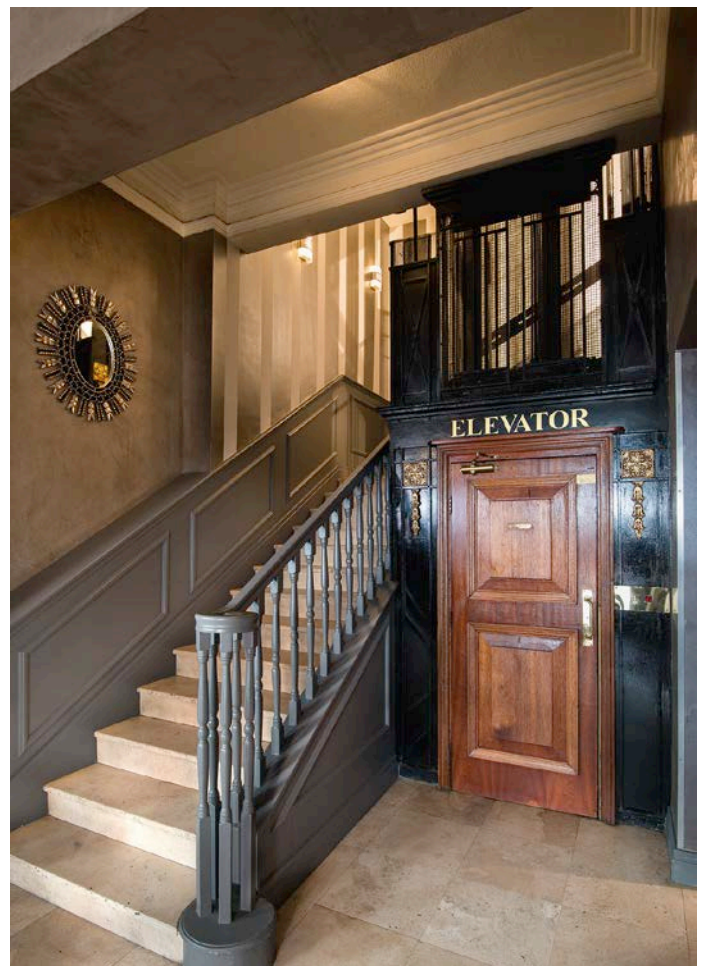
ROOMS: From 14,300 rand (£666), B&B. theroyalportfolio.com

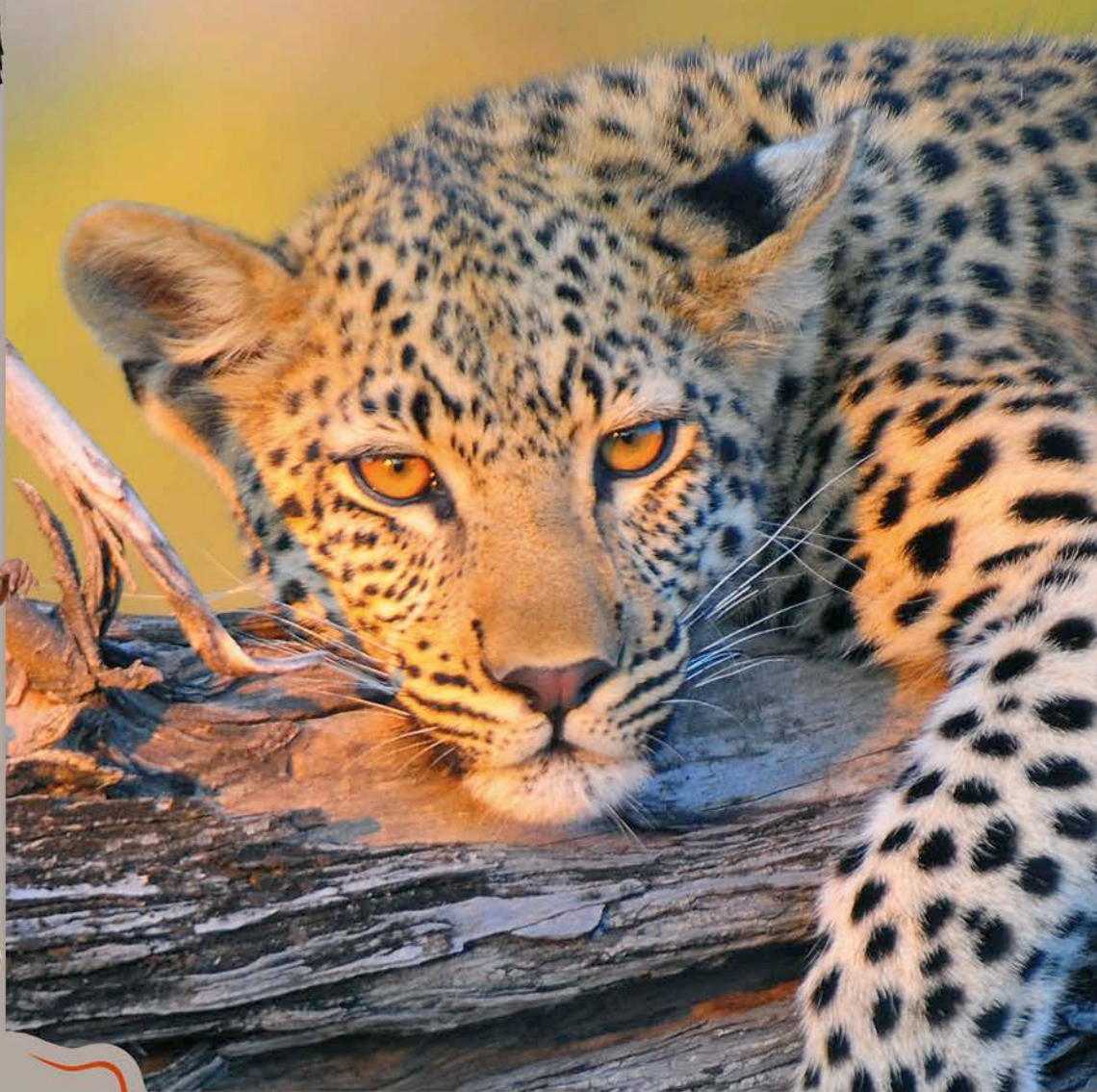
Best for vintage vibes

£ GRAND DADDY

This playful pad is sandwiched amid the bars and restaurants of buzzy, downtown Long Street. Turquoise-accent walls and millennial-pink headboards feature in many of the 25 rooms. Also on offer are seven vintage Airstreams on the rooftop, each with its own theme, from Rooftop Safari to Cape Winelands. The space also hosts cinema sessions, and free salsa classes on Fridays. Thirty Ate, the hotel restaurant, meanwhile, serves big portions from breakfast to dinner.

ROOMS: From £90, B&B. granddaddy.co.za





African
PROFILE SAFARIS
*More than a journey...
The ultimate Safari*



Our wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of the incredibly diverse parts of Namibia and its neighboring countries enables us to offer up market tailor-made guided fly-in safaris, special interest group or self drive tours.

www.profilenamibia.com

PO Box 24119, Windhoek, Namibia, Tel: +264 61 253992/7, Fax +264 61 225326
tours@profilenamibia.com



For old-school grandeur

£ £ £ ELLERMAN HOUSE

This sprawling Edwardian mansion is set high up on a Bantry Bay cliffside. Wrought-iron sunbeds with striped cushions dot the grounds near the pool. But tear yourself away and you'll discover one of the country's best displays of South African art, with paintings lining the antique-crammed corridors. With just 13 rooms, there's a hushed intimacy here, and the team will help with anything you need, including free transfers into town. Don't miss the walk-in pantry, where you can help yourself to gooey brownies, and devour them while spotting dolphins from the terrace.

ROOMS: From £510, B&B.
ellerman.co.za

Best for budget brilliance

£ THE I.G

This pretty hostel in Green Point is aimed at the flashpacking brigade. Spread over two houses with two kitchens, a shabby-chic vibe prevails. Expect pastel-hued rooms (many en suite), tin buckets as lampshades, sturdy wooden bunks and double en suite rooms for extra privacy. Don't miss the bougainvillea-draped pool area with rattan sun loungers. Excursions around the city can be arranged, from bar crawls to surfing trips.

ROOMS: Dorms from 272 rand (£13), doubles from 880 rand (£40). bigbackpackers.com

Best for kicking back

£ £ COMPASS HOUSE

Stay here and you'll feel like you're holidaying in your own relaxed villa-with-views. Its location, on a hillside in Bantry Bay, means it escapes the winds that sometimes blast the city — ideal if you plan on lounging on a four-poster daybed beside the infinity pool. All of the eight, differently sized, dazzling white rooms are flooded with natural light. An honesty bar and resident Corgi-Jack Russell cross adds to the home-from-home vibe.

ROOMS: From 6,100 rand (£285), B&B.
compasshouse.co.za

Best for beach bums

£ £ £ TINTSWALO ATLANTIC

This sublime property is the only luxe hotel located within the Table Mountain National Park, and right on the ocean to boot. Wake up in one of 11 suites, all of which come with a different island theme — such as Ithaca Island, with its white walls, royal-blue touches and huge, cushion-adorned bed. The food is sublime, too; start the morning with a delivery of fresh croissants and coffee to your room or just linger by the pool, tucking into a basket of crispy calamari.

ROOMS: From 6,565 rand (£305), B&B. tintswalo.com

SLEEP



Best for style gurus

🍷🍷 PINEAPPLE HOUSE

With its blush-pink exterior and neon signage, Pineapple House is one of the coolest new hotels in the city, with a handy location just two blocks from the beach in Sea Point. Each of the nine rooms is different, but all are vibrant and, above all, fun — leopard-print headboards, tropical-print bedspreads and pretty cotton gowns from Woodstock Laundry all feature. The friendly service makes it feel like you're staying in a friend's impeccably designed home, with breakfast served in a sunny, electric-blue room, complete with green velvet chairs and bold prints from local photographer Krisjan Rossouw. The plant-lined plunge pool is a great spot to chill in after a day's sightseeing.

ROOMS: From 1,650 rand (£77), B&B.

pineapplehouse.co.za 📍

SAFFA

- TOURS -

PRIVATE GUIDED EXPERIENCES & TAILORED TRAVEL



DISCOVER **SOUTH AFRICA** A WORLD IN ONE COUNTRY

From outdoor escapades on land, in the sea and the air, to discovering the country's culture, history, wildlife, and feasting on local culinary delights. Saffa Tours offers an authentic, immersive journey, impeccably executed & truly unforgettable, ensuring the highest quality of multi-day experiential travel - **we make every moment an exceptional memory.**

San Francisco

A GUIDE TO THE CITY'S
FIVE MOST VIBRANT
NEIGHBOURHOODS
BY THE LOCALS WHO
KNOW THEM BEST

WORDS & INTERVIEWS **JULIA BUCKLEY**

PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDRIA LO**



FEW CITIES HAVE SETTINGS AS SPECTACULAR AS SAN FRANCISCO'S: CANDY-COLOURED HOUSES RACKED UP AND DOWN ABSURDLY STEEP HILLS, GOLDEN GATE PARK UNFURLING INTO THE PACIFIC, AND THE TAWNY GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE MELTING INTO THE EMERALD MARIN HEADLANDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAY.

Just beyond the city limits are ocean-pounded beaches, ancient redwood groves and rugged mountains. Viewed from the water, it's hard to believe that within that ethereal landscape is a concrete jungle.

Perhaps it's that same diverse landscape that makes San Francisco a city of villages — because this is a place where each area has its own personality, and residents are passionate about retaining the vibe they chose it for. Maybe it's the rippling hills, with streets neatly cut around them, that have made islands of each neighbourhood; possibly it's because this city of immigrants — created by people who crossed either an ocean or the continent to get here — historically preferred tight-knit communities to an urban sprawl. Indeed, San Francisco's neighbourhoods seem to have a stronger personality than their equivalents in other US cities. As do the residents — this wild west idyll has attracted spirited, ambitious people since the days of the Gold Rush, when it first made the map.

Today, the influx of tech money means the city is changing fast: swanky apartment blocks are mushrooming in **THE MISSION**, traditionally the Latino area of town (named for the 18th-century Spanish church that still stands, swaddled by the city around it). Straight families are moving into the historically gay **CASTRO**. But the historic communities are reacting by getting louder, prouder. The famous street art of the Mission, once dedicated to Latin American politics, is tackling gentrification; America's first LGBTQ+ museum has opened in the Castro. And over in **HAIGHT-ASHBURY** — the world epicentre of hippy culture in the 1960s — vintage stores whirl you back to the Summer of Love.

Not everywhere has managed to retain so much of its past. America's oldest **JAPANTOWN** used to cover 40 blocks, before most of its population was incarcerated during the Second World

War; today it spans just six. Nearby, the **FILLMORE** district was, in the 1940s and 1950s, one of America's jazz centres. But after the city squeezed out the African American population under the guise of redeveloping the neighbourhood, the clubs where Sinatra and Monroe would watch Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis lie dark. For all we think of San Francisco as America's liberal haven, much of the diversity has been leached from the city we see today.

So what's left? A San Francisco that celebrates its past as its dotcom newcomers over in Silicon Valley look to the future. The Mission, along with its neighbour, SoMa, has become a nightlife hub; previously overlooked Hayes Valley has become a network of small, independently owned shops. Residential areas like Pacific Heights and Noe Valley become increasingly chichi, and Chinatown is as busy as ever, while Italian delis hang on beside Beat generation hangouts in North Beach.

One thing that's less noticeable here than in other major cities is the encroachment of tourism. For some reason — maybe it's those hills again, stymying high-rise plans — most of the hotels are clustered around the Union Square area, and most offices are nearby, in the Financial District. That leaves the other neighbourhoods to just be themselves.

So, as fun as places like Fisherman's Wharf and Alcatraz Island are, and as glorious as a bike ride across the Golden Gate Bridge is, it's by leaving behind the famous postcard scenes and instead exploring the neighbourhoods that you'll really get under San Francisco's skin.

On the following pages, we meet some of the residents who chose the places they live for a reason. From the hippy who lived through the Summer of Love to the millennial who swapped Los Angeles for the Castro, these are the people who bought into the mythical San Francisco — and the ones keeping it the place you first fell in love with.

RIGHT: Dolores Park in the Mission
PREVIOUS PAGE,
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
LEFT: Jazz musician Sam Peoples, in front of the Boom Boom Room in The Fillmore; tacos from Tacolicious in the Mission; muralist Susan Cervantes in Balmy Alley in the Mission; street sign in Japantown; Cicely Hansen, owner of Decades of Fashion in Haight-Ashbury; Monochaetum magdalenense (Colombian princess flower) at San Francisco Botanical Garden; Linda Mihara at her shop Paper Tree in Japantown; ice cream from Salt & Straw in Hayes Valley; Nick Large as Kristi Yummykochi in the Castro





Haight-Ashbury

THE HIPPIY HEARTLAND

Cicely Hansen, dressmaker, fashion historian and owner of high-end vintage shop Decades of Fashion, remembers moving to 'the Haight' in 1966, the year before hippies converged in the neighbourhood and made history with the Summer of Love. She's been witnessing the area's evolution ever since

On Haight Street, where tens of thousands of hippies famously gathered during the Summer of Love, one building stands out amid the colourful clapboard houses: the grandiose vaulted-windowed structure at number 1653.

Today, the former bank is Decades of Fashion, a vast emporium of vintage clothes from the 1880s onwards. Larger-than-life owner Cicely Hansen may have worked with Dolce & Gabbana, Dior and Lanvin, but she's usually to be found behind the till, surrounded by thousands of items of clothing. Although she lives outside the city these days, she'll never truly leave the Haight — because, as she puts it, the Haight changed her life.

"I came to do a job," she says of her first visit to the area in 1966. As a teen model from Los Altos, an hour south of San Francisco, she had been hired to work at a music contest.

"I was 17 and a freak — I used to dress in vintage, which nobody else did back then," she says. As she was leaving the event, dressed in 1940s clothes, the DJ — Tony Big — asked if she was going back to the Haight.

His words altered the course of Cicely's life. She made her first trip to Haight-Ashbury and was struck by the sight of "people wearing things they'd made themselves".

Cicely had found her tribe — and within three months, she'd moved to be with them. Behind the till is a picture of her from those early days: long blonde hair, diaphanous minidress and a broad grin. "That's me, taken on my way to tell my brother and sister to skip school because there was a guy coming to play who my neighbours said was good. His name was Jimi Hendrix."

The neighbours, meanwhile, were the rock band the Grateful Dead.

Check out // A MUSICAL LEGACY

Haight-Ashbury's time as the centre of the 1960s music scene changed the area's reputation forever — and you can still feel the rhythm at its musical sites. Amoeba Music was founded across the Bay in Berkeley, but its Haight-Ashbury branch — set in a former bowling alley — is its most famous, stocking an astonishing 100,000 records, CDs and cassettes. Then there's Club Deluxe, a retro cocktail bar with live jazz. To go back to where it all began, head to 710 Ashbury Street. It was once home to the Grateful Dead, who provided the unofficial soundtrack to the Summer of Love. amoeba.com clubdeluxe.co

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Cicely Hansen, owner of Decades of Fashion; colourful Victorian-era houses; taking a selfie against a mural in Haight-Ashbury; vintage clothes at Decades of Fashion



Colourful stores line the buzzing thoroughfare of Haight Street
RIGHT: Ryan Guillou of the San Francisco Botanical Garden

Cicely had been in Haight-Ashbury for a year when, in 1967, the Summer of Love occurred — a countercultural phenomenon that saw young people flock to San Francisco from across the country to share music, art and ideas. Tony Big, by now her boyfriend, swept her into the scene.

“The Grateful Dead would be playing in the Panhandle in Golden Gate Park,” Cicely reminisces. “I went to the Fillmore [District] when a friend had to show a guitar to someone called Eric Clapton. There were these guys around, too — Otis Redding and Chuck Berry. Tony took me to see Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary. Twenty thousand people would show up.”

The neighbourhood changed with time, of course — the days of walking around barefoot at midnight soured in the late 1960s, when hard drugs arrived on the scene. After getting married at 19, Cicely moved out of the area and started making clothes for the Velvet Underground, a clothing store in downtown San Francisco beloved by Stevie Nicks and

Janis Joplin. Next came lampshade-making for the likes of Barbra Streisand, then the cowgirl life on a ranch in Santa Cruz. But the Haight was always at the back of her mind, and in 2005 she returned to open her store amid the vintage shops that now characterise these streets. “I blended right in again,” she says.

Today, the Haight continues to change. The vintage stores are less ubiquitous, but Cicely still rates the shopping, including Love Street Vintage (“Graciela’s been in the business a long time”) and Held Over (“owner Werner Werwie is one of the reasons I moved back”). Amoeba Music, further up the street, is another Haight stalwart.

It may not be 1967 anymore — “you don’t see the camaraderie in the park these days,” Cicely laments — but the neighbourhood will always feel special. “The Haight gave me life,” she says, twirling about the shop in a floaty dress she made during the Summer of Love. “And a whole culture.”

MORE INFO: decadesoffashionsf.com
lovestreetsf.com



A LOCAL’S GUIDE TO Golden Gate Park

Ryan Guillou, the curator of the park’s San Francisco Botanical Garden, offers an insight into the city’s biggest park

TELL US ABOUT GOLDEN GATE PARK AND ITS GREENERY

Originally, this end of San Francisco was all sand dune. Manure was trucked in from downtown and all these trees were planted. Today, we have these 150-year-old Monterey cypresses and Monterey pines, growing 100ft tall. They’re up to five times the size they’d be in the wild; sheltered together here, they’ve just rocketed. Eucalyptus and Torrey pines are the other main trees in the park.

WHAT’S SPECIAL ABOUT THE BOTANICAL GARDEN?

We sit in the perfect foggy sweet spot here — it’s a weird Goldilocks climate, and we can grow anything that doesn’t need heat or cold. Our collections are divided geographically. We have the fourth-most-significant magnolia collection in the world, and a redwood grove that was planted in 1909 — it’s as lovely as Muir Woods [a forest outside the city], but not as crowded.

WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO A FIRST-TIME VISITOR?

There are big institutions in the park, like the California Academy of Sciences and the de Young Museum, plus hidden gems. I like the bison paddock — the herd you see today are descendants of those given to then-mayor Dianne Feinstein by her husband in 1984. There’s also the Polo Fields stadium, and boats for rent.

MORE INFO: sfbg.org
goldengatepark.com
calacademy.org
deyoung.famsf.org

Fillmore

A LOOK AT THE DISTRICT'S JAZZ SCENE

Musician Sam Peoples Jr is part of the Fillmore Jazz Ambassadors, a group dedicated to bringing jazz back to the city's once-swinging musical epicentre. He reflects on the highs and lows of Fillmore's dynamic jazz culture

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Fillmore District was known as the 'Harlem of the West' for its jazz clubs. Historically, you see, this is a Black neighbourhood: in 1939, there was a huge influx of African Americans from the South, who came to work in the shipyards and, since the city was segregated, one of the only places we could stay was Fillmore.

A lot of Black entrepreneurs opened clubs — places like the Alabama, Club Morocco and the Both/And, where Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and Art Blakey all played. After hours, the spot was Bop City — all the entertainers would come here, including Billie Holiday and Louis Armstrong, plus the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. The street stayed open all night, and there was a real vitality to it.

My family was always part of the scene. My grandfather came from Illinois at the turn of the century. My grandmother, who played the organ, had three kids, all entertainers: my aunt was a dancer, singer and actress; my uncle a clarinetist and pianist; and my father was the well-known sax player, Sammy Peoples. I remember seeing him on black-and-white TV — he was a star.

I was born in 1949 and by the 1950s, the scene had changed from jazz to rock 'n' roll. By the time I started playing, in the late 1960s, my father's peers took me under their wing and told me how Fillmore had been. We used to jam a lot, but we didn't have the same community or numbers. We had to go elsewhere to work: I got my start in North Beach and the Lower Haight. Around that time, the developers came and gutted the neighbourhood. We lost a lot of businesses, and people had to move. It had been so diverse: Black, Japanese, Mexicans, Filipinos, Jewish and Italians, all integrated, until the heart was torn out of it. We were decimated. The Black entrepreneurs were gone, and we lost our community.

Today, there are still some clubs sprinkled around Fillmore — the Half Note (now The Independent), The Fillmore, Sheba Piano Lounge, Madrone Art Bar and the Boom Boom Room — but we can't recreate the 1940s. I remember walking up and down Fillmore, all this nightlife, cars going up and down. We're trying to bring it back.

MORE INFO: Sam's band plays on Sundays at Moe Greens. moegreens.com fillmorejazzambassadors.org reverbnation.com/sampeoples theindependentsf.com thefillmore.com shebapianolounge.com madroneartbar.com boomboomroom.com

Jazz musician and native San Franciscan Sam Peoples Jr outside the Boom Boom Room in the Fillmore District



Nick Large in the Castro district dressed as alter ego Kristi Yummykochi, part of Asian drag troupe the Rice Rockettes
RIGHT: The historic Twin Peaks Tavern, an iconic fixture in Castro



Castro

GUYS & DOLLS

The Castro neighbourhood is the epicentre of San Francisco's LGBTQ+ scene, and its museums, historical sights and nightlife stand testament to the creativity — and political struggles — of the gay community, as a tour with activist and drag performer Nick Large reveals

On the corner of 19th and Castro, my guide, Nick Large, points upwards. In the window above us is a display of Barbie and Ken dolls. Only these aren't your average specimens. One holds a sign saying 'Keep the Castro Queer'; 'Dyke Pride', says another. There are also dolls in fetish gear, 'Impeach Trump now' dolls, and dolls with the kind of enormous physical attributes that definitely wouldn't come out of a Mattel box.

When *Life* magazine named San Francisco the 'gay capital of the world' in 1964, it was talking about the Castro. This is where Harvey Milk, California's first openly gay elected official, waged his election campaigns in the '70s. For decades, it's been the LGBTQ+ hub of America's most gay-friendly city.


Nick, I learn as we explore the area, moved here from Los Angeles in 2010. A housing policy analyst and activist, he used to work at

the Castro's Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Store and is a trustee of its GLBT Historical Society Museum. He's also part of the Rice Rockettes, an Asian drag troupe.

Visitors to the Castro are often struck by its louche nods: a nail salon and spa called Hand Job, the casual nudity on some streets. But Nick wants to show me *his* Castro — a place of refuge, community and activism. We start at Spike's Coffees and Teas, whose wooden counter is plastered with photos of customers' dogs. From there, past that doll-filled window, we're off to 573 Castro Street. Today, this is the Human Rights Campaign Store, but from 1972 until his murder in 1978, it was Harvey Milk's camera shop, Castro Camera, a key centre for the growing gay community.

There's more on Harvey around the corner at America's first queer history museum, the GLBT Historical Society Museum.

The local hero // HARVEY MILK

Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by a former colleague on 27 November 1978. Milk knew he was a target, and shortly after being elected as a Supervisor recorded a message to be released in the event of his death. "If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door," he said. He's since become a human rights icon; Terminal 1 at San Francisco airport was renamed the Harvey Milk Terminal in 2019. 

OUR PASSION. YOUR PLEASURE.



When you're celebrating a moment that was made for Bourbon, make sure it's not just any Bourbon. Make it a Bourbon expertly handcrafted from our 10 unique Bourbon recipes – as only we can.



Four Roses.
BOURBON

Handcraft the Moment at
cocktails.fourrosesbourbon.com



Server at Lookout, nightclub, Castro
RIGHT: Mural of Harvey Milk at nightclub The Café

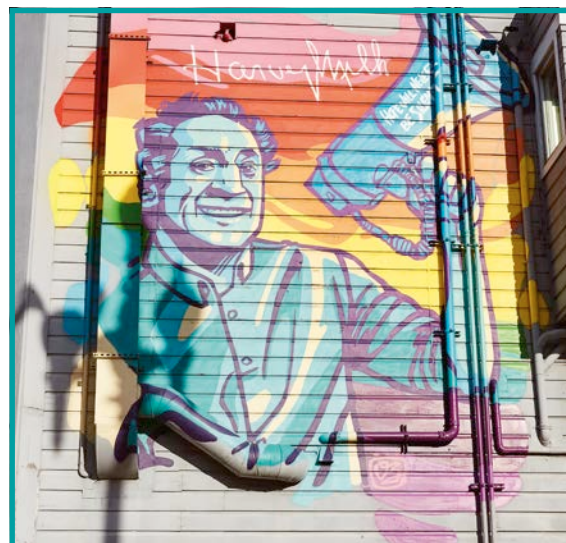
I soon discover some interesting facts: in 1849, when San Francisco's first known same-sex couple arrived, the Gold Rush city was 90% male; that drag, both female and male, was mainstream entertainment in the 19th century; and that the rainbow flag that symbolises LGBTQ+ pride was invented in the city in 1978 by artist Gilbert Baker (his eight-colour design is on display).

There are lots of joyful exhibits, but the museum catalogues tragedy, too, from early-20th-century mugshots of men arrested for homosexuality to the 1980s AIDS epidemic. "We lost an entire generation from this neighbourhood," says Nick. The famous speech that Harvey Milk recorded for release in the event of his murder plays on a loop above the case containing the bloodied suit he died in. We're both wiping our eyes as we leave.

Back on Castro Street, we follow the Rainbow Honor Walk (think Hollywood's Walk of Fame, only with famous LGBTQ+ citizens) past the 1920s Castro Theatre (now a cinema known for its singalong film screenings). "You're my favourite drag queen!" a passerby yells at Nick.

And so we get to the end of Castro Street, cross Market Street and arrive at Lookout, a nightclub where every second Thursday of the month, the Rice Rockettes perform. On the bar's balcony, overlooking the street, Nick tells me why he's so involved. "When you live in a city, part of what makes it special is the people who live there," he says. "But that feeling doesn't exist unless people contribute to it. I love this city because of all the things that are possible here that aren't in other places. You can do whatever you want and be yourself. But people died so we have these spaces — and if you want San Francisco to be known for that freedom, you have to fight."

MORE INFO: ricerockettes.com spikescoffee.com shop.hrc.org glbthistory.org rainbowhonorwalk.org castrotheatre.com lookoutsf.com



A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO The perfect day in Castro

Local resident and drag queen extraordinaire Nick Large describes his ideal day in San Francisco's LGBTQ+ heartland

11AM Brunch

On the weekend, I'll go for brunch. If I'm in the mood for a drag brunch, I go to Hamburger Mary's — it pioneered them. Or I'll go to Harvey's, where I'm all about the fried chicken sandwich. hamburgermarys.com

1PM HRC Store

All the profits are invested locally — proceeds from Harvey Milk-branded things go to the GLBT Historical Society. It's a lighter way to talk about history and what people died for. shop.hrc.org

3PM Cliff's Variety

This shop sells everything from household essentials to makeup, gemstones and glitter paints. I get my fake eyelashes there, and they're great for crafting materials. I can say, "I want to make this headpiece" and they'll help me do it. cliffsvariety.com

4PM Twin Peaks Tavern

In 1972, same-sex intimacy was illegal, and LGBTQ+ bars didn't want people to

be able to look in. As far as I know, this was the first LGBTQ+ bar with windows, and it was owned by women. twinpeakstavern.com

6PM Cafe Mystique

This is great and always affordable. I usually get the chicken parmigiana, and I love the string beans — they're served in soy sauce with freshly diced tomatoes and sundried tomatoes. Absolutely heavenly. cafe-mystique.com

8PM Harvey's

After Harvey Milk's murderer was sentenced to just seven years, riots broke out across the city and the police retaliated by coming to this bar, dragging patrons out and beating them up. Today, it's been renamed in honour of Milk. harveysf.com

10PM The Café

I go to this club because they have a big dance area — plus there's a great mural of Harvey on the side. cafesf.com





Japantown

A PAPER TRAIL

America's oldest Japantown is a bastion of immigrant crafts, cuisine and history dating back to the 1860s. An origami class with artist Linda Mihara showcases the area's commitment to preserving Japanese traditions

Linda Mihara is a born teacher. "That's great!" she keeps saying about my poorly folded bits of paper — the flowers that refuse to look like flowers, the birds that look nothing like birds. "The first fold is always the hardest!"

Not that she's a teacher by trade; Linda is a world-class origami artist whose work has been exhibited around the world. She's collaborated with both Hermès and Pixar, but she's also a stalwart of San Francisco's Japantown: her family own Paper Tree, an origami and stationery shop opened by her grandparents. The Miharas were the first to import origami paper into the US; they also published America's first book on the craft. And in the shop, Linda continues her grandparents' legacy by hosting classes.

"I've been doing this since I was five," she says, methodically sliding thumbs along creases and tamping down with her fingers as square pieces of *kami* paper (white one side, coloured on the other) bloom into flowers and fish. When she was 12, Linda was one of the young artists whose work was cast into concrete and placed on benches on the block-long pedestrianised stretch of Buchanan Street, Japantown's main drag.

San Francisco's Japantown is one of three left in the US, and the oldest in the country. Japanese immigrants

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Linda Mihara of Paper Tree in Japantown; the San Francisco Peace Pagoda, gifted by Japanese sister city Osaka in 1968; origami street signs, Japantown



started settling in the city in the 1860s; they established Japantown here, 13 blocks west of Union Square, after the devastating 1906 earthquake, which flattened approximately 80% of the city.

But it's a shadow of what it once was: today's six blocks used to be 40. The community living there has been displaced repeatedly over the decades; during the Second World War, California residents of Japanese descent were forcibly relocated to internment camps. Many returned to find their houses had been repossessed during their absence. Linda's grandparents made it back to San Francisco in 1949, but in 1974 they were forced to move again under the guise of 'urban regeneration'.

Today's Japantown residents and businesses are all too aware of how the area has been pulled apart over the years. This deep-seated sense of insecurity no doubt explains the strong focus on preserving their culture.

"He wanted to share Japanese culture with kids, and thought origami was the vehicle to do it," says Linda of her grandfather. Today, children in the store are entranced by her calm folding, while adults are embracing origami for its mindfulness qualities.

Within half an hour, we fold a house, a fox mask, a tulip and a crane. In an hour, Linda can teach most people how to fold a fish. But I have no dexterity — I can't even double over the paper evenly — but the rhythm of our folding soon lulls me into a spa-like state. Before paper was widely available, origami was a "sacred commodity", says Linda, reserved for religious or royal ceremonies. Today, in the back of her shop, as we honour her grandparents' tradition, it still has a sacred feel.

MORE INFO: Classes at Paper Tree start from \$20 (£15.60). paper-tree.com origamihara.com Linda's friend, Kristin Posner, has narrated a Japantown audio tour, downloadable at nourish-co.com



A TASTE OF Japantown

There's no shortage of spots to savour classic Japanese fare. Look out for shabu-shabu — a steaming broth prepared on butane stoves

BEST ALL-ROUNDER

Mums

This family-owned, retro restaurant inside Japantown's Kimpton Buchanan Hotel is famed for its all-you-can-eat shabu-shabu: translucent-thin ribeye, vegetables (including four types of mushroom) and tofu cooked in a seaweed broth. The Tam family — the first to bring shabu-shabu to San Francisco — prefer traditional flavours, but they have sauces, spices and various meats if you want to get adventurous. \$32 (£27). mumssf.com

BEST FOR VARIETY

Nabe

A *nabemono*, or *nabe*, is the collective term for Japanese hot pot dishes. At both Nabe outlets in San Francisco, 'sets' start with shabu-shabu and include other one-pot dishes like *kurobuta* pork belly in kimchi broth, and *kamonaban* (duck breast, leeks and soba in dashi broth). From \$22 (£18). nabesf.com

BEST FOR ATMOSPHERE

Mokuku

Book a table in the Tatami dining room and curl up on straw tatami floor mats for your shabu-shabu. Mokuku, which opened in 2019 in Inner Richmond (near Golden Gate Park), does all-you-can-eat shabu-shabu with six types of meat and a choice of broth. \$35 (£29). mokukushabu.com

The Mission

PAINTING WITH PURPOSE

Meet artist Susan Cervantes, the founder of a mural collective that began transforming the Mission district back in the 1970s and continues to mix paint, politics and passion in this traditionally Latin American 'hood



FROM LEFT: Shop owner, Linda Mihara, flipping through Japanese papers at Paper Tree; slivers of beef in a shabu-shabu hotpot; artist Susan Cervantes, muralist and founder of the Precita Eyes collective; the murals of Balmy Alley, Mission district

It's a sunny afternoon on Balmy Alley and artist Susan Cervantes is inspecting her life's work. She walks up and down the mural-covered, block-long alley inspecting the paintwork. But there's not much time to focus because people keep coming up to her. And then there are the two men carefully levering off the wall an enormous wooden baby emerging from a giant vagina.

"They're delicate but just do your best," says Susan to the workmen. The men are in the process of taking down a set of wall-mounted figures: a woman with her arms and legs splayed apart, and a man catching a child's head as it's born into what appears to be a river. Susan turns to me: "We've been waiting years for this," she says.

"This" is going to be a new affordable housing building for senior citizens — something the area lacks. Historically the Latin American district of San Francisco, the Mission has long been prey to gentrification, but the past few years have seen a rise in

the number of lower-income locals being squeezed out. The building the workmen are going to demolish to construct the apartment block is home to one of Susan's best-known works: an enormous applied arts mural, *Five Sacred Colours of Corn*, inspired by the yarn artwork of Mexico's Huichol people. It's dominated by this joyful, spiritual birth scene.

"We see people bringing kids to touch the belly," Susan tells me. Indeed, the woman's face and womb (made of copper) are mottled and dented by the touch of many hands. "It's been here almost 30 years and it's something everyone wants to see back on the wall," she adds. That's why the men are taking such care; as soon as the new building is up, the artwork will be hammered straight back on.

In an area whose identity is at risk of being whittled away, Balmy Alley offers a concentrated dose of community. The murals here forcefully remind their audience that this is a Hispanic area, regardless of

Macardo



SINCE

2007

SWISS
PREMIUM
WHISKY

THE
SWISS
ONE. 

We have seen the world. We have savoured the world. But we have never forgotten the taste of home: grounded, authentic, with notes of friendship. And the intensity of freedom. With courage and passion, concentrated on the essence. Finished with the wood from which generations are made. That is Macardo. Our world. Our home. And a whisky with the best of ourselves in its heart. Take a sip, savour the fire: macardo.ch

**ABOVE FROM LEFT:**

Owner of Mixcoatl Handicrafts & Jewelry store with Mexican luchador masks in the Mission; Street tacos from Taqueria Vallarta, the Mission

how many new high-rises are rocketing up around the *fruterías* (fruit shops) and *taquerías* (taco sellers). The art is almost all political and is made overwhelmingly by local Latino creatives. Just along from Five Sacred Colours of Corn is Enrique's Journey, a 15ft-long mural of a little boy's journey from a hilly Mexican village to San Francisco on top of a freight train, facing Grim Reaper-like immigration agents and a clueless Uncle Sam on the way. Like the rest of the murals, it bursts with colour — and packs an emotional punch, too.

This outdoor gallery — like many of the bright murals that drench the Mission neighbourhood — owes a debt to Susan. As an art student in the 1970s, she was inspired by a local group of female muralists called the Mujeres Muralistas to harness the power of public art. In 1971, she began the Balmy Alley project and, in 1977, founded Precita Eyes, a community-based mural organisation that aimed to increase local pride and cohesion.

Today, residents give the group permission for their garden walls to be painted on, and artists get to work. The only criterion: this must be art that means something. So alongside little Enrique and the childbirth scene, I also spot a brutal takedown of

gentrification; in the mural, a woman with a shopping bag from 'Wealth Foods' (using the logo of the chichi supermarket chain Whole Foods) toasts a policeman with a Starbucks frappuccino, and a blousy white family moves into a historic wooden gingerbread-style house where a sign reads 'sold for \$51 million'. The estate agent is named 'Rich White Realty'. Meanwhile, a homeless person sleeps on cardboard, and Renaissance artist Masaccio's famous figures of Adam and Eve are thrown out of Eden by a foreclosure team. Nearby, the uplifting Women of the Resistance mural is a collage of 38 global activists, including civil rights campaigner Angela Davis; education activist Malala Yousafzai and #MeToo founder Tarana Burke.

Precita Eyes has been called on to work on murals from Lebanon to China, but Susan is currently staying close to home, working on a new community project. Back at HQ, she shows me the plans — everyone involved has created something, and nobody gets rejected. The Mission may be changing, but if she has anything to do with it, the community will stay strong.

MORE INFO: Precita Eyes runs mural tours on weekends. \$20 (£16) per person.

precitaeyes.org



Bon, Nene serves Japanese cuisine with a French twist



A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO

EATING & DRINKING IN THE MISSION

As the sun goes down, the Mission warms up. Local resident Annie Kamin, chief of staff at small-batch bean-to-bar craft chocolate maker Dandelion Chocolate, offers an inside look at the restaurants and bars that make the area the unrivalled go-to for a dinner and drink

Bon, Nene

My favourite neighbourhood restaurant is a small, cosy spot with an open kitchen that serves Japanese cuisine with French accents. There's an intimate feel, interesting food and it's a bit off the beaten path. Don't miss the chicken *karaage* (Japanese deep-fried chicken with spicy mayo). Be warned, there's generally a longer wait on weekend evenings (it doesn't take reservations) but the warm service and comforting and creative food more than makes it totally worth it. bonnene.com

20 Spot

With its great selection of Californian and European wines and delicious food, this wine bar is a real favourite. The servers are extremely knowledgeable and friendly and make excellent recommendations on food pairings — you can start off with a glass of wine and end up there for hours. There's a very relaxed vibe, too, with customers turning up in anything from a vintage Yves Saint Laurent dress to the unofficial neighbourhood uniform of a hoodie and jeans. 20spot.com

Elixir

This is the second-oldest continuously operating saloon in San Francisco, dating back to 1858. The atmosphere is inviting,

funky and not at all pretentious, which is amazing given the fact these bartenders make some of the best cocktails in the city. Order the five spice old fashioned — sesame-infused Japanese whisky, honey syrup, homemade five-spice bitters and an orange twist. It's a great spot on Tuesday nights, when it hosts a classic San Francisco trivia game. elixirsf.com

Doc's Clock

This is a classic Mission dive bar with an interesting history: it opened in 1951 as The Clock Tavern; a dentist bought it a decade later and added 'Doc' to the name. You won't miss the bar as there's a huge, iconic sign that reads 'Cocktail Time' above the entrance. As for what to order, go for a shot of mezcal and Tecate, or any other 'shot and beer' combo. Alternatively, try Fernet, an aromatic spirit. If you're really cool, go for an Underberg, a digestif bitter, before you leave. Don't miss the shuffleboard table, either — it's fun to play, or you can watch locals' competitive streaks come out in 'friendly' competitions. docsclock.com

MORE INFO: Dandelion Chocolate offers factory tours, truffle-making classes, evening events and more. store.dandelionchocolate.com 🍫

Plan your trip

AMERICA AS YOU LIKE IT offers a five-day city break from £949 per person, including flights from Heathrow and room-only accommodation at the Kimpton Hotel Buchanan hotel, with free evening wine hour and Kimpton bikes for exploring the city. americaasyoulikeit.com

AUDLEY TRAVEL offers tailor-made trips such as five nights at Galleria Park Hotel, including flights, tickets to visit Alcatraz, transfers and a day's bike rental from £1,220 per person. audleytravel.com

VIRGIN HOLIDAYS has five nights in San Francisco, including flights from Heathrow and room-only accommodation at Hotel Zoe Fisherman's Wharf from £965 per person. virginholidays.co.uk

MORE INFO: sftravel.com
visitcalifornia.com
visittheusa.com



FIRE & ICE

BEVERAGES A.G.

From Swiss Alps

Our vodka is made from the finest-quality Alpine water and premium raw materials. Those get combined with new-generation alcohol which is based on biologically pure wheat and rye grains. Using modern equipment highest quality Stars are born: vodkas & gins Fire & Ice.



FIRE & ICE

VODKA
EXTRA SOFT

Bottled in
SWITZERLAND

alc.40%vol. 700ml e

ON THE



WATERFRONT

THE PALM-FRINGED WATERWAYS OF KERALA TEEM WITH BIRDLIFE AND THE RHYTHMS OF RICE PRODUCTION. BUT BENEATH THE SURFACE, THE PERIYAR NATIONAL PARK AND THE TRANQUIL VEMBANAD LAKE ARE FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEEDS OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURE

WORDS **JAMIE LAFFERTY**



IMAGE: AWL IMAGES

V

ishal, a ranger in the Periyar National Park, is patrolling a tourist boat heading out onto Periyar Lake early in the morning. As he struts, he announces tiger facts to an increasingly confused audience. He starts each of his proclamations with a demand for our “kind attention”. Vishal

has a neatly pressed olive-green uniform, a serious countenance and a black moustache so impenetrable it looks like it could deflect bullets.

“Your kind attention,” Vishal repeats, walking between the rows of seated passengers as the boat putters away from its jetty. “We have around 40 tigers here. Very strong animals. Many bison, too. No giraffes.” His final remark seems something of an afterthought: “You’ll only find giraffes in Africa. And Australia.” At this news, he certainly has my attention. “But tigers, yes, we have many. Tigers are only found here in Asia. And in South America,” he continues, incorrect again, before closing with some eyebrow-raising bragging on the felines’ behalf. “Bengal tigers are very strong — stronger than six lions,” he says. “Tigers can kill elephants, no problem.”

I don’t think Vishal wishes to mislead us, more that he’s innocently indulging in a bit of hyperbole to emphasise a point: this is tiger country and tigers aren’t to be trifled with. I’m less clear about why he mentioned the giraffes, but he speaks with such authority that no one in our small group has the guts to press him.

This much is true, however: Periyar National Park and its namesake lake lie in the highlands of Kerala, a winding five-hour drive east from the state capital of Kochi, through seemingly endless corridors of tea plantations and spice gardens. Established in 1982, the park’s status as a tourism destination, much like the wider state’s, is slowly growing, both domestically and internationally. Not that it’s possible to tell from looking at it, but the huge lake is actually man-made, dating back to 1895 when the ruling British erected the Mullaperiyar Dam, quite accidentally creating an Edenic wildlife sanctuary.

Vishal boat is one of three double-decker, park-operated vessels heading off shortly after dawn in search of wildlife along the lake’s shores. “The mornings are very cold,” says Vishal, which, unlike some of his pronouncements about wildlife, is correct. “Maybe the mammals will wait until afternoon to get warm before moving,” he adds, stamping his feet. I suspect Vishal is insuring himself against the possibility of us seeing nothing during the excursion. Tigers have spent 200,000 years evolving to go unseen, and while they have been spotted from these noisy boats, sightings are incredibly rare. We’ve a much more realistic chance of spotting gaur (a wild cattle species), Asian elephants and wild dogs.

These cruises leave every morning throughout the tourist season, which starts in October and runs until June, when the monsoon makes the journey far less appealing. For the past two years, flooding (particularly severe in 2018) has meant that park has been off-limits to visitors.

In real life, the lake looks less artificial than it does on a map, its waters spreading into valleys like insidious fingers. But despite having been here for 125 years, it’s yet to erode certain vestiges of the former landscape. As we move south along one of these watery digits, our route seems to be marked by huge stakes. Initially, I think they’re markers to show boat captains which channels are shallow enough to navigate, but I soon see that they’re actually the remnants of dead trees, long since drowned by this unnatural body of water.

Indian cormorants, river terns and grey-headed fish eagles are among the species using them as perches from which to launch sorties into the water. Behind them, jungle stretches up hills and to the horizon, disappearing into the blue sky. Up here, far from the more polluted coastal areas, the sky really is blue, and most of the plants are so perfectly formed and bombastically green as to appear shop-bought. The animals clearly appreciate the conditions. Over the hour or so we’re out on the lake, we see healthy herds of gaur lumbering around the shoreline and a wild boar nervously peering through the scrub.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Morning mist over Kerala's backwaters, the heart of which is Vembanad Lake; Nilgiri langur in Periyar National Park; cattle egret among the water hyacinths
PREVIOUS PAGES: Kettuvallams moored in the backwaters





Sabu Amami demonstrates weaving traditional rope by hand

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Dugout canoe ride on the Kerala backwaters; flowers in Periyar National Park; Sabu's family house in Manjira

Later, on a nature walk beginning at the Periyar Nature Interpretation Centre — now led by a more measured guide, Subhash — I come face to face with a cranky-looking gaur, almost get urinated on by a Nilgiri langur and see a small herd of sambar deer flitting through the jungle-like wraiths. Just as we begin to turn for home, we also stumble across a family of Asian elephants casually crashing through the undergrowth, apparently not in the least concerned by Vishal's gossip that superstrength tigers are plotting to assassinate them.

Monsoon weeding

India has a population of over 1.3 billion people; to put it another way, one person in every six on Earth hails from the country. Kerala contributes relatively modestly to this glut of humankind, being the 13th most populous of the 28 states; Kochi, the historic trading port at the state's heart, doesn't even make the list of the nation's top 20 megacities. It is, however, home to a notable record-breaker: India's longest lake, the mighty Vembanad, which clocks in at 60 miles from top to bottom and empties out into the Laccadive Sea at the Port of Kochi. The second largest body of water in India, the livelihoods of around 1.6 million people depend on it.

One of them is Sabu Amani, a farmer and part-time tour guide from the village of Manjira. Other than when a 20-year army career periodically took him away from home, the 53-year-old has spent his whole life here, at the very water's edge, as did at least four generations of his family before him. I meet Sabu aboard his noisy boat, the *Chottanikkara Amma*. As we traverse a small waterway, he points out a dozen or so species of bird. "That's a blue-tailed bee-eater, a migratory species. Comes here from Nepal and the Himalayas around October, then leaves before the rains," he says, flexing his ornithology muscles.


As was the case in Periyar, the monsoons of the past two years resulted in widespread flooding here. "In 2018, the water went inside everyone's house," says Sabu with a frown. "August 15th, boats were sent out to help people, but it took 15 days before they got to us here. Very tough." To his annoyance, the deluges also meant that Kerala's traditional snake boat races (a hugely popular spectacle involving 100 oarsmen per vessel rowing to the frenzied beat of large drums) haven't happened since 2017.

With this year's monsoons still several months away, we're on our way to visit his home, where family members will, variously, demonstrate traditional ropemaking and weaving and coconut-harvesting. First, we have to get there, though, which would be a simple business were it not for a blanket of water hyacinths covering the surface of the river.

As far as pollutants go, it's hard to imagine many more beautiful than the water hyacinth, with its mauve flowers — Indian pond herons and bronze-winged jacanas walking between them like inspectors looking through crime scenes. The plants sit atop the water and, while looking very pretty, draw out oxygen, reduce sunlight and suffocate algae and fish below. They tend to snag in boats' propellers, too. "When the saltwater comes, the hyacinths will die, but now it's a big problem," says Sabu, sucking his teeth. The natural cycle of the lake should mean that when the monsoon rains come, the surging freshwater forces saline water out into the Laccadive. For the other, rain-less, half of the year, the ocean creeps back in and the water becomes brackish; opposing forces taking turns at controlling the lake. However, in order to improve rice production, it was decided in the 1970s to build the Thanneermukkom Bund, a massive saltwater barrier with a central gate that stretches across the middle of Vembanad like a belt that's too tight.



Kettuvallam houseboats and fishing crafts navigate the backwaters near Alappuzha



IT'S A LOVELY WAY TO SPEND
AN AFTERNOON, WATCHING THE
PEOPLE FISHING AND WASHING
IN THE WATER, BIRDS DOING
THE SAME, SNAKE BOATS
SITTING IDLE, ALL LIFE
APPEARING FOREVER
UNRUSHED. THE MOST URGENT
ACTIVITY APPEARS THROUGH
THE HAZE: TWO GOATS BUTTING
EACH OTHER WHILE CROWS
LOOK ON FROM A RICE FIELD

HORMUZ

GRAND
MUSCAT

Welcome to the
EXCEPTIONAL

The Radisson Collection Hotel Muscat is a grand celebration of luxury, modern design and Omani hospitality – and a getaway from which to head out and embrace the beauty of Muscat.

A RADISSON COLLECTION HOTEL

Radisson Collection Hotel, Hormuz Grand Muscat

PO Box 128, PC 111 – Seeb, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

T: +968 2435 0500, reservations.muscat@radissoncollection.com

radissonhotels.com/collection



It was designed to keep half the lake filled with freshwater long enough to allow for two rice harvests, but this restriction has interfered with the natural cycle and enabled the water hyacinths to spread at an alarming rate.

It's hard to tell how much Sabu cares about that, save for endlessly having to clear his boat's propeller of snagged hyacinths. He is, after all, a rice farmer and the barrage has, for the time being, made his life more comfortable. He also sees the rising value of tourism and in the future hopes his three children will follow him into that business, rather than toiling in the paddies.

As we enter his front garden to watch his daughter demonstrate weaving rope by hand, a group of men in cobalt overalls come to watch us, in turn. There's much shared fascination, at least until their foreman catches them skiving and sets them back to work hauling sacks of rice onto a truck, depriving them of the chance to laugh at our own oafish attempts at making the rope.

As our group says goodbye to Sabu and family just after sunset, I'm left wondering how long the lake's unnatural pattern can continue. With record floods, rising overpopulation, worrisome air quality and plastic pollution, India often feels like the climate crisis writ large. Having learned of the challenges faced by Vembanad, it's clear the odds are stacked against the ecological health of Kerala's waterways. But, as I'm later to find out, there's hope, too.

Below the surface

As we look out from one of Kerala's ubiquitous *kettuvallam* houseboats, it's hard to believe that tranquil Lake Vembanad is facing any problems at all. These vessels provide the quintessential Kerala backwaters experience: lazily navigating waterways between colossal rice paddies, languidly observing the lives of those who

live there. Occasionally, giggling teenagers dare each other to wave to us, but for the most part we're ignored. The sun is warm, the breeze a refreshing whisper and the cold Kingfisher beers gratefully received. Hours pass like this, and it's an undeniably lovely way to spend an afternoon, watching the people fishing and washing in the water, birds doing the same, snake boats sitting idle, all life appearing forever unrushed. The most urgent activity appears through the haze: two goats butting each other while crows look on at the edge of a rice field that's almost ready for harvest.

In no way do these huge, gold-green spaces look like the environmental bulldozers they are. Modifications to Vembanad first began in 1865 during British rule. Some estimates say as much as two-thirds of the lake and its marshes have since been reclaimed for growing rice, each mega-paddy named after the local king who approved the British plan for its creation. From above, they look like shards from a dropped pane of glass, all straight lines and sharp corners. Of course, this rearrangement of the natural landscape drastically altered the ecosystem, but at the time no one would have predicted the future cost.

Aboard the *kettuvallam* I feel like I've rejoined part of that history. These double-decked, thatch-roofed tourist boats look like they belong to a precolonial era. Kerala was regarded as so agricultural that tourism only really took hold here in the early 1990s. The boats have since become incredibly popular — an estimated 2,000 are now thought to be sailing around Vembanad. Outside of the monsoon season, this armada typically spends half of each day navigating the narrow waterways between the paddies or else heading out into the larger body of the lake itself, the distant north shore of which is always lost in the blue-grey horizon.



LEFT: Fishing for black clams among the prolific water hyacinths

PREVIOUS PAGE, FROM LEFT: Rice is produced in paddies in the Kerala backwaters; Jojo, project coordinator at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment

After disembarking the boat, our group visits the local office of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), where we're met by project coordinator Jojo. For the past decade, the trust has worked with National Geographic — and, more recently, our tour operator, G Adventures, too — to address environmental concerns around the country. By way of introduction, Jojo tells us that our visit is contributing to the trust's funding (via a contribution by G Adventures).

Stalking the room barefoot, Jojo speaks passionately about a history of “uncontrolled human interventions”, clearly concerned about the fate of the lake and its wildlife. On the wall, a poster shows a fish being speared by a plastic straw. I can't read the Hindi text, but I understand the message very clearly. “A study in the 1980s said the lake had 180 species of fish,” Jojo continues. “But ever since we started a fish count in 2008, the maximum number of species we've found is 117.”

Jojo explains that things are a little better for the black clam population. Around 60% of India's entire production is harvested in Vembanad, offering a cheap, sustainable form of protein to locals. ATREE encourages the farmers to collect any plastic they find while gathering clams (last year they removed 80 sacks). I ask why, during my week in Kerala, I haven't seen the clams on any English-language menu. Jojo smiles. “Well, you know they're filter feeders,” he replies.

“Our stomachs are used to them, but you might surely have some problems.”

We head out to watch some of the clam-steamers go about their pungent work. Afterwards, we walk to the lakeshore, where fishermen are navigating small islands of water hyacinths, looking for blooms of fresh clams. As we watch the men work in the morning sun, Jojo asks a passing fisherman to hack the top off a fresh coconut for each of us. I'm relieved, although perhaps not surprised, to note that the drinking straw in my coconut is made of paper.

As one of the fishermen rakes the shallow lakebed and comes up with nothing, I ask Jojo if he's pessimistic for the future. “No, not overall,” he replies quickly. “We have a concern about the siltation of the lake — it's getting shallower — but the government is enforcing new regulations and we're seeing pollution come down.” And if he were in charge? Well, the houseboats would stay, he says, but — no surprise here — there'd be changes made to the barrage. “The only way to revive this system is to let the salinity come like it used to, by keeping the gates open longer,” Jojo explains. “Keep it natural, that's it.”

In his more optimistic moments, Jojo believes that, with successful ecological management, Vembanad can become an example for other parts of this colossal country to follow. If the tide can literally be turned in Kerala, he reasons, it can happen elsewhere, too. □

ESSENTIALS



Getting there & around

Air India offers the only direct flights to Kochi from the UK, departing from Heathrow twice weekly. British Airways flies twice daily to Mumbai from Heathrow, with codeshare flights on to Kochi. Etihad Airways flies daily from London to Kochi via Abu Dhabi. airindia.in ba.com etihad.com Average flight time: 10h (direct). To explore the state, book ahead with a tour operator or organise local car transfers through your hotel.

When to go

Kerala is defined by two rainy seasons. While the October monsoons tend not to cause much disruption, the same can't be said of the summer rains (June to August) in recent years. For the rest of the year, the weather is warm and often humid, averaging 27C. The area around Periyar National Park benefits from being at higher altitude and so is cooler than coastal Kochi.

Where to stay

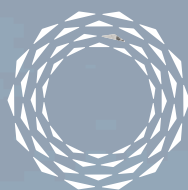
Peppervine. peppervine.in
Kumarakom Heritage Resort.
kumarakomheritage.com

More info

atree.org
keralatourism.org

How to do it

G ADVENTURES offers a bespoke, seven-day TailorMade South India trip from £1,649 per person, based on two sharing. Includes B&B accommodation, some meals and a host throughout. Excludes flights. gadventures.com



DOMES RESORTS

ELOUNDA · CHANIA · CORFU

It's time.



DOMES OF ELOUNDA
AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION
HOTELS



DOMES MIRAMARE
CORFU
THE
LUXURY
COLLECTION



DOMES ZEEN
CHANIA
THE
LUXURY
COLLECTION



DOMES NORUZ CHANIA
AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION
HOTELS

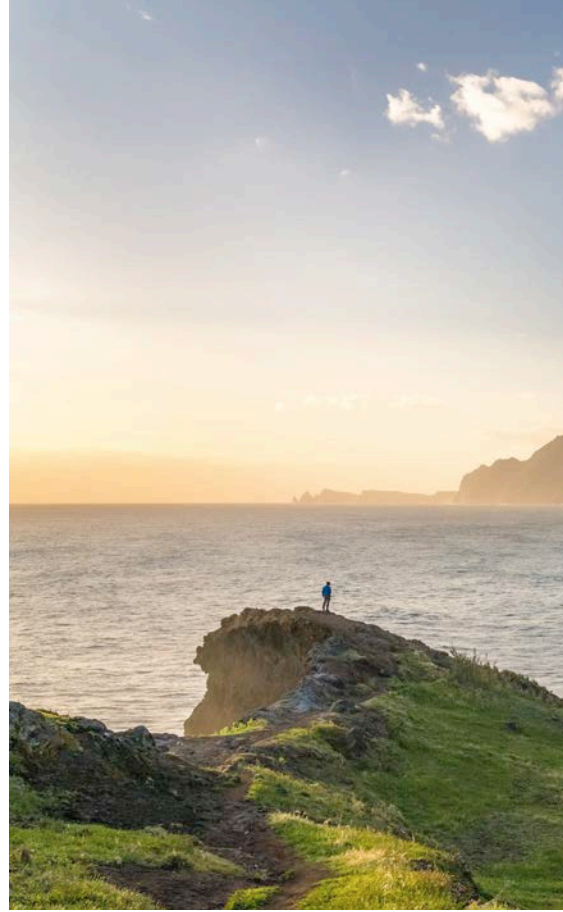
www.domesresorts.com

FIVE REASONS TO VISIT THE AZORES

Portugal's Atlantic islands were made for the adventurous, from diving and canyoning to scaling a volcano. Buckle in for this bracing tour of the Azores

Escaping the crowds comes easy in the Azores. This nine-strong, volcanic island chain, scattered across the mid-Atlantic has a population of about 250,000. Part of Portugal, yet only 930 miles west of Lisbon (or a two-hour flight away), they're naturally distinct, coronavirus-safe with testing on arrival and sustainable — the only

archipelago in the world to be designated a sustainable tourist destination by EarthCheck, in fact. And with a natural bounty this great, they have to be. Here, whales and mantas roam the seas, craters and canyons run deep and pulse-quicken adventures await around every corner — as does volcanic wine.



1. BELOW THE WAVES

All nine islands

Diving is spectacular across the Azores. Plumbing the depths of the archipelago reveals underwater lava walls, sunken craters and abundant marine life. Top sites include the wreck of the Second World War vessel, *SS Dori*, lying beneath São Miguel; the Cemitério das Âncoras, Terceira Island's eerie cemetery of 40 submerged anchors; and the bubbling underwater fumaroles of the hydrothermal vents, accessible from São Miguel. If you have to pick just one, however, head to Santa Maria, home to the marine reserve of Baixa do Ambrósio, where mantas and devil rays dance as you dive. It's also the best island for swimming with whale sharks, and the jumping off point for the Formigas Islets, where you may spot Galapagos sharks, mantas, turtles and hammerheads. May to October is the best time to dive.

2. SAILS AND WHALES

Faial Island

If you've never experienced the joy of seeing a cetacean summit the water, the Azores is the place to do it. While swimming with whales is prohibited in the archipelago (the law protects them), trips to spot them run from April to October, where visitors can admire their baleen beauty and blowhole theatrics by boat. This is a season dictated by the weather rather than a lack of cetaceans, which can be seen year-round from blustery clifftop viewpoints. There are 24 species in the Azores, ranging from regulars such as sperm, sei, pilot and blue whales, to occasional visitors, like minke and humpbacks.



FROM LEFT: Boats in the channel between Faial and Pico islands; man looking out over Faial Island; diver photographing a sperm whale

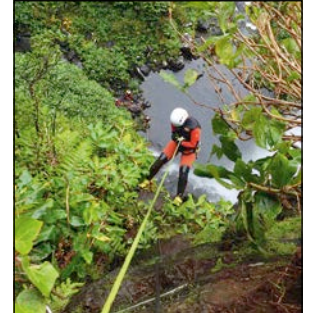


3. WINGING IT São Miguel Island

Arial ascents further cement the Azores archipelago's reputation as a destination for adventure enthusiasts. There are 32 paragliding locations dotted across the islands, 15 of which are on São Miguel. The sport is so popular, in fact, that throughout August paragliding pilots and free-flight aficionados descend for the annual Azores Paragliding Festival. Novices are warmly encouraged year-round by specialist companies that take visitors on tandem flights over the craters of Sete Cidades and Furnas, above the island's dark-sand beaches and serrated cliffs. You'll be glad you're with a pro for this one.

4. BLAZE A TRAIL São Miguel Island

Time to walk it off? There are around 500 miles of waymarked trails lacing around the nine-island chain. Many trails are age-old paths plied by Azorean islanders over the years, used to transport goods with mules or move cattle to fresh pasture, but that have now been restored into a network of pedestrian paths. Six of the islands have 20 miles or more of 'grand routes', which are best tackled over several days, but there are also many shorter more manageable strolls that are just as scenic, such as the popular hike to Lagoa do Fogo on São Miguel, which covers just under seven miles in four hours. trails.visitazores.com



5. GRAND CANYONING FLORES ISLANDS

Canyoning — essentially hurling yourself down river canyons and hoping for the best — will really get the blood flowing. First-timers might be nervous, but conquer your fears and you'll be captivated — jumping down waterfalls, scrambling over rocks and abseiling through a river canyons is exhilarating. São Miguel, São Jorge and Flores islands have the best options.

Essentials

Average flight time: 3h30m.
Getting around: Hiring a car is the best way to get around most of the Islands. There's also an excellent interisland flight service operated by SATA Air Azores, as well as seasonal ferry services that run between all of the islands.





Japan

One of Japan's 17th-century highways, the Nakasendō wound through the heart of the country's main island, Honshu, linking the spiritual centre of Kyoto with the political hub of Edo (known today as Tokyo). Today, only sections of its epic 332-mile route remain, offering up the hospitality and flavours of modern mountain life — and a tantalising glimpse into the inter-city travelling experience of centuries past

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS **MARK PARREN TAYLOR**





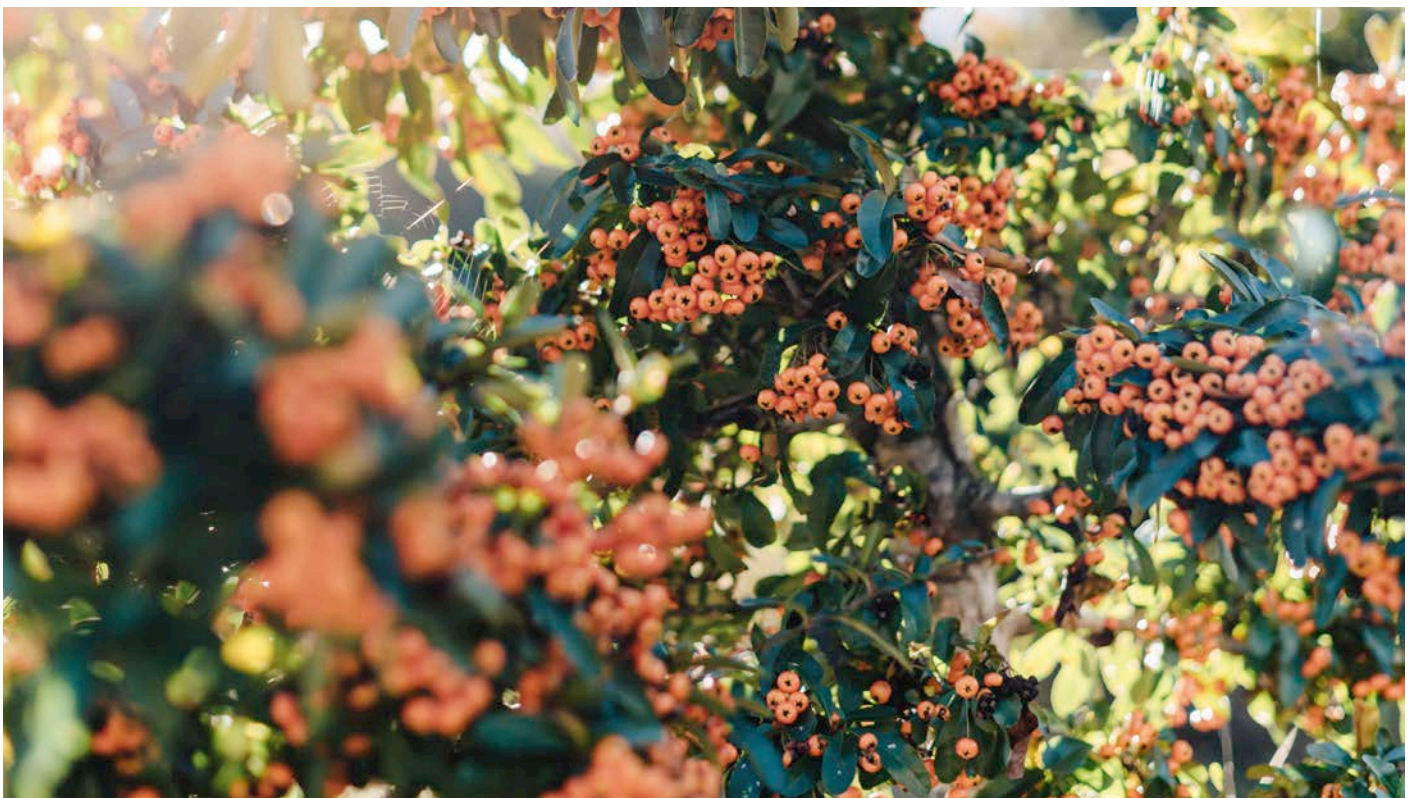


The Nakasendō was dotted with 69 ‘post-towns’ — settlements that provided wayfarers with lodging and supplies. The section through Kiso Valley still connects 10 such stations, including Magome at the southern end. Here and elsewhere, villagers decorate their homes with floral displays, and passing pilgrims paste *senjafuda* (signs containing their name) onto shrines.





The journey between Kyoto and Edo would typically take 12 days — a tricky hike for travelling salesmen with cumbersome baggage or porters wearing woven grass sandals who lugged shoguns and other nobility in sedan chairs. The four-mile stretch between the post-towns of Tsumago and Magome is indicative of the varied, undulating terrain the path negotiates.





The entire Kiso Valley section can be walked comfortably in three days. At the post-towns, inns range from traditional-style *ryokans* to contemporary B&Bs, and there are also general stores, cafes and artisan coffeehouses. Tsumago offers it all — from Yamagiri (opposite, bottom left), a noodle parlour, to Marutaya (bottom right) where Mr Ito crafts traditional bentwood boxes.









Long-haul hikers need to refuel and Wachinoya, in the town of Tsumago, is one of many local cafes offering the energy-giving regional speciality, *oyaki*. These bread dumplings — which owner Yoshio Hara makes in batches throughout the day — are filled with a selection of curious but satisfying ingredients, including wormwood, pumpkin, walnuts and pickled *nozawana* leaf.





Other culinary pitstops might feature handmade soba noodles, served with tempura vegetables at Nakai Tsutsuya restaurant in Magome, or *kuri kinton*, a sweet made with chestnuts that pairs well with a cup of chilled black tea. Sawadaya, a traditional confectioner in Tsumago located close to the red *torii* gates of Toyokawa Inari shrine, makes a superlative version. ▣



ANDERSEN GENÈVE

1980

2020

40th Anniversary



ANDERSEN Genève "Jumping Hours 40th Anniversary"

Hours displayed in the window and minutes in the counter
Automatic movement (60 hours power reserve)
18ct yellow gold rotor with *hand guilloché* "grain d'orge" motives
18ct red gold case (38mm) with polished/brushed finishing
21ct BlueGold dial with *hand guilloché* "losanges magiques" motives

40 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT TIMEPIECE CREATION

CHF 37'800



INSTAGRAM

ANDERSEN Genève is dedicated to small series of highly complicated timepieces and working with clients to design "Pièce Unique" creations. With a small team working in the heart of Geneva, only a few dozen timepieces leave the Atelier every year. In the late 70's, after almost a decade in the "Atelier des grandes complications" at Patek Philippe, Svend Andersen decided to launch his own collection. His first "Pièce Unique" was delivered to an esteemed collector in 1980. Since then, his work has set new standards and broken records within the horological world. 40 years later and with less than 1'500 timepieces manufactured, the Atelier remains at the same location, in the city next to the Rhône river. Our drive is to continue to support a passion, which is shared between our watchmakers and knowledgeable collectors alike.

Start your journey: concierge@andersen-geneve.ch

www.andersen-geneve.ch



SLOW TRAVEL IN SWITZERLAND

THE 10-DAY RAIL ITINERARY

The eco-minded Swiss have perfected rail travel like no other nation, with trains gliding between snow-capped peak, cities and slopes with maximum efficiency.

Switzerland's railways — Europe's greatest, some might say — unzip the landscape to reveal vineyards tumbling down to lakes, meadows chiming with cowbells, waterfalls, rivers, glaciers and one sky-high mountain after the next. Trains dive into tunnels to emerge at wind-buffed mountain passes and improbably steep viaducts. Epic vistas are matched only by the castle-capped towns and culturally rich cities that pin it all together. This 10-day rail trip from Geneva to Zurich gives you a taste of the lot.

DAYS ONE & TWO

Geneva-Lausanne

Ease into your trip in the French-speaking cities of Geneva and Lausanne. In Geneva, the dress-circle views of Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc pique the appetite for what's to come. Allow an afternoon to explore the city's *Vieille Ville*, promenades and the rainbow-kissed Jet de'Eau fountain, before treating yourself to a night in a grand hotel like the opulent Beau-Rivage.

The train ride to nearby Lausanne lifts the gaze from the lake to terraced vineyards and the snow-dusted Savoy Alps. Stop off in Nyon, where the 12th-century castle is quite the fairytale dream. In the brick-vaulted basement, Caveau de Nyon offers tastings of local La Côte wines.

Back on board, the train glides east to Lausanne, a city with a creative buzz, uplifting lake views and new cultural kudos since the recent opening of Plateforme 10, an innovative arts district set in revamped train sheds. For elegance, stay at the Art Nouveau Hotel Royal Savoy, or the Lausanne Palace with its state-of-the-art spa. The icing on the cake is scoring a table at two-Michelin-starred Anne Sophie-Pic, where the season-driven menus are sheer art.



The Belle Époque train
to Montreux.
Opposite: Kappelbruecke (Chapel
Bridge), Luzern

DAYS THREE & FOUR

Lavaux-Montreux

Lausanne is the jumping-off point for Lavaux, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where vineyards concertina down steeply terraced hillsides to Lake Geneva's glass-blue waters. It's a ravishingly pretty region for walks among the vines and a dégustation (tasting) of flinty Chasselas white or fruity Pinot Noir red wines. Hook onto the 8 mile hike from St Saphorin to Lutry. Or for minimal effort, take an hour-long spin of the vineyards on the Lavaux Express, departing from either Lutry or Cully.

From here, the train nudges east to Vevey, a chic lakefront town that loves its food. Denis Martin walks the culinary high wire at his Michelin-starred restaurant, adding a pinch of molecular magic to scrupulously sourced Swiss produce. Alternatively, for a mountain escape on the slopes of Mont-Pèlerin, five-star Le Mirador Resort & Spa is a class act.

The next town is Montreux, lauded for its lake-and-mountain views and July Montreux Jazz Festival. The unmissable here is medieval Château de Chillon, which fired Lord Byron's poetic imagination and Turner's paintbrush.

DAYS FIVE & SIX

The GoldenPass Line

Montreux is the starting point for the three-stage GoldenPass Line, one of Switzerland's most feted rail journeys, negotiating mountain passes and opening up views of forests, lakes and impenetrable mountains on its ride north to Lucerne. On the first leg to Zweisimmen, stop in Rossinière, where ornately carved timber chalets include the 113-windowed Grand Chalet, once home to Polish-French modern artist Balthus.

The peaks get higher and craggier on the approach to Gstaad, a ritzy ski resort in winter and a mellow walking base in summer. Its crowning glory is Glacier 3000, with glacier skiing, hiking and views of a host of peaks grazing the 1,300ft mark. For A-list glamour, stay at the Gstaad Palace and dine at Michelin-starred restaurant Chesery.

Back on the train, you're rewarded with wild Alpine scenes en route to Zweisimmen. Here you'll change for the onward journey to Interlaken along the shores of startlingly turquoise Lake Thun, maybe stopping to dally a while in the vine-cradled, castle-topped town of Spiez.



Llauterbrunnen railway, Gruetschalp.
Opposite from top: Student at the Ecole
d'Horlogerie; Grossmuenster, Zurich

**DAYS SEVEN & EIGHT****Interlaken-Lucerne**

As the train nears Interlaken, suddenly there's the pop-up effect of the pearly white, 13,640ft peak of Jungfrau. Interlaken places you in the heart of the Bernese Alps. Get an early start for the ride up to Jungfrauoch, Europe's highest station at 11,332ft, where riveting views of the 14-mile Aletsch Glacier unfold. On the way back down, stop at Kleine Scheidegg to hike or ski in the shadow of Eiger's gnarly north face, or in Lauterbrunnen to see the wispy Staubbach Falls leap spectacularly over a cliff face.

For belle époque style and spa time, the Victoria-Jungfrau gets top billing. Stay the night before embarking on the final leg of the GoldenPass Line. Trundling past lakes, waterfalls and over the mountainous Brünig Pass, the two-hour ride to Lucerne will have you glued to the train window. Pause in peaceful, timber-chalet-lined Brienz for lake strolls, a vintage steam-train ride up to the 7,713ft peak of Rothorn, and the spectacle of the multi-tiered Giessbach Falls.

**DAYS NINE & TEN****Lucerne-Zurich**

Overlooking mountains and a fjord-like lake, Lucerne is an instant heart-stealer. While you'll want to see the medieval Chapel Bridge, Jean Nouvel-designed KKL Luzern Culture Centre and Picasso-crammed Museum Rosengart Collection, much of the joy here is simply hanging out on a cafe terrace or wandering the lake shore. SGV boats ply the waters, connecting up with railways and cable-cars swinging up to the peaks of 6,982ft Mount Pilatus and 5,899ft Mount Rigi for views of the lake from on high. Lucerne's raft of luxurious sleeps includes Art Deco Hotel Montana, accessed by its own funicular.

Your final day involves a 45-minute train ride north to Zurich, where peaks give way to pastures. Beyond its river-divided Old Town, Zurich is a hub of new-wave creativity, with waterfront bars, boutiques and galleries. There's no better way to end your trip than in the ALEX Hotel at sunset, scenically perched right on the water.

Essentials

Getting There: SWISS is among several airlines serving Geneva and Zurich Airport. Alternatively, take the Eurostar to Paris, then connect with TGVs that race to Geneva in just over three hours. Once there, the money-saving Swiss Travel Pass lets you explore with a single ticket.

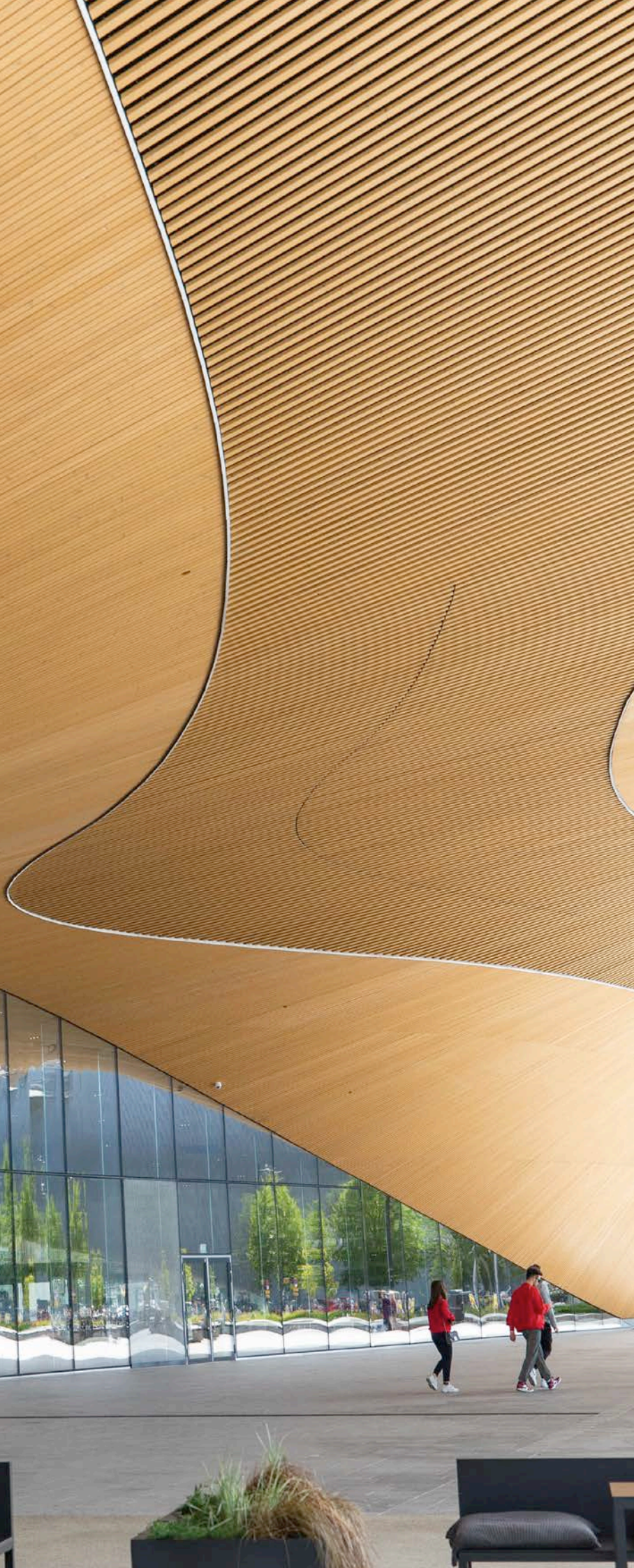
Switzerland.

CITY LIFE

HELSINKI



*With new cultural quarters, no-waste restaurants and a passion for design, Finland's capital has transformed itself from overlooked city break destination into a Nordic success story. **WORDS:** Chris Leadbeater **PHOTOGRAPHS:** Veera Papinoja & Lola Akinmade Åkerström*



“At the start, it was hard,” Luka Balac says. “But it was great to see how quickly suppliers were willing to change their practices to work with us. Now, we’re really in the groove.”

So in the groove that it’s a wonder he has a spare minute or two to pop out from the kitchen to talk to me. With a cloth draped over his shoulder and his face shiny with perspiration from the heat of the oven, Luka is keen to explain the methods and the principles underpinning Nolla, one of Helsinki’s trendiest and most ethical eateries. You could look at Nolla as a superb example of cross-European co-operation — the other co-founders, Carlos Henriques and Albert Franch Sunyer are, respectively, Portuguese and Spanish; Balac is Serbian — but there’s far more to this dining hotspot than an exchange-project ethos. Irritated by the amount of food tossed into the bin in their prior roles in other kitchens, in February 2018 the trio decided to launch a ‘zero-waste’ restaurant where even the bread is recycled into toasted caramel ice cream, wine-bottle corks are composted and ‘single-use plastic’ is an obscene phrase.

“We only use seasonal Finnish ingredients,” Balac continues. “If we can’t source any lemons, we don’t cook with them. It’s about a mindset, about making people think before throwing something out. We aren’t perfect, but we do our best. And we’re getting better.”

You might say the same of the Finnish capital. Helsinki was never unappealing, but if you’d paid a visit 10 years ago, you’d have encountered a flinty Nordic city going about its business without much flamboyance. Its harbour was drably functional rather than fabulous, its food scene pleasant but unimaginative. Fast forward a decade, and it’s almost unrecognisable, its waterfront alive and excited, options for dinner myriad and magical, bright new pieces of architecture lighting up its (still historic) centre.

At the heart of the matter lies the Design District. Created as one of the centrepieces of Helsinki’s year as World Design Capital in 2012, it’s grown to cast its spell across downtown areas such as Kamppi, Kruununhaka and Kaartinkaupunki — glimpsed in 200 fashion stores and jewellery boutiques — and inspired an upsurge in creativity across the city. The wind may still blow cold off the Baltic, but here, at least, Finland has never been hotter. ➤



SEE & DO

ALLAS SEA POOL: This literal hotspot has brought Finland's sauna obsession out of the woods and lodged it in a prime position on the harbour. Visitors can take a dip in three outdoor pools (one of which uses unheated Baltic seawater) after sweating it up in a trio of sauna rooms. The uninitiated and unconvinced will be relieved to hear that, contrary to feverish overseas rumours, swimsuits are obligatory in mixed saunas. allaseapool.fi

DESIGN MUSEUM: The Finnish instinct for invention is explored at this institution in Kaartinkaupunki, via exhibits taking in the likes of the Nokia phone boom of the 2000s, video game Angry Birds, Eero Aarnio's iconic Bubble Chairs and the genius of architect and designer Alvar Aalto. designmuseum.fi

CENTRAL LIBRARY OODI: Perhaps the most dramatic of the recent architectural additions to the city, Central Library Oodi arrived at the end of 2018, a sinuous vision in glass and wood. Not just a temple to the written word — it holds over 100,000 tomes — there's an innovative robotic book-delivery system and potted trees between the shelves, as well as a cinema and a busy cafe. oodihelsinki.fi

KIASMA: The library's cool companion on Kansalaistori Square, Helsinki's contemporary art museum, revels in works by Finnish visionaries, including Aarne

Jamsa, Raimo Kanerva, Torger Enckell and Ismo Kajander, plus wonders by artists from around Europe. kiasma.fi

AMOSREX: Opened in 2018, this stylish gallery stages temporary art shows but is as much an exhibit itself as anything it displays, due to the striking way it's been moulded into the Lasipalatsi ('glass palace'), a 1930s office building on the main drag, Mannerheimintie. Don't forget your camera, to snap the futuristic, bulging concrete domes behind it, housing skylights that illuminate the underground galleries. amosrex.fi

HELSINKI CATHEDRAL: The Finnish capital has no shortage of photogenic churches, but its Lutheran cathedral is undoubtedly the most beautiful, rising above the centre in a haze of neoclassical columns and onion domes that wouldn't look out of place in St Petersburg. helsinginseurakunnat.fi

SUOMENLINNA: This fortress, spread across eight islands three miles out to sea, bears testament to Helsinki's history of subjugation. Now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Suomenlinna was built by Sweden in 1748, at a time when (what is now) Finland was ruled by Stockholm. It's since become an emblem of national pride and a popular picnic spot for Helsinki residents. Ferries sail regularly from Market Square. suomenlinna.fi

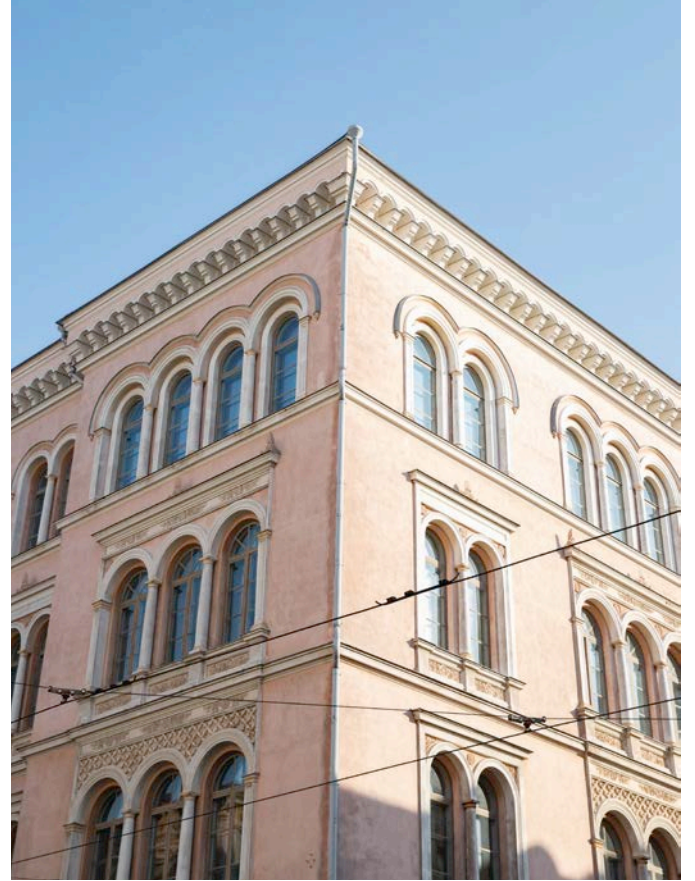
SKYWHEEL: This harbourfront Ferris wheel comes with a distinctly Finnish twist: one of its gondolas is a sauna. Obviously. skywheel.fi

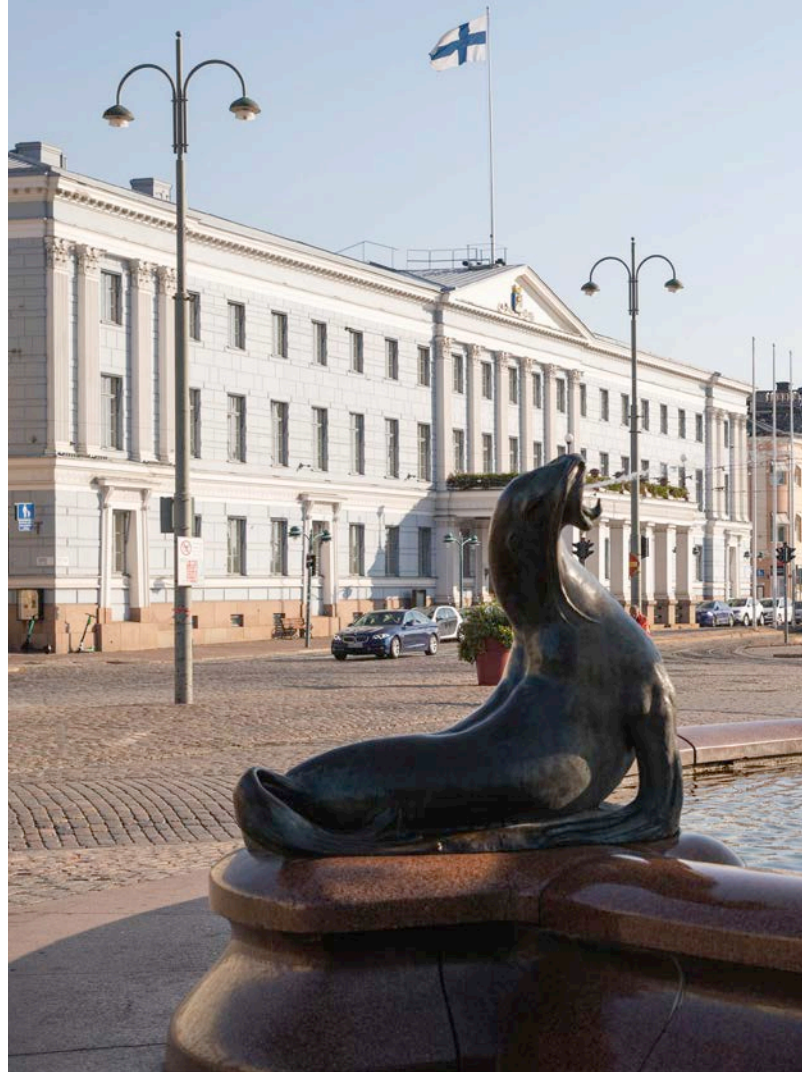
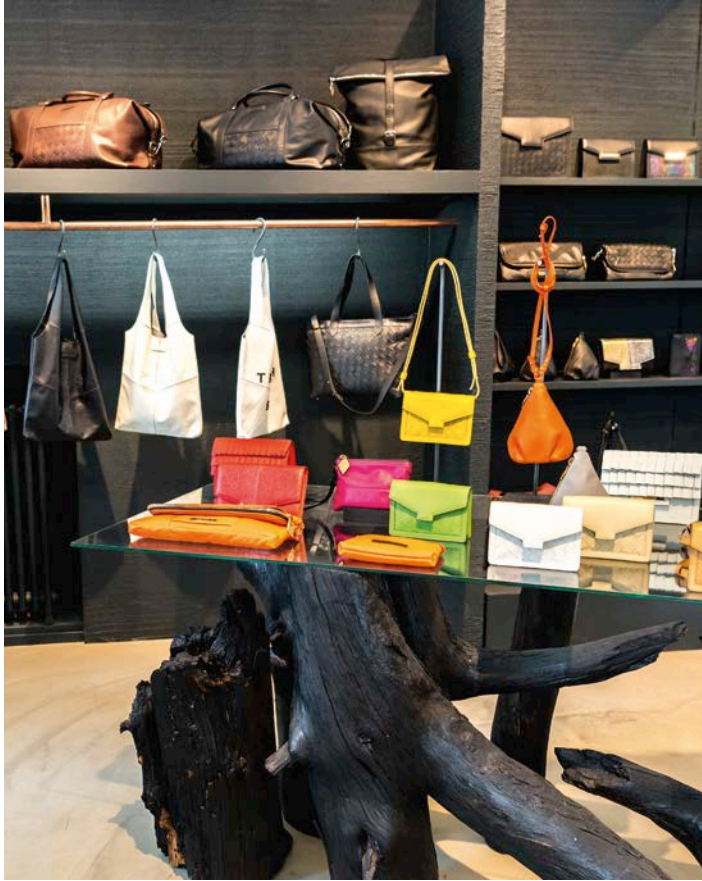
Styling it out // Helsinki's creative star has been rising steadily over the past decade — it was the World Design Capital in 2012 and joined the UNESCO Cities of Design network two years later

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

The futuristic skylights at Amos Rex gallery; architecture in the port neighbourhood of Kruununhaka; vegetarian dishes at Yes Yes Yes, a gourmet lunchspot set in a former McDonald's; Polish artist Mariusz Robaskiewicz paints the city

PREVIOUS PAGES: Central Library Oodi offers open plan meeting spaces







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sustainably made handbags for sale at Lovia; Havis Amanda fountain in Market Square; a bartender making a cocktail at Bronda; chaga mushroom cappuccinos at the Metsä/Skogen concept store

Did you know?

Part of the Helsinginniemi peninsula, Helsinki is spread out across 315 islands. These include Seurasaari, home to an open-air museum showcasing the traditional way of life in Finland, plus a nudist beach

BUY

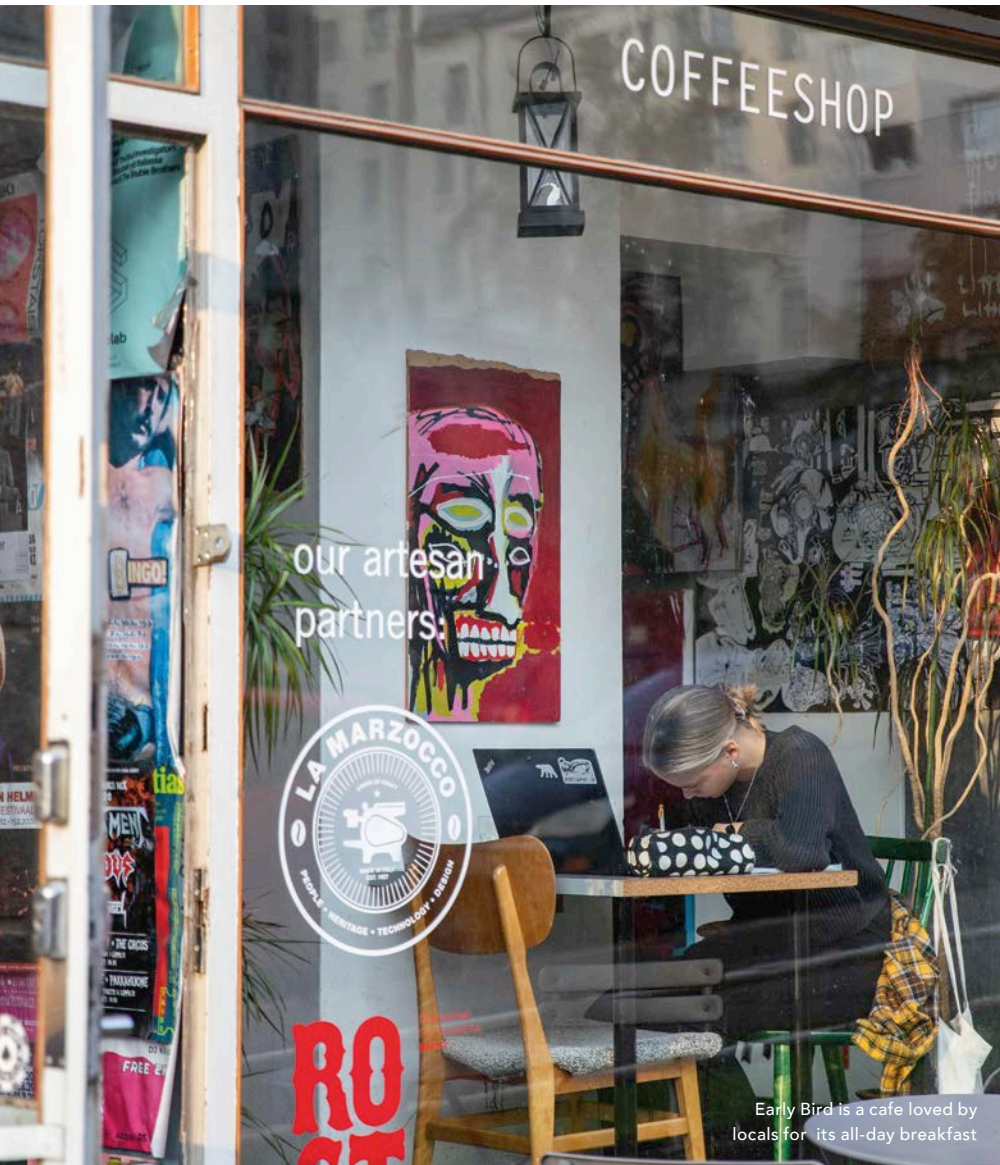
LOKAL: A highlight of the Design District, this gallery-cum-shop focuses on promoting Helsinki designers. The front of the store is used for monthly exhibitions; the rear sells works by the likes of Jatta Lavi, whose ceramic milk cartons are a quirky joy. “We showcase artists who aren’t household names — yet,” says manager Kati Ruohomäki. lokalhelsinki.com
LOVIA: A chic boutique that challenges head-on the accusation that the fashion world doesn’t do enough to reduce its environmental footprint. Its bags are made using excess material from the food industry, such as elk leather and salmon scales, and each one sold sports a ‘Transparency DNA’ label, which explains where every component was sourced. loviacollection.com
METSÄ/SKOGEN: You couldn’t dream of a more devotedly Finnish shop than this calm gem on Mannerheimintie. Here, you can buy wild-herb tea and recycled-textile clothes in a store gently fragrant with pine, and to a forest soundtrack of rustling leaves and twittering birds. metsaskogen.fi

EAT

YES YES YES: Helsinki feels an utterly appropriate place to bump into this sort of culinary metamorphosis: a former McDonald’s reimagined as a gourmet lunch spot (you can still see the old red tiles on the walls). The menu keeps matters vegetarian and vegan, with the likes of a roasted sweet potato with beetroot aioli, and a beetroot risotto with gorgonzola on offer. yesyesyes.fi
JORD: Linda and Filip Stenman-Langhoff used to run the Michelin-starred Restaurant Ask at this discreet premises in Kruununhaka, but decided to recalibrate in late 2019, reopening as an oasis of Nordic comfort food such as venison with parsnip and spruce shoots. restaurantjord.fi
NOLLA: At this ‘waste-free’ restaurant, cling-film and tinfoil are banned and frying fats are reconstituted as soap. Equal rigour has clearly been applied to what’s served up to patrons. Four- and six-course tasting menus feature the likes of whitefish with pea cream, and pike with apple-and-rose-flavoured quince jelly. restaurantnolla.com

AFTER HOURS

BADGER & CO: You could easily overlook this neighbourhood watering hole, which sits quietly in a corner building in Kaartinkaupunki. But step inside, and you’re greeted by stripped-back brickwork and coffee-table art tomes stacked on windowsills. Closed on Mondays, it stays open during the rest of the week until as late as 2am, with a 4-6pm happy ‘hour’. badgerbar.fi
OM’PU: Kallio has been Helsinki’s ugly duckling neighbourhood for much of the last decade, blossoming from dingy district to bohemian swan in recent years. It displays its hipster ambience in a number of bars, including Om’pu, an unpretentious pub where residents chatter through the evening amid the ring-ring of fruit machines and the sipping of punchy beers. ompu.fi
BRONDA: Part restaurant, part sleek nightspot, Bronda enjoys a fine location, gazing onto the green corridor that is the Esplanadi promenade. Choose a bottle from the enormous glass tower of a wine rack, which climbs to the very ceiling. ravintolabronda.fi



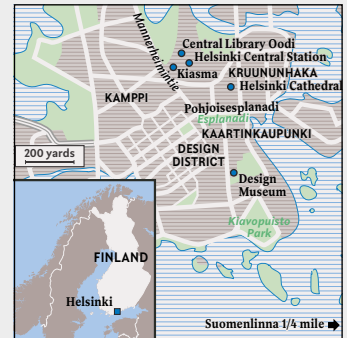
☪ LIKE A LOCAL

EARLY BIRD: Need to recover from the night before? This brunch spot is the place to bring yourself back to life and here, the voices are local and the portions large. Vegan options are available, and 'early' is more the name than the reality — breakfast is served all day. [facebook.com/earlybirdhelsinki](https://www.facebook.com/earlybirdhelsinki)
HIETARANTA BEACH: The Baltic isn't famed for its sunbathing beaches, but the Finnish capital has more than its fair share. The most popular is Hietaranta Beach, a broad crescent of sand on the west side of the centre, in Töölö. On a summer's day, it could almost pass for the Côte d'Azur.
TEURASTAMO: Two miles north of the centre, in the once-industrial district of Vilhonvuori, this open-air collection of bars, eateries and artisan stalls opened in 2012 on the site of a former slaughterhouse. Concerts are also held in the striking complex, which is packed with original architectural features. teurastamo.com

ZZ SLEEP

KLAUSK: Slotted into an art nouveau building, this centrally located design hotel nods to the Kalevala, Finland's national poem with murals of fair maidens with fiery hair and bearded gods holding aloft majestic birds of prey. The long roof terrace is a plum spot for a tipples. From €124 (£113). klauskhotel.com
MARSKI BY SCANDIC: A sizeable four-star on Mannerheimintie, but one with a pleasing element of soul. The ground floor is largely given over to an open-plan bar and restaurant area where evenings are whiled away to the sound of chatter and clinking glasses. From €138 (£125). scandichotels.com
HOTEL KÄMP: Arguably Finland's foremost five-star, Hotel Kämp has exuded a refined grandeur since 1887. The retreat of choice for rock stars and royalty, it's known for its decadent afternoon teas as much as its accommodation. From €243 (£221). hotelkamp.com □

ESSENTIALS



Getting there & around

Finnair flies direct to Helsinki from Edinburgh, Heathrow, Dublin and Manchester; British Airways from Heathrow; and Norwegian from Gatwick. finnair.com ba.com norwegian.com
 Average flight time: 2h 50m.
 Helsinki Airport is on the Ring Rail Line, which whisks passengers to the central train station in around 30 minutes (take the 'P' train going south east for the fastest route). Fares start at €5.50 (£5). One-day passes covering all local trams, trains and buses in the central zones A and B cost from €8 (£7.25) for two days and €16 (£14.50) for three days. The centre is compact enough to explore on foot or via hired City Bikes (hsl.fi).

When to go

Helsinki endures long winters (November to March) where the northerly latitude means mid-afternoon dusks and single-digit temperatures, although the city has a cosy charm in these months. The flipside is a summer (May to September) with highs in the low 20Cs complemented by up to 19 hours of daylight.

More information

myhelsinki.fi
visitfinland.com

How to do it

REGENT HOLIDAYS offers three-night breaks from £545 per person, including flights, B&B accommodation at Original Sokos Hotel Helsinki and private airport transfers. regent-holidays.co.uk
FINNAIR flies direct to Helsinki from Heathrow from £96 return. finnair.com

RAISING THE BAR

Award-winning bartender and TWISPER ambassador Erik Lorincz on his ideal bar, why he loves getting creative with umami flavours, and his perfect night out in London, the city he now calls home

When Erik Lorincz told his parents he was leaving home at the age of 21 to attend a bar academy in the Czech Republic, his mum was dismayed. “What’s going to happen, then?” she asked. “There are no cocktail bars here in Slovakia,” she’d said. It turns out Erik had much bigger plans. After following his dream from Nitra to Prague to Bratislava to London, award-winning bartender Erik now calls the latter home, adding ‘bar owner’ to his credentials with the 2019 opening of Kwānt in Mayfair.

The first thing I did when I arrived in London in 2004 was buy a bar guide and start crossing them off the list as I visited them. I’d come to learn English and my first job here was in a nightclub collecting glasses and cleaning ashtrays.

It took me until 2010 to open my own bar: Kwānt. The bar is like a sophisticated speakeasy with a tropical atmosphere. It was important to me to create a place where you can go for a good time and five-star service without the fuss and formality. The drinks are also very creative because I’ve built a laboratory inside the bar.

I love bars that work with the seasons.

My friend Alex Kretana has a bar on Old Street called Tayēr + Elementary. Their focus is on seasonal ingredients and working with top chefs, which means an ever-changing menu. There’s also Scout in Hackney, part bar, part sustainability lab, with a focus on local ingredients — think foliage foraged from Hackney Marshes.

There are so many great bars and restaurants in London. My ideal night out would start in the Artesian Bar in the Langham Hotel, before strolling down to this cool little place called Chucs. It’s a real hidden gem in Mayfair serving up amazing Italian cuisine.

My favourite recent discovery is Louie in Covent Garden. They have amazing oysters and do a brilliant dry martini (not to mention a fabulous Seven Tails Old Fashioned). When I run out of inspiration, TWISPER is an ideal tool to discover new places around London because all of the recommendations are genuine and trustworthy.

I’m currently working with a lot of umami flavours. Black miso-based distillate, salted maple syrup, dried mushrooms infused in Campari or sweet vermouth... I’m drawn to things that aren’t obvious as cocktail ingredients at first. I’ve never had spirulina in a drink, for example, but I have it for breakfast, so why not.

I came to London for six months and 16 years later, I’m still here. When I arrived, the city felt so cosmopolitan, energetic and vibrant — you could find inspiration anywhere. Today, that hasn’t changed.

ABOVE: Erik serving a Hacienda cocktail

BELOW: Erik, seated in his Mayfair bar, Kwānt

IMAGES: STEFANO AGOSTINO



Essentials

TWISPER is a free social app to share and discover positive recommendations for restaurants, hotels and bars around the world. TWISPER is community-driven, promotes positive values and never sells on user data. Find out more at [twisper.com](https://www.twisper.com)

TWISPER
Experience Positivity

Download TWISPER now and follow Erik Lorincz’s recommendations



TRAVEL GEEKS

ASK THE EXPERTS

IN NEED OF ADVICE FOR YOUR NEXT TRIP? ARE YOU AFTER RECOMMENDATIONS, TIPS AND GUIDANCE? THE TRAVEL GEEKS HAVE THE ANSWERS...

Q // I'm looking for a luxury weekend getaway with a spa, but within easy reach. Is there anywhere you recommend?

Serial spa-goers who want somewhere new to explore are in for a treat. The Buxton Crescent hotel in the Derbyshire spa town has just opened for the first time in nearly 30 years, following a multimillion-pound renovation. Close to the Peak District, the five-star hotel is the first foray in UK from the Ensana Hotels brand, which already has some 26 spa properties across Europe. Treatments harness the therapeutic benefits of the town's thermal mineral waters, but also include a wide range of massages and facials. If you really want to splash out, book one of the luxurious suites with four-poster beds and freestanding baths. From £125, based on two people sharing an Attic Room, B&B. ensanahotels.com

One of my favourite iconic spa hotels, however, remains Gleneagles, just an hour from Glasgow or Edinburgh. Although it did close earlier in the year due to coronavirus, it's now reopened to much fanfare and, with 850 acres of countryside, it's easy to unwind in socially distanced style, with golf, horse riding and numerous country pursuits on offer. The Espa Spa has won numerous awards and continues to offer a range of treatments including aromatherapy and Balinese massages. Also on offer this winter, on selected dates, is the Wild Wellness programme — a three-day, wilderness-based retreat with walking, foraging and forest bathing, from £3,100. Rooms otherwise from £395, B&B. gleneagles.com

Should you prefer a more off-grid escape, with workshops, treatments and outdoor activities, then you'll want to make a beeline for the South West. On the banks of Cornwall's River Fal, Thera-Sea offers guests the chance to de-stress and connect with nature. The venue is only accessible by hike or boat and requires a reasonable level of fitness. Don't expect any ultra-luxurious accommodation — this is all about immersion in your environment. Instead of plush suites, guests bed down in comfortable yet humble lodgings such as potting sheds, treehouses or shepherds' huts, and feast on delicious meals cooked by a chef on an open fire. From £395 for a two-night retreat. thera-sea.co.uk
SAM LEWIS

FROM LEFT: The Buxton Crescent's outdoor pool; Villefranche-sur-Mer, Alpes Maritimes, France

Q // Now seems like the ideal time to try a boating holiday but I've never done it before. What tips do you have for a beginner?

First-time boaters will be relieved to know that no past experience is required and driving a boat is surprisingly easy. But rest assured, full instructions are given before departure when dealing with reputable hire companies.

Operators and local authorities have extensive maps, which make it clear where you can and can't go on the waterways. Other on-board information tells you approximately how long it will take to travel from point to point, where you can moor and what you can expect to find in each waterside town or village. Le Boat, for instance, also has a host of region guides who can help plan an itinerary in finer detail.

Many operators have more than one base, which means you can either return your boat to the same place you started or cruise one-way between two different bases. Usually, you can book any duration from a three-night short break to a two-week holiday, or even longer. An average of three to four hours cruising a day is a nice pace for a first-timer.

As for where to go, a personal favourite is Brittany in France. From early May, the waterside village of La Gacilly is blooming with a colourful display of flowers. Another option is Aigues-Mortes, in the south, which offers the chance for a very pleasant cruise. leboat.co.uk **CHERYL BROWN**



Q // I now work remotely and am considering relocating to somewhere sunny. Where do you recommend?

With more people using this year as a period of reflection and reassessing what's important to them, Barbados offers the ultimate work-life balance. Aside from the obvious benefits of living near outstanding beaches and a year-round warm climate, Barbados also has superb universal healthcare.

It's no secret that coronavirus has presented huge challenges to countries that rely strongly on tourism, such as Barbados, but the global working world has changed too, and the island's 'Welcome Stamp' enables those who can work remotely to set themselves up in paradise. There's excellent connectivity, with the fastest fibre internet and mobile services in the Caribbean, and a range of flexible office space locations to suit all requirements.

The country has also worked to ensure that the application process is as simple as possible,

too. After going live in July, it has received more than 1,500 applications and already has successful applicants living there. Barbados has welcomed people from a broad spectrum of industries and the aim is to embrace these global citizens into its community, leading to the transfer of knowledge with local people. Life on the island encourages integration at all levels, with visitors assimilating into the population easily.

A form can be filled in at barbadoswelcomestamp.bb to cover key details, and there's a fee of \$2,000 (£1,540) for individuals and \$3,000 (£2,310) for families. One huge benefit is that the Welcome Stamp doesn't affect applicants' tax, which carries on being paid in their normal jurisdiction. The visa is valid for 12 months and participants can come and go as they please.

PETRA ROACH

Q // Is it true that my pet passport will be invalid after Brexit?

From 1 January 2021, after the end of the Brexit transition period, trips to the EU or to Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein will have different rules. If you're a pet owner, this means you'll have to take action now in order to travel with your animal in early 2021. As it stands, from 1 January 2021, pet passports will no longer be valid, and despite plans by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to work with the European Commission to ensure a similar arrangement for pet travel after Brexit, currently there's no such arrangement.

Therefore, the government is advising those travelling with their cat, dog or ferret (yes, ferret) to contact their vet at least four months in advance of their travel date to discuss the latest requirements. This includes ensuring that your pet is microchipped and has had the requisite blood samples, with your vet supplying an official animal health certificate.

If you have pet insurance that covers travel, it's also worth checking that these new post-Brexit requirements are in line with your policy's coverage terms.

Further info: gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit
SARAH BARRELL

THE EXPERTS



SAM LEWIS // CONTRIBUTOR,
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
TRAVELLER (UK)



PETRA ROACH // GLOBAL
HEAD OF MARKETS AT
BARBADOS TOURISM
MARKETING INC.



CHERYL BROWN //
MANAGING DIRECTOR, LE
BOAT LEBOAT.CO.UK

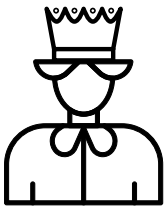


SARAH BARRELL //
ASSOCIATE EDITOR,
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
TRAVELLER (UK)

THE INFO

PASSPORTS, PLEASE

AS THE HOME OFFICE BEGINS PHASING OUT THE EU-STYLE BURGUNDY PASSPORT AND REINTRODUCING THE CLASSIC BLUE VERSION, WE GET THE LOWDOWN ON PASSPORTS AROUND THE WORLD. WORDS: NORA WALLAYA



The Queen

doesn't need a passport or any ID to travel, as UK passports are all issued in her name. The rest of the Royal Family must have one



Japan

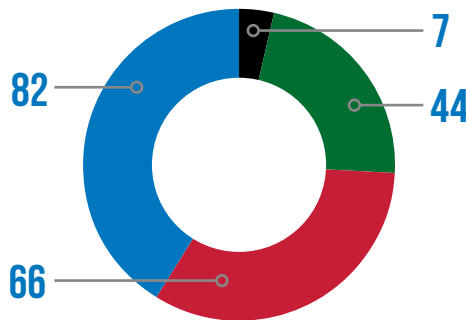
has the world's most powerful passport, with its citizens able to visit a total of 191 countries visa-free. Singapore is in second place with 190, and the UK ranks joint seventh



The number of countries British passport-holders can currently enter without a prior visa

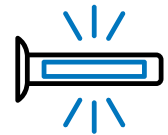
FLYING COLOURS

There are four passport colours around the world — black, blue, green and red/burgundy. Blue is the most popular colour, while black passports are favoured by just seven nations



76%

OF PEOPLE IN ENGLAND AND WALES HOLD A BRITISH PASSPORT, ACCORDING TO THE 2011 CENSUS. 17% HOLD NO PASSPORT AT ALL

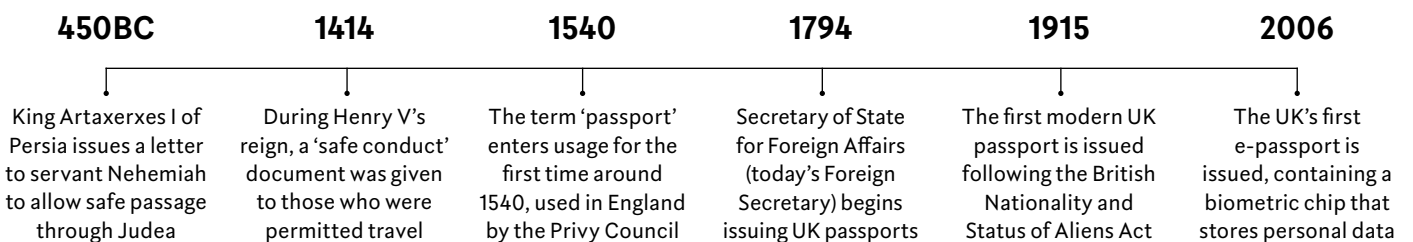


When placed under UV light, the pages of Norwegian passports glow with an iridescent image of the Northern Lights



The first modern British passport was a single page, folded into eight, bound in cardboard. It featured a photograph, signature and descriptions of facial features

A timeline of the passport



SOURCES: PASSPORTINDEX.ORG; HENLEYPASSPORTINDEX.COM; THEGUARDIAN.COM; ROYAL.UK; TELEGRAPH.CO.UK; HOMEOFFICEMEDIA.BLOG.GOV.UK; WEBARCHIVE.NATIONALARCHIVES.GOV.UK

HOT TOPIC

I READ THE EXTENDED VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE ONLINE AT [NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL](https://nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel)

WHY AIRPORT TESTING MATTERS

THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IS PINNING ITS HOPES ON AIRPORT TESTING TO LIMIT QUARANTINE AND BOOST ITS CHANCES OF STAGGERING ON THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS — BUT IS THIS THE MAGIC BULLET THAT WILL KEEP US TRAVELLING? WORDS: SARAH BARRELL

Quarantine roulette, the travel corridor shuffle — whatever you call it, there's no doubt that the UK government's weekly edicts on which countries are to lose their quarantine exemption are, at the very least, disruptive. Many travellers seeking to get home are being given just a few hours' notice that their destination is no longer within a safe travel corridor, leaving them facing inflated airfares, plus the practical ramifications of suddenly having to quarantine for 14 days on return. With a number of destinations either getting booted off or reinstated on the no-go list with confounding frequency as their infection rates rise and fall, the system seems nothing short of a travel industry wrecking ball. Is the only sustainable solution to introduce airport testing?

A case for inspiring confidence

"Testing and more testing is the only solution to giving people confidence and getting them moving again," says Paul Charles, CEO of The PC Agency travel consultancy. A spokesperson for this summer's effective Quash Quarantine campaign, Charles is also part of the new Test4Travel campaign; a recent poll it conducted suggested that the majority of the British public (62%) would prefer testing on arrival at ports and airports, rather than quarantine for 14 days upon return. More than half said they'd be prepared to cover the cost of the test themselves — a small investment compared to the high price of having to rebook flights and hotels and losing working hours.

"Testing enables travellers to book a trip and be reassured that others around them, on the same flight or cruise for example, are coronavirus-free as well," continues Charles. "Successful



testing also reduces the spread of coronavirus and removes the need for long, economically damaging quarantine periods."

Economic fallout

To many observers, it seems apparent that quarantine in the UK isn't working — for those who comply, it can be overly restrictive, while others simply ignore it. But with infection numbers rising worldwide, the government remains, for now, on the side of quarantine, pointing to the fact that testing isn't infallible. False negative results are a valid concern, possible when the virus is incubating and contagious but not detectable. But with airport testing in place at destinations across Europe and beyond, and the likes of Italy offering rapid antigen tests that produce results within 30 minutes, the UK lags well behind a test-and-trace approach to travel.

"Heathrow's traffic figures for August demonstrate the extent to which quarantine is strangling the economy," says the airport's chief executive officer John Holland-Kaye. "It's

cutting British businesses off from their international markets and blocking international students, tourists and investors from coming here to spend money."

Test & test again

It may seem that the Italian system is the answer, but one test alone won't catch someone who's incubating the virus. Heathrow has trialled several test solutions, including its polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing-on-arrival scheme, with a test facility unveiled at the airport in mid-August. Subject to government approval, this could provide passengers arriving from countries with higher infection rates with a reduced quarantine period if they test negative for coronavirus twice during a two-stage process. The airport has also launched pre-departure rapid-testing facilities for travellers to Hong Kong and Italy, both of which require passengers to provide a negative coronavirus test result prior to departure.

For the latest travel restrictions and requirements, visit gov.uk

TEST FOR SUCCESS

1

Two tests in succession could be 80% effective in identifying those with coronavirus, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC).

2

The WTTTC advocates a 'traffic light' system of reporting infection rates in different destinations.

3

Results could reduce the quarantine period from 14 days to between four and six, or none at all.

4

From December, the UK government's 'test-and-release' scheme could allow arrivals to take a PCR test after a week, which, if negative, would halve the 14-day quarantine period.

KIT LIST

WINTER HIKING

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF WINTER HIKING? KEEP THE HEAT IN AND THE WEATHER OUT. THESE ELEMENTS-PROOF ESSENTIALS WILL LET YOU ENJOY THE SEASON'S BRACING BEAUTY. WORDS: NORA WALLAYA

1 NORTH FACE 100 GLACIER FLEECE JACKET

It's a North Face classic — a snug shrouding of microfleece, full-zip fastening and elasticated cuffs provide a light, breathable layer of warmth without being cumbersome. Comfortable to wear beneath a waterproof or windbreaker. RRP: £65. thenorthface.co.uk


2 ICEBREAKER MERINO 200 LONG SLEEVE THERMAL TOP

You can take this light and thin jersey top anywhere; it's the ideal base layer. The wool helps to regulate body temperature, while limiting friction and body odour. With gusseted underarms for improved mobility. RRP: £80. icebreaker.com


3 OSPREY SKARAB DAYPACK

Stow away the essentials in this large-capacity daypack. The lightweight and versatile design makes it ideal for any time of year — features include a ventilated back panel and foam support, integrated rain cover, external hydration access and a padded hip belt. RRP: £80. ospreyeurope.com


4 BRASHER COUNTRY MASTER WALKING BOOTS

The hiker's stalwart, these sturdy, waterproof boots will stand the test of time. They have a shock-absorbing midsole and hardwearing sole to help you scramble over diverse terrain in comfort, and with complete support. RRP: £155. brasher.co.uk

5

5 PATAGONIA HOUDINI WINDBREAKER JACKET

Made from 100% recycled nylon, this all-terrain, lightweight windbreaker has an adjustable hood designed to allow for optimal peripheral vision. There's also a zippered chest pocket that doubles as a detachable day bag. RRP: £90. patagonia.com

6 SMARTWOOL PHD PRO OUTDOOR SOCKS

For happy feet, look no further than these thoughtfully designed socks. The luxurious merino wool-blend makes them much loved for their performance-inspired fit and they also come in a range of eye-catching styles. RRP: £26.95. smartwool.co.uk


Three more: winter warmers
SEALSKINZ WATERPROOF BEANIE HAT

This woolly hat's three-layer construction ensures a snug fit, with waterproofing and insulation. RRP: £25. sealskinz.com


MOUNTAIN WAREHOUSE COB ACTIVE HEAD TORCH

This head torch can fit beneath a hat or hood and has a beam distance of 50ft. RRP: £9.99. mountainwarehouse.com


UNDER ARMOUR LINER GLOVES

Rain and snow-repellent, these soft-knit gloves have a silicone print for better grip and touchscreen capability. RRP: £26. underarmour.co.uk



AWARDED WORLD'S BEST SKI CHALET FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS

Out of this world



WELCOME TO YOUR OWN PRIVATE 5* CHALET

Experience the perfect union of exquisite luxury with unrivalled care – and the best views in Zermatt. At the World's Best Ski Chalet, we craft beautiful experiences to create unforgettable memories. With superlative bespoke service to serve your wishes, come and enjoy your ultimate stay.

 ELYSIAN
COLLECTION

elysiancollection.com

+44 203 468 2235



TRAVELLER

TRAVEL WRITING COMPETITION 2020

Needless to say, this hasn't been a normal year. With international travel grounded for much of 2020, many of us have turned to past adventures for inspiration and escapism. The results of this year's Travel Writing Competition, therefore, have an added poignancy. From the hundreds of entries, our team whittled the list down to one winner and three runners-up, and was once again bowled over by the quality of entries and breadth of colourful experiences from across the globe.



WINNER

THAILAND: TALES OF THE TRIGGER-HAPPY

TO MARK THE TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR, CROWDS TAKE TO THE STREETS ARMED WITH WATER PISTOLS, SUPER SOAKERS AND BRIMFUL BUCKETS, READY TO DO BATTLE IN THE WORLD'S WETTEST FESTIVAL, SONGKRAN.
WORDS: DOUG LOYNES

With my finger still hovering over the trigger of my weapon, I wipe the sweat from my brow as the morning humidity presses down upon me. Across the road, I catch sight of a market seller scrambling to take cover. He meets my gaze and I shoot him a tight, furtive nod. In return, he holds up three fingers. Three hostiles? I scan the perimeter. Nothing. I gesture for more information. Now he holds up two fingers. Again, I steal a glance down the road but I see no sign of any threat he could be alluding to. And then, slowly, he shows me the reverse of his hand, leaving just one finger extended. The middle finger. By the time I've turned to face my three grinning assailants, it's already too late and I've been doused with an industrial-sized bucket of freezing-cold water.

Every year in Thailand, thousands of people take to the streets for the Songkran Festival — welcoming in the Thai New Year with three straight days of well-mannered watery warfare. Falling at the end of the country's dry season, a national water fight festival certainly offers welcome respite during a period in which temperatures can reach 45C, but behind the mayhem lies a very traditional Buddhist sentiment.

For centuries, the Thai people have gathered during Songkran to splash water over their friends and families, believing that this practice will wash away their bad luck from the previous year so they may enter the new year with good fortune on their

side. I therefore took great comfort in the knowledge that I was about to be cleansed of all misfortune as I stepped out of my tuk-tuk upon arrival in Bangkok, only for my wallet to be promptly blasted out of my hand by a six-year-old armed with a Super Soaker so big he had to fire it from his shoulder, as if it were a bazooka.

Armed only with a poxy water pistol, I spent most of Songkran cowering in various hidey-holes, which allowed me ample time for reflection. Western influence has certainly flexed its capitalist muscles in Thailand, with American food chains now outmuscling traditional street vendors at every corner and more 7-Elevens springing up than you can shake a Slurpee at. One might even argue that the Songkran Festival itself has cashed in its own cultural significance for an event that better appeals to the masses of tourists that descend upon Thailand each year. And yet, as I watch an elderly gentleman cackle in manic glee as he rains water balloons down upon a family of unsuspecting tourists, Thailand's enduring appeal becomes clear.

Sure, visitors flock to Thailand to find themselves in the foothills of Chiang Mai, typically before going on to lose themselves at the infamously heinous Full Moon Party. But it is the people of Thailand they remember and return for. A warm, fun-loving people who take pride in allowing strangers to share in their ways. Water and all.

THE PRIZE

Courtesy of TUI, the winner receives £3,000 worth of holiday vouchers to use to book a TUI Tour or another TUI holiday of their choice. tui.co.uk

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

Doug's Songkran story threw us right into the thick of it, with his finger on the trigger, and cleverly built subtle suspense around a tense stand-off in the opening paragraph. He continues the clear, focused narrative with flair, ducking in and out of the water fight with informative snippets and his own takes on the festival. It's an action-packed, well-paced anecdote that really stood out.



Koh Jum
BEACH VILLAS

A LUXURY ECO-CHIC BEACH VILLA HIDEOUT

Discover Thailand's last remaining retro island experience at Koh Jum Beach Villas, located on Koh Jum in the heart of Krabi Province. The community of privately owned indulgent villas sets the highest sustainable luxury benchmark for island resort living. The well-designed eco-villas are located directly on the resort's 700 meter long beach or in the lush tropical gardens with beautiful sunset views overlooking Phi Phi National Marine Park.



VILLAS

Secluded bespoke villas ranging from one bedroom up to five, are all inspired by local culture featuring elegant art and priceless antiques. Within each of the spacious rooms and gardens be immersed in a sanctuary where guests can indulge in serenity, privacy and personalized Asian hospitality while surrounded by captivating nature.



SUSTAINABLE PHILOSOPHY

A leader in low density high sustainability development and Gold Certified for Accommodation Sustainability with Travelife with a strong commitment to make significant efforts to reduce its social, environmental and economic impact. An abundance of undisturbed nature, the preservation of culture, generous space, privacy, opportunities to be "disconnected" where and when desired, real experiences and true emotions.



THE ISLAND

Koh Jum is a relatively unknown tropical island paradise in the Andaman Sea, only 30 minutes by boat from the mainland. The community spirited island, with its incredible beaches and ultra-relaxing atmosphere, has been left almost entirely untouched, which makes it the perfect place for a memorable beach hideaway holiday.





RUNNER-UP

CAMARGUE: HORSES FOR COURSES

RIPPLING ACROSS SOUTHERN FRANCE, THE MARSHLANDS OF THE CAMARGUE OFFER THE CHANCE TO FULFIL A DECADES-OLD DREAM OF A HORSEBACK ADVENTURE. WORDS: ISABEL EATON

The Camargue, at last: a long-awaited ride through France's marshlands. Hooves sink deep into the mud and saltwater splashes our thighs, transforming grey-coated Camargue ponies into freckled Appaloosas. On reaching firmer ground, we break into a canter, sending startled flamingos and my happy heart soaring.

On a muggy morning in early May, I'm following in the hoofprints of a dream born 20 years earlier. As a pony-mad teenager, I was captivated by a documentary exploring the wild marshlands of the Camargue on horseback. Daydreams of saddlebags filled with fresh baguettes and sun-drenched gallops among exotic wildlife formed a seed of longing that took root on bleakly-brown hacks through wintry Fenlands.

Expectation further thickens the humid air, therefore, when Valérie and I finally set out from her stables on the edge of the Étang

de l'Or two decades later. The wettest spring that locals can remember, where rain burst from swollen purple clouds in violent torrents seemingly intent on washing out the old landscape and starting afresh, has painted the countryside an exuberant green, and the air vibrates with the chattering of thousands of birds, frogs and insects.

Winding through the thicket that borders the reserve, ducking low to avoid branches shot with vivid spring growth, my eye is caught by the electric-blue flash of a European roller bird taking flight, the first glimpse of foreign fauna. The ponies, however, are focused on the jangling bells of nearby sheep and skitter nervously as we approach the clearing where they graze. Passing the summer months in a traditional wooden cabin among the marshes, without running water or electricity and far from the nearest village, Bernard, the grizzled shepherd we find guarding the animals, talks

of nights that resound with the calls of bats, birds and mosquitoes and days that revolve around his flock.

Finally in company, he's keen to chat but, impatient to explore, we canter on until firm ground finally gives way to salty marshland. Slowing to a walk, our ponies pick their way through the reeds to shallower waters. I breathe in the salted air and as a family of flamingos fly overhead, twig legs trailing, there's no doubting that I'm in the Camargue at last. At the edge of the marsh, we trot past a field of umber-coated Camargue bulls, the ponies notably less perturbed by these fleet-footed beasts with their cruelly chiselled horns than by Bernard's harmless flock.

Destined for the Course Camarguaise, the area's bullfighting spectacle, the black bull is as much a symbol of the region as its white horses. **READ THE FULL VERSION ONLINE AT [NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL](https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel)**



RUNNER-UP

CONGO: HANGING IN THE BALANCE

IN GOMA, IN THE SHADOW OF MOUNT NYIRAGONGO, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES SIMMER BELOW THE SURFACE AND AN UNEASY TENSION HANGS IN THE AIR. WORDS: NIKKI SCRIVENER

The wind kisses my face as we fly out of the city. Anxiously, I cling to the back of the stranger in whose hands I've so perilously placed my life. The straps of my helmet whirl about my face, adding to my general sense of disorientation. With agility and ease, he dodges potholes and oncoming traffic, showing little concern for our safety. Other bikes pull up alongside us, but with a quick twist of the wrist, we race on, leaving only a cloud of dust rising between ourselves and the city of Goma as we accelerate into the wild, untamed countryside of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The volcano is now in sight; it grows larger and more imposing every few metres.

The backstreets of Goma are disfigured by the hardened black mass of volcanic rock that only recently flowed like a deadly river through the city. The solidified lava rock twists and turns through alleyways and along narrow roads; a constant reminder of the threat posed by Mount Nyiragongo, which sits just 12 miles north and keeps a constant, menacing watch over the town. The

volcano erupted in 2002, destroying 15% of Goma and leaving over 100,000 homeless. The summit of this deadly mountain is my destination.

Earlier in the morning, as I'd strolled along Boulevard Kanya Mulanga, I gained a sense of the two worlds that coexist in this troubled city. The scent of freshly baked pastries and brewing coffee wafts gently from the French boulangeries. Meanwhile, a constant stream of sparkling white UN armoured trucks and 4x4s flows by.

The United Nations peacekeeping presence in the DRC is unmatched almost anywhere else in the world. This country, containing one of the greatest supplies of natural resources on Earth, has suffered years of war and exploitation from Western powers and internal forces alike. This morning, the occupants of these fortified vehicles wave as they pass by, unaccustomed to witnessing a lone tourist in the sea of Congolese faces.

READ THE FULL VERSION ONLINE AT NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL

RUNNER-UP

PANTANAL: WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY


SOUTHERN BRAZIL'S REMOTE PANTANAL REGION — THE HOME OF THE MAJESTIC JAGUAR — CONCEALS A WEALTH OF CURIOUS SIGHTS. WORDS: DEBORAH TELKMAN

"There!" says our guide Susan, pointing into the gloom beneath the overhanging trees at the side of the rolling brown water. As I peer into the darkness, a shape begins to resolve itself, and suddenly I find myself in the presence of the most iconic animal of this continent: a jaguar.

I'm sitting in a small, open boat on the Tres Irmãos River, deep in the Pantanal region of Brazil. The sun is beating down: it's nearly 40C and I can feel the sweat sliding through my hair. This is 'Jaguarland': a freshwater wetland covering an area as big as the UK and, Susan tells me, the best place in the world to see these elusive animals in the wild.

The journey has been a long one: three flights, followed by two days sliding along the sand and mud and under the rickety wooden bridges of the Transpantaneira Highway to Porto Jofre. Finally, boarding the boat that would take us to our 'flotel', we sped down the river, prow aloft and the wake flying behind us. I felt as though I was part of a Bond film.

Despite the remoteness, however, we're not alone. Six other boats are here, each one anchored and swaying slightly against the strong river current. In each boat, eyes and cameras are all trained on the sleeping predator beneath the jungle canopy. He's been sleeping for a while now, but we wait in the heat, hoping for some action. It's quiet here, apart from the hum of insects, the birdsong and the occasional, hopeful click of a camera.

I hear a splash behind me, and turn to find a giant otter looking curiously at me from the water. He's eating his lunch, an enormous bright green catfish, turning the slippery fish dextrously in his delicate paws. The boat behind ours was filled with serious photographers, their huge lenses bristling like bazooka barrels. So focused were they on the jaguar that not one of them noticed the amazing dinner show going on behind them. **READ THE FULL VERSION ONLINE AT NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL** 



SOORI

BALI

Naturally



EST. 1928

THE LEADING HOTELS
OF THE WORLD®

www.sooribali.com

FIND YOUR HAVEN



PORTONOVİ
MONTENEGRO

Nestled between emerald peaks and sapphire waters, lies Portonovi, the jewel of the Adriatic Riviera. This idyllic waterfront village offers a uniquely Mediterranean lifestyle in the heart of Montenegro, with a world-class D-Marin Portonovi marina and a mix of luxurious modern holiday accommodation.

Discover Montenegro's new haven.

Book your stay today | stay@portonovi.com | + 382 31 353 600

PORTONOVİ.COM

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

FOOD FESTIVAL

17-18 JULY 2021

BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE, LONDON |

Experience the world
through food and travel

FEATURING

MIMI AYE • VANESSA BOLOSIER • GRACE DENT • FUCHSIA DUNLOP
JUDY JOO • MARIANNA LEIVADITAKI • THEO MICHAELS
MARTIN MORALES • JOSÉ PIZARRO • JAY RAYNER • JACK STEIN
CHRIS BAVIN • OLLIE HORN • KATRINA RIDLEY

DESTINATIONS

CROATIA • CYPRUS • ENGLAND • GEORGIA • GREECE
GRENADA • GUATEMALA • GUADELOUPE • ITALY
MONTENEGRO • TAIWAN • WALES

£10
EARLY-BIRD
TICKETS
AVAILABLE

BOOK NOW: [FOODFESTIVAL.NATGEOTRAVELLER.CO.UK](https://www.foodfestival.natgeotraveller.co.uk)

Booking fees apply. Tickets include entry to the festival for one day only, including access to all interviews, sessions and demonstrations. Limited availability. Tickets are non-refundable; however, should the event be cancelled due to UK government advice regarding the coronavirus outbreak, all ticket-holders will be refunded within 14 days of the government's announcement.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Although travel hasn't quite been the same this year, 2021 promises a wealth of inspiration. Allow us to fire up your sense of adventure with the 35 destinations making waves in the year ahead

Plus // *Antwerp, Denmark, Edinburgh, Hamburg, France, Indonesia, Los Angeles, Malta, Portugal, York*

**JAN/FEB 2021 ISSUE
ON SALE 3 DECEMBER**

*For more information on our subscription offer,
see page 144*

Peter Hahn

Experience the Indulgent Luxury of 100% Merino Wool

A perfect blend of style and luxurious comfort. The PETER HAHN Cardigan is made of "Softwool", a fine, high quality merino wool famous for its unique and incredibly soft feel. The pretty mélange of colours show this yarn to its best advantage. The long, casual style with ribbed cuffs, hem and pocket openings will complement any outfit for the changing season ahead.

And with **£50 OFF PLUS FREE DELIVERY** when you order today, it's a little luxury at an exquisite price.

WAS ~~£119~~

only £69

£50 OFF PLUS FREE DELIVERY

*For a limited time only**



AVAILABLE IN 7 GREAT COLOURS

Light Grey	816 173 E5
Ice Blue	807 875 E5
Medium Grey	820 266 E5
Natural	816 256 E5
Blue	807 677 E5
Red	807 878 E5
Black	820 290 E5

100%
MERINO
WOOL

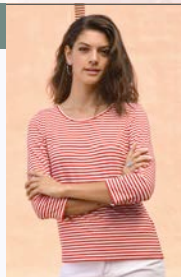


COMPLETE THE LOOK

Round neck top by PETER HAHN in a shorter design with 3/4-length sleeves.

Was ~~£55~~ **NOW ONLY £39**

Brown/grey 875 112 E5	Brown/taupe 875 104 E5	Black/brown 875 107 E5
Ice blue 940 809 E5	Red/white 940 810 E5	Marine/white 940 825 E5



ALL SIZES ONE PRICE. Available in: 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26



LIMITED
OFFER

£50 OFF
+ FREE P&P

502 487 E5

100% GUARANTEE | Should you not be 100% satisfied with a purchase you may return it with proof of purchase at any time for a full refund.

Call FREE and quote **502 487 E5** to get this great offer

0800 054 2120

Or shop online and quote **502 487 E5**
peterhahn.co.uk/special

HURRY LIMITED OFFER!

*The offer is only valid once, until 31.12.20, and only for this cardigan and top. Cannot be combined with other current offers. No compensation in cash. 100% Satisfaction guarantee; ordered articles may be returned at any time for exchange or refund if not suitable. Articles must be returned with a proof of purchase. PETER HAHN Limited • Woodview Road • Paignton • Devon • TQ4 7SR • Registered No. 3341321. Your privacy is important to us. To find out about our privacy policy please either visit peterhahn.co.uk/dataprotection or telephone us for free on 0800 054 2120.

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
TRAVELLER

+ FOOD

CHRISTMAS OFFER

ULTIMATE BUNDLE GIFT SUBSCRIPTION



TRIAL THE DIGITAL AND PRINT EDITIONS OF BOTH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER & NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER FOOD

It's not too early to be thinking of Christmas – and we've got just the idea for a festive gift. Our ultimate subscription bundle offers access to both the print and digital editions of *National Geographic Traveller* and *National Geographic Traveller Food*. Or why not treat yourself?

For just £20, the bundle contains five issues of *National Geographic Traveller* and two issues of *National Geographic Traveller Food*. Whether you're an active adventurer or simply want to immerse yourself in a destination from the comfort of your own home, this is the perfect gift for the curious-minded traveller.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR YOURSELF OR A LOVED ONE AND YOU'LL GET:

- AWARD-WINNING, INSPIRING CONTENT
- FREE DELIVERY OF THE PRINT EDITIONS
- IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO THE DIGITAL EDITIONS
- A SAVING OF 42% OFF THE COVER PRICE
- NEVER MISS AN ISSUE

VISIT [NATGEOTRAVELLER.IMBMSUBSCRIPTIONS.COM/XMAS1](https://natgeotraveller.imbmsubscriptions.com/xmas1)
OR CALL 01293 312166, QUOTING 'XMAS1'

T&Cs: Closing date for orders is 1 January 2021. The price shown is a UK Direct Debit offer. Your subscription will begin with the next available issue. If you do not cancel at the end of that period, the subscription will auto-renew by Direct Debit for five issues at £25. All subscriptions are non-refundable. This is a limited offer and may be withdrawn at any time. Overseas subscriptions are also available and payable by credit card. An annual bundle subscription to Europe is £56. An annual bundle subscription to the rest of the world is £60. Please note: by subscribing, we will contact you about your subscription from time to time.

INBOX

Did you love one of our features? Did a story inspire an adventure? Let us know what you think of the magazine and the Star Letter will win the incredible prize below

GET IN TOUCH

✉ inbox@natgeotraveller.co.uk

Have a query about subscriptions?

Get in touch at natgeotraveller@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk or call 01293 312166



Jessica Nabongo in Kyrgyzstan

WIN



A G-Shock Mudmaster watch worth £325!

The GG-B100-1AER is the latest addition to G-Shock's Mudmaster range, designed for use in the harshest outdoor conditions. The timepiece has a Carbon Core Guard case, finished with stylish herringbone design and a chrome bezel. It's smart, too, with a pedometer, compass, and both atmospheric pressure and temperature gauges to assist on the most challenging adventures. g-shock.co.uk

★ STAR LETTER

A brave new world

As one of many who, I suspect, feels increasingly helpless at the state of our world and the destructive behaviour of too many within it, I want to thank Jessica Nabongo for talking about what it means to be fearless (Meet the Adventurer, Sept/Oct 2020). As I approach my 61st year, I'm increasingly conscious of my mortality. Hearing about Barbara Hillary, the first black woman to visit both the North and South Pole at the age of 75 and 79, is truly inspiring, as is Jessica's experience that 'most people are good' and her wise council to 'humble yourself' while travelling. Thank you for such an uplifting article about one of life's true adventurers.

ANTHONY WILLIAM MILES

Homeward bound

Amelia Duggan's article 'The Emerald Edge of Europe' (Jul/Aug 2020) inspired me to return and complete the Wild Atlantic Way. Memories of seeing Fungie the dolphin in Dingle Bay, and buying a leather belt in a Dick Mack's pub/shop in Dingle flooded back. Now living in Finland, it's been too long since I immersed myself in the west coast of my home country. I plan to return in 2021 to take on the Wild Atlantic Way and acquaint myself with the mountains of Donegal, the beaches near Belmullet and the limestone pavements of the Burren. **TOM WALSH**

Turkish delights

Your article about Cappadocia (Sept/Oct 2020) reminded me of visiting Greece and Turkey as a twentysomething in 1982 with my partner. Our adventure began with an epic four-day bus ride across Europe, and to cut a long story short, we ended up spending two months travelling around Turkey on local buses and *dolmuş* taxis. The highlight was definitely Cappadocia, where we met two local men who helped us explore the fairy villages and underground cave cities, with no other tourists in sight. We felt incredibly lucky — Cappadocia is too special to just fly around in a whistle-stop tour, as your article reminded me. Thank you for helping us see the wonder of the world all around us. **SUE KIRK**



#NGTUK

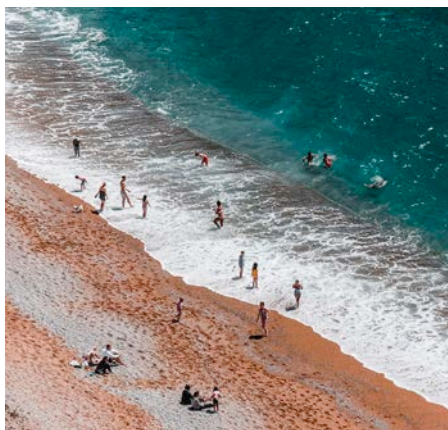
Every issue, we highlight the best photos you've shared with us on Instagram using #NGTUK



@NATGEOTRAVELUK
Follow us on Instagram
for inspiring travel
photography
every day



@azimronnie
Ghior boat market, Bangladesh



@wafflesandlamingtons
Durdle Door, Dorset



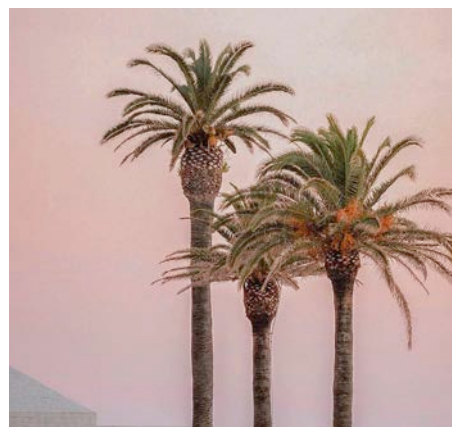
@framethewild
Grey seal, Horsey Gap, Norfolk



@nina.waffenschmidt
Cheetahs, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania



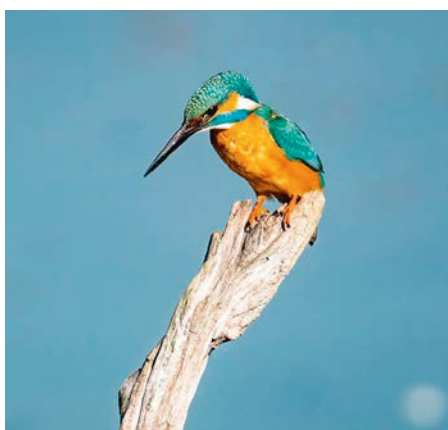
@davidmcclanephotography
Jodhpur, India



@sonia_mod
Cascais, Portugal



@wanderersrepublic
Deadvlei, Namibia



@marcoanfossiphoto
Kingfisher, Piedmont, Italy



@dan_scape
Road near Sauðárkrúkur, Iceland



ABOUT VINTAGE

DENMARK



THIS TURTLE
IS GOING
FAST

Introducing our newest diver; the **1926 AT'SEA Green Turtle**. Carbon neutral from idea to delivery, made with high-precision stainless steel, scratch-resistant sapphire crystal and with a 200-meter water resistance. An ally to the planet and on your next adventure.

First two batches sold out in no time. 3rd batch releases mid-November.

Try to catch it at www.aboutvintage.com

Collections from €199 - €999

CO2 neutral watches | Engraving - on the house | Free extra strap | Free delivery & returns



FAMILUX RESORTS

Where family means freedom

*Discover the world's first and only premium hotel group
catering exclusively to families with children.*



*Bring your kids,
find yourself.*