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GEOGRAPHIC

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# TRAVELLER

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# R O M E



BUENOS AIRES

CAMBODIA

MALDIVES

DISCOVER THE MANY LAYERS OF THE ETERNAL CITY  
ON A TOUR THROUGH ITS MOST DYNAMIC DISTRICTS



## Alaska

Life on the edge: Inupiat communities & polar bears on 'the rooftop of America'

## Burgundy

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WINNERS  
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November  
2021

# Contents



90

## 68 Rome

The Italian capital is a timeless destination, but even two millennia after its heyday, there are still surprises to be found. We explore seven dynamic neighbourhoods in which to get fresh perspectives on this spellbinding city

## 90 Alaska

With polar bears and austere Arctic landscapes, 'the roof of America' offers a truly wild escape

## 102 Burgundy

Spiritual tales meet world-class wines on a drive through France's verdant heart

## 114 Tajikistan

Green initiatives are bringing new opportunities to the wild and remote Pamir Mountains

## 126 Buenos Aires

The hot-blooded Argentine capital is reinventing itself, while preserving its historic glamour



## Issue 97

View towards St Peter's Basilica from Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome  
IMAGE: Francesco Lastrucci

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



November  
2021

# Contents



32



52



60

## SMART TRAVELLER

### 17 Snapshot

A chance encounter in Bangladesh

### 18 Big picture

Net results in the British Virgin Islands

### 21 Green light

Glasgow's hottest new openings

### 23 High & mighty

Perfect piste experiences in the Alps

### 25 Food

A taste of Gujarati cuisine

### 27 On the trail

Following Cornwall's new cycling route

### 29 Rooms

Where to bed down in Tampa

### 30 Family

Fiction-inspired adventures in the UK

### 32 Inside guide

Design museums and brilliant beer in Ghent

### 35 Stay at home

A guide to St Davids, the UK's smallest city

## 37 The word

Authors share their favourite travel tales

## 38 Kit list

What to pack for wild swimming

## 41 Competition

Win a luxury gourmet getaway in Surrey

## 43 Author series

Patrick Nunn on Fiji

## 44 Meet the adventurer

Pilot and photographer Garrett Fisher

## 46 Online

The latest highlights from the website

## INSIDER

### 48 Weekender: Jersey

Discover surf spots, markets and Portuguese culture in the biggest of the Channel Islands

### 52 Eat: Cambodia

Revived Khmer dishes and vibrant street eats in the new star of Southeast Asian cuisine

### 60 Sleep: Maldives

From private villas to honeymoon escapes, the ultimate hotel guide to the archipelago

## TRAVEL GEEKS

### 140 Travel Geeks

The experts' travel manual

## GET IN TOUCH

### 34 Subscriptions

Great offers and discounts

### 161 Inbox

Your letters, emails and tweets

### 162 Your pictures

This month's best travel photos

## DON'T MISS

### 148 Photography Competition

The results of our 10th annual Photography Competition are now in. We reveal the stellar shots that most impressed our expert judges

### 145 Events

Join us at our upcoming Travel Geeks events — Estonia and Saskatchewan

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VILLA AGRIPPINA  
— A GRAN MELIÁ HOTEL —  
ROME



# Contributors



## Lucy Gillmore

Cambodia's cuisine is stepping out of the shadow of its neighbours'. Eating my way around the country, meeting chefs resurrecting and updating regional recipes, and exploring Phnom Penh's street food scene was eye-opening. **CAMBODIA P.52**



## Jamie Lafferty

Most Alaskan tourism is focused on the west of the country, but I'm glad I headed north to meet the Iñupiat communities that call the North Slope region home — and not just because I was surrounded by polar bears most days. **ALASKA P.90**



## Nina Caplan

Sticking to Burgundy's well-trodden routes means you miss out on a lot, which is why this time, I decided on a leisurely drive, with stops for history, architecture and, of course, wonderful food worthy of the world's greatest wines. **BURGUNDY P.102**



## Christopher Wilton-Steer

To cross Tajikistan's Pamir Mountains, I travelled along the high-altitude Pamir Highway. Despite its extreme remoteness, dry, thin air and barren landscapes, few places I've visited have felt more alive. **TAJIKISTAN P.114**



## Vanessa Bell

Despite a strict lockdown, Buenos Aires has seen an explosion of exciting new food ventures and a reigned cultural scene. After 11 years of living in this dynamic city, I've never been more excited to call it home. **BUENOS AIRES P.126**

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# The Wonderful Treasure That's Full of Pleasure

## Indonesia CARE


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## Editor's letter

All cities have layers, but few can claim to be as stratified as Rome. Civilisations that have taken root here over millennia seem to jostle for prominence at every turn — medieval streets constructed above Etruscan sewers, Roman columns repurposed by Renaissance architects, baroque churches consecrated on top of ancient tombs, 1950s flats built upon the remains of palatial villas...

Part of Rome's magic is the way in which it honours its icons, like the Colosseum and the Pantheon. But rather than simply dining out on its past and preserving the city in aspic, the Eternal City refuses to stand still. Part of its unique appeal as a modern metropolis is the way its ancient lineage is woven into the narrative of the present, unfolding across its patchwork of spirited neighbourhoods.

In Testaccio, the menu of a traditional Roman trattoria offers a concentrated history of the city, while amid Trastevere's vast flea market and venerable pizzerias you'll find a modern art gallery in a crumbling church. Elsewhere, fashion-forward Monti has come into its own, while a regenerated Pigneto is now the coolest district in town.

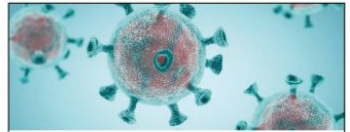
This issue, we weave our way through seven unmissable Roman neighbourhoods, peeling back the layers to cast new light on one of Europe's most alluring cities.

PAT RIDDELL, EDITOR

 @patriddell  
 @patriddell

### AWARD-WINNING NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER

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### Covid-19

The ongoing pandemic continues to affect travel. Please note, prices and travel advice are subject to change. Contact your travel provider for the most up-to-date information. For the latest news on safe travel and border restrictions, visit [gov.uk/fcd0](http://gov.uk/fcd0)

### DON'T MISS



### Photography Competition 2021

From intimate portraits to epic landscapes, your submissions were as varied as ever. Our judges have whittled down the longlist to find the very best in travel photography (p.148)

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Esposizioni Salgado: da "In the spirit before coming" Mount Pico da Neblina, Amazonas Stato, Brazil, 2014, a "Sociedade Salgado" (2019)

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# SMART TRAVELLER

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

## SNAPSHOT

### *Morrelganj, Bangladesh*

On the way to Morrelganj to take the famous Rocket paddle steamer, I passed through a small village near the Panchunchi River. My presence didn't go unnoticed by the children who were playing in the water. The group included a young woman, dressed in a colourful sari, with flowery earrings and elaborate henna designs on her hands. She told me she was ready to celebrate Pehela Baishakh, the Bengali New Year, and invited me to meet the rest of the villagers. Before I left, the girl asked me to take a picture of her, so I'd remember her every time I thought of Bangladesh.

SANDRA MORANTE // PHOTOGRAPHER

 sandramorante.com  
 @holasandraphoto





## BIG PICTURE

*Anegada, British  
Virgin Islands*

Off the coast of Anegada, the northernmost of the British Virgin Islands, the waters teem with conch and lobster. Fishing is a popular pastime on this low-lying, coral-and-sandstone cay, home to fewer than 300 permanent residents. Fish caught for food is landed on this concrete jetty, jutting from a headland known as Setting Point. The day's catch rarely has far to go: from the jetty, it's just a few minutes' walk around the bay to beachside cafes serving seafood dishes, including conch fritters and grilled lobster.

**MARK PARREN TAYLOR // PHOTOGRAPHER**

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GLASGOW

# GREEN LIGHT

From hotels to restaurants, the Scottish city is abuzz with new openings as it hosts this month's COP26 summit



**OFF THE RAILS**  
Do as the city's students do and embark on a 'sub-crawl', visiting bars close to all 15 stops on the underground rail network.



Glaschu, the restaurant at The Western Club  
LEFT: Kelvingrove Park and the University of Glasgow, in the city's West End

As attendees of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference hopefully won't find out, it's incredibly challenging to be green in certain parts of Glasgow. The city's 130-year-long football rivalry between Celtic and Rangers means there are entire neighbourhoods where simply wearing anything green would be met with howls of derision.

Thankfully, the city and its residents are open to change in other areas. For the past couple of decades, Glasgow — whose Gaelic name, Glaschu, fittingly means 'dear place' — has seen the development of restaurants and hotels, with neighbourhoods formerly best avoided evolving rapidly, thrillingly into something new.

Nowhere is this more evident than in **FINNIESTON**. The area has gone from better-to-take-a-taxi-through-it to one of Scotland's most dynamic gourmet corners, and it continues to excite with new openings. The latest additions include the **HIDDEN LANE ORGANIC BREWERY** and shop, which has popped up in a former laundry off Argyle Street, and **UNALOME BY GRAEME CHEEVERS**, which has opened at the

unapologetically high end of the food scene. [hiddenlanebrewery.com](http://hiddenlanebrewery.com) [unalomebygc.com](http://unalomebygc.com)

Cheever's may well be looking to emulate the Michelin-starred success of **CAIL BRUICH**, on the other side of beautiful Kelvingrove Park. For 17 years, Glasgow may not have been in Michelin's bad books, but it certainly wasn't in any of its guidebooks, either. That changed in early 2021, when Cail Bruich's clever take on modern Scottish cuisine was finally recognised. [cailbruich.co.uk](http://cailbruich.co.uk)

The Covid-19 pandemic has, of course, slowed Glasgow's regeneration, but in certain areas, it's provided an opportunity. In the **MERCHANT CITY** quarter, a series of bars and restaurants operating under the **FESTIVAL VILLAGE** umbrella was given a permanent al fresco home. Further east, **BARRAS ART AND DESIGN** — a collection of food, drink and entertainment spaces — is breathing new life into the century-old Barrowlands Market. At the back of Glasgow Green, with e-bike racks nearby, and a healthy presence of IPAs, street art, hipsters and all, it almost feels as though you could be Brooklyn. [facebook.com/festivalvillagemerchantcity](https://www.facebook.com/festivalvillagemerchantcity) [baadglasgow.com](http://baadglasgow.com) [peoplemakeglasgow.com](http://peoplemakeglasgow.com) **JAMIE LAFFERTY**

## NEW OPENINGS

### GLASCHU

The Western Club's restaurant offers slick cocktails and snazzy interpretations of Scottish cuisine. Its opening was one of several initially impeded by the spread of Covid-19. [glaschurestaurant.co.uk](http://glaschurestaurant.co.uk)

### LA CHAMBRE VERTE

Kimpton Blythswood Square has opened La Chambre Verte, combining forest bathing, CBD rituals, meditation and sound therapy. From £579, B&B, including massages and CBD bath experience. [kimptonblythswoodsquare.com](http://kimptonblythswoodsquare.com)

### VOCO GRAND CENTRAL

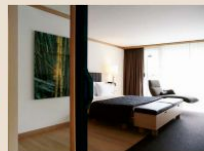
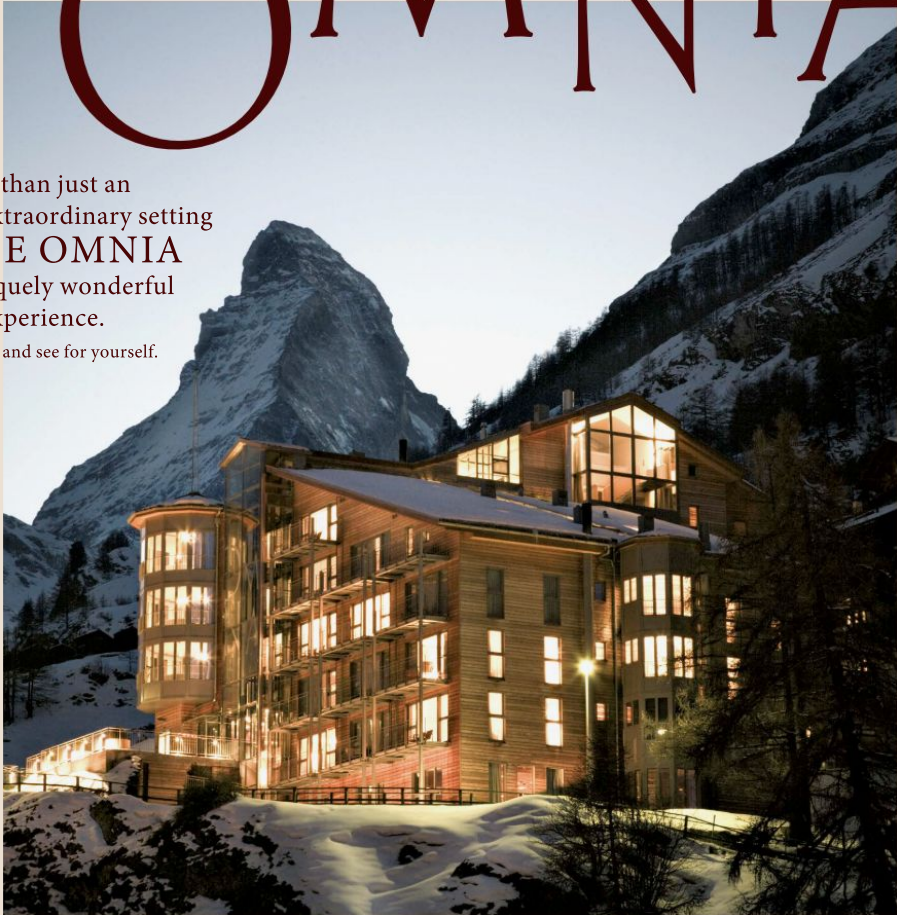
Glasgow Central station's onsite hotel has put its green credentials front and centre, with bedding made from 100% recycled materials, glass water bottles in guest rooms and water-saving showers. From £109. [grandcentral.vocohotels.com](http://grandcentral.vocohotels.com)



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## SKI SEASON

## HIGH &amp; MIGHTY

New experiences mean the Swiss Alps are this season's most exciting winter destination

**Head for heights**

The world's longest elevated forest walkway (nearly a mile long) opened this summer in the ski resort of Laax and will stay open throughout the winter. The Senda dil Dragun ('path of the dragon') snakes through the treetops between Laax Murschetg village and Laax Dorf, at heights of nearly 100ft. It's reached by lifts at each end. From £12. [flimsllaax.com](http://flimsllaax.com)

**Room with a view**

Lie back in the Kempinski Palace Engelberg's top-floor spa and enjoy the Alpine grandeur through a glass wall and ceiling. The belle époque hotel, which first opened its doors in 1904, reopened this summer after a five-year restoration and expansion. It's not just the spa with stellar views; mountain-backed vistas abound, and it's only a stroll from the Brunnibahn gondola. From £465, B&B. [kempinski.com](http://kempinski.com)

**Table talk**

New Verbier restaurant Le 22 is essentially a chef's table for 22 guests, hidden behind a discreet door. Chef Adam Bateman — who's previously worked for Raymond Blanc and Sir Richard Branson — rather understatedly promises a 'semi-gastro' meal. In reality, this means a five-course evening event — although at the decidedly reasonable price of £60. [crock.ch](http://crock.ch)

**Wheels of fortune**

See Andermatt on four wheels with new e-quad bikes. You don't quite get the freedom of the pistes, but you can zip around an environmentally friendly circuit via neighbouring Hospental. Riders must be 18 or over and have a valid driving licence. It costs £63 an hour — and you can't be late back because that's roughly how long the battery lasts. [anderlatt-swissalps.ch](http://anderlatt-swissalps.ch)

**NICK DALTON**

## PEAK PERFORMANCE

**EIGER EXPERIENCES****SKYDIVE**

Leap from a helicopter at 14,500ft (with an instructor), before free falling for 45 seconds beside the iconic north face of the Eiger until the parachute opens at 5,500ft. Flights with Skydive Interlaken start at £540. [skydiveinterlaken.ch](http://skydiveinterlaken.ch)

**SOAK**

Sail the chilly waters of Lake Brienz, one of Interlaken's twin lakes, while relaxing in your private HotTug. A cross between a whirlpool bath and a tugboat, these vessels offer a unique way to admire the snowy peaks. From £140 for two people, with sessions lasting 90 minutes. [pirate-bay.ch](http://pirate-bay.ch)

**SLEEP**

Bergwelt Grindelwald — Alpine Design Resort is set in a chalet-style building in the shadow of the Eiger. Be sure to swing by the Other Club cigar bar, a tribute to Winston Churchill, who climbed the nearby Wetterhorn in 1894. From £295, B&B. [bergwelt-grindelwald.com](http://bergwelt-grindelwald.com)

Environmentally friendly quad biking in Andermatt  
**LEFT:** Infinity pool at the Kempinski Palace Engelberg







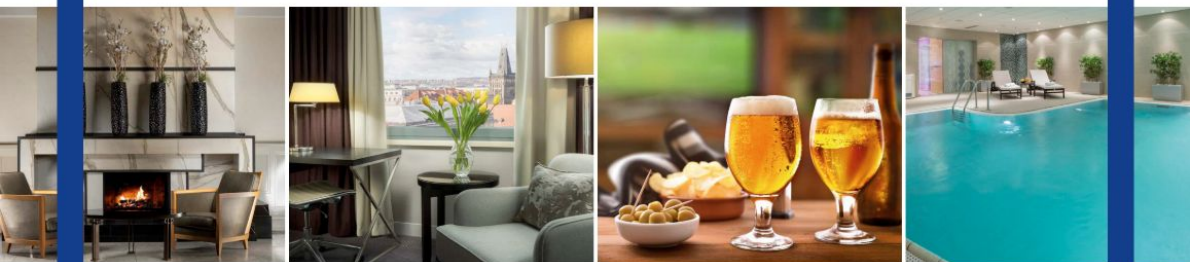
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Blogger and writer **VINA PATEL** is the author of *From Gujarat with Love*

**THE INGREDIENT**

*Dhana-jeera* is a homemade spice mixture made of roasted coriander and cumin seeds, blended into a masala powder. It creates an intense aroma: the coriander seeds impart a citrusy-sweet flavour, while the cumin seeds add a light hint of smokiness. It's the secret ingredient of Gujarati cooking.

LEFT: Khandvi, a popular savoury snack made with chickpea flour

**MUST-TRY DISHES**

**KHANDVI**

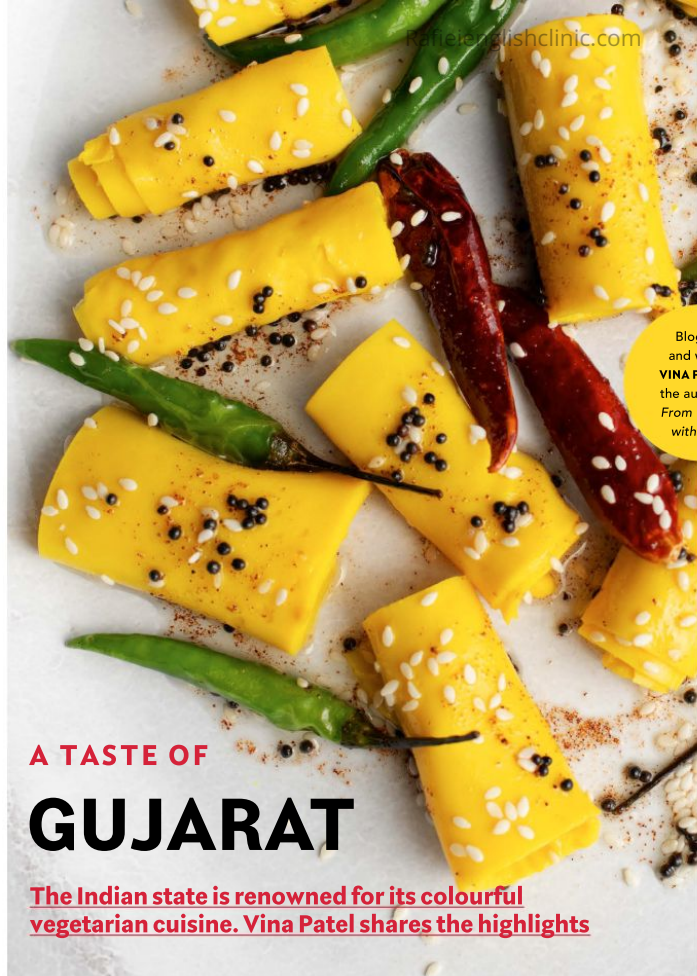
These bright-yellow rolls get their colour from the chickpea flour with which they're made. They're bursting with flavour thanks to the addition of mustard seeds, sesame seeds, shredded coconut and coriander.

**PATRA**

This classic dish contains leafy vegetables with a spicy chickpea flour batter. It can be served steamed with oil, deep-fried or stir-fried with sesame and mustard seeds.

**BATATA NA BHAJIYA**

You'll find food stalls serving these potato fritters all over Gujarat. The potatoes are dipped in batter, then deep-fried until they turn golden-brown and form a crispy outer layer. They're served piping-hot with slices of red onion, a splash of lime juice, some salt and red chili powder.



A TASTE OF  
**GUJARAT**

**The Indian state is renowned for its colourful vegetarian cuisine. Vina Patel shares the highlights**

I grew up in Gujarat, a state in western India, as the youngest of five children. As we were a large family, plenty of people gathered to prepare feasts, and I was blessed that the women in our immediate family were all fantastic cooks.

Across India, whenever anyone takes a bite of food, they taste the flavour of Gujarat. That flavour comes from the salt: almost 80% of Indian sea salt is produced in this one state. Gujaratis are also famous for their sweet tooth, and home cooks almost always sprinkle a spoonful of sugar or pop a small ball of jaggery (a type of cane sugar) into savoury dishes. Dhal served in Gujarati homes typically has a sweetish-spicy taste.

While there are some communities in the state that eat meat, the majority of Gujaratis are vegetarian. We have to thank the rich history of vegetarian cooking for informing the modern recipes of today. Plant-based diets are common in the state because of the influence of Jainism. Jains can't consume anything that's the result of injuring or killing another living thing, which means no meat or other animal products (including gelatine and

eggs). Even root vegetables are forbidden, as their removal from the ground is considered an act of killing another living thing. While Gujarati cuisine is informed by Jainism, our vegetarian diet tends to be slightly more relaxed. We take advantage of the abundance of locally grown vegetables, and our modern diets include dairy (notably ghee, cheese and yoghurt) and root vegetables. The cuisine is unlike any other in India.

Our traditional, spiced snacks form what's known as farsans, which are enjoyed all over the country. In India, farsans are as much a tradition as eating tapas in Spain or meze in Greece, where small plates form a larger spread. Many of the plant-based dishes use gluten-free chickpea flour; others are steamed, meaning they're light and irresistible. Two quintessential farsans are *khandvi* (melt-in-the-mouth rolls made with chickpea flour and buttermilk) and *nylon khaman* (yellow sponge made with chickpea flour).

*This is an edited extract from From Gujarat with Love, by Vina Patel, published by Pavilion Books (£20).*

IMAGE: JONATHAN LOVEKIN





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## ON THE TRAIL

# WEST CORNWALL

From scenic beaches to abandoned tin mines, some of the county's most spectacular sights await on the new, 150-mile West Kernow Way cycle route. Words: Emma Sparks

### 1 PENZANCE

With its pirate-worthy drinking holes, chic B&Bs and art galleries, pretty Penzance is more than just a jumping-off point — you'll also want to spend time admiring its treasures. Jewel in the crown is the art deco Jubilee Pool, the UK's largest seawater lido. Have a swim or cram in some calories with a coffee and Cornish bacon bap at the adjacent cafe before setting off along the revamped promenade. [lovepenzance.co.uk](http://lovepenzance.co.uk)

### 2 MINACK THEATRE

A 12-mile-pedal along coastal roads and single-track lanes brings you to Porthcurno, with its sheltered beach. Follow the South West Coast Path to the nearby Minack Theatre, which rises over the Atlantic like an ancient Greek ruin. Built in 1932, the outdoor performance space is encircled by subtropical gardens. Book ahead to take a guided tour or catch a show. [minack.com](http://minack.com)

### 3 LAND'S END

Rejoin the trail, admiring the waves at surfer-friendly Sennen Cove as you hook a left towards Land's End, the westernmost point in mainland England. On a clear day, it's possible to see the Isles of Scilly, 28 miles offshore. Legend has it they were once connected to the mythical mainland kingdom of Lyonesse, but it was submerged overnight during a terrible storm. [landsend-landmark.co.uk](http://landsend-landmark.co.uk)

### 6 ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT

The route ends in the town of Marazion, across the bay from castle-topped tidal island St Michael's Mount. At low tide, wander along the causeway linking it to the mainland, following in the footsteps of pilgrims and Queen Victoria herself. The island was a filming location for *House of the Dragon*, the forthcoming *Game of Thrones* prequel. [stmichaelsmount.co.uk](http://stmichaelsmount.co.uk) [cyclinguk.org](http://cyclinguk.org)

### 4 CROWNS ENGINE HOUSES

Head north to the Tin Coast: seven miles of trails scattered with ruins that testify to Cornwall's mining heritage, which dates to the Bronze Age. Highlights include the Crowns Engine Houses at Botallack Mine, an iconic pair of cliffside ruins; Levant Mine, home to a restored 1840s beam engine; and Gevor Tin Mine, where you can browse exhibits and even venture underground. [tincoast.co.uk](http://tincoast.co.uk)

### 5 MÊN-AN-TOL

Penwith Peninsula is said to have the highest concentration of Neolithic sites in Europe — you'll pass dozens while traversing these rugged moorlands; Mên-an-Tol is arguably the most curious. The formation of standing stones is notable for its ring-shaped stone. This mysterious megalith is flanked by two phallic neighbours, giving rise, ahem, to the notion that this spot was once used for fertility rituals.





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never forgotten, just like  
riding a bike

Whoever has lived  
it knows well

Mediterranean  
LIVE and  
SAFE





## WHERE TO STAY

# TAMPA

**Florida's Gulf Coast city is booming with a string of stylish new food-focused hotels**

### HOTEL HAYA

Like much of Florida and the American South, Tampa is a gumbo of cultures, and nowhere is that fusion more obvious than in its food scene, where modern American mixes with the many variations of Latin cuisine. And doing Tampa's tradition proud is Hotel Haya, which opened its doors last autumn. You'll find it in Ybor City, the area just north of Downtown, once famed for its cigar factories run by an immigrant workforce. Today, with the factories closed, Ybor has undergone something of a transformation: there's a thriving nightlife scene and it's the host for a calendar of annual food-focused festivals laid on for dishes such as cupcakes, flan and the Cuban sandwich — a pork, ham and cheese behemoth much beloved of the former cigar factory workers.

Hotel Haya brings it all together, adding a dash of hipster glamour. Rooms are playfully retro, with bright artwork and mustard-toned chairs lifting the royal blue carpets, headboards and curtains. The zigzag stone tiling in the showers elevates the standard marble-clad bathrooms to something altogether more chic, too.

Yet, like Tampa itself, this is somewhere to come for the food. Restaurant Flor Fina takes its lead from the area's Latin heritage, with ceviche featuring strongly on the menu and a live-fire grill taking pride of place inside (groups will love the semi-private dining area, where you can order a whole suckling pig 'feast'). Café Quiquiriqui is Cuban-inspired, meanwhile, and the rest of Ybor City — and Downtown Tampa — is just a few minutes' walk away. From \$189 (£138), [hotelhaya.com](http://hotelhaya.com)

### THE CURRENT HOTEL

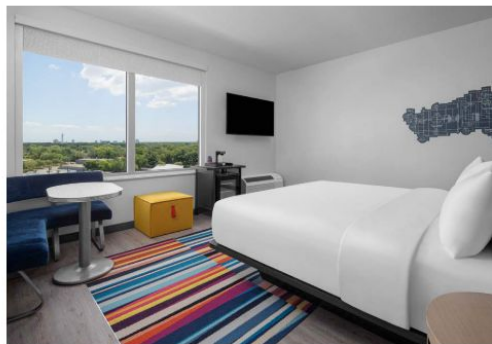
Floor-to-ceiling windows mean you'll have bay views no matter which room you choose at this outpost of Marriott's Autograph Collection. The main draw here is the rooftop bar (Tampa Bay's highest), which also does dinner, as well as the small plates at Julian Restaurant. From \$339 (£248), [marriott.com](http://marriott.com)

### EPICUREAN HOTEL

Launched by the owners of one of Tampa Bay's best steakhouses, this hotel's specially created 'Epicurean Theatre' hosts everything from coffee lessons to a Latin barbecue course. The lobby off licence, meanwhile, carries more than 1,000 bottles of wine and spirits, and even the spa treatments use coffee scrubs. From \$400 (£293), [epicureanhotel.com](http://epicureanhotel.com)

### ALOFT TAMPA MIDTOWN

Aloft was Starwood's (now Marriott's) brand for budget-conscious hipsters, and this property — which opened in January, sharing a building with the eco-orientated Element hotel — is no different. The main event is rooftop restaurant Sal Y Mar, with Latin-inspired food and sixth-floor views. From \$211 (£154), B&B. [marriott.com](http://marriott.com) **JULIA BUCKLEY**



**FROM TOP:** Bar at Hotel Haya; pool area at Epicurean Hotel; room with a view at Aloft Tampa Midtown



## FAMILY

## GETTING INTO CHARACTER

From Zog the Dragon to Harry Potter, some of fiction's most beloved characters are taking centre stage for unforgettable family escapes this autumn



Wars of the Roses Live, Warwick Castle  
RIGHT: Horrible Histories Maze, Warwick Castle



### Harry Potter in Cheshire

Fans of the boy wizard should head to Arley Hall & Gardens this autumn for their very own adventure in the Forbidden Forest. Co-developed by Warner Bros, this new nighttime trail is dotted with special effects to recreate woodland scenes from the movies. Keep your eyes peeled for a cast of magical creatures and conjure your own Patronus Charm.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Harry Potter: A Forbidden Forest Experience starts in October; tickets from £39. [hpforbiddenforestexperience.com](http://hpforbiddenforestexperience.com)

### Thomas the Tank Engine in Staffordshire

There are more than 25 rides and attractions in Thomas Land at Drayton Manor, meaning plenty of chances for children to get up close with the tank engine and his pals. A highlight is the Discover Thomas & Friends exhibition, featuring models from the first TV series.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Tickets from £27 for ages four to 11 and from £31 for over-12s. An adult and toddler ticket is available for £25. Under-twos go free. [draytonmanor.co.uk](http://draytonmanor.co.uk)

### Zog the Dragon and Horrible Histories in Warwick

The bumbling dragon Zog shares his skills on a new trail within the grounds of Warwick Castle, teaching kids how to roar, fly and even capture princesses in exchange for stamps and golden stars. Elsewhere, there's the Horrible Histories Maze, complete with special effects. Zog trail runs until 22 October.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Tickets from £26. Overnight stays from £159, based on a family of four sharing a Woodland Lodge. [warwick-castle.com](http://warwick-castle.com)

### Peter Pan in Dumfries

Moat Brae, the beautiful house and garden that inspired JM Barrie to create the character Peter Pan, is a great place for children and adults to explore. Among the trees and flowers, kids can discover hidden crocodiles, a pirate ship and maybe even some mermaids. Moat Brae is also home to The National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Tickets from £5 for children aged five to 16 and from £7 for adults. Under-fours go free. [moatbrae.org](http://moatbrae.org)

### Gruffalo Trails across England

Set off on one of the many Gruffalo Trails snaking through England's forests. At sites such as Thetford, in Norfolk, and Grizedale, in the Lake District, they're run by Forestry England and feature handcrafted sculptures dotted throughout the woodland. The Gruffalo Spotters trails involve an interactive app that brings Julia Donaldson's characters to life through augmented reality.

**HOW TO DO IT:** The trails are free, though parking fees vary. [forestryengland.uk/gruffalo](http://forestryengland.uk/gruffalo)

### A whole cast of characters in London

An interactive statue trail in and around Leicester Square celebrates much-loved characters, including Paddington, Mr Bean and Mary Poppins. There's also a free audio walking tour narrated by TV presenter Alex Zane, with movie clips, interviews and facts. **HOW TO DO IT:** The statue trail is free, and the audio tour is available to download on Spotify and all podcast platforms. [leicestersquare.london](http://leicestersquare.london)

**JO FLETCHER-CROSS**

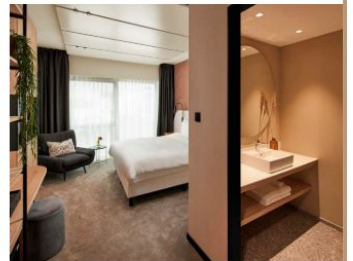


# Next Generation Designer Hotel

**Van der Valk Hotel Ghent** is characterised by its luxurious and warm atmosphere.

For our business guests, there are **12 meeting rooms** equipped with all necessary technological appliances. Furthermore there is a Brasserie, an à la carte restaurant Cocotte and a cozy coffee corner. The hotel has a fully equipped gym and a spa on the 9th floor, outsourced to **Weleda City Spa**.

To top it off, **located on the 10th floor** of the hotel is the **Skybar** where you can enjoy delicious drinks and bites with a unique view over the skyline of Ghent.



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## INSIDE GUIDE

## GHENT

**The canal-threaded Belgian city offers everything from design museums and food markets to quirky bars brewing a range of brilliant beers**

The most surprising thing about Ghent is that it isn't already hugely popular with visitors. Easily accessed by train from the UK, it has it all: a medieval heart crammed with buildings repurposed into restaurants, bars and boutiques; winding, canal-side paths, and a decidedly relaxed pace of life. Above all, Ghent is very much a city for its residents — its food and drink scene is aimed squarely at local tastes, and a large student population keeps its cultural life fizzing.

But before getting stuck in, fuel up on waffles and coffee at old-school coffee shop **MOKABON**. It's on a tiny lane off the sprawling **KORENMARKT**, once the centre of Ghent's wheat trade. Around the corner — towering over the city's handsome townhouses — is the medieval **BELFROY OF GHENT**. At 300ft high, it's a good place to get your bearings, while admiring the city's red-tiled rooftops spreading out below. [mokabon.be](http://mokabon.be) [belfortgent.be](http://belfortgent.be)

Up here, you'll see the network of rivers and canals that played a key part in making Ghent one of the most important cities in Europe during the Middle Ages. The views haven't changed that much in 800 years — gabled houses, cobbled quays and church spires still dominate the view. **GRASLEI** is the perfect starting point for canal-side wanderings; on sunny days, the wharf is abuzz with students and families hanging out, legs dangling over the water. The stone **ST MICHAEL'S BRIDGE**, at Graslei's southern end, is a good spot to take it all in.

Strolling north, you'll come to the **GREAT BUTCHER'S HALL**. It's an atmospheric place to pick up some Flemish produce, including beer cheese, cone-shaped *cuperdon* sweets and *jenever* (a spirit made with juniper). Don't miss **TIERENTEYN-VERLENT**, a purveyor of mustards since 1790. If that whets your appetite, **FRITES ATELIER** is just across the square. Part of a chain owned by Dutch chef Sergio Herman, the atelier serves chips heaped with beef-and-beer stew, and specials like cream cheese and kimchi. [grootvleeshuis.be](http://grootvleeshuis.be) [tierenteyn-verlent.be](http://tierenteyn-verlent.be) [fritesatelier.com](http://fritesatelier.com)

It's just a short walk across the Leie river to the **HUIS VAN ALIJN**, a museum set inside a former almshouse that explores day-to-day life in the past. Among the displays of old toys, packaging and household goods, the Nintendo Donkey Kongs and Wilbur and Friends dolls are sure to evoke wistful sighs from those old enough to remember them. In deference to the city's historic role in the textile trade, the **DESIGN MUSEUM GENT** has permanent collections of international fabrics and furniture in the rooms of a former 18th-century townhouse with a striking modern wing. [huisvanalijn.be](http://huisvanalijn.be) [designmuseumgent.be](http://designmuseumgent.be)

Take your time wandering through Ghent's narrow, picturesque streets. Worthy diversions include **WERREGARENSTRAAT**, an alleyway so popular with street artists it's now better known as Graffiti Street, and the **ANTIEK-DEPOT**, a vast, cluttered space that's home to multiple antique dealers, with a lovely bar at its centre. But save room for a tippie at **GENTSE GRUUT BROUWERIJ**, a brewery that uses herbs and spices rather than hops in the brewing process. You can sample the house beers in its brewery hall filled with quirky objets d'art (check out the zebra-striped stuffed cows on display). If you're keen to learn more, tours are available. [gruut.be](http://gruut.be) [antiek-depot.com](http://antiek-depot.com)

Heading north takes you out of Ghent's medieval heart and propels you into the industrial age. **THE INDUSTRIEMUSEUM** is set in a hulking former cotton mill and has plenty of interactive displays on textiles, printing and graphic design that map the story of the city's industrialisation. **DOK NOORD** is the natural end point for your journey; the old port area is where much of Ghent's modern development is centred. One example of the direction the city is heading in is **HAL 16**, a food hall owned by **DOK BREWING COMPANY**. Order beers, smoked meats, veggie burgers or pizza and enjoy it inside in the cavernous former warehouse or outside on the terrace. [industriemuseum.be](http://industriemuseum.be) [hal16.be](http://hal16.be) [dokbrewingcompany.be](http://dokbrewingcompany.be)

**AMANDA CANNING**

## LIKE A LOCAL

## Liselot Caura's favourite bars

Liselot Caura is the founder of Beer Secret, a company offering guided beer tastings and brewery tours in and around Ghent, Bruges and Brussels. [beersecret.com](http://beersecret.com)



## TROLLEKELDER

This place used to be a library, but the basement pub now sells over 300 different beers.

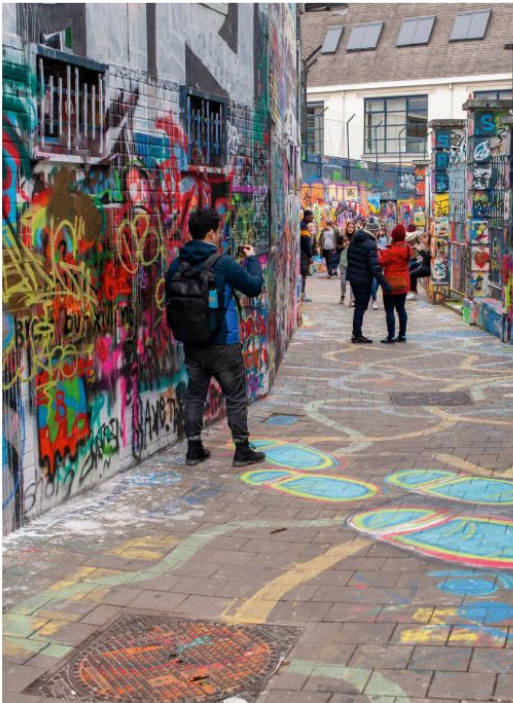
Trollekelder means 'troll's cave', but the friendly staff are anything but troll-like and will help you navigate the menu. I sell my own beer, Crabbelaer, herel [trollekelder.be](http://trollekelder.be)

## THE GLENGARRY

A hidden gem, this cellar bar — decorated with old stone jugs and whisky bottles — is a great place to chill out. Owner Mario serves the best beers, and the bar has a lot of single malts. People on my tours always tell me what a special place it is. [theglengarry.be](http://theglengarry.be)

## CAFÉ DE WALRUS

This relaxed bar has mismatched furniture and three areas, each with its own vibe: a dining space, a chill-out zone and a terrace. As well as beer, it serves great-value lunches and dinners. [walrus-gent.be](http://walrus-gent.be)



Chips, croquette and cocktail at Frites Atelier; Werregarenstraat, also known as Graffiti Street; Design Museum Gent; boat trip passing Graslei



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## STAY AT HOME

## ST DAVIDS

Head to the pint-sized Pembrokeshire city for saintly history, wild coastal rambles and a burgeoning food scene



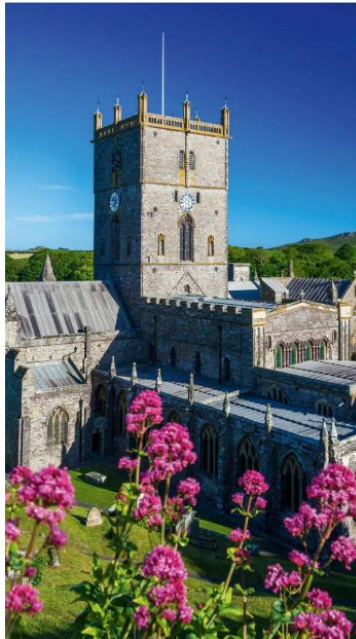
Dramatic coastline near Abereiddy, Pembrokeshire  
BELOW: St Davids Cathedral

## Why go

With just 1,600 residents, St Davids is Britain's smallest city by population, sitting on a beautiful stretch of the Pembrokeshire coast. It's home to pastel-painted cottages, pubs, galleries, an outdoor market, restaurants serving farm-to-fork and foraged food and — the jewel in its crown — a 12th-century cathedral. Touring the city is entirely possible in a weekend, but it pays to stay a little longer: with time, you can walk a leg of the 186-mile Pembrokeshire Coast Path, heading up and over cliffs to hidden coves and Neolithic sites; spot shearwaters on the RSPB-owned Ramsey Island; or try a spot of coasteering.

## What to do

Medieval pilgrims would flock to a shrine within St Davids Cathedral, where the bones of St David and St Justinian are reputed to lie. Today, you can follow in their footsteps with a 3.5-mile coastal walk around St Davids Head, a promontory forged from volcanic rock. Begin at Whitesands Bay before hiking to Porthmelgan and following the trail onwards to the Neolithic burial chamber of Coetan Arthur and the peak of Carn Llidi. Finish up by looping back to St Davids Head. [stdavidscathedral.org.uk](http://stdavidscathedral.org.uk)



## WE LIKE

Try coasteering (a mix of cave swims, bouldering and cliff jumps) with adventure specialist TYF, one of the sport's pioneers in the 1980s. It also offers all kinds of coastal activities, with guides shining a light on the area's rich biodiversity along the way. [tyf.com](http://tyf.com)

## Don't miss

For a close encounter with the undergrowth, stop by the Bug Farm and Grub Kitchen, the joint venture of academic entomologist, ecologist and farmer Dr Sarah Beynon and her husband, chef Andy Holcroft. Take a romp around the bee-rich wildflower meadows and the bug-focused museum before tucking into a lunch featuring edible insects. [thebugfarm.co.uk](http://thebugfarm.co.uk)

## Where to eat

For a forage-focused lunch or cake, the Really Wild Food Emporium lives up to its name with the likes of whipped goat's cheese mousse with red valerian and Japanese knotweed, and seaweed brownies. Elsewhere, Blas Restaurant riffs on top-quality local, seasonal ingredients in accomplished dishes like Welsh lamb with hen of the woods, black garlic and roasted onion. [facebook.com/reallywildemporium](http://facebook.com/reallywildemporium) [blasrestaurant.com](http://blasrestaurant.com)

## Where to stay

A 19th-century windmill is the basis for the slick, modern Twr Y Felin Hotel, which has 20 new rooms as of 2021. Set in landscaped grounds, it's full of specially commissioned, large-scale contemporary artworks, which pep up the monochrome, minimalist-luxe interiors. From £250, B&B. [twryfelinhotel.com](http://twryfelinhotel.com)  
KERRY WALKER



# THE GEMS

BY *Roberto*  
*E. Wirth*

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Parco del  
PRINCIPE

CHIUSI - SIENA - 43°01'37.2"N 11°53'17.6"E

## THE WORD

## TRAVELLERS' TALES

Speakers from this year's Cheltenham Literature Festival reveal their inspirations, from an ode to Venice to stories from Central Asia

**Colin Thubron**

The books that inspired me were classics even then. *The Road to Oxiana*, by Robert Byron, remains the bible of travel writers. Published in 1937, it describes in diary form a hazardous journey through Persia and Afghanistan, moving brilliantly from humorous sketches to some of the most beautiful architectural descriptions in our language.

Then there's Freya Stark, whose delicate and poetic writing in books such as *The Southern Gates of Arabia* and *Ionia: A Quest* cast a lasting spell. And finally, Jan Morris's *Venice*, which bewitched me from the start.

*The Amur River: Between Russia and China*, by Colin Thubron, is published by Vintage, £20.

**Alys Fowler**

'To enter a wood is to pass into a different world in which we are ourselves transformed,' wrote Roger Deakin in his introduction to *Wildwood: A Journey Through Trees*. It also sums up how I feel about reading Deakin, particularly when he's writing about trees. It's a book full of delights and joy: of the taste of fresh walnuts in Kyrgyzstan, the sweet smell of rotting apples in Kazakhstan, hazel rods in Essex, fertility rituals in Devon and a celebration of the wildest of woods — but it's also a call to arms to truly understand this 'fifth element' and see the wood for its trees.

*Eat What You Grow*, by Alys Fowler, is published by Octopus, £22.

**Jackie Morris**

I was slow to learn to read as a child, so I selected books for the paintings. *The Jungle Book*, by Rudyard Kipling, was one. I made up my own stories, looking at the pictures — perhaps that's why I became an illustrator. Once I could read, I loved *The Call of the Wild*, by Jack London, and *Tarka the Otter*, a prose poem of wildlife. Another favourite is *The Owl Service*, by Alan Garner. Now, though, it's all about poetry: fewer words means more space to find meaning. Matthew Francis's *The Mabinogi*, with its rich strangeness, has my heart.

Special editions of *East of the Sun, West of the Moon* and *The Wild Swans*, by Jackie Morris, are published by Unbound in November, £16.99.

ABOVE: Desert sands in the United Arab Emirates. Freya Stark's writings on the Arabian Peninsula inspired author Colin Thubron

**MORE INFO**

This year's Cheltenham Literature Festival runs from 8-17 October, both in person and online. [cheltenhamfestivals.com](http://cheltenhamfestivals.com)



## KIT LIST

## WILD SWIMMING

**Open water swimming in rivers, lakes or the sea requires both know-how and essential kit — especially in winter. Words: Amelia Duggan**

#### 1 DRYROBE ADVANCE LONG SLEEVE

Launched by UK surfer Gideon Bright in 2010, the cult-hit Dryrobe range offers a cover under which to wriggle in and out of swimwear. With its insulating lining, fleecy pockets and windproof outer layer (available in 12 different colours) the long-sleeve version is ideal for the colder months. £150. [dryrobe.com](http://dryrobe.com)

#### 2 ZONE3 ASPECT 'BREASTSTROKE' WETSUIT

This high-performance wetsuit has stretchy inner leg panels, as well as extended mobility across the chest to enable a range of strokes. Suitable for both open-water dips and competitive swims, it offers warmth, durability, visibility and streamlined, glued seams to help you glide smoothly through the water. £159. [zone3.com](http://zone3.com)

#### 3 RUCKRAFT

Off on an intrepid, self-supported swim? Load up to 15kg of supplies and equipment into RuckRaft's dry sack, strap it to the streamlined inflatable then tow it behind you. It's also great to simply load up with snacks, and to use as a buoyancy aid for longer swims. Its bright colour means added visibility. £164. [abovebelow.sc/ruckraft](http://abovebelow.sc/ruckraft)

#### 4 FINISTERRE NIEUWLAND 2E YULEX SWIMSUIT

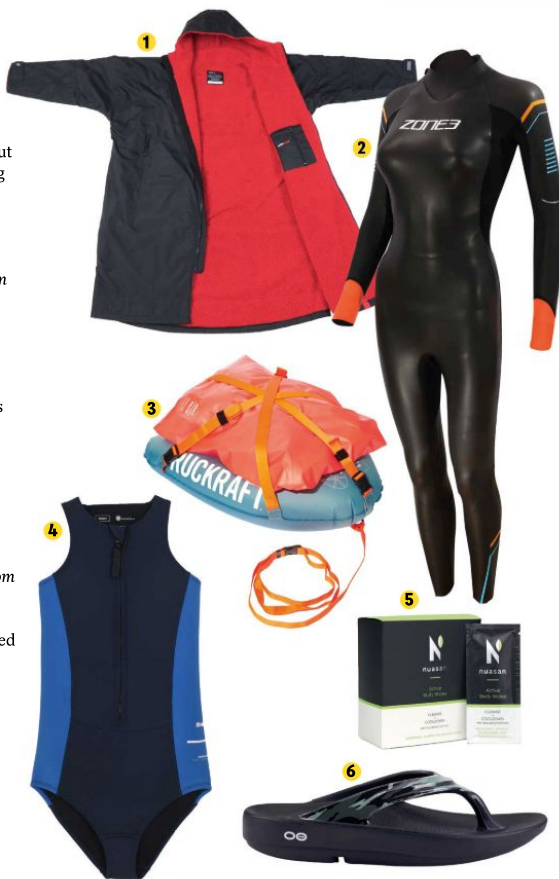
Catering to the UK's ever-expanding community of open-water swimmers, this 2mm swimsuit offers more warmth than a normal one-piece. Being made from natural Yulex rubber means 80% less CO2 than traditional neoprene swimsuits. £110. [finistere.com](http://finistere.com)

#### 5 NUASAN ACTIVE BODY WIPES

If showering isn't an option when you emerge from the water, opt for a wipe-down with these sweet-smelling, 100% biodegradable wipes, made from plant fibres and packed with natural ingredients, including bamboo and peppermint. Each pack contains 25 wipes, individually wrapped so they don't dry out. £15.95 (£13.70). [nuasan.com](http://nuasan.com)

#### 6 OOFOS OOLALA LIMITED SANDAL

Designed with impact-absorbing foam and offering contoured arch support, these aren't your usual flip flops. The super-light materials used are all engineered to go easy on tired feet and joints. Whether used on pebbly beaches or at the lido, these functional sandals are an essential accessory for athletes on the move. £55. [oofos.co.uk](http://oofos.co.uk)



## THREE MORE

## SWIMMING ACCESSORIES



#### DAKINE CYCLONE TOTE PACK 27L

This stylish, splash-proof and tear-proof bag has padded straps that convert it from a tote to a backpack. Taped seams and waterproof zips help to keep contents safe. £110. [outdoorsupply.co.uk](http://outdoorsupply.co.uk)



#### SEALSKINZ WATERPROOF ALL WEATHER CAP

Keep warm and dry post-swim, whatever the weather, with this waterproof and windproof cap. Its breathable technology makes it a practical choice whatever the season. £20. [sealskinz.com](http://sealskinz.com)



#### TEKRAPOD

This streamlined, backpack-style safety device includes a CO2-powered, pull cord-activated, pop-up float to grab in moments of crisis or tiredness. Race-legal too. £135 (£116). [tekrapod.com](http://tekrapod.com)



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Situated on the banks of the river Sûre, the **beer town of Diekirch** fascinates with its historic streets, cafés, museums and exceptional heritage.

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[www.diekirch.lu](http://www.diekirch.lu)



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**National Geographic Traveller (UK) has teamed up with Exclusive Collection to offer an unforgettable two-night stay at Pennyhill Park hotel and spa**

**FROM ABOVE:** Pennyhill Park, a five-star Surrey retreat; itakuja chocolate delicé and mango sorbet from Latymer, overseen by head chef Steve Smith

**THE DESTINATION**

Set within 120 acres of rolling Surrey parkland, Pennyhill Park is one of the finest stays in the South East, in easy reach of Windsor, Runnymede and the Thames. As well as having an award-winning spa, it's also a leading destination for gourmets, with a renowned afternoon tea; the Michelin-starred, four AA Rosette-winning Latymer restaurant; and Hillfield, where the emphasis is on the best local produce. [exclusive.co.uk](http://exclusive.co.uk)

**THE PRIZE**

Worth over £2,000, the prize includes two nights for two people in a Plush Junior Suite, on a B&B basis, with a discovery tasting menu for two at Latymer on one night, and dinner at Hillfield on the other, to the value of £42 per person. Also included is the Ultimate Afternoon Tea with a glass of vintage Ridgeview Blanc de Noirs, along with full spa access and a complimentary, 60-minute mud experience for two.



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Answer the following question online at [nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions](http://nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions)

**IN WHICH COUNTY IS PENNYHILL PARK?**

Competition closes 30 November 2021. The winner must be a resident of the UK and aged 18 or over. Full T&Cs at [nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions](http://nationalgeographic.co.uk/competitions)

**PENNYHILL PARK**



IMAGES: SCOTT CROSS; AMY MURRELL





# Greece

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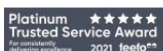
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NOTES FROM AN AUTHOR // PATRICK NUNN

# FIJI

**Geological mysteries and myths of the gods are revealed when sailing in the ghostly shadows of the Pacific Ocean's vanished islands**

Inside the reef there are few waves. When the sun shines, the ocean landscape seems boundless, an unruffled turquoise; both an open highway and a full larder. I once called it a geisha landscape: one so emblematic, so evocative of a place that an unwitting observer might easily be tricked into thinking its outward appearance hid nothing of note. But that's untrue.

Fiji is a land of contrasts. The noise and the smoke in the crowded cities lie at the opposite end of the spectrum to the effortless tranquillity of Fiji's smaller islands, with their deserted beaches, unpolluted reefs and grassy hills. But stay long enough, and you learn that this, too, is illusory. The hills have eyes. Their people have knowledge and understandings they hesitate to share for fear you'll judge them preposterous.

If you ever find yourself in these Pacific isles, go to the Fiji Museum in Suva. In one corner, you can touch the rudder of *HMS Bounty*, retrieved from remote Pitcairn Island after the rest of the ship was burned in 1790. She met her end at the hands of mutineers who set Captain Bligh off on an open-boat journey of more than 3,700 miles, sailing through Fiji and dodging assailants in Timor. Touch the rudder gingerly and you scratch the surface of the deep history of the Pacific.

Fiji's most famous archaeologist is Sepeti 'Mata' Matararaba, who, over the course of nearly three decades, taught me most of what I know about its vanished islands. Once we were on Moturiki Island, excavating at Naitabale and finding the 2,800-year-old remains of the earliest-known Fijian. To return to Suva, Fiji's capital, we hired two small boats for a trip that remained inside the reef but crossed the site of the 'sunken island' named Vuniivilevu. To show our respect to the people of this undersea land — the people whom local fisherfolk insist can be seen moving around down there on moonlit nights — our boats slowed as they passed over Vuniivilevu, and everyone kept quiet.

Except one person, whose boat's engine sputtered and died, only to be ignominiously towed into Suva eight hours later. No one was in any doubt what had happened. The spirits of the people of undersea Vuniivilevu, sensing someone disrespecting



of their presence, had crippled the boat. An unmistakable sign of the power of the unknown. And if you're tempted to chuckle, have pause, for every Fijian has heard dozens of such stories. The past lives here in a way that Westerners simply can't understand.

Mata and I once travelled to the southern Fijian island of Kadavu. The first thing we encountered was a rock named Solo, on which stands a red-and-white striped lighthouse. There's not room for much else. But many years ago, according to local traditions, there was a large, inhabited island here named Lomanikoro that one day sank, leaving just a tiny lone rock behind. When our boat entered Solo Lagoon, still a few miles from the lighthouse, it slowed; we bowed our heads and clapped thrice to show proper respect to the people of this sunken land. Mata said that if you listened hard enough, you couldn't just hear them talking, but also roosters crowing and mosquitoes buzzing.

From Solo, we sailed south to the island of Ono, an extinct volcano home of the 'vu' (spirit) named Tanovo. We passed his massive footprints on the cliffs, saw the hole his spear made when he viciously propelled it at a rival; we climbed the mountains that were his knees, looked down on the villages built — propitiously — on his feet. We even ascended to the bottom of his neck, trying to make out his head in the clouds above.

Some cultures have written memories of land being submerged. Many more have shared memories, ranging from the doleful tolling of underwater church bells off the English coast to stories from Australia of a giant kangaroo that wilfully sliced the land apart, allowing the ocean unwelcome ingress. So, as Mata reminded me when I last saw him, we shouldn't treat stories of Fiji's sunken islands in isolation. We were drinking sweet milky tea and eating sugar-glazed buns, warm from the oven, in a sidewalk cafe on Marks Street in Suva. "Every culture has such stories," he said. "How we approach them is key to how we understand them."

*To show our respect to the people of this undersea land — the people whom local fisherfolk insist can be seen moving around down there on moonlit nights — our boats slowed as they passed over Vuniivilevu, and everyone kept quiet*

Ocean geoscientist Patrick Nunn is author of *Worlds In Shadow: Submerged Lands in Science, Memory and Myth* (Bloomsbury, £16.99).

📍 [patricknunn.org](http://patricknunn.org)



## MEET THE ADVENTURER

## GARRETT FISHER

**The US aerial photographer is on a mission to capture the world's dwindling glaciers for posterity, shooting alone from his antique, single-engine plane**



conceivably hit something. Once I set the throttle, it stays constant. The rudder is foot-controlled, and I hold the stick in my left hand and the camera in my right. I take largely wide-angle shots, so even though I'm looking through the viewfinder, I can partially look after aircraft orientation, too. It's a choreographed art but it's become second nature.

#### What's the most extraordinary thing you've seen from your plane?

I'm continuously wowed by sights like clouds forming off the leeward side of the Matterhorn or gale-force winds at 16,000ft around Mont Blanc, but what strikes me most is the Konkordiaplatz in Switzerland. It's part of the Aletsch Glacier system, which is the longest in the Alps, where four major glaciers converge. It's something you don't get tired of seeing.

#### How does it feel to chase after something that's forecast to disappear?

I have conflicting feelings. In the winter, the glaciers are visible but masked by snowpack, so one can become desensitised to the immediacy of climate change's ramifications. In the peak of summer, however, I can see every detail. My first reaction when I see blue ice cascading down the mountainside in thundering waterfalls is to think, that's beautiful. Then I realise that's damage: they're melting.

The Alps are home to one-third of the world's ski resorts, so they resonate within the West as the capital of mountain culture. However, in the middle of a clear August day, looking at the whole range from a high vantage point, there aren't a lot of glaciers there. The thought of how long this can last is always in the back of my mind when I'm flying.

#### Tell us more about your Global Glacier Initiative, a new project aiming to collect glacier images from around the world.

I consider glaciers to be jewels, and they're important from an ecological standpoint, too. I'm trying to capture and share their majesty, even though I'm not convinced my work will lead to specific action to save them. I'm often thinking about the future generations that haven't yet been born. One hundred or 200 years from now, people will be interested in this past, mystical world of ice, and the images will be useful for science and outreach purposes. **INTERVIEW: ANGELA LOCATELLI**

#### Where does your passion for glaciers come from?

When I was a teenager in the late '90s, a friend told me about a study that indicated Glacier National Park in Montana would melt by 2030. I was in upstate New York, I'd never even been to a real mountain range, but I had a visceral reaction: I had to see them before they were gone. Then life got in the way. It wasn't until 2015, when I was living in the Rockies, before I started chasing them.

#### Why do you fly a 70-year-old Piper PA11, with no electrical instruments or GPS?

The plane chose me. My grandfather had been flying this style of airplane since the 1940s, and during his retirement he restored them, too. He found this plane in the late 1980s and I inherited it in 2010.

Aerial photography wasn't a particular ambition at the time but it was evident from the get-go I had a knack for it — I could see ways to avoid issues with haze and perspective. I moved out to Colorado and started figuring out mountain flying by myself. Within eight months, I had my first aerial photography book — *Above the Summit: An Antique Airplane Conquers Colorado's Fourteeners* — all taken on that plane, without a radio, without anything.

#### How do you fly solo and take photographs at the same time?

Practically speaking, I'm always at least 1,500ft above any physical object, so there's a lot of time before I can

Garrett Fisher's latest book, *Glaciers of the Bernese Alps* (2021), is out now. £20.

✉ [wgarrettfisher.me](mailto:wgarrettfisher.me) [globalglacierinitiative.org](http://globalglacierinitiative.org)

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

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## WHAT'S ONLINE

# THE BEST UK GLAMPING SITES FOR FOODIES

**Don't miss these places to camp — and eat — in style. Words: Sarah Baxter**



Forget tins of beans and fiddly gas stoves. As glamping has reinvented camping, so has it reinvented camp food. There are now plenty of luxe sites where your pitch not only comes with a barbecue and firepit, but with an onsite kitchen garden, farm shop, gourmet feast nights or delicious dishes delivered direct to your yurt, cabin or treehouse. Here are some of the tastiest retreats to try in the UK.

## Oastbrook Estate, East Sussex

Wake up and smell the Chardonnay: the bell tents at Oastbrook sit right by the estate's vines. Tours and tastings can be arranged or you can order a bottle of Oastbrook wine to match a chef-prepared meal, served in your

den or by the communal fire. A breakfast hamper will be brought to your tent each morning. Bell tents (sleeping two) from £145 per night, including breakfast. [coolstays.com](#)

## Grasmere Glamping, Lake District

The two stylish, heated glamping pods on Broadrayne Farm are perfect for the peckish: there's no charge for room service, so guests can order breakfasts and hearty dinners direct to their door. Sister site The Yan hotel is one of the finest foodie finds in the Lakes: dishes are no-fuss, delicious (with everything down to the ketchup made from scratch) and reasonably priced. Pods (sleeping two) from £275 for three nights. [grasmereglamping.co.uk](#)

## Monachyle Mhor, Perth & Kinross

Foodies flock to the loch-side Monachyle Mhor hotel for its award-winning restaurant, where outstanding dishes are made with ingredients sourced from its own garden and farm, as well as the nearby hills. Glamping options in the hotel grounds — a 1950s wagon, a cosy bothy and a modern treehouse — provide quirky accommodation, spectacular views and easy access to the hotel's dining delights. Monachyle Mhor has its own bakery and chippy in nearby Callander, too. Wagon (sleeping four) from £145 per night. [monachylemhor.net](#)  
**READ MORE ONLINE AT**  
[NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL](#)

## TOP STORIES

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



### ADVENTURER Paralympic cyclist Karen Darke

The two-time medallist on hand cycling, sit-skiing and kayaking



### DESIGN Meet the artists behind Notting Hill Carnival

The costume-makers keeping the summer tradition alive



### FOOD 10 of the best seafood destinations in the UK

The spots where seafood-lovers will be spoiled for choice

# SIX CORNISH COAST ALTERNATIVES

It's hard not to be drawn in by Cornwall's charm, but there are plenty of unforgettable coastal escapes to try elsewhere in the UK. Words: Connor McGovern

Cream teas, whitewashed fishing villages, surfboards, sandcastles, a generous slice of Celtic culture... you'd be churlish to deny Cornwall's unique appeal. After all, our southwesternmost county has a special place in many people's hearts, its awe-inspiring landscapes forever entwined with memories of summer escapes. It's a long drive for most visitors who flock here in the summer, but the rewards are famously great: that dazzling, turquoise coast; hikes in the grassy, village-dotted interior; and some of the finest seafood the nation has to offer.

People decamped to Cornwall in their droves between lockdowns and its popularity sees no sign of waning. So, those after a bracing dose of the British coast might want to try somewhere different. This is a nation shaped by the sea, after all, and there's no shortage of windswept, culture-soaked coastlines to enjoy. Stray from the South West and you'll discover picture-perfect villages, blissful beaches, historic sites and brooding landscapes across the country that give Cornwall a run for its money.

## Llyn Peninsula

Clawing into the Irish Sea, this is deepest Wales. A highlight is Braich-y-Pwll, where the land meets the sea with dramatic beauty. It's the spot where medieval pilgrims once set off to holy Bardsey Island — hop on a seasonal ferry to enjoy the isle's solitude yourself.

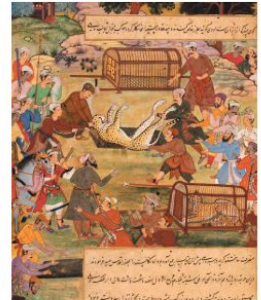
## County Antrim

The Northern Irish county has become a byword for the raw, windswept drama of Northern Ireland. Thrill-seekers should head to The Gobbins, an exhilarating cliff path, reopened in 2015 after a 60-year closure, that snakes through tunnels and over bridges.

## Northumberland Coast

Off the beautiful coast of England's northernmost county lies Holy Island (also known as Lindisfarne), a tidal isle and Ramsar wetland site dominated by its ruined priory. The entire shoreline is dotted with similarly historic sites, with Bamburgh Castle perhaps the most spectacular of them all.

**READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE NOW**



## I CONSERVATION I

### How trafficked cheetah cubs make it into your Instagram feed

Criminal networks in Somaliland smuggle cubs out of Africa to wealthy buyers abroad. Now the breakaway African state is fighting back.

## I INTERVIEW I

### Damon Albarn on turning the atmospheres of Iceland and Devon into music

The musician's new work reflects on the uneasy relationship between humans and nature.

## I WILDLIFE I

### Which sharks swim in UK seas?

From gentle giants to sleek predators — if you go for a paddle off Britain's shores, these are some of the species that might be in the water with you.

IMAGES: OASTBROOK; GETTY; NATASHA SEBIRA; ALAMY; BANDRA BHAI; HANNAH BAILEY; NATHAN COHORN/TREMONT PHOTOGRAPHY; 'AKBAR ASSISTS IN CAPTURING A CHEETAH,' FROM THE AKBARNAMA, BY TULSI AND NARAYAN, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



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WEEKENDER

# JERSEY

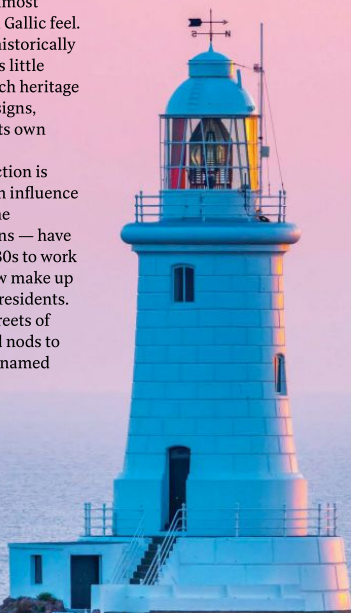
**A true cultural crossroads, the largest of the Channel Islands offers a packed weekend escape, with coastal walks, colourful festivals and a thriving food scene. Words: Antonia Windsor**

It's no surprise that the southernmost outpost of the British Isles has a Gallic feel. Just 14 miles from France, and historically part of the Duchy of Normandy, this little island has fiercely retained its French heritage — something glimpsed in its road signs, cideries, petanque clubs and even its own language, Jèrriais.

But while Jersey's French connection is well-known, it's not the only foreign influence firmly established on the island. The Portuguese — notably the Madeirans — have been coming to Jersey since the 1930s to work in agriculture and tourism, and now make up around 10% of the island's 100,000 residents. Wander the pretty, bunting-clad streets of the capital, St Helier, and you'll find nods to the country in the Rue de Funchal (named

after Madeira's capital), as well as a raft of Portuguese restaurants and cafes. It's this intriguing, vibrant mix of cultures — stirred in with Jersey's own wealth of traditions — that makes it a cosmopolitan place to be.

Stray beyond the cafes and bakeries, however, and the island's bucolic charms unfurl: a rolling green landscape threaded by quiet country lanes, nature reserves and pristine beaches beloved by surfers. There are ancient sites dotted across the island, too, and a calendar of quirky festivals celebrates everything from cider-making to the written word. It's food-lovers who are perhaps most spoiled for choice here, with a trio of Michelin-endorsed restaurants, and local producers working both land and sea to preserve the island's distinct food heritage.





The Watersplash, a popular hangout with the local surf set  
**LEFT:** La Corbière lighthouse, on the island's southwestern tip

## DAY ONE SURF & SUNSETS

### MORNING

If you're up with the seagulls, head to Le Braye, on the west coast, for an early yoga session with Delia from Bunker. The covered terrace opens onto the wide seascape of St Ouen's beach, and classes run whatever the weather, held against a backdrop of the dramatically ebbing and flowing tide. Refuel in the cafe downstairs and watch the surfers catch the first waves of the day — or, if you'd rather join them, hire a surfboard from the slip (and don't be surprised if you see Delia again, as she also runs the Jersey Surf School). Afterwards, round off the morning with a walk through the nearby dunes, carpeted with tall grasses and speckled with yellow gorse — a hallmark of the Jersey National Park, which hugs the coast.

### AFTERNOON

A short drive from La Braye is the free-to-enter National Trust for Jersey Wetland Centre, overlooking La Mare au Seigneur (better known as St Ouen's Pond). As well as making the most of the observation room, you can zoom in on wildlife using the interactive camera provided or learn to identify bird calls on the multimedia touchscreens. Continue the natural theme as you head up the coast to Kempt Tower to meet Kazz from Wild Adventures. Something of a survival skills expert, Kazz learned his trade from his grandparents, who lived under German occupation during the Second World War. Join him on a foraging tour to discover the bitter-lemon taste of pink sorrel or the spiciness of pepper dulse seaweed.

### EVENING

It's time to rejoin the surfers at their primary hangout, The Watersplash bar and diner, midway along St Ouen's Bay and just a 15-minute walk along the beach from Kempt Tower. It was here that several European surf championships took place in the 1960s, when Jersey was the surf capital of Europe (in 1968, five out of six of the British surf team in the Puerto Rico World Championships were Jersey locals). When the sun's out, you'll find the al fresco tables packed with people winding down after a day on the waves. Take note: a single beer might turn into several if a gig is taking place indoors. Alternatively, head for dinner at Corbiere Phare, a restaurant with dramatic views of La Corbière lighthouse, on the island's southwestern tip.

### TOP 5

## Local producers



### LA MARE WINE ESTATE

Most of the wine produced on Jersey each year is consumed within the Channel Islands. Head to La Mare Wine Estate to try red, white, rosé and sparkling varieties, as well as apple brandy, gin, vodka and cider. [lamarewineestate.com](http://lamarewineestate.com)

### LA ROBELINE CIDER COMPANY

Using a 100-year-old press, La Robeline Cider Company produces a medium and dry Cidre de Jèrri in the Normandy style, with the fizz coming from secondary fermentation in the bottle. [larobelinecider.je](http://larobelinecider.je)

### SEYMOUR SHELLFISH

Seventeenth-generation farmer John Le Seulleur and his wife Shannon nurture 14 million oysters across 13 hectares. Join a tour to discover more about oyster production and its history. [seymourshellfish.co.uk](http://seymourshellfish.co.uk)

### JERSEY HEMP

The organic hemp cultivated at Warwick Farm is now used to produce everything from CBD oils, nutrient-dense hemp-seed oil and hemp-seed protein powder. [jersey-hemp.com](http://jersey-hemp.com)

### JERRIAISE D'OR GOAT FARM

Don't miss this farm's Fluffy Fuhka, an award-winning goat's cheese made with Golden Guernsey milk. Buy it from the roadside honesty box in St Lawrence. [facebook.com/goatsjersey](https://facebook.com/goatsjersey)



## TOP 3

## Portuguese pit stops



## FOR ESPETADAS

Sit shoulder-to-shoulder at Funchal Paradise, a tiny restaurant that feels like stepping into a Madeiran guesthouse. Among the specials are *espetadas* (hanging skewers of grilled meat and fish), served with *milho frito* (cubed and fried cornmeal), rice, chips and salad. It's as popular with the Jersey locals as it is with the Madeiran expats. [facebook.com/funchal-paradise](https://www.facebook.com/funchal-paradise)

## FOR CATAPLANA

Mano's Bistro is an airy restaurant tucked in the corner of West Centre in St Helier (look out for the life-size bronze sculptures of Jersey cattle). Most of the customers are drawn here for the hearty Portuguese dishes like *cataplana* (a seafood or meat stew) or *picadinho* (a meat casserole cooked with garlic and bay leaves). [manos-bistro.com](http://manos-bistro.com)

## FOR PASTÉIS DE NATA

At Alfonso Bakery & Coffee Shop, the tempting display of pastries and cakes includes these classic custard tarts, as well as *malassadas* (yeast doughnuts) and *bolo rei* (also known as Christmas king's cake, a ring-shaped treat topped with candied peel and icing sugar). Alfonso also runs a nearby supermarket, where you can stock up on the likes of *piri-piri* sauce and *bacalhau* (salt cod). 41 The Parade and 59 Bath Street, St Helier.

## DAY TWO SWIMMING &amp; SHOPPING

## MORNING

Start the day at shingly Archirondel Beach, on the east of the island. The iconic white-and-red painted tower that dominates the bay is a Jersey Heritage let — ideal if you want somewhere memorable to stay. Take a dip with the locals (who swim here year-round), then warm up with a mug of hot chocolate from the Driftwood Cafe. Head on to Mont Orgueil Castle, an 800-year-old fortress that looms over Gorey harbour and is regarded as one of the best surviving examples of a medieval castle in the British Isles. Entry includes a tour with a local guide, who'll share their enthusiasm for the exhibits, including the curious wheel of urine — a medieval chart that helped doctors diagnose illnesses.

## AFTERNOON

Make your way into the capital, St Helier, for lunch. For something light, try one of the cafes in the Victorian covered Central Market, where you can sit and watch the florists and fruit vendors ply their trade. Gourmets, meanwhile, will want to book ahead for a table at chef Callum Graham's one-Michelin-star Bohemia, with its affordable lunchtime set menu. Nearby King Street has two independent department stores — Voisins and De Gruchy — that are ideal for VAT-free purchases (you'll pay just the 5% GST here). For a distinctly local souvenir, pop into Maison de Jersey for a jar of black butter, a conserve traditionally made with the apple pulp left over from cider-making.

## EVENING

Start your evening at hidden-away Project 52, accessed via an unmarked door on Waterloo Lane. If you find the speakeasy atmosphere of this bijou bar so enticing that you're tempted to spend your whole evening here, order a gin flight: a variety of gins served in apothecary bottles with complimentary botanicals and flavoured tonic waters. Alternatively, wander on to The Royal Yacht hotel, where you can choose between three popular restaurants for dinner: The Grill, for expertly cooked steak; Zephyr, for laid-back Asian fusion; and Sirocco, for Australasian-inspired fine dining. Afterwards, head to one of the onsite bars to drink and dance into the early hours.



Market Street, St Helier, as viewed from inside the Central Market. **RIGHT:** Floats taking part in the Jersey Battle of Flowers parade



## FOUR OF THE BEST FESTIVALS

There's a packed calendar of events on 'the Rock', as Jersey is fondly referred to by locals, from celebrations of centuries-old local traditions to festivals dedicated to globally popular music and culture

### JERSEY BATTLE OF FLOWERS

This florid festival was first held in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. The two-day carnival and parade sees each of Jersey's 12 parishes enter an elaborate flower-themed float, with parishioners meeting throughout the winter to craft paper designs ready for the celebrations in August. The competition to create the most spectacular float is fierce, so they're carefully crafted in farm sheds and warehouses with cloak-and-dagger secrecy. Young residents also compete to be crowned Battle Ambassador. It's outrageously kitsch, but the explosion of colour and creativity makes it a highlight on the island's calendar. [battleofflowers.com](http://battleofflowers.com)

### LA FAÏS'SIE D'CIDRE

Each October, Jersey celebrates its cider-making history in the grounds of Hamptonne Country Life Museum. Here, you can find out more about how black butter is made from leftover apple pulp, watch a horse-drawn granite cider press in action, bob for apples and, of course, swig a glass of local cider. Folk singing, dancing, craft activities and food stalls are all part of the programme. The festival is also a fantastic place to sample a Jersey wonder (a bow-shaped, deep-fried doughnut that's an island speciality). [jerseyheritage.org](http://jerseyheritage.org)

### JERSEY FESTIVAL OF WORDS

It's easy to see how the island's annual five-day literary festival — held each September — regularly manages to attract big-name authors. After all, the weather is generally still balmy and there's the promise of performing on the Jersey Opera House stage, which was once graced by Victorian actress Lillie Langtry, mistress of the future King Edward VII (locals believe the theatre is still haunted by her ghost). Visitors can enjoy readings, performances, workshops and competitions from all manner of wordsmiths. Previous authors to have appeared at the festival include Joanna Trollope, Lemn Sissay and Alexander McCall Smith. [jersefestivalofwords.org](http://jersefestivalofwords.org)

### WEEKENDER

Dubbed the 'Channel Islands' great summer festival', this two-day, non-camping music event held in early September attracts some 10,000 attendees to the Royal Jersey Showground in Trinity. It's a family-friendly affair, with plenty of food stalls and live entertainment across the weekend. There's always an eclectic list of headliners, too: those due to perform at this year's festival, which has now been postponed to September 2022, included The Jacksons, John Newman and rapper KSI. [weekenderjersey.com](http://weekenderjersey.com) ■

### GREEN WHEELS

Get around using one of the fluorescent-green EVie electric bikes parked at locations across the island. Download the app and check out a bike — you'll pay £1 per 10 minutes for the first two hours, then get two hours three to six for free. [evieondemand.com](http://evieondemand.com)

### MORE INFO

Bunker. [bunkerjersey.com](http://bunkerjersey.com)  
 Jersey Surf School.  
[jerseysurfschool.co.uk](http://jerseysurfschool.co.uk)  
 National Trust for Jersey Wetland Centre. [nationaltrust.je](http://nationaltrust.je)  
 Wild Adventures.  
[wildadventuresjersey.com](http://wildadventuresjersey.com)  
 Corbiere Phare. [corbierephare.com](http://corbierephare.com)  
 Mont Orgueil Castle. [jerseyheritage.org](http://jerseyheritage.org)  
 Bohemia. [bohemiajersey.com](http://bohemiajersey.com)  
 Voisins. [voisins.com](http://voisins.com)  
 De Gruchy. [degruchys.com](http://degruchys.com)  
 Maison de Jersey. [maisondejersey.com](http://maisondejersey.com)  
 Project 52. [project52.club](http://project52.club)  
 The Royal Yacht. [theroyal yacht.com](http://theroyal yacht.com)  
 Jersey Tourism. [jersey.com](http://jersey.com)

### HOW TO DO IT

Condor Ferries sails to Jersey from Poole up to four times a week, taking around four hours. Longcross also operate from Portsmouth. [condorferries.co.uk](http://condorferries.co.uk)  
 Alternatively, British Airways, EasyJet, Blue Islands and Jet2.com fly from airports across the country. [ba.com](http://ba.com)  
[easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)  
[blueislands.com](http://blueislands.com)  
[jet2.com](http://jet2.com)  
 Rooms at the Old Court House, overlooking the marina at St Aubin, start at £185, B&B. Rooms at the five-star Longueville Manor start at £200, B&B. [liberationgroup.com](http://liberationgroup.com)  
[longuevillemenor.com](http://longuevillemenor.com)



EAT

# CAMBODIA

**There's a buzz around the Southeast Asian kingdom's cuisine — not only is its street food scene thriving, but recipes and traditions once lost in the shadows of history are experiencing a resurgence. Words: Lucy Gillmore**



**“T**he herbs are all on one level and the vegetables on another,” says chef Luu Meng. “This herb is *sa om*, and it smells like asparagus.” He thrusts the pungent leaves under my nose. “And our basil is really lemony. European chefs don’t understand how acidic Cambodian herbs are; it’s better to use them whole or sliced rather than blended.”

Inside Phnom Penh’s dimly lit Phsar Boeung Keng Kang market, the aisles have become torrents of shoppers. I struggle to stay afloat and keep Luu in view, distracted by the stalls around me, each one an explosion of colour and organised with military precision. The chef swerves towards a fish stall and I almost lose him. “It’s rare to find tonguefish in the market, so if I see it, I buy it all,” he says.

Chef Luu Meng is a man on a mission. ‘Cambodia’s Gordon Ramsay’ — as one local told me wryly — is committed to putting Cambodia’s cuisine back on the world stage after spending years in Thailand and

Vietnam’s gastronomic shadow. His story is inspirational: after his family fled the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s, he spent much of his childhood in a refugee camp on the Thai border. Cooking is in his blood — his grandma was a chef at the Royal Palace, his mum had a noodle stall on the streets of Phnom Penh.

Described as the ‘Pearl of Asia’ for much of the 20th century, Phnom Penh is a beguiling city. The elegant French and Khmer architecture, along with a peppering of picturesque pagodas on the banks of the Mekong and Tonlé Sap Rivers made the Cambodian capital one of Southeast Asia’s most intoxicating centres before the Khmer Rouge era. Today, it’s coming into its own once more with a thriving bar scene, vibrant cafe culture and host of outstanding restaurants, such as Luu’s Kroeung Garden Restaurant.

When we head there, workstations are being set up on the leafy balcony. We’re making his signature soup, *samlor prahal*.

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Grilled, skewered fish at a Phnom Penh market stall; Psah Chas Alley 1, Siem Reap; *khanom krok* (coconut pancakes), served at Phnom Penh Central Market; sugar cane stacked outside a shop in Phnom Penh

IMAGES: GETTY, AWL IMAGES





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\*Condé Nast Traveler



Chef Luu Meng prepares samlor prahal, a classic Cambodian soup

**RIGHT:** Grilled sanday fish in wild betel leaf, served with pickled green papaya salad at Cuisine Wat Damnak

No Cambodian meal would be complete without a light, sour soup like this.

"Cambodia's cuisine has absorbed influences from its neighbours, but there are subtle differences," says Luu, as he chops ingredients. "It's not as hot or as sweet as Thai; our food is only mildly spicy and we use less fish sauce than in Vietnam. We use spices, but fresh not powdered like in India. In Khmer cuisine, everything is fresh."

Another important maxim of Cambodian cuisine is that things can't be rushed; the soup takes three to four hours to make and the key ingredient is *kroeuang*, the fresh herb and spice paste that's the bedrock of so many Cambodian dishes, and the inspiration behind the restaurant — and its name. "It's all about slow cooking," says Luu.

We pound fresh turmeric, garlic, ginger, galangal, chillis, shallots and young lemongrass in a bowl, then add the paste to the broth. Luu adds to the soup a handful of winter melon — a soft, courgette-like vegetable — along with a splash of fish sauce and chunks of river fish, handing me a spoon to taste. It's refreshingly light and aromatic.

"In Cambodia, the focus is on local specialities," he says. "Everyone knows that the best chicken comes from Siem Reap, the best rice from Battambang, the best coconut from Kampot."

The country's regional cuisine is something Luu has a firm handle on. After working as a chef in Thailand, Malaysia

and Singapore, Meng returned home to Cambodia and hit the road. For six months, he travelled around the country, unearthing forgotten Khmer dishes that were lost during the Khmer Rouge genocide and researching local specialities. He then refined the recipes to create a new sort of Cambodian cuisine, geared towards modern palates.

In a similar vein to Luu's travels, I head south to Kampot, an estuary town known for its numerous old, French colonial buildings. It's home to a culinary success story of its own: its eponymous pepper, which was awarded PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) status in 2016, putting it in the same category as Champagne and the Cornish pasty. It's a product with remarkable heritage, having been grown here for more than seven centuries; the climate between the mountains and the coast producing a distinctively aromatic pepper. In the early 20th century, no chef worth their salt would use anything but Kampot pepper, but then came the Khmer Rouge.

The regime had little interest in Kampot pepper, and forced people from the cities to work the land, particularly to grow rice. As a result, the plantations were abandoned, with some farmers fleeing the country. It wasn't until the regime's last fighters came down from the mountains in the late 1970s and put down their weapons that the plantations were gradually re-established, allowing the tradition to continue.

## A TASTE OF Cambodia



### CUISINE WAT DAMNAK PHNOM PENH

Siem Reap's Cuisine Wat Damnak closed during lockdown, but fans of French chef Joannès Rivière's groundbreaking take on new Cambodian cuisine needn't worry, as he's decamped to Phnom Penh. The new venue offers an à la carte or set three-course lunch menu for \$16 (£11.60). The latter includes dishes such as caramelised shrimp paste and tamarind, marinated green jackfruit salad with seared prawn and herbs, alongside barbecued pork ribs marinated with fermented soy beans and pickled green papaya. In the evening, there are two seven-course tasting menus — one plant based — from \$38 (£28) and \$34 (£25) respectively. [cuisinewatdamnak.com](http://cuisinewatdamnak.com)

### MALIS

Luu Meng's Phnom Penh restaurant is the showcase for his 'living Cambodian cuisine', a reinvention of traditional Khmer dishes. The setting is elegant, the menus innovative and dishes delicious. Choose between four- and seven-course tasting menus and a la carte, with dishes such as kaffir lime-flavoured rice cooked in fresh crab juice then wok-fried with fresh crab. For dessert? Kampot pepper brûlée. Four-course tasting menus from \$30 (£22), seven-course tasting menu \$60 (£44). [malis-restaurant.com](http://malis-restaurant.com)

### SOMBOK RESTAURANT

This Khmer fine dining restaurant on the Phnom Penh riverfront opened during the pandemic and is the latest venture from the two female chefs (Kimsan Pol and Kimsan Sok) behind Siem Reap's renowned Embassy restaurant. Showcasing modern Khmer cuisine, the three-course set menu features dishes such as long bean and smoked fish salad with roasted shallot, dried shrimp and garlic, and stir-fried beef with red ant sauce. From \$19.50 (£14.20). [facebook.com/sombokrestaurant](http://facebook.com/sombokrestaurant) [embassy-restaurant.com](http://embassy-restaurant.com)



## Five food finds



1

### AMOK

Cambodia's national dish, this aromatic, mild and creamy curry is traditionally made with fish, although chicken, beef and crab can also be used, marinated in a curry paste of coconut milk and *kroeuung*, then steamed in a banana leaf.

2

### NUM BANH CHOK

This noodle dish is a popular Khmer breakfast, the rice noodles swimming in a fish or spicy chicken soup and topped with cucumber, crunchy greens banana flowers and fresh herbs.

3

### POMELO SALAD

In Cambodia, salads often feature fruit rather than vegetables (green mango is a favourite), and a dish of pomelo, fried shallots, dried shrimp and mint leaves is a popular combination.

4

### KULEN BLACK PIG

in the Phnom Kulen mountain range, north of Siem Reap, free-roaming Kulen black pigs are reared organically and sustainably, their diet of forest floor foraging producing a pork with a distinctive flavour.

5

### KANG-KEP BAOB

Not for the squeamish, this snack of chargrilled frogs — their stomachs stuffed with minced pork, frog meat, roasted peanuts, chillies, fresh *kroeuung* and lime juice — is a common find at roadside stalls and food carts throughout the country.



Kampot pepper is grown at La Plantation, a farm part-owned by chef Luu Meng. LEFT: Amok, regarded as Cambodia's national dish

While in Kampot, I visit La Plantation, a pepper farm part-owned by Luu. As I bump down a potholed track through clouds of red dust, La Plantation's smattering of restored, Khmer-style buildings edges into view. The farm was set up by a French-Belgian couple, Guy Porre and Nathalie Chaboche, in 2013, and offers free tours, tastings and classes.

Beneath a searing sun, my guide and I wander among the pepper-strung trellises. As the colour of the berries changes, so do their flavour profiles, I learn: green pepper, fermented in salt, works well with goat's cheese and caramelised duck; black pepper, the bulk of the harvest, has chocolate, mint and eucalyptus notes and complements game and charcuterie; while red pepper is fruity, floral and delicious when paired with fish, or ground over ripe strawberries.

As Kampot pepper enjoys its renewed popularity, Phnom Penh's street food scene is also coming into its own. Back in the capital, I jump in a tuk tuk and sputter through its clogged, temple-flanked arteries to meet writer, guide and film location scout Nick Ray at the art deco Central Market for a street food 'safari'. "Everyone has heard about the street food in Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City," he says, "but Phnom Penh's should be just as famous."

We wander along aisles lined with dried fish: catfish, snakehead, squid. "Dried fish is

salty but really good grilled and dipped in mango sauce." The river crabs, he tells me, are fermented in salt for five days and then cooked with lemon, basil, sugar and chilli.

We graze from stall to stall, tearing into barbecued beef skewers with pickled young papaya at Phsar Tapang, and grab a street-side pew for a plate of *lort cha*, a dish of short rice noodles stir-fried on a sizzling hot plate with bean sprouts, cabbage, garlic, palm sugar, fish sauce and soy sauce, then topped with a fried egg.

"*Lort cha* is a popular cheap lunch," Nick says as we tuck in. "The carts selling them all play different tunes, like ice cream vans."

It's thirsty work, and so we round off our tour with a tippie at the Juniper Gin Bar, which serves drinks from Phnom Penh's first craft distillery, Seekers Spirits. I go for the kaffir lime leaf-laced Mekong G&T. It's packed with native botanicals such as lemongrass, pomelo, galangal and lemony Khmer basil. It's Cambodia in a glass. ☐

**HOW TO DO IT:** Singapore Airlines and Vietnam Airways fly from Heathrow to Phnom Penh via Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City, respectively. [singaporeair.com](http://singaporeair.com) [vietnamairlines.com](http://vietnamairlines.com)

Audley Travel offers a bespoke, 11-day trip to Cambodia from £2,280 per person, including flights, transfers and accommodation, and can arrange chef-led cooking classes. [audleytravel.com](http://audleytravel.com)

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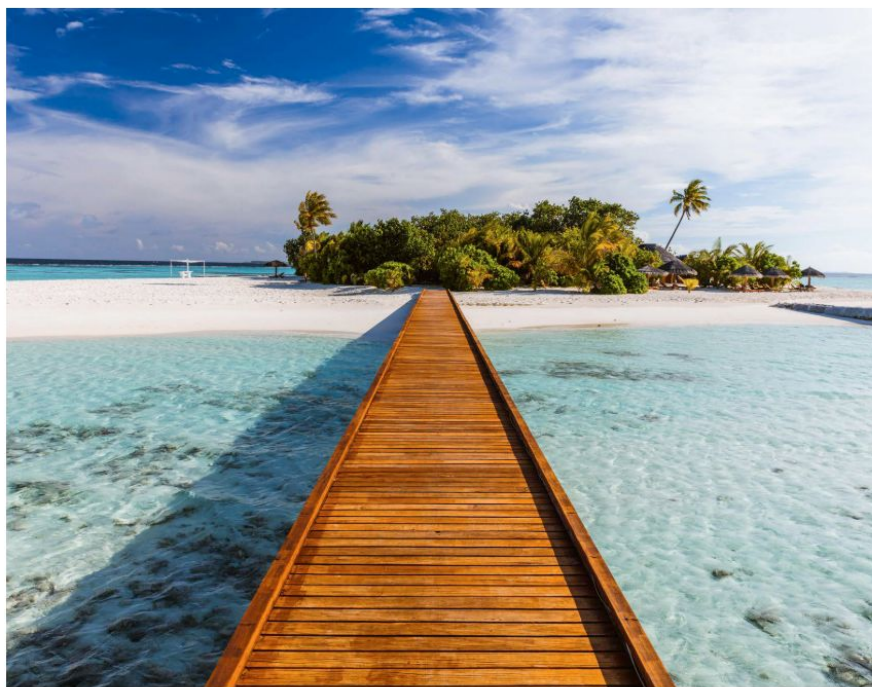
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SLEEP

# MALDIVES

**Framed by palms and with sparkling turquoise sea, nowhere does beachside bliss like the Maldives. And with a string of new openings, this Indian Ocean the islands' hotel scene has never looked better. Words: Lee Cobaj**



The Maldives is Mother Nature in overdrive: technicolour coral, beaches so white they'll make your eyes squint and water so blue it looks like the saturation has been set to max. This archipelago of 1,190 islands has become a poster child for island paradise, but there's more variety than you might think. Some atolls are better for manta rays; some attract whale sharks; and others are great for surfing, deep-sea fishing or have beaches running for miles. Tragically, several coral reefs were badly damaged during a worldwide bleaching event in 2016, so those keen to explore beneath the surface will need to plan carefully before visiting this ever-changing seascape. But much like its marine life, the Maldives' accommodation is similarly vibrant, and you'll find everything from love nests and party pads to castaway villas and overwater bungalows, meaning there's just as much action to be had on land as there is in that dazzlingly blue water.

IMAGES: AWL IMAGES; CLAUDIUS BRECHENWACHER & REINER BAUMANN. ALL RATES QUOTED ARE FOR STANDARD VILLAS, ROOM ONLY, PER NIGHT, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.



## Best for beach bums

### SEASIDE FINOLHU

Named after the island's immaculate, half-mile-long sandbank, Seaside Finolhu is perfect for hand-in-hand strolls. It recently refreshed all of its villas in sherbet shades of yellow, pink, blue and green, and the rest of the resort is similarly playful; take a stroll around the island and you might find an inflatable water park on the seashore or fire dancers on the beach. There's plenty more to do here, too, including tennis and yoga, and a raft of places to eat and drink, from the beachside buffet to the tiki-lit crab shack. Even with all this, rest assured that the island is also large enough that you'll always find somewhere to hide away and relax.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £598, all-inclusive. [finolhu.com](http://finolhu.com)





## For pure relaxation

### ££ AMILLA MALDIVES RESORT

This paradise idyll is well-suited for solo travellers, honeymooners and families alike. The spacious villas — some overwater and some on the beach — are decked out in Saint-Tropez-style whites and blues, with large living rooms, even larger wooden decks and private pools. The food is excellent and sustainably sourced and there's a bonanza of free daily activities, including kombucha-making classes, chess lessons and diving near the Hanifaru cleaning station, as seen on the BBC's documentary series *Blue Planet II*.  
**ROOMS:** Villas from £653, B&B. [amilla.com](http://amilla.com)







### Best for indulgence

#### 🏠🏠🏠 KUDADOO

'Anything. Anytime. Anywhere.' is Kudadoo's mantra and this ultra-exclusive, all-inclusive resort keeps its promise. Everything really is included here, from mini-bars stocked with Patrón tequila and Old Tom gin to round-the-clock gourmet meals in the restaurants or in your room and unlimited treatments at the temple-like spa. All the watersports and excursions are included as well. The resort has just 15 overwater pool villas, giving it a members-only feel, and the house reef is brimming with colourful coral and fish.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £2,540, all-inclusive. [kudadoo.com](http://kudadoo.com)

### Best for art-lovers

#### 🏠🏠 FAIRMONT SIRRU FEN FUSHI

This private island resort brags one of the most beautiful house reefs in the Maldives: it's a whopping six miles long and abundant with bright, healthy corals and kaleidoscopic reef fish. It's also home to the country's only Coralarium, a semi-submerged tidal gallery with a collection of eco-concrete sculptures that double as an artificial reef, encouraging corals, fish and crustaceans to the area. There's plenty to admire above the surface too, including airy villas with private pools, open-air restaurants serving Japanese tapas and grilled Maldivian tuna, and a serene spa.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £871, B&B. [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com)







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## Best for barefoot luxury

### £ £ GILI LANKANFUSHI

Fresh from a pre-pandemic spruce, perennial favourite Gili Lankanfushi is as dazzling as ever. One of the longest-established and most environmentally conscious resorts in the Maldives, it's easy to see why guests return year after year: the lagoon setting, world-class cuisine, outstanding spa and castaway-chic villas are truly first-class. But it's the service that stands out most: many of the staff have been with the resort for decades and won't bat an eyelid at even the most outlandish request — they once ferried in a baby grand piano at the request of one virtuoso visitor. But, in truth, days are all about luxuriating in the beautiful surroundings, feet in the sand, floating in the sea or sitting on the balcony watching stingrays in the water.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £980, B&B. [gili.lankanfushi.com](http://gili.lankanfushi.com)



## Best for design junkies

### £ £ £ PATINA MALDIVES, FARI ISLANDS

This stylish new resort exudes cool from every corner.

The first of three luxury destinations in the Fari Islands (a new mini-archipelago of man-made islands a 45-minute speedboat transfer from Malé), it has a sleek tropical modernist design — all low-slung wooden loungers, four-poster beach beds and villas with ocean-facing plunge pools. Start your day with a spot of yoga, perhaps followed by some standup paddleboarding in the lagoon, before dinner at restaurant Brasa, one of 12 places to eat and drink on the island.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £1,585, B&B. [patinahotels.com](http://patinahotels.com)

## Best for divers

### £ COMO MAALIFUSHI

You'll find this island escape in the barely-inhabited Thaa Atoll, surrounded by no less than 25 outstanding dive sites, including one of the most reliable whale-shark spotting locations in the country. Guests who sign up to see the huge fish are alerted when the animals have been sighted and told to head to the boat. In between times, you can lounge in your villa: all pale woods, four-poster beds and billowing white curtains. Alternatively, sip pina colodas by the pool and visit the thatched-roof spa, one of the best in the Maldives.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £612, B&B. [comohotels.com](http://comohotels.com)

## Best for VIPs

### £ £ £ SONEVA FUSHI

It's the Beckhams' Christmas getaway and where Buzz Aldrin comes to look at the stars — Soneva Fushi is celebrity central. Not that you'd ever know, with everyone in their hidden beach villas or fantastical overwater villas. The starfish-strewn beach is admittedly hard to leave, but activities include snorkelling trips to look for manta rays, eagle rays, stingrays, hawksbill turtles and spinner dolphins, sunrise yoga and jungle meditation sessions or spying the stars through a telescope.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £1,375, B&B. [soneva.com](http://soneva.com)





### Best for idyllic isolation

#### 📍📍📍 RAFFLES MERADHOO

A one-hour domestic flight south of the capital Malé, Raffles Meradhoo has some serious edge-of-the-world vibes. Half of the resort is set on floury sands, the other half is set on a stilted wooden deck out at sea, a few minutes from the jetty by speedboat. In between is a house reef bursting with biodiversity. The comfortable rooms, in cream and duck-egg blue, are some of the most romantic in the Maldives, ranging from beach villas with large tropical gardens that open out onto the beach to overwater villas with wooden stairs dropping into the Indian Ocean, all with private pools.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £1,345, B&B. [raffles.com](http://raffles.com)

### Best for animal-lovers

#### 📍 THE RESIDENCE AT DHIGURAH

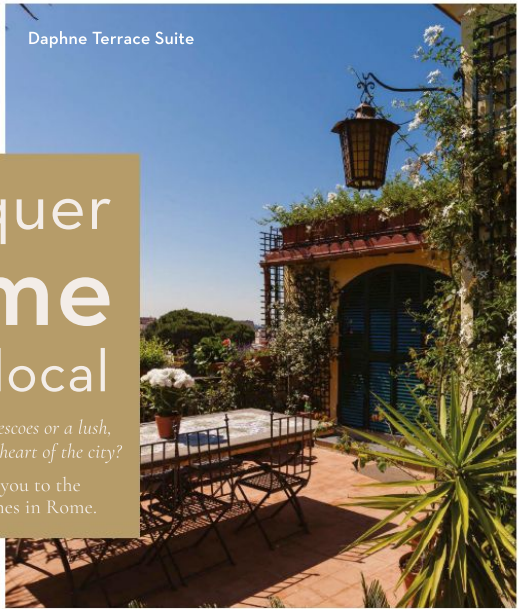
Set on a long, jungly island ringed by miles of white beach and bountiful coral reefs, Dhigurah's pristine location beats many of its pricier rivals. The styling is simple and the service is informal, but all the villas are extremely spacious and have huge private pools. The beach villas are especially peaceful and relaxing. Elsewhere, there's an Olympic-size infinity pool, six bars and restaurants, a spa and gym. Hop on your bicycle and pedal across a wooden walkway to Dhigurah's sister hotel, Falhumaafushi, and you can also use their facilities. The area is also a magnet for green sea, olive ridley and hawksbill turtles, while whale sharks are known to make occasional appearances, too.

**ROOMS:** Villas from £415, B&B. [cenizaro.com](http://cenizaro.com) 📍





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Rome

History is etched deep into the marble bones of the Eternal City, but Rome is far from being solely preserved in the past. This is a living, breathing capital, with its feet in the present and its eyes on the future. Set off into its distinctive neighbourhoods and you'll see once-forgotten districts now revitalised, age-old recipes carefully maintained and ancient landmarks restored for the modern age

WORDS **JULIA BUCKLEY, ANGELA LOCATELLI & RACHEL RODDY**  
PHOTOGRAPHS **FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI**



## Alternative history in the

# CENTRO STORICO

From the Trevi Fountain to the Spanish Steps, the capital's historic centre is a pantheon of celebrated sights. Those looking for something different, however, needn't veer too far off the tourist trail — intriguing tales reveal themselves at every turn. Words: Julia Buckley

In the middle of Via del Babuino, surrounded by designer shops, Giuseppe Albano stops at a cafe. From the outside, Canova Tadolini looks like any other. But Giuseppe gestures inside to a giant, white man sitting on a giant, white horse. They're barrelling towards the door, with more spectral, white statues behind them, gathered like an army of wraiths.

"This was the studio of Canova and his star pupil, Tadolino," says Giuseppe. The man on horseback is a plaster cast, and so too are the figures behind him, including athletes and a nun. The workshop belonged to Tadolino's family until 1967, when it became a cafe. Tourists walk past, oblivious to the significance of what's inside, often more interested in Il Babuino, a nearby fountain of a reclining Roman named Silenus. In centuries past, Romans would fix anonymous notes scandalising each other onto Il Babuino. "The Twitter of its day," laughs Giuseppe.

That's the thing about Rome. The city is so multi-levelled that to get off the beaten track you don't even need to leave the main streets, you just need to look a little deeper.

It's a lesson I'm learning from Giuseppe as we saunter along the Via del Babuino. What I'd dismissed as a stroll along a high-end shopping street is in fact an amble through history. This is the route British travellers used to take on the Grand Tour: they'd arrive at the swaggering Piazza del Popolo, then trot down Via del Babuino to their lodgings around the Piazza di Spagna.

Fittingly, I'm with the right person to follow in English footsteps around the Italian capital: Giuseppe is the director of the Keats-

Shelley House, a museum devoted to the Romantic poets. It's housed at the foot of the Spanish Steps, in the building where Keats died aged 25 in 1821. But today, Giuseppe is out and about, showing me his take on the Via del Babuino, which consists mainly of looking up. "People don't notice the architecture," he explains. Sure enough, above the shopfronts is a series of palazzi, each grander than the last. "If these were by themselves, they'd be marvelled at," says Giuseppe. "But because they're all together, you don't notice them."

Having passed the lavish Hotel de Russie, we stop at Palazzo Boncompagni Sterbini. Just like the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain, this is a grand show of 18th-century rococo style; unlike them, however, few people stop to take in the grandeur. The scallop shells over the windows are a subtle boast that someone in the family has completed the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, Giuseppe tells me. Imposing busts of emperors are tucked away in niches.

Look closely at the other buildings, instructs Giuseppe, and you'll see Rome differently. Carved, flord dolphins and waves dance around the doorway of number 51, the scene resembling something from the Trevi Fountain. Opposite stands a brick Anglican church, its incongruous place on this palazzo-lined street testament to the fact that non-Catholic churches were banned in Rome until the city joined a newly unified Italy in 1870.

I leave Giuseppe at the Spanish Steps and delve deeper into the well-trodden Centro Storico, the city's historic centre, by myself. Here, too, there are surprises at every turn.

**FROM TOP:** The Spanish Steps, connecting Piazza di Spagna and Piazza Trinità dei Monti; works by Caravaggio adorn the walls of the San Luigi dei Francesi church, close to Piazza Navona

**PREVIOUS PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Pasta alla gricia at Da Bucatino; the Spanish Steps; ceiling detail at Santa Maria in Trastevere church; view towards St Peter's Basilica from Ponte Sant'Angelo

I already knew Piazza Navona's distinctive lozenge shape was thanks to the site's origins as a stadium, but this time, I take the steps down from the ticket office to walk beneath the mammoth travertine arches that flank its edge. Afterwards, fuelled by an organic coffee at Sant'Eustachio Il Caffé, I step inside the San Luigi dei Francesi church and gaze at three paintings by Caravaggio: dark, swirling spotlit takes on the life of Saint Matthew.

There's more Caravaggio — along with Titian, Bernini and Tintoretto — at the Doria Pamphilj Gallery. It's a highly intimate place, not least because it's still owned by the family who first began assembling the collection 500 years ago. The voice of its current guardian, Prince Jonathan Doria Pamphilj, accompanies me through the audio guide, telling me how his family built this scarlet-walled, gold-stuccoed palace when his ancestor became Pope Innocent X in 1644.

The showpiece here is the Versailles-like hall of mirrors. But most extraordinary of all is the portrait of Pope Innocent X by Velázquez. "It's too real!" the subject was said to have yelled when he saw his mottled skin and jutting chin. Even now, centuries later, he seems so lifelike that I feel his beady eyes following me around the gallery. Vast and varied as it is, Rome truly does intimacy like nowhere else.

**HOW TO DO IT:** Private tour guide Valentina Bonaccorsi offers three-hour, tailor-made tours of the Centro Storico from £206, excluding entry fees. [facebook.com/aregoldartetour.canovatadolini.com](https://www.facebook.com/aregoldartetour.canovatadolini.com) [ksh.roma.it/stadiodomiziano.com/doriapamphilj.it](http://ksh.roma.it/stadiodomiziano.com/doriapamphilj.it)



## Four more alternative tours

### UNCOVER THE CITY'S ART SECRETS WITH A SCHOLAR

For an in-depth look at the city's frescoes and mosaics, pair up with an art historian on a personalised tour organised by Context. Itineraries can include admiring the cult of Mithras in the Basilica of San Clemente's subterranean temple or gaining special access to Palazzo Colonna, a Roman mansion that's been owned by the same family for over 20 generations. [contexttravel.com](http://contexttravel.com)

### GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF CLASSIC FILMS

For an intimate look at the silver screen's love affair with Rome, choose Casa Mia Tours' Rome Cinema & Food walk. On this private excursion, led by the granddaughter of renowned filmmaker Vittorio De Sica, travellers explore the locations of films including *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *La Dolce Vita* (1960) and hear behind-the-scenes accounts from locals and extras. [casamiatours.com](http://casamiatours.com)

### EXPLORE THE COUNTRYSIDE ON A SCOOTER

The beautiful Alban Hills, southeast of the capital, have long served as a rural oasis for Romans. Discover this volcanic landscape on two wheels with Scooteroma's four-and-a-half-hour Countryside Vespa Tour. Stops include Castel Gandolfo, home to the papal summer residence, and the wine-producing town of Frascati — plus pit stops for snacks along the way. [scooteroma.com](http://scooteroma.com)

### SHOP AND COOK LIKE A ROMAN

Walks Inside Rome will whet your appetite with its chef-led tours around the stalls of Campo de' Fiori, the capital's oldest market. Come lunchtime, take the fresh ingredients to one of two cooking schools in the historic centre and learn how to prepare a traditional Italian meal, including a pasta dish, a main course and a dessert. [walksinsiderome.com](http://walksinsiderome.com) AL





## In pursuit of pasta in TESTACCIO

The history of *pasta alla gricia* is entangled with tales and traditions. Recipes for the classic Roman dish may vary, but as a wander through the trattorias of Testaccio can prove, nothing can unify quite like a good bowl of pasta. Words: Rachel Roddy

Paolo is standing proudly in the doorway of Da Bucatino. Inside, waiters chat and polish glasses. Outside, a couple more smooth cloths and lay the tables that run to the corner of the street. For 16 years, I've shared an internal courtyard with this traditional, family-run trattoria, its boisterous kitchen clatter and scents escaping through the extractor vents and travelling up the three floors to my front door. It was in one of Da Bucatino's wood-panelled dining rooms that I learned the menu of a traditional Roman trattoria is a concentrated history of the city: a near-3,000-year-old story told by means of chickpea soup, roast lamb, wild chicory, cherry crostata and — the reason I'm standing here with Paolo — *pasta alla gricia*.

Although it's often overshadowed by its close cousin *amatriciana*, *gricia* was the original iteration of the dish. The story goes that shepherds high in the mountainous hinterland between Abruzzo and Lazio fried *guanciale* (cured pig's jowl), tossed it with pasta and pecorino cheese and called it *gricia*. Centuries later, tomatoes found their way into the Roman larder, and *gricia* went from *bianca* (white) to *rossa* (red). This new variation became known as *amatriciana*, named for the town of Amatrice, and was brought to Rome — along with *gricia* — by the Abruzzesi, who migrated to the city in search of work. It has become particularly popular in Testaccio, the city's 19th-century, grid-like working quarter, whose disproportionately high number of trattorias means the smell of cooking and the promise of a good lunch are all around.

"At Da Bucatino, we have two *gricia* options," explains Paolo, while overseeing a delivery of water, the green glass bottles clinking within plastic crates. The first option is traditional: *guanciale*, grated pecorino romano and black pepper, tossed

with stout tubes of a pasta called *mezze maniche* (meaning 'short sleeves'). The second version is *gricia con carciofi*, which sees artichokes cut into slender wedges and fried with the *guanciale* before being tossed with irregular strings of *pici* pasta and topped with pecorino. "With both dishes, the key is to have the *guanciale* cut thickly and fried carefully, so as to render its plentiful fat," explains Paolo.

But his way isn't the only way. At Flavio al Velavevodetto, a smart trattoria built into the base of Monte di Testaccio (an ancient, artificial hill of broken terracotta), the chefs opt to use *rigatoni* pasta and to add the pecorino in two stages. Some is melted into the hot pan with the *guanciale* and starchy pasta water; more is added at the end, showered over the dish like a snowstorm.

While the methods for *gricia* may vary, Testaccio is clearly defined. Once the ancient port of Rome, the wedge-shaped district is delineated by the busy Via Marmorata, a section of ancient city wall and the curve of the River Tiber. And sitting right beside the river is Lo Scopettaro, once a broom-making workshop and now a tempting trattoria. Hungry customers waiting to purchase their brooms were so tempted by the staff's lunch bubbling in the corner that, eventually, the place transformed into its current iteration. Its broom-selling days are over, and it's now more about the generous bowls of *gricia*. Here, the dish is made with *mezzi rigatoni* — tubes a little smaller than Paolo's *mezze maniche*. Around me, the diners are a mixed crowd: families sit beside office workers, who sit beside builders. For some, it seems, the promise of a good lunch is too hard to resist.

**MORE INFO:** [dabucatinio.it](http://dabucatinio.it) [ristorantevelavevodetto.it](http://ristorantevelavevodetto.it) [loscopettaroroma.com](http://loscopettaroroma.com)  
Rachel Roddy is the author of *An A-Z of Pasta*, published by Penguin (£25).

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Signage at Trattoria da Bucatino; mezzi rigatoni alla gricia, served at Lo Scopettaro; locals catch up in Piazza Testaccio; chef Flavio al Velavevodetto cooks rigatoni with gricia



### What to eat & where

**MARITOTZI** FROM LINARI  
Legend has it that these cream-filled buns were traditionally given to girls by suitors ('marito' means 'husband' in Italian). A breakfast staple, they're typically followed by an espresso. [pasticcerialinari.com](http://pasticcerialinari.com)

**SUPPLI** FROM TRAPIZZINO  
Don't miss these balls of seasoned rice, dipped in egg and breadcrumbs then deep-fried. Take a bite to reveal an oozing heart of mozzarella. [trapizzino.it](http://trapizzino.it)

**PIZZA BIANCA** FROM PANIFICIO PASSI  
Don't be put out if you turn up and see no *pizza bianca* behind the counter — it simply means the two-metre lengths of dimpled pizza dough are being prepared for cooking. Join the queue and enjoy one fresh from the oven. [Via Mastro Giorgio 87](http://Via Mastro Giorgio 87).

**FRIED ANCHOVIES** FROM LA TORRICELLA  
Dusted with flour, deep-fried and served with a wedge of lemon. If you're visiting in winter, follow them up with a warming bowl of bean and chestnut soup. [la-torricella.com](http://la-torricella.com) **RR**





**“The Roman evening either keeps still or it sings. No one can behold it without growing dizzy, and time has filled it with eternity”**

Jorge Luis Borges, Argentine poet



Sunset over the orange garden  
on the Aventine Hill







A question of taste in

# MONTI

Danish-born designer and tailor Tina Sondergaard has lived in the fashionable district of Monti for the past two decades. Here, she reveals what Roman style means to her

**ROMAN STYLE IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM, SAY, MILAN.** Sure, in a Prada or Gucci store, they'd look at you oddly if you were wearing something from last year, but Rome in general isn't like that; you're free to wear what you want. There's definitely much more colour worn here; there's a lot more black in Milan — a bit like Denmark.

**I'D SAY MY STYLE IS A CROSS BETWEEN DANISH MINIMALISM AND ITALIAN BAROQUE.** I use lots of colours as I want a good mood. This area is full of artists, creatives and designers. It feels very international, but very Roman at the same time. In Monti, we're a bit rebellious: if red is the 'in' colour this season, for example, then you won't find red here.

**MONTI'S STYLE IS MOSTLY WHAT YOU'D WEAR TO HAVE AN APERITIVO.** People mix things up — they like to be creative, but they're not intimidating or in your face about it. It's more artistic: you might wear a nice evening-style dress, but you'll pair it with trainers and a leather jacket. It's a very human approach to fashion.

**VISITORS WHO COME TO MONTI HAVE DONE THEIR RESEARCH.** They don't want Prada or Gucci or anything they can get at home. Nowadays, you can walk down a high street and you could be in Budapest, Stockholm or Madrid — they're full of the same brands. When I was younger, we'd buy something on holiday, knowing nobody else would have it at home. Now that's disappeared, but people know that Monti offers something different.

**INTERESTINGLY, I WASN'T ALWAYS GOING TO BE A DESIGNER.** I first visited Rome in 1982 and then, in 1988, dropped out of law school in Denmark to come here. I started off in Borgo Pio, near the Vatican, doing alterations, and I used to have priests come in to have their robes shortened. My Borgo Pio shop took off, and I then moved to Monti in 2003 [where she opened her eponymous boutique]. I thought the area had a great atmosphere — and everything starts with an atmosphere, including your outfits. At the time, it was just me and one other lady across the street, so I've seen the area really grow.

**ITALIAN CUSTOMERS CAN BE A VERY TOUGH CROWD.** They've usually had a seamstress in the family, and they have a real tailoring tradition. They know about fabrics, cut and length and they know what they're talking about. The younger generations tend to know a little bit less; they're losing that tradition of made-to-measure. But then again, lots of young people are going back to it. Either way, I won't let anyone out of the shop if I'm not happy with how they're looking. The body has to wear the clothes, not the other way round. **I THINK PEOPLE WANT QUALITY IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD.** They're more aware of what they're wearing and who made it. On the day I reopened after the first lockdown in May 2020, I had a customer who came in and said, 'The first thing I wanted to do was to buy myself a colourful dress.'  
*tinasondergaard.com* **INTERVIEW: JB**

## Tina's top shops

### LOL ROMA

If I didn't make and wear my own clothes, I'd be this shop's best customer. When it started, it stocked strictly black and white items, but now it's mixed it all up a bit and got colours in. It's a stylish mix between Milan and Rome. *lolroma.com*

### PERLEI

I've known Kely Paucar for 20 years. She's a real artist and makes beautiful accessories and jewellery — not usually from gold or silver, but from fabrics and semi-precious stones. It's really interesting, gorgeous stuff. *perlei.com*

### OFFICINERED

This is on one of my favourite streets, Via del Pellegrino, close to Campo de' Fiori. It has a great selection of fashion for both men and women, all a little bit alternative, so it fits with that Monti style. It does everything: clothes, shoes, bags, the lot — all from various designers. *officinered.com*

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Shoppers browse the boutiques on Via Condotti; designer Tina Sondergaard; nuns gather outside the San Lorenzo in Fonte church

## Where to shop in Rome

### POLVERE DI TEMPO

For the past 30 years, Adrian Rodriguez Cozzani — the self-titled ‘time artisan’ — has been studying and painstakingly restoring time measurement instruments that have fallen into disuse, like hourglasses and sundials. In his Trastevere shop, visitors can also find a range of hand-built, travel-inspired mementos, including maps and reproductions of 15th-century globes. [polvereditempo.it](http://polvereditempo.it)

### MASSIMO MARIA MELIS

Via dell’Orso has long been a street of craftspeople, and among its artisans is costume designer-turned-goldsmith Massimo Maria Melis. He uses age-old techniques, including stringing his intricate creations with Roman Empire-era coins and cameos, to revive traditional Roman, Etruscan and Greek fashions. [massimomariamelis.com](http://massimomariamelis.com)


### ANTICA CACIARA TRASTEVERINA

This delicatessen has been a Trastevere institution since 1900, and is still run by the same family. The counters are packed with artisanal delicacies, ready to be served in a sandwich or vacuum-packed for longer trips. Among the handwritten labels, look out for pecorino romano DOP, a cheese with protected status that’s been made in the Lazio region since Roman times. [facebook.com/anticacaciarastrasteverina](https://facebook.com/anticacaciarastrasteverina)

### ANTICA CARTOTECNICA

Half stationery store, half museum, Antica Cartotecnica is a treasure trove for lovers of the written word. There are elegant pens, leather notebooks, typewriters, ink bottles, vintage pieces and collector’s items. Located between the Pantheon and Piazza Navona, the store first opened in 1930 and is replete with walnut furnishings and old-school writing paraphernalia. [anticacartotecnica.it](http://anticacartotecnica.it)

### RE(F)USE

After working for the fashion behemoth founded by her family, Ilaria Venturini Fendi decided to apply her know-how to... waste. She’s the founder of Carmina Campus, a brand that collects end-of-line, vintage or defective fabrics and gives them a new lease of life as one-of-a-kind accessories and furniture. Pieces from her collections are on sale at Re(f)use, her store in central Rome. [carminacampus.com](http://carminacampus.com) **AL** 





## The inside guide to

# TRASTEVERE

The sprawling neighbourhood of Trastevere, on the western side of the Tiber, is Rome in microcosm — walk its streets to discover a vibrant bar scene and bustling Sunday markets, multi-layered history and atmospheric alleyways

Trastevere is many things to many people. Bar aficionados come for the nightlife, others to admire its boho-pretty cobbled streets. And many Romans think it's over — ruined by tourists, the artisans of the past pushed out to make way for hipster bars. Although this isn't the proudly working-class area stuffed with earthy trattorias and workshops it once was, it's not a soulless bar strip aimed solely at visitors, either. The Trastevere of old is still there if you scratch beneath the surface.

Although it was outside the main city walls (the literal meaning of 'Trastevere' is 'across the Tiber'), the area has a wealth of ancient remains. At **SANTA CECILIA IN TRASTEVERE** church, steps lead visitors down into a second-century BC former Roman abode. You'll also find the sarcophagus of St Cecilia, a Roman woman supposedly martyred on this site for converting to Christianity. *benedettinesantacecilia.it*

Ancient Rome blends once more with Catholicism at **SANTA MARIA IN TRASTEVERE**, the neighbourhood's main church. Look away from the glittering, 13th-century mosaics and you'll see 22 hulking columns propping up the nave; these were taken from the nearby ruins of the Baths of Caracalla.

And there's a strong hum of la dolce vita in the medieval **VICOLI**, too. These alleyways zigzag their way through the quarter, and in the southeastern part of Trastevere, you'll still find washing lines dangling over the cobbles and bougainvillea growing up the walls (Via dei Salumi has some of the prettiest *vicoli* leading off it). In this corner of the neighbourhood, you'll also find more ancient-meets-modern at **SANT'ANDREA DE SCAPHIS**, a crumbling baroque chapel-turned ultra-modern art gallery. *santandreadescaphis.com*

For many, Trastevere's **SUNDAY MARKET** at Porta Portese is Rome. Wade into the capital's largest flea

market, for everything from Jesus statuettes to mid-century furniture. It starts at the old city gate and spreads south. If you want something more made-to-measure, you'll still find some of Trastevere's artisans in the less busy streets around Santa Cecilia in Trastevere Church. **GIUSEPPE AND ISABELLA CIUFFETTI** hand-stitch elegant bags, wallets and belts from Tuscan leather; Giuseppe's been doing it since childhood and Isabella joined him 45 years ago when they married. Opposite them is **LA CRAVATTA SU MISURA**, Melania Flamini's one-woman show making ties and scarves. *facebook.com/mercatodomenicaleportaportese Ciuffetti: Via S. Cecilia 30 cravattasumisura.it*

Trastevere manages to blend that proud, working-class origins with high culture, too. Sixteenth-century **VILLA FARNESINA** contains frescoes by Raphael, among others, and his Loggia of Cupid and Psyche is arguably better than his work in the Vatican. The grounds are also outstanding, but be sure to make time for the **ORTO BOTANICO DI ROMA**, the city's botanical garden, which is full of old cedars and oaks. Follow the elegant, tree-lined boulevards to **PIAZZALE GARIBALDI**, from where you'll have sweeping views of the city. *villafarnesina.it*

But no visit to Trastevere would be complete without a twirl around its nightlife scene, centred around the area from Piazza Trilussa to Viale di Trastevere. For something to eat, it has to be one of the district's historical pizzerias — either **IVO A TRASTEVERE** or **AI MARMI**. The latter's known as *l'obitorio* ('the morgue') for its all-marble interior, unchanged since its 1931 opening. For a night on the town, try **FRENI E FRIZIONI** for creative cocktails. Alternatively, for a taste of classic Rome, make a beeline for wood-clad **BAR SAN CALISTO**, a local institution. *ivoatrastevere.it facebook.com/aimarmi freniefrizioni.com barsancalisto.it JB*

### Q&A with Renzo Panattoni

Renzo is the owner of Pizzeria Ai Marmi, which has kept the Trasteverini well fed for 90 years. He explains the Roman take on Italy's iconic dish

#### WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT ROMAN PIZZA?

A real Roman pizza base is made with flour, olive oil, yeast and a bit of salt — nothing else — and Ai Marmi has stuck to the same recipe since it opened in 1931. Pizza in Rome is thinner than in Naples, because it's stretched more and cooked slightly longer; I cook mine for three minutes.

#### WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF PIZZA IN TRASTEVERE?

When I arrived in the 1960s, there were only a few pizzerias: this one, Ivo and La Torre (which is now closed). Pizza was first brought to Rome by the Tuscans, not the Neapolitans — they'd open shops selling cakes as well as pizza, and that's how my family started, too.

#### WHAT TOPPINGS WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

When we took over the pizzeria in the 1980s, we stuck to four: a classic margherita, marinara, mushrooms, and ham. Others were making very strange pizzas (like putting pineapple on top), so we had to change, too, but a *capricciosa* (mushrooms, ham and artichokes) is as far as I go.



Religion-inspired street art in Trastevere  
**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Al fresco dining on Via della Paglia; man stands in the doorway of a mansion in Trastevere; local with her dog on Via della Lungaretta







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After hours in

# PIGNETO

Mixologist Giulia Castellucci is one of Rome's best bartenders and co-owner of Co.So Cocktail & Social, the bar that put Pigneto on the nightlife map. She shares her thoughts on the evolution of the area from forgotten neighbourhood to the coolest district in town

**PIGNETO IS A REALLY INTERESTING PLACE.** Architecturally, it's known for its small, low-rise houses and little self-contained villas — I think the three-storey block of flats next to us is the biggest in the area. These days, it's really expensive to live here but in the past, sadly, it had a bit of a bad reputation. Pier Paolo Pasolini, the film director, used to live here, and his [1961] film *Accattone* was partly shot here, depicting working-class struggles in post-war Italy.

**I'D SAY FROM 2013 TO 2015, THE AREA BEGAN TO CHANGE.** Until Massimo D'addezio opened Co.So [which Giulia now co-owns] in 2013, Pigneto wasn't really about quality. There was the pedestrianised area, but it was nothing like it is now: packed with great bars and restaurants. It's like a lovely little town in itself — you can move about on foot, and it's a small area, made up of just the streets surrounding us. In the evening, it comes

into its own; it's full of bars and people, and you can go from one place to the next; an aperitivo here, then dinner elsewhere, on for post-dinner drinks to another bar and so on.

**PIGNETO IS REALLY KNOWN FOR ITS STREET ART.** There's not one main area — it's scattered everywhere. You just have to walk around. There are some works by well-known artists, too. The art really inspires our creations at Co.So, so we put murals in our bar to keep the urban theme.

**PEOPLE COME FROM ACROSS ROME TO HANG OUT IN PIGNETO.** They come to our bar — it's really cool, and you'll see a table of students right next to a table of lawyers or judges, but you don't notice the contrast. I'm not going to say it's cooler than somewhere like Trastevere, but I will say that Pigneto is totally different — here you see another reality of Rome. [cosoroma.business.site](http://cosoroma.business.site)

**INTERVIEW: JB**

**ABOVE:** Giulia Castellucci prepares a Sicilian version of a mai tai, using prickly pear and almond milk, at Co.So Cocktail & Social





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**FROM TOP:** Pigneto's renowned street art, which often has a political slant; aperitivo at Necci dal 1924, popular for its scenic garden; dusk falls in Pigneto, as locals head out to enjoy the nightlife

## 12 hours in Pigneto

The city's most exciting district is a magnet for Romans looking for a good time. From admiring art to bar-hopping, here's the perfect way to spend an afternoon in the offbeat neighbourhood

**12PM: LUNCH AT BOTTIGLIERIA PIGNETO**  
Open from morning until the wee hours, this Pigneto institution serves everything from brunch to after-dinner snacks. Start with cured meat or avocado toast topped with prawns, and wash it down with a glass of vino from the 19-page wine list, curated by Italian region. [bottigliariapigneto.it](http://bottigliariapigneto.it)

**2PM: TAKE IN THE STREET ART**  
Although there isn't an official trail, you'll find the best-known works around Via Fanfulla da Lodi. This is where the director (and Pigneto resident) Pier Paolo Pasolini shot *Accattone*, which focused on gritty, working-class life. Keep an eye out for the various visual interpretations of him and his films, as well as political murals on Via Giovanni Brancaloneo.

**4PM: LEAF THROUGH LIBRERIA TUBA**  
As you'll gather from the many political murals, Pigneto is a hotbed of activism, and you'll find Libreria Tuba at its beating heart. Cross the railway line to this feminist bookshop, which has a cafe serving farm-to-table food, fair-trade herbal teas and artisan beers, and regularly plays host to events. [librieriatuba.it](http://librieriatuba.it)

**5.30PM: START THE BAR CRAWL**  
Stroll the Via del Pigneto, from Via Grosseto to Via L'Aquila; it's around about now that many bars

and restaurants will be waking up. Popular spots include Cargo, Mabel and Mezzo, the latter a vermouth bar that tempts with its impressive array of fortified wines. Birra+, a beer bar that stocks rare brews, is also worth seeking out.

**7PM: APERITIVI AT NECCI DAL 1924**  
Take a villa built in 1924, craft its lovely garden into a seating area and you have Necci dal 1924 — perhaps the most elegant spot in Pigneto. There's a great wine list, but you're here for the atmosphere, which feels like a refined corner of the Villa Borghese gardens. [necci1924.com](http://necci1924.com)

**8PM: DINNER AT LA SANTERIA DI MARE**  
It can be easy to forget the coast is only half an hour away from Rome, but this lovely little seafood restaurant reminds you of just that. Come for the excellent *frittura di paranza* (fried fish platter) or a seafood twist on the classic Roman pasta dish *bucatini all'amatriciana*. [lasanteria.it](http://lasanteria.it)

**10PM: CO.SO**  
Finish the night at Co.So Cocktail & Social. The new menu riffs off Freudian thinking, with drinks designed to spark childhood memories or drop you straight into reverie. The highlight? A carbonara sour: *guanciale*-swilled vodka with whisked egg, lemon and a piece of pasta for a straw. **JB**





## History reinvented in

# PALATINO-CAMPITELLI

A walk through the neighbourhoods of Palatino and Campitelli throws up examples of the innovative archaeology taking place city-wide — an approach that's helping to weave threads from the Eternal City's ancient past into modern-day life. Words: Julia Buckley

I'm used to looking down when I'm at the Colosseum, but not today. Thanks to a new itinerary allowing access to its subterranean chambers, I'm looking up from the underground spaces where gladiators and wild beasts waited before entering the stadium. Walking through dark corridors, you can feel the horror and the drama that once unfurled here: the terror of the animals, the adrenaline of the gladiators about to fight for their lives, the roar of the crowds. Gazing up through the lift shafts at the seating above, suddenly the violence feels real.

Two millennia since its heyday, the Roman Empire is constantly throwing up new surprises. The Domus Aurea, Nero's former palace, opens new rooms as and when they're excavated, and digs at the Circus Maximus have unearthed underground shops. In 2019, the Domus Transitoria — Nero's other home, on the Palatine Hill — opened to the public.

It's not just the city's big-name attractions revealing fresh surprises, either. Earlier this summer, it became possible for the first time in centuries to walk the Aurelian Walls, built in the third century and expanded in AD 401. Seemingly impervious to attack, the fortifications were destroyed by 19th-century Romans intent on urban expansion, reducing much of the walls to fragments.

"Lots of cities have walls, but we have the Forum and Colosseum in Rome, so people think 'walls — meh'", says archaeological curator Antonella Gallitto. We're walking a newly opened stretch of the Aurelian Walls at the top of Via Veneto. As we stroll — elegant palazzos one side, the tall pines of the Borghese Gardens the other, she tells stories of the walls: how they saved Rome countless times against invasion, how 19th-century artists set up ateliers in the towers, and how 20th-century squatters tried to buy them for housing. The Aurelian Walls are anything but forgettable.

They're just one among a flurry of new openings this year. In September, the Horti

Lamiani — the gardens of emperors Caligula and Claudius — were revealed beneath an office block in Piazza Vittorio. A painstaking excavation has revealed hints of past decadence — ostrich, bear and lion bones — and some of the 90,000 pieces of painted wall have been reconstructed to form a panel depicting a port scene. "It's a new approach, integrating the past into the modern city," says director Mirella Serlorenzi. "We're not taking [the remains] away to a museum. We're giving the city back its history."

A similar project has opened over on the Aventine Hill, home to the Roman aristocracy for two thousand years. Digs have revealed an ancient *domus* (mansion) below a block of flats, but instead of having the remains removed, the owners of the site donated the basement to the city. Twice-monthly tours now showcase this grand, first-century villa.

But perhaps the year's biggest opening was the Mausoleum of Augustus, where Rome's first emperor was buried, along with a number of his successors, including Caligula and Claudius. I meet with Sebastiano La Manna, director of the restoration, to walk around the inner sanctum, in which the emperors were buried. The air sizzles with intrigue. "That's Tiberius," he says casually, pointing at a broken slab of marble inscribed with Latin. We also pass the resting place of Augustus's sister, Octavia Minor, and his prodigy, Marcellus. "It's emotional," Sebastiano admits, noticing me well up.

Guided tours of the site weave the strands of history together. We see elegant turn-of-the-century marble staircases, fascist graffiti and Roman vaulting, as perfect today as it was in 29 BC. The Eternal City is constantly changing, and this year, we're part of it.

---

**HOW TO DO IT:** Private tour guide Agnes Crawford offers three-hour bespoke tours from £258, excluding entrance fees. [understandingrome.com](http://understandingrome.com)  
[arccollosseo.it](http://arccollosseo.it) [sovraintendenzaroma.it](http://sovraintendenzaroma.it)  
[scatolarcheologica.it](http://scatolarcheologica.it) [mausoleodiaugusto.it](http://mausoleodiaugusto.it)

## More historic highlights

### JEWISH QUARTER

Walk through the ruins of the Theatre of Marcellus and you'll enter the Jewish Ghetto. There was a thriving Jewish community in Rome until the horrors of the Second World War. Today, there's a strong restaurant scene (Sora Margherita is highly recommended) and a synagogue dating to 1870, accessible on tours. [museoebraico.roma.it](http://museoebraico.roma.it)  
[soramargherita.com](http://soramargherita.com)

### BATHS OF CARACALLA

This vast complex was where Romans enjoyed everything from baths to exhibitions. The underground levels include tunnels in which slaves heated bath water; they're regularly open to the public — keep an eye on the website. [soprintendenzaspecialeroma.it](http://soprintendenzaspecialeroma.it)


### SAN GIORGIO IN VELABRO

This lovely church is often overlooked, since it's so close to the much-visited Santa Maria in Cosmedin. Despite the Roman arch outside, it has a beautifully simple medieval interior, complete with 13th-century frescoes.

### BELVEDERE TERRACE

The Palatine Hill has one of the most spectacular views in the city, from its terrace suspended above the Forum. Enjoy heart-stealing views from the Colosseum to the Victor Emmanuel II Monument in Piazza Venezia, plus everything in between. **JB**



Locals admire the ruins of the Circus Maximus from Palatine Hill  
**ABOVE:** The Colosseum, which launched a tour of its underground chambers this year 





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Visitors explore the Villa Borghese's laghetto by rowing boat

## Going green in

# VILLA BORGHESE

The city's gloriously green heart is almost a neighbourhood in itself, full of sweeping views, lavish villas and world-class art collections. Here's what not to miss

The **TERRAZZA DEL PINCIO** viewpoint presides over Piazza del Popolo with views of the city's domes and terracotta roofs. Look closely and you'll also see the Pantheon rising above the skyline of Centro Storico. A short stroll north of this promenade is the Laghetto Di Borghese lake — rent a boat and row around the faux-classical Temple of Asclepius, hidden among trees on an island.

Elsewhere, the **GALLERIA BORGHESE** is housed in the 17th-century Villa Borghese. It's one of Rome's top galleries, with masterworks that pack a punch. The Bernini room pits the sculptor's extraordinarily lifelike sculptures against a gilded, stuccoed and marbled backdrop. You'll also find works by Caravaggio here, including David with the Head of Goliath. Art aside, the truly lavish setting makes this well worth a visit. [galleriaborghese.beniculturali.it](http://galleriaborghese.beniculturali.it)

If you've ever looked out over Rome from the west side of the Tiber, you'll likely have seen the cream-coloured, castle-like **VILLA MEDICI** dominating the skyline. As the name suggests, the 16th-century villa was built for the Medici family, but these days it's open for

visitors and hosts modern art exhibitions in its beautiful Renaissance gardens. There are exceptional city views from Colbert, an elegant cafe. [villamedici.it](http://villamedici.it) [facebook.com/colbertroma](https://www.facebook.com/colbertroma)

Just outside the park, beside the Villa Medici, is **CAFFE CIAMPINI**, an icon of Roman snacking. A restaurant, pizzeria and gelateria, Ciampini is known for its delicious *tartufo*: a cocoa-rolled chocolate ice cream dessert with a glacé cherry and chocolate chips at its heart. Taste it on the terrace overlooking the dome-filled skyline before taking a walk along the Terrazza del Pincio. [ristoranteciampini.com](http://ristoranteciampini.com)

If you're after more art, you're in luck. The likes of Michelangelo and Giorgio Vasari worked on the **VILLA GIULIA**, which was built on the edge of the city for 16th-century Pope Julius III. It's home to the National Etruscan Museum, and highlights include the Sarcophagus of the Spouses — depicting a married couple reclining together in the afterlife — and the gold Pyrgi Tablets, inscribed in an Etruscan-Phoenician script. [museoetrui.it](http://museoetrui.it) **JB**

## More leafy locations

### VILLA CELIMONTANA

Trajanic-era remains were excavated at this park near the Colosseum, and while some of its treasures have been relocated, 16th-century fountains, a nymphaeum and an Egyptian-style obelisk still adorn the park's grassy banks. [societageografica.net](http://societageografica.net)

### CIMITERO ACATTOLICO

This 16th-century graveyard in Testaccio contains the graves of artists, diplomats and ideologists. It's also the final resting place of Romantic poets John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Underneath its towering cypresses are marvels of masonry, including the Angel of Grief, carved by sculptor William Wetmore Story for his wife's tomb. [cemeteryrome.it](http://cemeteryrome.it)

### ROSETO COMUNALE

Found on the Aventine Hill's eastern slope, this rose garden has long been of botanical importance. A temple dedicated to Flora, goddess of flowers and springtime, stood here in the third century BC; today, it's abloom with more than 1,000 roses from around the world. [comune.roma.it](http://comune.roma.it) **AL**





## Where to drink espresso

### BAR FRATELLI CAPONE

Run by brothers Gigi and Nando, this small bar in Piazza Testaccio is always busy. The gold bags of beans upended in the grinders are pure arabica from one of Rome's oldest roasters, Tintori, and the brothers conjure consistently good espresso from the cafe's well-worn machines. *Piazza Testaccio 30*

### SCIASCIA CAFFÈ

This is a beautiful place for a coffee, low-lit by green-glass lamps under which skilled baristas turn out spot-on, crema-topped espresso (the cup lined with chocolate, if you wish) using their excellent house blend, which is available to buy at the counter. *sciasciacaffe1919.it*

### ROSCIOLI CAFFÈ

Long, narrow and popular with locals and tourists alike, this is the sister bar to the sleek Roscioli deli and kitchen, and down-to-earth Forno bakery. The busy cafe effortlessly blends the best elements of its siblings: serious coffee, whether espresso or cappuccino, and exquisite pastry creations from chef Rodrigo Bernoni. *rosciolicaffe.com*

### SANT'EUSTACHIO IL CAFFÈ

This cafe's 1940s vibe is best admired either early or late in the day when it's quieter (it's open until after midnight). Sugar is added by the barista, so if you prefer yours without, be sure to ask for *amaro* (without sugar). *caffesanteustachio.com*

### CASA MANFREDI

The Torinese coffee empire Lavazza has a new offering: 1895 by Lavazza Coffee Designers, a range of rare blends from small producers supplied to selected bars, including Casa Manfredi. The coffee is exceptional at this luminous bar on a tree-lined street near Palatine Hill, particularly the single-blend. Try it with one of the cafe's fruit-and-custard tarts. *casamanfredi.it*

### MARIGOLD ROMA

Set on a quiet street in the Ostiense district, Marigold is a stylish micro-bakery whose commitment to sourcing the finest produce is reflected in its smooth, rich and fruity house blend from organic farms in Papua New Guinea, Peru, Colombia and Rwanda. *marigoldroma.com* RR ☐

## ESSENTIALS



### Getting there & around

Take the Eurostar to Paris, then the TGV to Milan (the latter takes around seven hours). From there, high-speed Freccia trains get you to Rome in just over three hours. *eurostar.com trenitalia.com* Several airlines fly direct to Rome's main airport, in Fiumicino, including British Airways from Heathrow, EasyJet from Bristol, Gatwick and Manchester, Jet2 from Manchester and Vueling from Gatwick. The city's smaller Ciampino Airport is served by Ryanair from Manchester and Wizz Air from Luton and Stansted. *ba.com easyjet.com jet2.com vueling.com ryanair.com wizzair.com*

Average flight time: 2.5h.

Rome has a decent Metro system but it only skirts the top of the historic centre, which is best explored on foot.

Buses run to neighbourhoods such as Testaccio and Pigneto. Good shoes are recommended, as the city's *sampietrini* cobbles are notoriously hard.

### When to go

With temperatures in the low 20Cs, October in Rome is so special that there's a special name for it: *ottobrata romana*. Mild winters get rain, but a sunny winter's day can still feel like autumn in the UK. Summers are very hot and humid — so try to avoid July and August.

### Where to stay

Mama Shelter, near the Vatican. From €139 (£119). *mamashelter.com*  
The Hoxton, in Parioli. From €149 (£127). *thehoxton.com*  
Hotel Locarno, in the Centro Storico. From €252 (£215). *hotellocarno.com*  
Hotel Vilòn, in Campo Marzio. From €570 (£486, B&B). *hotelvilon.com*

### More info

Rome Tourism. *turismoroma.it*  
*The 500 Hidden Secrets of Rome* (Luster, £14.95)  
SPQR: *A History of Ancient Rome*, by Mary Beard (Profile, £19.99)

### How to do it

MERRION CHARLES has three nights at Hotel Locarno, B&B, plus flights and transfers from £520 per person. *merriioncharles.com*



A barista serves espresso at Sant'Eustachio il Caffè

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# THE FINAL FRONTIER

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS JAMIE LAFFERTY

THE SEVERE, SERRATED NORTH SLOPE OF ALASKA LIES 250 MILES INSIDE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE, FAR BEYOND THE TREELINE AND UNDER 1,400 MILES FROM THE NORTH POLE. RESILIENT INUPIAT COMMUNITIES AREN'T THE ONLY REASON TO VENTURE TO THIS ICY COASTLINE — THE 'ROOFTOP OF AMERICA' IS THE BEST PLACE ON EARTH TO SEE POLAR BEARS IN THE WILD







**T**he poetic collective noun for polar bears is an 'aurora', but around the community of Kaktovik they may be more accurately described as an 'inevitability'. An inevitability of polar bears. Elsewhere in the Arctic, spotting the planet's largest land predator can be a bit of a lottery, requiring binoculars and considerable luck. Here, on Barter Island, off the north coast of Alaska, neither are required.

I'm heading out into a cold Arctic afternoon with Riley Barnes, a New Yorker ordinarily employed as a stuntman on features as varied as *Avengers: Endgame* and *The Marvellous Mrs Maisel*. While between projects, the 27-year-old heard about "wild work" skipping boats and searching for polar bears for Kaktovik Arctic Tours, so decided to swap one uncommon job for another. This meant relocating to the frigid Alaskan coast known as the North Slope.

We're not even 10 minutes out of Kaktovik's rudimentary harbour before we've seen a cautious mother with two young cubs, the larger one at the front, a younger, smaller sibling scurrying behind like it's forgotten its schoolbag. The adult sits down on the brownish sand, immediately sullyng her pristine white coat, then, in a moment of uncanny tenderness, lets the youngsters in to suckle.

An hour later, the gentle perfection of this scene is forgotten when we see two males in the water, grappling with each other with the fury of drunk berserkers. "They're just playing," says Riley, and I believe him, but if this roughhousing happened to almost any other species, there'd be nothing left afterwards but fleshy spaghetti.

Riley says that in the weeks he's been working here, the number of polar bears has varied from day to day, but he's never failed to find at least a few. Their residence here over the summer months is partly due to man: Kaktovik's Native Inupiat population is permitted to kill three bowhead whales a year. Having done this, they then flense their huge carcasses on the edge of town, before distributing the meat equally among the community; what remains — dragged to nearby sandbars — belongs to the bears.

These free meals have attracted *Ursus maritimus* in numbers for generations; so many, in fact, that on the flight here from Fairbanks, in central Alaska, I mistakenly thought I was seeing sheep ambling along the dark shores. With food abundant, the bears appear as placid as specialist serial killers can be, showing little interest in conflict or murder.

For outsiders, including myself, the immersion into Inupiat culture requires rapid adjustment. Take, for example, the

**CLOCKWISE:** Bruce Inglangasak keeps an eye on nearby polar bears while skipping his boat; a typically rudimentary home in Kaktovik, on Barter Island; with webbed paws and insulated fur, polar bears are adept swimmers — their Latin name means 'sea bear'

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** A mother with cub on a barrier island outside Kaktovik





hunting and eating of whales. I want to ask more about that, but it's hard to frame delicate cultural questions when my overriding thought throughout this boat trip is: 'Ooh! Polar bears!'

Bowhead whales are thought to be the longest-lived mammals on Earth, with a lifespan of up to 250 years. Proof of their resilience came in 2007, when a bowhead caught off this same stretch of Alaskan coast was found to have a fragment of a Victorian harpoon embedded in its neck. The skeletons of bowhead whales lying on nearby sandbars like the wreckage of old ships could conceivably belong to equally venerable specimens.

Their slaughter can be a hard thing to consider, let alone witness, but following the ban on commercial hunting of bowhead whales (as distinct from subsistence hunting, which is permitted for Native populations under limited conditions) in the early 1970s, the Western Arctic population is thought to have increased tenfold. Now the whales taken from these waters each year account for no more than 0.5% of the population, making it a sustainable catch. None of this would offer much consolation to the whales, of course, but their demise is at least to the benefit of man and bear alike.

While changing my camera's memory card, I ask Riley if he's tempted to stay for winter. He shakes his head and explains that even in summer this distant outpost feels too isolating. "And it's a dry town," he says, half laughing, although not with his eyes. "I mean no booze at all, man."

I mention that Kaktovik's barren landscape, muddy roads and ramshackle houses aren't what I'd expected from this great wilderness; that somehow it all feels unbecoming of the magnificence of the bears. Yet, here in a town that's recorded winter temperatures of -52C, its perhaps understandable that function must always be prioritised over form by its 250 human residents: aesthetics sacrificed to pragmatism. Or, as Riley puts it: "Pretty is the one thing this town ain't." However, unappealing as it may look, Kaktovik is probably the most reliable place on Earth to see wild polar bears, without the crowds and commercialism of places like Churchill, in Manitoba, Canada.

But when conditions are ideal, even Kaktovik can be beautiful.

## The skipper

The next morning, we enjoy its rarest weather: brilliant sunshine with only hints of cirrus clouds appearing like brush strokes on the firmament. Now the bears take on the hues of dawn — pink, then golden — as they come to the shore, their mighty frames mirrored in the still waters of the High Arctic.

Riley's boss, Bruce Inglangasak, relocated here 20 years ago from Northern Canada,

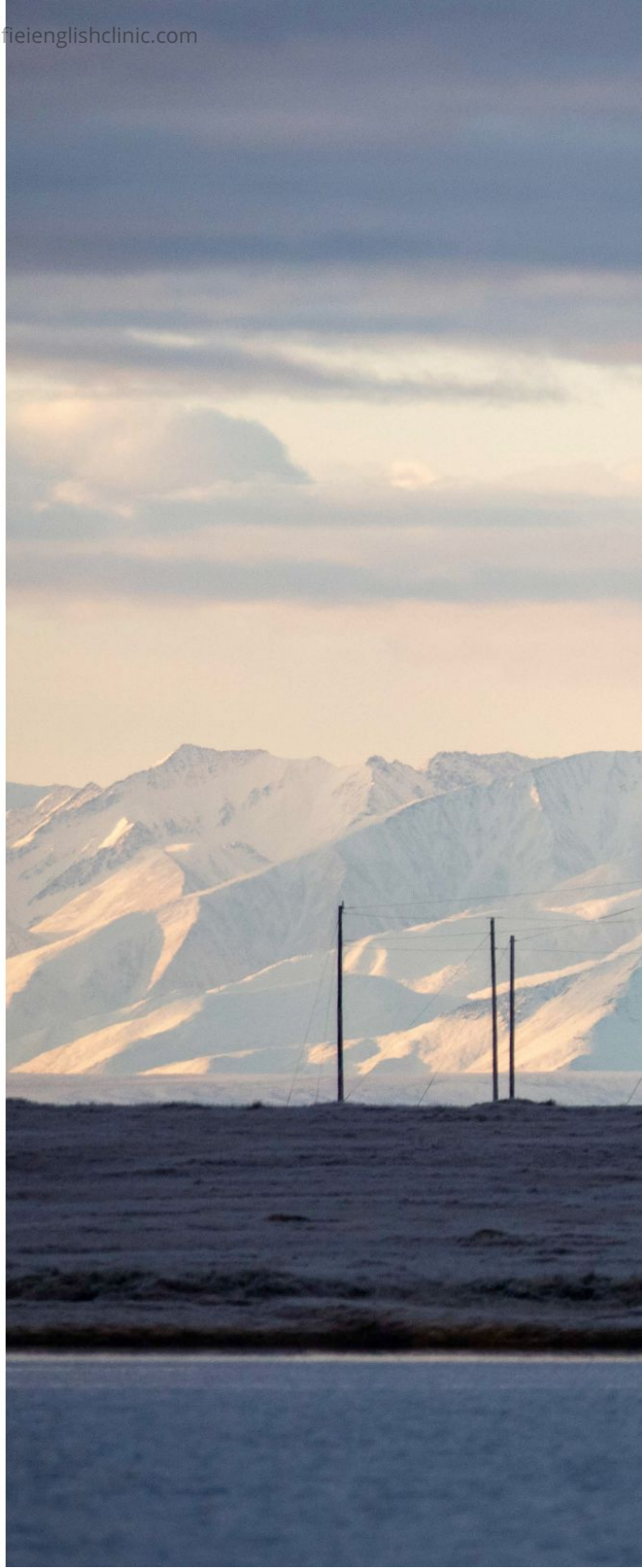





IMAGE: JAMIE LAFÉRTY

A warehouse in Kaktovik with Alaska's Brooks Range in the background 



although in Iñupiat terms, crossing the modern border meant little. The 64-year-old wears an authoritative moustache and an ill-fitting hunter's jacket, and accepts compliments or thanks with an almost imperceptible nod. I can't describe his hair to you because over the three days I'm with him, he's never without a thermal hat. Bruce's hands are large and worn and he knows certain things like the backs of them — things like the safe distance to be from polar bears and when to start the engine should their attention linger on his boat.

A member of the Iñupiat community, his manner is at once terse and illuminating. For example, when I ask whether or not he feels American or even Canadian, he exhales as though doing an impression of a horse before replying: "I feel like an Iñupiat because I lived that life — I still live it today. I hunt and I fish and I support my family."

In the early days of working with the bears, he was asked to help Sir David Attenborough's legendary cold-climate cameraman, Doug Allan, film them for the BBC. "It was fun — when we first started, we used to walk around here with them," says the skipper while we're at anchor just 15 metres or so from a pair of sleeping bears. I give him a hopeful look that asks: 'Could we possibly do that today?' But a small landslide of his eyebrows tells me that, no, we absolutely cannot.

When Bruce speaks, he does so with the slow rhythm of a strolling bear, almost as though he resents having to form the words at all. "There are all kinds of rules and regulations now," he sighs. "I had to take all the training, go through all the paperwork. That took a while."

In 2018, authorities also started insisting that Iñupiat hunters sink any whale remains in the ocean, making it harder for the bears to reach them and discourage their presence. Now he often sees them diving for scraps, their colossal white derrières bobbing on the surface like drifting polystyrene. Centuries of habituation mean they haven't gone elsewhere — yet. In fact, the number of interactions with the townsfolk has risen; bears are frequently found wandering around Kaktovik. As a result, visitors aren't allowed to walk around

at night. Many locals have large, mean-looking dogs, which here, at 70 degrees north, maintain their winter coats and surliness all year long. Many effectively act as bear alarms.

During my time in town, a local shoots a polar bear for allegedly trying to kill his hound. Bruce explains with righteous profanity that he and others in the community think this is an outrage. Nonetheless, it's ruled justified self-defence and the man is only given a warning. It's another one of those moments that underlines just how serrated this edge of America can feel, how to people from the nation's Lower 48 states — or further afield like me — life up here is distant and ultimately unknowable, even when it's right in front of us.

Of course, there's plenty here that does have universal appeal. The North Slope lies 250 miles inside the Arctic Circle, far beyond the treeline and fewer than 1,400 miles from the North Pole. Its latitudes are so extreme that to see it on a map is to wonder if the air is thinner up here. It may not be, but it's often more colourful — Bruce tells me that in the darker months the Northern Lights are spotted so often that he hardly pays attention. The polar night lasts for 66 days and we're so far north that it can snow at any time of the year, including during the 66 summer days when the sun doesn't yield.

No road reaches Kaktovik, leaving it at the mercy of the vagaries of Alaskan light aircraft. Delays and cancellations are frequent, but it's a highly localised service. When it's finally time for me to depart, the pilot realises someone is missing from the passenger list, so one of the workers from the airstrip jumps in a truck, drives to her home and picks her up. When the lady climbs into the plane, she apologises as though she'd momentarily delayed a bus.

Before leaving, Bruce explains that schedules aren't the only thing subject to change round these parts. When he first moved to the area, he counted 90 polar bears at the bone pile, but following a freak storm in 2005, numbers started declining dramatically. "The ice wasn't very thick, we had 100mph winds for a week and, well, this ocean got pretty messed up," he tells me on the final morning. "The next year, we





IMAGES: GETTY, JAMIE LAFERTY

**FROM TOP:** Barter Island, in the Beaufort Sea along Alaska's Arctic coast; polar bear siblings suckle while their mother reclines against driftwood >



# Enjoy ROME

Established in 1992, Enjoy Rome is one of the city's most reputable and prestigious purveyors of guided tours, covering all of her most famous sights and a host of lesser-known treasures as well. Expert guides with years of study and passion for Rome under their belts bring history to life, from the grizzly acts of insane emperors to the unbridled excesses of renaissance-era popes. The company is able to offer its clients privileged access to areas off-limits to mere mortals, including private contemplation inside the Sistine Chapel.



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counted 60 bears. Now I think we're hovering around 40 or 50." I've only half-asked my question as to what might be causing this decline when his answer lands on the deck like a hammer: "Climate change."

Bruce doesn't seem particularly scientific in his approach, but his kind of experience must surely count for something. Having spent two decades observing Kaktovik's sea ice, he's certain that increased winds, warmer temperatures and thinner ice are making things harder for the bears. And in that light, he says, sinking the whale carcasses seems like an especially unnecessary move.

### The edge of America

A 35-minute flight west, Prudhoe Bay is the source of much of the North Slope's traffic, as well as its wealth. It's been that way since the late 1960s, but if Kaktovik ain't pretty, then Prudhoe — North America's largest oil field — is a carbuncle in the permafrost. Sometimes polar bears wander nearby, and I can think of few images more jarring than a modern symbol of nature's fragility coming face to face with this vast gouge of unclean industry, the bears' white fur metaphorically and perhaps even literally spattered with corporations' black oil.

Our plane touches down briefly in Prudhoe Bay, where it's another another

25-minute flight north west to Utqiagvik. Known as Barrow from 1901 until 2016, it's the northernmost city on the mainland of the Americas, making it a tourist attraction in its own right, although the majority of its 4,500 residents (around 60% of whom are Native Alaskan) are involved either directly or indirectly with the oil industry.

I take a walk around town in the Arctic gloaming, willing the sky clear for a chance later to see the aurora borealis. Until then, a low, frigid sun hangs impotently above the horizon, providing enough light to make a pilgrimage to the coast, close to the confluence of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Standing next to a set of whale jawbones, planted in the black sand to make a macabre gate, the air feels insidiously cold. Ahead, the water is remarkably calm, appearing heavy like double cream as it slides off into an infinite mist. I listen intently, trying to catch the report of one of those ancient bowheads, but the only thing I can really hear is my own teeth chattering, so I retreat to the warmth of the Latitude 71 BnB, where generous owners Myron and Susan McCumber revive me with a mug of hot chocolate.

The following morning, I head to the excellent Inupiat Heritage Center, a cultural museum and learning hub festooned with native artifacts and lore. In here, close to the

I can think of few images more jarring than a modern symbol of nature's fragility coming face-to-face with this vast gouge of unclean industry, the bears' white fur metaphorically and perhaps even literally spattered with corporations' black oil

**ABOVE:** Polar bear walking past a pile of bowhead whale bones from the local hunt in Kaktovik





whaling exhibit, I meet guide Dorothy Levitt. “It should be snowing by now,” she says, glancing out of the window grimly. “Instead, we’ve got all this rain. That’s affected our hunting season — there’s less traffic on the tundra because it’s so wet.”

Dorothy is quick to acknowledge that the oil industry has altered the way of life up here, but she believes climate change will have an even bigger impact. She’s spent her whole life in the northernmost reaches of the 49th state and explains that despite the challenges, there’s no shortage of people willing to come up when accommodation is available. Whether they can endure it or not is another thing.

“We’ve had teachers arrive in August, go into a sort of culture shock and get on the next plane back south,” Dorothy says, smiling. “Lots don’t last until Christmas, but it really depends on how you react to the environment.”

How about the darkness? I’m Scottish and, even at those comparatively generous latitudes, coping with parsimonious winter daylight is a challenge for most, and impossible for some. “I don’t think the darkness really bothers us too much here because we grew up with it,” says Dorothy with a dismissive wave of her hand. “We tell our new friends: don’t think about the remoteness too much, and don’t seclude yourself. You gotta stay involved.”

This applies to the whaling celebrations, too. Dorothy is Inupiat but she also has some Scottish and English heritage. Both sets of forebears were lured here by commercial

whaling in the early 1900s, and while the limited hunting that takes place today serves a different purpose, it does still happen — to considerable fanfare — every spring and autumn. Summers are reserved for hunting walrus and seals.

I’ve never previously heard of people eating walrus: an animal with a hide so thick as to be almost polar bear-proof. How does it taste? At this question Dorothy wrinkles her nose: “Well, OK if you boil it for long enough.”

The Heritage Center has detailed exhibits looking at the minutiae of what it all means spiritually and economically to the Inupiat. In another room, Native Alaskans make handicrafts and scrimshaw from walrus tusks. Outside, lengths of baleen call to mind pampas grass as they flutter in the Alaskan breeze. All the remnants of these great creatures would seem more gruesome to me if they weren’t being put to use, weren’t so vital to the Inupiat.

“When the spring whale is caught, we have a big celebration, including the blanket toss,” continues Dorothy as we start to say goodbye. I’d heard this custom was originally devised to help spot whales in the distance (with no significant hills around, a scout would be launched into the sky, a few feet of additional height improving their vantage point). Dorothy starts laughing before I’ve finished asking her if this is true. “I dunno about that,” she chuckles. “I think somebody was pulling your leg — that bit is really just for fun.” ☐

**LEFT:** A set of whale jawbones, planted in the sand to make a macabre gate in the community of Utqiagvik

## ESSENTIALS



### Getting there & around

British Airways and its partner airlines, American Airlines and Alaska Airlines, offer the most efficient route to Fairbanks, with a single stop in Seattle. [ba.com](http://ba.com) [aa.com](http://aa.com) [alaskaair.com](http://alaskaair.com)  
Average flight time: 15.5h.  
From Fairbanks, local tour operators organise charters to the North Slope. These light aircraft face weather-related delays so flexibility is built into itineraries.

### When to go

It’s best to visit between May and September, which sees highs of 8C and lows of -9C. Outside of this, flights become less certain and the weather colder (dipping below -20C from December to March). However, leaving it later increases the chances of seeing the Northern Lights. By winter, most of the bears will be out on the sea ice.

### Where to stay

Latitude 71 BnB, Utqiagvik. From £303 per night. [latitude71bnb.com](http://latitude71bnb.com)  
Marsh Creek Inn, Kaktovik. Price on request. [marshcreekinnak.com](http://marshcreekinnak.com)  
Pike’s Waterfront Lodge, Fairbanks. From £77. [pikeslodge.com](http://pikeslodge.com)

### More info

Kaktovik Arctic Tours. [kaktovikarcticstours.com](http://kaktovikarcticstours.com)  
Inupiat Heritage Center. [nps.gov/inup/index.htm](http://nps.gov/inup/index.htm)  
Explore Fairbanks. [explorefairbanks.com](http://explorefairbanks.com)

### How to do it

**GONDWANA ECO TOURS** has seven days at the North Slope, booked by nights in Fairbanks, from £6,100 per person based on two people sharing. Includes accommodation, meals, transfers, internal flights and polar bear guides in Kaktovik. Excludes international flights. [gondwanaecotours.com](http://gondwanaecotours.com)

# Gyeongsangbuk-do Korea's historic hamlets

Shrouded in tranquillity and tradition, South Korea's UNESCO-listed villages soak up the rustic rhythms of country life and offer a glimpse into the past

South Korea may be among the most modern places on earth, yet it keeps one foot firmly in the past with its traditional villages. Hahoe and Yangdong, situated in Gyeongsangbuk-do, are two of the best-preserved historic hamlets, both granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 2010. Experiencing them is like stepping back in time with their cornucopia of Joseon-era folk traditions, time-honoured rituals, and works of art.

## HAHOE FOLK VILLAGE, ANDONG

Bordered by hills and a great S-shaped bend in the Nakdong River, Hahoe Folk Village is arguably the country's most famous — so much so that the Queen stopped by the UNESCO-listed settlement for a visit in 1999. The village's most famous resident comes in the form of a 600-year-old zelkova tree called Samsindang. This great arbour towers over the village like a guardian, and — true to Hahoe's shamanistic roots — is said to be home to the goddess Samsin.

But Hahoe is not just a museum piece. This is a place where history comes to life through local celebrations and performances. Seonyu Julbul Nori is a biannual festival where visitors can marvel at a fireworks display over the languid flow of the Nakdong River, while Byeolsingut Tal Nori is a ribald mask drama that's a thrilling mixture of ritual, opera and pantomime.

## YANGDONG FOLK VILLAGE, GYEONGJU

With more than 160 homes spread out among the rises and valleys, UNESCO-listed Yangdong Folk Village is the largest Joseon-era village in the country. Here, visitors can experience all the components synonymous with a traditional Korean clan village including a *jeongsa* (study hall), a *jeongja* (pavilion), a *seowon* (Confucian academy), and a *seodang* (village school), as well as many spiritual heritages, including plays, artworks, and rituals.

Like most Korean villages, Yangdong was designed and built to exist in harmony with its environment, which consists of a river in front of the village and a mountain behind. Yangdong, which is nestled against the dramatic backdrop of Mount Seolchangsang and surrounded by arable fields, keeps optimally cool during Korea's sultry summers and cosy come the harsh winters.

*British Airways offers regular non-stop flights to Seoul's Incheon Airport. From there, transfers to both villages are within easy driving or bus distance.*



# BETWEEN HEAVEN

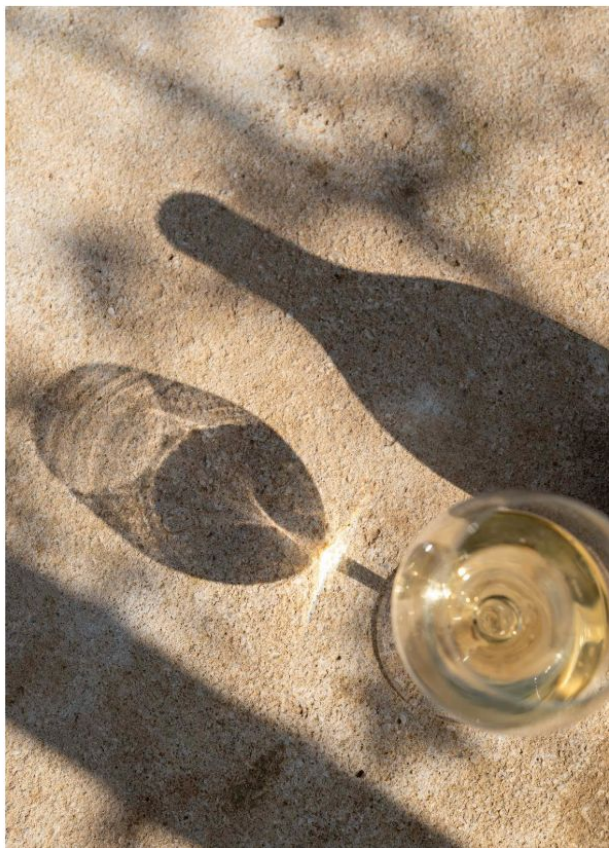
# & EARTH

**Pilgrims and Parisians alike know the treasures of Burgundy, whose gleaming ecclesiastical architecture, family-run chateaux hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants punctuate a patchwork of world-class vineyards south east of the French capital. While many travellers solely focus on the Côte d'Or wineries, a leisurely road trip along the Route Nationale 6 reveals the sensory — and spiritual — draws of the wider region**

WORDS NINA CAPLAN PHOTOGRAPHS SLAWEK KOZDRAS







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Head chef Louis-Philippe Vigilant, of Dijon's Loiseau de Ducs restaurant, with a crab amuse-bouche; view from the Philippe le Bon Tower, Dijon; the vineyard at Château de Saint-Aubin; wine-tasting in the cellar of Château de Saint-Aubin  
**PREVIOUS PAGE:** The vineyard at Château de Pommard, bought by a US entrepreneur in 2014 and set to welcome guests with 28 new suites in 2023

## VISITING BURGUNDY'S CÔTE D'OR, THE 'GOLDEN SLOPE' OF LEGENDARY VINEYARDS, IS EASY.

Dijon, the city at the heart of the area, is just 90 minutes by train from Paris. Maybe that's why so few wine-lovers choose to drive down from the capital. Which is a shame, because Burgundy, with all its scenic, sensory charms begins a long way north of that celebrated ridge — and the road is paved with stories.

The monks who first tended Burgundy's vines were focused not on the pleasures of the table but on the immortality of the soul. But if sacramental wine was to become the blood of Christ during mass, why not make it transcendently delicious? Up until Catholic property was seized during the 1789 French Revolution, the landscape was moulded in the image of the church; graceful chapels, magnificent altarpieces and well-marked pilgrimage routes still characterise the region. But later, in the 20th century, a different kind of pilgrimage became popular: moneyed Parisians drove south, along the Route Nationale 6, in search of sunshine. Their desire to eat and sleep well on the way was eagerly seized on by Michelin, the tyre-seller-cum-guidebook-creator, whose restaurant guide would become the arbiter of gastronomic excellence.

I'm as guilty as the next modern-day wine-lover: for years, I've focused my Burgundy visits only on the famous stretch below Dijon, where vines unfurl up the hillsides as if they, like those long-dead abbots, hoped to reach Heaven. This time is different. I'm not a believer, nor tempted by monastic life, but I do admire dedication, be that to

Burgundy's famously challenging, varied soils or to higher things. And I suspect that to really appreciate the region's wines, I need to emulate the monks — and the early road-trippers, too. It's time to take things slow. To savour Burgundy's twin preoccupations, writ large across the land: dinner and eternal life.

Just two hours south of Paris, I reach northern Burgundy and an area named for the river I'm seeking: the Yonne. Locally, the Yonne is famous for cherries — the darkest, sweetest ones I've ever tasted. They appear in May, are briefly everywhere — grocery stores, markets, roadside stalls — then disappear, like spring itself. But the wider world knows this region better for Chablis, a very particular austere, flinty yet delicious style of Chardonnay that goes beautifully with oysters, among other things. At dinner in La Côte Saint Jacques & Spa (a Relais & Châteaux hotel in the small town of Joigny that the Lorain family have run since 1945), sommelier Thomas Noble serves a 2018 Chablis by a small producer, Thomas Pico, of Domaine Pattes Loup. Like many in Burgundy, Thomas has abandoned the easy route of spraying chemicals, he tells me, despite the work and risk that organic agriculture involves due to the inconstant northern temperatures. The result is a wine that tastes of lemon and cream, like syllabub without the sweetness, and is an unlikely but perfect match for the richness of the foie gras placed in front of me.

Pleasures of the flesh may take precedence, here, over the spirit, but religion still manages

to insinuate itself. I arrived late for dinner, not because I've adopted a leisurely pace of travel but because my GPS misdirects me away from the river — where the hotel stands on one bank, with a helipad on the other — and up the vine-covered hill beyond. This, too, is the Côte Saint Jacques: the hotel was named for the slope, christened long ago by local monks for Saint James, the apostle in whose honour pilgrims walk to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, sometimes passing this way.

Later in the bar, dessert still lingering on my tongue, I pull down from a shelf a copy of the 1986 Gault & Millau guide and open it to the restaurant's entry: 35 years ago, Michel Lorain is congratulated on having lured his son, Jean-Michel, into the family business, and is feted as one of France's four top chefs of the year. Today, Jean-Michel is himself in the process of passing the reins — in this case, to a talented nephew, Alexandre Bondoux. We chat briefly before dinner but he's subdued: Michel died, aged 87, this summer. "He still had all his faculties and never stopped coming into the kitchen every day, to check that everything was being done right," Magali Rostan, the property's marketing manager, says sombrely. Jean-Michel, too, still comes in daily. This place, like the vineyards, is a life's work — and more: a gift from parents to children, each generation's role that of caretaker. Despite his sadness, Jean-Michel makes clear that he's happy to be here, honouring his father's legacy. And when, next day, I tell





**LEFT:** Amuse-bouches at La Côte Saint Jacques & Spa, a hotel and two-Michelin-star restaurant in Joigny  
**RIGHT:** Les Halles Market in Dijon, designed by Gustave Eiffel in the 19th century

him how much I enjoyed my dinner, his face lights up.

The Route Nationale 6 runs past the door — in fact, the Lorain family have built a passage beneath it, so their guests can enter the small town of Joigny more easily by foot — but many people pause here for wonderful food and accommodation, then simply speed on. In keeping with my slow mission, I stroll into the nearby Saint-André Church, with its medieval Pietà, Mary awkwardly clutching a crucified son twice her size. Leaving, I stumble almost immediately on another church, through an archway hewn, like the building beyond, from the region's distinctive grey-white stone.

I marvel at the precision and detail of St-Jean de Joigny, set high on a hill with superb views down to the river, built long before machinery made things simpler. Inside, the ceiling is intricately carved and there's an extraordinary, 16th-century marble sepulchre, seven life-size figures gathered in mourning around the dead Christ. More remarkable is the fact that my 10-minute walk back to the hotel passes another church, this one in the Place du Pilori, where guilty townfolk were once placed in the stocks to be pelted by their righteous neighbours. It's a reminder that many aspects of the present are an improvement on the past.

But no medieval peasant here, even if surrounded by churches, could have doubted the importance of Auxerre, just 20 miles away: the pale might of Saint-Étienne

Cathedral rises dramatically above the clustered houses and flat, green fields. It would've been the largest building most of them ever saw, and its grandeur, as I cross the Yonne into the city, is still breathtaking. I stroll around, admiring stained-glass windows (some dating back to the 13th century) and a marble Joan of Arc, pious on her knees — apparently, she took a break from battling the English to pray here in 1429.

Really, I think, running my finger discreetly down the cathedral's white stone, it all comes back to land. That's what Joan was fighting for; that's what the monks devoted themselves to, learning the differences between each tiny plot and nurturing the vines accordingly. (In fact, there's a local story that says they used to lick the soil to understand the difference in flavours in this, the world's most piecemeal wine region.) I realise this very earth is what these buildings are hewn from, too: this *calcaire d'Auxerre* rock is the same limestone found in the soil, all that remains of an ancient sea. As I drive on, the villages with their pale stones glow like ghosts in the gloaming.

#### ACQUIRED TASTES

These vines predate the monasteries — in fact, they probably predate Christianity, since some were already being regulated on the orders of the Roman emperors in the first century AD. But it was much later, when a monastery was built and the pious began donating vineyards to ensure their place in heaven, that the town

of Chablis and its surrounding lands became synonymous with great white wine.

With its wide streets and small shops, Chablis is very pretty, but after the glare of sunshine on all those pale buildings, it's a relief to step inside Baptiste Bienvenu's cool, modern tasting rooms, Caves Bienvenu. I try a few wines, buy more than I can afford, then settle at a high table with a glass of Pinot Noir from nearby Irancy, Baptiste's home village, and a heaped plate of excellent charcuterie.

But it's later in Dijon — once the capital of a duchy that was not only separate from France but arguably more powerful — that Burgundy's two great themes of spirituality and gastronomy truly present themselves. Here, too, there's a vast cathedral, while in the sprawling ducal palace, the Musée des Beaux-Arts holds relics, giant altarpieces and the delicately sculpted marble tombs of two long-dead noblemen, their effigies' hands folded in prayer. Then there are the medieval, porcelain eating implements and a silver-and-wood cup said to have been used by Saint Bernard. I pause to think of the monks sitting down in their refectory after a hard day's pruning and praying, and lifting a cup of wine to their lips with exactly the same sensation of anticipation we feel today.

With its roofs a festival of brightly coloured tiles, and food stalls spilling out onto the surrounding cobblestones from its vast covered food market, Dijon is a city of strong hues and flavours.



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Les Cailloux





**I STROLL AROUND AUXERRE, ADMIRING STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS DATING BACK TO THE 13TH CENTURY AND A MARBLE JOAN OF ARC, PIOUS ON HER KNEES — APPARENTLY, SHE TOOK A BREAK FROM BATTLING THE ENGLISH TO PRAY HERE IN 1429**





The buildings of Rue Vauban, in the heart of Dijon, reflected in a glass of Burgundian wine at Loiseau de Ducs  
**LEFT:** Timber-frame houses in Auxerre, a historic city straddling the Yonne River



And at Loiseau des Ducs — a restaurant housed within the graceful arches of a 16th-century mansion that was launched in 2014 by the formidable widow of legendary chef Bernard Loiseau — both are on the plate.

Loiseau was the other Burgundian in that quartet of top-rated chefs in the 1986 Gault & Millau guide, but his story didn't end as well as Michel Lorain's. Having achieved three Michelin stars for his restaurant, La Côte d'Or, in Saulieu, and international fame, he took his own life in 2003, supposedly out of anxiety surrounding rumours of a downgrade by the Michelin inspectors. His wife, Dominique, took the reins and ensured the restaurant businesses survived, her children joining her as they grew old enough, meaning the Bernard Loiseau portfolio of eateries is now also a cross-generational enterprise.

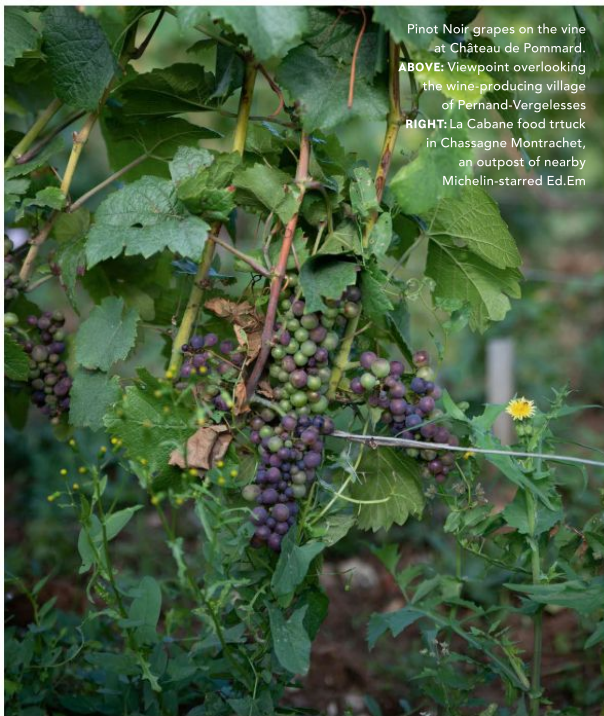
The wonderfully named chef here, Louis-Philippe Vigilant, has earned a Michelin star for his work at Loiseau des Ducs restaurant but arguably deserves more: the food is delicately inventive without being fussy, and very French. I nibble on roasted frogs' legs and allow a nugget of veal from Limousin, a region famous for its meat, to melt on my tongue, followed by a mouthful of Mercuray Pinot Noir. The cheese trolley is so copiously stocked it could keep a gourmet busy for a month. Director Emmanuel Dumont bewails declining standards to me: "It's so hard now to find young people who want to work!" But that's a cry that's older than winemaking. In the attention to detail and the long view of a family business, Bernard's dedication lives on.

**THE GOLDEN SLOPE**

And so at last, my leisurely pilgrimage brings me to the Côte d'Or proper. I feel that I now have an altered perspective on it, as I contrast the gentle tilt of these south- and southeast-facing vineyards; trees clustering on hilltops like modish headwear, with the cooler, lusher, northern landscape in my recent memory.

Change happens slowly here, if at all. The purchase of the 18th-century Château de Pommard, with its 50-acre single plot (unusually large for this region), by US tech entrepreneur Michael Baum in 2014, caused a stir. And certainly, Baum is changing things: the courtyard is a morass of mud and noise as workmen convert the outbuildings to a 28-suite luxury hotel, set to open in 2023. I imagine some neighbours are horrified: in Saint-Aubin, further south, where a derelict château has been lovingly refurbished as the Prosper Maufoux winery and a luxurious four-bedroom bed and breakfast, the locals were apparently unimpressed by the opportunities that this change to their sleepy wine village — which lacks even a bakery — would bring.

Pommard wasn't a monastic property; it was built in the 18th century by a secretary to Louis XV, and the vineyard beneath the



Pinot Noir grapes on the vine at Château de Pommard. ABOVE: Viewpoint overlooking the wine-producing village of Pernand-Vergelesses RIGHT: La Cabane food truck in Chassagne Montrachet, an outpost of nearby Michelin-starred Ed.Em





tasting room, Micault, is still named for him. I feel the centuries flow into my glass along with the excellent wine. Baum, who admits he “grew up on beer and cheesesteaks” is bringing a US expansiveness to these enclosed vineyards — most Burgundian wineries don’t welcome visitors without appointments, let alone partner with a ballooning company like France Montgolfières so that you can learn about the vineyards while floating quietly above them: an angel’s-eye view.

When it’s finished, Baum’s hotel will be a very modern proposition compared to the Château de Saint-Aubin, a building that offers the sort of intimate, rural luxury that the French do so well. At the latter, hostess Pascale Rifaux shows me to my sumptuous bedroom and together we look out over the Saint-Aubin vines. “Premier Cru near the house, ordinary Villages beyond — the classifications are so much easier to explain when they’re right in front of you,” she says, handing me the keys to the swimming pool that sits between chateau and vineyard with a conspiratorial wink. The next morning, she goes early to market for my breakfast bread and croissants; by the time I leave, Pascale seems more like a friend putting me up for the weekend — albeit in luxury.

Chatting to Pascale, as she opens wines for me to taste, I realise I’ve failed to consider something important in my odyssey across

Burgundy: its ordinary people. The region was never just the domain of monks, dukes and saints, as large and immortal as their stories have become. The heady tapestry of vines and churches braided across the fertile region always stood to elevate the general population, too — and, it seems, the travellers who pass through it. As I sip heavenly wine wrought from this earth, and note the passing of time by the bell clanging in Saint-Aubin’s tiny, 10th-century church, I feel that thanks are due to the land’s custodians — and perhaps a higher power.

However, it’s in the neighbouring village, Chassagne-Montrachet, that I have a true epiphany. La Cabane is a cabin attached to what the French call ‘un food truck’, created by the owners of Michelin-starred Ed.Em. Here, I drink Saint-Aubin Premier Cru with a bowl of buttery snails, washing that down with a goblet of Chassagne-Montrachet paired with a plate of local pigeon. I wonder if there can be anything more miraculous than tasting a great wine in its birthplace, accompanied by a bird that likely fed on the very same grapes. I’ve journeyed from Saint Jacques to Saint-Aubin, and if neither martyr would’ve approved of my focus on temporal pleasures, they at least would have agreed that these wines were a link between heaven and earth, for pilgrims of all kinds. □

ILLUSTRATION: JOHN PLUMER

## ESSENTIALS



### Getting there & around

Eurostar runs multiple daily services from London St Pancras to Paris Gare du Nord, with a typical journey of 2hr16m. [eurostar.com](http://eurostar.com)

Alternatively, EasyJet flies to Dijon from Gatwick, Luton or Manchester; British Airways from Heathrow, and Air France from Heathrow and Manchester. [easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com) [ba.com](http://ba.com) [airfrance.com](http://airfrance.com)

Average flight time: 1h20m.

In Paris, Hertz rents cars from just beside the Gare du Nord or from either airport, with the option to return in Dijon. [hertz.co.uk](http://hertz.co.uk)

### When to go

Spring has average temperatures of 20C, while autumn offers the sights and flavours of the harvest. Summer temperatures can top 30C, while winters are cold and cloudy.

### Where to stay

La Côte Saint Jacques & Spa, Joigny. Doubles from £275, B&B.

[cotesaintjacques.com](http://cotesaintjacques.com)  
Grand Hôtel La Cloche, Dijon. From £150, room only. [hotel-lacloche.fr](http://hotel-lacloche.fr)  
Château de Saint-Aubin, Saint-Aubin. From £214, B&B. [chateau-st-aubin.com](http://chateau-st-aubin.com)

### Places mentioned

Caves Bienvenu. [caves-bienvenu.fr](http://caves-bienvenu.fr)  
Château de Pommard. [chateaudepommard.com](http://chateaudepommard.com)  
France Montgolfières hot air ballooning. [franceballoons.com](http://franceballoons.com)  
Loiseau des Ducs. [bernard-loiseau.com](http://bernard-loiseau.com)  
La Cabane. [restaurant-edem.com/fr/la-cabane.html](http://restaurant-edem.com/fr/la-cabane.html)

### More info

Burgundy Tourism, [burgundy-tourism.com](http://burgundy-tourism.com)

### How to do it

BOURGOGNE GOLD TOUR offers bespoke day tours of either Chablis and Grand Auxerrois or the Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune from £420 per person (minimum two people), including private vehicle and driver, wine-tastings and bilingual guide. [bourgogne-gold-tour.com](http://bourgogne-gold-tour.com)



## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

# The inside guide

From the pulsing beat of capital Nairobi to the gentle lapping shores of lakeside Kisumu, we take a dive into two of Kenya's cities



### NAIROBI

#### THE DYNAMIC EAST AFRICAN CAPITAL

With a bustling, modern centre, Kenya's capital, Nairobi, is far more than just a springboard bouncing adventurers into East Africa's safari heartlands. It's a multi-faceted city, strong on culture, commerce and even wildlife-watching. Its streets can be frenetic, with hawkers dodging traffic jams and *matatus* (minibuses) hurtling along and stereos blaring, but its ample green spaces ensure there's tranquility to be found. Unusually for a fast-growing capital,

wilderness is on the doorstep: land at Jomo Kenyatta International or Wilson Airport in the morning and you can be in lion country for lunch. Nairobi National Park, a generous stretch of greenbelt with genuine conservation clout, lies immediately south of the city — there are several hotels and lodges on the periphery of the national park. The park protects four of the Big Five, including rhinos, lions, leopards and buffaloes; for the fifth, head to the adjoining Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, which cares for orphaned elephants. Nairobi's other leading wildlife sanctuary, The Giraffe Centre in Langata, has Rothschild giraffes, who famously like to pop their heads in for breakfast at Giraffe Manor, the upmarket hotel next door.

Nairobi buzzes with commercial activity, with streetfood connoisseurs snapping up fresh fruit, grilled maize, chapatis and *mutura* (spicy sausage), bargain hunters sifting through secondhand clothing in Gikomba Market and souvenir shoppers hagglng over baskets and bangles in the

Maasai Markets. Social enterprises and craft co-operatives operate open workshops and showrooms: at Kazuri Beads, ceramicists craft glossy beads, while Kitengela Hot Glass upcycles bottles into ornaments. Ocean Sole turns flip-flops into bright sculptures and Spinners Web has pieces from weavers, stitchers and local food and coffee producers.

The cosmopolitan restaurant scene includes Carnivore, where hungry diners enjoy dawa cocktails and barbecued meat including crocodile and ostrich (farmed, for conservation reasons). Vegetarians and vegans can browse the sustainable menu at Boho Eatery in the leafy suburb of Karen, or at one of the city's many excellent Indian restaurants such as Chowpaty in Westlands, home to the UN's African headquarters.

*Nairobi has many vehicle rental companies, taxis, Ubers and buses. Cash-strapped locals often hail matatus. Rush hour can be chaotic, so plan accordingly. To explore Nairobi National Park, you ideally need a 4WD.*

**Nairobi National Park, immediately south of the city, protects four of the Big Five: rhinos, lions, leopards and buffaloes**

## KISUMU

### KENYA'S LAKESIDE CITY

Once just a trading post and fishing village on Lake Victoria's northeastern shore, Kisumu is now Kenya's third-largest city. Despite its prodigious population growth, however, it's far smaller and airier than Nairobi and Mombasa, with a calm, up-country feel.

That's not to say Kisumu is sleepy; thanks to recent waves of investment, boosted by preparations for the ninth UCLG Africa Africities Summit, which it will host, there's a spring in the city's step. Billions of Kenyan shillings have been spent on renewing its ferry dock, fishing port, airport and Nakuru-Kisumu railway, and new tree-shaded pavements with solar-powered lighting have made the commercial centre greener and more pedestrian-friendly.

To learn about local heritage, head for the city-centre Kisumu Museum, which celebrates Luo customs through a collection of tribal artefacts, a full-scale model village, drumming and dance. For a slice of contemporary life, walk around the daily Jubilee Market, the best in the region, with vendors selling everything from dried Lake Victoria tilapia, neatly stacked tomatoes and giant watermelons to kettles, textiles and wigs. Kisumu also has a Maasai Market similar to but generally cheaper than Nairobi's, with souvenirs such as clothing, beads and soapstone carvings.

When you're ready to refuel, grab some finger food from The Backyard Patio on Ogada Street, or order something from the grill at Lolwe Lounge, a stylish new garden bar that catches the lake breeze — a boon on the city's hottest days.

Kisumu's revamped port serves commercial shipping rather than travellers, but there are great views of Winam Gulf — the extension of Lake Victoria on which the city stands — from Hippo Point, southwest of town. Nearby restaurant Le Pearl offers fried fish, *ugali* (a starchy porridge) and cool Tusker beers, with golden sunsets thrown in.

To see more of Africa's largest freshwater lake and fringes, seek out the community-run Dunga Beach Ecotourism project, which offers birdwatching, boat trips and homestays in a Luo fishing village. Alternatively, book a stay at an island eco-lodge or campsite. Ndere Island appeals to birdwatchers, while Mfangano has fig trees, boulders and Batwa rock art.

Heading inland, you'll soon find yourself immersed in West Kenya, homeland of Barack Obama Sr, father of the former US president. It's an appealingly rural region, scattered with ultra-lush smallholdings and precious pockets of equatorial trees such as Kakamega Forest.

*Locals who don't have their own transport get around town by boda boda (bicycle or motorbike taxi), tuk-tuk (auto rickshaw) or matatu. You can charter a motorboat to Ndere Island from Hippo Point in Kisumu. Mfangano Island can be reached by matatu and motorboat via the lakeshore hamlet of Mbita. Kenya has now been added to the UK's Rest of the World category.*

**LEFT:** Rhino in front of the city of Nairobi, Nairobi National Park  
**RIGHT FROM TOP:** Fishing boat sailing in Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake by area; Dunga fishing village near Kisumu; eating a fruit salad in Nairobi



READ MORE AT  
[MAGICKKENYA.COM](https://www.magickkenya.com)



# TAJIKISTAN

In the heart of Central Asia lie the Pamir Mountains — some of the world's highest peaks, where the air is thin and twisting mountain roads are dwarfed by the vastness of the lunar-like landscape. And while the dramatic topography poses unique challenges to daily life, new initiatives have helped to bring fresh opportunities to some of Tajikistan's remotest communities

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS  
**CHRISTOPHER WILTON-STEER**










Many semi-nomadic people from neighbouring Kyrgyzstan cross the border to trade with the Tajiks. In the eastern town of Murghab, on the fringe of Tajik National Park, women produce handicrafts that are then sold on with support from the not-for-profit Aga Khan Foundation — valuable income in a region with limited economic opportunities and challenging geography. Amid harsh conditions, where winter temperatures are known to plummet to  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ , only the hardiest of animals, like yaks, can survive. The similarly robust Marco Polo sheep, named after the 13th-century explorer who detailed them in his stories, also roam the peaks.









In the stark, yawning landscapes of the country's far east, the Aksu River has become a reservoir. The waterway is used to power a hydro-electric station, which lies just out of shot, in the furrows of a valley. Nearby Murghab was without electricity until the station opened in 2018, and the township now runs on a reliably clean and affordable source of energy.









The dusty Pamir Highway twists through rugged terrain and is one of the world's highest, wildest and remotest roads. To make a living on its slopes, many women harvest cashgora wool from local breeds of goat. It's then gathered into yarns and exported, or used locally in the production of fabrics and handicrafts. Traditional Tajik clothing offers a splash of colour in a landscape of muted browns and greys, and many locals don their finest garb for special occasions — in this case, the opening of a new tourism centre in the Pamir Mountains.











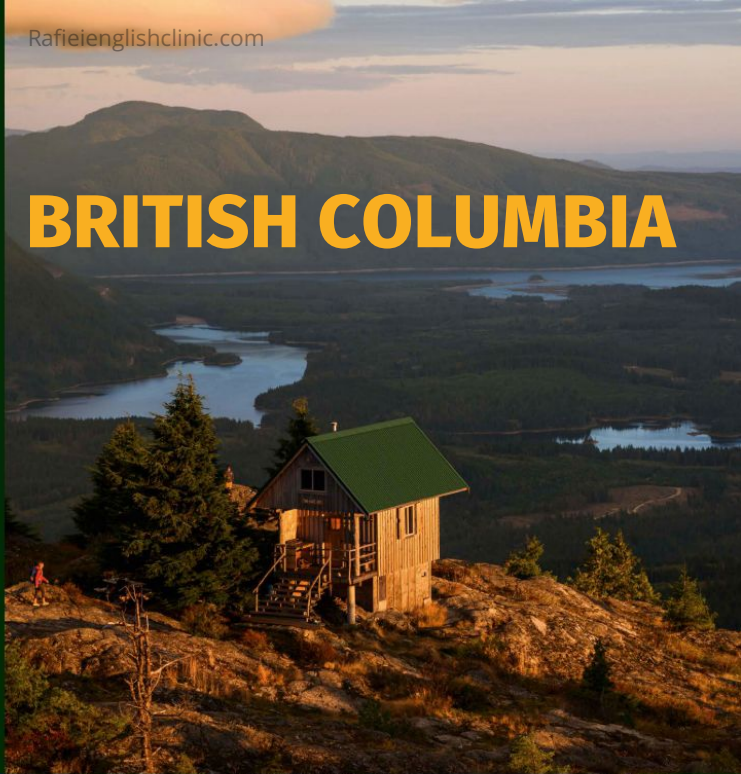
One of the main towns in eastern Tajikistan, Khorugh is home to the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre (above), a place of worship and social gathering for the predominantly Ismaili Muslim population. The University of Central Asia (below), meanwhile, was co-established by the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in 2017 to provide high-quality education to the region's remote mountainous communities. ▣



# EXPLORING BRITISH COLUMBIA

Whether it's getting to know the coastal, cosmopolitan city of Vancouver or whiling away time in a rejuvenating hot spring in the Rockies, there's plenty to experience in British Columbia.

British Columbia is big, beautiful and vast. At 365,000sq miles, Canada's westernmost province is almost four times the size of Great Britain, and abounds with blockbuster landscapes — think ancient forests, glistening lakes and hulking mountain peaks. But planning the ultimate road trip can be daunting, so where do you start?



Turn to travel experts Trailfinders for adventure-packed, fly-drive itineraries that encapsulate the very best of this exciting province. Find out more at [trailfinders.com](https://www.trailfinders.com)

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CANADA



TRANSFORMATIVE TRAVEL

# The wild is calling in British Columbia

Heading into the wild comes naturally in the vast Canadian province of British Columbia, with its big open spaces, fresh, clean air and ability to offer transformative travel from the outside in

## ON THE WATER

Home to hundreds of rivers, lakes, fjords, hot springs and over 15,000 miles of coastline, you're never far from a water-based adventure in Canada's westernmost province. Head out into Howe Sound on a paddleboard and listen to the soothing sounds of your oar slicing through the water as you tune in to the nature that surrounds you in British Columbia. Pods of orcas, sometimes 50-strong, may be just some of the wildlife you see. Few experiences underline the majesty of Mother Nature more than a plume of spray erupting beside your boat, followed by a dorsal fin, tail fluke, or if you're lucky, a full breach — a beautiful, 10-ton beast leaping from the water. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Clayoquot Sound, on Vancouver Island's western coast, is home to more than 300 marine species, from whales to seals, otters and puffins. Further south, in the city of Victoria, is Ogden Point, an underwater playground ideal for scuba diving and snorkelling among giant king crabs, octopus and shoals of herring. Being fully immersed in this underwater world gives the body space to reconnect with its surroundings and the mind room to calm amid the gentle sounds.





Canadian Rockies mountain range  
**FROM LEFT:** Howe Sound; Kermode  
 (spirit) bear in the Great Bear Rainforest

#### GO ONLINE

for more stories about  
 the healing power of  
 British Columbia  
[nationalgeographic.  
 co.uk/call-the-wild](http://nationalgeographic.co.uk/call-the-wild)



#### DEEP IN THE RAINFOREST

British Columbia's temperate rainforest is one of the world's rarest ecosystems. As you walk past ancient Douglas-firs, consider the comforting thought that, here, nature truly flourishes. This is a province leading the way when it comes to sustainability, so follow the locals' lead and explore by foot or on an electric bike, stay in eco-lodges or join educational hiking trips. BC's pristine natural habitat is a haven for wildlife: black bears and grizzlies wade through icy rivers for spawning salmon; bald eagles scan the forest floor for marmots; and black-tailed deer shelter under the shade of giant hemlocks. Experience the deepest, wildest corners of BC's forests on a multi-day West Coast Trail hike. Or for a slower pace, local guides lead forest bathing experiences in places like the Sunshine Coast. Stretching out on soft green moss below the canopy, you'll feel a calm wash over you as you learn to take in the environment through all your senses. Close your eyes, inhale the spruce-scented air, and appreciate the gentle rush of rivers making their way to the ocean.

IMAGES: HUBERT KANG; KARI MEDIG; YURI CHOUFOR

#### IN THE MOUNTAINS

Watching the sun rise over a glacial lake or snowy peaks. Trekking ancient, forested trails on horseback. There are few places that compare to British Columbia when it comes to high-altitude adventure. Near Vancouver, paragliding, rock climbing and helicopter flights are on the menu: choose between gliding 2,000ft above the deer and grizzlies of Pemberton Valley; scaling a 2,300ft granite monolith in Squamish; or flying past glaciers and turquoise fjords in a helicopter in the Tantalus Mountain Range. Further east, summer in the Canadian Rockies — a chain of 2,283 snow-capped peaks that spreads across the pine forests and turquoise lakes of BC's Kootenay Rockies and into Alberta — means making the most of more than 2,000 miles of hiking, biking and horse-riding trails. Feel the magnetism of the wild and let your feet guide you to new summits and viewpoints. As you listen to birdsong bursting from nearby cedars or the calls of eagles overhead, the stresses and strains of modern life melt away and the feeling will stay with you even long after you've left.

*Vancouver International Airport is the obvious arrival point from the UK, and Air Canada and British Airways fly there direct from Heathrow. Prices start from around £467 return.*

**Connect with nature before you travel — book time with British Columbia's great wilderness.**

READ MORE ONLINE AT  
[HELLOBC.COM/CALLTHEWILD](http://HELLOBC.COM/CALLTHEWILD)

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 COLUMBIA  
 CANADA





CITY LIFE

# BUENOS AIRES



*Famed for its boulevards and ballrooms, the Argentine capital is reinventing itself through restaurant collaborations, a new arts district and a revamped dockland park*

**WORDS: Vanessa Bell PHOTOGRAPHS: Javier Pierini**

**T**hink Buenos Aires and the European associations are inevitable. Its reputation as the 'Paris of South America' has its roots in the late 1800s when the ideal of modernity among well-heeled Porteños (as Buenos Aires' citizens are known) was modelled on France. From fashion to ornate facades, the capital of the fledgling independent Argentina — and its growing population of European émigrés — fostered a Parisian vogue that reached fever pitch in the early 20th century, when it welcomed a who's who of avant-garde creatives, from Marcel Duchamp to Le Corbusier.

But to declare the city's heyday long past, its glamour faded, its Camelot fallen, or to dwell too heavily on its history — Argentina's string of *coup d'états* and dictatorships between 1930 and 1983 — is to misunderstand the dynamism and daring spirit woven into the fabric of modern-day Buenos Aires. This is a city whose track record proves that periods of adversity only pave the way for sparkling reinvention.

Testament to this are the innovations that have taken place within the city's culinary scene in the past year — pivots and new enterprises that nimbly responded to the devastating rhythms of the pandemic like tango dancers in the city's (presently shuttered) milonga ballrooms. While artisanal coffee shops switched to

selling cups-to-go via hatches, elsewhere, collaborative culinary initiatives like F5 appeared. By day, a breezy bakery and brunch spot in the heart of the city, run by baker Francisco Seubert, at night, the venue passes into the hands of Rodrigo Sieiro and Tomás Romero, who serve up modern iterations of traditional cantina food. Local gourmands also benefitted when lauded experimental restaurant Anchoita decided during lockdown to reopen as a pop-up ice cream parlour. When life gives you lemons? In this case, Porteños made fresh and fruity gelato.

Even outside of the pandemic, the best way to connect with the city is by foot — ideally with a local guide. Enjoy stately Avenida del Libertador and Avenida Figueroa Alcorta, laden with purple jacaranda blossom. Linger awhile in the buzzy meeting spots of Plaza Mafalda and Barrancas de Belgrano; explore the revamped dockside nature reserve of Puerto Madero; soak up the sun in Parque Las Heras. Be intrepid — lesser-visited neighbourhoods like Caballito, Almagro, Boedo and San Cristóbal are home to a treasure trove of timeless vignettes. On weekend afternoons, when the lull of the siesta is palpable and the light begins to soften, join the old-timer clientele at retro corner bars and see neighbours chatting on their doorsteps over mate tea. Buenos Aires' glory days are far from over.







**FROM LEFT:** An exhibit at Ruth Benzacar, one of the many modern art galleries in Villa Crespo; Plaza Mayo, the city's oldest public square; the shopfront of Rut's Catering, a Jewish-owned deli in Villa Crespo; Palacio Barolo on Avenida de Mayo

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Facade of Casa de los Azulejos, an art nouveau building in the Microcentro business hub of San Nicolás

## SEE & DO

**XUL SOLAR MUSEUM:** Built in 1993 to celebrate Argentinian artist Xul Solar, this museum contains his former apartment and library of 3,500 books. The building's brutalist design and labyrinthine layout were inspired by his mystical works, which included made-up languages, tarot decks and experimental instruments, and are fascinating to explore. [xulsolar.org.ar](http://xulsolar.org.ar)

**MARTÍN GARCÍA ISLAND:** A visit to this nature reserve takes in the scenic Tigre Delta en route, reached via a two-and-a-quarter-hour catamaran service from the Estación Fluvial river port in Tigre. While here, visit the traditional bakery, famous for its *pan dulce* (a panettone-style cake of Italian origin) and walk around the ruins of the prison where former Argentine president Juan Perón was held in 1945. Sturla Viajes offers guided day trips to the island. To stay longer, book into the island's campsite or simple hostel. [islamartingarcia.tur.ar](http://islamartingarcia.tur.ar) [sturlaviajes.tur.ar](http://sturlaviajes.tur.ar)

**CONFITERÍA DEL MOLINO:** One of the city's finest examples of art nouveau architecture, dating back to 1916, the Confitería del Molino coffeehouse has been painstakingly restored over the past three years. Its emblematic cafe, with grand, stained-glass windows and marble pillars, is set to reopen in 2022. [delmolino.gob.ar](http://delmolino.gob.ar)

**BELGRANO R ENGLISH QUARTER:** Buenos Aires' English Quarter, Belgrano R, is characterised by late-19th-century mansions and cobbled streets, making it ideal for a leisurely stroll. Originally inhabited by British nationals working in railroad construction, it's now an upscale residential area peppered with embassies. Avenida Melián, with its canopy of tipa trees and dappled sunlight, easily wins the prize for the city's most photogenic street.

**VILLA CRESPO ART DISTRICT:** When hallowed gallery Ruth Benzacar made the bold move to leave the established downtown arts district for a converted warehouse in Villa Crespo in 2014, other galleries soon followed suit. Nora Fisch, La Ira de Dios, Gachi Prieto, Hache and Pabellón 4 are some of the key spaces to visit in the now-vibrant, post-industrial neighbourhood. Watch out for the next instalment of Gallery Days, an afternoon of tours, open studios and performances. [ruthbenzacar.com](http://ruthbenzacar.com) [norafisch.com](http://norafisch.com) [lairadedios.com.ar](http://lairadedios.com.ar) [gachiprieto.com](http://gachiprieto.com) [hachegaleria.com](http://hachegaleria.com) [pabellon4.com](http://pabellon4.com) [gallery.com.ar](http://gallery.com.ar)

**SAN MARTÍN CULTURAL CENTRE:** Extensively restored in 2017, this modernist architectural gem, designed by Mario Roberto Álvarez in 1960, spans 13 floors, offering multipurpose auditoriums with exceptional acoustics, an arthouse cinema and a gallery with free

exhibitions of exceptional Argentinian photography. A rich programme of ballet, opera, theatre and music concerts runs all year. [elculturalsanmartin.ar](http://elculturalsanmartin.ar)

**LA REPÚBLICA DE LOS NIÑOS:** This 130-acre children's theme park was dreamt up by the Eva Perón Foundation and inaugurated in 1951. It's thought to have provided the inspiration for Disneyland; allegedly, Walt Disney noted the chocolate-box houses and turreted buildings at its initial opening, although it's more likely he saw the plans during a visit in the 1940s. The 'Children's Republic' is essentially a rainbow-coloured model city, featuring a child-friendly parliament, courthouse, church, theatre, restaurants and even an airport. [cultura.laplata.gob.ar/listings/república-de-los-niños](http://cultura.laplata.gob.ar/listings/república-de-los-niños)

**PARQUE CENTENARIO:** Built in 1910 to celebrate the centenary of the revolution that kick-started Argentina's War of Independence, this landscaped pleasure ground is an amuse-bouche of Porteño life, best experienced on weekends when you can peruse the secondhand book stalls and bustling flea market. Located on the perimeter, the ornate edifice of the Bernardino Rivadavia Museum of Natural Science houses astonishing regional dinosaur finds, while architecture buffs will appreciate the brutalist Naval Hospital, designed to resemble a ship. [macnconicet.gob.ar](http://macnconicet.gob.ar)





Concepción, a new design space in Villa Crespo

**RIGHT:** Meridiano Hostel Boutique, a guesthouse in the heart of the Palermo district

**BUY**

**CONCEPCIÓN:** The brainchild of Ries, one of the country's most exciting furniture studios, this edgy design space set in a former depot opened its doors in July in the heart of the arty Villa Crespo district. Conceived, renovated and launched during the pandemic, it now showcases the work of a host of local designers, including Luna Oks, whose sumptuous fabrics can be bought by the metre. Visits should be booked via Instagram. [instagram.com/concepcion\\_local](https://www.instagram.com/concepcion_local)

**SOMBREROS MAIDANA:** This fourth-generation hat shop was founded by Luis Maidana 111 years ago. Heaven for any headwear aficionado, the shop is trusted by both *estancieros* and *gauchos* (rural Argentine landowners and cowboys, respectively). Sombreros Maidana is the only hat-maker in Argentina to still employ the traditional Borsalino method, an artisanal technique using steam to fashion the hats from hare fur, a process that happens at the rear of the store. [instagram.com/sombrerosmaidana](https://www.instagram.com/sombrerosmaidana)

**QUORUM:** Founded by a collective of Argentinian artists with the aim of giving young creatives a platform to display and sell their work, this art and design store has amassed an eclectic and inspirational roster of suppliers working in mixed media. Pick up an affordable print or more sizeable one-off pieces. [instagram.com/tiendaquorum](https://www.instagram.com/tiendaquorum)

**SLEEP**

**MERIDIANO HOSTEL BOUTIQUE:** The owners of this newly opened guesthouse have drawn on their globe-trotting experiences to offer visitors a great dorm experience: comfortable, without breaking the bank. Set in a typical *casa chorizo*-style house with an outdoor patio, it's ideally located for anyone wanting a taste of Palermo's legendary nightlife scene. [meridianohostel.com](https://www.meridianohostel.com)

**HOME HOTEL:** The hotel's stated objective is to be a home from home. The decor across all 17 rooms and two suites fuses mid-century design with flea market finds — plus original 1960s French wallpaper from record producer owner Tom Rixton's extensive personal collection. Enjoy cocktails by the pool before checking out nearby plant-based eatery Sacro or the excellent Atte Pizzeria Napoletana. [homebuenosaires.com](https://www.homebuenosaires.com)

**PARK HYATT BUENOS AIRES:** Set in a lavish mansion decorated with neutral tones, the Park Hyatt is one of the most stylish hotels in Buenos Aires, striking the perfect balance between sophistication and understatement. Ask for one of the rooms overlooking the dilapidated Residencia Maguire, one of the area's few surviving aristocratic palaces, dating back to the 1890s. After some indulgence? Enjoy a swim and pamper at the spa downstairs. [hyatt.com](https://www.hyatt.com)





## EAT

**LA MEZZETTA:** This unpretentious Porteño institution remains virtually unchanged since it opened in the 1930s in the Chacarita neighbourhood. Sample its signature deep-pan *muzzarella*, bubbling-hot pizza oozing with cheesy goodness. It's typical to eat it standing, perhaps with a slice of chickpea *faina* flatbread, washed down with a locally brewed Quilmes lager. [instagram.com/pizzerialamezzetta](https://www.instagram.com/pizzerialamezzetta)

**PARRILLA PEÑA:** The unfussy decor and starched white tablecloths of this traditional steakhouse mean the food does the talking: Parilla Peña's fried beef empanadas are the stuff of legend. Go for a tender *lomo* (tenderloin steak) or try other flavoursome beef cuts like *entraña* (skirt) or *vacio* (flank). Leave room for a *flan mixto*, a crème caramel served with lashings of cream and *dulce de leche*. [instagram.com/parrillitapena](https://www.instagram.com/parrillitapena)

**CHUÍ:** This experimental, open-plan bistro was one of the most hyped openings of 2021, adding to a modern dining scene dominated by adventurous young chefs. The evolving menu fuses seasonal ingredients and wide-ranging influences with unorthodox textures and fermentations; the fridges display an impressive array of fungi, harvested every couple of days. [instagram.com/chui.ba](https://www.instagram.com/chui.ba)

## LIKE A LOCAL

**MINGLE WITH TANGO CROONERS:** Pull up a pew at El Bolicho de Roberto, a legendary haunt steeped in tango heritage. The dusty bottles behind the bar are testament to the establishment's vintage: the venue dates back to 1893, when it was a watering hole for horse traders. Order a *fernet* (a bitter, aromatic local spirit, often served with cola) and wait for the musicians to strike up. Expect impromptu renditions of tango numbers from local performers dressed the part in traditional garb. [facebook.com/elbolichederoberto](https://www.facebook.com/elbolichederoberto)

**SUPPORT THE ARGENTINOS JUNIORS:** While a Superclásico match (played between rival superclubs Boca Juniors and River Plate) is often touted as the ultimate local experience, an Argentinos Juniors game in their home stadium in La Paternal is equally lively — and it's far easier to get tickets. Since former player Maradona's passing last year, murals and impromptu shrines have popped up along the perimeter walls. [argentinosjuniors.com.ar](https://www.argentinosjuniors.com.ar)

**PEOPLE-WATCH AT CAFÉ PAULIN:** Opened in 1981 and left more or less untouched for 40 years, the U-shaped bar, leather stools, mirrored walls and time-warp decor of Paulin make it the quintessential downtown lunch spot. Sandwich orders are given to the kitchen over an echoey tannoy and fly out on plates along the polished bar minutes later.

**Steak a claim //**  
*Argentina is famous for some of the world's best beef, and its citizens tend to prefer their steak well done, so order rarer than you'd normally like. 'Vuelta y vuelta' is blue, 'jugosa' is bloody, 'a punto' is medium rare and 'bien cocida' is well done*

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Chuí, one of this year's most exciting restaurant openings; Quorum, which sells prints from Argentinian artists; Marcos Altgelt, a designer working and selling in the Concepción studio space; mushroom, lemon and dill dish at Chuí








Cocktails at Casa Cavia's courtyard bar in Palermo Chico

## AFTER HOURS

**BAR LOS GALGOS:** In 2016, new owners took this ailing, historic bar and revived it, restoring its original furniture and installing warm lighting and an inviting, brushed-metal bar. By day, linger over a cup of *café con leche*, the local take on a strong latte, or dine on modern iterations of Porteño cuisine, such as *sandwiches de miga* (crustless sarnies) or *buñuelos de acelga* (chard fritters). As evening draws in, the lights dim and lively chatter and a jazz soundtrack strike an intimate tone. Ask the barman to pour you a La Fuerza vermouth, created in the owners' *vermutería* in the Chacarita neighbourhood. It's typically served on the rocks accompanied by a traditional soda siphon, allowing you to blend your drink at your own discretion. [barlosgalgos.com.ar](http://barlosgalgos.com.ar)

**CASA CAVIA:** This converted house in the exclusive Palermo Chico area has kept much of its original 1927 design. It contains an upscale restaurant and capacious outdoor patio, with a turquoise-green terrace, central water feature and foliage lit up beautifully at night. The outdoor bar's mixologists offer some of the most artful cocktails in town in a stylish yet refreshingly unpretentious setting. [casacavia.com](http://casacavia.com)

**PAL QUE GUSTE:** Bringing a taste of the pampas — Argentina's wild, central grasslands — to the heart of the city with its countryside decor, this *peña* (a traditional bar where folk musicians play) serves delicious empanadas, tamales and Argentinian *locro* stew. At weekends, guest musicians hailing from all across the country sing troubadour-style songs about everyday rural life and love as you dine. [instagram.com/palqueguste](http://instagram.com/palqueguste) 

## ESSENTIALS



### Getting there & around

British Airways operates direct flights to Buenos Aires, flying from Heathrow four times a week. [ba.com](http://ba.com)

Average flight time: 13.5h.

European carriers such as Iberia and Air France offer one-stop flights via their European hubs, and American Airlines, Delta Air Lines and United Airlines via US hubs. [iberia.com](http://iberia.com) [airfrance.co.uk](http://airfrance.co.uk) [aa.com](http://aa.com) [delta.com](http://delta.com) [united.com](http://united.com)

Buenos Aires is a wonderful city to explore on foot, although the transportation system is cheap and efficient — as are taxis. Buy a SUBE card from any metro station or kiosk to use on buses, underground and for train connections to the suburbs. Take advantage of the extensive bike lane network: Free Ecobici bikes have drop-off stations across the city. [buenosaires.gov.ar/ecobici](http://buenosaires.gov.ar/ecobici)

### When to go

Buenos Aires is best enjoyed in its spring and autumn seasons (late-September to November and March to May, respectively). The summer months either side of New Year guarantee temperatures in the mid-30Cs, although December and January are often uncomfortably humid. Its Southern Hemisphere winters are temperate, with plenty of sunshine and blue skies.

### More info

Argentina Tourism. [argentina.travel](http://argentina.travel)

### How to do it

**JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA** offers a seven-night trip to Buenos Aires from £2,649 per person, based on two people sharing. Includes flights, transfers, guided tours, four nights at the Palacio Duhae — Park Hyatt Buenos Aires, on a B&B basis, and three nights at Estancia La Sofia. [journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://journeylatinamerica.co.uk)



WHAT I LOVE ABOUT

# Nova Scotia

Nature photographer Adam Hill waxes lyrical about the Canadian province where he grew up

**T**here aren't many places as special as Nova Scotia; it's where I grew up and formed life-long memories.

It's also home to the highest tides in the world, amazing seafood, some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet and the incredible Cabot Trail. This is where you slow down, savour what's around you and appreciate life a little bit more.

As a child growing up in rural Cape Breton Island, I was surrounded by family, farms, rivers, lakes, mountains and very few big-city distractions. Inspired by the beauty of hills and hidden streams, I began my journey as a photographer. With camera in hand, I discovered eagle nests, chased the light on mountains, watched loons raise their chicks and photographed new waterfalls each week. Cape Breton and the whole of our scenic province is a playground for nature photographers, with its array of seascapes, landscapes, skies and wildlife.

Like many east-coasters, it took leaving Nova Scotia to fully realise how special it is. During the nine years I lived in Canada's Northwest Territories, the pull to return home grew stronger. While I loved living in the north, I couldn't wait to see my home and stand on its rugged coastline, watching eagles fly overhead and breathing in the salty air. Four years after my family and I moved home to Nova Scotia, I could never imagine my life anywhere else. [adamhillstudios.ca](http://adamhillstudios.ca)

## ADAM'S TOP THREE: OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### CABOT TRAIL

The world-famous Cabot Trail is a 185-mile drive that loops around Cape Breton's highlands and travels through the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. It's one of the world's best road trips.

### WHALE-WATCHING ON BRIER ISLAND

On the western edge of Nova Scotia, Brier Island's Bay of Fundy is best known for having the world's highest tides, but its biggest draw is the dozens of whales that call it home, including the elusive right whale.

### TIDAL BORE RAFTING ON THE SHUBENACADIE RIVER

Nova Scotia is the only place in Canada where you can try tidal bore rafting. When the tide comes rushing in, waves up to 16ft high can form on the usually calm river. This isn't your typical whitewater rafting experience!



Photographer Adam Hill was born and raised in Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA  
CANADA

READ MORE AT  
[NOVASCOTIA.COM](http://NOVASCOTIA.COM)



# SPEND 72 HOURS IN Busan

With long beaches and mountain temples, Busan has emerged from Seoul's shadow to become a thrilling destination in its own right

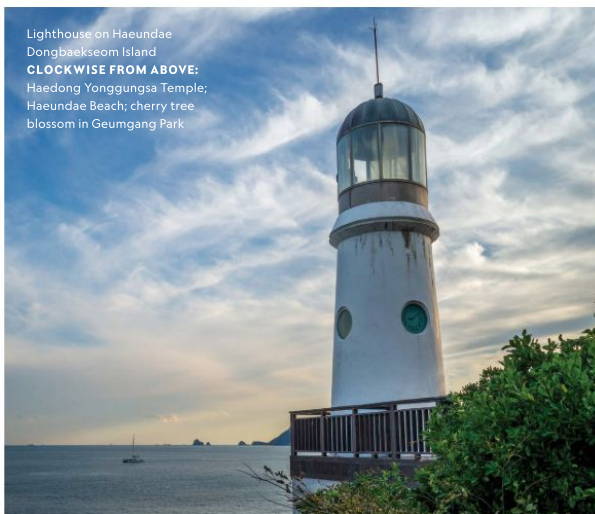


**S**ituated on the southeastern tip of the Korean Peninsula, Busan is where Koreans come to let their hair down. The country's second-largest metropolis is most famous for its long, sandy beaches, and its seaside culture seeps into all aspects of daily life, from a noticeably carefree, festive air to the seafood-rich cuisine. This energetic burg is home to some of the most exciting attractions in the country, and to top it all off, it offers up nature in spades, with pine-covered mountains, countless miles of hiking trails and marine parks dotted with cliffs. Here's how to plan your next getaway to Korea's city on the sea.

**Busan is famous for its beaches, and its seaside culture seeps into all aspects of daily life**

Lighthouse on Haeundae  
Dongbaekseom Island

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:**  
Haedong Yonggungsa Temple;  
Haeundae Beach; cherry tree  
blossom in Geumgang Park







## DAY 1

Hiking is Korea's national pastime, so start the day by joining the locals at Geumgang Park. Here, a precipitous ropeway takes visitors to the summit of Geumjeongsan Mountain — the fortress-topped massif that defines the skyline of the city — gliding over a blanket of pine trees and offering views of the densely packed urban world below. From the top, you can hike along the ridge for a few miles before dropping down and soaking up the serenity at Beomeosa, one of the great temples of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism founded in 678. Sit down at Sansugapsan, located just a short stroll from the temple's main gate, for a meal of marinated duck washed down with a bottle or two of *makgeolli*, a milky rice wine served up on mountains throughout the country.

After lunch, it's time to head to the coast — and in Busan, that's never far away. Just a 45-minute subway ride from Beomeosa, Haeundae is the city's most famous seaside playground and an ideal place in which to

grab a coffee and kick back with an azure stretch East Sea as the backdrop. (In the summer months, revellers gather here from far and wide, making this white-sand beach a prime people-watching spot, too.) If ready to resume rambling, head down to Mipo Port at the far end of the beach and board a cruise boat to the Oryukdo Islets, where you can take in the sleek high-rises of the city from a different point of view. Alternatively, saunter along the coastal path that snakes around Dongbaekseom Island, a rocky outcrop of pine trees on the west side of the beach.

While you're in Haeundae, make sure to explore Bay 101, a sprawling culture and arts complex that also includes a yacht club, restaurant, cafe, pub and store. Feel the day slip into night over a dinner of grilled beef before jumping into a taxi and cruising over Gwangan Diamond Bridge and shooting up to the observatory at the top of Hwangnyeongsan Mountain, where the city lights splay out like a thousand stars.

## TOP 3: STREET FOOD

### SSIAT HOTTEOK:

This is Busan's take on *hotteok*, a popular Korean street delicacy. It consists of wheat-flour hot cakes stuffed with brown sugar, honey, cinnamon, pine nuts and sunflower and pumpkin seeds. It's particularly good in the chilly winter months, but beware — the sweet, gooey inside can sometimes be magma-hot.

### EOMUK:

Any visitor to Busan will notice street vendors selling these fish paste ribbons on skewers all across the city. Savoury and satisfying, *eomuk* is the favourite food for Busanites on the go and is best when dipped in soy sauce. Make sure to get a cup of the *eomuk* broth, too; a few sips of it make everything right in the world, at least for a moment.

### BINGSU:

Like most of the country, Busan can get downright tropical in the summer months, and one way locals beat the heat and humidity is by eating *bingsu*. This shaved ice dessert is served with sugary toppings such as chopped fruit, condensed milk, syrup and — most popularly — sweet red beans.



### TOP 3: SEASIDE MUSTS

#### TAJEONGDAE RESORT PARK:

Situated at the far end of Yeongdo Island, Taejongdae Resort Park is where the sea meets the sea – violently: strolling under a canopy of pines, visitors can watch the waves explode on gargantuan rock forms. This is nature in action, just a 15-minute taxi ride from Nampo-dong.

#### HAEDONG YONGGUNG TEMPLE:

From its rocky perch above the shore – where the ancient stone of the Korean peninsula makes its last stand before the sea – Haedong Yonggung Temple watches over the East Sea like a sentinel. This is Busan's second-most-famous Buddhist temple, with an ornate yet rugged beauty.

#### SONGDO MARINE CABLE CAR:

In recent years, Songdo, Busan's first official municipal beach, has undergone a remarkable makeover. This includes a state-of-the-art cable-car that carries visitors across the water to Annam Park, where they can enjoy panoramic views of the city.



### DAY 2

The Nampo-dong neighbourhood, home to Busan's main harbour and old downtown area, is an ideal gateway to your second day of urban exploration. Here, attractions abound, from the secondhand book shops on Bosu Book Street to BIFF Square, the original site of the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) – Asia's largest, and the city's most important cultural event. Make sure to explore the alleys of the labyrinth-like Gukje Market, too, to pick up a few mementos. Hunger pangs should be seen to across the street, at Jagalchi Market. In operation for over 600 years, this is Busan's beating heart, where locals and visitors alike can browse the sea's bounty in all its scaly, gilled and tentacled glory. A meal in one of the raw fish pavilions is not to be missed – just point to what you want and the fish will be dispatched and served up on the spot.

Just a short taxi ride away is the Gamcheon Culture Village, a former hillside shanty settled by Korean War refugees that's now famous for its tiny, brightly painted



One of the many markets in the Jung District

LEFT: Gamcheon Culture Village;

BELOW: Fish stall at Jagalchi Market, in operation for over 600 years

houses and vivid murals. Enjoy a coffee and the million-dollar view at Cafe Avant Garde before wandering its backstreets.

Come dinnertime, nearby Bupyeong Kkangtong Market is a haven for non-nonsense, traditional Korean cuisine. There are scores of stalls cooking up everything from *bindaetteok* (mung bean cake) and *guksu* (Korean noodles) to *pajeon* (green onion pancake) and *dwaengi gukbop* (pork and rice soup), Busan's savoury, signature dish. When it's time to walk off the evening feast, amble over to Yongdusan Park and reach the top of Busan Tower for bird's-eye-views of the harbour, mountains and electric cityscape.

### DAY 3

Busan is famed for its spas, and to relax after a couple of days on your feet there's Heosimcheong Spa, in the Oncheonjang neighbourhood. This huge complex is one of Asia's largest naturally fed hot springs and offers hot, cold and outdoor baths. For lunch, treat yourself to a selection of the side dishes known as 'Korean royal court food' at Yewon Hanjeongsik, a short taxi ride away.

To discover Busan's sophisticated side, make time to also see the gleaming cluster of high-rises in Centum City. Lose yourself in the luxurious expanse of Shinsegae, the world's largest department store, or explore the Busan Cinema Center, home of the BIFF.

In the end, however, Busan is all about the beach, so jump back on the train and cruise over to nearby Gwangalli to watch the sun go down by the majestic Gwangang Diamond Bridge. A few blocks back is Seorae, a good place for a hearty, sizzling meal of tabletop-grilled pork, and after that, there's no shortage of watering holes, from HQ Gwanang, the city's best Western-style pub, to Galmegi Brewing, which serves locally produced craft beer. For something more upscale, Bar Di.Lan features a top-notch selection of whiskeys and wines — perfect to end the trip in style.

*British Airways offers regular nonstop flights to Seoul. From there, Busan is just a quick connection. The city is served by a world-class public transport system, and taxis are also plentiful and inexpensive.*

VISIT  
BUSAN

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BTO.OR.KR



## TRAVEL GEEKS

## ASK THE EXPERTS

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



**Q** // Where would you recommend taking a small group ski break this year?

European ski resorts are welcoming back international visitors, and resorts have had the whole of last season to sort out socially distanced lifts for local guests. Travellers seem confident: ski companies are reporting decent sales, aided by the many skiers who were forced to put back their booked holiday for a year. So, capacity is getting stretched. It's advised those looking to hit the slopes this year book swiftly, and don't expect as many last-minute bargains — with less uncertainty around travel restrictions compared to last year, most companies now offer changes of date or a refund if the holiday can't go ahead.

If you're undecided (and some operators feel first-time skiers, uneasy about a new challenge anyway, might be put off by the uncertainty), then France could be the place for you. Big resorts

such as Les Arcs, La Plagne and Alpe d'Huez — good for all levels and full of big, roomy lifts — are packed with apartments with skiing straight from the door, avoiding the morning crowds. Inghams has four nights' self-catering at Arc 1950 Le Village Apartments from £549 per person, based on six sharing (two bedrooms, plus sofa bed), including flights and transfers. Full catering packages can be ordered that include oven-ready meals from UK creator Cook, as well as local specialities.

Across the board, trip options vary wildly. For a price, the Oxford Ski Company's chalet staff will become part of your bubble, remaining exclusively with you and your party during your stay. For many visitors, uncertain about mingling in resort restaurants, sticking to your own bubble in an apartment,

self-catering and taking a picnic lunch is the answer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, self-catered and one-family chalets have also been doing well and British operator Ski France's 'contactless self-catered' chalets (ingredients for upmarket dinner recipes, plus wine, delivered to the door) have been a bestseller this season.

Travelski, meanwhile, has launched train holidays to Les Arcs, La Plagne and other French resorts on its new chartered Eurostar service, the Travelski Express, running from London St Pancras to Moûtiers and Bourg-St-Maurice. Seven nights' self-catering at Le Village in Les Arcs starts at £767 based on a family of four sharing, including transfers and a seven-day lift pass, allowing skiing right from the point of arrival. [inghams.co.uk](http://inghams.co.uk) [oxfordski.com](http://oxfordski.com) [skifrance.co.uk](http://skifrance.co.uk) [travelski.com](http://travelski.com) **NICK DALTON**

## Q // What's the situation with 'cowboy' Covid-19 testing companies, and what should I look for when booking my travel tests?

From 4 October, fully vaccinated travellers returning to England from non-red-list countries no longer have to take a pre-departure test. However, a day-two test after arrival is still required, and that's before you consider any tests required for other countries. The government has started to crack down on test providers using bait and switch, where the price advertised isn't the price you pay, but there's still a risk that results aren't returned in time before travel. It's essential, then, to find a provider that can meet deadlines.

You won't necessarily find one on the government's list; while it's

a good place to start your search, it contains hundreds of providers, some of which have poor customer ratings. Instead, look for a provider that limits sales of postal tests (this applies for both outbound and day-two tests). Companies like Testing for All cap sales to ensure they have enough lab capacity to issue results on time. Comprehensive refund policies are a good sign, too, as they act as an incentive to get things right. C19 refunds any test that takes longer than 24 hours to analyse, and you can drop off samples directly at labs in London and Manchester.

[testingforall.org](http://testingforall.org) [c19testing.co.uk](http://c19testing.co.uk)  
**RORY BOLAND**



## Q // I'd like to try a truffle-hunting tour or course in the UK this season. Are there any you recommend?

English truffles are on a trajectory similar to that of our sparkling wine: going from little-known product to drawing deserved respect in culinary circles. While it's accepted that our native truffles don't pack the punch of their French cousin, the Périgord (*Tuber melanosporum*), which is now cultivated worldwide, English native truffles can be a revelation.

A prerequisite of any experience should always be a seasoned guide who can explain the full picture. The English Truffle Company will get you up to speed in Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire between late September and January each year. A day-long experience starts with a truffle 101 of sorts, delving into the fascinating mycology at play, as well as where they grow, what to look for, and the important question of eating. In between lunch and afternoon

tea, where you'll be served a simple truffle dish, you take to the woods with truffle hunter James Feaver and his dogs. The prize? The delicacy that is black autumn truffle (*Tuber uncinatum*).

Wiltshire Truffles is a name known to the country's top chefs. While founder Zak Frost doesn't operate tours or courses, he does recommend booking in-season at restaurants that have nurtured the renaissance of English truffles. Among them are The Fat Duck, in Bray, Berkshire, and The Pig's portfolio of restaurants with rooms, many of which are in the truffle heartlands of the South West. Adam Handling's restaurant, Ugly Butterfly, in Cornwall's Carbis Bay, gets the nod. [englishtruffles.co.uk](http://englishtruffles.co.uk) [wiltshiretruffles.com](http://wiltshiretruffles.com)  
**MAX BREARLEY**

## Q // I'm looking to visit Lanzarote this winter but would like to discover a different side to the island. What do you suggest?

It might offer the usual beach experience, but Lanzarote, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, has many other natural advantages, too. There's all that dramatic frozen lava: a striking backdrop to any hike or trail run, particularly if you're used to running in green countryside. To immerse yourself in the eeriest landscapes, book a guided walk along the volcanic Tremezana Route in Timanfaya National Park. You can even cross the island from top to toe by following the 44-mile Órzola to Playa Blanca Nature Trail, part of the GR131 trail that runs across the Canary Islands.

If cycling is your thing, you'll be in good company: elite athletes train here, particularly in the north, home of the Ironman Lanzarote. The clear, breezy air lends itself to watersports and stargazing, too. Caleta de Famara is perfect for surfing, and the Peñas del Chache lookout in Haría has mind-blowing views of the Milky Way after dark.

To seek out the quietest, prettiest beaches, try the gnarly north east, between Órzola and Jameos del Agua; the coastline here is dotted with appealing little bays, where black rocks contrast with dazzling, white sand.

**EMMA GREGG**

## THE EXPERTS



**NICK DALTON //**  
SKI WRITER



**RORY BOLAND //**  
EDITOR, WHICH? TRAVEL  
[WHICH.CO.UK](http://WHICH.CO.UK)



**MAX BREARLEY //**  
FOOD AND TRAVEL  
WRITER



**EMMA GREGG //**  
TRAVEL WRITER



## THE INFO

## ALL THAT GLITTERS

BRITAIN'S SKIES WILL BE SPARKLING FOR GUY FAWKES AND DIWALI FESTIVITIES THIS AUTUMN — BUT THEY'RE MERELY TWO OF THE WORLD'S FIREWORKS-FILLED SPECTACLES. WE LOOK AT HOW THE EXTRAVAGANT EXPLOSIVES ARE USED IN CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE WORLD. WORDS: CONNOR MCGOVERN

## IN NUMBERS

**1,270kg**

The weight of the largest-ever aerial firework. It was set off in Colorado in 2020

**105ft**

The diameter of the world's largest Catherine wheel, which was set alight in Malta in 2011

**\$10,904**

The number of explosives used for the world's largest fireworks display, held in Manila in 2016

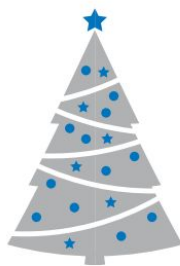


**Independence Day** is marked with fireworks shows across the US, but it wasn't made a federal holiday until almost a century after the Declaration of Independence was signed

Fireworks were first used for celebrations in ancient China, having been developed from military rockets and missiles. The 19th-century addition of ingredients such as magnesium made the explosions even more brilliant



The **Montreal Fireworks Competition** sees pyrotechnic companies battle it out with 30-minute-long spectacles



PERUVIANS OFTEN MARK CHRISTMAS WITH **BOLD, BRILLIANT FIREWORK SHOWS** AT MIDNIGHT ON CHRISTMAS EVE



Diwali, India's **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**, often features extravagant fireworks displays. Traditionally, the festival is held on a moonless night, when the skies are at their darkest

## THE BIG BANG: NEW YEAR'S FIREWORKS CELEBRATIONS

**COPACABANA BEACH**

Millions of revellers pack out Rio de Janeiro's famous beach on New Year's Eve

**EDINBURGH CASTLE**

Over 3,000 fireworks were set off for the Hogmanay display in 2020

**LONDON EYE**

The observation wheel rings in the New Year to the chimes of Big Ben

**BURJ KHALIFA**

Dubai's celebrations see fireworks shoot off from the 2,722ft-tall skyscraper

**SYDNEY HARBOUR**

The iconic Harbour Bridge is fitted with rockets that light up the skyline

SOURCES: ALMANAC.COM; BRITANNICA.COM; EDINBURGH.LIVE.CO.UK; FORTUNE.COM; GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; JAPANISTRY.COM; MONTREAL-FIREWORKS.COM

## HOT TOPIC

# SHOULD WE TAX FREQUENT FLYERS?

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS REACHING TIPPING POINT AND EMISSIONS TARGETS ARE FAR FROM BEING MET, YET AIR TRAVEL IS STILL PREDICTED TO GROW. SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE — BUT SHOULD THIS COME IN THE SHAPE OF A FREQUENT FLYER LEVY? WORDS: SIMON USBORNE

While aviation takes off again as the pandemic's travel restrictions ease, the debate intensifies over how to reconcile the industry with a net-zero world. To meet targets for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (by 2050 in the UK) the Climate Change Committee, which advises the government on climate policy, says the UK must slow aviation growth sufficiently so that passenger numbers don't rise more than 25% above 2018 levels. All forecasts, however, predict much higher figures.

## How do you make people fly (a lot) less?

Broadly speaking, there are two approaches: you either restrict supply — by, for example, blocking the construction of new runways or, as France has done, banning domestic routes with good rail links — or you restrict demand by making flying more expensive through taxation. Or you do both.

## What would this do to airfares?

Either of these approaches would result in higher ticket prices, which poses a cultural quandary. Decades of evolution in aviation have democratised travel, bringing foreign trips within reach of people whose parents, say, couldn't have dreamed of jetting off abroad. But the age of the budget airline resulted in such low prices that winding back expectations and opportunities will be difficult and potentially unfair. We risk reviving an elitist age in which jet travel was the preserve of the rich, while also disrupting business models and employment across the globe that have evolved in response to low-cost flying.

## How would a frequent flyer levy work?

A small minority of frequent flyers take the majority of flights in almost all countries with high



aviation emissions. In the UK, 70% of flights are made by a wealthy 15% of the population, according to a recent report produced for the climate campaign group Possible. In the US, two-thirds of flights are taken by 12% of people, while in India 45% of flights are taken by just 1% of households.

"While the poorest communities are already suffering the impacts of a warming climate, the benefits of high-carbon lifestyles are enjoyed only by the few," Alethea Warrington, Possible campaigns manager, told BBC News in March. Greenpeace, which supports a frequent flyer levy, also pointed out the compounding effects of air miles, which reward passengers for travelling by plane more frequently.

The New Economics Foundation think tank is among those groups arguing for a sliding tax. A frequent flyer levy would replace the blanket Air Passenger Duty, which currently adds £13 to the cost of a short-haul economy ticket and £78 to a long-haul economy ticket. The levy would only kick in when an individual takes their second flight of the year, reducing

the cost of travel for those taking just one annual trip involving flights. The think tank's modelling indicates that, on average, the lowest-income 20% of the population would pay £7.75 a year on a frequent flyer levy, while the highest-income 20% would pay £165.85 per year.

## Is there a case against it?

While a blanket duty is simplistic and arguably unfair, a frequent flyer levy could suffer for its relative complexity. The UK government has welcomed proposals for change while it considers its own response to the challenge of making aviation fit climate targets, but it has poured cold water on the idea of such a levy. Any system could be difficult to administer and open to abuse. Would we distinguish between pleasure and business travel? Would we penalise people visiting far-flung families? There would also be potential data and privacy concerns in tracking us across the skies. If a frequent flyer levy does become a solution, it may not get permission to land any time soon.

## FLIGHT RISK: OTHER AVIATION ISSUES

### FUEL

Modern airliners are increasingly efficient, and low-carbon fuels are coming to the market, but efficiency improvements aren't keeping pace with demand — and electric airliners are still decades away.

### POLICY

Aviation sits outside the Paris Agreement because it's an international matter; carbon offsetting schemes are broadly still optional; and aviation fuel is largely exempt from taxes.

### OTHER EMISSIONS

Non-CO2 aviation emissions include nitrogen oxides and contrails, which also have a warming effect.



# IN THE NEXT ISSUE



The Caribbean offers far more than just paradise beaches. Discover a region where jungle-swathed interiors thrive with wildlife and sun-drenched cities offer exciting cuisine and fascinating histories. Find out how to pick your perfect island escape

**Plus** // *Bhutan, Bologna, Cyprus, Denmark, Galway, Liverpool, Madeira, Nairobi, Portland, Salvador, Tasmania & more*

## DECEMBER ISSUE ON SALE 4 NOVEMBER

*For more information on our subscription offer,  
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TRAVEL GEEKS

12 OCTOBER 2021

## BEERS, BEARS & BEYOND IN ESTONIA

You might know Estonia's culture-filled capital, Tallinn, with its wonderfully preserved medieval architecture, but the Baltic nation is brimming with other attractions

Our panel of experts will discuss hidden corners to discover, exciting new activities and itinerary favourites — everything you need to inspire your next trip to Estonia. We'll cover unusual outdoor adventures, including bog-walking through an Ice Age landscape, island-hopping along the coast and spotting wild bears in the forests. There are myriad ways to get out and about in the Estonian countryside, whether that's setting off on hiking trails, canoeing through wetlands or exploring the wild coastline. Find out about culinary journeys you can take: we reveal how to explore the new wave of craft breweries; where to go foraging for seasonal ingredients; and the best new restaurants in which to sample high-end, Nordic-inspired fare. There'll also be details on how to engage with Estonia's rich history and culture, from ancient castles and rural traditions to KGB artefacts and modern art.

WHERE: Online  
TIME: 19.00-20.00  
PRICE: Free

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RECONNECT WITH NATURE IN

# Isère

Isère is the third-largest ski area in France, meaning there's no shortage of winter adventures — from Nordic skiing to frozen waterfall climbing

Speeding down slopes is a pillar of mountain culture, but slow down the pace and the wintry scenery around you will come into focus. Sprawled across the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region of southeastern France, the department of Isère spans 22 ski resorts, four massifs (Vercors, Chartreuse, Belledonne and Oisans), two regional nature parks and the Écrins National Park. Glistening lakes, towering peaks, snow-laden forests: with such diverse landscapes, there are countless opportunities to get immersed in nature, and activities like ski touring and snowshoeing offer the chance to do just that.



Ski touring in Villard-de-Lans  
**RIGHT:** Nordic skiing in the Vercors



## 1 NORDIC SKIING

This age-old Scandinavian activity has multiple variations: cross-country skiing, popular with beginners, involves gliding with straight strides on flat or uphill tracks; skate skiing requires a more energetic, diagonal motion. Try it at the Nordic site of Haut Vercors, crisscrossed by 95 miles of marked pistes. La Royale is one of the most popular routes, covering a loop of 18 miles connecting the villages of Corrençon, Villard-de-Lans and Saint-Julien en Vercors.

## 2 SNOWSHOEING

Snowshoe routes are ideal places to experience the grounding stillness of the mountains, and at Isère, hikers are spoiled for choice. Wildlife enthusiasts can join chamois-spotting tours organised by guides in Les Deux Alpes, and if it's sprawling views you're after, the ESF Ski School in Oz-en-Oisans offers sunset treks to Pré de la Pierre, a clearing overlooking the striking Belledonne range. For a full nature immersion, walkers with or without snowshoes can also explore the ethnobotanical trail in the spruce forest of Piégut — one the largest in Europe.

## 3 DOG SLEDDING

Snuggle up in a sleigh and watch the scenery whizz by as rows of sled dogs pull you across snowy fields. The plateaux of the Vercors Massif are a popular destination to try dog sledding, with 31 miles of tracks and several operators offering rides and mushing lessons. To get even closer to the dogs, Team Ehawee, in Oz-en-Oisans, offers evening *cani-balade* outings, where huskies guide hikers via belts and waist harnesses.

## 4 ICE CLIMBING

Crampons on your feet and ice axe in hand, get ready to conquer vertical ice walls. Once considered the preserve of

mountaineers, ice climbing is becoming accessible to anyone looking for cold thrills. Beginners can tackle the 270ft-high *Symphonie d'Automne*, a frozen waterfall in the *Grandes Rousses* massif, with guides from *Oz-en-Oisans* (and, on the way down, have a go at abseiling, too). Other scenic climbing spots near the resort include *Mur d'Ice Bill* and *Chacal Bondissant*, to name a few.

## 5 SKI TOURING

Explore the backcountry with a ski touring experience in Chamrousse. This sport allows mountain-goers to discover off-the-beaten-track areas, thanks to skins attached to the skis, which create traction for uphill treks. Chamrousse has two popular itineraries — a two-mile route from *Bachat-Bouloud* and a shorter one to *Lac des Pourrettes* and *Lacs Robert* — but for something different, opt for the resort's after-dark experience. Named 'best ski touring itinerary' at the 2019 Ski Touring Trophies, it allows tourers to safely enjoy night outings.

*Airlines including British Airways, EasyJet, Jet 2 and Ryanair fly direct from the UK to Grenoble in under two hours. Isère's main train station, Grenoble, has excellent national and international rail connections, and train journeys from London take around seven-and-a-half hours, changing in Paris. Find recommended journey schedules at [snowcarbon.co.uk](http://snowcarbon.co.uk).*



READ MORE AT  
[ALPES-ISERE.COM](http://ALPES-ISERE.COM)

## A TASTE OF THE MOUNTAINS

Grenoble — the capital of Isère, located at the foot of the French Alps — has been named European Green Capital 2022 in recognition of its sustainable development goals. Jeanette is one of the many restaurants in this Alpine hub to favour traditional flavours, fresh products and short supply chains. Head chefs Manon Bocquentin and Thaïs Giannetti tell us more.

### TELL US ABOUT JEANETTE.

All our ingredients come from within 30km of where we're based, to limit our environmental impact. This also forces us to use seasonal fruits and vegetables; producers tell us what they have, and we create a menu around it.

### WHICH INGREDIENTS CAN DINERS EXPECT?

We use local, wild herbs from the mountains: meadowsweet, which gives a bitter almond flavour; wood sorrel, which is very acidic; and elderflower. We collect them ourselves and rely on market producers for other products.

### HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE FRESH FLAVOURS?

We use different herbs throughout the year. For example, wild garlic flowers are the first to flourish in the spring, and asparagus comes just afterwards. In winter, we use the herbs we collect in the warm months, dried and infused in syrups.



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## FOOD & TRAVEL

THE ESSENCE OF A DESTINATION CAN BE DISCOVERED BY DIVING INTO ITS FOOD CULTURE. IN THIS NEW CATEGORY, WE WERE LOOKING FOR IMAGES THAT TELL A STORY FROM ANY STAGE OF THE JOURNEY FROM FIELD TO FORK — FROM SCENES OF HARVESTERS, VINTNERS AND FISHERMEN AT WORK TO SHOTS OF MARKETS, SMOKY STREET FOOD KITCHENS AND GRATEFUL DINERS

### ★ NIC CRILLY-HARGRAVE

◀ **STALLHOLDERS READY THE CATCH FOR MARKET IN VERACRUZ, MEXICO**  
I took this image early one morning in a warehouse behind Veracruz market — it's where meat is prepared and deliveries are unloaded, so it's a hectic place to shoot. It's a race against time to get everything ready before shoppers arrive, so everyone's pretty focused — but I spotted this moment of companionship between two men as they gutted fish. When they saw I'd taken their picture, one pointed to the other, uttering one word: 'brother'. @nicrillyhargravephotography

### THE JUDGES SAID

A seemingly simple photograph, the brilliance of this shot lies in the interaction between the two subjects. We feel as if we're sharing a personal joke and this helps the image feel inclusive and intimate, drawing us into their world. The side lighting is soft and flattering, adding a warm and gentle glow that helps saturate the colours and bring life to the two men's faces.





### ▲ KAROLINA WIERCIGROCH

#### FRESH PRODUCE ON SALE AT A MARKET IN URUBAMBA, IN PERU'S SACRED VALLEY

This is where locals shop for their daily groceries while chatting to vendors. I climbed the stairs to eye the market from above. This particular scene caught my attention because of the combination of shapes and colours, perfectly depicting the variety of Peruvian ingredients, while offering harmony among the chaos.

@karolina\_wiercigroch

### ▲ IAN DOUGLAS SCOTT

#### COOKS CRAFT THEIR FAMED DIM SUM IN SHANGHAI'S YU GARDEN DISTRICT

The roadside stall framed the scene naturally. It's so good to see people enjoying themselves as they create such beautiful delicacies. They seemed so immersed in their happy conversation that they didn't notice the camera. Little did we or they know that behind this joyful scene a virus was already spreading right here in this city and things would soon change so much for all of us the world over.

# PEOPLE

IT'S OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER PEOPLE THAT MAKE TRIPS UNFORGETTABLE. TRAVEL PORTRAITURE SEEKS OUT THE HUMAN STORIES WITHIN A DESTINATION, RESPONSIBLY. AND THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A POWERFUL SHOT ARE A COMPELLING SUBJECT AND AN INTERESTING BACKDROP

## ★ CLAIRE WARING

### ▶ ICE FISHING ON THE FROZEN SEA IN HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

I drove down the Notsuke Peninsula, a sand bar protruding into the Nemuro Strait on the east coast of Hokkaido. My primary aim was to photograph the elegant, red-crowned cranes, huge Steller's sea eagles and other wildlife. The sea was frozen and several ice fishermen were out on the bay, fishing for *wakasagi* (smelt). Each had made a hole with an auger and dropped down a line with coloured lures and bait attached. Several fishermen had erected small tents for protection but this man was braving the weather. With his gear on a small sled, he just sat — and waited — looking very cold. I lay down on the ice to get the shot of an activity I'd never seen before.

### THE JUDGES SAID

This was selected as the category winner due to its minimalism and the sense of intrigue it inspires. The angle is also fantastic, as it shows not just him fishing but the tools of his trade.

### ▶ WALTER MONTICELLI

#### VIETNAMESE WOMAN IN TRADITIONAL CLOTHING IN THE IMPERIAL CITY OF HUE, VIETNAM

While walking between temples in the Imperial City, I heard a faint melody playing in the distance. Following the sound, I reached a room in which a group of women wearing traditional clothing were playing music with traditional Vietnamese instruments. I'd been standing there for a while taking in the sound when I noticed this lady sitting next to the entrance enjoying the music her friends were playing. @walter.monticelli.photography

### » RAJIV JOSHI

#### A LOCAL BOATMAN IN REMOTE NORTHERN MYANMAR, TACKLING A CHALLENGING WATER CHANNEL

I was in Putao, a remote region in the far north of Myanmar, heading to an island where Buddhist monks make a pilgrimage. A boatman was found who could get me there. I was amazed by his skill and calmness as he navigated through rapids and between rocks using only rudimentary equipment: an old small motor and worn, wooden boat. I wanted my photo to convey his ease amid the turbulence. @raj.joshi.story







# URBAN

EACH URBAN CENTRE HAS A PERSONALITY THAT CAN BE CAPTURED, BE IT ANT-LIKE MOVEMENTS OF A CROWD OR RESIDENTS ENJOYING THEIR OWN SPACE IN A CITY

## ★ CLARA DIP WAN CHEUNG

### ◀ THE VELES E VENTS BUILDING IN VALENCIA, SPAIN

**On a trip to Valencia, we stopped at this amazing building. I captured my friend Sarah walking up the first staircase of the horizontal platforms, gazing at the uninterrupted views extending out towards the Mediterranean Sea. @claracdw**

### THE JUDGES SAID

The composition of this shot is as architectural as its subject. The leading lines of the staircase and floors all point towards the figure that's the subject of the photograph. The choice of light complements the architecture, creating an overall soft, white palette to the piece that's cohesive and pleasing.

## ◀ YAI MENG CHAN

### SUNSET IN RAINHAM, UK

The picture was taken from a railway bridge. This sunset can only be seen one week a year and depends on the weather and a train that passes every 30 minutes — planning the shot took months. @jokerchan

## ▼ JOSHUA PAUL AKERS

### MAHA BANDULA GARDEN STREET, YANGON, MYANMAR

The once-grand facades of the buildings opposite my downtown guesthouse had turned into a sort of vertical urban jungle, with trees and plants growing out of the cracks in the faded yellow walls. @joshuapaulakers



# WILDLIFE

PHOTOGRAPHY HAS LONG BEEN USED TO DEMYSTIFY ANIMALS. BUT THEY DON'T PLAY BY OUR RULES, MAKING PHOTOGRAPHING THEM CHALLENGING — AND REWARDING

## ★ MITCHELL LEWIS

► A LONE RABBIT IN RICHMOND PARK, LONDON

All through spring I'd been visiting Richmond Park at sunset trying to capture an image in golden light. Focusing on a colony of rabbits, I was finally able to capture this guy enjoying the last few minutes of light. @mitchlewisphoto

### THE JUDGES SAID

The most important thing in wildlife photography is light, not subject, and this photo shows this in spades. The backlit scene gives the shot a compelling warmth and helps emphasise some of the most delicate features of the rabbit, from its paper thin ears to its silky whiskers.

## ▼ HARI KUMAR PRASANNAKUMAR

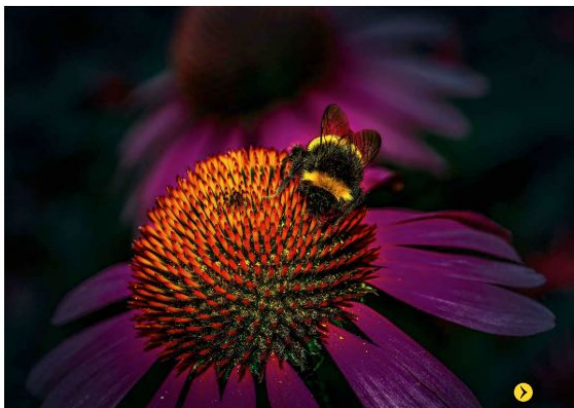
OSPREY CATCHING A FISH IN AVIEMORE, SCOTLAND

Ospreys migrate from Africa to Scotland every year. I was waiting for the bird from 4am, I got the first jump at 5am but it was a noisy image due to low light. Another bird came and this time I got the shot. @just4hari

## ► DIMITRIOS ZACHAROPOULOS

BUMBLEBEE AT RHS GARDEN WISLEY, SURREY

The colours of the flowers contrasted with those of the bumblebee to striking effect. I had to create darkness in the shot so I dropped my compensation down. I took around 50 photos and this was my favourite. @obipixel\_









# LANDSCAPE

FROM VAST, SWEEPING VISTAS TO AERIAL SHOTS THAT REVEAL THE PATTERNS OF A TERRAIN, THIS CATEGORY IS ALL ABOUT CAPTURING UNUSUAL PERSPECTIVES

## ★ OZGUN OZDEMIR

### ◀ MARBLE HILL BEACH, DONEGAL, IRELAND

**I'd been trying for this shot for months but couldn't get a calm early morning. On this November day, my friends and I agreed to meet at the beach at sunrise, but after checking the forecast I realised that would mean missing the ideal conditions, so I arrived an hour early to set up. @oozzguunn**

### THE JUDGES SAID

The planning and execution of this shot is the most striking aspect. The photographer was able to capture a moment to allow us to experience a much deeper view of the landscape. The use of a drone is incredibly impactful, making the stream from land to water feel like a magic spell.



## ⚡ JIANBO JIA

### EMERALD LAKE, QINGHAI PROVINCE, CHINA

It took us eight hours to drive from the nearest city to Emerald Lake, hidden like a jewel in the north west of China. When we pulled up at the lake, I was still preparing my drone for take-off when my friend excitedly dashed into the lake, which I then filmed with my drone. @jace\_jia

## ▲ JORDAN BANKS

### DIAMOND BEACH, ICELAND

I found myself on Diamond Beach in Southern Iceland, surrounded by these ginormous pieces of ice, and was struggling to highlight the wildness of the location and magnitude of the ice blocks from the ground. I took to the sky with a DJI Mavic 2 drone with 28mm Hasselblad lens to achieve a new perspective. @jordanbanksphoto





# PORTFOLIO

SHOOTING A FULL PHOTOGRAPHY FEATURE INVOLVES TELLING A STORY THROUGH A SERIES OF IMAGES. ENTRIES INCLUDED UP TO 10 IMAGES OF A DESTINATION TO TEASE OUT DIFFERENT FACETS OF THE NARRATIVE AND CREATE A NUANCED PORTRAIT. THE IMAGES WERE JUDGED AS A COHESIVE SET, IN TERMS OF SUBJECT AND STYLE

## GRAND PRIZE WINNER

### ★ ANDRO LORIA

#### ► ICELAND

The images were all taken in Iceland from a small airplane on my trips during summer and autumn last year. Iceland is unique, as it has a great variety of landscape types within a relatively short range of distance. You can see deserts, volcanoes, glaciers, mountains, braided rivers and lakes, sea coast and highlands all in one flight. It's like a continent in miniature. And what an amazing 'continent' it is. @andro\_loria

#### THE JUDGES SAID

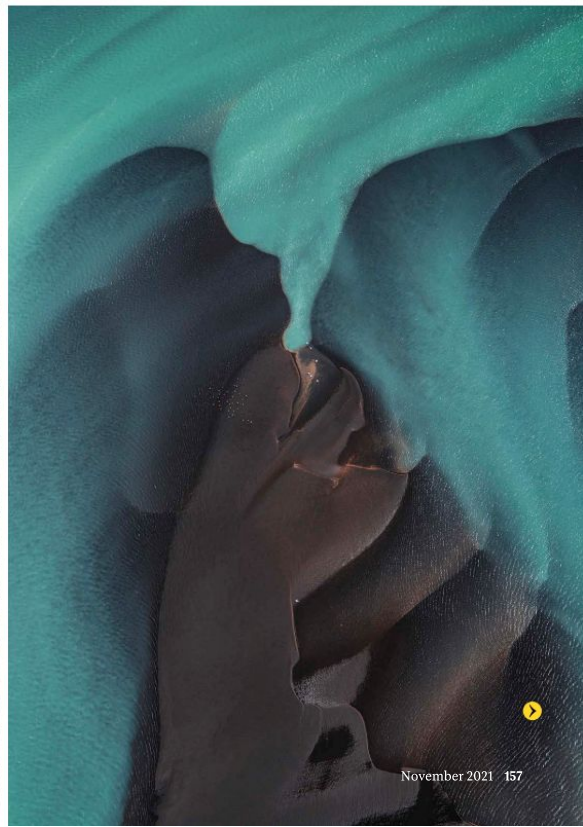
What an incredible selection of landscapes, mixing abstract swirling colours with frozen geyser-filled vistas that are at once cohesive and distinct. The skill with portfolios is to curate a selection of images that complement each other to elevate each above the single frame, while each working individually and the photographer has certainly succeeded with this.

### ◀ RENATO GRANIERI

#### SIERRA LEONE

The Sorbengi Women's Oyster Group was founded by Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary in 2018 and aims to teach the residents about sustainable ways to harvest oysters. This initiative targeted women oyster harvesters as a form of female empowerment in the area; the group now boasts a total of 40 harvesters. During my stay at Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, I was part of the team that visited this remote area of Sierra Leone. It was a fantastic chance to spend a few days witnessing the hard work achieved by the community. The work they do is truly remarkable. @renato\_granieri\_photography









◀ **JONATHAN DOYLE**

**AUSTRALIA**

In 2020, I was documenting an expedition to complete the first human-powered vertical crossing of Australia. I captured the images in the Namadgi National Park near Canberra. It was closed to the public due to the bushfires that had devastated the area, but we were invited to visit by Brett McNamara, the park manager. The scene could only be described as apocalyptic. But it was the silence that struck me first. We just stood there in the middle of the road, surrounded by dead white limbs thrusting up from the ground like giant skeletal fingers. No bird calls, no buzzing insects, no rustling leaves. Just suffocating silence. @jonathandoylemedia

**THE JUDGING PANEL**

**BECKY REDMAN**

Art director, *National Geographic Traveller* (UK)

**HARRY SKEGGS**

Award-winning wildlife photographer

**LOLA AKINMADE**

Award-winning freelance photographer

**ANNAPURNA MELLOR**

Award-winning travel photographer

**ALEX STEAD**

Award-winning Nikon photographer

**F DILEK UYAR**

Award-winning freelancer photographer

**CATHY HARLOW**

Guide and photographer, Discover the World

**OLIVER PUGLISI**

Picture editor, *National Geographic Traveller* (UK)

**THE PRIZES**

**Grand prize**

The grand prize winner receives a state-of-the-art Nikon Z 6II mirrorless camera and 24-70 f/4 lens, worth £2,549. With a massive 24.5MP FX-format CMOS sensor, dual card slots and 4K video capacity, this is the perfect kit for capturing rich, professional travel imagery. [nikon.co.uk](http://nikon.co.uk)

Nordic expert Discover the World is also offering the grand prize winner a four-night Northern Lights trip for two people in Swedish Lapland, worth around £4,500. Flying from Manchester or London, the trip combines three nights at Brändön Lodge with one night at the Treehotel. [discover-the-world.com](http://discover-the-world.com)

**Category winners**

The five category winners each receive a Nikon D3500 SLR camera and AF-P 18-55mm VR lens worth £419. A 24.2MP CX-format sensor, razor-sharp auto focus system and ergonomic grip make it a great on-the-go companion for travel photographers. □



SEE THE FULL GALLERY OF WINNING SHOTS AND FINALISTS AT [NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL](http://NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.CO.UK/TRAVEL)

# 24 hours in Baden-Baden

On the northern cusp of Germany's Black Forest, find out why this hilly spa town gained UNESCO World Heritage status in 2021 as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe.

Here's how to spend the perfect day

## MORNING

Kick-start your morning over a locally roasted espresso at boho-cool Kaffeesack before exploring Baden-Baden's historic heart. At the Kurhaus, you'll want to see its riot of Corinthian columns; Trinkhalle, a neoclassical pump room, whose portico is festooned with mythological frescoes; and the hilltop Stiftskirche church, which has towered above cobbled Marktplatz square for more than 1,000 years.

Pause among the flowers, fountains and sculptures in the manicured Lichtentaler Allee gardens on the Oos River banks. Here you'll find Baden-Baden's unmissable gallery, the avant-garde Richard Meier-designed Museum Frieder Burda, which has high-calibre modern and contemporary art including Miró, Picasso and Pollock.

## AFTERNOON

Hungry? Go for the daily special or a slice of torte (the Black Forest gâteau is divine) at elegantly old-school Café König, once frequented by Liszt and Tolstoy. Or snag an al fresco table at park-side Rizzi, where the brasserie-style dishes like bouillabaisse and homemade burgers are expertly paired with a glass of Riesling and Pinot from one of the nearby vineyards.

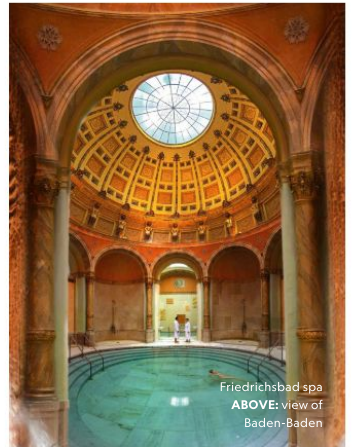
Part of Baden-Baden's beauty is its proximity to nature, so spend the afternoon on a high. Hoof it up to Florentinerberg for

quiet time in Italianate gardens filled with orange, lemon and cypress trees. Or take the funicular up to 2,191ft Merkur mountain for gentle hiking trails, deer encounters and views deep into the Black Forest hills.

## EVENING

Said to cure all manner of ills and make you feel 10 years younger, Baden-Baden's hot springs are its raison d'être — take an early evening dip, not only a rite of passage, but also very relaxing. The slick, glass-fronted Caracalla Spa has a clutch of indoor and outdoor pools, grottoes and hydrotherapy channels. But if you're prepared to bare all, head instead for the ornately domed Friedrichsbad, for a ritual scrub-and-steam in its Roman-Irish baths.

For a spot of splendour and culture, have a flutter in the palatial Casino Baden-Baden that Marlene Dietrich called the world's most beautiful, or get dressed up for an event at the Festspielhaus, Germany's largest opera and concert house. When it's time for dinner, go all out with a French feast at a hot-ticket restaurant like elegant, Michelin-starred Le Jardin de France. Or keep it more casual at the tucked-away Weinstube im Baldreit, where regional flavours like Flammkuchen (Alsatian pizza) and braised pork cheeks are matched with local wines. Wrap up the day with a dessert and coffee in its vine-draped courtyard.



Friedrichsbad spa  
ABOVE: view of  
Baden-Baden

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### MAGICAL KENYA

Nairobi is a buzzing city of street food vendors and cosmopolitan restaurants. Wilderness is on the doorstep, too: nearby Nairobi National Park is home to a range of wildlife. [magicalkenya.com](http://magicalkenya.com)



### OBLU SELECT SANGELI

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

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## A bundle from Finisterre worth £155!



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IMAGES: GETTY



Wild Barbary macaque on the Rock of Gibraltar

## ★ STAR LETTER

### Monkey business

Your 'Stay at Home' piece on North Staffordshire (October issue) caught my eye, not only because its lovely countryside is just an hour from where I live in Cheshire, but for the mention of the 60-acre monkey forest at Trentham Estate in Stoke-on-Trent. It reminded me of when I lived in Gibraltar, where I became well-acquainted with Barbary macaques, so I took a keen interest in those living at Trentham's Monkey Forest. Gibraltar's monkeys rarely roam below the top of the Rock, though, and are much more interested in people than those at Trentham. The latter clearly haven't yet learned how to steal chocolate from unwitting visitors — a marginally terrifying mistake I only made once when in Gibraltar. **LISA BEST**



## Festival fever

How wonderful to be reminded about the 'Glastonbury of food festivals' — the Abergavenny Food Festival — as described in your Wales guide. I was there back in 2017. Spread across the small market town rather than across a muddy field, it had stalls letting you sample (and buy) coffee, burgers, cheese, gin and even Welsh wine. Best of all was a masterclass on innovations in chocolate. I learned so much, including how fermentation affects the taste and how an experienced farm worker can open up to 500 cacao pods in an hour with a machete, without damaging the beans inside — and without harming himself! **ANNETTE HAMES**

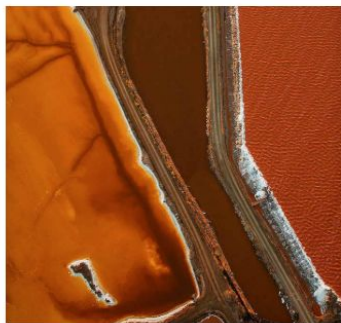
## Southern comfort

There's always been something about North America that fascinates me, and the Deep South (as featured in your October issue) is top of the list. Perhaps it's the music, history and colourful nightlife, or perhaps it's the sweet aroma of barbecue flavours and beautiful scenery. It's somewhere that excites me every time I think about it — I can just picture myself drinking an old fashioned, listening to blues music. I'm now a step closer to booking that bucket-list trip. **ABBIE SMITH**



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