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The pandemic has transformed much of the Americas. Visit a more inclusive Windy City; trek through Chile's rugged coastline; dance to bachata beats in Mérida, Mexico; and eat jerk lamb chops in Portland, Jamaica.

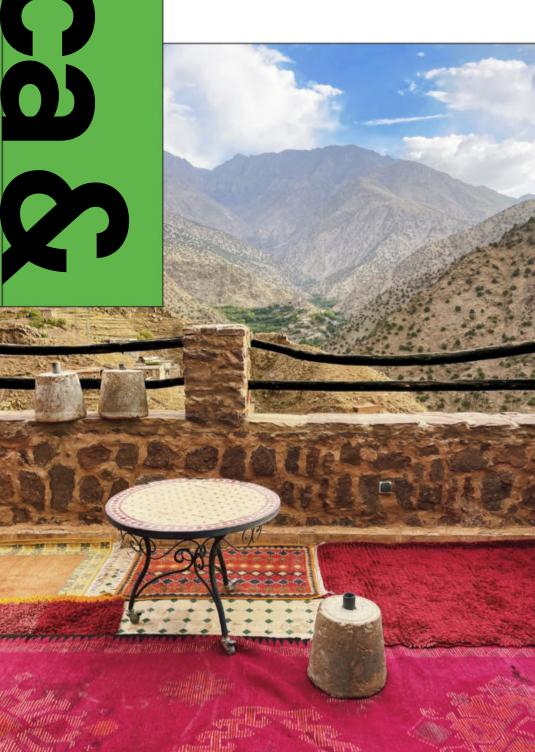


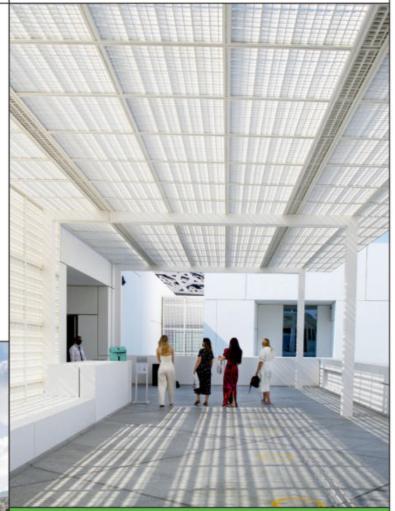


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There's more to Africa than safaris and more to the Middle **East than deserts. Consider** embarking on a river-rafting adventure in Uganda. Walk among the echoes of ancient **Egypt in Luxor. And spot** Arabian oryx in Abu Dhabi.





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Europe offers a breadth of destinations for every kind of traveler. Cycle through Germany's most sustainable wine region. Explore Copenhagen's up-and-coming neighborhoods. Hike the wild mountains of Croatia.

Great Innovation

drives a cleaner future

Scottish company MacRebur repurposes non-recyclable plastic waste into materials used to build new road surfaces, with every kilometre containing the equivalent weight of nearly 750,000 single-use plastic bags. Join us and see things differently.





asla

In Taiwan, high-end chefs are rediscovering native ingredients. Sri Lanka is embracing its new role as an outdoor paradise. And in Cairns, Australia, **Sea Rangers are** celebrating the region's Indigenous heritage.

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HAWAII

Tahiti



Two cocktails and a movie past Hawai'i ...
you'll find authentic Polynesia. Immerse yourself
in lagoons teeming with color. Learn to crack
open a coconut from a local. Sink your toes
into two private beach experiences, one in Bora
Bora—the other off the coast of Taha'a. Best
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Where are you excited to go next?

"I can't wait to visit Hanoi, for an epic street food crawl: bánh xeo, bún chả, bánh cuốn, and so much more." – K.L.

much more." –K.L.

"I'm looking forward to visiting Tokyo, Japan, as well as the surrounding mountains where my husband's family is from." —M.H.

"I plan to drive from Charleston, South Carolina, to Asheville, North Carolina, and I'm excited to explore the outdoors in both destinations." –M.K.



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"I'll be spending a week in April in the south of Sweden at a sailing regatta in Kalmar." – B.B.

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Contributors





TASNEEM ALSULTAN *Photographer*

Tasneem Alsultan is best known for her thoughtprovoking photographs on gender and social issues in the Middle East. For Abu Dhabi (p. 66), she let the cosmopolitan nature of the city speak for itself, focusing her lens on modern museums and children playing near opulent mosques. "I seek to portray places and people with an honest and raw view," Alsultan says. Follow her on Instagram @tasneemalsultan.



DEBBIE OLSENWriter

A travel writer for more than 20 years, Debbie Olsen is the author of 125 Nature Hot Spots in Alberta (Firefly Books, 2018) and the blog Wander Woman Travel. On her trip to **Métis Crossing** (p. 40) in Alberta last year, Olsen reconnected with her Indigenous roots after growing up in foster care with limited access to her Métis mother. "In Canada, there are many Indigenous people who grew up separated from their culture as I did," Olsen says. "It was nice to go and experience what Métis culture means." Find her on Twitter and Instagram @wwtravelmag.



CLARISSA WEI Writer

Food and culture writer Clarissa Wei is passionate about telling the story behind the food of **Taiwan** (p. 107) from the perspectives of the people who make it. Wei digs into the ways chefs are using native ingredients to help forge a national identity distinct from mainland China's. "There's an existential crisis going on in Taiwan and people are really trying to figure out who we are and what we are," Wei says. Her cookbook, Made in Taiwan (Simon Element), is set to publish in 2023. Track her food and farming adventures on Instagram @dearclarissa.



Writer & Photographer

Since moving to **Singapore** (p. 102) in 2003, Manila-born travel photographer and writer Lester V. Ledesma has fallen more in love with the city-state: It's where he met his wife, had children, and solidified his career. "I love this place because of its amazing mix of cultures and the fact that everyone gets along, despite the different religions and ethnicities," Ledesma says. After the pandemic, he's looking forward to documenting the region get back on its feet. Follow him on Instagram @skylightimages.



MIMI ABOROWA
Writer

For this issue, Mimi Aborowa contributed a love letter to Nigeria's third-largest city, **Ibadan** (p. 76), which is often overlooked by travelers. "It's this place that has so much history, but it's kind of been forgotten," Aborowa says. She's also the creative director and founder of *Ìrìn* Journal, a print magazine dedicated to showcasing a side of Africa that goes beyond safaris and pyramids. Find it on Instagram @theirinjournal.



JASON CHUANG
Illustrator

For Where Travel Takes You (p. 108), Londonbased Taiwanese illustrator Jason Chuang was inspired by postcards, images that can represent the joy of travel and inspire new adventures. Dreamy and mind-bending, Chuang's work is heavily influenced by surrealism as well as medieval Eastern art. "I am naturally attracted to bizarre and beautiful things, the oddities that occur in everyday life," Chuang says. Find more of his work on Instagram @jasonchuangart.



From the Editor

AROUND THE WORLD IN 39 PLACES

AS I WRITE THIS LETTER, I've just returned home from a whirlwind week of travel. I flew to Washington, D.C., to moderate two panels on sustainability at a conference organized by the U.S. Travel Association. I also visited the newly reopened Hirshhorn Museum, where I wandered through the sweeping and deeply moving retrospective of performance artist and musician Laurie Anderson's work (open through July).

Then I returned to San Francisco and drove to Yosemite National Park with my family for a long weekend of exploration and relaxation. Crowds were sparse, and the rivers and waterfalls were rushing, a welcome sight to this wildfire-weary Californian.

For me, travel is back after a long pause. My elder daughter received her first COVID-19 vaccination this week, and I've already begun plotting out our next 12 months of trips. Perhaps you're doing the same. Or maybe you're still just fantasizing about travel, unsure about where you'll go next and when.

In this special issue, we aim to inspire all your travel hopes and dreams, wherever you fall on that spectrum. We've collected 39 love letters to various places, written by the people who know them best: locals. How did we decide what to

cover? We focused on the lesser-known sides of a destination (Abu Dhabi, page 66, and Taiwan, page 107); spots where your visit could really count (Turkana, Kenya, page 74, and Ten Thousand Islands, Florida, page 47); and those cities that could use a little love on the heels of 2020 and 2021 (Chicago, page 32, and Copenhagen, page 84). As always, we tell these stories through the lens of travel as a force for good.

I'd love to hear what you think of the issue and where you want to head next. Please find me on Twitter @jules_afar.

In Weligama, Sri Lanka, fishermen perch on stilts, a tradition that started in the 1940s.

Travel well,

JULIA COSGROVE

Editor in Chief

Note: At press time, not all the destinations featured in this issue had reopened to American travelers. Before booking, check the U.S. State Department's detailed COVID-19 travel information and country-specific advisories.



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SHERIDANWYOMING.ORG

The gods of climate change made some of their first displays of power in this slice of rural California, where there's much to love and much to protect. by Chris Colin

DID YOU KNOW?

The Grateful Dead used to rehearse in the community of Rio Nido.

REQUIRED READING

Try Tales of the Russian **River: Stumptown Stories** by John C. Schubert.

STAY LONGER

The cities of Healdsburg and Sebastopol are both within striking distance.



NEIGHBORHOOD **NOT TO MISS**

Villa Grande. It's not quite a hobbit village, but this unincorporated community near Monte Rio is tucked away, shaded, and cute.

THE BAY AREA IS STILL lovable in its fleece-wearing Tesla millionaire kind of way, but-local secret here-the region's faded old river towns have long been the heart of our most quintessential Northern California-ness. The addled trappings of modern life fall away at the first quake of the aspens. What remains is a refreshingly purer iteration of the human spirit, miles from the venturefunded sleekness of San Francisco. Here, at a lazy bend in the shimmering Russian River, a wiry man in a milk jug raft drifts past singing Puccini. Explore farther and you'll discover a five-anddime on Main Street in Guerneville. Join

a barbecue at the Monte Rio firehouse. Feel the gentle purling of the river under your butt as your inner tube floats vaguely west, not a care in the world except not spilling that beer someone tossed you. The Lower Russian River Valley has long inhabited a slower, more analog era that's left room for funky charms to take root. The passage of time seemed to just sort of overlook this region—at least until now.

Over the last couple years, a dramatic transformation has ripped through these once-serene parts, forced not by the Silicon Valley climate but by the actual climate. Historic flooding in 2019 gave way to historic wildfires in 2020. California's drought has only grown more droughty, sapping snowmelt and parching watersheds. For the first time, the Russian River feels not like an embrace of the past, but like a preview of the future.

No need to dwell on the direness; we know the deal. Instead I've come to share a different take: There's never been a better time to visit this corner of the planet. Certainly the wonderful stuff is as wonderful as ever—a float



down the river, a trek to the misty coast near the town of Jenner, a stroll through the redwoods. But look closer and you'll see something new-neighbors helping each other clear underbrush, establish phone trees, step up river maintenance. At a bar not long ago. I heard two burly local dudes parsing the nuances of fuel moisture content.

The future will soon test us all. But maybe it'll reacquaint us, too, with what we love about the world, so we can go about saving it. (A)

Contributing writer Chris Colin wrote about Hawai'i in the September/October issue of AFAR. *His most recent book is* Off: The Day the Internet Died (Prestel, 2021).



Brot in Guerneville; the Monte Rio Theatre & Extravaganza. Opposite page: The Russian River. es at This page, from top: Dish





AFRESH CHARLESTON

DISCOVER A DIFFERENT SIDE OF THE HOLY CITY

Highlighting everything from lesser-visited beaches and Black-owned businesses to historic landmarks and local restaurants, this map helps you explore the outdoors responsibly, shop small, celebrate diversity, and more—proving that whether it's your first time or one of many, a trip to Charleston, South Carolina is always a distinctly rewarding experience.

Outdoor Adventure

Explore the surrounding water and wildlife.

Sullivan's Island Lighthouse

Distinctly modern, the "Charleston Light" makes for postcardworthy photo ops.

Folly Beach

Head to the beach's pier or the Washout area for some of the best surfing on the East Coast.

Mount Pleasant

Paddle by kayak, passing manatees and dolphins along the way.

Historic Sites

Reckon with Charleston's storied past.

Charles Towne Landing

Where English settlers landed in 1670 is now home to Charleston's only replica of a 17th-century trading vessel.

Fort Sumter National Monument

Built on an island at the harbor's mouth, this marks the spot where the Civil War's first shot was fired in 1861.

USS Yorktown

Tour the massive World War II-era aircraft carrier's interior, then check out more than two dozen aircraft on the flight deck.

Aiken-Rhett House

Built in the 1820s, this well-preserved house features former slave quarters.

Food and Drink

Get a taste of the Lowcountry.

The Daily

At this neighborhood café, everything from fresh produce to baked goods comes from area farmers and artisans.

Circa 1886

This romantic spot serves elevated Lowcountry cuisine like sea scallops with blue corn grits.

Graft Wine Shop

Test-drive bottles before buying at this shop and bar where locals come to sip, socialize, and listen to vinyl.

High Wire Distilling

Charleston's first distillery since Prohibition offers tours and tastings of smallbatch spirits, including gin, rum, whiskey, and vodka.

Celebrate Black Culture

Support small businesses and explore heritage.

The Sound of Charleston

Charleston's longestrunning musical production, this must-see show combines gospel, Gershwin, music of the Civil War, and jazz for a special, memorable night out.

Rodney Scott's Whole Hog BBQ

This James Beard Award-winning pitmaster serves pulled pork, plus fried catfish and more.

International African American Museum

Opening in 2022 on the very spot where nearly half of Africans brought to North America on slave ships disembarked.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site

A Gullah/Geechee heritage site, carefully preserved in recognition of generations of enslaved people.

Iconic Charleston

Save some time for the classics.

Charleston City Market

Find one-of-akind souvenirs like sweetgrass baskets handcrafted by Gullah weavers.

Rainbow Row

These colorful historic homes represent the longest stretch of Georgian row houses in the U.S.

The Pineapple Fountain

Wading is not only permitted but encouraged at Charleston Waterfront Park's famous statue.

See the city from a new perspective at

afar.com/charleston

30 AFAR_JAN/FEB 2022 WHERE TO GO / THE AMERICAS

FAMOUS FOR ITS blush-colored beaches and the shorts, Bermuda has long been a traveler's dream, but this 21-square-mile archipelago nestled in the North Atlantic also offers a substantial measure of Black culture and history. In 2020, it became one of the first places in the world to honor a Black woman

Look beyond Bermuda's pinksand beaches and explore Black history on the islands.

by Rosalind Cummings-Yeates

with a public holiday; Mary Prince Day celebrates the formerly enslaved Bermudian who became the first Black woman in England to publish her own narrative, the seminal 1831 book *The History of Mary Prince*.

Visitors to the islands can follow the African Diaspora Heritage Trail, which includes museums, monuments, and even a seaside cave connected to Bermuda's Black past. For an experience that showcases both food and history, book Kristin White's bike tour through the cobblestone streets of St. George's, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Or on your own, walk past the candy-colored buildings of the capital city, Hamilton, and pop into the Griot bookstore, a sunlit, art-adorned space that sells works by authors of African descent. Pick up a cold-pressed elixir at the mural-covered Om Juicery (locals are partial to "Bountiful" and "Dancing"). In the reef-hugging Sandys Parish, Buna Gallery and Coffee House serves up Ethiopian brews, live music, and local art exhibits in a stylish setting. Settle in and stay awhile.

Rosalind Cummings-Yeates is a Chicago-based writer and author of the upcoming book Moon 52 Things to Do in Chicago (Moon Travel, February 2022).



NICKNAME

Bermy

REQUIRED EATING

Try a Bermudian fish sandwich, a delectable swirl of sweet and savory consisting of fried fish slathered with coleslaw and tartar sauce on raisin bread.

POPULATION

63,903

RINK UP

Beloved by locals and considered by many as the national drink, the rum swizzle's ingredients vary but often include Goslings rum, pineapple and orange juices, grenadine or Falernum, and Angostura bitters.



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2.7 million

GET OUTSIDE

The city's motto, *Urbs in horto*, means "City in a garden." Chicago has an expansive park system, spread over 8,800 acres.





The Windy City is roaring back from the pandemic, thanks to its entrepreneurial spirit and strong sense of pride. by Elaine Glusac

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Great Fire, which razed more than 2,000 acres of central Chicago in 1871, leaving nearly 100,000 homeless, one resident, William D. Kerfoot, displayed a hand-painted sign that read ALL GONE BUT WIFE, CHILDREN AND ENERGY.

I have been thinking about Kerfoot since the pandemic. But not before a full year of questioning why I still lived in Chicago when everything I loved about it—the theater, music, sports, and dining scenes, as well as the 26-mile lakefront—was closed or verboten.

As the city has been slowly reopening, I have been reminded of Kerfoot's outlook. Jazz musicians started holding "step sessions" on neighborhood porches, encouraging residents to BYO and use virtual tip jars. They're planning to return to porches in spring 2022. Entrepreneurs renovated an RV as Majostee Spa, a mobile nail salon making home visits. Stephanie Hart, owner of Brown Sugar Bakery, recognized the need for comfort food during the pandemic; now the baker is looking to open a shop for her famed cupcakes at O'Hare International Airport, where she can, as she puts it, "export a little bit of my African American neighborhood and inspire <code>[people]</code> to come to 75th Street and see everything we're serving."

"Chicago sees itself, since the fire, as a city able to withstand whatever," said Shermann Dilla Thomas, a historian who offers guided city tours. "It also makes us a city that doesn't believe in small plans. After you get a blank canvas, the sky's the limit."

In the wake of 2020's social justice movement, there is new attention to oft-overlooked areas of the city. Bronzeville, the historic Black hub five miles south of downtown, boomed following the Great Migration of African Americans from the South in the first half of the 20th century. It later suffered from redlining and overcrowding. But today, the Bronzeville Winery, a Black-owned wine bar, joins a new



STAY LONGER

Visit suburban Oak Park to tour architect Frank Lloyd Wright's original home and studio, plus the surrounding neighborhood filled with Wright designs. Indiana Dunes National Park is just across the state line in Indiana, about 40 miles from downtown Chicago.

REQUIRED READING

A Latina comes of age in the Pilsen neighborhood in Sandra Cisneros's classic *The House on Mango Street*. A fictional account of racism and injustice in the 1930s, *Native Son* by Richard Wright resonates today. The poem "Chicago" by Carl Sandburg is a visceral bite of early industrial Chicago.

development devoted to minority-owned businesses, including House of Africa, a boutique from fashion designer Sarah Kuenyefu. Boxville, a seasonal market in shipping containers, gives fledgling companies a start. In June 2021, the South Side area saw a new monument to civil rights activist Ida B. Wells unveiled in the neighborhood she once called home.

"It takes a small wheel to turn a larger wheel," said Eric Williams, the owner of Bronzeville Winery, whose original retail store, Silver Room, helped transform the now-trendy Wicker Park neighborhood in the 1990s. "People need to see success to see what's possible."

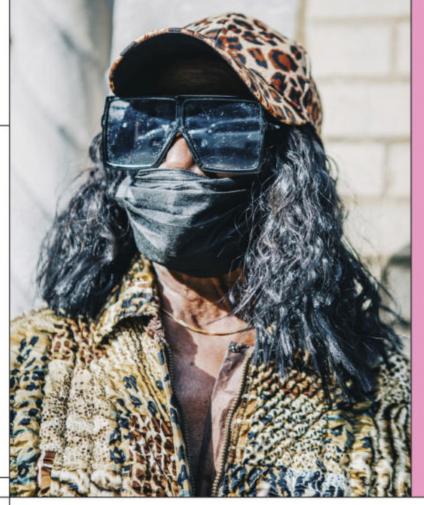
There are other launches too. Near the city's southern border, the Pullman National Monument unveiled a new visitor center in the 141-year-old clock-tower building, devoted to the factory town where Pullman rail cars were built. The Obama Presidential Center broke ground in Jackson Park in September, beginning construction on the former president's library with completion estimated in four years. The center is conceived as a digital archive with community spaces including a public library and playground.

Chicagoans are showing up for their own. According to Open Table, total restaurant reservations are three-quarters of prepandemic norms. Entire streets remain blocked off for dining (and don't worry about the weather; we managed to socialize alfresco in chalets, huts, and tents, even during the long winter). It can take months to get a table at the hottest new restaurant, Rose Mary, which opened in April 2021 with a mix of Croatian and Italian food. Meanwhile, locals are visiting one of the state's most enduring tourist attractions, Navy Pier, savoring panoramic skyline views and rooftop cocktails at its new hotel, Sable, which opened in June 2021 and

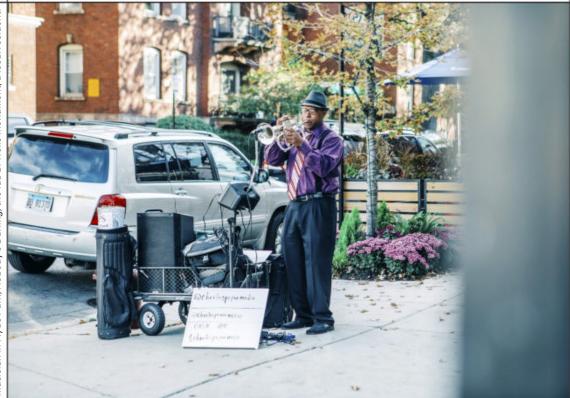
houses 223 nautically inspired rooms. But perhaps the most inclusive vibe in town can be found at the new Nobody's Darling, a Black-, queer-, and womanowned bar in Andersonville on the North Side, where everyone is welcome to quaff boozy mezcal old-fashioneds, vespers, and zero-proof spritzers in the narrow, sexy space.

One hundred fifty years ago, a post-Great Fire Chicago had to reset, giving rise to the modernist architecture for which the city is now famed.









In the same fall week, I attended a White Sox baseball game at the home park and As You Like It at the newly reopened Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier. I reveled in the communal joy of live performance, while remaining aware, as I moved around the city, of survivors and newcomers amid stretches of vacancies. We are still in recovery, but at least the recovery has begun. As Dominique Leach, the owner and executive chef of Lexington Betty Smoke House, said, she's doing three people's work to stay solvent—adding, "I have a lot of fight in me."

One hundred fifty years ago, a post-Great Fire Chicago had to reset, giving rise to the modernist architecture for which the city is now famed. The pandemic reset may not be as tall literally, but it's wider metaphorically, reinvesting in communities, encouraging entrepreneurs, and proving that the energy remains to make it work in the City that Works. 🔕

Elaine Glusac is a Chicago-based writer and the New York Times's Frugal Traveler columnist.

KNOWN FOR

BEST

wind, of the climatic and political varieties, as well as architecture, improv theater, and deep-dish pizza

228 square miles

SIZE

DID YOU KNOW?

House music originated here in 1977 at the club the Warehouse. It really took off in the 1980swith pioneers including Frankie Knuckles and Marshall Jefferson.

YEAR INCORPORATED AS A TOWN

1833

DRINK UP

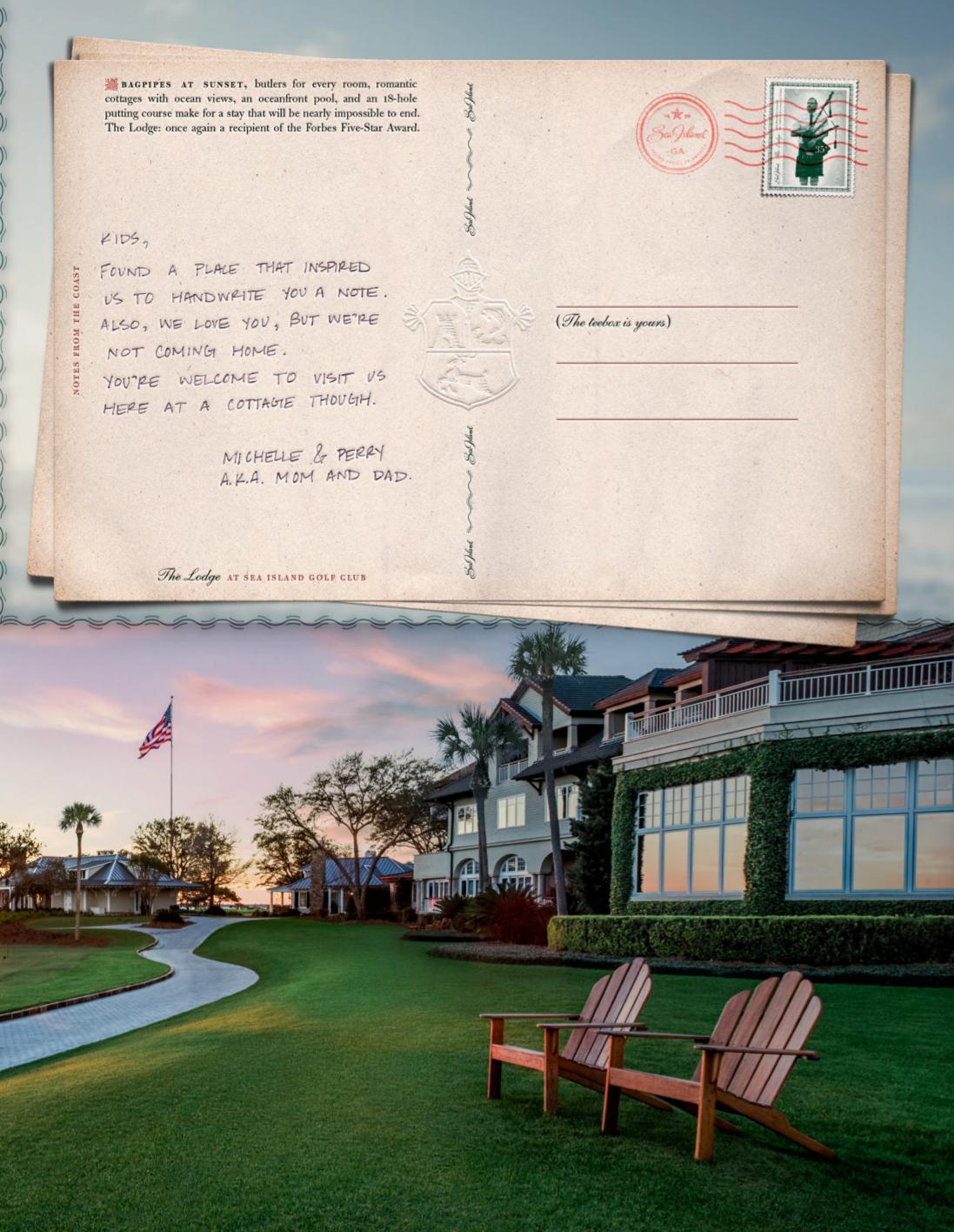
Chicago has a top-shelf bar scene. At the Peninsula Hotel, try the Z, made with gin and cucumber and served with a stellar skyline view. Other places to tipple: Lost Lake, Billy Sunday, the Whistler, the Matchbox, and Kumiko.

REQUIRED EATING

A hot dog "dragged through the garden" (with everything, but never ketchup)







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Once known for its mining boomtowns, the Iron Range has gotten a mighty

makeover. by Katherine LaGrave

MINNESOTA IS LAUDED for its lakes—more than 10,000 of them—but any local knows that its land deserves some love, too. To get better acquainted, head to northern Minnesota's Iron Range, which has quietly debuted 250 miles of new biking trails in the past decade. The routes came about largely thanks to local cycling enthusiasts, who have worked to turn the area into a magnet for biking in nature. Tioga Recreation Area added 19 miles of mountain bike

trails near the town of Cohasset in August 2019, and a trail expansion is currently underway in Cuyuna County, which already has 50 miles of rust-colored dirt paths spread over 800 acres.

One of the most recent news makers? Redhead Mountain Bike Park, which opened in June 2020 after a nearly

\$2 million investment, now features 25 miles of trails outside the town of Chisholm. There, you can ride cinnamon-colored paths flanked by steep cliffs that descend into an abandoned mining pit with an aqua-blue lake at the bottom. (You'd be in good company, as more than 25,000 people have ridden the popular trails since the launch.)

If you're looking for something a little smoother, northeastern Minnesota has you

If you're looking for something a little smoother, northeastern Minnesota has you covered there, too. As of press time, the paved Mesabi Trail offers more than 135 miles of biking and walking through forests and small towns. When completed, it will stretch 155 miles from the Mississippi River to the remote Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, one of the country's most glorious natural sites. (And no, I'm not biased.)

Katherine LaGrave is a deputy editor at AFAR. Her family owns a cabin in Minnesota.



REQUIRED READING

Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country by Pulitzer Prize winner Louise Erdrich is a beautiful meditation on the state's natural beauty.

REQUIRED FATING

Try *lefse*, a Norwegian flatbread, spread with butter and topped with white sugar.

OPIGIN STORY

Ojibwe Indians migrated to the Great Lakes some 1,500 years ago and lived in Ely when fur trappers arrived; it was "formally" incorporated in 1888.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dorothy Molter—the "Root Beer Lady"—made roughly 11,000 bottles of homemade root beer each season, and today in Ely, you can visit a museum dedicated to her life and legacy (select dates only).



minesola

paved Mesabi Trail passes through 28 communities



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Alberta's first Métis cultural destination was conceived, built, and operated by Métis people to tell their story—and in 2022 it's getting a huge expansion.

by Debbie Olsen

I WAS ABOUT 12 YEARS OLD when I first met my birth mother and discovered that I was Métis. I saw her several times after that, and though we never discussed why I grew up in foster care, she frequently reiterated that we were both Métis. I've spent years trying to figure out exactly what that meant and why it was so important.

Since the 18th century, the French word *métis* has described individuals in Canada with mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. In Canada's early years, French and Scottish fur traders married First Nations women of Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Cree, and other cultural backgrounds, and soon the Métis Nation was born. The Métis were known for hunting, trapping, and fur trading, and in 1982 they became one of the three groups of recognized

Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

Métis Crossing, which opened in 2005 on the river lots—the riverside settlements home to the earliest settlers in this part of Alberta—is a fascinating place to learn about Métis culture, traditions, and beliefs. There's a campground with comfortably furnished trappers' tents, and in 2019, a large Cultural Gathering Centre was built to host educational programs.

When I visited in fall 2021, I wanted a cultural experience, and I also wanted to embrace my own Indigenous roots. I spent some time with elder Lilyrose Meyers, the Knowledge Holder at Métis Crossing. She taught me the ancient art of moose-hair tufting and talked about growing up as a Métis person, explaining some distinctive facets of the culture. Though I rarely discuss my experiences growing up in a foster home disconnected from my Indigenous roots, for the first time in a long time, I felt comfortable doing that. Lilyrose is about the same age as my birth mother would be if she were still alive, and I found myself thinking about her.

During the trip I paddled a voyageur-style canoe on the North Saskatchewan River. I ate perch for the

ALBERTA, CANADA

CFOSSINC



REQUIRED READING

Try The North-West Is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Métis Nation by Jean Teillet.

DRINK UP

Kikawinaw Sparkling Gin Tea. Kikawinaw is Cree for Mother Nature. The gin is made at Rig Hand Distillery in Edmonton using a recipe from two Métis women, Kelly and Carrie Armstrong.



DID YOU KNOW?

First Nations People consider white bison to be the most sacred living creatures on Earth, said to have a healing power. Though there are many legends about white bison, they are rarely seen. In the wild, it has been estimated that just one out of every 10 million bison

DISTANCE FROM ALBERTA'S CAPITAL

68 miles

between Métis Crossing and Edmonton

But the highlight of the visit was seeing bison, which were reintroduced to the land after becoming all but extinct by the 1860s. I had never seen a sacred white bison, and I was awed by the experience.

first time, with seasonal vegetables and traditional bannock bread. I was mesmerized by a velvety black night sky sprinkled with silver stars. But the highlight of the visit was seeing bison, which were reintroduced to the land after becoming all but extinct by the 1860s. I had never seen a sacred white bison, and I was awed by the experience.

Métis Crossing is expanding in 2022 with the opening of three cross-country ski trails and a new 40-room lodge. It will be the first year the site is open year-round, and I'll be there, spending more time connecting with Métis culture. My first experience helped me discover a piece of myself that had long been missing. Thanks, Mom. I'm finally starting to get it. (A)

Debbie Olsen is an award-winning Métis writer and a national bestselling author based in Lacombe, Alberta. She has written two books and contributed to 13 Fodor's guidebooks.



Avoid the crowds and head to a serene shoreline and the birthplace of jerk chicken.

by Sheryl Nance-Nash



New York, for rural Robins Bay in Jamaica in September 2020. On weekends, I explore. My favorite discovery is the parish of Portland on the island's northeast coast, which—unlike Montego Bay and Ocho Rios with many tourists—offers flourishing rain forests, laid-back beaches, and a vibe of *soon come*, *no hurry*, *no worries*. . . .

I have a particular soft spot for Winnifred Beach, where neighbors and families go to relax. Food vendors and artists sell their wares from small shops, made from zinc and wood, and despite the lull in business during the pandemic, dancehall and reggae still boom. Nothing stops the party. If it's Saturday, true to tradition, somebody is quite likely cooking (and sharing) chicken foot soup. Another favorite ocean retreat is Frenchman's Cove, where flowing water from the Blue Mountains creates a dramatic canopy of tropical greenery by a whitesand beach. Further south, Reach Falls is beloved for its underwater cave, natural heart-shaped pool reminiscent of a Jacuzzi, mountain views, and lush vegetation.

There is no sense of urgency in Portland. Visitors can while away an afternoon rafting on the Rio Grande or browsing the Portland Art Gallery in Port Antonio, the parish capital, also home to Folly Lighthouse and Folly Ruins, the remains of an early 1900s mansion.

I always bring my appetite to Portland, because the

eating is good and you can find some of the best jerk on the island. At Woody's Low Bridge Place, the legendary Charles "Woody" Cousins and his wife, Cherry, are known for their restaurant's burgers and homey environment. Bits of wisdom decorate the place, such as DON'T MAJOR IN MINOR THINGS. There's also the restaurant Likkle Portie near the water in Hope Bay, where I order the curried lobster and brown stewed fish and munch it merrily at a picnic table while watching kids play in the sea. For fine dining, the best choice is the Geejam Hotel's Bushbar. Whether you want jerk lamb chops or lobster, you'll get tasty, authentic cooking paired with views of the Caribbean Sea below.

Sheryl Nance-Nash writes about the intersection of travel, history, wellness, and culture.



POPULATION OF

82,183

REQUIRED EATING

Jerk chicken is mandatory, of course, but while you're at it, try the spicy jerk pork, too.

DISTANCE FROM Jamaica's Capital

55 miles

between Portland and Kingston

EST KNOWN FOR

beaches, caves, waterfalls, breadfruit trees, and the seemingly bottomless Blue Lagoon

STAY LONGER

Check in to a tree house at Kanopi House or a cabin at Geejam Hotel, which has an on-site recording studio.



Dall Comment of status in the continents U.S.

REQUIRED READING

A Walk in the Park by Tom St. Germain remains the definitive guide to the hikes of Acadia.

POPULATION

Mount Desert Island has around 10,000 year-round residents, more than 1,100 plant species, and at least 300 types of birds.

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT

Acadia's peak tourism season is June to September, when you can definitely get your sweat on during a hike and enjoy a refreshing lake swim afterwards. But the fall shoulder season is also delightful, when hard-shell lobsters become more abundant and the trails empty out.



New England's sylvan wonderland is filled with winding trails and history lessons. by Sally Kohn

acres of Acadia National Park, where the jagged Maine coast cuts into the Atlantic. But no matter where you go, you're surrounded by historical figures. The intricate carriage trails around Mount Desert Island, where much of the park is situated, were commissioned by John D. Rockefeller Jr. in the early 1900s. Many of the island's other trails were built as part of a New Deal–era Civilian Conservation Corps public works project in the 1930s.

Stone stairs that seem almost magically carved into the mountainside form parts of Homans Path, a trail named for Eliza Homans. She was a wealthy widow and longtime summer resident who, in 1908, first gifted part of the land that would become the park. The 140-acre spread Homans bequeathed includes one of Acadia's most treacherous and rewarding hikes, the Beehive—a short but steep climb up a cliff face, with a payoff view of Sand Beach and the Atlantic coastline.

Mount Desert Island's lake and ponds are another plus. For most of the summer, you can jump off the rocks at Echo Lake Ledges or hike to the distant parts of Long Pond, where you'll be rewarded with crystal clear water and, often, few other swimmers in sight.

Sally Kohn is a writer, media strategist, and author of The Opposite of Hate: A Field Guide to Repairing Our Humanity (Algonquin, 2018).

PEQUIPED FATING

Panuchos (fried tortillas topped with refried beans and other delights), sopa de lima (chicken and lime soup), poc chuc (grilled pork), relleno negro (turkey stew), and queso relleno (stuffed cheese).

DID VOIL KNOWS

Mérida was once one of the world's richest cities when it was the leading producer of henequen (sisal), the plant used to make rope.

AV TRIP

75 miles

Distance from the city to the Mayan ruins of Chichén Itzá

TAVIONGED

Delay that flight home to experience a traditional Mexican hacienda—luxury accommodations in historic buildings.

LSO

La Ciudad Blanca, the White City, for its many limestone structures



Yucatán's welcoming capital city offers a sensory experience on every corner. by Colby Holiday

EACH EVENING, AS THE SUN begins to settle into its slumber, Mérida comes to life. Nightfall offers a respite from the sweltering heat of the day. Families gather in the zócalo for cultural performances. The city's main drag, Paseo de Montejo, is lined with tables where patrons delight in nibbles and tipples. Elderly couples salsa dance in the park as if no one is watching, and if you walk down any of the main streets in the Centro neighborhood, you'll hear the thrums and drums of bachata beats from beyond the swinging doors of local cantinas.

Mérida, the capital of the Mexican state of Yucatán, revels in permanent celebration, and the city invites you to do the same, to find joy

in simple pleasures. It's a place where diversity extends beyond what to do, see, and eat. LGBTQ travelers, for example, can find nightlife in Centro and spend evenings vibing to live music at Cadadía Bar Café.

Visitors to the city will quickly discover the "Mérida magic" that everyone speaks of—that inexplicable sense of happiness, peace, and community found here. It may be the deep-rooted culture and rich gastronomic heritage that draws people to the colonial city; for me, it was the Mérida magic that turned my three-month visit into home for the foreseeable future. \triangle

Colby Holiday is a cofounder of the nonprofit Black Travel Alliance, an organization that supports Black creators around the world.





NEIGHBORHOODS NOT TO MISS

Camp North End is where you'll find many of Charlotte's artists hanging out. NoDa is full of murals and eclectic shops like "world of magick" emporium Curio, Craft & Conjure. South End offers good eating and the rail trail, which is a colorful walking path that follows the city's light rail line into Uptown Charlotte.

STAY LONGER

Head up to Lake Norman for a day of boating. On summer weekends, you'll always catch boatloads of people having a party on the lake.

REQUIRED EATING

Order the loaded shrimp hibachi fries from What The Fries, which come topped with shrimp, bok choy, and house-made "yum yum" sauce. Get there early; there is often a line.

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT

Fall is when temperatures drop and the city's event calendar includes the music- and art-filled Festival in the Park (September) and the new BayHaven Food & Wine Festival (October) from the owners of Leah & Louise.

NORTH CAROLINA

OFFI

OF

North Carolina's largest city is turning into an essential food destination, with tempting options across different neighborhoods.

by DeAnna Taylor

IF YOU ASKED SOMEONE a few years ago what Charlotte is known for, they might have said it's one of the country's biggest banking spots. But the city is fast becoming appreciated for its growing culinary scene.

Take the James Beard Award-nominated chef Greg Collier and his wife and business partner, Subrina. In 2020, the restaurateurs opened Leah & Louise, a modern-day juke joint in Charlotte's creative hub, Camp North End. The cuisine honors their Southern roots: fried oyster sliders and slow-roasted cabbage with pork neck bisque. The pair have a special place in my heart, as they helped found Soul Food Sessions, a pop-up dinner series featuring Black chefs and mixologists.

Exciting new businesses are opening regularly. In September 2021, cocktail connoisseur Tamu Curtis opened the Cocktailery for classes and tastings in the city's Atherton Mill retail center. In 2022, Ricky Ortiz, the

Mexico-born owner of Tacos Rick-O, will expand his food empire beyond his taco truck at Hoppin'—a self-service beer, wine, and cider spot in South End—with a new concept based on Spanish desserts in the NoDa arts and entertainment district.

"Charlotte's not just football and finance," Greg Collier insists. "This ain't just the cookie-cutter, vanilla shell South. . . . It's a place full of aspirations, mind-blowing creatives, good cooking, and possibilities." \triangle

DeAnna Taylor is a writer, editor, author, lawyer, and Charlotte native.



From top: Blackened catf

ten thousand



S FLORIDA

O TORIDA

O TORIDA

O TORIDA

36 miles



A labyrinthine world of mangroves, sandy islands, and clear skies awaits intrepid kayakers on Florida's Gulf Coast. by Terry Ward

POPULATION

The Ten Thousand Islands are uninhabited except for Chokoloskee Island, home to about 400 people.

REQUIRED READING

The Everglades: River of Grass by Marjory Stoneman Douglas

STAY LONGER

Try a pampering stay at the JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort or Edgewater Beach Hotel in Naples. **EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK**—the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States—reveals only its outer edges to day-trippers. For a deeper view of a similar ecosystem, head to the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, just south of Marco Island. Here, one of the world's largest mangrove systems covers 230 square miles, where fresh and salt waters meet.

"We're not a beach destination, like St. Petersburg or Daytona," says Charles Wright, a naturalist who owns Everglades Area Tours and takes guests on kayak adventures through mangrove islands in the Gulf of Mexico. "But there are sandy barrier islands with beautiful beaches . . . from Marco Island to the mouth of the Lostmans River.

"Most people think of swamps when they think of the Everglades—of airboats, alligators, and mosquitoes," he adds. But the Everglades are much more than that, and the Ten Thousand Islands "are kind of the untapped jewel, with dolphins, manatees, orchids and bromeliads, wading birds, raptors, and more."

On expeditions from Chokoloskee Island, you'll camp on deserted islands and visit Native American sites; the Calusa tribe inhabited the area as early as the 15th century. One thing you won't really see, however, is light pollution—just the canopy of the Milky Way in the inky skies above your camp at night.

Terry Ward is a Tampa-based travel writer.







REQUIRED READING

When Washington Was in Vogue by Edward Christopher Williams is an acclaimed love story written and set during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s.

DID YOU KNOW?

When the Washington Monument opened in 1884 it was the tallest structure in the world; the Eiffel Tower in Paris took the title in 1889.

DRINK UP

Try a gin rickey, with gin, lime juice, and soda water. It's D.C.'s official cocktail.

DAY TRIP

Take a train from Union Station to downtown Baltimore or head over to Old Town Alexandria, just six miles down the road from D.C.



Wander around the new waterfront and taste your way through the revitalized capital city. by Kwin Mosby

washington, D.C., is so much more than its reputation as the center of U.S. politics. It's a welcoming, walkable city with residents and regions as culturally diverse as the international embassies that line Massachusetts Avenue. Over the past decade, the city has transformed several neighborhoods—the H Street Corridor, Brookland, NoMa, Shaw, and the LGBTQ-friendly Logan Circle. The flourishing food scene attracts locals and visitors to such neighborhood anchors as Tortino (which serves elevated Italian dishes) and the Dabney, a Michelin-starred restaurant specializing in farm-to-table American fare.

But the District's newest star is the Wharf, where the second phase of a \$2.5 billion revitalization project is expected to be completed in 2022. New additions include the 131-room Pendry hotel, a tranquil 1.5-acre green space called "The Green," and several live music venues. Stroll the brick walkway to take in the serene Potomac River while eating delicious confections from District Donuts or shop for clothing, jewelry, and home decor at stores like the Blackowned fashion boutique A Beautiful Closet.

At Kaliwa, order the drunken duck noodles and other Thai and Filipino dishes. Or head to chef Philippe Massoud's new high-end Lebanese restaurant, Ilili, and try the tender braised lamb shank. Close out your night with panoramic views at the rooftop bar Whiskey Charlie. The Wharf Spiced Rum is a perfect coda to a perfect day in the district.

Kwin Mosby is a travel writer and editor in chief of Vacationer Magazine, a new LGBTQ travel website.

CHI

arica &

Local textiles, Ilamas, and the world's oldest mummies are among the reasons to visit northern Chile.

by Mark Johanson

when travelers plan trips to the desiccated salt flats and cloud-hugging lagoons of the world's driest desert, the Atacama, most end up in the resort town of San Pedro. Yet 400 miles north lies a refreshing alternative: Chile's Arica and Parinacota region.

The main reason to go is to explore a new UNESCO World Heritage site created in July 2021 that honors the Chinchorro culture. These hunter-gatherers crafted the world's oldest mummies, covering their deceased with

clay masks and flowing wigs some 7,000 years ago (2,000 years before the ancient Egyptians). A tourist circuit now unites 19 archaeological sites along the Pacific coast and passes six roadside Chinchorro statues designed by local artists Paola Pimentel and Johnny Vásquez. Meanwhile, the mummy museum in Azapa Valley is preparing for a multimilliondollar revamp to be completed by 2024.

The 143-mile trip from lowland Arica to highland Parinacota follows another new tourist trail: Ruta de las Misiones. The route includes dozens of hamlets inhabited by the Aymara people, many featuring whitewashed adobe churches and handcrafted alpaca textiles from Indigenous artisans such as Julia Cañari. Putre is the largest of these villages. At an altitude of 11,500 feet, you can acclimatize here for expeditions into the volcanostudded Lauca National Park, llamafilled Las Vicuñas National Reserve, or the blindingly white Salar (salt flat) de Surire, where the hot springs come with views of pink flamingos. 🔕

Mark Johanson is a Chile-based travel writer and the coauthor of a dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks to destinations across the Americas and Asia.



REGIONAL Population

224,548

DRINK UP

Mate de coca (an herbal tea made from raw coca leaves) is the traditional fix for altitude sickness.

STAY LONGER

Just across the border from Lauca National Park is Bolivia's equivalent: Sajama National Park. It makes a great addition on the trip between La Paz and Arica, if you're heading there from Bolivia.

REQUIRED EATING

Olives from Azapa Valley are treasured all across Chile and used in regional dishes such as *pulpo al olivo* (octopus in olive sauce).





In 2022, Space City offers distinct dining and art options that celebrate its diverse communities. by Kayla Stewart

REQUIRED READING

God Save Texas: A Journey into the Soul of the Lone Star State by Lawrence Wright is a thoughtful overview of Texas history.

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT

In the spring, temperatures are pleasant and it's rodeo season. The 90th anniversary of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in February will bring barbecue contests, rides, and fried . . . well, everything.

DON'T MISS

The Obama Portraits Tour makes its final stop at the Museum of Fine Arts in April and May.

AS ONE OF THE NATION'S most multiethnic cities, with some 145 languages spoken, Houston is full of culinary and cultural innovation. MasterChef winner Christine Ha's restaurant Blind Goat deliciously showcases the city's Vietnamese community, while the local chain Tacos A Go Go represents some of the best of its Latinx options. (Be sure to try all the tacos while you're in town: corn tacos filled with barbacoa; shrimp tacos; and migas tacos, a Tex-Mex staple made with scrambled eggs and jalapeños).

For a taste of Houston's Black-owned restaurants, book a table at Lucille's, where the celebrated chef Chris Williams turns out fine Southern cuisine (catfish and grits, fish fry, and liver and onions). If you're craving comfort food, head to Breakfast Klub.

Don't miss a trip to the Third Ward (the neighborhood where Beyoncé and Solange Knowles were raised). There you'll find the Houston Museum of African American Culture, which recognizes the achievements of Black Americans. Another essential stop: Project Row Houses, a site encompassing five city blocks that has been serving Houston's artists of color for three decades. It presents programming that preserves and elevates Black culture and community, regularly running exhibitions and events while supporting young people and small businesses.

Kayla Stewart is a food and travel writer. Her work has been featured in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and Bon Appétit.

houston



COSTA RICA

ouerto vielo



The Talamanca region is home to the Indigenous Cabécar and Bribri people, the latter numbering around 12,000. Both groups primarily live inland in mountainous regions. Some offer guided visits, plantation tours, and waterfall hikes



This lively Caribbean coastal town offers excellent surfing and beaches, plus a secret dry season. by Nina Kokotas Hahn

Ceviche, Caribbean-style meat patties, and rice and beans, as well as gallo pinto, a savory Costa Rican breakfast staple

Overnight at the Hotel Aguas Claras. The passion project of a local mother-daughter artist duo, the hotel features open-concept suites, secluded bungalows, and a colorful pool deck with a resident sloth named Clara. The hotel sources local ingredients, uses potable water entirely filtered by its own salt filtration system, and composts organically.

IN SEPTEMBER 2021, Costa Rica's new Digital Nomads law began granting visas to foreign nationals for up to two years, inspiring remote workers to live out their long-term fantasies of surf, work, ceviche, repeat. Whether you're eyeing a semipermanent move or just a weeklong break, one place to dip your toes in is Puerto Viejo de Talamanca, a small coastal town on the country's less frequented Caribbean side.

You won't find the big brands or high-rises of Papagayo and Tamarindo here-just soft sand beaches and green macaws, and local boutiques such as Aloe Tienda for stylish handmade women's clothing. The African influence is palpable in the Limonese Creole patois, calypso beats, and the coconut-sweetened version of rice and beans.

Another plus of Puerto Viejo: The town experiences a dry season in September and October, when most of the country is inundated with rain. Travelers who visit at this time usually luck out at such mega surf breaks as Salsa Brava. In nearby Cahuita National Park, a large coral reef hosts an array of marine life, ranging from diminutive damselfish to nurse sharks. Snorkelers can experience it in all its glory. After a few days in Puerto Viejo, you might discover it's time to adopt the Pura Vida lifestyle and stay awhile. (A)

Nina Kokotas Hahn is a Chicago-based writer, outdoor adventurer, and aspiring surfer.

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REQUIRED EATING

Anguillian crayfish is a lobsterlike crustacean found in local waters.

DRINK UP

The potent rum punch at Elvis' Beach Bar in Sandy Ground is an essential welcome cocktail.

LOCATION

Anguilla, a British overseas territory, is one of the northernmost islands in the Lesser Antilles.

POPULATION

18,400

REQUIRED READING

Saint X by Alexis Schaitkin is a gripping mystery about an island vacation gone awry, inspired by the author's visits to Anguilla.



One of the Caribbean's smallest islands punches above its weight.

by Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon

WITH 33 BEACHES, several islands and cays, and more than 100 restaurants, Anguilla packs a lot into its 35 square miles.

Start by hopping on American Airlines' new direct flight from Miami into Clayton J. Lloyd International Airport. You'll disembark mere minutes from any one of the island's beaches, a string of seductive white-sand scallops lapped by blue water. On Meads Bay, check in to Tranquility Beach, a collection of 15 suites (all with kitchens) that preside over sand resembling powdered sugar and offering magnificent sunset views. Close by is the Hummingbird, a charming cottage studio that's a perfect choice for solo travelers.

For lunch, try Ken's BBQ in Anguilla's capital, The Valley, where they have been cooking fall-off-the-bone tender ribs for more than 20 years. Don't forget to finish the meal with a Johnny cake or two. If you're in the mood to treat yourself, end the day with cocktails at Four Seasons Anguilla's ocean-view Sunset Lounge, then continue to dinner at beachfront classic Blanchards, where you should sample the grilled Anguillian crayfish.

The next day, if cerulean seas beckon, charter a catamaran to take you from Crocus Bay to Little Bay, a compact cove you might have all to yourself.

Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon is a Miami-based writer, editor, and on-screen host.

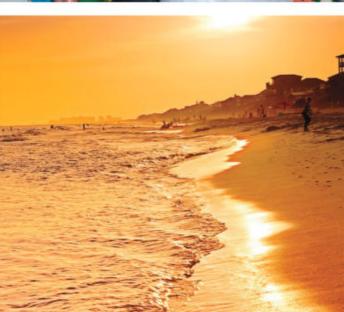




SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION







Fine Dining and Fabulous Displays of Nature

Located in Northwest Florida, **South Walton** is continually recognized as a premier beach vacation destination that boasts 26 miles of sugar-white sand, turquoise water, and 16 beach neighborhoods, each with its own personality and style.
Luxury accommodations,
outdoor adventure, eclectic
shops, art galleries, and
award-winning restaurants
all make up the distinctive
character and relaxing
atmosphere of beautiful
South Walton.

There's no shortage of outdoor activities with 15 rare coastal dune lakes, four state parks, a 15,000-acre state forest, and easy access to the **Gulf of Mexico**. Here, you'll sun and swim, and adventurous travelers will also enjoy

stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking, or fishing on the Gulf of Mexico or **Choctawhatchee Bay**.

More than 200 miles of trails invite nature lovers to observe rare birds while hiking through state parks



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



Golf Burnt Pine Golf Club at Sandestin, one of the top 150 resort golf courses (left), browse the many art galleries (top left), enjoy spectacular beach sunsets (bottom left), explore Blue Mountain Beach (above)

and forests. The 19-mile

Timpoochee Trail leads
runners and bicyclists
past New Urbanist
neighborhoods and
offers panoramic views of
stunning scenic beauty.

You can also challenge yourself on the tennis

court or tee off on a championship golf course, but if shopping is your passion, take time to browse the area's wide range of sophisticated boutiques. And foodies will relish the fusion of flavors created by award-winning chefs, showcasing fresh-

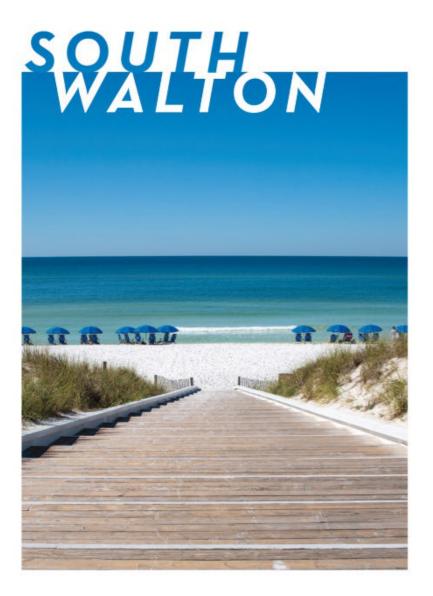
from-the-Gulf seafood and locally sourced ingredients. As the sun makes its spectacular evening splash into the Gulf, the beach offers a front row seat to the greatest show in town.

An upscale yet casual place to unwind, South

Walton is the ideal place to rejuvenate, create lasting memories, and find your perfect beach.

Learn more at VisitSouthWalton.com







A LEGACY OF LEISURE

South Walton's 26 miles of sugar-white sand beaches in Northwest Florida offer an all-natural escape, yet perfectly blend modern amenities, world-class cuisine and small town charm into an unforgettable experience.

The days move a bit slower here, and it's this simplicity – a day spent creating memories at the beach – that draws generations of families back to South Walton.



ROOMS WITH A VIEW

From resorts to boutique hotels, South Walton is home to unique architecture, breathtaking views and accommodations to suit any style.



The Pearl Hotel brings luxury and sophistication to South Walton, featuring beautifully appointed accommodations, destinationworthy cuisine and a welcoming spa. Guests also enjoy complimentary beach chairs and oversized umbrellas.











DESTINATION: RELAXATION

When settling into the wide-open space along our 26 miles of stunning beaches, you can check out a good book or simply check out. Find your perfect beach at VisitSouthWalton.com.



From Key Largo to Key West and all points in-between, The Florida Keys fulfill fantasies every day. Then again, with warm, clear water, world-class boating, fishing, diving, snorkeling, kayaking, eco-tours, wildlife and countless other island adventures, it isn't all that difficult to make your dreams come true.

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For the latest protocols on health & safety in The Florida Keys, please visit our website.





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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION







Paddle board along the many miles of waterways (left), relax on the pristine sandy beaches (top right), snorkel the clear waters of The Keys (bottom right)

Why The Florida Keys and Key West are the Ultimate Escape

Slip away to **The Florida Keys and Key West**,
where wildlife refuges
meet outdoor dining and
beaches for a blissful
getaway. A visit supports
the small businesses and
sustainable culture that
make this destination
special, helping preserve
The Keys for generations
to come. Read on for
recommendations to make
the most of your trip.

KEY LARGO

Go snorkeling among the shipwrecks of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary or explore the Everglades, then relax by the pool at a bayside or oceanfront hotel.

ISLAMORADA

Paddle around **Library Beach Park**, go gallery
hopping on **Morada Way**,
or enjoy some outdoor

dining at spots such as **Islamorada Shrimp Shack** or **Pierre's**.

MARATHON

Meet local wildlife at the **Dolphin Research Center, Turtle Hospital, Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters**, or **Pigeon Key**.

LOWER KEYS

Bike in **Bahia Honda State Park** or **Deer Key Refuge**,

or visit the **Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge's Nature Center**.

KEY WEST

Do a little sightseeing at the **Hemingway Home**, **Fort Zachary Taylor State Park**, and the **Key West Botanical Garden**.

Find The Florida Keys' latest health and safety protocols at fla-keys.com.







Feast your eyes on art that defies expectations and gravity.

This winter, experience the most colorful and vivid vacation imaginable. Where America's Best Beaches meet a thriving and diverse arts community. From vibrant street murals and festivals to world-renowned museums and performing arts, discover the awe-inspiring beauty of a getaway to St. Pete/Clearwater.

VisitStPeteClearwater.com



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION







Be amazed by Janet Echelman's aerial sculpture, "Bending Arc." (left), visit The Salvador Dali Museum (top right), enjoy The James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art (bottom right)

Artistic Inspiration, Inside and Out

When you venture beyond America's best beaches, you'll discover that creative flourishes are around every corner in **St. Pete/Clearwater.**Look no further than the stunning **Dalí Museum**, an architectural wonder that celebrates Salvador Dalí's greatest works. Or find

miracles of glass sculpture in the Chihuly Collection at the **Morean Arts Center**.

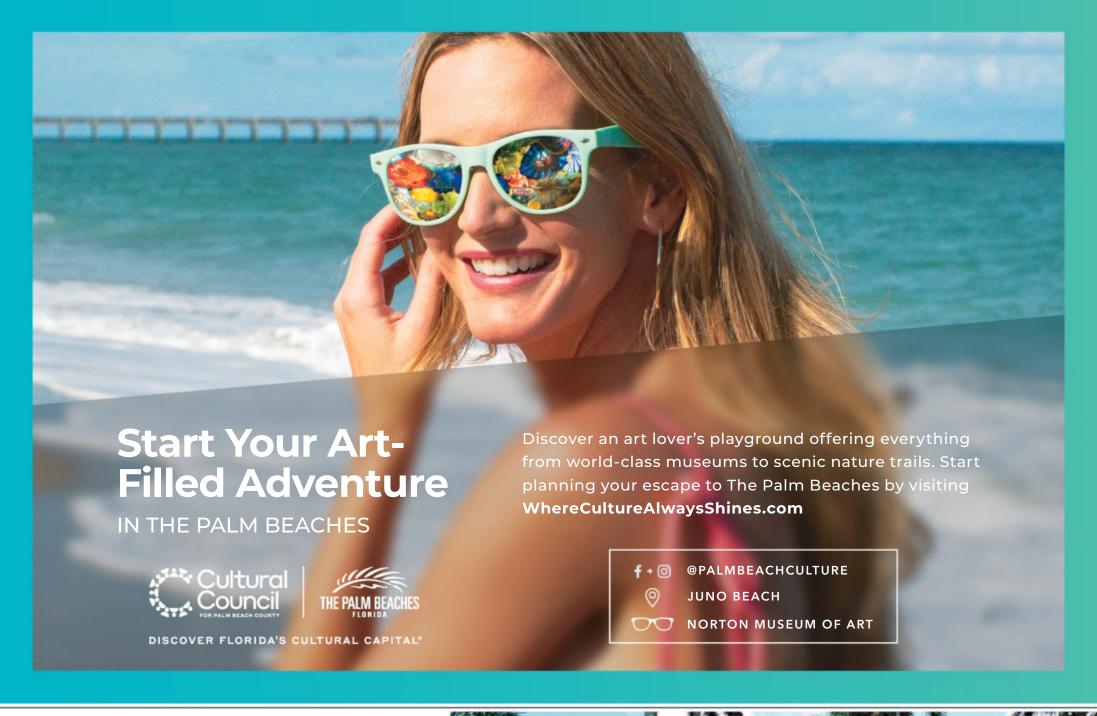
View more than 400 premier works of art at the **James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art.** Explore the history of the American studio glass movement at the **Imagine Museum.**

Here, you can surround yourself with art or stand underneath it by visiting the **St. Pete Pier**, home to **Janet Echelman's Bending Arc**—composed of 1,662,528 knots and 180 miles of twine, the aerial sculpture spans 424 feet and measures 72 feet at its tallest point.

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, a cultural destination that draws you in and stokes the imagination.

Start dreaming at VisitStPeteClearwater.com





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Hailed as America's First Resort

Destination®, The Palm Beaches are home to a winning combination of sun-soaked beaches and vibrant arts and culture, spanning some of the world's best museums, arts centers, stunning street art, breathtaking gardens, iconic historic sites, and much more.

Take a closer look at WhereCultureAlwaysShines.com







Explore the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, a 100,000-square-foot Gilded Age mansion and the home of Henry Flagler in 1902 (top), visit the Norton Museum of Art, the largest art museum in Florida (bottom)

A road trip through Abu Dhabi reveals what lies beneath the surface of this sprawling emirate. by Nicola Chilton



WORLD RECORD

The largest hand-knotted carpet on the globe, at

60,546 ft²,

resides in Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and was made by 1,200 artisans.



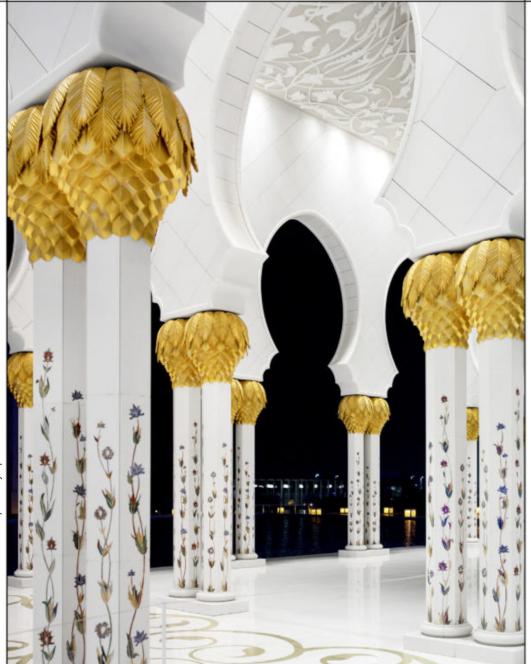
WILDLIFE Population

Some 16,000 animals, including 700 endangered Arabian oryx, live on Sir Bani Yas Island, a nature reserve. Scientists have also recorded 164 species of birds that visit the island.

JEDI PLAYGROUND

With its spectacular desert landscapes, the Rub' Al-Khali, or Empty Quarter, is the largest area of continuous sand in the world, and Abu Dhabi's section of it has been the backdrop to many movies, including Star Wars: The Force Awakens and the 2021 version of Dune.





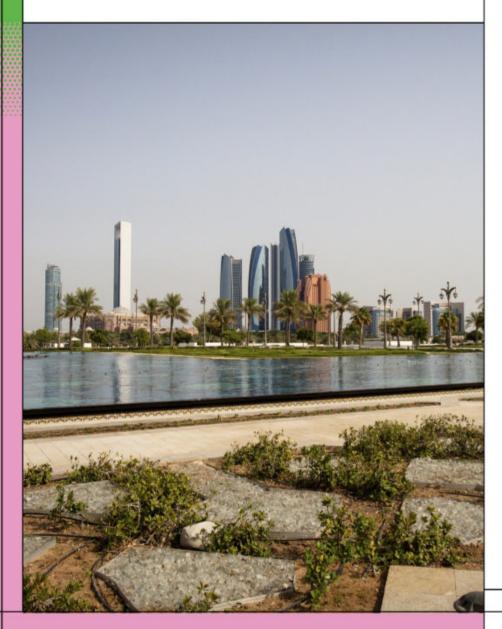
IN ITS 50 YEARS OF EXISTENCE, the United Arab Emirates has developed at lightning speed, creating cities out of the desert with record-breaking skyscrapers, lavish hotels, and a fast pace of life. I moved to Dubai in 2015, and when I wasn't traveling for work, I filled my calendar with dinners, sundowners, and gallery visits. As the pandemic forced me to slow down, I rediscovered the joy of exploring the hidden sides of my home. By the time my friend Rashid Khalfan invited me to Abu Dhabi, the emirate south of Dubai that covers 26,000 miles, I was ready to explore farther afield.

Rashid grew up in Dubai and has worked for many years in Abu Dhabi. We had cemented our friendship over a shared love of history, so a road trip to explore Abu Dhabi's historic architecture and ancient souks suited us both. We met in the evening, after my two-hour drive through the desert, and were joined by our friend Nasser Saeed. Together we headed down Zayed the First Street (nicknamed Electra Road for its dozens of electronics stores) to glimpse the city's many modernist structures.

Rashid, knowing my love for brutalist architecture, showed me some of his favorite buildings, which he admires as symbols of a young nation's progress. He pointed out the Buty Al Otaiba Tower, covered in rows of hexagonal windows, and the Hamed Centre, with its diamond motif. The most handsome edifice was the Al Ibrahimi building, a circular tower with protruding balconies that resemble woven fabric, designed by the late Egyptian modernist architect Farouk El Gohary. "The older ones have more Arabic touches; the later ones from the '80s and '90s have more glass on their facades," Rashid said.



I could've stayed longer, but the Rub' Al-Khali—the Empty Quarter, an expanse of desert 130 miles to the south—was calling.



It was getting late, but Nasser wanted to show me the Gold Souk, one of the older marketplaces he used to frequent with his mother. He still likes to come here for its human scale when the large, air-conditioned malls of the city become overwhelming. He took me inside to visit the Yemeni gold traders, and I gazed at bridal necklaces covered in gemstones. As we were leaving, Rashid bought me what looked like a stick. I looked at him, confused. "It's a toothbrush," he told me. Known locally as a *miswak*, cut from the arak tree, it's traditionally used across the Arabian Peninsula and parts of Africa.

The following day, I set out to see the Qasr Al Hosn fort, parts of which date to the 1790s, and the nearby Qasr Al Watan presidential palace, a dizzying expanse of geometric mosaics that opened in 2019. I could have continued along the coast-line to the Jean Nouvel-designed Louvre Abu

Dhabi, covered with a metallic dome that, pierced by the rays of the sun, mimics the light and shadow patterns of date palm fronds in the Emirate's oases.

But instead, I made the two-and-half-hour drive to Sir Bani Yas Island in the western region of Abu Dhabi, a formerly barren island that was transformed with the planting of more than 3 million trees such as date palms and native ghafs. The late ruler Sheikh Zayed—the beloved founding father of the UAE known for his commitment to conservation—designated it a nature reserve in 1971. The island is also home to the ruins of a Christian church and monastery from the 7th century, as well as three resorts—including the Desert Islands Resort & Spa by Anantara, where I had booked a room.

On a morning safari drive with Abdul Asif Ali, my guide from the resort, we observed sand gazelles eyeing us curiously, peacocks pecking at the ground, and curly-horned Barbary sheep rolling in the dust. But what Abdul really wanted to show me were the Arabian oryx. We found them soon enough, large antelopes with bright white bodies and horns that can grow up to 36 inches long. They were hunted to extinction in the wild but are now one of the conservation world's success stories.

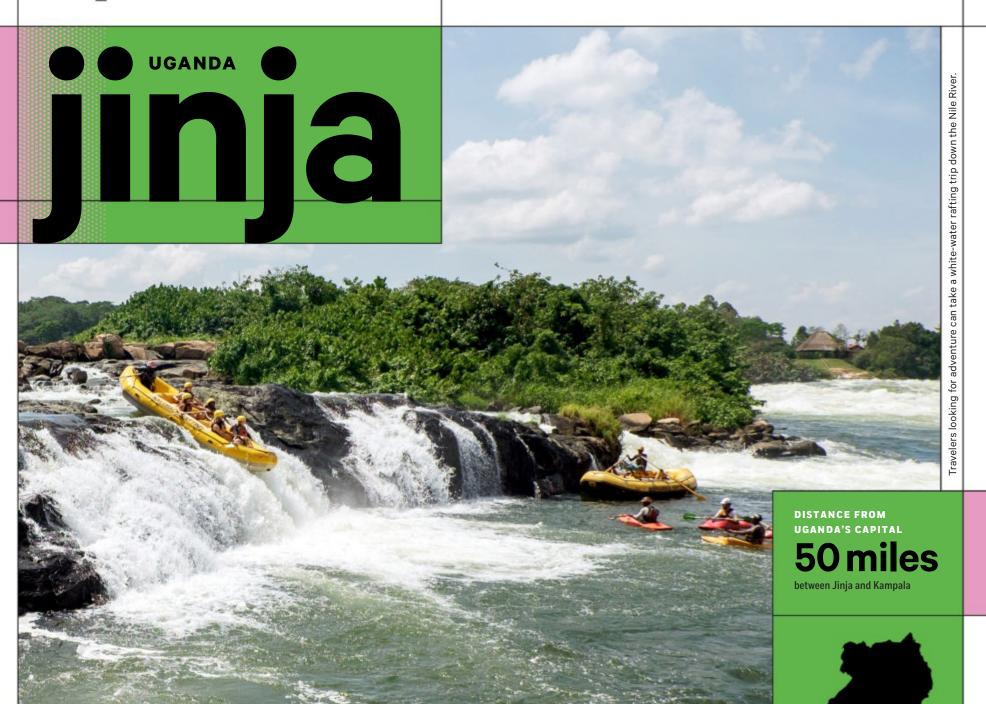
"In the 1980s, only six species of fauna were found here," said Dr. Abid Mehmood, the island's wildlife and conservation manager. "We've created a 'novel ecosystem,' effectively a new habitat."

I could've stayed longer, but the Rub' Al-Khali—the Empty Quarter, an expanse of desert 130 miles to the south—was calling. There the Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara rises like a mirage, designed to enable your desert fantasies as you ride camels, smoke fragrant shisha, and let yourself be cocooned in rhassoul clay in the hammam.

The real magic, however, lies in the surrounding dunes. On a sunset walk through the soft, fine sand, I took in sublime views that stretched as far as the horizon in every direction. I woke early the next morning and did it all over again, the rising sun giving me the same show in reverse while I contemplated my next nearby adventure. \triangle

Dubai-based writer Nicola Chilton has lived in Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, and Thailand and spends much of her time exploring the UAE.





SET ALONG THE NILE RIVER in eastern Uganda, Jinja is home to misty views marked by rapids and waterfalls, as well as roads blanketed by red dust that spools onto the skin with a vengeance. My father's work in the petroleum industry frequently took him to Jinja, 140 miles west of my hometown, Kisumu, Kenya. As a child, I often tagged along to explore the natural wonders of the area.

This Nile-side city in eastern Uganda abounds with outdoor adventures. by Wendy Watta

DID YOU KNOW?

When you hear rolex, you probably think of a luxury watch, but in Jinja, it's the word for an omelette rolled inside a soft chapati. Look for street vendors and buy one for about 25 cents.

KAMPALA JINJA

STAY LONGER

Head to southwestern Uganda

to see the mountain forests and

their famous inhabitants: the

endangered mountain gorillas.

Volcanoes Safaris operates four

lodges in the region, which also

and support local villages.

fund projects that restore habitats

REQUIRED EATING

The Black Lantern, the restaurant at the Nile Porch hotel, is popular for its pork ribs served with matoke bananas, a local staple

FOREST BATHE

The Mabira rain forest, with its steep ascents and fast drops, is a good option for bicycling enthusiasts. Cyclists can follow a path to a hillside tea estate where pickers pluck tea leaves and throw them over their shoulders into sisal baskets.

On a recent visit, I based myself at the Nile Porch, a hotel with semi-tented, highceilinged rooms. I discovered Adrift Uganda, which offers trips along the Nile River that include Class VI rapids, and booked a trip. I was relieved when my group voted to tackle a Class III rapid called Bubugo-until I learned that it means "condolences" in the Lusoga language of Uganda.

Later that afternoon, on a less harrowing quad-biking excursion with All Terrain Adventures through nearby Kyabirwa Village, I charged past farms bursting with maize; kids ran out from the open doorways of mud-brick homes to wave hello.

The next day, as I paddled on flat waters with Kayak the Nile, observing cormorants and kingfishers while otters lazily swam past me, I was reminded of that feeling of limitless adventure that continues to lure me back.

Nairobi-based writer Wendy Watta is always dreaming of her next African trip.





The people in Imlil are Amazigh (Berber) and speak Tashelhit. The older generation and many of the women do not speak Arabic.

41 miles

between Imlil and western Morocco's cultural capital



Kasbah du Toubkal is built like a casbah, or castle, and its hillside setting offers panoramic views of the mountains. Or try Douar Samra, which has two treehouse rooms above a fragrant garden.

13,671

Elevation in feet of Mount Toubkal, the tallest mountain in North Africa. Imlil is the gateway for the majority of the mountain's visitors.

This small village in the Atlas Mountains exudes a warm, laid-back hospitality.

by Alice Morrison

MOVING A HOUSEHOLD is always stressful. But when I relocated three years ago to Imlil, a tiny Berber village in the heart of Morocco's Atlas Mountains, my biggest worry was trying to figure out if a mule could carry a washing machine up a mountain.

I had found a house in a family compound carved into the rock of one of the high peaks that surround the main street in Imlil. A valley full of walnut and cherry trees stretches out beneath my terrace, and in the spring the landscape is drowned in pink-and-white blossoms. The day I moved in, children screeched around the communal yard, and the cow-who lives under my bedroom-vied with the chickens to make the most noise. I stepped onto the terrace as the first notes of

the Muslim call to prayer rang out, bouncing off the peaks painted golden by the sun. I saw the tiny figures of hikers high on the trails.

At 5 p.m., Miriam, my new neighbor, took my hand in her warm one and led me into her house. "It's teatime," she said. Women and children sat on the handwoven carpets, chattering like birds.

Miriam poured the sweet mint tea. "Eat, eat!" she said as she presented a feast of hot flaky flatbreads, honey from wild bees, home-churned butter, and walnuts from the trees outside.

And it is that hospitality that makes a visit to these soaring, juniper-clad mountains so incredibly special. Here, you are not a stranger; you are a friend. (A)

Writer Alice Morrison recently walked through Morocco with her six camels.





EGYPT

Sometimes, the most enchanting experiences can be found outdoors.

by Colleen Kinder

in the open air—I challenge you. In three years of wintering in this city on the banks of the Nile, about 400 miles south of Cairo, I haven't found one. Luxor is often called an openair museum, a place where antiquities are as common as mosques, schools, or fruit stands. A visitor could stroll the grounds of Karnak Temple—not to mention Luxor Temple, Valley of the Queens, Valley of the Kings, or the Colossi of Memnon—for days and still find obelisks to marvel at, all while breathing in fresh Sahara Desert air.

Luxor is where I met my husband, and it's where we now live part-time (when not in Alberta, Canada), in a mud-brick house on the city's quieter, more rural-feeling West Bank. It's located on the edge of Medinet Habu Temple, parts of which date to 1500 B.C.E. I joke that we're basically "glamping in the desert"—never fully inside, because the dust, the donkey braying, and the call to prayer easily find their way in through the corners of our earthen abode. No need to set an alarm clock, since the whoosh of hot-air balloons overhead stirs us awake by sunrise.

The temple of Hatshepsut honors Queen Hatshepsut, the fifth pharaoh of Egypt's 18th Dynasty.

I'm reminded why this ancient city—forever surfacing relics of astounding age—is worth a visit any time in history, but especially now, when outside is the best place to breathe in the larger world.



FELLOW TRAVELERS

The Nile River Valley is a major bird migration corridor—close to 300 different species (including ibis, cormorants, and storks) pass through Luxor, some flying all the way from Europe to winter in Egypt or farther south.

BEST KNOWN FOR

There are upwards of 650 known tombs on the West Bank of Luxor. The Valley of the Kings is home to 62, while the Valley of the Queens features more than 90, and the Valley of the Nobles contains more than 500.

MUST VISIT

In some ancient tombs in Luxor, you'll find artwork that illustrates the afterlife not only of the tomb owner but also of their pets:
Dogs, cats, and even monkeys sometimes appear in these artistic depictions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pharaoh Amenhotep III's "House of Millions of Years," was built in the 14th century B.C.E. on what is now the West Bank of Luxor. It was once the largest temple complex in the world.

Luxor's prodigious art scene can also be savored outside. Even going to the opera, prepandemic, did not require going indoors: Verdi's *Aida* was staged at the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut. I vaguely recall the arias and the actors; I more vividly remember the stunning colonnades aglow in the cool desert night.

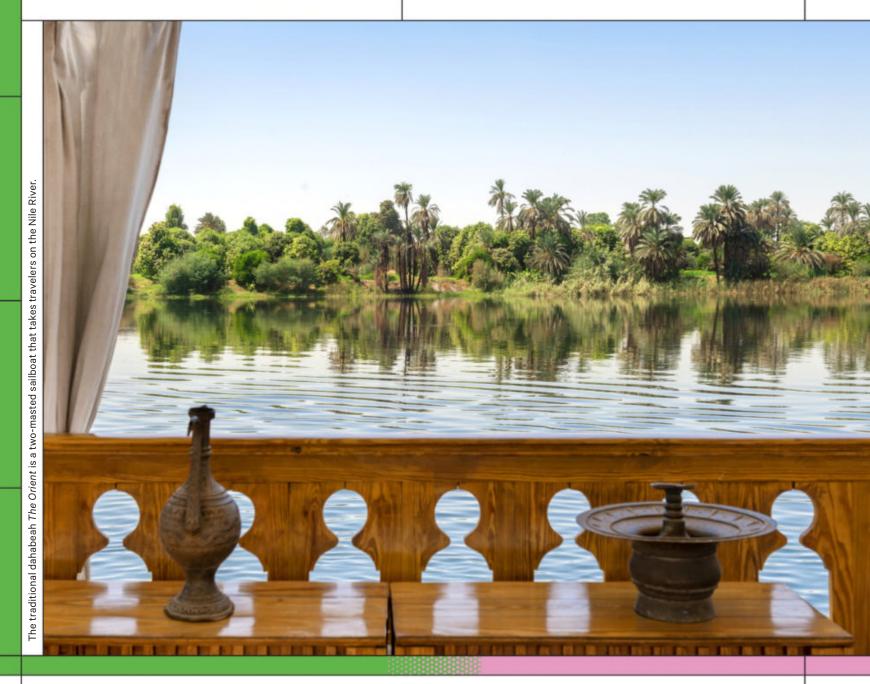
The city's most renowned artist, Alaa Awad, is a painter whose neopharaonic murals stretch across buildings on the West Bank. The local gallery that features his work, Luxor Art Gallery, has an outdoor courtyard for workshops and expositions where a visitor might run into him. For Awad, the

pandemic has been a quiet but artistically fertile time. "I created so much work," he told me on a recent call. "I painted portraits of my friends, landscapes of the Nile." He explained how lockdown catalyzed his art and even varied its mood.

For our Luxor neighbor Mahmoud Salem, a sculptor, this quiet period has held similar promise, offering him time to renovate his studio and create new pieces. "I have good energy in winter; ideas come to me then," he said. I asked Salem over the phone about new archaeological discoveries such as the "Lost Golden City" with undulating brick walls, close to both our homes. "When I was younger, we would play soccer there," he said with a laugh, hinting that what Egyptologists call "discoveries" are sometimes already familiar to residents.

Still, I was hungry to know whether I can explore this latest excavation when we return to Egypt in a few weeks. Salem assured me that I'll catch a glimpse from the street, and I'm reminded why this ancient city—forever surfacing relics of astounding age—is worth a visit any time in history, but especially now, when outside is the best place to breathe in the larger world.

Colleen Kinder is an essayist, editor, and cofounder of
Off Assignment, a nonprofit magazine focusing on the personal
narratives behind news stories.



GETTING THERE

Fly from Nairobi (an hour-and-45-minute journey) or opt for the scenic, two-day drive that takes you past small agricultural towns. Kitale is a good spot to overnight (try the quiet Westside Hotel). It's a seven-hour drive from there to the town of Lodwar.

CLOSER LOOK

Most of Kenya's Turkana people, who are part of the Nilot group that originated in East-Central Africa, continue to lead a seminomadic lifestyle.

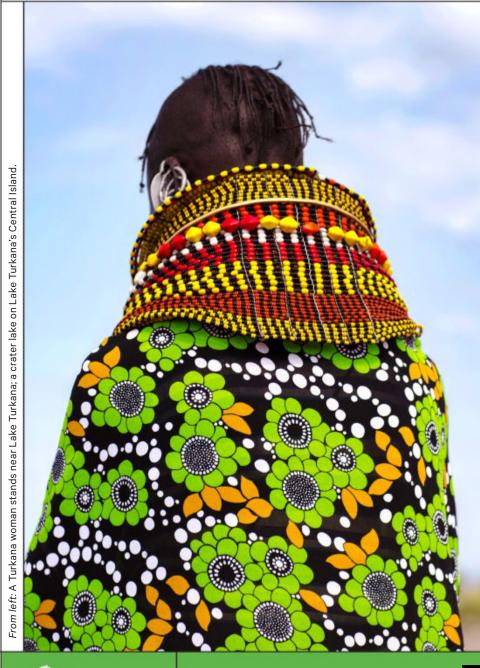
STAY LONGER

It takes a little more than an hour by car from Lodwar to reach Lothagam, an archaeological site with rust-colored sediment beds and animal fossils dating to the Late Miocene period.

REQUIRED EATING

At Sandfields Lodwar Camp, try *tope tokon*, or "roast till it cooks" in the Turkana language: goat meat cooked over an open fire, resulting in a uniquely smoky taste.

Explore the northwestern corner of Kenya, where archaeological sites and the blue waters of Lake Turkana await. by Harriet Akinyi



HAVING LIVED IN KENYA all my life, I never knew how rich and varied the landscapes and cultures of my own homeland could be—until I traveled to Turkana County.

This arid part of the country, often called the cradle of humankind, lies 310 miles northwest of Nairobi. Turkana is one of Kenya's largest counties, but even with its groundbreaking archaeological finds and distinct traditions, few people visit.

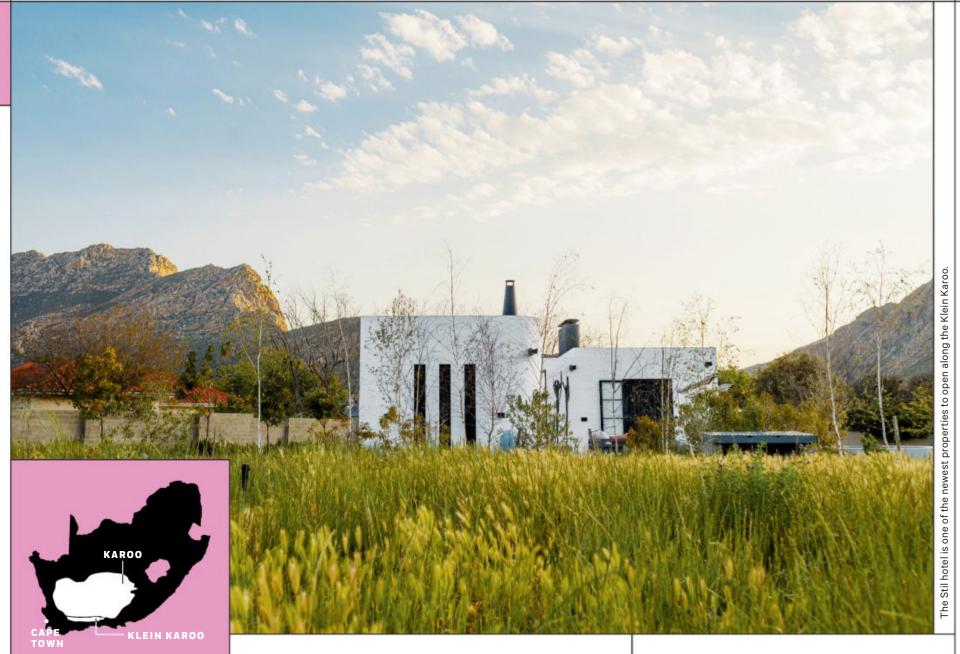
During a recent trip, my first stop is Turkana's dusty capital, Lodwar, where I head to the Mikeka market, famous for its intricate handwoven baskets made with multicolored reeds. The women who create them use the earnings to supplement their agricultural livelihoods, which are constantly threatened by drought. From Lodwar, I travel east for 45 miles until I reach the azure waters of Lake Turkana. I stop at the fishing town of Kalokol to observe anglers dry tilapia and perch and to view Namoratunga II, a 2,300-year-old ceremonial site composed of 19 stone pillars.

Next I drive 50 miles north along the lake to Nariokotome to see the discovery site of Turkana Boy, the most complete known skeleton of Homo erectus, dating back 1.6 million years. A brass replica of the hominid skeleton stands near the site where it was uncovered; the original resides in the National Museum of Kenya. But the site itself, where I can picture Turkana Boy in the very place he once inhabited, offers a powerful reminder of our ancient roots. (A)

Nairobi-based writer Harriet Akinyi writes on travel and conservation and is drawn to Africa's less-visited destinations.



LUICA (a had



This valley northeast of Cape Town reveals a less explored side of South Africa's interior. by Mary Holland

MY LOVE AFFAIR with the Klein Karoo—a semidesert valley 200 miles from Cape Town, on the southern edges of the Karoo region-blossomed late. In part, moving far away from Cape Town to New York City allowed me to appreciate this area with fresh eyes when I returned.

The Klein Karoo contains a 215-mile stretch of Route 62 that runs parallel to the more famous Garden Route. I traveled the entire road in January 2021, and my first stop was the country's Sanbona Wildlife Reserve at the foot of the scrubby Warmwaterberg Mountains. The terrain, with its ancient rock formations and indigenous

fynbos vegetation, is the only place to see the region's nearly extinct white lions. At Dwyka Tented Lodge, set in an amphitheater of rock, there's peace in the deafening silence.

An hour west lies Montagu, a handsome town framed by farms and the jagged Cape Fold Mountains. One of my favorite hotels is Jonkmanshof, a guesthouse set between two restored Cape Dutch buildings. When I return to the region next, I'll check into Stil, a monochromatic retreat with a sculpture garden that opened in 2021. I'll also take a morning hike along the Keisie River, where weaverbirds and shrikes soar above. And I'll follow it with a latte in the tree-shaded garden of the Barn on 62, a coffee shop at the foot of those magical mountains.

Mary Holland is a South African writer based in New York City.

REQUIRED EATING

The restaurant 22 Church Street, set in a restored old house in Montagu, serves hearty dishes such as venison and mushroom tortellini and butter chicken curry. Grab a seat on the terrace and watch the town wind down at the end of the day.

About an hour from Montagu, in the middle of nowhere, is Ronnie's Sex Shop, a famous drinking hole and pit stop for bikers. This bar isn't actually a sex shop. The story goes that Ronnie's friends painted the word SEX between the words RONNIE'S SHOP on the bar's sign as a prank. Business has boomed ever since.

Stop in for a wine tasting at Joubert-Tradauw, a family-owned vineyard and wine cellar located 15 minutes to the south of Sanbona Wildlife Reserve.



A three-hour train ride from Lagos, this centuries-old city is rich in history, culture, and hearty cuisine.

by Mimi Aborowa

CITY OF FIRSTS

Ibadan is home to Africa's first television station (Western Nigerian Television), skyscraper (Cocoa House), and teaching hospital (University College Hospital).

URBAN LANDMARK

Mapo Hall, Ibadan's city hall, is modeled on St. George's Hall in Liverpool, England.

LITERARY HUE

The University of Ibadan has produced world-famous authors, including the novelist Chinua Achebe, author of *Things Fall Apart*, and playwright Wole Soyinka, the recipient of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature.

IBADAN IS THE CITY of my youth, my mother's youth, and that of her mother before her.

Once an epicenter of Nigerian politics, Ibadan was founded by Yoruba warriors in the 19th century. Today, it's characterized by its seven hills, colonial buildings, and rusty corrugated roofing. Thanks to the newly modernized Nigerian Railway, my mother and I recently returned to Ibadan from Lagos on a journey that took us past thick rain forests, farmlands, and rural communities.

From the train station, our taxi dropped us at the International Institute of Tropical

Agriculture (IITA), founded by Americans in 1967 to improve food security in sub-Saharan Africa. Spread over 2,400 acres, the IITA headquarters includes farms, offices, and a tree-shaded, utilitarian hotel.

From there, we set off to explore the manicured grounds of the University of Ibadan—Nigeria's first university—and wandered among the eucalyptus and teak trees at Agodi Botanical Gardens. We haggled for yams and fresh *ata rodo*—habanero peppers—in the Bodija market. At Amala Skye, a *buka* (canteen) that serves Yoruba comfort food, we fortified ourselves on green-hued *ewedu*, a soup made with jute leaves.

As we tasted these familiar flavors and recounted our school days, it occurred to me how much there is to explore in my home country. That thought alone brought me indescribable joy. (A)

Mimi Aborowa is the founder of Ìrìn Journal, which focuses on travel in Africa.





ISRAEL

The rocky, dune-filled landscape in the southern half of Israel has just welcomed its newest retreat.

by Natalie Blenford

DISTANCE FROM ISRAEL'S CAPITAL

between the desert and Jerusalem

ORIGIN STORY

The Negev was first populated by prehistoric hunters who roamed the area 17,000 years ago. Featured in the Bible, the desert has been home to the Nabateans, the Romans, and the Bedouins, among other groups.

I WAS 13 YEARS OLD when I visited Israel's Negev Desert for the first time, and the moment I saw its primeval craters and sand-colored mountains, I was transfixed. During my residential high school program in Israel, the expansive desert offered an otherworldly, biblical antidote to my suburban London childhood.

Since moving to Tel Aviv in 2017, I try to return to the Negev whenever I need to reconnect with my carefree younger self. And this passage through time just got more comfortable, thanks to the sub-

lime Six Senses Shaharut, a resort that opened in August 2021.

I traveled to the desert in the fall, and on arrival to the Six Senses, immediately noticed the site-specific architecture. Built from locally sourced limestone, the buildings blend into their surroundings. My suite was designed using natural stone, copper, and a teak door from an old boat. Following a perfect night of sleep, I awoke to views of the unspoiled Arava Valley through floor-to-ceiling windows. I took an aerial yoga class and then a dip in the infinity pool. Looking out at the desert that has awed me for nearly 30 years, I felt deeply inspired to walk its paths anew.

Natalie Blenford is a British journalist and actor based in Tel Aviv, Israel.

IS IT ISRAEL, OR IS IT MARS?

The Ramon Crater, an erosion crater in the heart of the Negev, was recently used by scientists to simulate what it would be like to live on Mars for a month. Limestone and chalk dominate the landscape, and the crater is surrounded by high cliffs.

WILDLIFE HAVEN

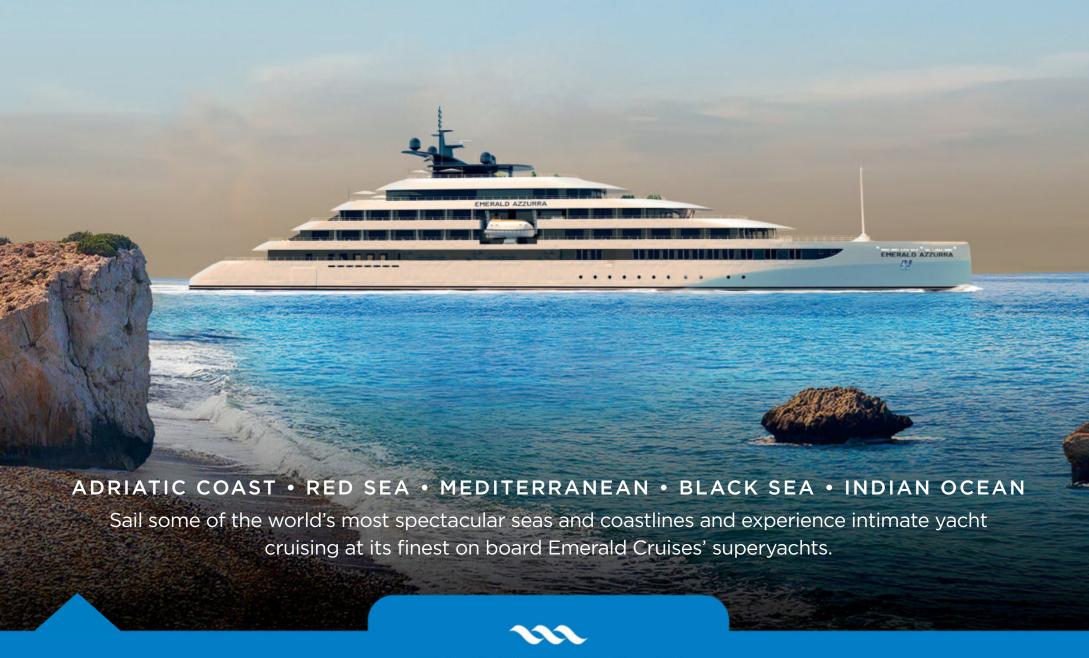
The Negev is home to more than 1,200 species of plants, 45 species of reptiles, and 55 species of birds. Hikers along the desert's trails should keep their eyes peeled for camels, Nubian ibex, and Negev gazelles.

SURFACE AREA

stretches from Be'er Sheva to Eilat



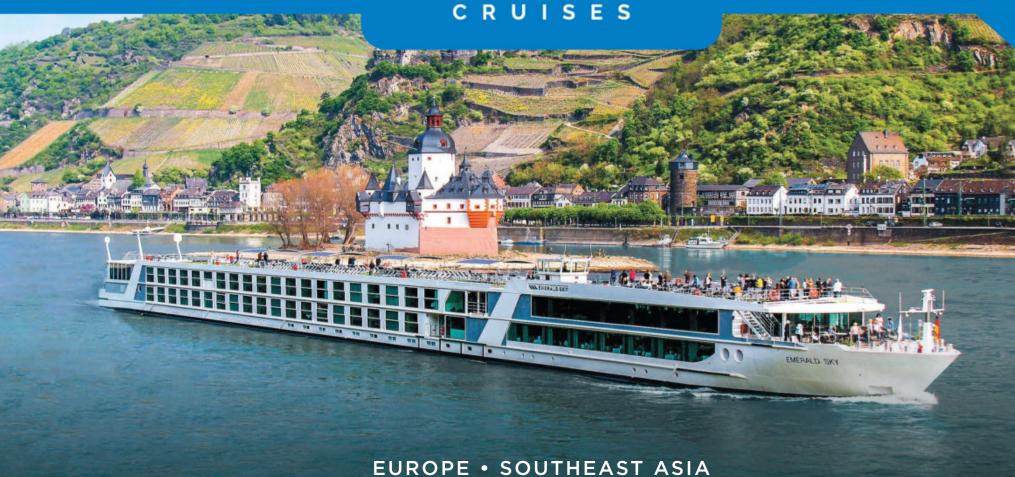




BY SUPERYACHT

EMERALD

BY STAR-SHIP



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Ponder the history of Western civilization as you hike along Turkey's ruin-strewn Carian Trail.

by Jenna Scatena

IN SPRING 2021, I moved from Istanbul to a 200-year-old stone house on the Turquoise Coast—and found myself on the Carian Trail. Unbeknownst to me, the 528-mile route, part of Turkey's growing network of ruin-laced

While I can access the path from my front door, the official trailhead begins in the seaside town of İçmeler in southwestern Turkey. From there, the trail slinks around the Bozburun and Datça Peninsulas and past Hellenistic temples and old stone monasteries. It winds by the Gulf of Gökova-there, trekkers can swim in the turquoise water where, according to legend, Cleopatra once bathed-and though there are many offshoots, the trail technically ends in the town of Karpuzlu.

The Carian Trail unfolds like an outdoor museum: Ancient artifacts, pristine coves, and stone villages are linked by mule paths and old caravan routes dotted with campsites and inns. I decided to take on one new section every month, focusing on stretches I could hike in a day.

On my first outing, I walked from my home until the stone path turned to dirt and the houses gave way to coastal shrubs. I reached the first bend and looked back, consider-

Instead, I followed the red-and-white way markers tattooed on boulders. I passed beekeepers tending apiaries and wild mountain goats hoofing over loose rocks. I stayed mindful of the thistles and boar tracks, marching down switchbacks lined with wild thyme and sage.

With each hike, I found myself increasingly drawn to the ruins along the route. The trail is named after the

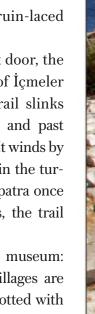
Carians, a civilization indigenous to this coastline as far back as 6000 B.C.E. I passed tombs, mausoleums, crumbling walls, and altars. I passed relics of the Persians, Byzantines, Romans, and Ottomans, all of whom left their marks.

The Carians had their own language, traditions, and way of life. It's believed that Hecate, the Greek goddess of pathways and crossroads, originated from Carian culture. The vast perspective of the highlands and the reflective depths of the shoreline feel designed for roaming and ruminating, and the ruins punctuate it like fossilized epiphanies from those who were here long ago. While hiking the Gulf of Gökova section one day, I could see Bodrum

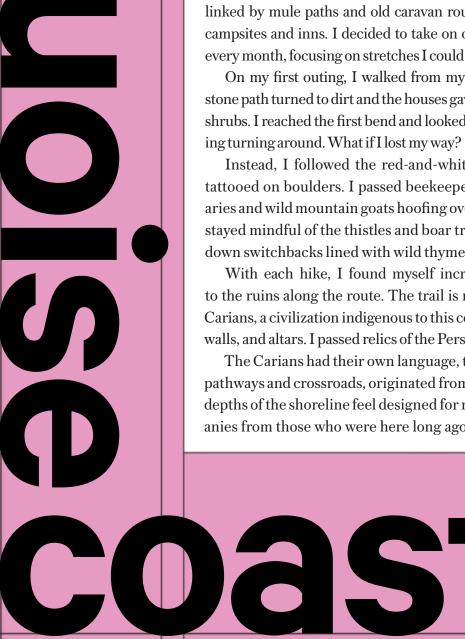
> across the water, where I imagined people drinking at trendy beach clubs, and thought: That coast is for vacationing. This one is for philosophizing.

> The landscapes converge on the Datça Peninsula, where the Aegean collides with the Mediterranean. The peninsula is the site of the ancient Hellenistic acropolis of Knidos, where one afternoon I stopped at the Temple of the Muses and looked out over Greece's Dodecanese Islands. As I sat, civilizations, borders,

treks, runs directly through my village.











Homer's Iliad features the first written mention of the Carians, the civilization for whom the trail is named.

days to hike the entire Carian Trail at 15 miles per day.

Many people embark on selfguided treks, but trail organizers Yunus Özdemir and Altay Özcan also offer expert-led hikes.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Dalaman Airport is the closest to the trailhead.

NUMBER OF TRAIL SECTIONS 52



and time lines dissolved: What was left was the realization that sometimes the world changes, and there's no going back to the way things were. Not even $He cate \ could \ navigate \ the \ moment \ our \ world \ is \ in \ right \ now. \ The \ only \ possibil$ ity is to make room for it, get to know it, walk the path, soak in the present, and maybe try to leave a message for those who come next. (A)

Jenna Scatena is a freelance journalist, author, and editor. Her essays have been published in several anthologies, including The Best Women's Travel Writing, Volume 9 (Travelers' Tales, 2013).

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15,714



REQUIRED READING

Finding Fontainebleau by Thad Carhart is a memoir about growing up in the artistic town during the 1950s. **GETTING THERE**

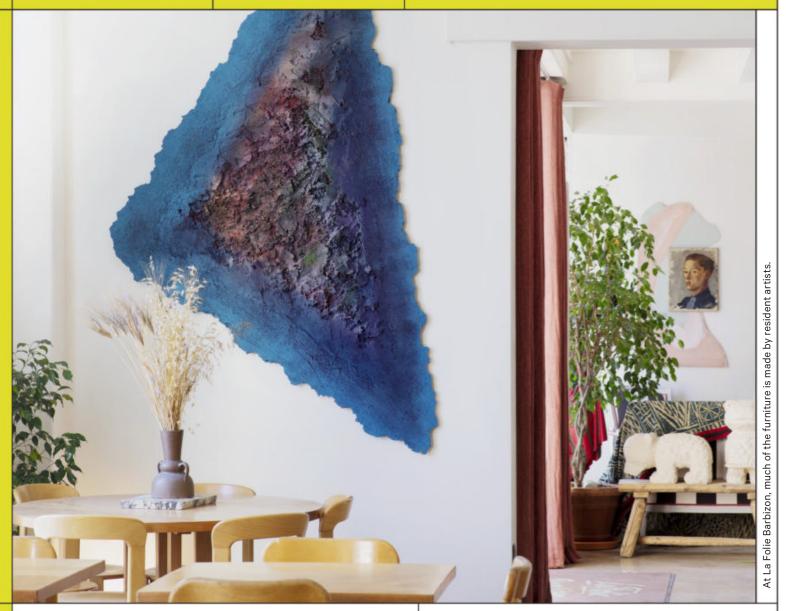
45 min

train ride from Gare de Lyon in Paris to Fontainebleau

15 min

bus or car ride from Fontainebleau to Barbizon, an artists' enclave

FRANCE



Trade Paris for a tranquil weekend in this forested town—once home to royalty—and its neighbor, one of the country's most notable artists' communities. by Lindsey Tramuta

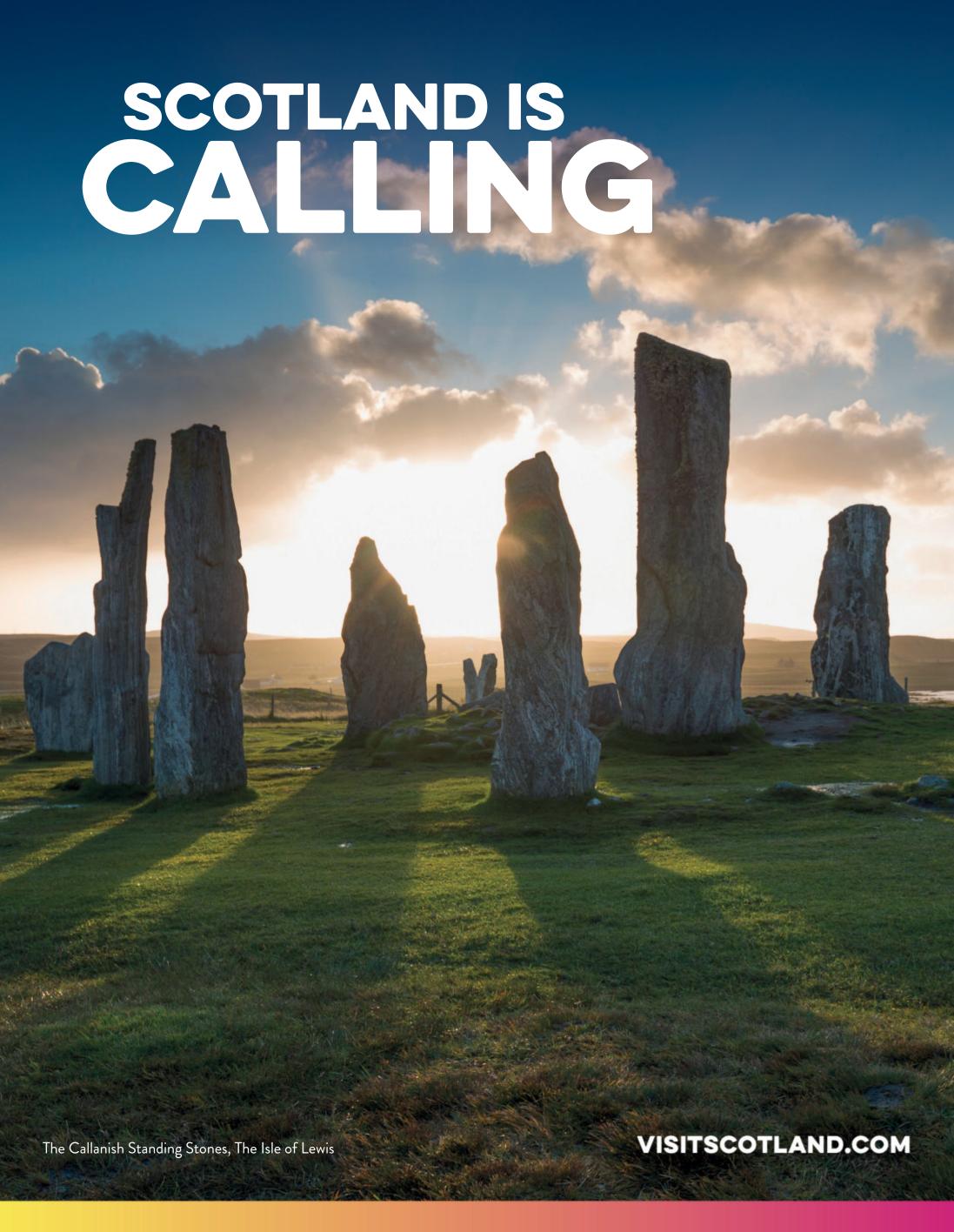
through multiple COVID-19 lockdowns in the city with little access to green space. By the end of 2020, we realized we wanted to make a long-term shift to get closer to nature. So we decided to divide our time between Paris and the country, and bought a century-old stone house near a place eminently familiar to us: Fontainebleau, a town 45 miles south of Paris. For more than 15 years, we have hiked, climbed, and explored in the once-royal place, known for its vast forest and intricate sandstone architecture.

The town was built around the 12th-century Château de Fontainebleau, which was updated in the 16th century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site currently

undergoing another restoration. Ancient forest—54,000 acres of it—surrounds the town, encompassing boulders, hiking trails, and Barbizon, an artists' village. In the 19th century, iconic painters such as Jules Dupré and Théodore Rousseau, inspired by the sandstone boulders and stands of deciduous trees, created the community, where they pioneered landscape realism and the pre-impressionism movement.

The artistic style remains a fixture in Barbizon, where visitors can explore a dozen museums, galleries, and studios in addition to La Folie Barbizon, an artists' residence, inn, and restaurant specializing in organic vegetarian fare that opened in the spring of 2020. Despite the changes, the magic that captured the artists remains: Each time I step off the train from Paris, I feel lighter and more connected to the present. \triangle

Lindsey Tramuta is a journalist and author of two books about Paris, including The New Parisienne: The Women & Ideas Shaping Paris (July 2020, Abrams).





SUSTAINARILITY

In 2009, Copenhagen made a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025.

DDAGDESS

Between 2005 and 2020, the city reduced its carbon emissions by

65%

LEGOTRED READING

The Copenhagen Trilogy by Tove Ditlevsen is a series of memoirs that explore family, motherhood, the life of an artist, and more.



NOT TOO LONG AGO, I took a walk through the wastelands of Copenhagen. It sounds strange to call them that, because the Danish capital, with all its modern design and hygge, is hardly known for grittiness. But this dusty expanse of mostly empty warehouses and overgrown weeds, languishing to the southwest of the lively Meatpacking District, seemed to qualify. After 20 minutes of wandering, I entered a gate and found myself in an *Alice in Wonderland* alternate reality. A leafy glade contained dark, rustic wooden barns. Fat heads of garlic and fire-engine-red tomatoes spilled from the door of one, the jangle of a band from another. At an outdoor table set beneath fairy lights, a young mother fed her child pieces of a sandwich.

The green city is expanding rapidly—

go now to explore its gritty, evolving

liminal spaces. by Lisa Abend



Copenhagen does expansion well, which is a good thing, since it is doing so much of it. Its 2019 municipal plan outlines an ambitious housing strategy for the 100,000 new residents expected to arrive in the city by 2031. As is the Nordic way, the ambition addresses not only the city's size but also its attention to environmental sustainability (car traffic restrictions, green building materials) and its citizens' well-being (spaces for public enjoyment). In the Sydhavn neighborhood, blocks of new housing have been punctuated with canals, the better for kayaking and swimming. In Nordhavn, along the harbor north of the city center, an outcrop of architecturally

Opposite page: Woody Bar & Café at BaneGaarden. *This page, from left*: The streets outside BaneGaarden; the on-site farm shop

RESERVATION TO MAK

Noma is the obvious one, but Amass, in Refshaleøen, serves food grown in its own garden, with a goal of eliminating food waste.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN



Danish is the official language, but the majority of Danes learn English and also understand Norwegian and Swedish.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most housing in Copenhagen is currently positioned within a third of a mile from public transportation, and as the city grows, it intends to preserve that close proximity.

CYCLING NATION

49%

of all trips to work or school are made by bike.

striking housing is accompanied by a whimsical—and public—rooftop gym. There are also restaurants, such as the exquisite Sushi Anaba and the convivial Hija de Sanchez Cantina, and what is surely the city's most unlikely hotel: a one-room suite situated in what was once a coal-loading crane.

These areas are still peripheral, and therein lies much of the charm. In the mental geography of Copenhageners, neighborhoods such as Sydhavn and Nordhavn sit alluringly outside the city—terra incognita—rather than in the center's familiar embrace. But not for long. The first time I went to René Redzepi's famed Noma, in 2009, I walked from the city center across the Knippels Bridge and down a street so barren I was convinced I was lost. Today that same stretch is chockablock with new apartment buildings, restaurants, and quays full of Copenhageners drinking wine and sunning themselves.

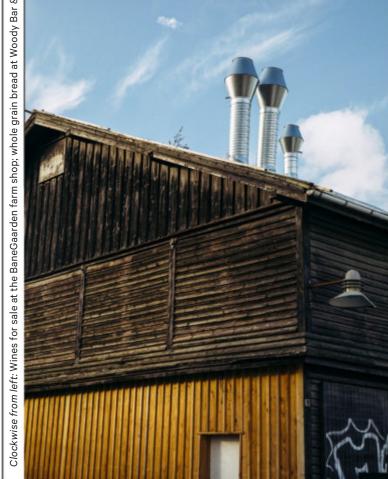
Meanwhile, Noma has moved about a mile north and is now close to busy, industrial Refshaleøen, the island where Copenhagen's shipyards once thrived. The neighborhood has since become a veritable playground for locals and travelers, with a monthly farmers' market, the world's tallest climbing wall, floating hot tubs, a contemporary art museum, and all manner of places to eat and drink.

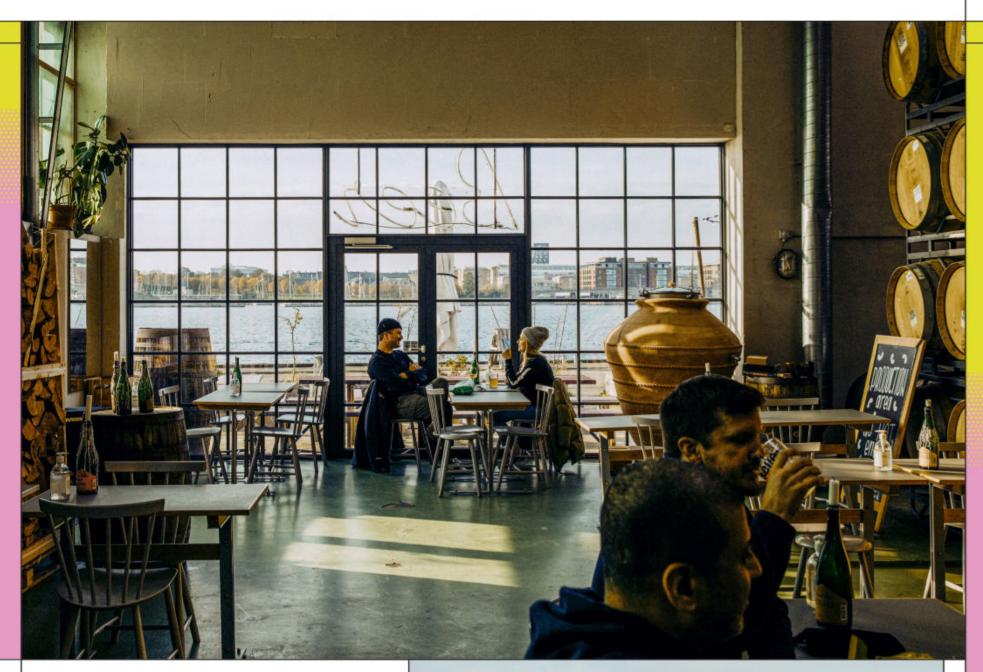
As is the Nordic way, the ambition addresses not only the city's size but also its attention to environmental sustainability.



Other enterprises are beginning to follow Noma's path north. The Opera House, which once seemed like a remote lighthouse on the empty shore of the harbor, is getting a new park in the coming years, and in its shadow, cafés and a bakery have appeared. More striking is the housing development going up on Paper Island. It's a spit of land where the city's newspapers once stored their paper; later it was home to a popular seasonal street food market, which has since relocated to Refshaleøen. When Paper Island is finished, the development, planned as a clutch of pyramidal buildings with a dramatic appearance not unlike a Nordic Angkor Wat, will be devoted mostly to apartments. Still, in accordance with the Danish sensibility that most private developments should serve the public, it will also contain entertainment and cultural spaces, including an Aquaculture House







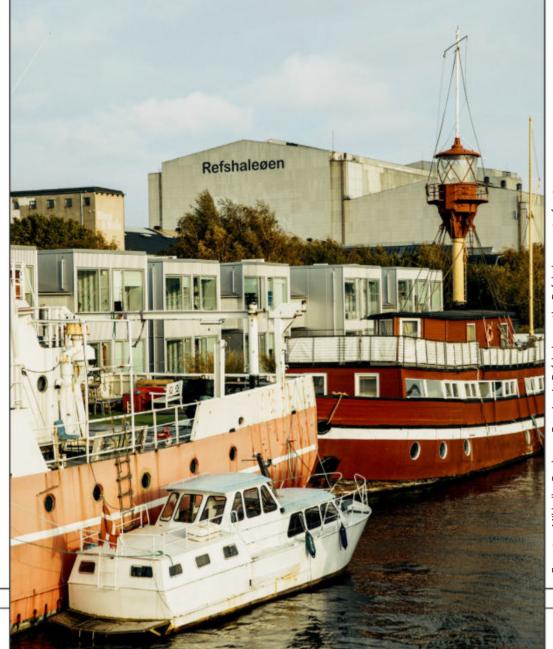
designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma with indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

"We didn't think we should just come in like a UFO landing in the middle of Copenhagen," said Klaus Kastbjerg, one of three Paper Island developers. "That's not the Danish way. We wanted to develop in a way that everybody could use and like."

When I asked Kastbjerg if something won't be lost when Paper Island—and with it, that long stretch of harbor—is developed, he knew immediately what I meant. "It's true. All the pop-ups [such as the street food market] that were here—they gave a special atmosphere. What we're building will bring something else, but it will take that spontaneous feeling away, and that's a pity."

Right now, Paper Island is a construction site; residents aren't expected until 2023. In some ways, the interregnum makes it the perfect time to visit. Fluid, ripe, open to discovery: Refshaleøen, like BaneGaarden and Nordhavn, holds the excitement of exploration, while offering a glimpse of Copenhagen's future.

AFAR contributing writer Lisa Abend lives in Copenhagen. In 2015, she wrote about learning to cycle in the city for AFAR. She's also the author of the memoir The Sorcerer's Apprentices: A Season in the Kitchen at Ferran Adrià's elBulli (2012, Atria Books).



From top: Mikkeller Baghaven Brewing in Refshaleøen; the Refshaleøen waterfront

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FOR MORE THAN 850 YEARS, grapes in Saxony—Germany's easternmost wine region—have been tended and harvested by hand, the wines made painstakingly in small quantities. One of my favorite ways to taste the sustainably grown wines, which are consumed primarily within the region, is also ecofriendly: via a bike ride on the 34-mile-long Saxon Wine Route.

The route starts in the riverside town of Pirna and coils its way through terraced vineyards and historic towns such as Meißen and Radebeul along the Elbe River. In Radebeul, I like to stop at Hoflößnitz, a winery-turned-museum that makes organic wines. At the nearby 18th-century Wackerbarth Castle, visitors can stroll through gardens and goldriesling vines, a variety of grape mainly grown on the Elbe. Travelers can taste sparkling wines at Wackerbarth, the region's oldest sparkling wine cellar, or try Saxon reds and whites at Schloss Proschwitz Vinothek in Meißen, a town also renowned for its porcelain.

While the path ends in Diesbar-Seußlitz, about nine miles from Meißen, I sometimes take a detour on my way back to Pirna via the Elbe Cycle Route. The Elbe path leads to the Cycle through organic vineyards and past 18th-century castles on a wine tour in eastern Germany's most sustainable wine region.

by Christina Ng

village of Schmilka in the Saxon Switzerland Mountains, 16 miles from Pirna. There a 17th-century mill refurbished as a bakery fills the cobblestone streets with scents of spelt sourdough and *handbrot*, a palm-size bread stuffed with cheese, bacon, or vegetables. Hungry cyclists will also find pâtisseries and an organic brewery in Schmilka, all of which use seasonal ingredients and minimize food waste.

My only (hard-won) advice? Don't try to complete the entire route in one day. \triangle

Christina Ng is a writer and translator based in Berlin, Germany.

MAKE IT AN OVERNIGHT

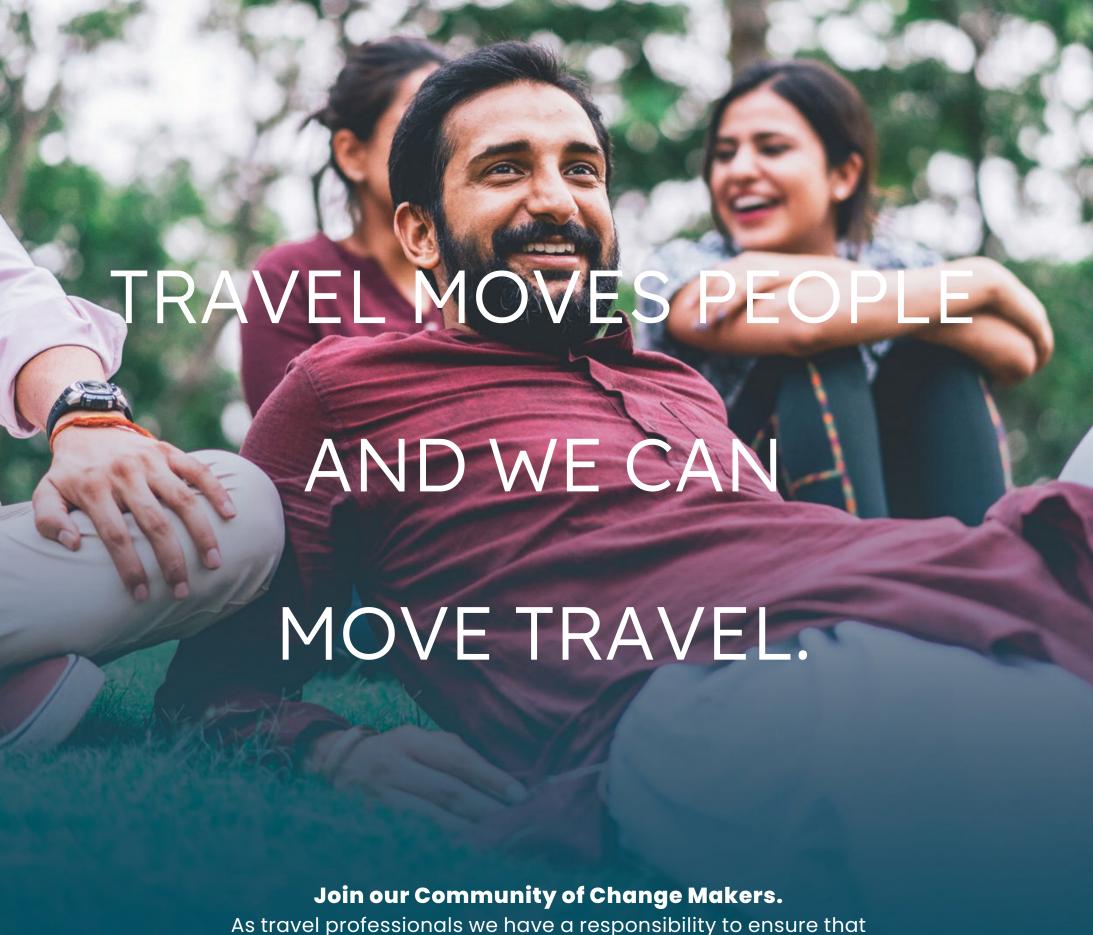
In Radebeul, a town located midway on the wine route, book a room at the Gästehaus Hoflößnitz. Travelers can also overnight in Schmilka at the Hotel Zur Mühle, which occupies the same 17th-century mill as the bakery.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Dresden Airport is the closest to the wine route, but it has few international flights. If coming from the United States, it's best to fly to the Berlin Brandenburg Airport and take the two-hour train ride to Dresden, 15 miles from Pirna.

NUMBER OF WINERIES IN SAXONY





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MY HUSBAND WAS BORN in San Miniato, a picturesque hilltop village often overshadowed by its neighboring Tuscan cities: Florence, Pisa, Siena, and Lucca. For years we lived in Florence, but early in the pandemic, we moved back to my husband's hometown to escape the crowds and be closer to family. I had also discovered that the town was experiencing a culinary renaissance—and for me, as a food writer and cookbook author, that sealed the deal.

San Miniato, with its fertile, tree-covered hills, has long been known for its prized white truffles, grated with abandon over plates of buttery *tagliolini* and celebrated every November at the local truffle fair, La Sagra del Tartufo Bianco. (The festival marked its 50th year in 2021.) In the months we've been here, I've appreciated living a five-minute walk from modern Tuscan classics: a fourth-generation butcher, Sergio Falaschi, which has the best view in town and a new casual restaurant out back; Maggese, a fine-dining spot with an emphasis on veggies; Birra e Acciughe, a tiny beer and panino joint named for its long, warm baguettes filled with butter and anchovies; and Pizza del Popolo, a new bakery that sells sourdough and vegetarian pizza *a taglio*, or by the slice.

The village's delights extend beyond restaurants. Travelers can taste wines at the nearby biodynamic winery Cosimo Maria Masini, join a truffle hunt year-round, or stretch their legs on one of the walking paths of Via Francigena, the 10th-century Roman pilgrim route that cuts right through town. Whenever I walk it, I'm reminded of how lucky we are to have such abundant countryside—and food—right

outside our front door.

Emiko Davies is a food and recipe writer, as well as the author of five cookbooks, including
Torta della Nonna (March 2021, Hardie Grant).

ESERVATION TO MAKE

Try the elegant vegetarian tasting menu at Ristorante Maggese. (Book a seat at the counter, where you can see chef Fabrizio Marino in action.)

REQUIRED EATING

Locals swear by the *cinta* senese prosciutto at Sergio Falaschi, made from heirloom Tuscan pigs.

REQUIRED READING

Pinocchio. It's believed that author Carlo Collodi's father was a cook in San Miniato and that the story contains references to local places.

On your next trip to the Bel Paese, bypass the tourist-clogged Tuscan cities and head for this truffle-loving hill town. by Emiko Davies



MIKO DAVIES

Hardie Grant). O ITALY O TOUR STATE OF THE


CROATIA

WHILE TOURISTS SWOON over the islands and coast of Croatia, its mountainous regions, located southwest of the capital city, Zagreb, remain blissfully off the radar. In Lika and Gorski Kotar, travelers can hike beside Plitvice Lakes and visit no fewer than four of the country's eight national parks, and spot ancient yew trees and native flowers such as Carniolan lilies.

Drawn by the remote wilderness and my own roots-my mother hails from a now-abandoned hamlet in Lika—I've been spending time in the area during the last several years. There, I found Jelena Pirc of Lynx & Fox, who guides day hikes into Gorski Kotar's rugged sylvan landscapes frequented by bears, wolves, and the endangered Eurasian lynx. Pirc recommends visiting Stara Sušica's new Large Carnivores Visitor Center, which opened in July.

Farther south in the mighty Velebit Mountains, where old-growth beech forests hide rare western capercaillie birds, the conservation nonprofit Rewilding Europe is reintroducing wild horses and bovines to the Lika Plains and building wildlifeThough travelers best know the country for its picturesque beaches, Croatia's wild interiors are also worth a special trip. by Anja Mutić

watching hide structures to support naturefocused tourism. Accommodations range from cozy chalets and rustic lodges to the higher-end Linden Tree Retreat & Ranch, located inside the UNESCO Velebit Mountain Biosphere Reserveeven more reasons to detour inland from the Croatian coast.

Born in Croatia and based in New York City, Anja Mutić has worked in travel since 2000.

GETTING THERE

From Rijeka International Airport to Gorski Kotar

84 miles

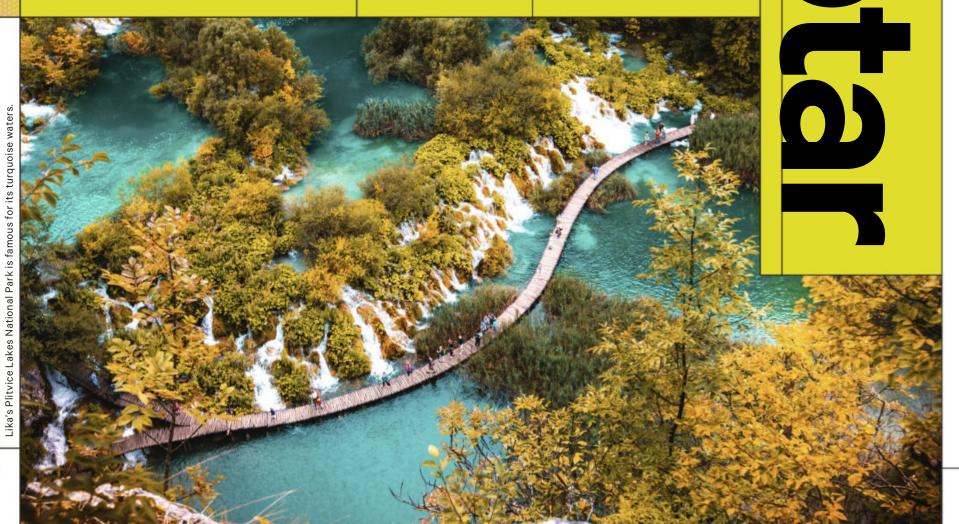
From Rijeka International Airport to Lika

POPULATION

85 percent of Gorski Kotar's surface is forested, with a population density of 50 people per square mile.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lika is the birthplace of the legendary inventor Nikola Tesla. Travelers can visit his memorial center and museum in the village of Smiljan.



GETTING THERE

113 miles

POPULATION

1,963

FIRST MENTION

wrote about the town when building his summer getaway, Bundoran Lodge.

BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO VISIT

The waves are at their prime in fall and winter.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bundoran hosts Sea Sessions, a three-day annual festival celebrating music, surfing, and skateboarding. More than 10,000 people usually attend.

A popular seaside resort for centuries, Bundoran has forged a new identity for itself: surf



I NEVER THOUGHT MY QUEST to learn to surf would lead me to Bundoran, a coastal town in County Donegal in the northwest corner of Ireland. When I first visited in 2015, I thought I'd only be there for the three months my visa allowed. Now, I come every year, often bouncing around Europe or returning stateside while waiting for my visa to reset.

Bundoran was a popular destination long before it became the surf capital of Ireland. During Victorian times, people flocked from across the country to soak in the Thrupenny and West End (Nun's) Pools. Today, surfers from around the world come to visit Tullan Strand or ride the breakers at the Peak, home to some of Europe's most consistent waves.

I return to Bundoran each year, vowing that I'll finally learn to surf. The funny part is, I never follow through. I visit instead for the *craic*, or good times, in local parlance. There's still plenty to do in town without getting in the water: It's not called Fundoran for nothing! Consider taking a hike up Benbulbin, cycling around the Gleniff Horseshoe loop, cliff jumping from the coastal crags, or simply strolling along the Rougey Cliff Walk. If you're feeling parched afterwards, check out some of my favorite pubs and eateries, including the Phoenix Tavern, the Chasin' Bull, and Maddens Bridge Bar & Restaurant, where you can enjoy pints while listening to traditional music.

Yolanda Evans is a Berlin-based freelance travel writer.

IRELAND oundoran

DARRAGH GORMAN

Made from shipping containers, the dining and retail complex Cargo is home to 27 restaurants, breweries, and more.

ENGLA



In June 2020, local activists toppled a statue of merchant and slave trader Edward Colston.

YEAR TO VISIT

In the summer, travelers can enjoy the city's parks and outdoor dining spaces.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

A Respectable Trade by Philippa Gregory is a historical novel set in 18th-century Bristol that focuses on the country's slave trade.



In southwestern England, this progressive maritime city has grown into a proper food and beer destination. by Tim Chester

EVERY TIME I RETURN TO BRISTOL, the West Country city where I spent my teenage years, it's changed, often substantially. The trading port may wear its heritage on its sleeve—the waterfront's imposing cranes and the famous Clifton Suspension Bridge are just two examples of Bristol's maritime and engineering history-but it's also a modern hub of creativity, ingenuity, and liberal thinking. Since my dad's work took us there in the early 1990s, the city has witnessed the rise of trip hop, the street art of Banksy, a revitalized harborside and city center, and the advent of its own currency (which transitioned into digital currency in 2021). It was also named a

European Green Capital in 2015. More recently, a racial reckoning saw many of the city's establishments question and ultimately condemn Bristol's slave-trading past.

My latest trip, in summer 2021, yielded plenty of fresh fun. Since I last visited, Bristol has turned into a bona fide food and craft beer capital, with breweries located in unusual places. The reborn (once again) harborside is now full of restaurants. I liked the hazy IPAs at Left Handed Giant, whose brewpub occupies a former sugar refinery on the riverbank. Near the central train station, visitors can try hop-forward beers in a taproom shared by brewers Newtown Park and Verdant. And at Cargo, a waterfront collection of restaurants and stores housed in shipping containers, travelers can taste everything from bao and poke to local cheese and cider. The complex is diverse, surprising, and full of flavor-just like Bristol itself.

Tim Chester is a deputy editor of AFAR. He's based in Los Angeles but spent his formative years in Bristol.



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The island nation quietly comes into its own as a nature lover's low-key paradise. by Zinara Rathnayake

OUTSIDE A TENT IN HAPUTALE, 112 miles east of Sri Lanka's largest city, Colombo, I sipped a cup of sugary tea, the morning sun warming my hands and feet. Mist blanketed the surrounding tea gardens. All was quiet except for the chattering of the birds, the faint hum of a nearby stream, and an occasional murmur from nearby hikers readying their packs for the day. I was at the Eco Lodge Haputale, a familyrun campsite in the Haputale mountain range of Sri Lanka. Although the campsite also has a guesthouse, the appetite for it has shifted. "Since the pandemic began, our guests prefer the outdoors," Viraj Dias, the eldest son of the family, told me.

The Dias family who owns it is part of a noticeable boom in interest in the outdoors in Sri Lanka. When the world went crabwise—after borders

closed and international arrivals to Sri Lanka dwindled—the country's tourism industry pivoted, courting residents like myself with new adventure offerings: kayaking trips, guided bush walks, and wildlife ranger programs for kids. After spending several months working from home in Colombo, I wanted to reconnect with nature. And I wasn't alone. Across the country, Sri Lankans trekked through primary rain forests, snorkeled with sea turtles, strolled the island's sprawling shores, and explored its dense mangrove forests. (Good news for international travelers: As I write this, Sri Lanka's borders are fully open, and more than half its population is fully vaccinated.)

Born and raised in the fishing hamlet of Weligama, on the island's south coast, Thilina Dananjaya is not new to tourism; his father opened the first guesthouse here in the 1980s. But Dananjaya, owner of Layback, a boutique hotel that focuses on surfing and yoga, says his perspective has changed in the last year. "Being confined to our homes made us more conscious about our health and the luxury of spending time outdoors," he says.

Dananjaya and his team used the slower period to add a yoga deck, a concept store for women-made handicrafts, a new restaurant, and two spacious rooftop terraces that overlook the bay of Weligama. In November 2021, Dananjaya reopened Layback for retreats that incorporate surfing, yoga, traditional batik workshops, and Sri Lankan cooking classes. "I saw the demand and desire," he says of the decision to increase his offerings. "People are longing for a 'local experience,' and more people want to retreat."

Two hundred miles north, on the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka, Shirabdi De Silva owns the women-run boutique hotel Anawasal. It opened in 2017, but over the past 18 months, De Silva says she's noticed a growing interest in small-scale accommodations—like hers—that allow visitors to experience the country on a more intimate level.



Running in the Family by Michael
Ondaatje and A Passage North
by Anuk Arudpragasam paint pictures
of the island's recent history.

POPULATION

22 million

DID YOU KNOW?

Five out of the world's seven sea turtle species frequent the beaches of Sri Lanka. The island waters also host blue whales, the largest mammals on Earth.





REQUIRED EATING

Try kiribath (coconut milk rice) and kola kenda (a thick drink made from rice, leafy greens, and coconut milk) for breakfast. Lunch is a combination of rice, several curry dishes cooked in coconut milk and mallung (leafy condiments). Appa or appam (egg hoppers) for dinner are a must-have. Enjoy it all with a glass of coconut toddy.





Set in Kalpitiya, a coastal region with 14 islands that make up the peninsula, Anawasal has three thatched-roof cabanas and two villa rooms set in a large one-acre palm garden. The ecofriendly accommodations overlook a vast lagoon with dense mangrove marshes that serve as feeding and nesting grounds to both native and migratory birds. Travelers can explore the lagoon by kayak or stand-up paddleboard. From November until April, just a few miles off the coast in Kalpitiya, visitors can see large pods of spinner dolphins twirl, riding the waves and leaping out of the ocean.

De Silva also conducts personalized yoga sessions, and nearby, the Rascals Kite Resort offers kitesurfing lessons with local and foreign instructors. (Kalpitiya is one of the top kitesurfing destinations in Asia.) De Silva and Rascals have teamed up on a new project called Lay Low, a yoga and kitesurfing retreat with new ecofriendly cabanas on a secluded island in Kalpitiya. It will open in the fall of 2022.

Water-based adventures and yoga aside, bushwalks and wildlife safaris are also on the rise. In the central inlands of Sri Lanka, the locally run ecotour outfit Bush Loft has set up wildlife campsites in some of the country's most remote corners. Their experiences include fly camping in the grasslands of Buttala, a region frequented by elephants, as well as safaris in Yala National Park, where visitors can see Sri Lankan leopards and Asian elephants in the dry plains.



Travelers can also go it alone and independently arrange four-wheel-drive safaris in the national parks with a registered tour guide and driver. Recently, on an impromptu safari to Kaudulla National Park in the north of the country, I spotted a herd of Asian elephants protecting the youngest member of their group, trunks and limbs moving in tandem. Soon after, I paused to watch a dancing peacock and yellow weaverbirds flitting in and out of their intricate woven nests, which hung from branches all around me. *This*, I thought—*is what Sri Lanka is all about*.

Zinara Rathnayake is an independent journalist from Sri Lanka who writes about food, travel, and culture for BBC Travel, CNN Travel, Atlas Obscura, and others.





Across the country,
Sri Lankans trekked
through primary rain
forests, snorkeled
with sea turtles,
strolled the island's
sprawling shores, and
explored its dense
mangrove forests.



An Indian state celebrates the old with the new. by Jasreen Mayal Khanna

YOU COULD SAY I grew up with Goa. In my youth, I visited to party with friends, lured by the Indian beach state's notorious raves. But when I hit my thirties, I began to better appreciate Goa's rich heritage, its Portuguese influence, and the growing number of restaurants, bars, and stores that celebrate the region's culture and architecture.

Nowhere is all of this more apparent than in the picturesque historic quarter of the capital city, Panaji, where brightly painted homes share streets with local boutiques like Sacha's Shop, with its superbly curated resort wear from homegrown Indian designers.

Another favorite is the rainbow-shuttered restaurant António at 31, which opened in January 2021: A throwback to Panaji's old taverns, the menu from chef Pablo Miranda features seasonal fruit cocktails and tapas such as tender coconut stir-fry and crispy baitfish with *kalchi kodi* (leftover curry) dip.

In the north of Goa, the newest darling is Felix, a gallery, coworking space, and events spot that serves modern plates with a regional twist, including eggs Benedict with Goan chorizo. For a truly immersive experience, book "A Very Goan Picnic" with tour company the Local Beat. Travelers can splash around a secret waterfall straight out of *The Jungle Book* and then feast on a homecooked lunch accompanied by *feni* (cashew or coconut liquor).

Another highlight is on the way. In the township of Bardez, the Moda Goa Museum & Research Centre, founded by the late Goan fashion designer Wendell Rodricks, will welcome visitors in early 2022 with more than 800 fashion, textile, and art objects.

Jasreen Mayal Khanna is the author of Seva: Sikh Secrets on How to Be Good in the Real World (Juggernaut Books, 2021). She lives in Mumbai.

YEAR FOUNDED

Goa was captured by Portugal in 1510 and remained a colony until 1961. In 1987, it was formally established as an Indian state.

NICKNAME

In the local Konkani language, Sobit Goem translates to "beautiful Goa."

SIZE OF STATE

1,429 square miles

REQUIRED READING

The Village of Pointless Conversation by Kersi Khambatta, set in a fictional town in Goa.

DID YOU KNOW?

Goa is India's smallest state and has the highest income per capita in the country.

tokorozawa

A stone's throw from Tokyo, architecture and anime buffs will find a place built just for them. by Yukari Sakamoto

an hour from Tokyo Station, a new "town" was born in November 2020. Dubbed Tokorozawa Sakura Town, it's a joint venture between the city of Tokorozawa and the Japanese publishing giant Kadokawa, known for its manga and anime titles. Its main focus? Bringing Japanese pop culture to life.

Here, visitors will find two structures by influential Japanese architect Kengo Kuma: the futuristic Kadokawa Culture Museum, with a colossal exterior built using 20,000 pieces of granite, and the minimalist Musashino Reiwa shrine. A highlight inside the labyrinthine fivestory museum is the Bookshelf Theater, which has 26-foot shelves and is filled with more than 50,000 books, the majority of which are related to manga and anime.

(Yes, you can flip through them.) The sleek Shinto shrine, meanwhile, is guarded by two *komainu*—guardian liondogs—crafted by sculptor Yoshimasa Tsuchiya. The shrine also features an asymmetrical roof and a phoenix painted on the ceiling by Yoshitaka Amano, the renowned designer of *Final Fantasy* video game characters.

Since Tokorozawa Sakura Town's inception, architecture and pop culture fans have been drawn to the cultural complex, which also has a brand-new bookstore, restaurants,

and a permanent TeamLab installation of giant silver acornlike objects that glow at night amid the trees. There's also an anime-themed 33-room hotel that hosts character parties—so go ahead, make a long weekend of it. (A)

Yukari Sakamoto is the author of Food Sake Tokyo (The Little Bookroom, 2010). She also leads tours of Tokyo markets intended to demystify Japanese cuisine.

RAIL ACCESS

Higashi-Tokorozawa Station on the JR Musashino line

MUSEUM NICKNAME

Kadcul

PLAN AHEAD

Buy tickets for the Kadokawa Culture Museum in advance, as they can sell out.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tokorozawa is also known for the 8,650-acre Sayama Hills, which is said to be the model for Totoro's Forest from the Studio Ghibli film *My Neighbor Totoro*. Director Hayao Miyazaki came to the area for inspiration.

STAY LONGER

No need to hurry out of Singapore Changi Airport, which has a spa, pool, and movie theater.

REQUIRED READING

A Baba Boyhood: Growing Up During World War 2 is the memoir of Singaporean William Gwee. Most of the stories are set in the author's old family home, which still stands in Geylang.

DID YOU KNOW?

Singaporeans speak "Singlish," a colloquial mix of Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English.

POPULATION

5,908,302



In a metropolis known for its squeaky-clean streets, a tale of two cities emerges.

by Lester V. Ledesma

SOME SINGAPOREANS raise an eyebrow when they learn I live with my family in Geylang. For decades, this township has been notorious as a red-light district, an incongruous aspect of Singapore's wholesome image. But there's another reason people converge here on weekends. Amid narrow lanes hemmed by shophouses and temples, restaurant chefs are cooking some of the tastiest regional food in Singapore.

Many evenings, my wife and I land at Ån Là Ghiën, a hot pot joint that feels straight out of Hanoi, complete with squat chairs and bowls of steaming sour prawn soup. Other times, we head to Dong Bei Dumpling King, a Chinese eatery where we always order the crispy pork-and-celery-filled dumplings. For a Thai fix, our go-to is Gu Thai House, with curries

and noodles all cooked to suitably spicy standards. Anthony Bourdain loved JB Ah Meng for white pepper crab and Sin Huat Eating House for *crab bee hoon*, a whole crab served with rice noodles.

There are also decades-old restaurants run by generations of local Singaporeans, themselves the descendants of migrant workers. At 126 Dim Sum Wen Dao Shi, the *siu mai* (steamed dumplings) and *char siew bao* (pork buns) come hot, fast, and 24/7. Keng Wah Sung—one of the oldest coffee shops in Singapore—serves the same *kopi* (coffee with sweetened condensed milk) and coconut jam on toast from the recipe its founder concocted in the 1970s.

But even I need a break from Geylang sometimes. Luckily, Kranji, with its open fields and farms, is just 30 minutes north by car. It's worth the drive to watch our kids squeal with delight when they feed goats at Hay Dairies Goat Farm, go prawning at Nelly's, or eat fresh fruit from trees at Bollywood Farms, a scenic orchard with a farmers' market and café.

We also love the Kranji Marshes and Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve. Together, these nature parks form a 460-acre haven for migratory shorebirds and raptors. With a camera in one hand and a bottle of insect repellent in the other, I walk the footpaths, taking in the sea breeze and the waves hitting the seashore, the rustling of leaves in the mangrove forest, the chorus of birds in the jungle canopy above. If I'm lucky, I might spot a crocodile at the water's edge, or a family of macaques scampering through the branches. Here I am, in a jungle away from an urban jungle, both of which call Singapore home.

Singapore-based Lester V. Ledesma covers Asia in words and photographs.



This page: Hot pot in Geylang. Opposite page, from top: Nature walks in Kranji; colorful heritage buildings line Geylang's streets.

Amid narrow lanes hemmed by shophouses and temples, restaurant chefs are cooking some of the tastiest regional food in Singapore.

STAY LONGER

Phong Nha's caves are a 28-mile drive from Dong Hoi, a pleasant provincial capital with sandy beaches, an old citadel, and a domestic airport.

BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT

Avoid the flood season in October and November; aim for March or April, when the sun is out, temperatures are warm, and the rock pools are full.

YEAR FOUNDED

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park was established in 2001 and became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003. Son Doong cave was surveyed for the first time in 2009.

DID YOU KNOW?

Explorers are hunting for caves that are even bigger than Son Doong. Large areas of the national park remain unexplored, which means that even grander underground worlds could be down there.

PHONG NHA-KE BANG National Park, a geologically notable site in central Vietnam, has tempted daredevils since 2013, when Son Doong, the biggest cave on the planet (large enough to hold a Boeing 747), opened for multiday tours. The Phong Nha-based company Oxalis Adventure is hoping to launch a fresh adventure in 2022 that's set to rival the Son Doong Expedition, its flagship experience.

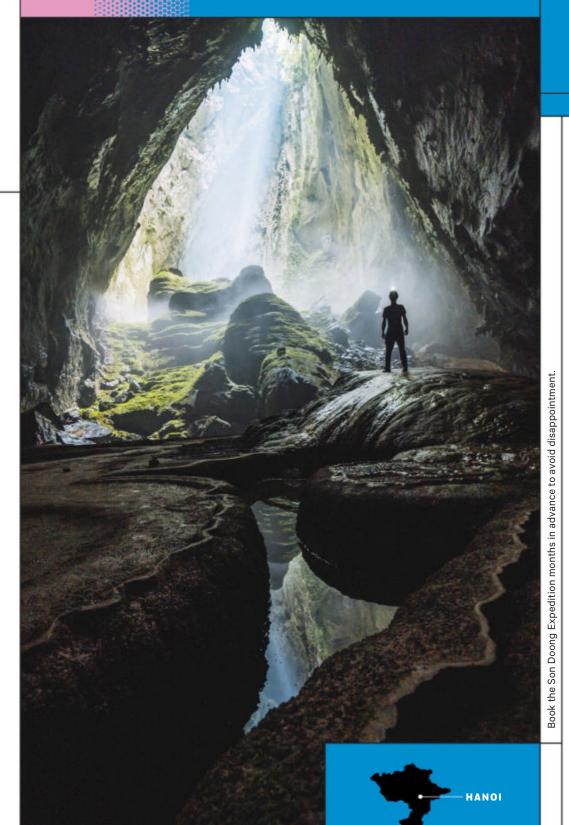
On the new Hang Ba tour (still in development), Oxalis guides will lead spelunkers through upwards of five caves with gigantic limestone chambers and dangling stalactites. When cavers aren't crawling, swimming, or paddleboarding, they'll be camping and trekking through jungles.

"I've been wanting to design this tour for ages," says Howard Limbert, who led the expedition team that discovered the caves in the early 1990s. Back then, it took 15 hours to reach the cave cluster from Phong Nha village. Thanks to a new road, it may only take five to six hours.

Limbert says that collective efforts to protect the caves (his team has

mapped more than 500 in Vietnam) and hire people from the community have reduced the rate of illegal logging and instilled conservationist attitudes. Phong Nha–Ke Bang can serve as a model for other protected areas in Vietnam, Limbert says, including the newly recognized biosphere reserves Nui Chua and Kon Ha Nung.

Joshua Zukas is a Hanoi-based writer covering travel, culture, and architecture.



COURTESY OF OXALIS ADVENTURE

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Calms



Australia's premier Great Barrier Reef gateway reopens, offering travelers a new way to engage with Indigenous cultures. by Sarah Reid

VISITORS TO CAIRNS, a coastal city in tropical north Queensland, typically arrive on a mission: See the Great Barrier Reef. Prepandemic, nearly 3 million people would pass through annually, boarding massive catamarans laden with scuba tanks and snorkel masks, an army of tourists in pursuit of wonder.

As Australia's borders reopen, Cairns is ready to welcome travelers again, with refreshed esplanade dining, new hotels championing sustainability, and an exciting experience celebrating the Indigenous heritage of the Great Barrier Reef.

Some 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have a continuing connection to the world's largest coral reef system, and in 2018, Dreamtime Dive and Snorkel launched trips led by Indigenous Sea Rangers who share cultural knowledge passed down from their ancestors. During the tours, guests listen to evocative creation stories about how the reef came to be, and learn about hunting practices, such as seasonal harvesting, that have safeguarded the reef's biodiversity for millennia.

Visitors will be able to engage with Sea Rangers more deeply at a new pontoon base for Dreamtime's day trips to Moore Reef. Opening in early 2022, the floating pontoon will house an on-site laboratory and underwater observatory. Activities will fuse traditional knowledge and modern science to inspire collaborative protection of the Great Barrier Reef. A

Sarah Reid is a journalist and sustainable travel expert based in Byron Bay, Australia.

DISTANCE FROM

1,044 miles

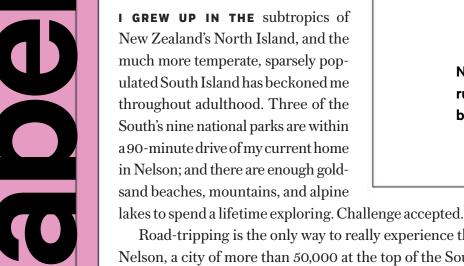
BEST TIME OF YEAR

Year-round, but the dry season (April through September) is ideal for reef and rain forest exploration

STAY LONGER

Reopened in December 2021 following its \$10.9 million facelift, Silky Oaks Lodge near Cairns has partnered with several Indigenous operators to offer walking tours of the Daintree Rainforest. Part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, the world's oldest living tropical rain forest was officially returned to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people, its Traditional Custodians, in late 2021.





Road-tripping is the only way to really experience the South Island's natural beauty. Start in Nelson, a city of more than 50,000 at the top of the South Island, and drive west about an hour to the eastern entrance of Abel Tasman National Park. Many travelers opt to hike—or "tramp"—the Coast Track, a five-day, 37-mile "Great Walk," camping in tents along the way. If you have mobility issues (or perhaps toddlers in tow), you can still get the best of the national park via boat tours from Kaiteriteri, stopping at beaches on turquoise bays.

Continue the drive over notorious Tākaka Hill—with its narrow, windy, gut-churning lanes—to Golden Bay, pausing at a lookout for panoramic Tasman Bay views. Stay overnight in a town along the way, such as Tākaka or Collingwood, and end your visit marveling at the 65-foot-high Wainui Falls and Te Waikoropupū Springs. The cold, clear springs are a sacred Māori space—a source of life, healing, and renewal for locals and travelers alike.

Writer and editor Elen Turner is based in Nelson, New Zealand.



New Zealand's South Island is rural, uncrowded, and achingly beautiful. by Elen Turner

YEAR FOUNDED

sauvignon blanc.

Collingwood in Golden Bay. Chase them down with a glass of Marlborough

The Māori have lived on the South Island since the 13th or 14th century. Captain James Cook claimed the South Island for the British Crown in 1770 while passing through the Marlborough Sounds.

POPULATION

The South Island's population is 1.1 million, out of New Zealand's 5.1 million total.

WHEN WILL NEW ZEALAND REOPEN TO INTERNATIONAL VISITORS?

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has signaled travel will resume in 2022, with heavy restrictions.



HENRIETTE V. / SHUTTERSTOCK

DID YOU KNOW?

Taiwan is the birthplace of the Polynesian languages. Polynesians migrated out of the island around 5,200 years ago, spreading into the Philippines and eastward into the Pacific.



Together, a new band of chefs and cultural activists is showcasing real Taiwanese food.

by Clarissa Wei

TAIWANESE FARE has long been considered a subset of the food of China. But diplomatic contact between China and the contested island nation ceased in 2016, and tensions have continued to climb. One of the by-products: Across Taiwan, many chefs are reviving a distinct national cuisine.

"A lot of people think Taiwanese food is beef noodle soup and *xiao long bao* [soup dumplings]," says Huang Teng-Wei, co-owner of Siang Kháu Lū, a boutique cooking school that opened in 2019 in Taoyuan, southwest of Taipei. "But in fact, all these dishes came after 1950 with the Chinese immigrants." Traditional Taiwanese cuisine tends to revolve around root vegetables (like sweet potato and taro) and rice, with dishes such as savory rice puddings flavored with pork. He and his

wife, Chou Pei-Yi, are particularly focused on reviving *kueh*, an old-school rice pastry that was used for centuries as a temple offering to the gods.

Other chefs are celebrating native Taiwanese ingredients. At Akame, a glitzy eatery that has been open since 2015 in Pingtung



REQUIRED EATING

Bawan is a dumpling made from sweet potato starch and stuffed with meat.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Taiwanese, Mandarin, Hakka, and the indigenous Formosan languages

SIZE OF COUNTRY

13,974 miles²

(a little bigger than Maryland)



county, on Taiwan's southernmost tip, the Indigenous chef Alex Peng uses pine needles and local sumac to flavor meat. Meanwhile, André Chiang—who helms Taipei's fine-dining tour de force Raw—is committed to using Taiwanese ingredients from regional producers and highlighting Taiwan's micro-seasons. Menu items might include roasted sliced duck graced with a sheet of seaweed, or a trio of local rice (fermented, purple, and toasted) alongside creamy panna cotta. Chiang's side gig? Creating an encyclopedia of Taiwanese cooking techniques, ingredients, and food history so that the national cuisine becomes more recognized. (A)

Clarissa Wei is a Taipei-based writer. Her first cookbook comes out in 2023.

taiwan







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