

POSTCARDS

Inspiration And Insights To Help You Travel Better

JACKSON HOLE

EXPLORE WYOMING'S UNSPOILED WILDERNESS



GREECE

Seafood in the Ionian Islands

AUSTRALIA

A guide to the Northern Territory

WELCOME

Dear fellow traveler,

Bright, carefree summer months are the ideal backdrop for travel plans. The ultimate summer luxury — time with family and friends — should be considered judiciously, and you might find just the right journey within these pages. There's always a stretch of coast, seasonal dish or annual festival that beckons.

In this summer issue of *Postcards*, we're pleased to feature Pól Ó Conghaile, author of *Secret Dublin* and Travel Editor at the *Irish Independent*, who gives us his guidance for visiting the Irish capital. Rebecca Barnes traces an 11-night Crystal Cruises itinerary that departs Bali and heads north along the Makassar Strait before hopping between the Philippines' emerald islands and ending in iconic Hong Kong. And the gastronomy of the Ionian Islands of Greece comes into focus thanks to Emily Brown, who shares her favorite seafood tavernas.

Sand, sea and celebration: long dinners outdoors, building sandcastles and splashing in crystal-clear waters are the things of family lore, and our agency is here to help you make the most of it. Backed by our specialized resources, we can turn your travel dreams into reality. All you'll need to do is switch to airplane mode and head into endless summer. Happy travels!



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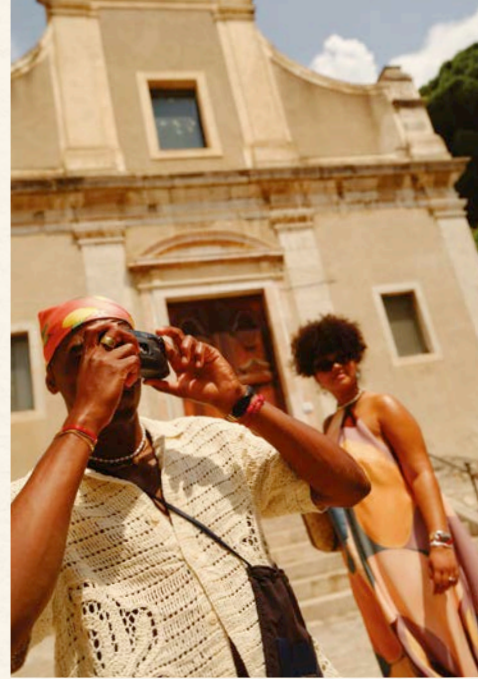
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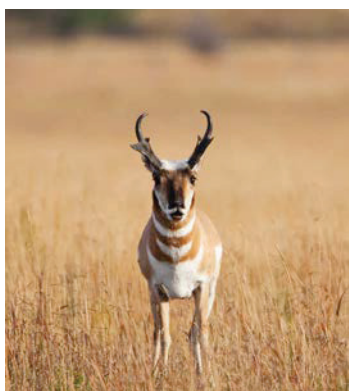
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WEEKENDER

How to spend a perfect 72 hours in Jackson Hole, Wyoming's unspoiled mountain valley packed with wildlife, adventure and towering peaks

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A deep dive into the unique fusion flavors of Corfu, the popular Greek island with a cuisine shaped by over 400 years of Venetian rule

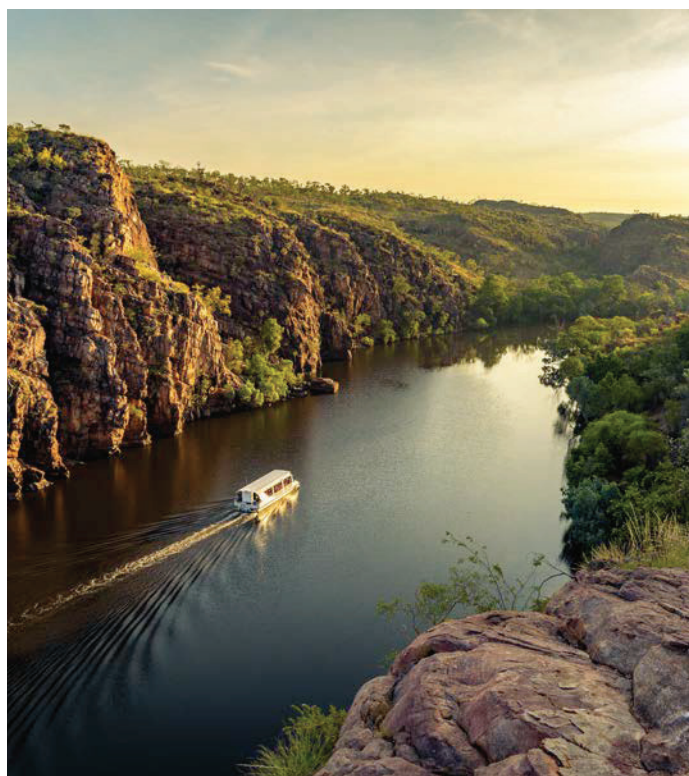
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NORTHERN TERRITORY

The ultimate beginner's guide to one of Australia's most fascinating destinations — from finding authentic, Aboriginal art to planning day trips through spectacular national parks

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An incredible 11-night voyage with Crystal Cruises explores cultural hotspots including Hong Kong, Bali, Sabah and the Philippines

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CITY GUIDE: DUBLIN

A comprehensive guide to the small but mighty Irish capital — from how to explore its surprising culinary scene to making the most of its world-famous historical spaces

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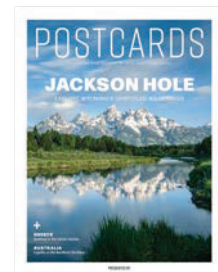
Victoria Smith
Acting Senior Sub-Editor

Daniel Gregory
Production Manager

Matthew Midworth
Special Projects



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Cover: Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming • Getty

WONDROUS WATERFALLS

Helmcken Falls

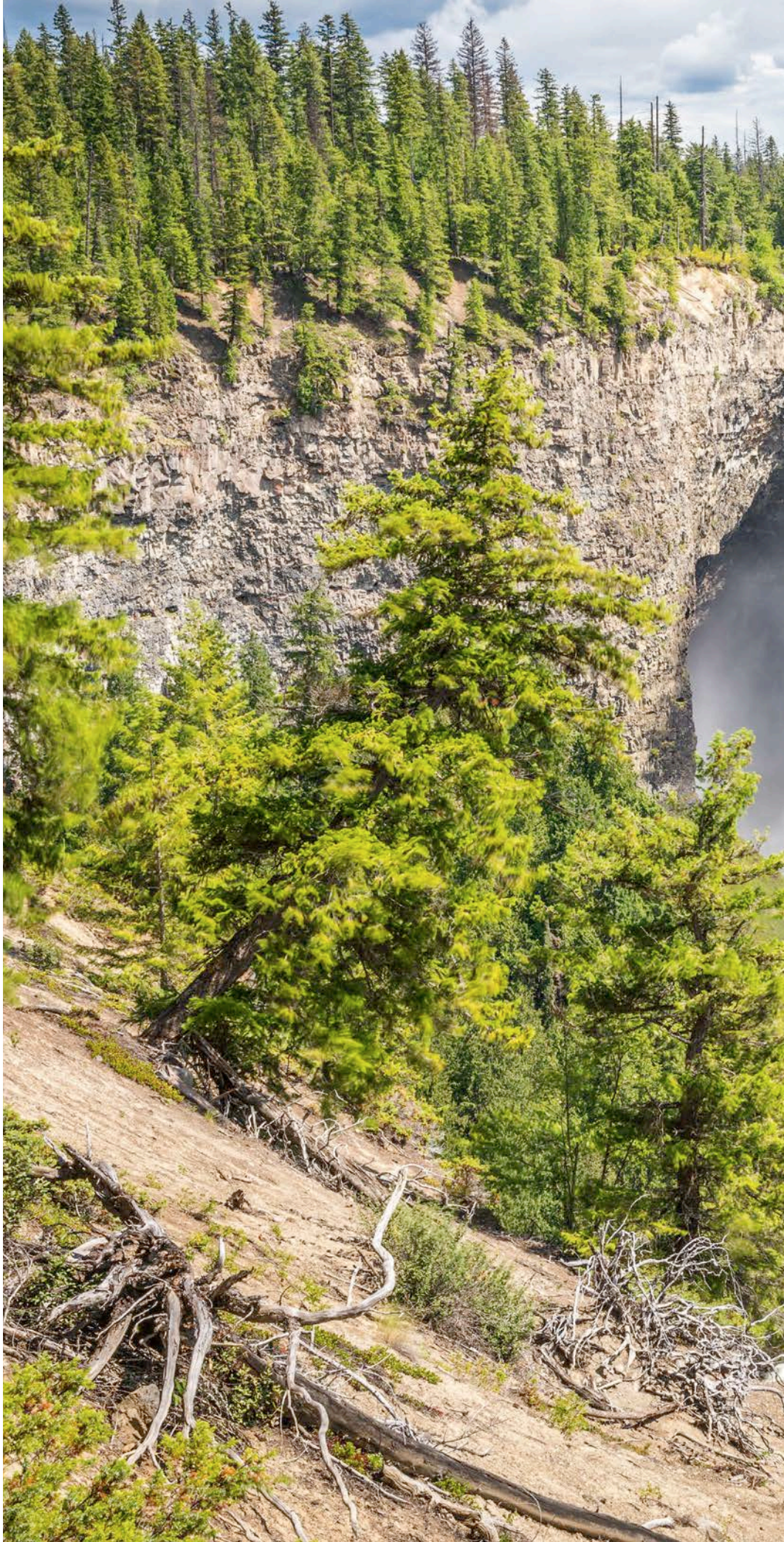
WHERE: BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Canada's fourth-highest waterfall, Helmcken tumbles 463 feet through a narrow opening in the western precipice of the Murtle Plateau. It's an awesome spectacle, with an average of 3,800 cubic feet of water plunging over the top every second, before emptying out into an enormous rocky bowl below.

Helmcken is just one of 41 named cascades inside Wells Gray Provincial Park, nicknamed 'Canada's Waterfall Park'. A combination of lava flows, slow-moving glaciers and ice-age floods shaped its rippling hills and etched its titanic ravines. Wells Gray's showstopper was first surveyed in 1913 and is named in honor of John Sebastian Helmcken, a local physician.

While the falls flow all year long, they're at their most spectacular in winter, when the spray freezes in mid-air to form a huge 'ice cone' that can be as tall as 165 feet. To witness this phenomenon, sign up for a guided snowshoe tour to the site in either January or February.

However, access to the park is easier in the summer months. Visitors can enjoy three hiking trails in the vicinity, including the Brink Trail that leads to Helmcken from Dawson Falls, and the Helmcken Falls Rim Trail that traces the edge of the gorge to overlook the confluence of the Murtle and Clearwater rivers.





GO NOW





Ban Gioc Falls

WHERE: CAO BANG, VIETNAM

Ban Gioc isn't your typical waterfall. Its splendor lies not in its height, but in its expansive breadth: the vertical drop is a relatively small 98 feet, but the horseshoe-shaped cascades sprawl horizontally over around 980 feet.

Also known as the Detian Transnational Waterfalls, Vietnam's largest falls are located on the Quay Son River in far northern Cao Bang province. Though it can also be seen from the Chinese side of the border, it's the viewpoint 170 miles northeast of Hanoi that attracts most visitors.

The tiered waterfall was formed over millions of years through limestone erosion, with each layer revealing a different stratum of bedrock and mineral deposits. Technically, it's not one single cascade, but two separate waterfalls that merge at the height of the rainy season (between May and September).

For a distant view of Ban Gioc draped over the misty hills, aim for the lookout at the Phat Tich Truc Lam Ban Gioc Pagoda. More intrepid visitors can sign up for a rafting tour of the emerald pools. It's best to use one of the traditional homestays in the area as a base to explore the falls, the rice paddies in the Phong Nam Valley and the nearby network of karst caves. □







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Left: *Star Princess*
sailing through Alaska

ALL ABOARD

Cruise launches in 2025 and beyond include art programs, innovative dining concepts and the unveiling of two new LNG-powered ships

all 2025 is set to be an exciting time in the world of cruising with the launch of two new ships from Princess Cruises and Virgin Voyages. The 4,300-passenger, LNG-powered *Star Princess* follows the launch of sister ship *Sun Princess* and features a three-story dining room and entertainment venue inspired by the architecture of Santorini, Greece. Its maiden voyage will be an 11-day Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona in October, followed by Caribbean sailings from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Virgin Voyages' adults-only *Brilliant Lady*, however, will focus on U.S. voyages including New England, Alaska and the West Coast. It promises entertainment, creative dining, enhanced cabins and a wide range of itineraries from five to 16 nights to broaden its appeal across different cruising demographics.

Other launches in 2025 include Viking's 12th ocean ship, *Vesta*, which will set sail on the high seas in July. Although slightly bigger than its predecessors, Viking is promoting it as a ship that can 'dock where larger ships cannot'.

Its maiden season will include Mediterranean cruises and voyages to Northern Europe and Iceland. The 47,000-ton, 998-guest, all-veranda ship features wellness facilities, multiple dining and entertainment options, two pools and a large Owner's Suite. Fall will also be a busy time for both MSC Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line. *MSC World America*, the brand's third LNG-powered ship, is set to launch in April after successfully completing deep-water tests in a final sea trial. *Norwegian Aqua* will start week-long Caribbean voyages the same month, with a Prince tribute show as one of its entertainment highlights.

Elsewhere, Oceania Cruises is set to launch *Allura* in July, which features the Grand Dining Room, where guests can choose from among more than 270 specially-created dishes. August will see Royal Caribbean launch *Star of the Seas* — its seven-night Eastern and Western Caribbean sailings will feature the return of the Artist Discovery Program, which helps regional artists showcase their work.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Caribbean club opening

The cruise travel giant is launching a series of beach clubs for passengers starting with the Bahamas in late 2025. The 17-acre club will include beach and swim-up bars and more than 40 cabanas.

The White Lotus boom for Thailand

Season three of the hit TV series *The White Lotus* is attracting tourists to locations in Phuket, Koh Samui and Bangkok. Many hotels have reported a rise in interest since the series aired.

Brilliant bites in New Orleans

The city has bolstered its culinary offering with a host of new restaurant openings. Rising stars include steakhouses The Husky and Bon Ton Prime Rib, as well as Tatlo, an Asian-inspired absinthe bar.



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WATER TO WINE: REGENT TRIESTE TO BARCELONA

Regent's *Seven Seas Mariner* will set sail from Trieste, Italy, to Barcelona, Spain, in October 2025 — and it aims to please the oenophiles on board. Bringing a taste of California to Europe, Steven Honig, from Honig Vineyard in the heart of Napa Valley, will be aboard to lead wine-tastings and seminars on sustainable viticulture as well as the region's rich wine history. Honig's specialties include Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc. On top of sampling Steven's leading selections, guests will be setting sail from the picturesque port of Trieste, before dropping anchor in Malta's capital Valletta, Naples, Tuscany and the port of Marseille as a gateway to Provence, en route to Barcelona.

Onshore, guests will have the opportunity to experience major cultural and historical attractions, including Valletta's Mosta Dome, the ruins of ancient Pompeii in Naples, Renaissance art in Florence, Marseille's charming Old Quarter and the imposing, famously unfinished Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

CULINARY CRUISE: FUSION FLAVORS FOR WINDSTAR

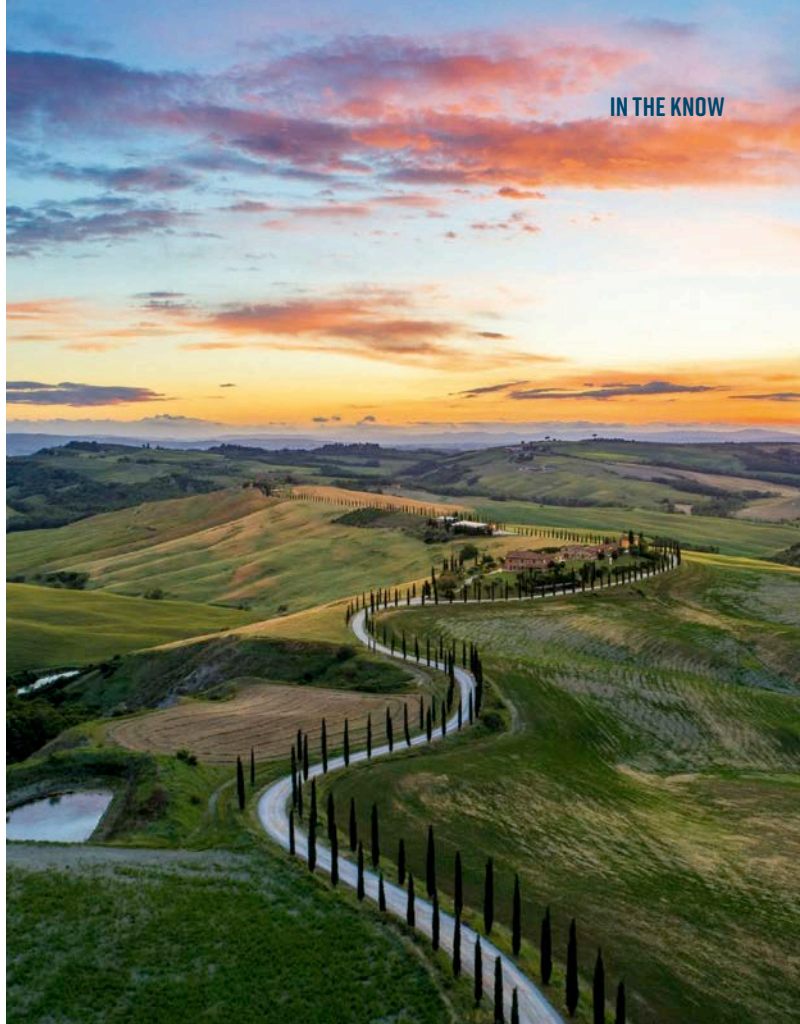
Basil + Bamboo, a specialty restaurant combining Mediterranean and Asian flavors, will replace Windstar Cruises' Cuadro 44 Spanish restaurants across its fleet.

Highlights of the bold and diverse menu include miso black cod and chicken with yuzu kosho. The dessert menu is just as enticing, with the likes of citrus olive oil cake and chocolate crèmeux with ginger-cinnamon hibiscus ice cream and sake caviar.

After debuting on *Star Breeze* in February, Basil + Bamboo will be rolled out to all ships throughout the year, including the upcoming *Star Seeker*, which launches in December 2025. Its maiden voyage leaves from Málaga, Spain and finishes in Miami on January 13, 2026.

The new restaurant will expand on Windstar's existing culinary options, which include the main dining room Amphora, and the more casual Yacht Club and Star Grill, which serves seafood and barbecued, grilled and smoked meats.

From top: Regent's *Seven Seas Mariner* will stop in Tuscany; Basil + Bamboo restaurant on one of Windstar's ships





Split Rock,
Turks and Caicos

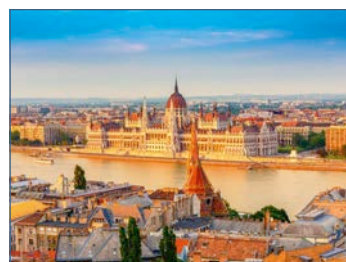
THROW ME A BONE

Hunting the elusive bonefish is growing in popularity among visitors to the Turks and Caicos Islands

The bonefish isn't renowned as a culinary delight, but the sport of bonefishing is about the skill and thrill of the chase, rather than catching something for dinner. Best described as an extreme form of fly-fishing, it's a test of patience as well as physical endurance. Once a bonefish — also known as the gray ghost — is caught, and often photographed and weighed, it's then released back into the waters.

Off the coast of the Turks and Caicos Islands, an archipelago of 40 low-lying islands, bonefish are generally found in the shallow waters of the flats; they move

to these areas with the tides. Sailrock South Caicos is a luxury resort that offers a bonefishing experience under the watchful eye of local experts. Whether you're a total novice or have years of fishing experience, the extremely knowledgeable guides are trained to cater to guests of all levels. The resort's bonefishing trips entail guides sharing their casting techniques and best tips for stalking and hooking a prize catch. As well as bonefish, lucky anglers might catch Atlantic tarpon on their fishing trip. To get to South Caicos, you can fly American Airlines non-stop from Miami on Wednesdays and Saturdays. □



TRAVEL TALK

AmaWaterways and Smithsonian

The luxury river cruise company is partnering with the Smithsonian Institution to add a new cultural component to its European sailings. These co-branded trips will launch in April 2026, offering immersive experiences on the Danube, Douro, Rhine, Rhône and Seine.

Sandals' coral conservation

The Sandals Foundation, conservation group BRANCH Coral Foundation, the Sandals Royal Curaçao resort and the local government have joined forces to restore Curaçao's coral reefs. Five trees will be erected to house fragments of staghorn coral in an attempt to regenerate this species, which is threatened by climate change, overfishing and pollution. The two-year project aims to create a coral nursery.

Up close with nature in Florida

The Florida Keys Eco-Experience Trail Pass and the Florida Aquarium are offering visitors natural world interactions. The trail pass offers more than 40 geo-tagged bookable Monroe County experiences, including kayak tours and wildlife refuge visits. The upgraded Florida Aquarium in Tampa will include a tide pool touch experience with an aquatic lounge. The launch date is not yet confirmed.

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JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

Breathtaking scenery, winding rivers and endless outdoor activities make this Western mountain valley a must-visit, says Kristen Pope

DAY 1

Ringed by the Teton and Gros Ventre mountain ranges and with the winding Snake River running through the valley, Jackson Hole is a nature lover's paradise. It's a great place to spot bison, elk, grizzly and black bears, bald eagles and to get a taste of the wilderness in the Western U.S.

Fuel up for a day of adventure with breakfast at Persephone bakery and cafe. Grab a table on the outdoor patio and choose from the likes of brioche French toast, scone skillet or a seeded avocado bowl. Wander down the street to Jackson's iconic Town Square, with its famous elk antler arches on each corner. Elk are an integral part of life in Jackson Hole, and the 24,700+ acre National Elk Refuge, where thousands of them spend their winters, is just north of here. Take a few minutes to peruse the numerous boutiques, galleries and gift shops. The Jackson Hole Farmers Market is a nice way to spend an hour or two if you're visiting on a Sunday. Wildlife and photography lovers shouldn't miss Thomas D. Mangelsen's Images of Nature Gallery, which includes the local photographer's incredible images of wildlife in Jackson Hole and around the globe. Oenophiles should swing by Jackson Hole Winery's tasting room to sample some wine at high altitude.

After exploring the town, get ready for a half-day of whitewater rafting. Slather on sunscreen, grab any necessary gear and head to the designated pick-up point for the trip. Many operators offer whitewater rafting as well as scenic floats on calmer stretches of the Snake River with the chance of spotting wildlife like moose and bald eagles. Trips vary, but the eight-mile whitewater float and one popular scenic float option are each about three to four hours long, depending on flow levels. Then, stay on the river theme by returning to town and heading to Snake River Brewing. Established in 1994, this locals' favorite brewpub is often called 'Jackson's living room', and pours locally-brewed Pako's IPA and Jenny Lake Lager, among others. On its menu, expect bison burgers, bison and beef chili, pizzas, salads and much more.

For dinner, head to The Blue Lion (book in advance), a historic house on Millward Street. Enjoy the famed rack of lamb or sample the array of game and fish on offer.

In the evening, head to Snow King Mountain to gaze at distant worlds through a telescope in the mountaintop observatory and planetarium. On select summer evenings, concerts are held on top of the mountain — be sure to book ahead.



DAY 2

Get an early start to spend a full day enjoying Grand Teton National Park. First thing in the morning is one of the best times for wildlife viewing, so consider grabbing a cup of coffee and breakfast to go at Snake River Roasting Company's cafe before heading up to the park, which is only a few miles from Jackson's Town Square. Bring binoculars and cameras, and keep a watchful eye for moose, especially in areas near water, as well as bears, elk and other wildlife. In the fall, listen for bugling elk and look up to the sky for a chance to spot bald eagles and an array of raptors. For the best chance at seeing bison, drive toward the historic TA Moulton Barn on the eastern side of the highway. This site is a classic photo stop for its epic backdrop of the Teton Mountains.

Then, slip on a pair of hiking boots and get ready to explore. Take the Jenny Lake Boating Shuttle across the lake for quick access to the hiking trails of Hidden Falls and Inspiration Point. Boats run

continuously every 10-15 minutes and no reservations are necessary. Be sure to have everything you need for outdoor recreation, such as water, food, sun protection and layers of clothing, including rain gear. Keep in mind the weather can change rapidly in the mountains, and a beautiful sunny day can turn into a cold thunderstorm with hail very quickly — so come prepared. When hiking, always give wildlife plenty of space, and learn best practices for exploring in bear country, including hiking in groups and never letting a bear access human food. Bring bear spray and learn what to do in case of a close encounter.

For lunch, drive to Leek's Pizzeria, by the shores of Jackson Lake, to enjoy a couple of slices while listening to the lapping water. Then, drive along Jenny Lake Scenic Drive to enjoy some of the park's best views. For more exercise, consider hiking Taggart Lake-Bradley Lake Loop, which is 5.6 miles round-trip and provides views with around 890 feet of elevation gain along the way.

From left: A bison at Grand Teton National Park; view of Aspens and Teton Range at Grand Teton National Park

Previous pages, clockwise from top left: Aerial tram at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort; National Park sign; Million Dollar Cowboy Bar in Jackson town; a pronghorn antelope buck at Grand Teton National Park; sunrise in Jackson Hole; a burger at Mangy Moose Saloon in Teton Village; horseback riding in Grand Teton National Park; a grizzly bear door post at Teton Tourist Village; Colter Bay, Jackson Lake, Teton Range





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After working up an appetite, swing by Dornans, a local institution established in 1922. Sit on the side or upper deck with a pizza, pasta or other tasty dishes while enjoying views the Tetons. Watch the sun dip below the mountains and then drive back to town — looking out for wildlife along the way — and settle in for another relaxing evening.

DAY 3

The Bunnery Bakery & Restaurant is a great place to indulge in a breakfast, with favorites like omelets, quiche and biscuits with gravy. After filling up, head to the National Museum of Wildlife Art, situated on a hill just north of town, with an expansive view of the National Elk Refuge. The museum's permanent collection includes more than 5,000 artworks by renowned artists like Andy Warhol, Georgia O'Keeffe and John James Audubon. Enjoy the permanent collection, savor the rotating exhibits and be sure to check out the outdoor Sculpture Trail.

Stop for food at Palate, the museum's on-site restaurant that serves up dishes like bison gyros, elk meatloaf wraps and salads. It's a good idea to book ahead as it can get busy during the summer.

After lunch, drive out to Teton Village, home of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and famous for its extreme ski terrain. In the summer, the resort features an extensive network of trails with hiking and lift-accessed downhill mountain biking, as well as a via ferrata, disc golfing, paragliding and other adrenaline-filled activities.

Take the Jackson Hole Aerial Tram (locally known as 'Big Red') 4,139 vertical feet up to the top of Rendezvous Mountain, while scanning the slopes below for moose, bears and marmots. Here, from a 10,450-foot vantage point, take in panoramic views of the Jackson Hole Valley, Tetons — including a look at Grand Teton National Park — and distant mountain ranges. Stop by Corbet's Cabin for a plate of mountain-top waffles, then explore the high-elevation scenery before descending to explore the base area.

Above: Stagecoach ride and Elk Antler Arches, downtown Jackson Hole



Million Dollar Cowboy Bar at night

Down at the base, enjoy a treatment at one of Teton Village's spas. SpaTerre includes an infrared sauna and salt chamber, eucalyptus-infused steam rooms and hot tubs — including a rooftop hot tub with incredible views. Be sure to book ahead.

After unwinding a bit, take the resort's Bridger Gondola up to The Deck, which is partway up the mountain, to enjoy some food and drinks outdoors while watching the sun set and soaking up valley and mountain views. Or go indoors for dinner at Piste Mountain Bistro, which has floor-to-ceiling windows and dishes like elk and cheddar meatballs and grilled Wyoming lamb burger.

Each summer, world-renowned musicians play at the Grand Teton Music Festival, which is hosted at Walk Festival Hall in Teton Village, but be sure to purchase tickets in advance.

After a long day at the village, head back to the town of Jackson for a drink at the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar atop one of its iconic saddle barstools to cap off a perfect three days in Jackson Hole. □



ESSENTIALS

When to go: Late May to early

September is peak summer season and fall is also a popular time to visit. Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions, including potential snow. Summer thunderstorms are common.

Currency: U.S. Dollar

Language: English

Getting around: Renting a car will provide the most flexibility, though taxis and buses will take you between Jackson and Teton Village. In summer, biking is a popular way to get around and beat traffic. However, to travel up to Grand Teton National Park, a rental car is the best option, or sign up for tours that pick up in town if driving isn't an option.



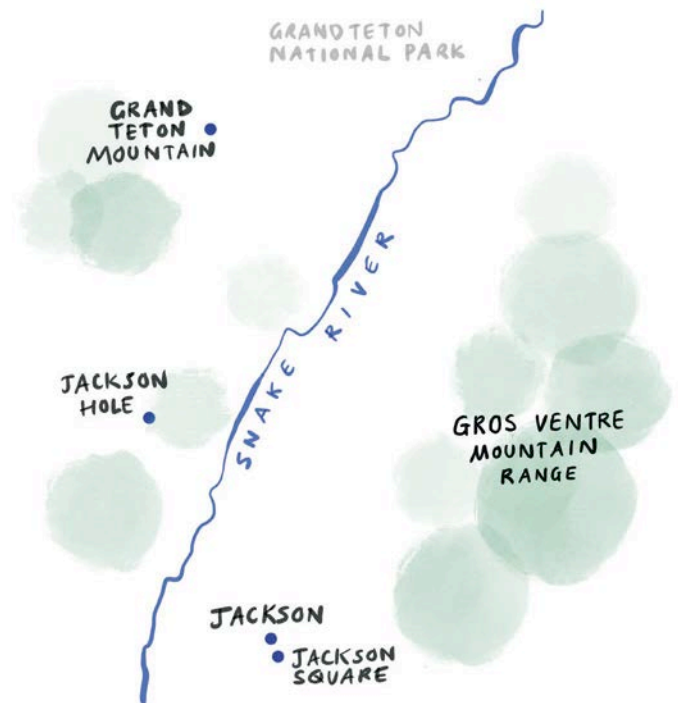
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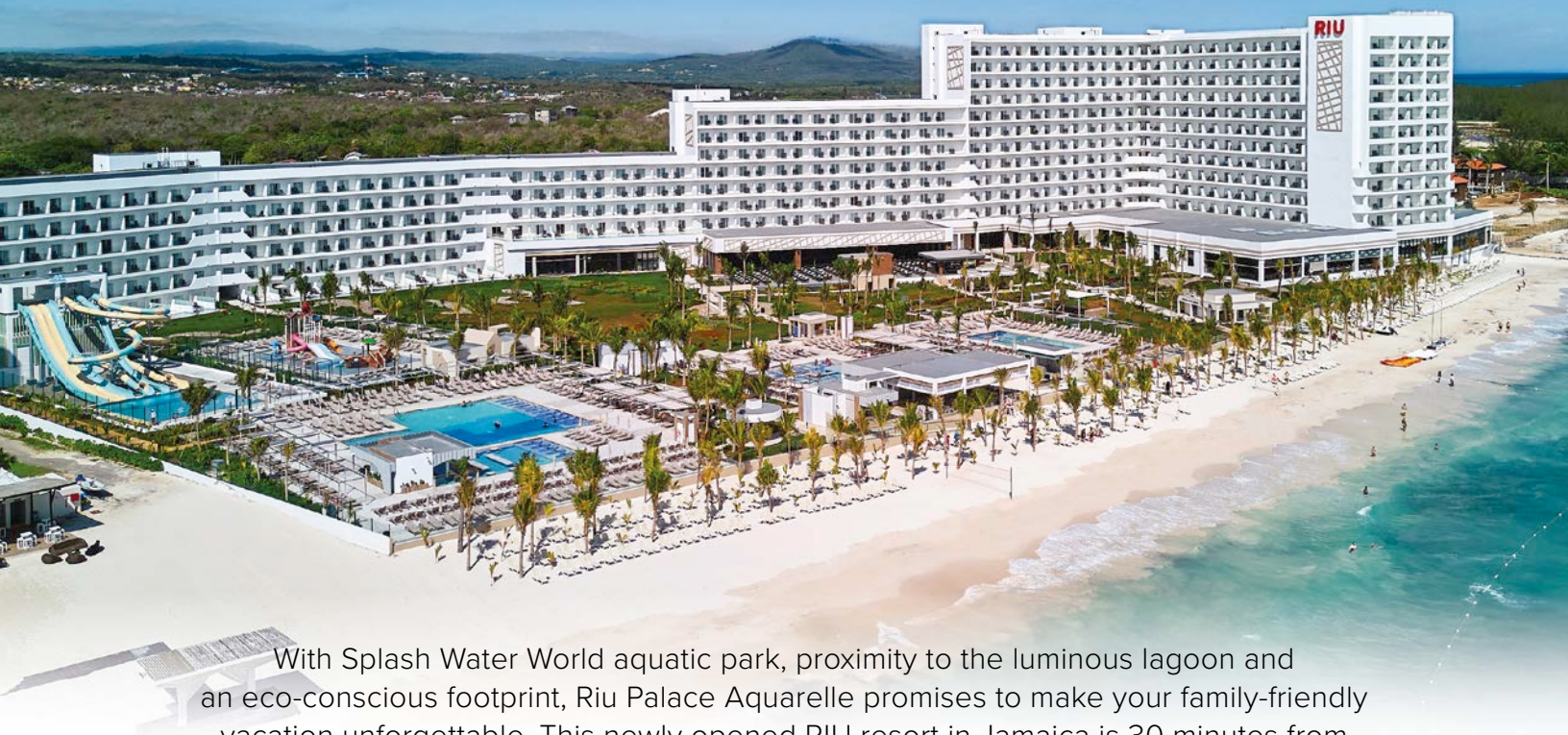


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MUSEUMS IN MADRID

Dive into the Spanish capital's most impressive and celebrated collections, says Emily Lush

From the esteemed 'Big Three' institutions that make up the Golden Triangle of Art — inscribed as 'a Landscape of Arts and Sciences' by UNESCO in 2021 — to contemporary pop-up exhibitions, Madrid is a true bastion of the arts. The Spanish capital is home to more than 100 museums, galleries and cultural centers in total, some set in

iconic neoclassical buildings along the Paseo del Arte ('Art Walk'), and others occupying retrofitted industrial spaces on the riverside. Trace Spain's legacy from ancient Iberia to the imperial era and the 21st century through a combination of artifacts, Golden Age masterpieces and iconic cubist canvases. Here are the five Madrid museums you can't miss.

← AMERICAN MUSEUM

The Museo de América was established in 1941 to display a diverse collection of objects from Spain's former colonial territories. Its HQ in the Ciudad Universitaria district was designed by architects Luis Moya and Luis Martínez Feduchi, and evokes the conquistadors' evangelical mission, with a convent-inspired layout where galleries are arranged around a central cloister. This tribute to art, archaeology and ethnography features Andean and Mesoamerican artifacts, Native American crafts and artworks. The museum promotes dialogue, understanding and collaboration — cultural mediators are on hand to interpret the mostly Spanish exhibits.



↑ MATADERO

Set on the Manzanares River, the Matadero served as Madrid's cattle market and abattoir for seven decades before it was closed in 1996. Now an interdisciplinary arts center, it preserves many of its industrial details, including the water tower. Head to the Abierto X Obras, a former refrigeration facility, to see the latest installation, attend a pop-up musical performance in the Plaza or watch a documentary film in the Cineteca. Guided tours, hosted every weekend, explore the city's history through the lens of one of its most ambitious urban regeneration projects.



← PRADO MUSEUM

As the leading art institution in Spain, the Museo Nacional del Prado has pride of place in Madrid's Golden Art Triangle. Its neoclassical headquarters — designed in 1785 — reflect the grandeur of the collection, which covers European art between the 12th and 19th centuries. There's a statue of Diego Velázquez at the western entrance and many visitors make a beeline for *Las Meninas* (1656), his baroque masterpiece that hangs in a characteristically ethereal gallery. Other highlights include Caravaggio's *David and Goliath*, Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Son* and Hieronymus Bosch's allegorical triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.

→ NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Founded by royal decree in 1867 as a repository for the Spanish monarchs' vast treasures, Museo Arqueológico Nacional offers visitors a deep dive into the history of the Iberian Peninsula and broader Mediterranean. Its permanent galleries were custom-designed a decade ago to accommodate the 13,000-plus objects, which range from Roman mosaics and Visigoth coinage to Egyptian sarcophagi and Mudéjar stonework. Don't miss the iconic Lady of Elche, a 4th-century BCE limestone bust that was unearthed in southeast Spain. In the forecourt, a replica of the Cave of Altamira features vivid recreations of paleolithic paintings.



← REINA SOFÍA

This museum picks up where the Prado leaves off, surveying abstract, surrealist and impressionist art from the 20th century. The collection celebrates the contemporary Spanish masters who were inspired by Velázquez, with Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), a wall-sized epic that depicts the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró and Juan Gris — plus their international contemporaries Francis Bacon, Vassily Kandinsky and Yves Klein — are also represented. Inaugurated in 1992, the Reina Sofía's original gallery (once a 16th-century hospital) is flanked by modern glass elevators, while a 32-foot-tall aluminum sculpture, *Brushstroke* by Roy Lichtenstein, stands proudly in a courtyard that bridges the new and old wings. ▢



FLY-FISHING IN THE BAHAMAS

The vast and shallow inshore flats of the Bahamas offer some of the world's best fly-fishing for anglers in search of wily bonefish, says Chris Hunt



1 NEW PROVIDENCE

Home to Nassau and the country's main international airport, New Providence is usually the first stop in the Bahamas. The Southern Flats are home to some of the country's biggest bonefish, which thrive among the shallow sand and turtle grass shoals around Coral Harbour and Cay Point. Access to these flats can be a bit challenging and they're best explored on foot.

2 ABACO ISLANDS

On these islands, situated in the north of the Bahamas, you'll find the 'Marls' — around 300 square miles of sand flats peppered by mangrove cays and pine islands, where bonefish move in and out with the tide in search of shrimp and crabs. From Abaco Lodge on the lip of the Marls, anglers can put flies in front of some that average between two and four pounds, and, if they're lucky, even tip the scales at an impressive eight pounds.

3 ANDROS

Around 150 miles southwest of Miami is perhaps the world's premier destination for saltwater fly-fishing. Andros Island offers a vast network of sandy flats and shallow creeks — perfect habitats for plus-sized bonefish. The Andros complex is legendary for its bonefish and the seemingly never-ending blonde-sand flats where they live. With more than a dozen lodges from Red Bay to Congo Town, anglers visiting the island will have plenty of options for guides and expertise.



THREE MORE

BELIZE

This Central American nation is home to some of the most productive bonefish flats on earth. Covered by verdant turtle grass, Belizean flats make for challenging sight-fishing, but fly-fishers have more choices.

YUCATAN PENINSULA, MEXICO

From Tulum all the way south to the border with Belize, this fish-filled stretch of the Mexican Caribbean is one of the most dependable places to visit for fly-fishers looking for the 'grand slam' — catching a bonefish, permit and tarpon all in the same day.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

'DR' is a 'big game' fishery for fly anglers hunting for blue and white marlin, sailfish and swordfish. Chasing them on a fly requires a capable guide and the ability to 'tease up' these fish with hookless lures. Once a fish shows up, the fly caster gets to work. If they're lucky, they'll spend the next hour battling the fish of a lifetime.



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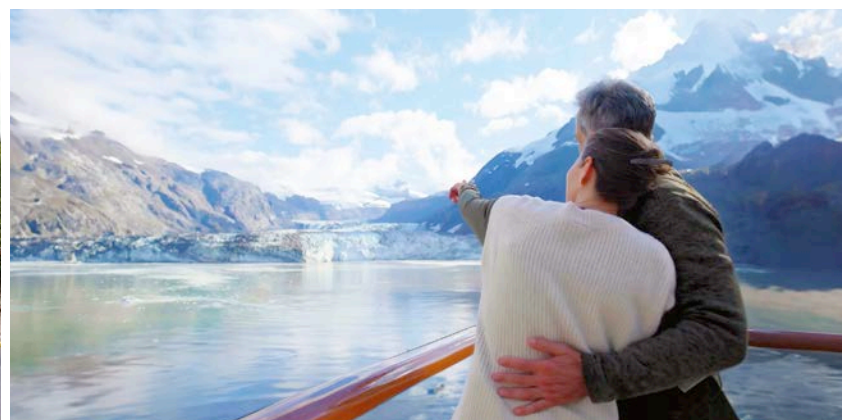
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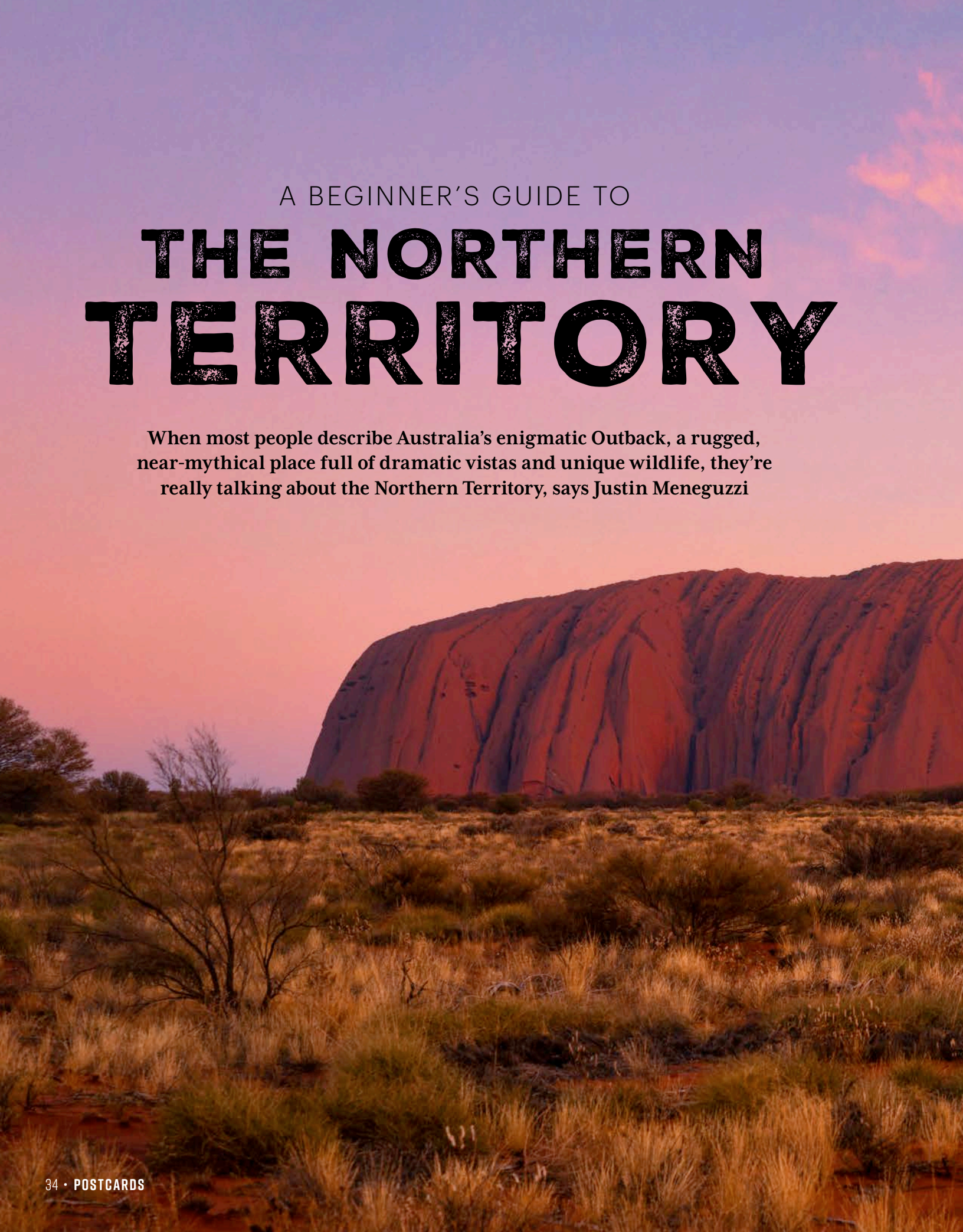
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A photograph of Uluru, a large sandstone monolith in the Northern Territory of Australia, during sunset. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and blue, with some clouds catching the low light. The foreground is filled with dry, yellowish-brown grass and small, dark shrubs. The monolith itself is a deep red color, with its surface showing vertical erosion patterns.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

When most people describe Australia's enigmatic Outback, a rugged, near-mythical place full of dramatic vistas and unique wildlife, they're really talking about the Northern Territory, says Justin Meneguzzi





The third-largest of Australia's states and territories is more than double the size of Texas, but can be roughly divided into two parts. To the north, shaped like a bull's head rushing into the Timor Sea, is the sultry Top End, known for its tropical savannahs, ancient rock art and showstopping national parks. Further south is the Red Centre, Australia's heartland, filled with cattle stations converted into luxury stays, vast star-studded night skies and monuments of deep spiritual significance.

Against the Territory's sheer scale, it might seem easy to get lost, but there are a handful of popular drawcards. Most

come to see Uluru, the hulking sandstone monolith at the country's center, but you can also soar above lush Kakadu National Park in a helicopter, shop Darwin's humid night markets, dine on native flavors found nowhere else, and learn the ancient ways of the Territory's Aboriginal peoples — the world's oldest continuing culture, dating back over 65,000 years.

TOWNS AND CITIES

Darwin is a popular launching pad to explore Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks, but there's good reason to linger in the Territory's capital. The consistent balmy nights are perfect for wandering

From left: Dirt road in the Red Centre; Ormiston Gorge in Tjoritja/ West MacDonnell National Park

Previous pages: Sunset at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park





the outdoor food markets, pulling up a beanbag at the open-air cinemas, or boarding a sunset cruise around the harbor. Families will also love the revitalized waterfront precinct with its funky restaurants and man-made (and croc-free) lagoon.

Alice Springs, Australia's most famous Outback town, is a magnet for thrill-seekers and creatives alike. At the city's edge lie the MacDonnell Ranges, where visitors can hike, climb or cycle through many chasms and gorges, stopping for a rejuvenating splash in hidden water holes. Meanwhile, the town has a wealth of Aboriginal art galleries and throws regular art festivals celebrating everything from Indigenous culture to Pride.

Located on the outskirts of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, the small town of Yulara is the main base for people wanting to visit Uluru, the 1,140-foot-high sandstone monolith. There are many ways to see it, including at dawn surrounded by a spectacular light show or at sunset accompanied by an expertly prepared

banquet of native ingredients like quandong, lemon myrtle and finger lime.

HISTORY & HERITAGE

Before European settlement, Aboriginal people lived widely across the Northern Territory in a network of clans, each with their own culture, language and belief systems. The Larrakia people, the traditional custodians of the Garramilla region, which is today called Darwin, traded with their Southeast Asian neighbors and even encountered early Dutch explorers nearly 150 years before James Cook formally claimed New South Wales for Britain in 1770.

It would take some time for settlers to chart the Northern Territory's dangerous coastline, but Port Darwin was eventually established in 1839. The region then witnessed multiple unsuccessful attempts to settle and use the land, which included pearling, gold mining and early pastoralism. Sheep and cattle farms were successfully established in the region in the late 19th century.

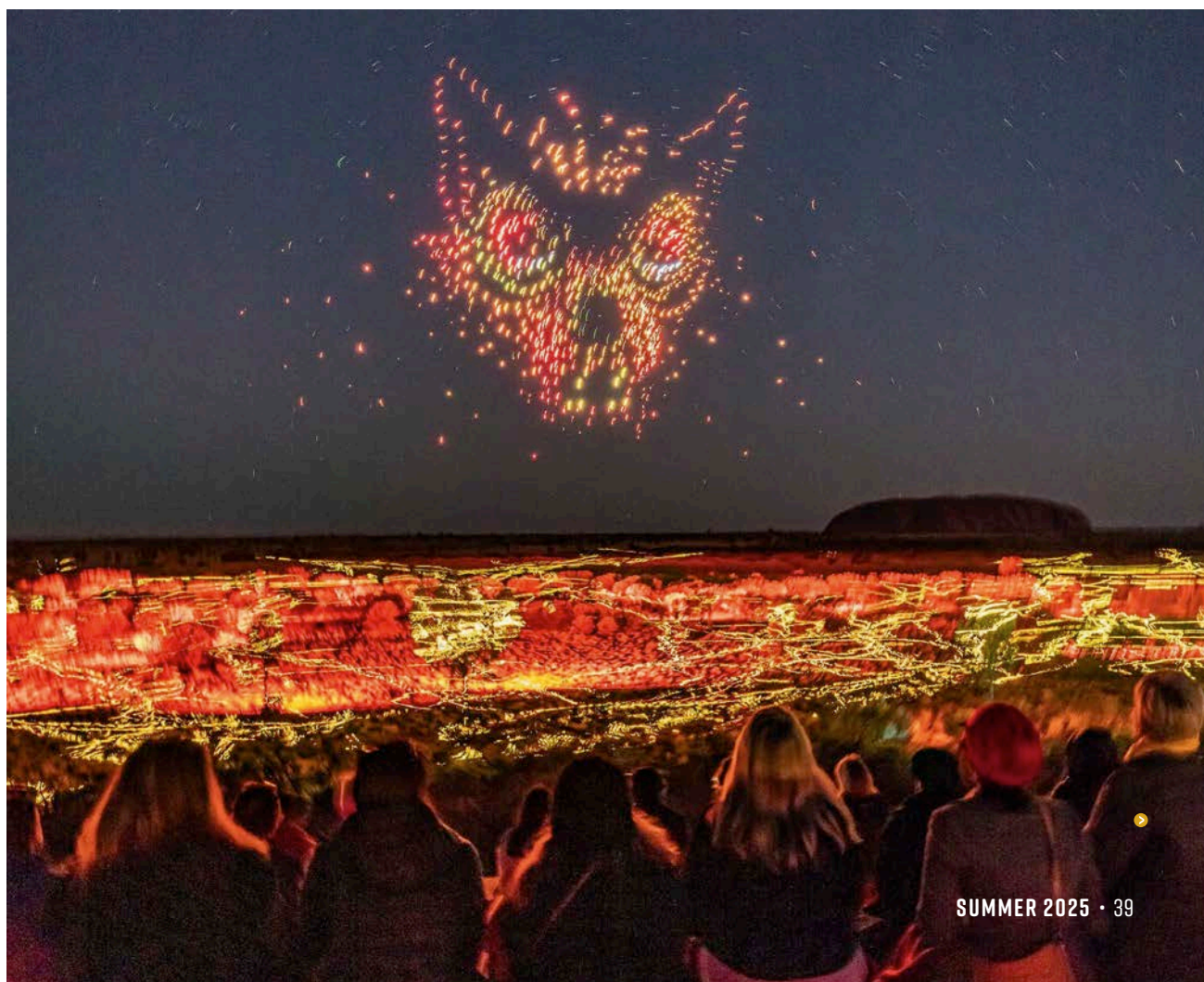


Alice Springs, Australia's most famous Outback town, is a magnet for thrill-seekers and creatives alike

Clockwise from left: Darwin Festival; The Kangaroo Sanctuary in Alice Springs; an aerial view of Darwin Esplanade and CBD; the Wintjiri Wiru light show at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park



AUSTRALIA



IMAGES: TOURISM NT/@BETSYBGLAP; TOURISM NT/KANGAROO SANCTUARY;
TOURISM NT; TOURISM NT/RAY REYES /VOYAGES AYERS ROCK RESORT





This expansion in land use inevitably led to greater conflict with Aboriginal people, who were increasingly dispossessed of their homelands, and kick-started a cycle of conflict that culminated in Australia's infamous Assimilation policy during the early and mid-20th century, which saw Aboriginal children taken from their families and placed in missions. The Australian government was forced to pause this policy at the onset of World War II. Darwin suffered a large-scale air assault in February 1942, just months after Japan joined the war. Hundreds of people were killed in the attack, and several ships sank.

In the decades following World War II, a renewed Aboriginal movement dismantled the Assimilation policy and fought for greater land rights. Today, while parts of the Northern Territory are mined for bauxite, manganese and uranium, swaths of land are in the process of being handed back to Aboriginal communities.

ABORIGINAL ART

One of the most recognizable types of Aboriginal art is dot painting, where thousands of individual dots are used to create culturally significant shapes and patterns, but many people don't realize this is just one style of Aboriginal art.

Each clan has its own distinctive style, as well as its own stories that are expressed on canvas and bark, ranging from the cross-hatched style of Arnhem Land to screen printing on the Tiwi Islands. Learn more about Aboriginal art by browsing the myriad galleries across the territory, such as Maruku Arts in Uluru, Araluen Arts Centre in Alice Springs, and Marrawuddi Arts and Culture in Kakadu National Park.

For a hands-on experience, visitors can join a workshop with an Anangu artist at Maruku Arts or the Tiwi by Design day tour, where they can take home their own screen print creation. Darwin also hosts an Aboriginal Art Fair in August where they can meet and purchase from local artists.

From left: Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin; a yidaki (didgeridoo)



“

Road-trippers can take in the epic scenery of Nitmiluk National Park, including majestic Katherine Gorge, carved through ancient sandstone





TOP THREE: FESTIVALS

Garma Festival

Taking place over four days of miny'tji (art), manikay (song), bunggul (dance) and storytelling, Garma Festival is Australia's largest Aboriginal gathering and takes place in August in remote northeastern Arnhem Land. While the festival program, which includes movie nights, poetry recitals and cultural performances, is designed as an inclusive celebration of Yolngu culture, it's also an important meeting between clans and families.

FabAlice

Inspired by 1994's *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, which tells the story of two drag queens and a transgender woman who road trip from Sydney to Alice Springs in a brilliant silver bus, FabAlice brings glitter, glamour and pride to the Outback city each March. The line-up includes stand-up comedy, cabaret shows, drag bingo and interactive screenings of the film that launched it all.

Darwin Fringe Festival

As the biggest local platform for emerging and independent artists, this festival is jam-packed with the colorful, outrageous and sometimes plain weird. Nearly 100 acts pop up across Darwin over 10 days in July, from songwriting workshops to circus acts, burlesque and events for kids.



IMAGES: TOURISM AUSTRALIA; TOURISM NT
SHAUNA MCNAUGHT; MICHAEL JALARDU TORRES



Clockwise from top left: A crocodile jumping out of the Adelaide River; Tali Wiru Dining Experience; the nightly ceremonial dance at Garma Festival; a river crossing in Litchfield National Park

Previous spread: Katherine Gorge at Nitmiluk National Park



FOOD & DRINK

With Asia at its front door and a vast bush pantry in the back yard, the Northern Territory blends multiple culinary cultures with native ingredients to create a unique food scene. Think wild buffalo curries, egg noodles with barramundi fish and chocolate tarts peppered with green ants.

You'll find all of these in Darwin, where outdoor markets reign supreme, and locals have a special soft spot for laksa (a spicy noodle dish) despite the stifling temperatures. Deciding which laksa is the best is a serious point of contention, which is why the city hosts a dedicated International Laksa Festival in October. But if you just want a taste, head over to Mary's at Parap Village Markets or Darwin Laksa at Mindil Beach Sunset Market.

Wild-caught crocodile, emu and kangaroo are common on restaurant and cafe menus around Darwin. The cafe at Aboriginal Bush Traders in Smith Street Mall specializes in native flavors with a modern twist, offering a tasting plate featuring nutty wattleseed, bright lemon myrtle and spicy pepperberry.

Because of their remote locations, there are fewer options when it comes to dining out in Alice Springs and Yulara, but visitors with special dietary needs can usually be accommodated. Most restaurants use locally sourced bush ingredients, which means you won't need to hop too far for a taste of kangaroo or emu.

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TOP THREE: SOUVENIRS

1 Soaps and skincare

Aboriginal Australians have turned to the bush for medicine and healing for thousands of years, with some native plants containing more vitamins and nutrients than those found overseas. For instance, a single Kakadu plum has 15 times more vitamin C than an orange. You can buy soaps, moisturizers, lip balms and more containing aromatic ingredients like eucalyptus, Kakadu plum, lemon myrtle and Buddha wood. Visit the markets in Darwin, as well as shops like Aboriginal Bush Traders and Damadi Artisan Soaps and Skincare. In Alice Springs, you can find goods stocked in art galleries and museum stores.

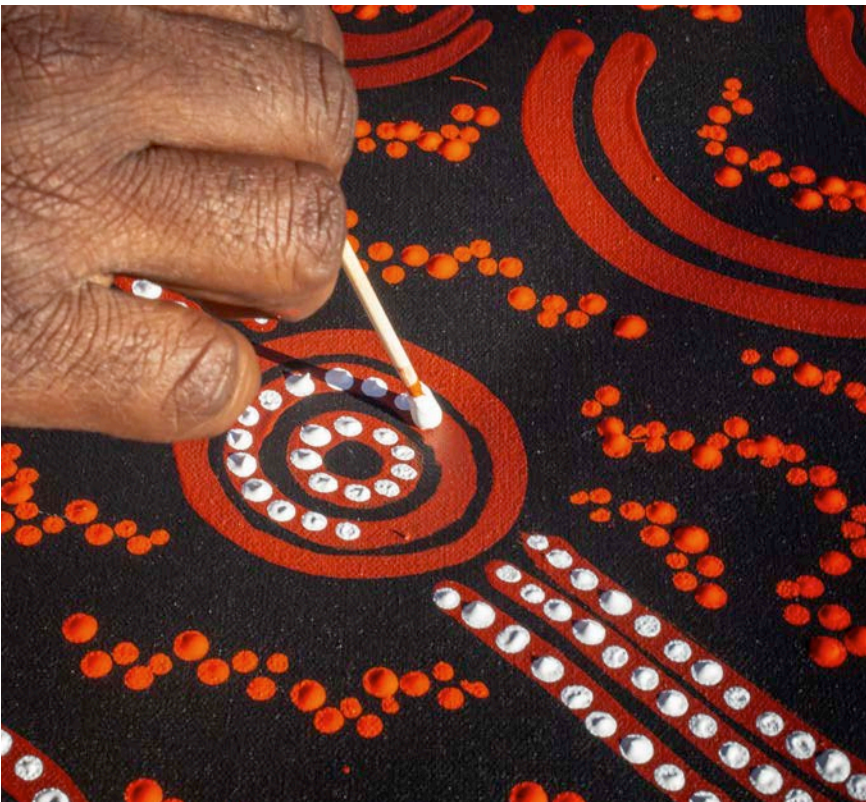
2 Aboriginal fashion

Aboriginal designs appear on nearly everything in the Northern Territory, from boomerangs to mugs — but pick up some stylish threads from Aboriginal fashion brands and you'll also be supporting Outback communities. Most brands are carried in boutiques across the Territory, and highlights to look out for include Albertini, a couture label in Darwin that collaborates with Aboriginal artists; Bima Wear, a women's enterprise on Bathurst Island that celebrates the Tiwi Islands' screen-printing style; and Liandra Swim, which offers vibrant swimming outfits with Indigenous flair. Head to Aboriginal-owned House of Darwin in the city center for funky street togs oozing with Australian charm.

3 Pearls

Pearling was one of the first industries established in the Northern Territory in the 1880s, and now Australia produces some of the world's best and biggest pearls. The industry has had its fair share of ups and downs, especially during World War II when demand for mother-of-pearl dropped significantly, but today you can readily find pearl necklaces and mother-of-pearl buttons and inlays in shops across Darwin. Family-owned Paspaley started pearling in the 1930s, and today you can browse pearl rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces and more at the shop in the city center.

From top: The Maruku Arts gallery in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park; artists at work at the entrance to the gallery





Surprise Creek Falls in Litchfield National Park



ESSENTIALS

When to go: The Northern Territory is so big it stretches between two very different climate areas. The most comfortable time to travel to the Top End is from May to October, when temperatures range from 70F to 90F, perfect for outdoor markets and hiking in national parks. By contrast, the best time to visit the Red Centre is in autumn (March to May), when days are still warm and desert nights not too cold with temperatures ranging from 55F to 80F.

Currency: Australian dollar

Language: English

Getting around: You can use public buses to move around Darwin, but once you leave the capital, you'll need to rely on a rental car (with extra fuel and supplies in case of a breakdown). Domestic flights run daily between Uluru, Alice Springs and Darwin.



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ROAD TRIPS

The Northern Territory is a dream for drivers and caravaners, with lots of different road-trip routes to choose from. One of the shortest and most popular routes is the five-day Red Centre Way, which sets off from Alice Springs in a wide loop and includes visits to Glen Helen, Kings Canyon and Watarrka National Park. Along the way you can stretch your legs with hikes through spectacular red gorges, and grab a sunset beer at Glen Helen Homestead.

Further north, road-trippers can take in the epic scenery of Nitmiluk National Park, including majestic Katherine Gorge, carved through ancient sandstone. Or they can tackle the nine-day Nature's Way from Darwin to Kakadu, then back to the city via Litchfield National Park, to swim beneath waterfalls and admire towering termite mounds. For those who want to see the sights but aren't confident drivers, another option is to board The Ghan, a transcontinental train between Darwin, Alice Springs and Adelaide. □

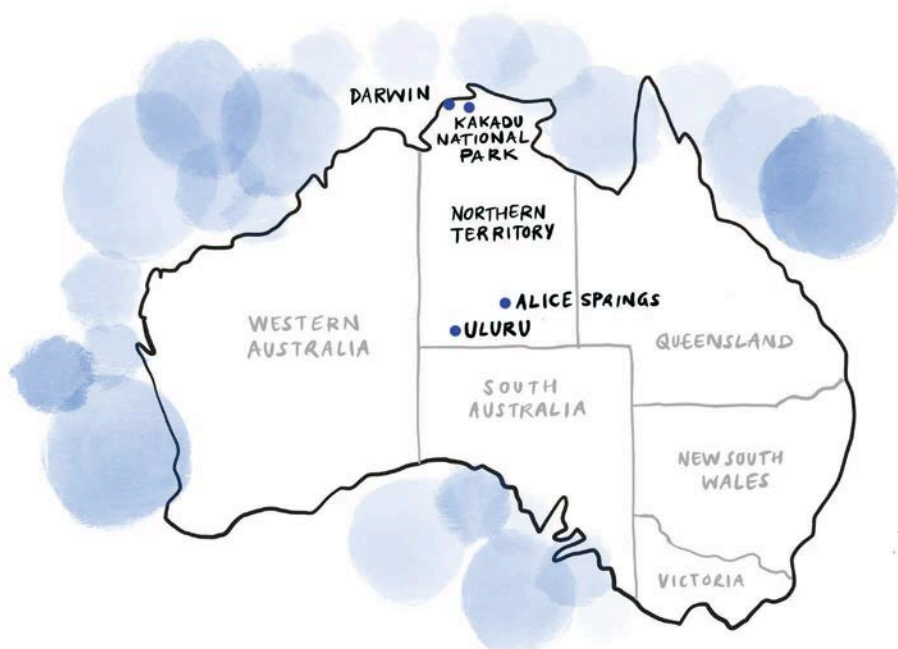


IMAGE: TOURISM NT/JOSHUA GRIFFIN. ILLUSTRATION: LIS WATKINS



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A romantic couple is captured in a close embrace, smiling and looking at each other. They are standing in a vibrant market stall, likely a vegetable or fruit stand, with various produce like leeks, potatoes, and tomatoes visible in the foreground. The background is filled with other market stalls and warm, ambient lighting, creating a cozy and lively atmosphere. The text "GRASP THE MOMENT." is overlaid in a large, white, serif font, centered over the couple.

GRASP
THE MOMENT.

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A TASTE OF THE IONIAN

Located to the west of the mainland, Greece's Ionian Islands have a distinct cuisine that's been shaped by numerous historical influences. In Corfu, the second-largest isle in the archipelago, dining on freshly caught seafood offers a glimpse into the region's storied past, writes Emily Brown





I'm sitting under a parasol by the porticos of Spianada Square. It's Corfu's answer to Paris's Rue de Rivoli and I'm watching a very British game of cricket, while sipping a Greek frappé. Anywhere else, this scene might feel strange, but here, it's as natural as can be. Corfu is the second largest of the Ionian Islands, which also includes Kefalonia, Lefkada and Zakynthos. Stretching from the Albanian Riviera to the tip of the Peloponnese, these verdant isles have made centuries of occupation by various European powers part of their character.

A wander around Corfu's Old Town demonstrates its multitude of identities; within a few yards of the cricket pitch at Spianada Square, I encounter Napoleonic marble esplanades and a Regency-era mansion built to house the British High Commissioner, before coming to the Old Fortress, which was constructed by the Venetians. I cross the stone moat — now filled with pleasure craft rather than vessels of war — and see the Greek national colors, blue and white, flying from the flagpole. I mention my interest in Greek history to the ticket officer of the fortress. He emphatically explains that Corfu is the only part of Greece that never came under Ottoman rule, pointing his finger to the heavens.

Corfu didn't escape the reaches of the British Empire, however. It was occupied in 1815 — wrested from France after the Napoleonic Wars — until 1864, when the isle was transferred to a newly formed nation-state: Greece. One of the standout landmarks from the British era is Mon Repos, a palatial villa on a cliff surveying the glittering sea below.

With 258 acres of parkland, a maze of gravel pathways and an interior draped in pastel blues and genteel stucco, Mon Repos was a fitting summer residence for the new Greek royal family, who were gifted the palace in 1864. Prince Philip, the late Duke of Edinburgh and a member of the Greek monarchy, was born here in 1921.

As enjoyable as a morning stroll in the house and grounds is, I feel a prickle of heat on my top lip as the sun rises, as well as a pang of hunger. It's two miles back to Corfu Town, so I pick out an esteemed taverna about halfway to break up the walk.



Clockwise from left:
The Liston, a street in Corfu Old Town;
red snapper tartare with citrus, cucumber sorbet and black truffle oil at The White House;
view from The White House
Previous pages from left: *Cape Arilla near Afionas;*
black quinoa salad with grilled shrimp and truffle-espresso mayo at The White House



Clockwise from top left: Summer basil smash cocktail at *The White House*; Vlacherna Monastery and the Church of Pantokrator on Mouse Island, Corfu; chilled tomato soup with strawberries, crayfish tartare and basil oil at *The White House*

Traditional hotspot Avli (meaning ‘courtyard’) looks out over a lapping Garitsa Bay and the eucalyptus-dappled Anemomilos Grove. The menu includes some staples of Greek cuisine, including baked eggplant, rich tomato sauces and flaky calamari. However, it’s the creative presentation that earned Avli its reputation; an octopus tentacle is laid on a golden bed of fava puree, while wild greens are cooked up with peppers and parsley to make tsigareli — a spicy island specialty. Thanks to Corfu’s position on the Venetian spice route, ingredients like cinnamon, paprika, chili and pepper are found all over the island.

A standout on the menu is the signature dish of pork filet, served with sticky, caramelized kumquats. The sweet, tart citrus fruits are much loved in Corfu, and meals are typically washed down with a kumquat liqueur. I toast to Avli’s proprietors, brothers Christos and Vasilis Pappas, and continue my journey.

ANCIENT RITES

To really understand Corfu and its food, one must delve into its rocky coastline, marshy lakes and forests of spire-like cypress trees. A short drive that serves up a selection of landscapes is the coast road south of Corfu Town, to the fishing village of Benitses.

After clearing Corfu Town’s suburbs, I reach the sea at Pontikonisi. Here, Corfu’s airport runway divides the Strait of Corfu from the grassy Halikiopoulou Lagoon, which in ancient times was Corfu’s primary port, but is now home to colonies of the endangered great egret. I pause for a while, watching the planes land — the rumble from the jets causing the egrets to spread their own wings.

Allowing my eyes to fall to the waterline, a postcard-perfect scene comes into view: the whitewashed Holy Monastery of Vlacherna, a modest chapel on its own islet that belies the gilded chandeliers and well-preserved wooden icons inside. A little farther down the coast road is the Achilleion Palace, a classically inspired pile built for a heartbroken Empress of Austria in 1891.

When I reach Benitses’s bay, framed by forested mountains, I go for dinner at Klimataria. It’s hard to miss — the four-story magnolia facade makes it stand out from the low-rise apartments that surround it. There are only 11 tables here, so booking in advance is recommended.

Nikos Bellos and his wife, Lily Bellou, opened the seafood-oriented Klimataria in 1997 and, like any Greek taverna worth its salt, it’s a family operation. Nikos handles the fresh fish and meats, while his wife oversees salads, vegetarian dishes and desserts.

“We’re one of the first restaurants at the Corfu Town market every morning. Some fishmongers will even save their excellent produce for us”, Nikos and Lily’s son Costas Bellos proudly tells me.



He points to something on the menu described as ‘bianco’: a Corfiot blend of garlic, pepper, olive oil, potatoes and lemon, with fish. Or, he suggests I go for bourdeto, a paprika-laced fish stew originally hailing from the Adriatic coast of Italy and Croatia — an import of the Venetians. “Scorpion fish is ideal for these traditional recipes, which reflect freshness and simplicity”, explains Costas. Yet as this melting-pot meal reveals, Corfu has hidden depths.

ON THE SILVER SCREEN

The Durrells in Corfu — the story of naturalist Gerald Durrell’s childhood on the isle — is, to me, the ultimate comfort watch. The villa where the series was filmed is a short distance north of Corfu Town, but the real Durrells’ house can be found in the pine-sprinkled village of Kalamí on the island’s northeast corner.

Overlooking a topaz bay, The White House was the home of author Lawrence Durrell (the eldest brother) and his wife Nancy in the 1930s. Now, it’s an upscale restaurant, with a marble plaque in the shape of a book by the door detailing the building’s connection to the Durrells. Before crossing the threshold, I rent a kayak to paddle around some secluded nearby coves — that blue water is just too hard to resist.

Spearheaded by Michelin-awarded chef Lefteris Lazarou, The White House is one of a few eateries on Corfu that has its own fishing boat for sourcing the day’s specials. The à la carte options have a touch of modernity: flank steak tacos sit comfortably beside quinoa salad with shrimp, as well as Corfiot classics.

Sous chef Kyriakos Zapis sits down with me as I sip a dewy glass of robola — a floral white wine produced on Corfu’s Theotoky Estate. “Corfiot cuisine is unique due to its blend of influences from Venetian, French, British and Greek culinary traditions”, he explains. Glancing over a menu where yuzu gel accompanies crab and ouzo jelly is paired with squid, I ask Zapis for his favorite traditional Corfiot dish.

“Pastitsada — it’s a tender beef stew in a fragrant tomato sauce, with plenty of warm spices like cinnamon and cloves, served over pasta. We cook it low and slow, allowing the flavors to infuse.”

I’m tempted, but I’m in the mood for fish. Kyriakos smiles and says both are a good choice: “When you sit down to either meal, you’re not just eating — you’re experiencing something deeply rooted in tradition, with a twist of something extraordinary.”

Later that day, I look out over the mainland, Kyriakos’s words resonating in my head. With bountiful seas and soil, a distinctive landscape and a cuisine that has maintained a fierce identity of its own, it seems Corfu has always been doing something extraordinary. □



Vlacherna Monastery and the Church of Pantokrator
Right from top: Spoon sweet quince, a traditional treat in Greece; the sea-facing terrace at The White House



TOP FOUR: IONIAN DESSERTS

1 Kumquat preserves

Glykou tou koutaliou — ‘spoon sweets’ — feature in traditional kafeneio (coffeehouses) all over Greece, and are often served with a side of Greek coffee. The Corfiot version involves whole, preserved kumquats, which provide zingy pops of flavor. One of the producers of kumquat liqueur, Lazaris Distillery, makes jars of the tart, amber-colored confection.

2 Mandolato

Mandolato is the archipelago’s own type of nougat — a sticky, egg-based sweet laced with herby Greek honey and local nuts like walnut, almond and pistachio. Crunchy, chewy and smooth, mandolato is a treat that will transport the taste buds back to the Ionian. Zante Pleasure in Zakynthos’s main town makes homemade souvenirs; the Giatras brothers whip up big blocks in the kitchen to sell in (smaller) chunks.

3 Ladopita

Lefkada’s olive oil pie, ladopita, is associated with happiness here — and this gently crumbling, cinnamon-scented dessert is sure to bring a smile to the face. It’s made by whisking warmed syrup and olive oil with flour, baking then sprinkling the cooling mixture with sesame seeds and confectioner’s sugar. Traditional patisseries in Lefkada sell it by the kilogram.

4 Frigania

Frigania shares the format of Italian tiramisu: a layer of soaked rusks, spread with cream, then dusted with a topping. However, dig the spoon in a little deeper and it becomes a love letter to Greek cookery, with Cretan rusks doused in orange syrup, topped with vanilla custard, whipped cream and warming cinnamon. Frigania is in demand during the heat of Greek summer; the servings at Latas Café Bistro in Zakynthos come with sweeping sea views.



The harbor and Venetian architecture of Assos, Kefalonia

BEST OF THE REST: IONIAN ISLANDS

Paxos

Petite Paxos is small enough to explore by bike (or moped, as the locals prefer). After dark, warm, starry nights are made for al fresco dining and the island's colorful neo-classical waterfronts offer plenty of opportunities to sip on aromatic retsina (resinated white wine) in a taverna. Mambo in Gaios serves a good selection of Ionian dishes, including rabbit stifado (stew) and succulent beef sofrito.

Kefalonia

Mountainous Kefalonia is the setting of Louis de Bernières's romantic novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. The island's finger-like peninsulas reach into all corners of the ocean and there are incredible beaches, including the white sugar-soft grains sheltered by dramatic cliffs at Myrto. Kefalonia also has a cave system, including a subterranean lake in Melissani cave, a cenote-like blue pool surrounded by a dense forest.

Lefkada

Accessible from the Greek mainland via a causeway, Lefkada's two-tone seas are some of the most beautiful in the Ionian. The main town is at the end of the causeway, but a true taste of Lefkada lies inland: the hills are home to family-run olive mills, sparkling waterfalls and fascinating folklore museums. The island's largest monastery, Faneromeni, contains a couple of enlightening museums.

Zakynthos

This is where you'll find one of Greece's most iconic sites — Navagio Beach, a steep-sided cove. Book a boat trip and visit the Blue Caves; portholes into paradisiacal turquoise seas. Don't miss the Venetian fortress, built in the late 15th century atop Bohali hill. Zakynthos is also an ideal destination for active travelers: hiking paths through the hills and countryside lead past olive groves, flourishing valleys and serene monasteries.



ESSENTIALS

When to go: The weather is best between late May and mid-September, with sunny days and balmy seas, but the main Ionian Islands will be busy. Visit in the shoulder months (April and October) to take advantage of fewer visitors. April typically sees Orthodox Easter celebrations.

Currency: Euro

Language: Greek, but English is widely spoken

Getting around: Renting a car is the best way to explore the islands independently, but local buses are plentiful on larger islands like Corfu and Zakynthos. Moving between the islands can be tricky as the Ionian Islands span 300 miles in length, so it's best to base yourself on a large island and take short ferries to surrounding islets.



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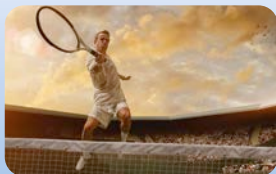
World Cup



Indy 500



Wimbledon



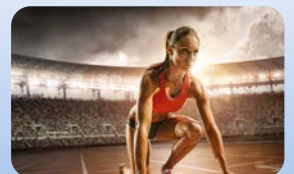
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INTO THE BLUE

This incredible sailing from Bali to Hong Kong takes in unspoiled landscapes, spectacular coastline and big-hitting cities, writes Rebecca Barnes



CRUISE



64 • POSTCARDS



Clockwise from top right: Tea served at Spa Alila, Bali; Bali is renowned for its paddy fields, such as the World Heritage-listed Tegalalang Rice Terraces; a temple statue decorated with plumeria blossoms; paddling a canoe on Lake Beratan

Previous pages: Bodgaya Island off the coast of Malaysian Borneo

The island of Bali needs no introduction. This Indonesian hotspot is the starting point for Crystal Cruises' 11-night Bali to Hong Kong voyage, offering guests beach life and city energy in equal measure. Then, following a day at sea, it's time to discover the maritime history of South Sulawesi's port city, Makassar, before making a stop in Sandakan, Malaysia — home to a rehabilitation center for orangutans. The 740-guest *Crystal Serenity* then continues north, hopping around the Philippines' emerald islands toward Boracay, before docking overnight in the country's buzzy capital, Manila. After crossing the South China Sea, a final overnight in Hong Kong offers no shortage of things to do, from sampling street food to mooching around markets, and thrilling helicopter rides above the skyline.

BALI, INDONESIA

While Bali is famed for its sprawling beaches and secluded coves, there's so much more to the island than first meets the eye. The picturesque province — one of 38 in Indonesia — is abundant with lush landscapes, jungle-shrouded volcanoes, rice fields and waterfalls. It's a place of deep spiritual importance to its people, and is often referred to as 'The Island of the Gods'. Its rich Hindu heritage comes

alive in the ancient temples found all over the island, each one said to be a seat of the Hindu gods. Two notable examples are the cliffside Uluwatu and Tanah Lot in Tabanan, the latter perched on a large offshore rock formation, making for a pretty sunset backdrop.

Balinese culture also features traditional dances including the dramatic, fire-fueled Kecak, along with arts and crafts, spiritual healing and sun salutations. A 20-minute drive from Benoa, where the ship docks, is the trendy beach town of Seminyak, home to a wealth of cafes, restaurants and designer boutiques.

For those who enjoy a slower pace, mountainous Ubud is abundant in cultural activities, artists' workshops and natural treasures along the Campuhan Ridge Walk, a sun-drenched trail that provides outstanding vistas. The Kajeng Rice Fields Walk is also a great option for traditional villages, streams and rice paddy fields.

MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

On arrival into this bustling port city, on the eastern Indonesian island of Sulawesi, guests should keep an eye out for phinisi, the traditional two-masted wooden sailing ships once used for fishing, commerce and the strategic trading of spices, gold, coffee and silks. Today, Makassar is known for its idyllic beaches, pristine waters and cultural attractions,

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Day 1

Bali, Indonesia

Day 2

At sea

Day 3

Makassar, Indonesia

Day 4

At sea

Day 5

Sandakan (Sabah), Malaysia

Day 6

Puerto Princesa, Philippines

Day 7

Boracay (Malay), Philippines

Days 8 & 9

Manila, Philippines

Day 10

At sea

Days 11 & 12

Hong Kong, China

Clockwise from right: A typical market in Bali selling fruits and vegetables; grounds of the Saraswati Temple in Bali, Indonesia; Puerto Princesa Subterranean River, Philippines; A young orangutan at Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Malaysia

including the famed Losari Beach, which is easily accessible from the port and a preferred spot for sunsets, strolls and seafood. There's also the 17th-century Fort Rotterdam, which was built on the site of a Gowanese fort to defend the city from hostile ships, and offers prime views across the Makassar Strait.

Venture further afield for a taste of local island architecture at the Balla Lompoa Museum, which is raised on six-foot ironwood stilts and is an exceptional example of the traditional craftsmanship of past artisans. Alternatively, watch working fishing vessels offloading the catch of the day at Paotere Harbor, located three miles north of the city center. For snorkeling and scuba diving, retreat to the tiny island of Samalona, where bleached

white sand melts into waters teeming with tropical marine life and coral reefs.

SANDAKAN (SABAH), MALAYSIA

Flora and fauna commands much of the landscape around Sandakan — a port in Sabah, the easternmost state in Malaysia. Conservation is the focus at nearby Turtle Islands Park, dedicated to the protection of turtles and their hatchlings. There's also the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, where visitors can engage with and support the conservation of these gentle giants, who are able to relearn crucial survival skills in the semi-wild environment. More endemic species can be found around the Kinabatangan River, including proboscis monkeys, pygmy elephants and various species of birds.





CRUISE

“

For snorkeling and scuba diving, retreat to the tiny island of Samalona, where bleached white sand melts into waters teeming with tropical marine life and coral reefs

The surrounding Sulu Sea is a body of water known for its colorful coral reefs and diverse marine life. There's plenty of opportunity for strolling picture-perfect beaches here, as well as sublime, freshly caught seafood.

When it comes to the city's past, Sandakan played a key role in Malaysia's history as an important trading port during British colonial rule. It also has a poignant connection with World War II, notably the Sandakan Death Marches, in which prisoners of war endured forced marches and harsh conditions.

PUERTO PRINCESA, PHILIPPINES

Known for being the cleanest and greenest coastal city in the Philippines, Puerto Princesa is home to white-sand beaches, including the serene Sabang Beach on the west coast, as well as mangrove forests, nature parks, waterfalls, coral reefs and bays teeming with sea life. One of the most beautiful places is Honda Bay, on the eastern shore and sheltering a number

of islands. It's dubbed the Philippines' Last Frontier, thanks to its rich marine biodiversity, which includes the namesake organisms of Starfish Island. One of the biggest draws is its impressive cave system, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River: this UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature, chosen from around the world. Stretching for five miles, the subterranean attraction features ethereal limestone rock formations, verdant forest and distinctive wildlife — expect to be greeted by resident monkeys when you arrive.

The capital of Palawan province is also the gateway to the unspoiled coastal region of El Nido as well as the sun-drenched Bacuit Archipelago, which is surrounded by limestone cliffs. For a refreshing tippie, duck into the Palaweño Brewery for a craft beer tasting. The city's food specialties include the saltwater delicacy tamilok (shipworm molluscs) and the savory pastry hopia, both found at Baker's Hill, the must-visit destination for lunch or a local snack.



“

Known for being the cleanest and greenest coastal city in the Philippines, Puerto Princesa is home to white-sand beaches, including the serene Sabang Beach



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BORACAY (MALAY), PHILIPPINES

This island is renowned for its pretty beaches, but those looking for more destination immersion can learn about local culture and even dip their toes in the thriving nightlife scene when the sun sets — you'll find everything from beach bars to upscale clubs with live music here. Motag Living Museum is the place to deep-dive into the Philippines' rich history; the traditional crafts, local delicacies and carabao (water buffalo) rides provide an insight into creative Aklanon life. Aklanon is the local language, although most of the locals speak English and Tagalog.

With any time you have left here, kick back at a luxury resort, or set sail on a private yacht across the calm waters, taking in the front-row views of the cliffs and vivid turquoise sea, before stopping at a beach — such as the famed White Beach, which has been ranked among the best in the world. There's also the secluded Ilig-Iligan Beach on the northeast coast, great for kayaking, swimming or just lazing on its unspoiled, sugar-soft sand. Don't forget

to pack snorkels — the diverse sea life in this region include turtles, manta rays, reef sharks and barracuda.

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Here's where the cruise cranks up a notch, with an overnight stop in Manila, the second-largest city in Southeast Asia. Located on Luzon Island, in the north of the archipelago, the Philippine capital has plenty of big city excitement and a few oases of calm. Spanish-era forts sit alongside cathedrals and tropical parks, making this a truly diverse port of call with a flavor for everyone.

Mountains featuring impressive rice terraces can be found north of the city, while across Manila Bay, the dormant volcano Mount Mariveles offers a range of hiking trails. South of Manila, the rapids at Pagsanjan Falls provide an active respite from city life, with exhilarating canoe rides to and from the falls, passing by steep gorges and lush vegetation. Farther south from the capital, a leisurely walking tour of Taal explores the history and backstory

From left: Diniwid Beach, Boracay Island, the Philippines; San Agustin Church in Manila

Previous page: Sabang Beach in Puerto Princesa, Philippines

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TOP THREE: ROOFTOP BARS IN HONG KONG

Skye

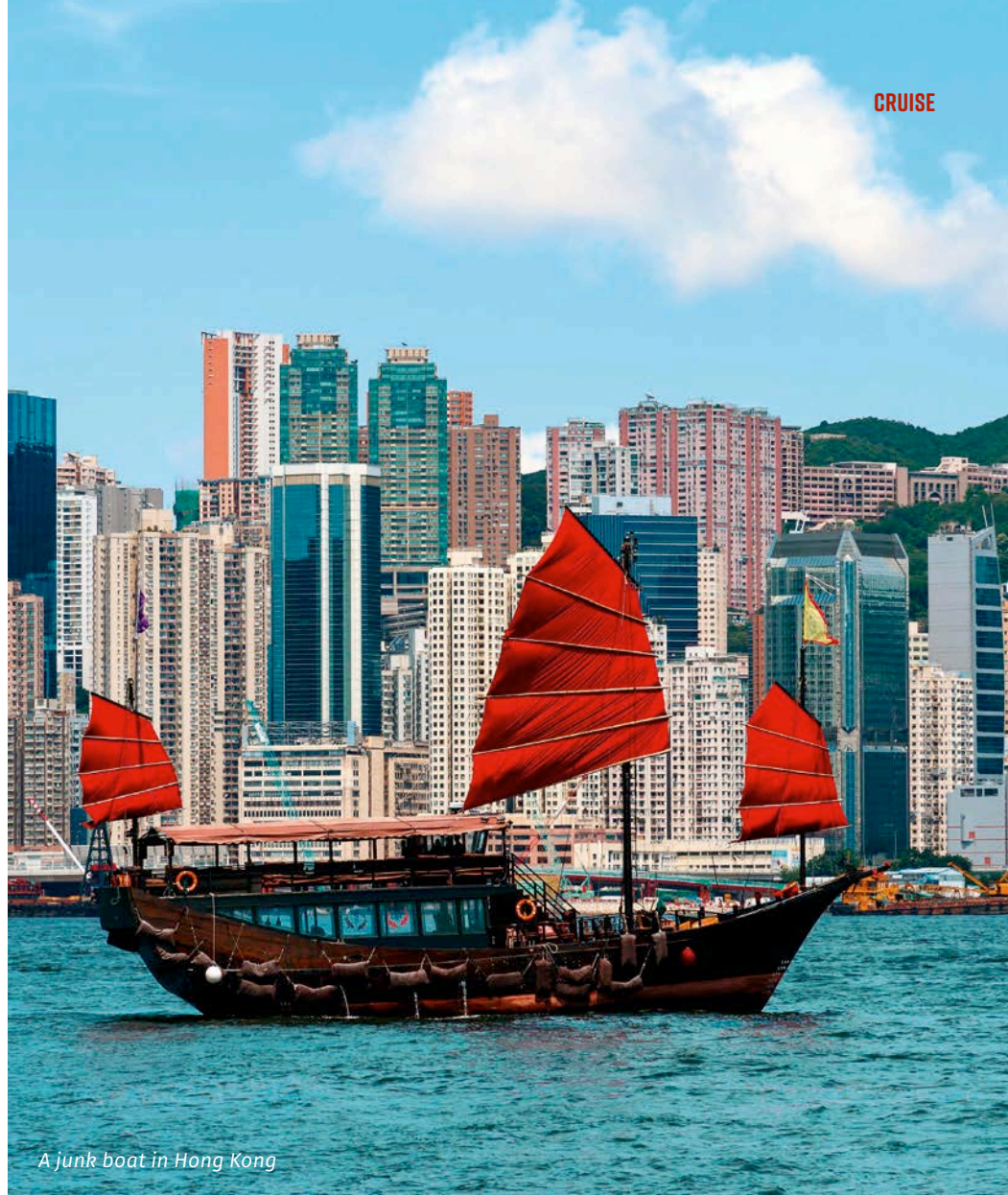
Futuristic and fabulous, Skye's huge, neon-lit terrace provides panoramic views of Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong Island. It's located on the 27th floor of The Park Lane Hong Kong, where the crowd is chic and the cocktails are creative — one of the signature drinks, Gloucester Road, features the hotel's exclusive gin.

Ozone

Welcome to the highest rooftop bar in the world, located on the 118th floor of the Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong. The unobstructed views from up here are incredible. Start inside, sampling small plates and inventive cocktails, before moving out to the terrace to marvel at the cityscape.

Alto

Located on the 31st floor of the V Point Tower in Causeway Bay, this stylish hangout features a steakhouse and restaurant, conceptualized by designer Tom Dixon. But it's the artisan cocktails, live DJ sets and excellent shisha that attract HK's party people, along with the superb views of the Kowloon Peninsula.



A junk boat in Hong Kong

of the ancient but beautifully preserved hilltop town, which was founded in 1572 — its colonial houses standing as living monuments of a bygone era.

HONG KONG, CHINA

The up-tempo pace continues in Hong Kong, and the city that's famous for its skyscrapers and sheer beauty offers a myriad of attractions and experiences, from the visual exhibits at the Hong Kong Museum of History to the smell of claypot rice and dim sum emanating from the food stalls at Temple Street Night Market. Keep the energy high with a walk along the scenic Dragon's Back hilltop trail, which has been hailed as Asia's best urban hike. Nature-lovers will enjoy the panoramic views of the coastline

and countryside while traversing the breathtaking landscapes of Shek O Country Park.

Another highlight is the Lantau Island Monastery Exploration, which takes visitors to the largest outlying island of Hong Kong to experience the 3.5-mile Ngong Ping Cable Car ride, before touring the hilltop Po Lin Monastery, and visiting Ngong Ping, a village designed to reflect the area's spiritual integrity.

After nightfall is when Hong Kong truly shines: the illuminated skyline and must-see landmarks can be viewed from an evening cruise through Victoria Harbour on a junk — the traditional style of sailing boat in this region.

As for gastronomes, Hong Kong will certainly not disappoint. Popular dishes



Pagoda in Nan Lian Garden at
Chi Lin Nunnery, Hong Kong



ESSENTIALS

When to go: March to May offers

pleasant sailing conditions in Indonesia, while October to November in Hong Kong mean lower temperatures and fewer crowds. March to October is the dry season in Borneo, and November to May in the Philippines.

Currency: Indonesian rupiah; Hong Kong dollar; Malaysian ringgit; Philippine peso

Language: Indonesian, Balinese and Sasak (Indonesia); Chinese (Hong Kong); Malay (Malaysia); Filipino and English (Philippines)

Getting around: Buses, taxis, and car rental are available in Bali. Buses, trams, ferries, taxis and railway (MTR) are available in Hong Kong. In Sandakan, there are taxis and buses. In the Philippines, there are jeepneys, buses, the Manila metro and taxis.



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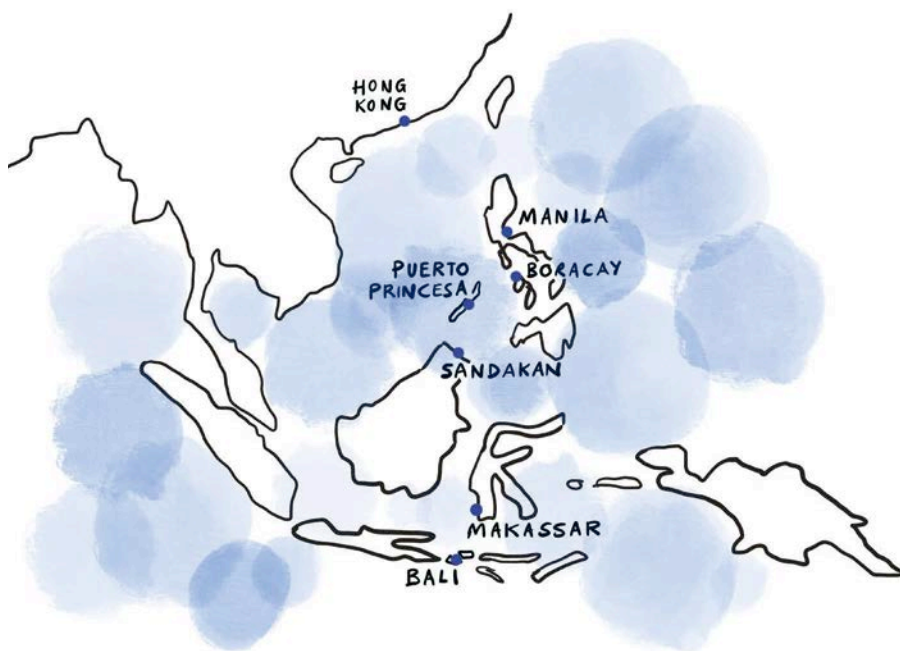


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here include sweet and sour pork, roast goose, wontons and hot pot — a pot of boiling broth placed in the middle, which diners can use to cook various meats and vegetables. A typical Hong Kong-style breakfast consists of noodles and egg with milk tea and bread.

For those wanting to explore farther afield, an excursion to Macau provides insights into the former Portuguese colony that fuses Chinese and European cultures. It's often referred to as 'The Vegas of Asia' thanks to its casinos. Your time in Macau starts with a catamaran cruise, before engaging with the region's history at the 15th-century A-Ma Temple and the ruins of the 17th-century St. Paul Church. There's also the chance to climb to the top of the 1,109-foot Macau Tower for views and photo opportunities. □





HA LONG BAY, VIETNAM



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AT THE CHEF'S TABLE

We speak with Jason Chaston, traveling executive chef for Azamara Cruises, about cooking at sea, sourcing fresh ingredients and the versatile power of a lemon



Above from left:
 Chef Jason Chaston;
 Prime C restaurant;
 Kotor, Montenegro,
 one of Azamara's
 destinations;
 grand staircase on
 Azamara Pursuit

How did you become a chef?

I've loved food and cooking ever since I was young. I was fascinated by how different ingredients come together to create something amazing. This passion led me to culinary school, where I learned the basics and started to develop my own style. After graduating, I worked in various kitchens and, over time, I found my own approach to cooking, focusing on fresh, local ingredients and creative techniques. Eventually, all that hard work paid off and I became an executive chef.

How did you come to work with a cruise line?

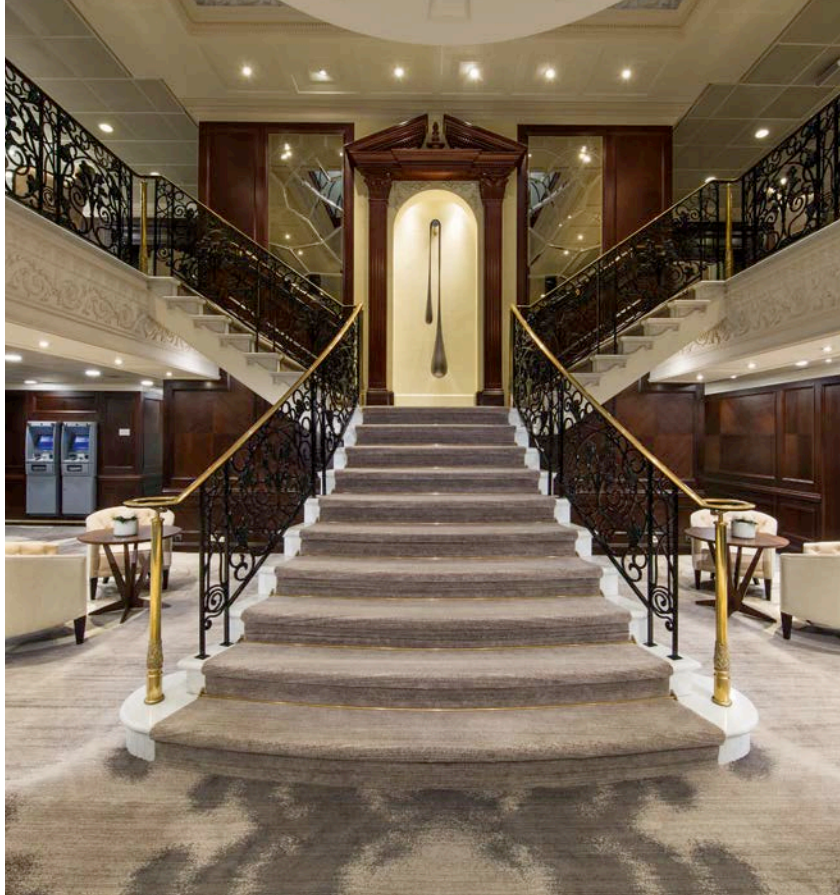
I'd always been intrigued by the idea of combining my love for cooking with the adventure of travel. One day, my friend who owns a recruitment agency told me about an opportunity to join a cruise line as a chef and I went for it. Once I got the job, I quickly adapted to the unique challenges of cooking at sea. It's been an incredible experience, allowing me to explore new places, meet diverse people and create delicious meals for guests from all over the world.

What does your work with Azamara involve?

I'm in charge of four ships and I oversee all culinary operations across them, ensuring that they maintain the highest standards of food quality and service. This involves planning and designing diverse menus, managing chefs and kitchen staff and ensuring consistency in our culinary offerings. I also source fresh, local ingredients from the various ports we visit. This allows us to showcase regional flavors and specialties adding to the destination immersion focus that Azamara is so well known for.

What dining experiences do you recommend?

A highlight is Aqualina, where guests can enjoy Italian dishes made with high-quality ingredients. Another standout is Prime C, our steakhouse that serves perfectly cooked steaks, herb-coated rack of lamb, and Chilean sea bass, all paired with delicious sides. For a truly unique experience, try the Chef's Table. This exclusive dining event features a multi-course menu paired with fine wines.



TOP THREE

1 What would you want as your last meal?

My mum's roast dinner. There's something incredibly comforting about it. The perfectly roasted meat, crispy potatoes and all the delicious sides bring back so many memories of family gatherings and special occasions.

2 The most important kitchen rule?

Respect everyone, respect the ingredients and respect your workplace.

3 Most underrated ingredient?

Lemon. It's incredibly versatile and can elevate a dish in so many ways. The zest is also fantastic for adding a burst of citrus aroma and flavor.

SEAFOOD GIOUVETSI

SERVES: 10

INGREDIENTS

For the prawn stock

3 tbsp olive oil
1.8 oz butter
prawn heads and shells
3 tbsp brandy
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 onion, sliced
1 stick celery
½ bulb of fennel, sliced
1 small carrot, sliced
2 tsp tomato puree
34 fl oz water
2 sprigs fresh thyme
2 sprigs fresh oregano
½ tsp peppercorns

For the giouvetsi

2 shallots
2 garlic cloves, crushed
10 medium prawns, peeled and heads removed
2 medium-size squid, cut into rings

5 cups clams
2 cups orzo
1 large tomato, grated
1 tbsp tomato puree
small bunch of parsley, roughly chopped
lemon wedge
herb oil

METHOD

❶ To make the stock, heat 1 tbsp oil and the butter in a large pot and cook the prawn heads and shells over a medium heat for 10-15 mins, stirring regularly. Transfer to a bowl, set aside.

❷ Deglaze the pan with 1 ½ tbsp brandy, scrape the pan then add these juices to the shells. With the remaining oil, fry the garlic, onion and vegetables. Cook for 10 mins, add the tomato puree, cook for a further 2 mins, then add prawn heads, shells and juices back to the pot.



❸ Pour in the remaining 1 ½ tbsp brandy, reduce by half and top up with the water. Bring to a boil and skim off any scum. Add the herbs and peppercorns, and simmer uncovered for 1-2 hrs. Strain and chill.

❹ To make the giouvetsi, saute the shallot and garlic with a drizzle of olive oil in a large frying pan, then add the

seafood for 1-2 mins on high. Remove and set aside. Add the orzo pasta, grated tomato, tomato puree and stir.

❺ Gradually add the stock, bring to a boil and keep stirring for 20 mins to cook the orzo.

❻ Add the cooked seafood and garnish with parsley, lemon and herb oil.





CITY GUIDE

Dublin

Layered with culture, conversation and legendary craic, the Irish capital is a city break with historical depth and real soul, says Pól Ó Conghaile

At the right moment, with the right people, Dublin feels like a mood as much as a metropolis. It's a small city center of around 600,000 people, it's low-rise and has no metro. But what it lacks in shimmering skyscrapers, it makes up for in spades in its historical layers, kaleidoscopic culture and knack for craic.

That last word is a skeleton key to the city. Craic, pronounced crack, is Irish for fun or conviviality, but means so much more. It's about laughter, chats and the electricity in the air when people click. "What's the craic?" is a common greeting in the streets of Dublin. A night out, or a person, might be 'great craic'. It's not something that can be staged or planned. It's 'had' rather than done — over pints, on a hike, after a sea swim or a spontaneous bit of banter with a tour guide. And it's pure Dublin.

The Irish capital is similarly slippery to define. It's a time-tangled mix of quays, meandering streets and alleys, redbrick

Georgian squares, Victorian terraces, glassy European HQs for tech giants like Google and Meta, and a surprisingly long, curving coastline. Its lack of a grid can feel confusing, but the River Liffey provides some orientation, slicing the city into north and south. Neighborhoods like The Liberties (home to the Guinness Storehouse) or Stoneybatter radiate outward from there. It's all very walkable, too.

Set pieces like Trinity College and St. Patrick's Cathedral are must-sees, but Dubliners are also fiercely proud of their living culture — from flourishing food and drink scenes to authors like Paul Murray and the music not just of U2 and Sinéad O'Connor, but young artists like Sorcha Richardson, Sprints and Lankum. St. Patrick's Festival leans right into this — a cultural juggernaut sprawling over several days around March 17. But smaller gigs and get-togethers can be just as much, well, craic.



From left: Trinity College Library; St. Patrick's Cathedral; the Oscar Wilde monument in Merrion Square
Previous pages from left: The Oliver St. John Gogarty pub in the Temple Bar area; a painting depicting Irish coffee



HISTORY

Situated behind Dublin Castle is a pint-sized park. Dubh Linn Gardens is plum for a picnic or a pause after visiting the Chester Beatty museum and library. It's also the historical heart of the city — 'Dubh Linn' is Irish for 'black pool', a name harking back to a tidal basin that bulged here when Viking settlers moored their boats from the early ninth century. They weren't the first Dubliners; Celts had been here before (its Irish name, Baile Átha Cliath, means 'town of the hurdle ford'). But the trading port flourished, and Dublin developed from there, laying down streets, lanes, districts and squares over the centuries.

Few traces remain of the city's Viking heritage today (a story colorfully told in the

Dublinia museum), but visitors can step into the medieval crypts of Christ Church Cathedral, search out chunks of Anglo-Norman city walls, gaze at glowing Georgian redbricks from the pathways of Merrion Square or find bullet holes from the 1916 Easter Rising on O'Connell Street. Another era is always around the corner.

Sometimes, Dublin's most historical spaces feel like portals of time travel — standing beneath the barrel-vaulted ceilings of Trinity's Old Library (said to be an inspiration for the Jedi Archives in Star Wars) is just one standout example. Those tracing their own roots can visit EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, which covers the history of the diaspora, and its Irish Family History Centre.

BEST OF THE REST

Drury Street

This food and shopping strip includes crafts and jewelry in the Irish Design Shop, toasties with wine at Loose Canon and the old-school George's Street Arcade.

Mae

Chef Gráinne O'Keefe named this restaurant after her grandmother, and intimacy and personality ring through the menus, striking a lovely balance between fine dining and the personal touch.

Glasnevin Cemetery

There are around 1.5 million souls resting here, and tours bring the colorful stories of artists, revolutionaries and folk heroes to life, culminating in city views from the 180-foot O'Connell Tower.

Tradfest

This January festival celebrates Irish identity through music, mixing up established and emerging performers with shows that often take place in unusual locations — including churches.

Clockwise from top: View over the River Liffey toward Ha'penny Bridge; a sign at the Guinness Storehouse; interior of the Guinness Storehouse

FOOD & DRINK

Think Dublin, and good food might not be the first topic that springs to mind. But that's changing. A new generation of chefs and restaurateurs, and a growing confidence in Irish breads, cheeses, lamb, beef, seafood and other ingredients, has seen a tasty and underrated food scene emerge here — from mid-range to Michelin stars and all sorts in between.

In The Liberties, Variety Jones sees chef Keelan Higgs cooking over fire with a funky, family-style approach to fine dining. Chef's choice menus are served to share: celeriac noodles topped with slivers of fire-roasted scallop and a golden confit egg might be one of the six courses, for example. On Parnell Square, two-Michelin-star Chapter One is chef Mickael Viljanen's polished poem to modern Irish cuisine — with decadent detailing in dishes like wild turbot with carrot, yuzu and bergamot and lobster sauce. Some Dublin foodies believe this will be Ireland's first three-Michelin-star restaurant.

Elsewhere, Legal Eagle is a contemporary take on the Irish gastropub (its Sunday roasts are among the city's best), and new arrivals worth talking about include globally influenced Floritz and Italian restaurant Lena. For a roving, convivial taste of the city's trends, consider a walking food tour with Fab Food Trails or Delicious Dublin Tours.

When it comes to drink, 'the black stuff' is on every bucket list. Tours of the Guinness Storehouse provide an immersive look at the iconic stout, the science behind it and its place in Irish culture. They culminate with a pint at the 360-degree Gravity Bar, which provides views stretching from Dublin Bay to the mountains.

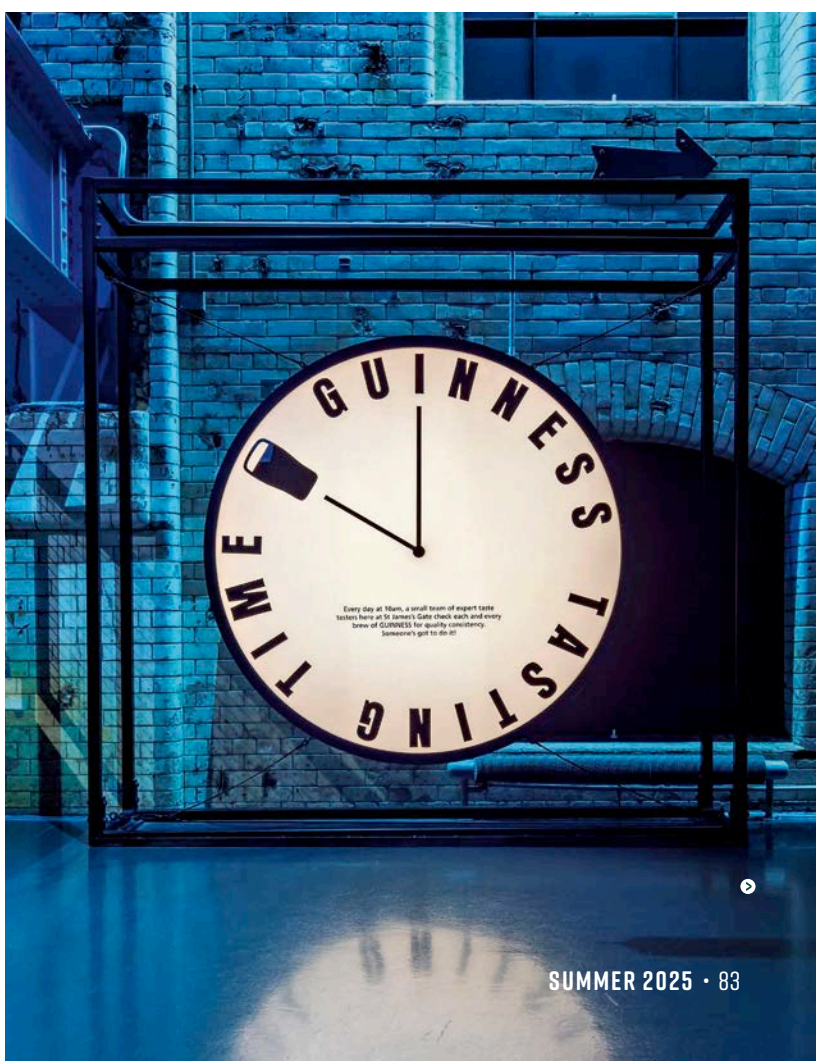
NIGHTLIFE

Temple Bar is the city's tourist hub — a boisterous, sometimes rowdy cobblestoned crossroads between the River Liffey and Central Bank building. Visitors often outnumber locals in the party pubs here, but it's worth an early evening walk for the atmosphere, and pubs such as The Temple Bar itself make a great photo (especially in its Christmas finery).

"Good puzzle would be to cross Dublin without passing a pub," Leopold Bloom says in James Joyce's *Ulysses* — a masterpiece set in the city. The challenge remains as tricky today, but why pass by when one can step inside? Mulligan's on Poolbeg Street and the Palace Bar on Fleet Street are famous literary pubs, while The Cobblestone in Smithfield hums with quality traditional music. The Dublin Literary Pub Crawl sees actors bring pub lore to life during a 2.5-hour tour.

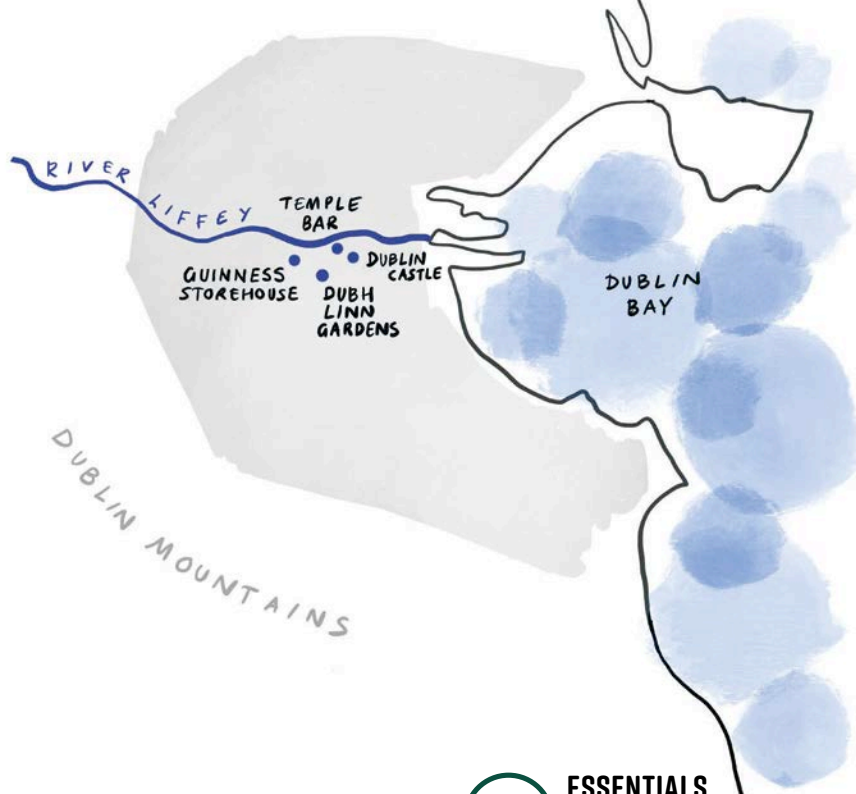
Dublin nightlife quickly transitions from an after-work and pre-show scene to packed pubs, before tapering into fewer late bars and clubs after midnight — centered around lively strips like South William Street and Leeson Street. Its cocktail scene is going up a gear too, with new arrivals like the Collins Club at The Leinster, which serves batch drinks in a sexy crimson salon, alongside stalwarts like the Vintage Cocktail Club, marked by the letters VCC on its grubby steel door in Temple Bar.

Irish craft spirits are increasingly a feature — the Vintage Cocktail Club's 'banshee' cocktail is a good example, a mix of Micil poitín (a traditional distilled spirit), Powers single pot still Irish whiskey and Celtic honey liqueur along with bitters, apricot, apple and rhubarb.





From top: Wicklow Mountains National Park; the bar at The Shelbourne



EXCURSIONS

The Dublin Mountains, south of the city, quickly blend into Wicklow Mountains National Park. The 80-mile Wicklow Way is an iconic hiking route, but there are plenty of shorter rambles — to the hulking old ruin of the Hell Fire Club on Montpellier Hill, for example. Legend has it the devil once played cards at this 18th-century shooting lodge.

Continuing through Wicklow, a popular driving tour takes in Glendalough, where a sixth-century monastic site seems to sit in soft focus in a glacial valley. There are easy ambles through the ruins and along the lakeshore, but a tougher, six-mile hike on the Spinc and Glenealo Valley route offers views over the entire site and passes an abandoned mining village. Wicklow is known as Ireland's garden county — Powerscourt Estate and the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh are just two to visit.

Heading north, Ireland's Boyne Valley is a rich tapestry of historical sites including the Hill of Tara, Bective Abbey and Brú na Bóinne (also known as the Boyne Valley tombs). The highlight of the latter is a tour of Newgrange, where visitors are taken deep into the structure, past stones cut with ancient symbols, to a chamber that's illuminated by a shaft of sunlight during the winter solstice. Those on tour get to see a simulation, but it's still magical to think the experience pre-dates Egypt's Great Pyramids.

HOTELS

Dublin is a small capital by international standards, but its selection of classic, contemporary and boutique stays is a cosmopolitan one. The Shelbourne, overlooking St. Stephen's Green, is its grand dame. Celebrating 200 years, this is at once a heritage five-star putting guests within walking distance of the main sights and shops, and a beloved special-occasion stop for locals. Afternoon tea in its Lord Mayor's Lounge, or cocktails in its 1824 Bar, are worth getting dressed up for.

The Dylan Hotel is squirreled away from the buzz off Baggot Street, but with a vibrant, clubby feel thanks to its contemporary art, design and Dublin focus (an in-room map and audio guide leads guests on a neighborhood trail). Make time for a cocktail in its Ruby Room bar or dinner in The Eddison restaurant.

The Fitzwilliam is another elegant, central stay, with an art deco-inspired lounge and recently refurbished rooms (options overlooking St. Stephen's Green from terraces are like looking out from a luxury ocean liner). The icing on the cake is chef Andy McFadden's Michelin-starred Glovers Alley restaurant.

Just over a mile from the city center is Anantara The Marker, an iconic, Aires Mateus-designed building on Grand Canal Square. Local chef Gareth Mullins is developing a destination restaurant here in Forbes Street, creating dishes that feature seasonal and local produce. □



ESSENTIALS

When to go: Shoulder months like May, June and September see pleasant temperatures and fewer crowds, but travelers should pack a light raincoat, whatever the weather forecast. St. Patrick's Festival, set around Ireland's March 17 national holiday, is a multi-day celebration packed with events and parades.

Currency: Euro

Language: English and Irish

Getting around: The DART commuter rail line runs along the coast from Howth to Dun Laoghaire and Co. Wicklow to the south. Two tram (Luas) lines and buses also serve the city. FreeNow and Uber are the main taxi apps.



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DIVE INTO PARADISE

Four Fiji Resorts Perfect for Underwater Adventurers



Surrounded by clear, dolphin-blue waters and soft, white-sand beaches, Fiji has been blessed with the kind of postcard scenery that travel magazines were created for. To add to its many blessings, the island country also offers some of the best diving in the Pacific. Billed as the "Soft Coral Capital of the World," it caters to scuba divers and snorkelers with equal aplomb. The waters themselves have an enticing average temperature of 82 degrees, with visibility often stretching up to 165 feet. This makes it easier to enjoy the region's sensational marine life, with turtles, rays and a rainbow assortment of tropical fish inhabiting colorful coral, sea walls and drop-offs.

Here, we showcase four exceptional resorts in Fiji that would be ideal bases for your underwater adventures. The best part: since these properties are in the **SELECT Hotels & Resorts by Internova** program, you will receive special benefits and amenities when you book through our agency.

SELECT

Hotels & Resorts | INTERNOVA

Book one of these SELECT Hotels & Resorts by Internova properties through our agency and you will receive:

- Complimentary breakfast for two daily
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COMO Laucala Island

COMO Laucala Island is a Fijian private island with 25 sea-facing residences and five restaurants that include healthy COMO Shambhala options. The range of resort activities exceeds the length of a guest's stay, including hiking, mountain biking and ocean bareback horse rides. The marine environment around the island is teeming with life, featuring seagrass forests, mangroves and sunken calderas ideal for wall diving. With up to 50 dive sites just a short boat ride away, divers can explore many vibrant reefs. Popular sites include The Passage, home to Spanish dancers, angelfish and clown triggerfish; and Long Beach, known for its feather starfish and sea fans.



Kokomo Private Island Fiji

Encircled by the Great Astrolabe Reef, Kokomo Private Island Fiji capitalizes on world-class dive locations with endless opportunities for captivating encounters with marine life. This is a place where spectacular white-sand beaches are yours to discover, where privacy is paramount, service is superior and you are the priority. At over 62 miles long, the Great Astrolabe Reef is home to 60 locally managed marine reserves that together boast more than 1,000 species of fish, 200 species of coral and a thriving reef manta population.



Nanuku Resort Fiji

A world-class, tropical oasis located on a 500-acre private estate along the coast of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu, Nanuku is ideal for couples, honeymooners and families. Guests can enjoy an array of land and sea adventures including diving the magnificent coral reef of Beqa Lagoon, famous for its soft coral forest and shipwrecks. Guests can also spend blissful days sailing to Nanuku's private island, hiking to waterfalls in the jungle, white-water rafting, jet skiing and trekking up soaring sand dunes.



Six Senses Fiji

Nestled on pristine Malolo Island, Six Senses Fiji offers a tropical paradise with a sandy beach and all-tide swimming in a crystal-clear lagoon. The resort features 24 elegantly designed one- and two-bedroom pool villas and 13 stunning residences that blend contemporary luxury with traditional Fijian charm. This stunning resort is surrounded by a vibrant marine environment and colorful corals. It offers a plethora of magnificent dive sites within the Mamanuca archipelago to suit all divers' desires.





Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia

Welcome to the Heart of Arabia

As a land of dramatic landscapes and astonishing cityscapes, Saudi Arabia is easily one of the world's most intriguing travel destinations. This diverse country has it all: ancient heritage sites, glittering modern metropolises, beautiful beach resorts, global events, thriving coral reefs and verdant oases surrounded by seemingly endless desert. No matter where your travels take you in Saudi, one thing is for sure — expect to be pleasantly surprised and delighted.

Where to Stay

Luxury Hotels

There's no shortage of luxury hotels and resorts throughout Saudi — here are some of our favorite options by destination.

ALULA

Habitas AIUla

Nestled within AIUla's ancient desert, Habitas AIUla is a sustainable home base perfect for pursuing wonder and adventure in this one-of-a-kind environment. Its selection of luxury villas provides chic respite within the dramatic sandstone canyons. The range of experiences available — be it sunrise yoga or live music showcasing local talent — center on being grounded in the present moment. Whatever your day entails, the tastes of Tama, their regionally inspired restaurant, quell any appetite with dishes that bring Saudi Arabia's unique flavors to life.

Banyan Tree AIUla

This tranquil desert retreat draws inspiration from the magical surroundings of the Ashar Valley, resulting in a 5-star hotel perfect for experiencing modern oasis living. Each of its elegant, tented villas harkens back to tales of Arabian opulence; curated experiences and thoughtful touches take an already bespoke stay into a new stratosphere of luxury. The dual restaurants provide you riches of fine dining — all with the dramatic AIUla landscape serving as the background.



JEDDAH

Shangri-La Jeddah

Anchored on the scenic Jeddah waterfront overlooking the Red Sea, all 221 stylish rooms of Shangri-La Jeddah feature floor-to-ceiling windows, seemingly inviting the stunning landscapes inside. Set out to explore Jeddah's vibrant cityscape and return to Shangri-La to revive after your day's adventures: Its signature spa provides the chance to find your inner peace via Asian traditions and cutting-edge techniques, while its selection of vibrant dining venues ensures you never have to venture far for a truly unique meal.

Jeddah EDITION

Located in the heart of the Jeddah Yacht Club (conveniently near the city center, the Red Sea Mall and the F1 racetrack), The Jeddah EDITION boasts sophisticated lodging in all 63 rooms — expect to find faux fur throws, Le Labo amenities and a scenic balcony with any and every room. Across the resort, there's no shortage of stylish spaces to relax and unwind in between your escapades throughout Jeddah.



RIYADH

Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh

Perched atop the iconic Kingdom Tower, the Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh serves as a landmark of style, sophistication and warm hospitality in Saudi's vibrant capital. Here, authentic Saudi heritage seamlessly blends with modern luxury, with exceptional service and world-class amenities combining for an unforgettable stay. The result? No matter if your stay is in one of the elegant rooms or expansive suites, you'll find comfort, style and breathtaking views of the city.

DIRIYAH

Bab Samhan, a Luxury Collection Hotel

Just a short drive outside of Riyadh, Diriyah is a historic hub of Najdi culture. Bab Samhan, a Luxury Collection Hotel, promises to be the ideal gateway for exploring the soul of Najdi culture. Blending authenticity with modern sophistication, all 134 rooms provide a tranquil and thoughtfully designed escape, pairing handcrafted details with modern amenities and spacious layouts. Pair your literal adventures with epicurean journeys at Jareed — where you can savor tender Muqalqal and aromatic Kabsa — or at Taleed, where Chef Michael Mina combines regional traditions with Mediterranean flair, forging a wholly original dining experience.



Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve



The St. Regis Red Sea Resort



Bab Samhan, a Luxury Collection Hotel

THE RED SEA

Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve

A totally unspoiled sanctuary within a secluded archipelago of the Red Sea, Nujuma is where uncharted meets extraordinary. With 63 villas either set amid pillow-soft white sand or directly above the azure sea, every villa comes equipped with panoramic windows, open living space, a sea-view pool and telescope for admiring the star-studded night sky.

The St. Regis Red Sea Resort

Set atop a pristine private island in the Ummahat archipelago, the St. Regis Red Sea Resort presents a serene vision of exquisite living a world away from the mainland. Accessed from the Saudi coastline via speedboat or seaplane, this collection of 90 overwater and beachfront villas sports timeless glamour, spacious layouts and a private pool per room — and the perfect position to catch the vibrant, violet, Red Sea sunset. A wealth of selection awaits you at mealtime, with three restaurants providing a profusion of culinary experiences.

Six Senses Southern Dunes, The Red Sea

Set inland less than 15 miles from the Red Sea, Six Senses Southern Dunes is a desert resort escape located along the historic incense trade route. Secluded rooms, suites and pool villas marry privacy with sweeping vistas across the Alnesai dunes — the desert plains and Hijaz Mountains make for a dramatic backdrop to your day's events. With the diverse culinary experiences, hands-on exploration of Nabataean heritage and specialty spa treatments, your days will be awash in desert bliss. ■

Discover the Highlights

10-Day Guide

Dramatic deserts, modern cities, rich heritage and beautiful beaches: Saudi has it all. Experience the best of the country with this can't-miss guide.

Across the country, the duality of Saudi is apparent: This is a land of both treasured links to the past and rapidly evolving modernity via its many bustling cities and cultural hubs. There's a reason this country is considered the heart of Arabia — the spark of life flows within it and radiates outward. Every way you look, there's something to marvel at: Natural and historical wonders, trendy neighborhoods, architectural feats and otherworldly landscapes all combine to create a patchwork of everyday life both stunning and simple in its beauty. You could spend a lifetime in Saudi and never stop finding sights to take your breath away ... is it any wonder that a trip here deserves 10 days at the very least?

Days 1 & 2: **RIYADH & DIRIYAH**

The heart of the country — the Saudi capital of Riyadh — is a haven of culture. Skyscrapers have sprung up around the many museums, mosques and heritage spots.

Fuel up for your day with a hearty breakfast at Elements restaurant at the Four Seasons. Your first stop should be the National Museum: It's a stunning collection of Saudi artwork, history and jewelry. From there, the possibilities are endless: World-class shopping at boutiques or countless souqs. Jaunts to the great outdoors at the King Abdulaziz National Reserve or Al Kharrarah National Park. More delectable treats and restaurants than you have room for in your stomach.

One can't-miss experience? Diriyah. Perched about a 20-minute drive outside Riyadh proper, Diriyah is a town renowned as the birthplace of Saudi Arabia. Strolling its

maze of winding alleyways and mud-brick architecture has you tracing the footsteps of visionaries and kings. UNESCO World Heritage Site At-Turaif is a regal citadel that set the stage for the birth of the country as we know it today.

Days 3 & 4: **ALULA**

Arguably the centerpiece of any and every itinerary, AlUla is a sight to behold. You could dedicate days to exploring it ... starting with the ancient city of Hegra. Consisting of over 110 remarkably well-preserved tombs, defensive walls, towers and gates, the sum of these remnants adds up to be the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Arch and Face Rock are can't-miss spots, as is the chance to have dinner next to the iconic Elephant Rock. The real can't-miss sight? The nighttime sky. Unless you happen to be an astronomer, you've never seen the cosmos quite like this.





The next day, opt for a guided tour through the ancient capital of Dadan. Visiting the extensive, pre-Arabic rock inscriptions at Jabal Ikmaah makes for a fascinating contrast to AlUla's more modern enticements, like Maraya. As the world's largest mirrored building — 108,000 square feet gleaming in the desert — Maraya seems almost to shimmer in the landscape, like a futuristic mirage.

Days 5 – 8: THE RED SEA

The Red Sea might just be the world's best-kept beach resort secret. These are world-class private islands and overwater villas, popping up gradually like coral on a shipwreck. There is no wrong way to do a beach trip — you could spend all three days staring out at the Red Sea,

meditating on its beauty — but you'd be remiss not to immerse yourself in it. There are countless ways to experience it firsthand: snorkeling, sailing, kayaking ... if you're certified, you should scuba dive. This is one of the world's largest and least-explored coral reefs — an absolute bucket-list experience for those enchanted by underwater realms. Naturally, you'll want to recover with a session at your resort's luxury spa.

Days 9 & 10: JEDDAH

Cap off your Saudi trip in Jeddah, a historic port city alive with music, markets and vibrant murals. Get acquainted with the city's ancient heritage on a breezy stroll around Tayebat Museum, where Jeddah's 2,500-year

history comes to life through fascinating exhibitions and displays. Then, head over to Old Town; the echoes of yesteryear harmonize with the bustle of the current day at this UNESCO World Heritage site.

For a no-frills lunch, stop at Abu Zaid for a hearty mutabbaq (fried or baked bread stuffed with garlicky mincemeat). Then, explore the Qabil Street Souq, one of the city's oldest markets, for the opportunity to stock up on a trove of authentic souvenirs and local delicacies: everything from dates and nuts to jewelry and shoes. In the evening, catch a live performance at the Music Space, have a picnic by the Jeddah Fountain or enjoy a lavish dinner at Mataam Al Sharq or Le Traiteur — all of which make for fitting finales to your trip. ■

Above from top left: Red Sea beach; Hegra; AlUla; shopping on Qabil Street Souq, Jeddah

Left page from top: Exhibit in the National Museum; At-Turaif outside of Jeddah

The Future Is Now

A “Top 3” Guide

Long touted as the “final frontier of tourism,” Saudi’s capital has catapulted itself to the cutting-edge of possibility in recent years. Experiencing all that this city has to offer is a balancing act — the history and tradition here is rich and well worth a delve ... but so are the modern attractions. Stick to the must-see’s: Here are the top three for what makes Riyadh shine.

DINING WITH THE STARS

Riyadh has a culinary scene that can rival the most global cities — thanks in no small part to the scores of chefs from Michelin-starred restaurants who have flocked here in recent years. A quick primer on who’s-who (and where you can find them for decadent dinner):

1

NICOLAS ISNARD

Savor a meal reminiscent of the Great Gatsby’s lavish soirées thanks to Isnard’s House of Grill, found at Fairmont Hotel Riyadh.

2

DANIEL BOULUD

Café Boulud is the latest venture from this chef, offering French cuisine from the Four Seasons Kingdom Tower.

3

DURGA MISRA

This chef brings his mastery of French cuisine to LPM Riyadh, housed in the iconic Mandarin Oriental Al Faisaliah Hotel.



to Riyadh



HAUTE COUTURE IN THE HIGH DESERT

Haute couture is having a moment: High-profile fashion shows and luxe soirées have proliferated in recent years, with Riyadh Fashion Week and The 1001 Seasons of Elie Saab both proving international glitz and glamour is well at home in Saudi. Should a fashion show leave you feeling inspired, it's fortuitous that Riyadh is rich with luxury boutiques.

1

RIYADH PARK

This might be your first choice if you're most at home in a modern mall — global and local brands combine at the biggest mall in Riyadh. Come for the latest trends, stay for the Museum of Illusion.

2

ROSHN FRONT

A luxury outdoor shopping center, housing the finest high-end brands in addition to a range of restaurants.

3

VIA RIYADH

An attraction in itself, here world-class dining, high-end shopping, exclusive entertainment and accommodations combine for a hub of luxury steeped in local tradition and heritage.

Images from left to right: *Café Boulud, Four Seasons; Riyadh at sunset; designer boutique*



MODERN ART FOR A MODERN CITY

The arts are alive and well in Riyadh, thanks in no small part to a thriving gallery scene. Even if you're just whiling away the hottest part of the afternoon or on the hunt for a one-of-a-kind piece to hang on your home's walls, there's plenty to admire.

1

NAILA ART GALLERY

As a favorite haunt for elite artists and critics and one of the most prominent art galleries in the city, Naila boasts a collection of over 10,000 pieces of artwork from 400 visual artists.

2

ABSTRACT ART GALLERY

This gallery hosts local art pioneers, providing a space for them to display their handiwork. Peruse the abstract arts on display in the company of discerning art connoisseurs ... and perhaps become one yourself.

3

AL AJLAN ART GALLERY

Established in 2019 by Saudi artist Mohammed Al Ajlan, it showcases the dazzling, the exceptional and the bizarre. Al Ajlan's paintings fuse color arts, poetry and Islamic and Arab heritage, to arrive at fine abstract art well worth some contemplation.





HISTORICAL MUST-SEES

You can't travel to a place as storied as Riyadh and not dive into its story. The past is so well preserved in Riyadh, it's practically still present. A quick peruse of a few historical destinations can provide immense context to the city you see today.

1

THE SAUDI NATIONAL MUSEUM

The definitive collection of Saudi history, from the prehistoric ages to the modern day, traces the country's development through 3,700 artifacts.

2

ADDOHO NEIGHBORHOOD

This is the last old neighborhood to preserve traditional Najdi architecture. A stroll through its narrow alleys whisks you back over 200 years to see how desert civilization thrived.

3

AL MASMAK PALACE

Standing as a sentinel to a bygone era; the palace served as a strong fort for Imam Abdullah bin Faisal in the Hijri 14th century. Today, its fortified walls are a symbol of regaining power and rule of the country and house a museum inside.

TOP 3-DAY TRIPS FROM RIYADH

1. Diriyah

A mere 20 minutes outside Riyadh proper, Diriyah is where the first Saudi state was established in 1446 CE. Its old streets harken back to ancient history with heritage landmarks, while also serving as a local favorite escape from the city with trendy cafes and scenic trails.

2. Desert Camping

The desert is downright mesmerizing; spending an evening camping in it makes for a trip that's hard to top. Traverse through Riyadh's red dunes, eat a meal cooked in an underground pit and partake in a night-long party brimming with Arabic coffee, traditional music and dance — what's not to love? Two great campgrounds to consider: Al-Waba Crater or Rawdat Tinhath in the King Abdulaziz National Reserve.

3. Heet Cave

One-part casual cave spelunking, one-part refreshing swimming hole, Heet Cave is an entirely unique adventure. Roughly 18 miles outside the city, this natural spring has been a source of fresh water in the desert for thousands of years. Today, it's the natural pool you never knew you were missing out on.

Images from left to right: Takenda entertainment hub;
Al Masmak Palace; desert camping

Awestruck in



AlUla

Encompassing more than 200,000 years of human history, AlUla offers adventurous experiences galore, from hiking the lush Heritage Oasis Trail to exploring the captivating UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hegra.

HEGRA

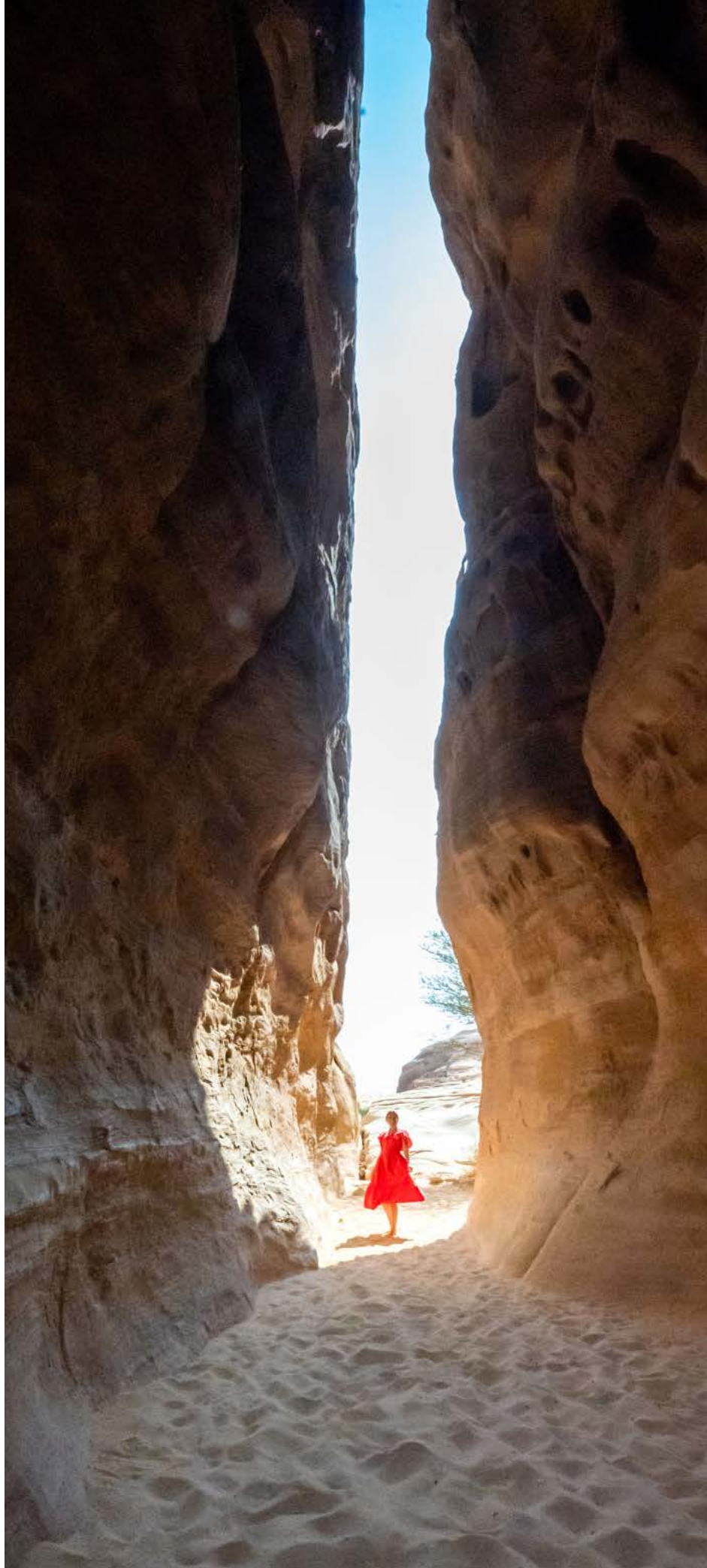
The country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site — one of the world's largest outdoor museums showcasing a bygone empire dating back to the first millennium BCE — Hegra is a sight to behold. More than 110 remarkably well-preserved tombs dot the desert, each an awe-inspiring remnant of the ancient Nabataean civilization. The Roman influence, meanwhile, can be glimpsed in the defensive walls, gates and towers that once encircled the city.

MARAYA

Like a mirage in the desert, or an alien spaceship with a cloaking device, Maraya simultaneously blends in and stands out from its natural environment. This ultra-modern, multi-purpose venue hosts concerts, events and even weddings. Arrange a rooftop reservation at the Maraya Social restaurant — helmed by award-winning chef Jason Atherton — for the chance to dine under the warm glow of starlight.

Images from left to right:

*Hegra; Elephant Rock at night;
Maraya mirrored building*





ELEPHANT ROCK

Jabal Alfil — better known as Elephant Rock — is one of AlUla's quintessential highlights. This three-story-building-sized rock formation has taken shape over thousands of years of wind and water erosion, leaving behind a naturally made sculpture. Impressive any time of day, prime time is at sunset — you'll swear it's glowing crimson. Stick around into the night for the combination of food trucks, table service and shisha.

Alternatively, after dinner by Elephant Rock, head to Gharameel with a quick trek into the desert for the chance to enjoy some absolutely out-of-this-world stargazing.

LION TOMBS OF DADAN

Deep in AlUla's oasis are the remains of another once-flourishing ancient Arab kingdom: Dadan and Lihyan. The former capital city was once one of the most developed ancient cities in Northern Arabia, mostly due to its proximity to trading routes. Today, it's one of the most important archaeological discoveries in AlUla; you can see the still-preserved tomb carved into the sandstone.

HERITAGE OASIS TRAIL

AlUla is a true oasis — 2 million date palm trees attest to that. Besides producing 90,000 tons of dates each year, it also serves as the setting for a surreal hike. The Heritage Oasis Trail stretches through 2 miles of towering date palms between the Orange Path and the Dadan Visitor Center, making for a cool stroll in a one-of-a-kind forest.

THE OLD TOWN EXPERIENCE

AlUla's tourism roots run deep: It's been a crossroads of civilizations and rest-stop oasis on incense-trading routes for thousands of years. As such, rich heritage is baked into the essence of the built environment, with the labyrinthine Old Town serving as a perfectly preserved relic of long-bygone eras. The historic marketplace still hums with banter and barter, showcasing local handicrafts and elegant antiques — the perfect place to pick a souvenir. ■



(City) Life Is Good



The Joy of Daily Life in Jeddah

There's a charm to Jeddah that's hard to pin down at first. The historic streets of Al-Balad. The ultra-modern yacht club and marina. The plethora of trendy cafes and marvelous mosques. Eventually, the realization washes over you like a gentle wave from the Red Sea: This is a metropolis that's always been teeming with life.

You can't fake this kind of flourishing: Culture begets culture, like rings on a tree. Through the ages, Jeddah has prospered as the gateway for pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina, as a major commercial hub on the Red Sea dating back to the ancient Incense Route and today, as the modern face of Saudi Arabia. Like any great city, there's a thrill to simply being a part of it — and there's no shortage of places to be.

BEACH DAY YOUR WAY

Sprawled out along the scenic coastline is an assortment of trendy beach clubs, each boasting their own private beaches; while many function as stand-alone resorts, you can often buy a day pass. There's a beach club for every amazing beach day you could imagine: Boho the Beach gives chic Bohemian castaway vibes, Bhadur is best for escaping the bustle of the city with your family and Silver Sands is perfect for those who immediately think water sports when they hear “beach day.”

COOL CAFÉ HANGOUTS

Oftentimes, the best way to experience the city is to just get out and about in it — “When in Rome,” as the saying goes. Historical Nights Café is the perfect spot to lounge among the bustling of the city; this urban oasis serves stellar coffee and divine desserts and boasts a rooftop offering up stunning views. Those looking to try authentic almond coffee should seek out Diwab Café, the oldest of its kind in Historic Jeddah. Serious coffee connoisseurs will want to visit any of Caffeine Lab's three locations, while those looking to mimic the locals in little treat selections will certainly want to try Sculpture Café.



Images clockwise:

Musician in Al-Balad;

jet skiing on the red sea;

Dewan Bait at Hajaz coffee shop



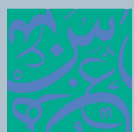
OLD TOWN

Even with all the modern offerings, you simply can't go to Jeddah and not dig into its history. Al-Balad (literally translated as "The Town") is the historic center of Jeddah; a scenic afternoon stroll through its streets whisks you back to bygone eras. Zawiya 97 is the heart and soul of Old Town — here you'll find curated exhibitions and dynamic craft installations in addition to culinary delights at Al Murakab Community Kitchen and authentic wares at Artisans Souq. If your ideal souvenir is a photograph, the elegant façade of Beit Al Matbouli is a can't-miss.

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING

Never mind the big-time marquee events — the F1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, the Red Sea Film Festival, the Food Culture Festival, the Islamic Arts Biennale 2025 or Jazz in Jeddah — the telltale sign of a modern city is never being at a loss for something to see or do. An evening stroll along the Jeddah Corniche is the simplest means of soaking in the city's vibes, but for those willing to search out the evening's entertainment, there's a live performance or a dominoes game just waiting to be found. ■

The Red Sea



A Hidden World of Wonder

Luxury beachside resorts aren't just found in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia — Saudi has the coastline and the capability to provide a dream-come-true luxury beach vacay.



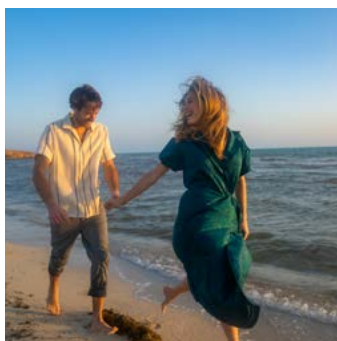


A FAR CRY FROM THE CITY

Roughly 80% of the world's population is only an eight-hour flight away from the Red Sea, and yet it feels like an entirely different planet. The ultraluxe resorts certainly help with that — whether it's Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, The St. Regis Red Sea Resort or Shebara Resort, you'll feel like you're in your own world ... one of total luxury and relaxation.

BEACH LIFE IS YOUR BEST LIFE

Just about every watersport you can imagine is available: Sailing, snorkeling, stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, windsurfing, e-foil, WingSUP and scuba diving are adventures that await your attention. For the scuba-certified, the underwater sights are not to be missed — Yanbu is Saudi's scuba-diving capital, boasting dive sites ranging from WWI and WWII shipwrecks to an old Chinese tugboat, on top of the sprawling coral reef.



DESERT DAYS

Trade in the shoreline for a different kind of sandy adventure. The desert calls out, promising equal parts beauty and adventure. Explore Saudi's Nabataean heritage and majestic desert surroundings with hiking trails that trace historic trading routes, or to cover more ground, rent mountain bikes and pedal through rugged granite hills, ancient volcanic fields and endless plains. Head back out at night, and swap desert views for stargazing wholly unrivaled. ■

Images from left: Overwater suites at The St. Regis Red Sea Resort; aerial view of Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve; couple walking on the beach; wakeboarding; desert hiking

Can't-Miss Dishes



A Feast of Flavors

Saudi's culinary scene is a mixture of timeless and modern, traditional and international, refined and rustic. No matter your tastes, it is truly difficult – perhaps even impossible – to have a bad meal here. As you travel through the country, here are some recommendations for memorable dishes.

JEDDAH

Toki Jeddah

There's a romantic air to this modern Chinese restaurant; between the Chinese Art Deco interior and the rich palette of Cantonese and Szechuan flavors in the meticulously crafted dishes, time seems to slow as you savor the seconds here.

Can't-Miss Dish: Sichuan Crispy Duck

Nafoura

Experience Mediterranean elegance in Nafoura's sunny open kitchen or outdoor terrace overlooking the Red Sea. The sea breeze really adds a certain charm to the atmosphere.

Can't-Miss Dish: Shish Taouk



RIYADH

Café Boulud

Award-winning chef Daniel Boulud has composed a café of timeless elegance, providing a French culinary journey through seasonal classics and modern creations.

Can't-Miss Dish: Lavender-Glazed Duck Breast

Najd Village

An ideal choice for sampling authentic traditional Saudi cuisine, Najd Village draws its heritage from the Najd Highlands; every dish is prepared under the direct supervision of specialists in authentic Najd cuisine.

Can't-Miss Dish: Camel Vertebrae Kabsa

Suhail Restaurant

This traditional homestyle Saudi food with a modern twist, served in a high-end setting – is a must-try for those with a taste for both authenticity and luxury.

Can't-Miss Dish: Hneini Cheesecake

ALULA

Maraya Social

Set atop the ever-shimmering Maraya, Maraya Social is helmed by the acclaimed Jason Atherton. The only thing that compares to the delectable sharing plates of Mediterranean, Arabian and British cuisine? The desert landscape, bathed in starlight.

Can't-Miss Dish: AlUla Date & Banana Pudding

Tama Restaurant

Founded on the idea that cooking for someone is an expression of the purest love, Tama brings people together with shareable plates comprised of Mediterranean, Asian and South American traditions.

Can't-Miss Dish: The menu changes often — just trust your gut!

Pink Camel Pastry Boutique

Little-treat culture is alive and well in the middle of the desert. Found on the edge of the oasis, the only thing more Instagrammable than the plates are the views.

Can't-Miss Dish: Hot Chocolate Pancakes

Circolo Restaurant

Authentic Italian pasta and wood-fired pizza ultimately provide a taste of Italy well across the Mediterranean. Savoring locally sourced premium ingredients while staring out at a sea of date palms makes for a serene meal.

Can't-Miss Dish: Linguine with Wild Mushrooms and Truffles



QUINTESSENTIAL SAUDI DISHES

Some dishes are simply so iconic you'll want to try them at more than just one restaurant. As you explore Saudi, keep your eyes peeled for the chance to order any of the following:

Kabsa: The national dish — a platter of amber-hued rice topped with succulent camel meat, chicken, fish or lamb seasoned with a medley of spices and topped with fried onions, pine nuts and raisins

Ma'amoul: Small shortbread cookies stuffed with dried fruits or nuts, typically served with strong coffee or tea

Jareesh: A savory porridge made with coarse ground wheat and flavored with spices like cardamom, cloves, cinnamon or cumin stirred together with butter or oil and tender lamb before being sprinkled with fried onions and garlic

Mutabbaq: One of the most popular street foods, essentially a fried pancake stuffed with fillings like mincemeat, eggs or vegetables served with lemon and chili

Hanini: A traditional dessert made from dates, brown flour and regional spices, baked to perfection then topped with pecans, walnuts or pistachios (and often soaked in caramel sauce)

Images from left: Shish taouk; Kabsa

Upcoming Epic Events

Time your visit with one of these upcoming events to boost your wanderlust to a whole new level.

JEDDAH SUMMER FESTIVAL

This grand celebration, set to take place from June to September 2025, is a perfect blend of music, cultural exhibits, fireworks and a host of fun activities. It's a showcase of the city's vibrant seaside charm, drawing tourists from all around the globe.

RIYADH SEASON

Taking place from October 2025 through March 2026, Riyadh Season is back for a fourth year with new events, bigger surprises and unforgettable moments. This celebration transforms the Saudi capital into a global hub of excitement, as millions of visitors revel in culture, entertainment and adventure in the heart of Saudi.

SOUNDSTORM

A music festival of epic proportions spanning from December 11 to 13, Soundstorm is the loudest, liveliest festival in the region — and they're leveling up. With an all-star lineup, new side quests and the freshest sounds in every genre, you're in for another round of electrifying performances and unforgettable memories thanks to hundreds of artists across stages you love to experience.



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX

Even in the octane-fueled world of Formula One racing, known for its powerfully muscled hot rods, the Jeddah Corniche Circuit is breaking speed records. The track, situated along Saudi's Red Sea coastline, is "the fastest street circuit ever seen in Formula One," according to the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, the governing body for motorsports. It also boasts the most corners: 27.

This is a spectacle you'll want to see firsthand — nab roadside seats to feel the buzz of the turbo-charged engines in April 2026.

OTHER EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

The above are just the start — there are even more events to look forward to down the line. The Red Sea Film Festival takes place every December and showcases a curated selection of Saudi, Arab and international films. Even further out, the legendary FIFA World Cup is set to be hosted in Saudi come 2034. ■

Images from top: Riyadh Festival celebration; Formula 1 Grand Prix

Saudi Arabia Travel FAQs

From archaeological sites set in dramatic landscapes to modern cities of skyscrapers and world-class restaurants, Saudi Arabia is the jackpot for the adventurous, the curious, the enchanted and the discerning traveler.

Where Is Saudi Arabia?

With the Red Sea to the west and the Arabian Gulf to the east, Saudi Arabia pops out on a map — it is the largest country in the Middle East, after all. Most Saudis live in urban centers like the capital of Riyadh, the buzzy seaside port city of Jeddah or the two holiest cities in Islam, Makkah (also known as Mecca) and Medina. While the country is home to the largest sand desert on the planet, the varied topography means you'll find oases, cliffs, steppes and mountains dotting the landscape ... not to mention the 1,240 miles of sunny coastline.

Who Should Go?

Short answer: Those with adventure on their minds and wanderlust in their hearts.

Long answer: Saudi Arabia has global appeal. The reasons are many: Generosity and hospitality play important roles in Saudi life. With two-thirds of the population under the age of 35, the country has a youthful and engaging spirit. All travelers are encouraged to visit, from lifetime learners to active adventurers, and can expect a warm welcome.

What Are the Main Draws?

At the top of most lists is the otherworldly AlUla, Saudi's first UNESCO World Heritage Site — it's the world's largest open-air museum. It's a must for history buffs, especially with the pre-Islamic tombs of Hegra dating back to the first century BCE.

And then, on the other end of history's timeline, the latest luxury developments along the Red Sea promise one of the world's most ambitious regenerative tourism hubs. Further out on the horizon, the futuristic megacity NEOM beckons in a new era of luxurious, sustainable living.

Sprinkled throughout the country are global festivals and top sporting events, experiences warranting international travel for the chance to attend: F1 Grand Prix, FIFA World Cup, Soundstorm and film festivals. Timing your trip with one of these is very much two birds, one stone.

When Should You Visit?

There is no bad time to visit. Travel to Saudi is typically most popular during the fall, winter and spring. From October to March, temperatures are typically 60-80F. For those who prefer a pinch more warmth, April is the prime time to visit.

Contact our agency to plan your Saudi journey.



FISHING ESSENTIALS

From gloves to fish finders, here's everything you need to ensure optimum comfort and preparation on your next fishing trip

1 Columbia Men's PFG Mackenzie River Jacket

This high-performance rain jacket has an adjustable hood, waterproof bonded layers and zippered chest pockets for keeping both you and your gear dry. \$140, columbia.com

2 Huk Rogue Wave Boots

These slip-on fishing boots are made from durable neoprene rubber. The outsole traction pattern ensures stability on all surfaces, while breathable mesh liners help keep feet dry. \$100, huk.com

3 HydroFlask 20L Day Escape Pack

This insulated backpack cooler keeps items cold for up to 36 hours. Welded seams ensure no leaking, while a waterproof outer shell protects belongings. \$199.95, hydroflask.com

4 Costa Rincon Polarized Sunglasses

Equipped with premium 580 lenses and plant-bio-based resin, these polarized mirrored glasses block 100% of UV light. The C-Wall coating repels water, oil and sweat. \$280, costadelmar.com

5 Big Y Fly Co Orvis Clearwater Trout/Freshwater Outfit

Suitable for both novices and pros, this handy Big Y Fly kit is an essential for fishing trips, and includes a four-piece fly rod, cordura rod tube, reel and a fly line. \$347, bigyflyco.com

6 Columbia PFG Terminal Tackle™ Fishing Gloves

A lightweight polyester shell keeps hands comfortable and dry, while UPF 50 guards use tight fabric to protect skin from sun damage. \$30, columbia.com

1



2



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4



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6



BEST FISH FINDERS



Simrad GO Chartplotter and Fish Finder

This compact device fits any boat, delivering accurate navigation and fish detection with its sonar, radar and GPS technologies. Its LED screen is even visible in bright sunlight. \$699, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Garmin Striker Plus 4 Dual-Beam Transducer Fish Finder/GPS Combo

This sleek fish finder combines high-sensitivity GPS with a Quickdraw Contours live mapping system. Save fishing hotspots and plot routes. \$159.99, [cabelas.com](https://www.cabelas.com)



Humminbird HELIX 5 DI G2 Fish Finder

With a maximum depth of 600 feet, this high-tech fish finder utilizes down imaging sonar to display high-quality, underwater images on its 5-inch screen. \$269.99, [finandanchor.com](https://www.finandanchor.com)

THE MARBLE CAVES, CHILE

This mesmerizing cave system is not just marble by name — it's made entirely of solid stone, says Emily Lush

It took an estimated 6,000 years to chisel and polish the Marble Caves, a system of partially submerged grottoes and islets in the Patagonian Andes. The formations are sculpted from the cliffs that plunge into Lake General Carrera, which straddles Chile and Argentina. The marble is rippled with shades of icy blue, pink and gray, and, as the glacial lake's water level rises and falls throughout the year, so too do the colors oscillate.

The designated Nature Sanctuary in the Aysén Region encompasses several unique structures. The cathedral is a voluminous chamber buttressed by majestic marble arches that resemble cloisters. The chapel, meanwhile, is smaller and propped up on a heavily eroded pedestal of marble columns. The ceiling of the expansive marble cavern drips with twisted stone spires and spindles.

The cliffs are thought to have been made of limestone that was recrystallized as calcium carbonate when tectonic shifts subjected them to extreme heat and pressure. Ribbons of ochre and rose were created as impurities and became trapped during this process. Later, pounding waves and battering winds caused some of the minerals to dissolve, hollowing out the caves and casting the islets, while the swell buffed the interior walls until the surface was smooth.

The caves are concealed below a sheer escarpment on a forested peninsula, so can only be accessed by water. Boat tours from the nearest major town, Puerto Río Tranquilo, are a popular way to navigate through the larger caverns and view the entire peninsula from the lake. To wend through the tighter caverns, visitors should join a guided kayaking expedition.



ESSENTIALS

Puerto Río Tranquilo is conveniently located off the Carretera Austral, making it an easy stop on a road trip down Chile's Route 7. The best time to go is between December and February, when the lake is topped up with ice melt from the Andes and the rock takes on more intense hues. In winter, the water level drops by up to three feet, revealing additional layers of crystalline stone that are hidden in summer.

THIS IS THE ISLAND OF ALL

You're in for a summer adventure like no other on a cruise to Perfect Day at CocoCay — voted Best Private Destination by *Travel Weekly* readers for five years running. Bask on seven stretches of powdery beach, including the new adults-only Hideaway BeachSM.

Sip cocktails at the swim-up bar in the largest freshwater pool in The Bahamas, or unwind in an Overwater Cabana at Coco Beach Club[®]. Then amp up the thrills on the tallest waterslide in the Caribbean. Only on Royal Caribbean[®].



To book, contact our agency today!



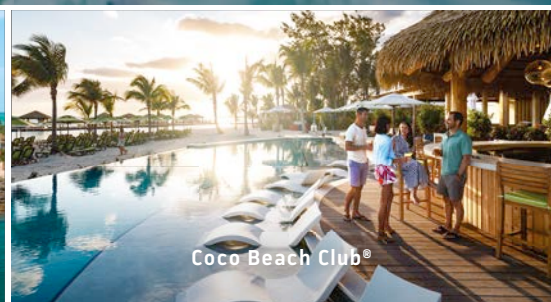
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Daredevil's Tower



Perfect Day at CocoCay, Bahamas



Coco Beach Club[®]

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IMAGE: ANWL IMAGES