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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GRACE PARK, L. KASIMU HARRIS, FEDERICO CIAMEI, KISAWA SANCTUARY, LAUREN TAMAKI





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Rhythms can shift  
depending on the time  
of day, or season,  
or neighborhood. One  
thing is universal:  
A city is constantly  
in motion.

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Red Oak Trail,  
Cedar Ridge Preserve

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the beaches, the  
fresh food, and  
the quality of life.  
Honestly, why  
don’t I live there?”  
—L.D.R.

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“Tokyo makes  
me feel more alive,  
awake, in love,  
challenged, and  
at home than  
anywhere else.”  
—K.L.

“After visiting  
Istanbul just once,  
I knew I’d need  
a lifetime to fully  
explore all of  
its iconic buildings  
and storied  
neighborhoods.  
It’s a mission  
I’ll happily take on!”  
—C.A.

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“I like Greenville,  
South Carolina,  
so much that  
I built a small  
house there last  
year.” —C.S.M.

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“Seattle has it  
all. Beer, coffee,  
music—what’s  
not to love? The  
Northwest’s  
biggest secret:  
The weather  
is perfect in the  
summer.” —J.B.

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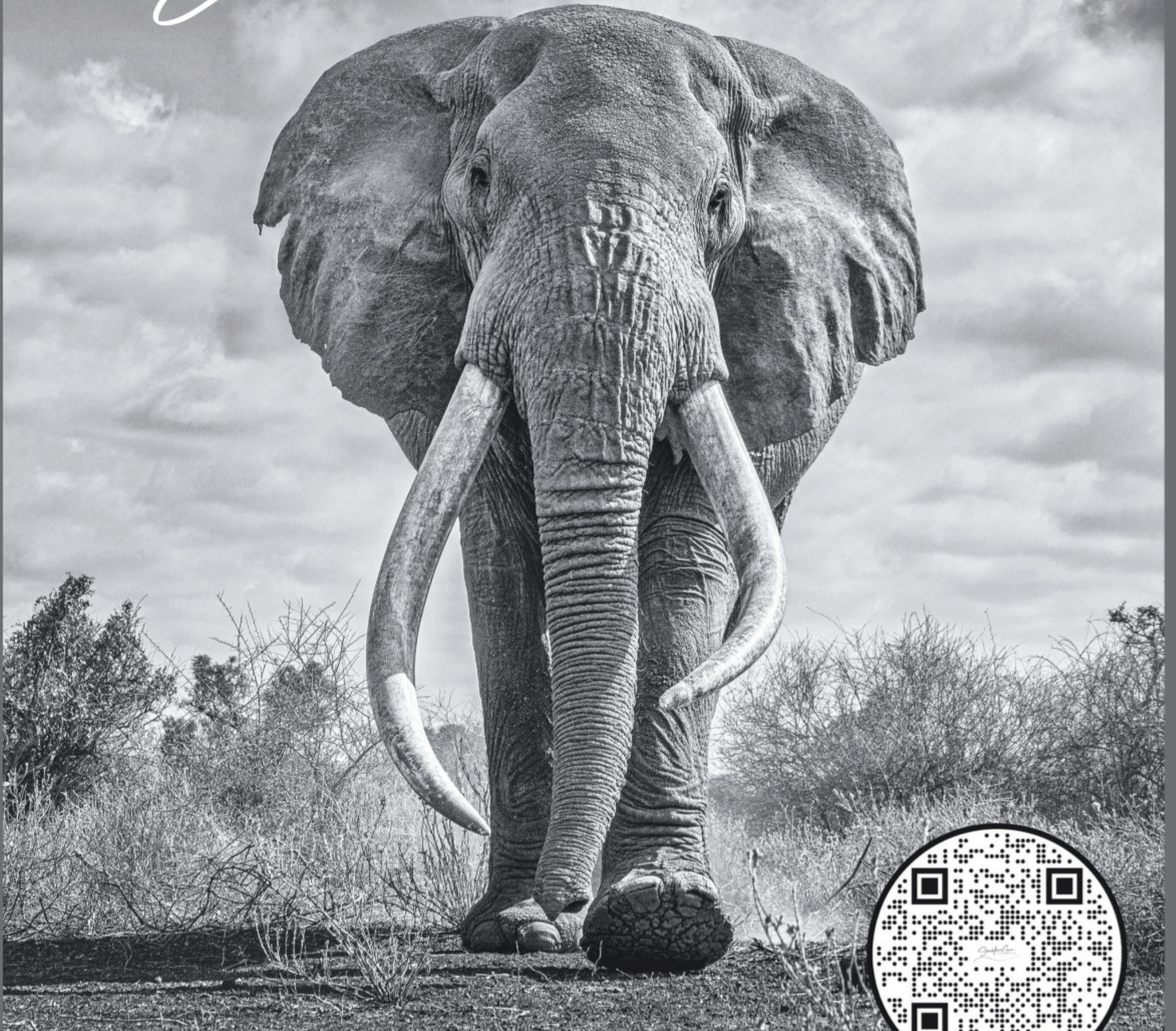
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## ALEX LAU

Photographer

Alex Lau spent parts of his childhood in both New York City's and San Francisco's Chinatowns. For **Something Like Healing, Something Like Hope** (p.96), he traveled back to the neighborhoods of his youth to document the communities that live there. "Any opportunity to photograph these places that are so culturally important is awesome," Lau says. He regularly jets around the world to shoot food, and his photos will appear in the forthcoming cookbook *Rambutan: Recipes From Sri Lanka* (Bloomsbury Publishing, October 2022). See his work on Instagram @ihatealexlau.



## ANU TARANATH

Writer

Dr. Anu Taranath is the author of *Beyond Guilt Trips: Mindful Travel in an Unequal World* (Between the Lines, 2019), and has been a professor at Seattle's University of Washington for 20 years. She's also one of AFAR's new **Unpacked** (p.19) columnists. In her first piece, she discusses how people can use travel to transform their communities. "Traveling ethically feels not just important but like a calling," Taranath says. Her work has appeared in *Jaggery, Yes!*, and *Away Journal*. Find her on Instagram @dr.anutaranath.



## AZZURRA COX

Writer

Azzurra Cox is a landscape architect who has written for such publications as *Bloomberg CityLab* and *Places Journal*. In **The Future of Cities** (p.26), she examines the ways metro areas around the world are evolving—many in direct response to the pandemic. "COVID exposed some serious problems with equity and access to public space," she says. "Going forward, the hope is that cities are going to become more sustainable and locally focused." In her latest architectural endeavor, Cox is planning the landscape design of the upcoming Wisconsin Museum of Nature and Culture, which is set to debut in 2026. Follow her on Instagram @azzucox.



## RENA EFFENDI

Photographer

Istanbul-based and Azerbaijan-born photojournalist Rena Effendi describes herself as a storyteller who works through the language of pictures. For **Border Lines** (p.72), Effendi captured quiet moments in Gaziantep, an ancient Turkish city near the Syrian border renowned for its cuisine. "The food makes the city very special to me, with all the delicious blendings of regional flavors and spices," Effendi says. She is currently working on a film about a rare butterfly, *Satyrus effendi*, that shares a name with both Rena and her father, an entomologist. The butterfly can be found in the borderlands between Armenia and Azerbaijan—two countries that have been at war with one another for more than 30 years. Find her on Instagram @renaeffendipfoto.

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## L. KASIMU HARRIS

Photographer

Born and raised in New Orleans, L. Kasimu Harris knows his city inside and out. He picked up photography in 2005, when he returned to his hometown 45 days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. In **Here Today, Gone Tomorrow** (p.41), Harris chose to focus on the human aspects of New Orleans, be it a woman admiring flowers or a pair of hands deftly packing shaved ice into a snowball, a local favorite on hot days. "People say it's the northernmost Caribbean city," he says. "It's a different place, and one that I connect with." His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Vox*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Follow him on Instagram @visionsandverbs.



## KRIS ANDREW SMALL

Illustrator

For the **Features Opener** (p.71), Kris Andrew Small was asked to illustrate the letter "A," a project he took on with colorful intensity. Small, a native of Sydney, Australia, likens his artistic process to making something beautiful out of leftovers from the fridge. "I find all of these random ingredients and then try to make something interesting," he says. "Without my work, I don't think I make much sense." Small has collaborated with brands such as Apple, Nike, and Adidas. See more of his art on Instagram @krisandrewsmall.



# A Perfect Gastro City Break in İstanbul

*İstanbul is the new cool and a center of world class cuisine as vibrant and diverse as its many neighborhoods. From traditional cuisine in the old city and modern Anatolian tasting menus in Beyoğlu to the freshest of fish by the Bosphorus coast, there's so much to explore for dedicated gourmands in this city of unforgettable flavors.*

İstanbul's gastronomic scene is thriving. Whether it's traditional establishments where Ottoman palace cuisine is being resurrected, or modern fine dining restaurants, where the richness of Anatolian recipes and ingredients are being redefined by the creative ardor of celebrity chefs, İstanbul represents the confluence of Türkiye's diverse palatal world, past and present, traditional and modern, pure and experimental.

The culinary journey begins in Sultanahmet, the old city and its most important food market: **Mısır Çarşısı** (Spice Bazaar). A covered market that has been flourishing since its inception in 1664 with its iconic mounds of spices in a full spectrum of colors, its dried fruits and nuts and traditional sweets. Outside, vendors selling an endless array of cheeses and pickled vegetables line the street, while the smell of freshly roasted Turkish coffee from the historic coffee roasters lingers in the

air. It is also here that **Pandeli**, one of the city's oldest restaurants open since 1901, continues to serve classic Turkish dishes in its beautiful rooms decorated with shimmering turquoise İznik tiles. **Lokanta 1741**, with its extraordinary location inside a 300-year-old Ottoman hamam, serves classic Turkish cuisine with a creative spin in an ambient open-air courtyard including a fully decked-out cocktail bar. In the backstreets, established restaurants offer Ottoman palace cuisine derived from meticulous research of royal archives, resulting in unique dishes such as *Mahmudiyye*, a sweet and sour Ottoman dish with cinnamon and clove flavored chicken, honey, almonds, apricots and raisins. Much like its Ottoman past, where the finest ingredients were used in the palace kitchens, İstanbul chefs pick out their ingredients from the city's best markets as well as local producers from all around Anatolia



Dining experience by the Bosphorus





and the TurkAeagan, for the freshest of produce, dairy products, meat, fish and much more.

Walking across the Galata Bridge with its iconic fishermen is like taking a journey in time, because once one arrives in Karaköy and continues up into Beyoğlu, the city's modern gastronomic scene unfolds with splendor. Some of the city's best fine dining venues shortlisted by the World's 50 Best Restaurants platform await with their carefully selected tasting menus.

İstanbul's premier haute cuisine locations look out over the historic peninsula from their minimal dining rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows. Tasting menu dishes, which look more like artworks, represent a celebration of Anatolia's rich world of recipes and ingredients, reinterpreted creatively and unforgettable in taste. Every bite is accompanied by a sip of wine, selected with pride from Türkiye's burgeoning boutique vineyards where local grape varieties such as *Bornova Misketi*, *Narince*, *Öküzgözü* and *Kalecik Karası* are thriving and being recognized with international awards. Whether it's a simple yet elegant eatery serving traditional *esnaf* (tradesmen restaurant) dishes with a modern twist, or fine dining establishments like **Sunset** or **Ulus29**, which offer Turkish cuisine at its finest with a hillside view of the city's iconic bridges, İstanbul's food scene is as diverse as it is exclusive.

İstanbul is also a metropolitan city in transformation with newly launched projects such as **Galataport**, the world's first underground cruise ship terminal, with its waterfront promenade plus shops and restaurants. With new luxury hotel openings on the rise, internationally acclaimed chef restaurants and culinary brands available in global capitals around the world are also opening locations all over the Turkish mega city.

Along the wealthy neighborhoods by the Bosphorus, famous for their upscale fish restaurants, the list of *meze*





## Galata Tower and the Historical Peninsula



dishes is always long and the freshest catch is simply grilled and served with a wedge of lemon and accompanied either by a cold glass of Turkish white wine, or a chilled glass of *rakı*. In the evening, neighborhoods like Arnavutköy become alive with chic craft cocktail bars where award-winning mixologists make their own bitters and syrups and create drinks with unique ingredients such as oak-aged *rakı*, a new interpretation of the anise-flavored local spirit.

Across the Bosphorus, the more bohemian district of Kadıköy has its very own charms with its historic *meyhane* (local restaurant specialized on *rakı* and *meze*) culture, neighborhood pubs and modern restaurants where young chefs are redefining Turkish street food classics, preparing and serving them as gourmet dishes. Of course, no mention of Kadıköy would be complete without its famous bustling market, where everything from fresh fish to pickles, olives, cheeses, produce and coffee can be found along a network of interconnected shops and vendors. After filling one's bags with the best ingredients the city has to offer, the journey ends at one of the local restaurants near the marketplace, with a hearty meal of classic Anatolian dishes. The kind of meal that the people of this country have been making and taking comfort in for centuries, served in a city where the unique food culture is the result of both heritage and contemporary verve.

  
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# It's Time to Visit Cities Again

**I RECENTLY SPENT** an energizing few days in Munich. I took a walking tour focused on the city's Jewish history and culture, went to the National Theater to see the ballet *Coppélia*, and strolled through the English Garden, a sprawling green space in the middle of town frequented by toddlers, seniors, joggers, surfers (yes, really), and at least one nudist. I traversed the city on foot and by train and didn't use a taxi or car once.

After two years of being in places I already know well, it was invigorating to be in a city previously unknown to me. Dining at the stylish, packed restaurant Brenner, I people-watched as I ate *spargel* (the white asparagus lionized in Bavaria). In the Werksviertel-Mitte district,

I sipped pilsners and ales with brewer Tilman Ludwig. There is nothing that refuels me like the energy of a bustling city.

In this issue we ask questions big and small about cities around the world. What's next for our urban spaces? How will they retain what makes them distinctive in an era of increased homogenization? What are the travel experiences that can only happen in densely populated places? On page 26, we look at how forward-thinking municipalities are investing in public spaces, hyperlocal neighborhoods, and more expansive cycling infrastructure. Writer Bonnie Tsui examines Chinatowns through a personal lens on page 96. And we unveil the 2022 AFAR Stay List, our compendium of the world's best new sustainable hotels (page 49). *Prost!*

Travel well,  
**JULIA COSGROVE**  
*Editor in Chief*

---

*As the world reopens, travelers should be patient and flexible—places may have closed, hours may be different than they were pre-pandemic, and hotels and restaurants may still be understaffed. A bit more advance planning could be necessary.*



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# Traveling Mindfully in Asheville

There are many ways to visit Asheville, North Carolina. It's especially rewarding when you explore the city's fascinating past thoughtfully and support innovative, community-building businesses founded by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC entrepreneurs.

In the heart of “The Block,” Asheville’s historic Black business district near Pack Square, located in the center of downtown, the boutique and gallery **Noir Collective AVL** features works by Black makers and artists. Located beside the **YMI Cultural Center**—the oldest African-American community center in the United States—it offers visitors an opportunity to surround themselves with living history while giving back. Bring home art and other exquisite, handcrafted works, from African masks and clothing to textiles and jewelry, and become part of Asheville’s storied tradition of Black entrepreneurship. The Collective also hosts art openings and events where people come together to mingle, exchange ideas, and celebrate. Its creative, inclusive atmosphere embodies how easy it is for all types of travelers to feel at home here.

## Purposeful Travel in Asheville

**These restaurants, shops, and experiences showcase Asheville’s diverse entrepreneurs and history.**

Pick up gift items or enjoy a raw honey tasting at **Asheville Bee Charmer**, an LGBTQ-owned store committed to honeybee education and conservation.

Treat yourself to a made-from-scratch, Southern-style confection at **Short Street Cakes**, whose owner, Olga Jiménez, hails from Hidalgo, Mexico. If sweets aren’t your thing, have a cold one at **7 Clans Brewing**, a majority female- and Indigenous-owned microbrewery.

See the work of the Black mason who defined turn-of-the-century Asheville architecture along the **James Vester Miller Walking Trail**. Learn more: [exploreasheville.com/james-vester-miller-trail](http://exploreasheville.com/james-vester-miller-trail).



Photo: Renato Rotolo



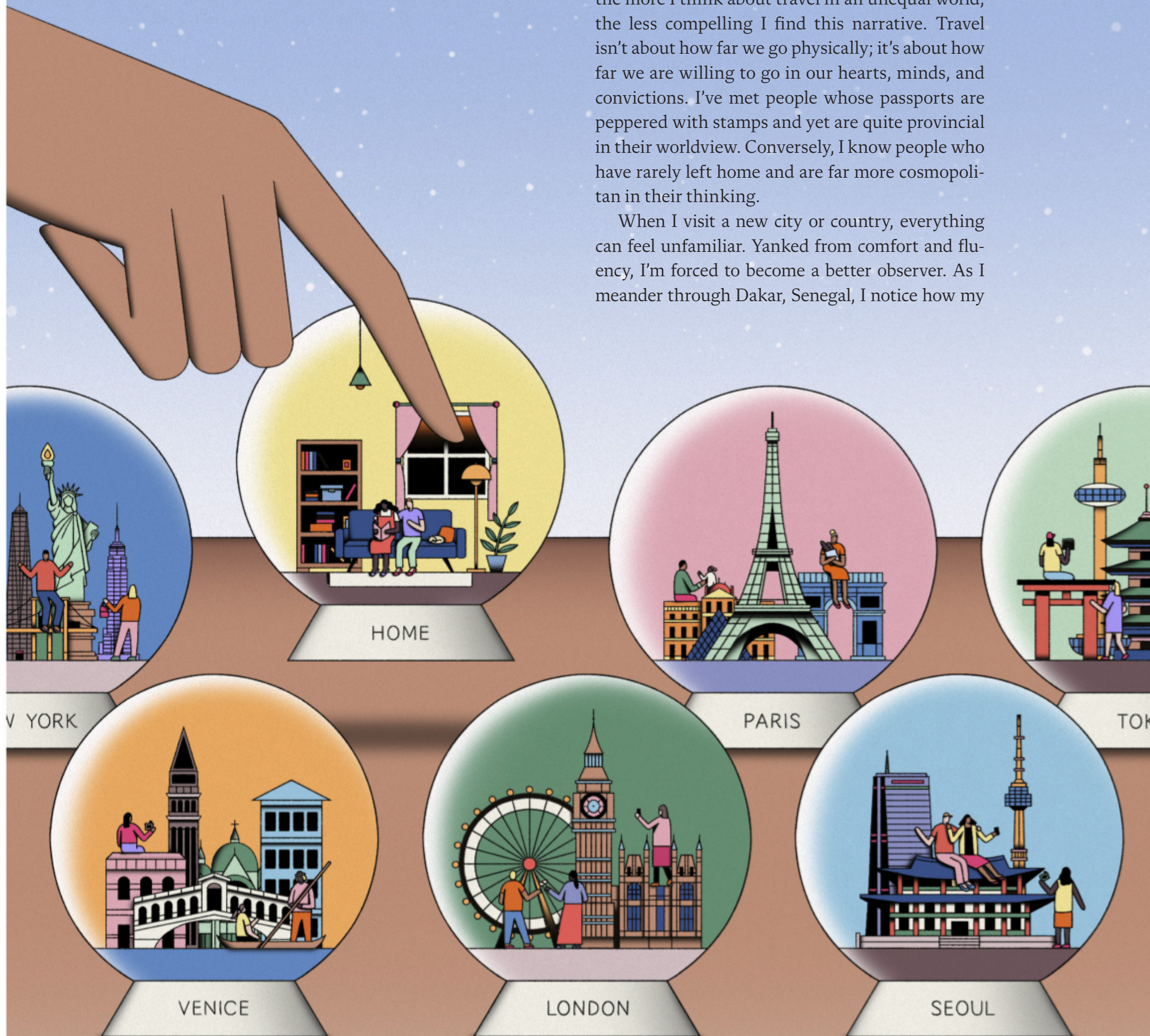
# A Change in Perspective

How to apply lessons from travel to daily life.

**I USED TO THINK** travel meant going to a far-off place where the sights, sounds, and smells could snap me into another version of myself. Only travel, I believed, had the power to make me more plucky and intrepid, less prejudiced and blinkered. In that hallowed space of geographical and cultural difference, my fellow travelers and I would be inducted into an exclusive club of global sophistication.

The more I travel from my home in Seattle and the more I think about travel in an unequal world, the less compelling I find this narrative. Travel isn't about how far we go physically; it's about how far we are willing to go in our hearts, minds, and convictions. I've met people whose passports are peppered with stamps and yet are quite provincial in their worldview. Conversely, I know people who have rarely left home and are far more cosmopolitan in their thinking.

When I visit a new city or country, everything can feel unfamiliar. Yanked from comfort and fluency, I'm forced to become a better observer. As I meander through Dakar, Senegal, I notice how my








South Asian brownness presents itself in the racial and cultural mix of West Africa. While browsing street markets in Rio de Janeiro, I consider how being a woman feels, based on local gender norms. I reflect on the various privileges I am awarded due to my U.S. passport, the dollars in my pocket, and my own global mobility.

Travel brings these nuances to the surface precisely when I am an outsider. To wear brand-name sneakers and tote a fancy water bottle would loudly proclaim my urbanity and access to resources, especially when I visit less wealthy places. Since forming relationships is my priority as a traveler, I'd rather tone down my privileges and dial up my desire to connect. I cannot undo all the global inequities around me, but I can make small choices about how I show up in new spaces. I carry a nondescript water container and wear the kind of footwear that other women my age do. Sometimes, this leads to unexpected feelings of connection, as I remember happening

**I cannot undo all  
the global inequities  
around me, but I can  
make small choices  
about how I show up  
in new spaces.**

and acceptance, and who is denied such dignities—and why. It is about understanding that, due to history and accidents of birth, some of us have advantages others are not afforded.

None of us has a manual for dealing with the ways our privileges or lack thereof make us feel, or how our identities might play out abroad or at home. We do, however, have the ability to engage more intentionally with the people and world around us. In the process of attending more carefully to one another, we come closer to justice. And we might even heal a bit of ourselves, too. 

on a muggy day in Tiananmen Square, where I was surrounded by Chinese elders. Despite a lack of shared language, their broad smiles offered grace and camaraderie. Other times, I stand out and simmer in discomfort. A walking tour of low-income neighborhoods in Mexico City left me feeling agitated and unsure about how to process the planet's many unfair realities. Both scenarios encourage me to pay attention to my feelings as well as my surroundings.

I am trying to live my life at home with a similar consciousness I feel when I'm on the road. How can I use the gifts I receive while traveling to live more mindfully at home?

With a beginner's mind, I enjoy the comforts of home *and* take in my familiar surroundings as a curious outsider. When I listen to the calls of robins and chickadees in my local park, I wonder which communities in my city have fewer green spaces and why. I notice the people around me as I reach for tomatoes at the grocery store. How monocultural is my life, I ask myself, and why, especially if my city is celebrated as being so diverse? At the library or café, I intermittently close my laptop and remind myself to look up. I try to connect with people, starting with a nod, a soft gaze, and an easy smile. I avoid the automatic greeting, "How are you?" Instead I ask, "What's something you've been thinking about lately?"

Mindful travel in an unequal world isn't about getting on a plane to go somewhere; it's about paying attention to who feels a sense of belonging, opportunity,



PROMOTION

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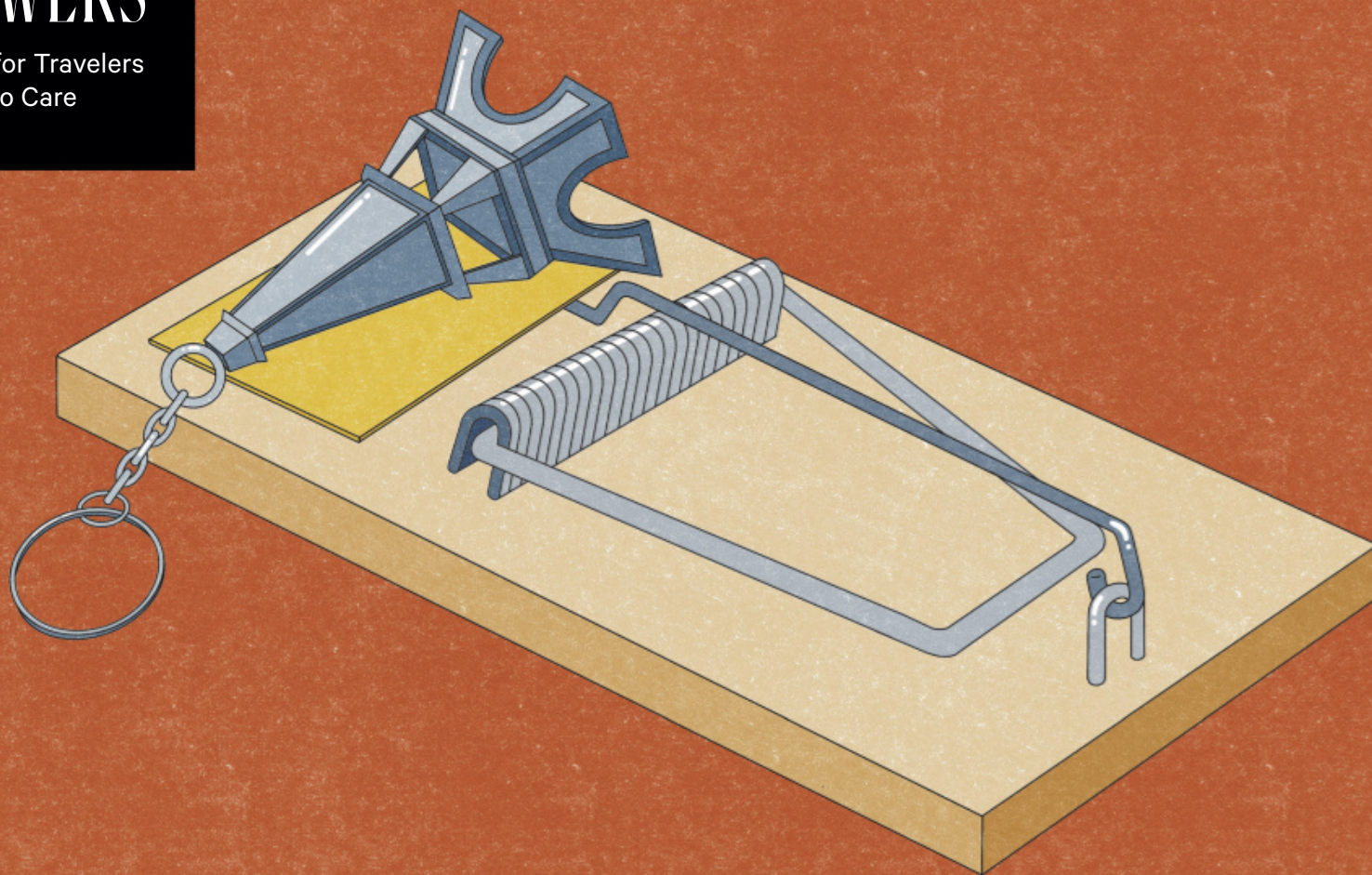
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## How can I avoid tourist traps?

Like many of you, I've been caught in the occasional "tourist trap" over the years. I've found myself waking up in a cookie-cutter hotel room, with a generic print of a local landmark over the bed, or on a street full of gift shops selling puntastic T-shirts. Then I ask myself, "How did I get here? Aren't I a better traveler than this?"

Tourist traps are everywhere tourists can be found, and they can ensnare us all. But what exactly is a tourist trap? And how should we think about them?

### What constitutes a tourist trap?

A tourist trap is, by definition, a place that attracts and exploits tourists. But Merriam-Webster doesn't leave much room for nuance. After all, one person's trap is another person's treasure.

A tourist trap is often cast as the opposite of an "authentic" experience. It's somewhere we skip if we're looking for the "soul" of a destination. But what makes,

say, visiting a hidden supper club in Hackney more true to London than watching the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace? Who's to say what is truly "authentic," anyway?

There's also a distinction between a tourist *hot spot* and a tourist *trap*. Many hot spots—for example, the Eiffel Tower—are marvels of engineering, nature, or culture that are kept standing, alive, or protected for visitors. The trinket stalls that surround them, however, err on the side of traps.

Instead of asking how to avoid tourist traps, perhaps a better question is: How can travelers more deeply immerse themselves in a new city—to experience both its beloved landmarks and the places less familiar to the average visitor?

### Tap into local experts

"Avoiding 'inauthentic' experiences requires research and advance

planning," says Lindsey Tramuta, a Paris-based writer who offers small group tours of the city. "However, it can be as simple as scoping out who the local, trustworthy voices are."

She recommends reading the work of writers who live in the city you're visiting, as well as following chefs or restaurant owners on social media.

### Tune in to the local frequencies

Mary Rickard, a semi-retired journalist who leads walking tours of New Orleans through Context Travel, suggests tuning in to the local radio station and reading the newspapers to get primed before your trip. You'll also find out about concerts, art exhibitions, and other community events.

In New Orleans, for example, musicians are often guests on WWOZ radio shows leading up to performances. Attend a gig and you might strike up a conversation that teaches you something new about the city and the people who live there.

### Step away from the tour bus

Coach tours can play a valuable role in facilitating travel if you're unable or unwilling to make your own way in unfamiliar territory. But renting a car, Rickard says, can offer "a more leisurely experience of less-visited sites and roadside restaurants."


The same is true for other, more independent, forms of transportation—like walking, cycling, and taking public transit. If I'd done that in Marrakech a few years back, I'd have spent less time in my taxi driver's cousin's perfume shop.

### Seek out new neighborhoods

A city's heart may be found among its lesser known arteries. Joan Roca, CEO and founder of Essentialist, a private members' service for travelers, recommends doing a little research in advance—but also, when you feel safe to do so, letting yourself go with the flow in the present.

"Take that map out, and make note of where the big attractions are and what is familiar to you," he says. "Then look to the other spaces on the map. Perhaps it's a green space . . . perhaps it's a maze of streets away from the well-known areas that's caught your eye."

### Consider when you travel

Meaningful interactions can be had at quieter times of day and year, as a dawn visit to St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City with an infant once taught me. "Traveling in the low season," Roca says, "will help avoid both tourists and traps alike." 

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# A Bustling Multicultural Hub

Auckland is the most populous Polynesian city in the world and home to a wide range of ethnicities. You can enjoy world-class shops, museums, and restaurants, such as newcomer **Mr. Morris**, a fine dining experience of diverse cultural influences; **Lucky 8**, with Asian tapas; and **Sumthin Dumplin**, which serves authentic, juicy dumplings. What better home base is there for exploring the awe-inspiring landscapes nearby—or as part of a journey that goes further afield?

## Day Trips

### Waiheke Island

Board the 35-minute ferry from Auckland to nearby Waiheke Island where you can kayak with Waiheke Adventure Centre or fly over land on 656 feet of “flying fox” zip lines with EcoZip Adventures—an exhilarating experience capped by a calming nature walk. Top it all off with a glass of one of the region’s renowned red wines.

### Te Henga Walkway

This trail meanders along lofty coastal cliffs with spectacular views of black sand and Tasman Sea surf at Te Henga, also known as Bethell’s Beach, about 45 minutes from the city. Choose an easy “tramp” or an intermediate one

to Muriwai Beach where you’ll cross the Waitākere River footbridge.

### Muriwai Beach

You can drive north 40 minutes from Te Henga to Muriwai Beach, which has a mere 37 miles of New Zealand’s 9,300-mile coastline. A massive colony of gannets, giant Australasian seabirds, nest here from August to March. Learn to surf or play a round of golf—especially memorable if it’s windy.

## Overnight Stays

### Matakana

Matakana hosts its popular Village Farmer’s Market on Saturdays, well worth the hour-long trip from the city. Linger at the lush, 200-acre Brick Bay Wines, with its



outdoor sculpture trail and famed restaurant. Nearby, Sculptureum offers six sculpture gardens, six art galleries, a vineyard, two restaurants, and a bar. Drive 10 minutes south to Sandspit, hop on a ferry or water taxi, and enjoy historic Kawau Island.

Lodge sits on a ridge with panoramic views of the Brynderwyn Ranges, gorgeous beaches, and

surrounding islands. The stunning lap pool is nestled into the bush line of the property.

### Epic Places to Stay

Up the coastline of Muriwai Beach, 216 Luxury Accommodation Auckland elicits “wows” just 40 minutes from Auckland. Choose among two self-contained suites with private decks and a soothing soundtrack courtesy of the Tasman Sea below. North of Matakana, the stylish, eco-friendly Te Arai







# The Future of Cities

More than two years into a pandemic that forced humans indoors, emptied out downtowns, and decreased rates of travel, it's not a surprise that the planet, and its cities, became markedly quieter during this time. The hush reached deep into the Earth's crust: Scientists in 2020 noted a drop in seismic noise due to reduced vibrations above. As dramatic as the pandemic pause has been, it proved something that urbanists have always known: that cities are highly responsive and adaptable. Here's what the future holds for some of our planet's most dynamic urban centers.

## INVESTING IN THE HYPERLOCAL

The benefits of the 15-minute city—where residents enjoy a range of essential services within a short walk of their homes—became more evident during the last two years, when many commutes were eliminated and daily routines took place in a tighter perimeter. With the future of in-office work still up in the air, some cities are pouring resources into specific neighborhoods. “The question is how can we reinvest into not the monumental spaces, but the daily spaces,” says Alexa Bush, a program officer at the Kresge Foundation, which expands opportunities in U.S. cities through grants and investments.

In **Detroit**, multipurpose spaces have multiplied. Many are supported through the Motor City Match program, and most of them are minority- or women-owned. They have become neighborhood anchors as well as new destinations for travelers.

by **AZZURRA COX**

Illustrations by **TIM PEACOCK**



On any given night at Spot Lite, you can find a diverse, vibrant crowd dancing to a world-class DJ. During the day, the airy warehouse building functions as a coffee bar, local art gallery, and place to work. At the music space Paramita Sound, travelers can dig through rare LPs while enjoying a glass of local Michigan wine.

Elsewhere, cities are investing in outdoor spaces. **San Francisco** is spending \$150 million to develop India Basin Waterfront Park in the Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood. Located in one of the city's lowest-income areas, the park construction is accompanied by an





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Equitable Development Plan to preserve the culture and identity of the historic district.

In **Tainan City, Taiwan**, the Tainan Spring project reimagined the shell of an obsolete shopping mall as the frame for a new public pool and, eventually, a sunken park with wading pools and tropical greenery. And **Freetown, Sierra Leone**, has embarked on a campaign to increase tree cover by 50 percent by the end of 2022, using an open-source app and financial incentives for Sierra Leoneans to tend to the saplings.

## How can travelers better plug in to wider expanses of cities than they may see represented in travel brochures and on social media?

### EXPANDING CULTURAL HUBS

The world’s greatest cities are mosaics of cultures, languages, and people, yet too often immigrants and nonwhite racial groups are omitted from the common narrative. How can travelers better plug in to wider expanses of cities than they may see represented in travel brochures and on social media?

The stereotypical postcard image of **Paris** might include graceful cathedrals and stately museums, a fluffy croissant, and a café au lait at the corner bistro. That vision doesn’t reflect the Paris that French Cameroonian entrepreneur Jacqueline Ngo Mpii knows and loves—a city shaped by Afro-French people and culture. Ngo Mpii founded Little Africa, a cultural and tour agency, and has helped turn the neighborhood of La Goutte d’Or, located a mile east of Montmartre, into a vibrant, newly trendy slice of Paris. Locals and visitors can dine on jerk chicken at Mama Kossa or a traditional tagine at the Institut des Cultures d’Islam. Also in La Goutte d’Or: Little Africa Paris Village, a concept store that highlights African designers, artists, and entrepreneurs.

In **Seattle**, the Central District—historically one of the city’s redlined neighborhoods—has become a locus of gentrification and displacement. In the 1970s, more than 70 percent of its residents were Black; today, the figure has sunk below 18 percent. In the face of this shift, the Africatown Community Land Trust has been acquiring and developing land in the district over the last two decades to foster a cultural and economic home for the African diaspora in the Seattle metro region. As a result, visitors to the Central District can find a number of flourishing Black-owned businesses, including Melo Cafe; Ethiopian coffee shop and roaster Cafe Avoles; and the restaurant Communion, which serves what some call the best catfish this side of the Mississippi.

### GETTING AROUND TOWN

Some cities are working to transform the long-standing dominance of car culture. For a while, this meant sidewalks clogged with tangles of timed-out scooters. But many cities have strategically paired investments in “micromobility”—that is, transportation over short distances by lightweight, usually single-person vehicles such as bicycles or electric scooters—with more permanent infrastructure.

**Atlanta’s** BeltLine development is a prime example. A network of public parks, multi-use trails, transit, and affordable housing partly along a 22-mile railroad corridor, the BeltLine is also home to Ponce City Market, where travelers can get their fill of vegan cheesesteak, chicken tikka rolls, tonkotsu ramen, and more. Then, with the aid of an electric scooter or bicycle, folks can easily access other parts of town.

Many cities have been doubling down on better bicycling infrastructure. As part of its Transportation 2040 plan, **Vancouver** launched a citywide strategy to create new bike paths and upgrade existing ones, with the goal of having bike travel account for 12 percent of all trips by 2040. To date, the city’s efforts have nearly doubled the number of bike commuters since 2011, and the network of bike lanes makes it easy



for travelers to explore Vancouver at their own speed. (Cycle City Vancouver offers bike rentals, maps, and guided tours.)

**La Paz’s** transformative investment in mass transportation, Mi Teleférico, is the world’s largest cable-car system. Launched in 2014, the system traverses the La Paz–El Alto metropolitan region, with 26 stations across 10 lines, offering 360-degree views over the world’s highest capital city. Mi Teleférico does more than reduce lengthy land-based commutes: It connects residents and visitors across class and geography. 📍



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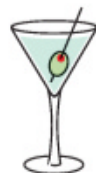
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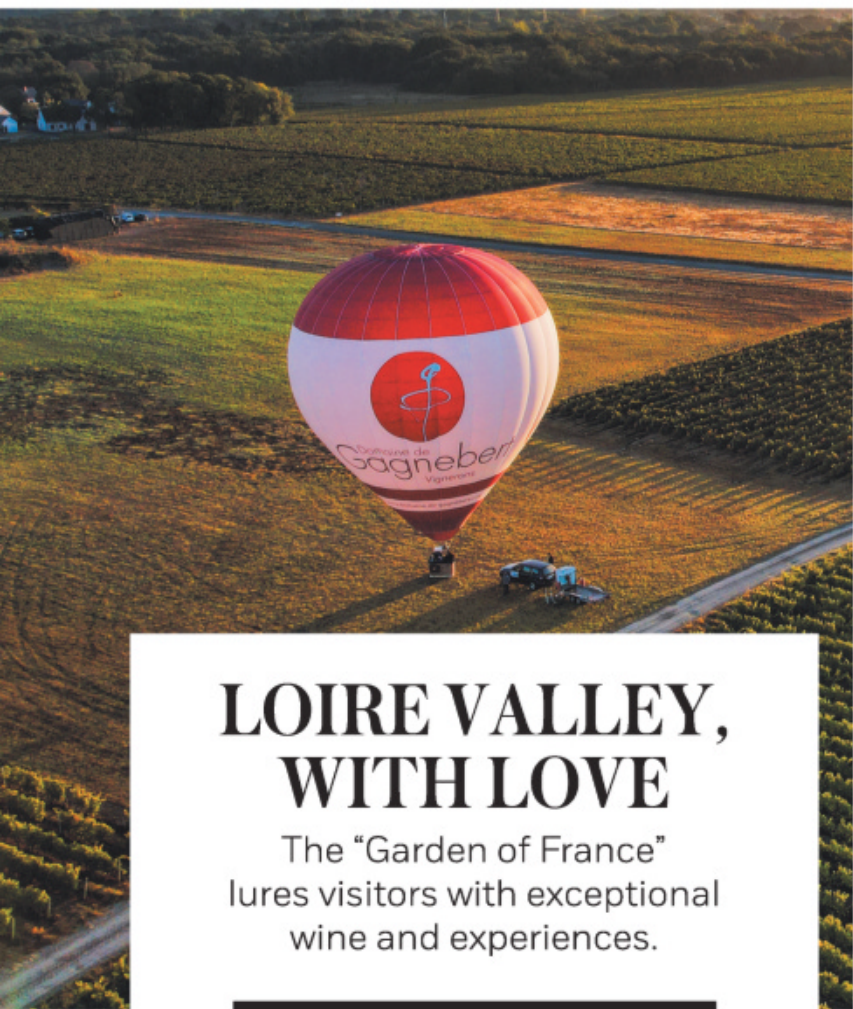




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In the **Touraine** region, sip on an herbaceous **Sauvignon Blanc** after touring the majestic Amboise château where Da Vinci is buried, and retire for the night to your own castle, **Château Minière**. In Saumur, visit the **Ackerman House**, the valley's oldest producer of fine sparkling wine, and its underground caves before flying in a hot-air balloon over **Domaine de Gagnebert's** vineyards at dusk with a **Chenin** in hand. Team up with Édouard Massart at **Jardin d'Édouard** and learn about **Muscadet** and his eco-wine while immersing yourself in the process and sharing a meal with the winemaker.

For a festive weekend, mark your calendar for the first weekend of September to take part in the **Vignes Vins Randos**, known as VVR, or Vines Wines Hikes, where some

20 gastronomic trails take you from Blois to Nantes to drink some of the region's best wine and meet vintners to more deeply understand their craft along the way.

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# That's the Spirit

When in Italy, do as the Italians do: *aperitivo*.

by Lisa Abend

Photographs by Federico Ciamei





# E

**EVERY EVENING** around 7 p.m., an apricot-colored glow spreads steadily across the Piazza San Marco, Venice's famous central square. It emanates not so much from the setting sun as from oversize glasses filled with the orange-hued beverage known as the Aperol Spritz, which proliferate at this time of day—recognized throughout Italy as *aperitivo* hour. For a time, during the loneliest years of the pandemic, those orange orbs were sparse. Now they are back in force, because for the gazillions of tourists who are again flooding the city like a human version of *acqua alta*, Venice's legendary high tides, aperitivo means one thing: an Aperol Spritz.

The word “aperitivo” (or *aperitivi* in the plural) refers both to a drink and to a daily ritual that takes place from roughly 7 to 9 p.m. It comes from the Latin *aperire*, meaning to open—as in, to open the appetite—and it usually involves a few salty (and free) snacks and a glass of something alcoholic. For Italians, the aperitivo is a fiercely protected tradition, a social ritual with a primary purpose: to bridge the transition from day to evening while ensuring no one gets too hungry, or thirsty, while waiting for dinner. Although there are regional variations on the theme, three drinks—each associated with a different Italian city and each gilded with legend—have become classics.

## MILAN'S COCKTAIL KING

The Americano—a mix of Campari, sweet vermouth, and a splash of soda water—is the oldest of the aperitivo triumvirate. In the 1860s, bartender Gaspare Campari invented his namesake liqueur,



an infusion of bitter herbs, aromatic plants, and citrus. At his Milanese bar, Caffè Campari, Gaspare began mixing the liqueur with vermouth from nearby Turin and served the drink under the name Milano-Torino.

Some 70 years later, an unknown soul decided to add soda water to the mix, and the Americano was born. The name might be a nod to the Italian boxer Primo Carnera, who, after winning a world championship in New York in 1933, was dubbed “L’Americano.” Or it might hail from a Milan bar where, in the 1930s, American tourists asked for a lighter take on the Milano-Torino. As with so much in the world of cocktails, opinions differ. You can debate it all at Caffè Campari, which still traffics in the Milano-Torino (and the Americano), 160 years later. But when I asked a few Milanese locals where I should go for an aperitivo, they all said the same thing: Bar Basso.

At 7 p.m. on a Saturday, Bar Basso is hopping—quite a feat for a place whose brocade walls, faded velvet chairs, and





Milan moments at Bar Basso, clockwise from opposite page: *Aperitivo* hour; olives are a key part of the snack ritual; the goblets are big and the Americanos strong; the bar's aperitivo spread.

Opener: An Aperol Spritz in the lime-light at Bar Basso.

black-vested waiters were the height of fashion when the spot was founded in 1947. I manage to find a seat among the families and groups of friends who crowd around tables that quickly fill with plates of fat olives, oily focaccia, and mini tuna sandwiches.

Mirko Stocchetto bought Bar Basso from its founder in 1967. At the time, bars in Milan still had a somewhat seamy reputation, but Mirko had learned the trade in his native Venice, where he worked at the iconic Harry's Bar. Back then, Venetian bars had a more polished sheen, explains Mirko's son, Maurizio, who now owns Basso.

"Thanks to the movie *Roman Holiday*, Americans had started to come," Maurizio says. "It was the time of *La Dolce Vita*, of Peggy Guggenheim, and you had all these jet-setters arriving. Americans were high rollers and heavy drinkers, and they liked their cocktails."

Mirko set about bringing that glamorous cocktail culture to Milan. Good Venetian that he was, he designed glassware—enormous goblets, short-stemmed coupes, simple chalices—to upgrade his cocktails. Each day, he

hauled blocks of ice from the city icehouse using a three-wheeled motorbike with a platform attached. "They'd use electric saws to cut the ice," Maurizio says. "If you came in the morning for coffee, the place sounded like a carpentry shop."

Mirko's efforts paid off. Today, Bar Basso has a citywide reputation and a 500-plus cocktail list. Purist that I am, I stick with the Americano. It arrives in a tall, stemmed glass, garnished with half an orange slice, and is as bitter and bracing as I imagine it was nearly a century ago.







## FLORENCE'S SPIRITED SPIN

Negronis are as crisp as Americanos—but they'll get you drunker quicker. For that, we can thank a Florence-based count (or purported count) named Camillo Negroni. It was 1919, World War I had just ended, the Spanish influenza was raging, and the count—legend holds—needed a stiff drink. So, at a bar in Florence, he asked for a splash of gin in his Milano-Torino.

Until relatively recently, Florence's Negroni standard-bearer was Caffè Giacosa, founded in 1815. After Giacosa closed in 2017, that title switched to Caffè Lietta, which opened in 2019 with some of Giacosa's staff.

Caffè Lietta bartender Martina del Sordo once worked for another Florence institution, Rivoire. With her tattoos and bright red lips, she doesn't look like a traditional Florentine bartender. But after many years at Rivoire and three more now at Lietta, she knows how to achieve the perfect balance between the vermouth, Campari, and gin—and she would never swap the classic orange-slice garnish for that newfangled abomination, a strip of orange

peel. Nevertheless, she is alert to the cocktail's exquisite sensitivity. "You'll never have the same Negroni twice," Martina says. "It all depends on the hand of the bartender."

With that, Fabiano Buffolino would agree. Co-owner and visionary behind Manifattura, a cult Florence cocktail bar, Fabiano has created a drink menu that couldn't be more modern but

## It's Always Aperitivo Hour Somewhere

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### MILAN

**Bar Basso** / With its extensive cocktail list, this institution can feel daunting. To make it easy on yourself, order an Americano—or Basso's own invention, the Negroni Sbagliato, or "bungled Negroni." (It was born when one of the bartenders reached for the prosecco instead of the standard gin.)

**Mag Café** / This café, with its cozily cluttered decor, is a morning-till-late-late-at-night place. Start your day with breakfast and wind down with an early evening Aviation or Americano.

**Lacerba** / Inspired by a magazine devoted to the Futurist movement, Lacerba feels appropriately artsy and offbeat. Surrounded by bright yellow walls and abstract artwork, try the equally quirky drinks, including the popular vodka-based Basil & Honey.

### FLORENCE

**Manifattura** / Located in the Piazza di San Pancrazio, Manifattura has an art deco feel and a strictly Italian bar selection. (Amari fans, this is your place.) Aperitivo hour brings Sazeracs with a twist and snacks (cured meats, stuffed artichokes).

**Caffè Lietta** / If you want a Negroni in Florence, this should be your first stop. In

the three-room space, linger over a sweet or savory pastry (the *pirulo*, filled with ricotta and seasonal fruit, is a favorite) and fresh takes on Negronis from bartender Riccardo Banducci.

**Locale Firenze** / Housed in a building that dates to the 13th century, Locale Firenze feels heavy with the weight of history—in a good way. The menu riffs on the past, too, divided into sections inspired by art: Choose from muscular drinks in the Scultura (sculpture) section or more floral concoctions in the Pittura (painting) section.

### VENICE

**Bar Longhi** / Located in the Gritti Palace hotel, Bar Longhi offers a luxurious take on aperitivo hour. Sip on a spritz on the canal-side terrace or in the colorful, historic interior salon, filled with Murano glass and paintings by the 18th-century artist Pietro Longhi.

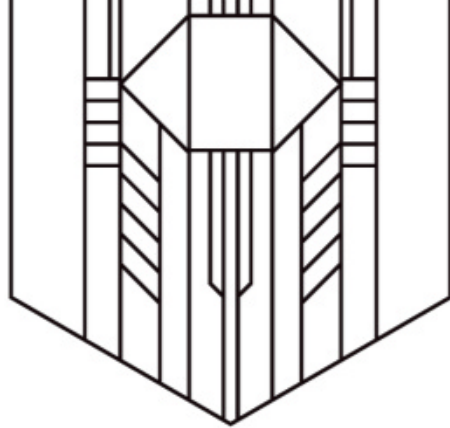
**Harry's Bar** / Opened in 1931, Harry's has had a front-row seat to history. This is where such luminaries as Frank Lloyd Wright, Katharine Hepburn, and Ernest Hemingway gathered over Bellinis, invented here by founder Giuseppe Cipriani in 1948. It has maintained its classic vibe. Go for aperitivo hour, stay for dinner. —Aislyn Greene

still manages to pay homage to Italy's spirited past. In fact, he and his team—clad in classic white bartender coats—do extensive research, revive old spirits, and seek out well-made versions of new, local ones. "This is a bar where we talk about Italianity, and that means we only serve Italian bottles," Fabiano explains.

Those self-imposed limits have opened a whole new world of possibilities. They've led him, for example, to seek out special spirits—such as a juniper and bergamot liqueur he found in Calabria—that are clear expressions of the terroir that produces them. "We're looking for that point

Director Orson Welles, a fan of the Negroni (pictured), once said: "The bitters are excellent for your liver, the gin is bad for you. They balance each other."





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between tradition and innovation," he says, and when it comes to aperitivi, "it's not enough to just serve Campari and sodas."

Fabiano makes me a Negroni with peated gin and bitters so intense they make Campari taste like a lollipop in comparison. "The Negroni offers endless combinations," he says. "But if someone comes in and asks for the classic [version], we're winning."

## VENICE'S POLARIZING SPRITZ

Fabiano's words follow me to Venice. The city is home to its own classic cocktail, the Bellini, a luscious mix of peach nectar and prosecco. But the Aperol Spritz—a blend of prosecco, soda water, and bitter, orange-hued Aperol, garnished with a green olive and an orange slice—has become so heavily favored among the visitors who flock here that I see signs of a backlash in bars in the less touristed parts of town. Literally. (WE DON'T SERVE ANY F\*\*\*ING APEROL SPRITZES, reads one.)

To me, there's nothing wrong with the drink itself. It has its own long history: Spritzes, in the form of white or sparkling wine and soda, were introduced to Venice during World War I. Aperol, which was invented in neighboring Padua just as the war was ending, probably seemed an obvious addition. What seems to irk the Venetians is both the Instagram-fueled association between

the drink and mass tourism itself, and the way that Campari's sustained advertising campaign has made it difficult for independent producers to gain traction. (Over the years, the company has acquired smaller alcohol producers, including

Aperol and Cynar, an artichoke-based bitter liqueur also used in spritzes.)

"When I was young, we only drank prosecco for an aperitivo," says Stefano Munari, gesturing at the dozens of tables around the Piazza San Marco. "And Campari was just something old people drank. Now, look around: It's just orange, orange, orange."

Stefano is the manager of fine dining at Gran Caffè Quadri, one of the oldest cafés in the central square. It's been in business under that name since 1775, but about a decade ago, the establishment was taken over by brothers Massimiliano and Raffaele Alajmo, an acclaimed chef and restaurateur, respectively, and its opulent interior was restored by designer Philippe Starck. As a consummate hospitality professional, Stefano takes a tolerant approach to the Aperol Spritz—give the customers what they want, after all—and has been known to occasionally drink one, sans olive, himself.

I would normally shun the cafés in Piazza San Marco, with their overpriced, multilingual menus and cheesy bands cranking out pop classics. But I am also a consummate professional, so in the name of research, I take a table at Gran Caffè Quadri and order an Aperol Spritz. It's . . . fine. Yet sitting there, bathed in the sunset glow reflecting off the Basilica and watching Italian families strolling past on their way to their own aperitivi, I am seduced nonetheless. When my glass is empty, I order another drink. Although this time, I make it a Bellini. **A**

Travelers in Venice enjoy the spritz Venetian bartenders love to hate.





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CLOSER LOOK

# Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

In New Orleans, pop-up is a place,  
a verb—and a lifestyle.

by Leslie Pariseau  
Photographs by L. Kasimu Harris





# W

**WE WERE THERE FOR** the secret pizza. On a sunny Saturday afternoon, my partner, Tony, and I parked in the St. Claude neighborhood of downtown New Orleans. That morning, I'd been messaged an address for a membership-only wood-fired pizza pop-up, which asked to remain nameless. When we located the cottage, we opened a side gate that led into a backyard bordered by firewood, a hand-hewn bar, and a stone pizza oven radiating waves of heat. Umbrellas shadowed a handful of tables spread with printed cloths. We were the first guests to arrive, but as bees buzzed around an herb garden, other diners trickled in. They sipped on rosé sangria and summery riffs on mimosas, while D, one of the proprietors, loaded the oven with wood and rounds of dough covered in sauce and toppings.



As we ordered a white pie and a bottle of rosé, J, the other proprietor, explained that pizza used to be a thing she and D did on the side. Then they decided to open to members (who pay a onetime \$5 fee) on Mondays, Tuesdays, and the occasional weekend brunch. “Now,” she says, “we can make a living.” It all makes sense—low overhead, a minimal menu, and a devoted crowd of vetted diners hungry for pizza—but maybe only in New Orleans.

There's a tongue-in-cheek saying here: *If you can't make it in New Orleans, don't leave.* That may not be entirely valid, especially given the rising costs of living in the city. But there are so many reasons it's wonderful to reside in this humid, weathered town, not least of which is the attitude toward work. Here, people think about working to live, not the other way around. Of course, this spirit presents its own challenges—strange business hours, the black hole of Mardi Gras and festival season—but it also offers an antidote to the new American ideal of giving one's life over to email, Slack, Zoom, and other tools of modern living. Because of this, New Orleans, in all its geographical and philosophical impossibility, is fertile ground for a vibrant economy of underground businesses known as pop-ups, which “pop up” at various locations and are often temporary in nature.

New Orleans has always been home to informal food-focused affairs: crawfish boils on neighborhood corners, barbecue and beer vendors at second line parades, Lenten fish fries at churches. The pandemic, however, ushered in a new era. In the early days, with restaurants shuttered and hospitality workers at home with time on their hands, it became more common to see people selling food from front porches or at bars willing to incubate homegrown enterprises.

Now, on any given day, perusing a hyper-local Instagram feed will reveal a universe of non-establishments thriving in the bureaucratic gray areas that lend the city so much of its charm and exasperating complexity. (Permitting can be prohibitively expensive and unclear when it comes to a pop-up, so many informal businesses risk setting up however it makes sense. Thus far, the consequences have been few, despite threats of a city crackdown.) Some, like the secret pizza, are harder to find; others are more accessible—that, too, is part of the charm.

One day, you might find the Filipino pop-up Gatâ serving *sinigang* soup and chicken *inasal* at Miel, a brewery in the Irish Channel neighborhood. Another day, you'll catch Tacos Para La Vida preparing birria pizza and tostadas at Pal's Lounge in the Bayou St. John. (Both Miel and Pal's host pop-ups most days of the week.) On Tuesdays at the Southern Food and Beverage Museum, Bronwen Wyatt of Bayou Saint Cake may be constructing layers of chiffon, homemade preserves, and





Perusing a hyperlocal Instagram feed will reveal a universe of non-establishments thriving in the bureaucratic gray areas that lend the city so much of its charm and complexity.

buttercream frosting. A couple of times each month, Harlem native Serigne Mbaye hosts his wildly popular pop-up Dakar at restaurants around the city because, he says, “My business is wherever I am.”

Of course, there are pop-ups beyond food. There’s Waysides, a whimsical flower shop based out of a roving truck; Finch Hatton, an antiques dealer; and Lekha, which sells handmade clothing from India. (All three once popped up in the same place; now Finch Hatton and Lekha are looking for more permanent venues.) On Sundays at Bar Marilou, sommelier Uznea Bauer hosts the Tell Me Bar, a natural wine pop-up. Tiny Nest Botanicals, a plant service by Abby Barber, sometimes appears around



*This page, clockwise from top: Chef Serigne Mbaye of the pop-up Dakar; vintage finds at Finch Hatton; the line at Chance in Hell SnoBalls.*

*Opposite page: Bites from the Puerto Rican pop-up Fowlmouth.*

*Opener, clockwise from top: Chance in Hell SnoBalls; Fowlmouth; Dakar.*



Part of what makes pop-ups so viable is the city's unusually deep affinity for scrappiness. . . . To thrive here, you likely have some hustle threaded into your DNA.

town selling lush banana leaves and colorful succulents from her 1976 VW camper van. Cubs the Poet—a poet in residence at the Columns hotel—roams the city with his typewriter, setting up at weddings or markets to create à la minute poems.

This alternative universe—a world away from Yelp and Tripadvisor and tour buses—is always there, simmering beneath the surface. Some pop-ups have been around for a while (and have even become permanent, licensed establishments); others catch fire, burn bright, and fizzle out. Which is why, when you find them, you must recognize their temporary nature and seize the moment. The

tastiest ice pop (or the best *yakamein*, or the prettiest bouquet) you ever find might come from a pop-up that will reveal itself and, just as quickly, slip back into the city's swampy ether.

**LAST YEAR, TONY AND I** had the opportunity to pop up our wine shop, Patron Saint, in a Lower Garden District restaurant space that had gone dormant during the pandemic. Within a few months of the business's closure, I—along with chef Ana Castro, restaurant owner Michael Stoltzfus, and the creators of Lucy Boone Ice Cream—had set up Here Today, a collective storefront. I bought a couple of utility shelves from Walmart, crammed them with more than 800 bottles, and waited to see who would come.

Every weekend for three months, that corner was slammed. People had heard something was happening on this otherwise sleepy block. Inevitably, as afternoon slipped into evening, the corner would become a spontaneous street party. People would sit on the curb, pouring glasses of Slovenian *pét-nat* (naturally sparkling wine), making friends, eating fried chicken sandwiches and sweet potatoes with *mole encacahuatado*, and reveling in the alchemy only a pop-up can produce.

Since then, that space on the corner has become Lengua Madre, Ana Castro's modern ode to the Mexican food of her childhood, and Tony and I are building a permanent wine shop just blocks away. For us, the pop-up was a trial by fire, which is often how new institutions are forged here. To get started, you don't necessarily need a fleshed-out business plan, a team of investors, and a budget for lighting and millwork. You just need a little time and space, and (usually) people will come.

Part of what makes pop-ups so viable is the city's unusually deep affinity for scrappiness. Despite the laidback vibe, to thrive here, you likely have some hustle threaded into your DNA.

It helped attract Ozzie Mendoza Diaz, the chef-owner of Fowlmouth, a modern Puerto Rican pop-up. In 2016, while traveling as a coffee and café consultant, Mendoza Diaz—who was born in Puerto Rico—stopped in

From left: Happy patrons at Chance in Hell SnoBalls; one of Fowlmouth's pop-up locations.







New Orleans. In the city's rhythms, weather, and mood, he recognized a familiar Caribbean vibration and felt drawn to stay.

He soon found his calling. Observing the brisk business of unregulated vendors around Bourbon and Frenchmen Streets, he realized he could take the soul food he'd been cooking for years and turn it into a business—without jumping through hoops. "I thought, I can hang," he says. "I [knew] I could hack it."

For the first year and a half he made chicken and rice, eventually adding empanadas and chicken skewers. For a while, he hosted up to 25 or 30 people at a time in his house in the Seventh Ward, serving yakitori through the lens of *cocina criolla* and highlighting Gulf ingredients. Now, he pops up at Lengua Madre once or twice a month.

This fluidity has been critical to Mendoza Diaz's success. "What's made Fowlmouth so interesting, what's allowed us to survive, is that we've always been super adaptable," he says. Adaptability is helpful when living in a city where the economy depends largely upon tourism and weather. Throw in a global pandemic, and it's the key to survival. It's become cliché to label New Orleans resilient, but there is an implicit guarantee that when things are broken, rebuilding—in whatever manner—is simply how we will get by.

**ON ANOTHER SUNNY** Saturday, Tony and I pulled up to the corner of France and Burgundy in the Bywater, where a line of 20 or so people snaked around the block. Some fanned themselves as the strains of Bobby Charles's "Small Town Talk" floated from a front porch belonging to Kitten and Lou, the duo behind Chance in Hell SnoBalls. Every so often, the "ching" of a Venmo payment would register over the music. A customer would pass by, mesmerizing the queue with a tower of shaved ice doused in such homemade syrups as chocolate matzo toffee, dill pickle, or nectar, the city's intoxicating almond-and-vanilla specialty.

Things were moving slowly, and everyone was shiny with sweat, but nobody complained. The reward was too great. Besides, Chance in Hell had been closed the weekend prior, and it wouldn't open the next weekend. Kitten and Lou had lives to lead—things to do, other projects to tend to. Such is the nature of the pop-up. You cannot predict its hours, its location, its menu. You cannot make special requests or reservations or call ahead. You can only embrace the moment. **A**

*Above: A couple of times each month, chef Serigne Mbaye hosts dinners that showcase modern Senegalese food.*

Find New Orleans pop-up resources at [afar.com/popups](https://afar.com/popups).



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As the last few years have proven, sustainability is mission critical to the future of our planet and the people who live here. And it matters for the future of travel, too: Opened in the last two years, the 14 new and renovated properties that make up our 2022 Stay List prioritize community-centered, socially responsible, environmentally sensitive operations. Their owners are helping to redefine hospitality in ways that benefit both guests and locals. Here are the visionary hotels changing the way we travel. —JENNIFER FLOWERS



## Sterrekopje

**SOUTH AFRICA**

After an international search for a regenerative farm, Dutch entrepreneur Fleur Huijskens and her wife, Nicole Boekhoorn, settled on South Africa's Western Cape wine region. Located less than five miles from the town of Franschhoek, Sterrekopje sits on 124 acres with 17th-century farm buildings. Fleur and Nicole have opened an 11-room sanctuary that strives for sustainability in everything, from its gray water treatment system to a minimum-waste restaurant. Chefs use eggs and other seasonal produce from the property. The point of the resort is to step away from the hectic pace of life and recenter yourself on the farm during three- to seven-day stays. Travelers pick their path toward tranquility, be it a Reiki treatment in the spa or a pottery class at the on-site arts studio. The guest rooms are all individually designed with cool tile floors, exposed beam ceilings, and wooden four-poster beds crafted in Lamu, Kenya. Some have fireplaces, while others feature soaking tubs and outdoor showers.



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## Six Senses Shaharut

ISRAEL

In southern Israel's Negev Desert, the Six Senses Shaharut works with local communities to arrange visits to a traditional kibbutz to learn about permaculture and organic farming. Guests can also take a guided tour that retraces part of an ancient 1,200-mile incense route, hearing about the history of regional trade along the way. Nothing in this otherworldly, arid landscape was removed from the site where the 60 LEED-certified guest rooms now stand. Each accommodation was created from wood and limestone reclaimed or sustainably sourced from the settlement grounds.


## Silky Oaks Lodge

AUSTRALIA

The Daintree Rainforest, 180 million years old, has been home to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people for more than 50,000 years—and teems with buff-breasted paradise kingfishers, musky rat-kangaroos, and bioluminescent fungi. Sitting on 80 forested acres next to the rain forest in northeast Queensland, the recently reimagined Silky Oaks Lodge is an eco-conscious retreat for travelers seeking a deeper understanding of the world's oldest forest and indigenous cultures. The 40 guest rooms include treehouse suites with outdoor stone tubs. When guests want to learn about ancient medicinal plants and spot the vibrant blue Ulysses butterfly, Aboriginal-owned tour operator Walkabout Cultural Adventures leads the way, tapping into millennia-old knowledge of the rain forest.







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## Golden Rock Resort

### CARIBBEAN

Few travelers have visited the tranquil volcanic sand beaches of remote St. Eustatius, an island in the Caribbean reachable via a 20-minute plane ride from St. Maarten, its more famous neighbor. Now that Golden Rock Resort has opened, that's about to change. Sitting on 40 acres overlooking the sea, Golden Rock is the first luxury resort on the island, and it's entirely solar powered. Drinking water comes from a reverse osmosis machine that treats salt water, and a complex gray water system built with reeds and bamboo irrigates the property's landscaping. The 32 guest rooms, with private balconies and wooden floors, make comfortable bases for exploring the 12-square-mile island. Guests can choose from two dozen hiking trails, including some that reach acacia-covered Boven National Park and the dormant Quill volcano. St. Eustatius, which residents call Statia, also has some of the region's best diving, thanks to protective measures in place from St. Eustatius National Marine Park. In the park, visitors can observe coral-covered shipwrecks and swim with manta rays and sea turtles.

## Alila Marea Beach Resort ▶

### CALIFORNIA

There's a new place for travelers to rest their heads in Encinitas, a city along the Pacific Ocean 25 miles north of San Diego. The Alila Marea Beach Resort collaborated with sustainable-tourism advisory group Earth-Check to ensure it contributes zero waste to landfills in the next five years. Some of the tactics Alila employs: no single-use plastic water bottles and composting all unused food and paper products. Four EV charging stations allow guests to plug in their vehicles, and visitors can borrow electric bikes to explore Cardiff-by-the-Sea, a beach community within Encinitas known for its surf spots. The 130 guest rooms, with Pacific Ocean or lagoon views (some with patio firepits), use the property's smart LED system that turns lights off when areas are not in use, which is estimated to reduce energy consumption by 80 percent.





# Wilderness Safaris Vumbura Plains

## BOTSWANA

The safari lodge company Wilderness Safaris has been on a long and evolving path toward sustainability since 1983. Its Botswana-based Vumbura Plains camp underwent a complete refurbishment in the spring of 2022. The 14 new guest suites are the work of interior design firm Reflecting Africa, founded by Cate Simpson, who collaborated with local craftspeople to design the high-ceilinged thatched roofs, natural wood flooring, and handwoven textiles. It's a stylish place to retreat to after seeking out elephant herds and birdlife in the Okavango Delta, a UNESCO-designated site. Vumbura leases land from five nearby villages and employs 150 community members. Travelers will especially appreciate the lodge's partnership with the Okavango Community Trust, created in 1996 to represent key priorities of the villages, while offering assistance in farming practices and COVID-19-related relief projects.



## Gros Morne Inn ▶

CANADA

There wasn't much in the way of notable lodging near Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland. That changed with the opening of Gros Morne Inn, whose owners, Ian Stone and Rebecca Brushett, make sure that travelers can experience the area's rugged coasts, thick forests, and awe-inspiring fjords while treading as lightly as possible on the destination. Whatever carbon footprint the 15-room hotel can't offset through operations—repurposed materials, no single-use plastics, renewable energy from hydroelectricity—it donates in kind to a local nonprofit. Gros Morne is aiming to have its restaurant become certified by the nonprofit Ocean Wise for serving only sustainably sourced seafood.



## 1 Hotel Toronto

CANADA

Over the last seven years, 1 Hotels has proven that eco-conscious luxury can be successful in North American cities ranging from New York to West Hollywood. The 1 Hotel Toronto, located in the center of town, is no exception. Architecture and design firm Rockwell Group partnered with the developer Athens Group for 1 Hotel's first Canadian property, bringing in Toronto-based craftspeople to build custom dining and side tables out of local wood in the 112 biophilic guest rooms and public spaces, where every shelf spills over with native plants. The hotel works with recycling partner Green Planet to convert leftover kitchen oil and grease into biofuel.


## ◀ Guild House Hotel

PENNSYLVANIA

These days, it's common to see old buildings repurposed into magnificent new hotels. Philadelphia's Guild House Hotel stands out not just as a thoughtful restoration of a National Historic Landmark, but also for the story it tells. The Victorian building is the former home of the New Century Guild, a group of women who were outspoken abolitionists, suffragists, and artists in the late 19th century. First-time hotelier Brennan Tomasetti hired the female-owned interior design firm Rohe Creative to reimagine the property, now a hotel with 12 rooms furnished with custom-designed wallpaper and antiques. Each guest room is dedicated to the story of a former guild member, including Eliza Sproat Turner, the founder, whose love of nature is reflected in botanical prints in a room that was once the guild's library.





A woman with her hair in a bun is sitting in a meditative pose on a white ledge, looking out through a large arched window. The window frames a bright blue sky with white clouds and a tropical beach scene with palm trees and the ocean. The text "GIVE US YOUR BODY FOR A WEEK AND WE'LL GIVE YOU BACK YOUR MIND" is overlaid on the top half of the image.

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## Kisawa Sanctuary

MOZAMBIQUE

Ocean conservation continues to lag behind land-based efforts, which is why it's refreshing to see a tourism project centered so heavily on marine research and preservation. Sitting on more than 700 acres of beach and coastal forest on Benguerra Island, off the central coast of Mozambique, Kisawa Sanctuary is a collection of 21 guest bungalows constructed and decorated with local timbers and 3D printing. (The technology was also used to construct artificial coral for nearby reef restoration.) The retreat partners with the Bazaruto Center for Scientific Studies, a nonprofit marine conservation center whose buildings are powered by solar energy. Its research not only helps international scientific organizations better understand the Indian Ocean but also augments the experience for guests, who can help tag sharks or explore underwater landscapes from the same dive center that equips scientists and documentarians.



ELSA YOUNG









## ◀ Room2 Chiswick

ENGLAND

The idea behind Room2 Chiswick, part of a growing, multi-property brand in Europe aiming for net-zero carbon emissions, is that sustainable hospitality should be for everyone. Indeed, nightly rates at this 86-room hotel in West London—which is predicted to use a whopping 89 percent less energy than the average U.K. hotel—start well below \$200. Reclaimed terra-cotta tiles line the lobby floors; carpets in the corridors were made from fishing nets reclaimed from the ocean. The hotel brand partnered with the Forest Stewardship Council to source sustainable timber for headboards and furnishings, and planted 4,400 trees in Nicaragua to offset the carbon generated from the furniture-making process. The hotel is heated and cooled via solar panels and heat pumps, and its “blue roof” can collect more than 13,000 gallons of water to deter local flooding.

## Explora El Chaltén

ARGENTINA

Since 1993, Explora has offered guests conservation adventures in South America. Now the group is bringing its ethos to a remote corner of Argentine Patagonia near the famous trekking destination Mount Fitz Roy. Explora El Chaltén opened in the private 14,000-acre Los Huemules Reserve, which is covered in native *ñirre* and *lenga* trees. There, the lodge’s mainly female guides lead rock-climbing and glacier-hiking excursions, helping guests identify remarkable birds of prey (Andean condors and white-throated caracaras) along the way. The 20 guest rooms were constructed in Mendoza out of prefab modular units that minimize waste and site disturbance; they sit off the ground on timber stilts to further lower their footprint.

## Hotel Terrestre ▶

MEXICO

In the Oaxacan hills with views of the Pacific Ocean, Hotel Terrestre marries modern style and sustainability. Mexican hoteliers Grupo Habita commissioned Mexico City-based architect Alberto Kalach, who is known for his sustainable approach that harmonizes with nature, to design the property. (Not too long ago, he created the Casona Sforza retreat in Puerto Escondido.) He fashioned Hotel Terrestre’s 14 villas out of local clay, wood, brickwork, and concrete that blend into the sand-colored landscape. Each accommodation has a private terrace with an outdoor shower, dipping pool, and hammock. Custom furniture pieces designed by Oscar Hagerman were built by area craftspeople. The hotel, entirely solar powered, is cooled by fans and cross ventilation. Landscaping includes endemic flora (*copales* and mesquites) that thrive in the arid climate.





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# Azumi Setoda

JAPAN

The new Azumi Setoda invites visitors to a corner of Japan unknown even to many domestic travelers. Part of an archipelago in the Seto Inland Sea, Ikuchijima is a quiet island with a population of 10,000. There, Kyoto-based architect Shiro Miura was entrusted to transform a 146-year-old private residence into 22 guest rooms. The accommodations offer a contemporary take on the traditional *ryokan*, with rooms featuring rice paper screens, cypress wood bathtubs, and gardens that face a landscaped courtyard. Meals feature seasonal ingredients such as octopus and Omishima wild boar, all served on antique plates from the original owners of the estate. With an eye toward improving the property's sustainability, Azumi is working to ensure it will use only renewable energy sources by 2023. **A**





# 3 Ways to Follow Your Bliss in Greater Fort Lauderdale



Looking to extend your stay before or after a cruise? Whether you seek a thriving restaurant scene, world-class art and culture, natural beauty, or all of the above, here's how to discover your personal paradise in this South Florida destination.

Attracting a new type of savvy, modern traveler who seeks to immerse themselves in a place and its culture, Greater Fort Lauderdale is a far cry from its past as a spring break hub in the 1960s–1980s. Today, with the arrival of lauded chefs, renowned hotel brands, and leading arts and entertainment,

the destination is a true cosmopolitan playground set within a stunning natural landscape. For a pre- or post-cruise trip, use these guides to find the best of cuisine, art, and the outdoors in this sunny locale.





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Food, drink, and hotels are luxurious yet laid-back in Greater Fort Lauderdale, and there are so many great places to eat that it's hard to hit them all in just one weekend. As downtown dining has shifted from national chains to sophisticated indie spots, there's a fair share of award-winning chefs making a splash, but even more mom-and-pop gems to discover.

Try the **Fort Lauderdale Ale Trail** for a tour of the region's best craft beer or a walking tour with **Craft**

**Food Tours** where you'll meet chefs and small business owners. You can also browse artisan food and crafts at **Yellow Green Farmer's Market** in Hollywood, get a smoothie made with organic ingredients at **Fresh First**, or head to **The Foundry** for decadent graham cracker French toast with lemon pastry crème and seasonal berries.

When it's time for dinner, choose among **Louie Bossi's Italian Ristorante**, a seat on the Riverwalk at **Rivertail** by James Beard Award-

nominated chef Jose Mendin, **Aruba Beach Café** for jerk wings and Bimini bread, and creative dishes by chef Timon Balloo, also a James Beard Award nominee, at **The Katherine**.

For a finale? Caviar connoisseurs should seek out rare pure beluga caviar at **Marky's Caviar Lounge** at The Shoppes at the Guitar Hotel at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood—just a final delectable bite to remind you to come back again soon.

## Where to Stay



### If You Travel for Food

Check into **Conrad Fort Lauderdale Beach** and sample a parade of Japanese and Korean shareable small plates and sushi at Takato, paired with colorful tropical cocktails and sake.



### For Culture-Seekers

Head downtown for a dose of delightful tropical decor at **The Dalmar**. Located in the Flagler Village neighborhood, it's within walking distance of MASS District where you can purchase handmade gifts and stroll through galleries and warehouse spaces highlighting contemporary art.



### To Commune with Nature

Make your way to **Hillsboro Beach Resort**, a recently opened beachfront property with 99 beautifully appointed guest rooms, studios, and suites and the only resort on Hillsboro Mile, one of the premier beachside areas in all South Florida.





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What better way to end a visit than with some pink-feathered friends? Stretch your legs at the botanical gardens and wildlife sanctuary that encompasses 60 acres at **Flamingo Gardens** and start making plans for your return visit.





# Welcome

## CAPTAINS AND FIRST MATES



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# Border 'Lines

Writer **Anya von Bremzen** explores the fluid nature of food, identity, and community in Gaziantep, a Turkish city renowned for its cuisine—and reshaped by the Syrian war.

Photographs by  
**Rena Effendi**

Calligraphy by  
**Mahmut Enes Kemer**





Gaziantep is one of the oldest cities in the world. Archaeological evidence suggests humans first settled here in the 4th millennium B.C.E.





# I

**IT'S 11 A.M. IN GAZIANTEP**, a city in southeastern Türkiye, and I'm stunned by the sheer spectacle of our late breakfast. My partner, Barry, and I are at a restaurant called Orkide with our friend Filiz Hösükoğlu, an expert in local culture and food. Around us, guys in trim leather jackets and ladies—some in sparkly black tops, some in flowing hijabs—sip *menengiç*, a warm drink made from ground wild pistachios.

I circle our table in awe, trying to count and record all the dishes, losing track at three dozen. There are snowy clumps of *kaymak* (clotted buffalo cream) to be eaten with raw honey from the nearby hills; eggs scrambled with walnuts, fresh tarragon, and tiny roasted green olives; and eggs fried with *topaç* (beef confit). Copper bowls hold apricots stewed with fresh almonds and tahini the color of deep earth. All dishes seem touched by mint, live fire, and flakes of local red pepper.

"This spread is my homage to our region's Sunday tradition of potluck family breakfasts," says Mustafa Özgüler, Orkide's owner, as a vast platter of *katmer* arrives. A delicate cousin of the city's prodigious baklava, *katmer* is made by wrapping layers of paper-thin pastry around pulverized pistachios with an almost preternatural intensity, and then baking it all to a sugary crunch. "Katmer is a cult, a drug . . ." Filiz murmurs.

I'd been dreaming about Gaziantep—Türkiye's sixth-largest city, situated just west of the Euphrates River and north of the Syrian border—since I discovered its flavors in Istanbul two decades ago at Çiya, a celebrated restaurant specializing in southeastern Turkish cuisine. The food at Çiya was vibrant and inventive, wild with fresh herbs, pomegranate molasses, and *şalça* (sun-dried tomato and pepper pastes). It seemed worlds away from the delicate refinement of Istanbul cooking, and it launched in me a mild obsession with Gaziantep. Still, for years I hesitated to go, always too busy in Istanbul, and anxious perhaps that reality might not live up to my expectations. Meanwhile, the food hype only grew, especially when UNESCO named Gaziantep a Creative City of Gastronomy in 2015.

While I'd been putting off a visit, geopolitics in this region kept on its dark course. In 2011, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's regime began to use violence to suppress pro-democracy protests—tactics that eventually launched a ruinous civil war in Syria. During the next decade, that conflict would send more than 3.5 million refugees across the border to Türkiye. Megalopolis Istanbul absorbed some 550,000 arrivals. Gaziantep welcomed at least 500,000, ballooning its population by almost a third—and earning its mayor, Fatma Şahin, international praise for her savvy policies that prioritized integration and tolerance.

For the past several years, I've been researching a new book on food and nationalism, and soon after wrapping the text, I decided it was finally time for a visit. Like all food-obsessed pilgrims to Antep, as the locals call Gaziantep, I'd come for kebabs of grass-fed lamb, *lahmacun* (flatbreads with toppings) blistered in wood-fired ovens, and tiny bulgur dumplings bobbing in yogurt soup. Less blithely, I hoped to break bread with Syrians making a go of it. I wanted to learn how the new arrivals—most from war-ravaged Aleppo, once Syria's largest city, 61 miles south—are reshaping the food culture of this singular borderland. From my book research, I was already familiar with Istanbul's post-imperial Balkan-Greek-Armenian assemblage. Now I wanted to know more about what had been happening in Gaziantep—once a critical trading hub along the Silk Road—with its intertwined, ever-shifting layers of cuisines, identities, and cultural memories.

Clockwise from top left:  
The Liberation Mosque;  
Orkide chef-owner  
Mustafa Özgüler; brass-  
works vendors; lentil  
and bulgur patties from  
MSM Gaziantep.











*This page: Spices on display in the historic center. Opposite page: A baker prepares pastry for baklava.*





**“OF COURSE, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** there was no Türkiye or Syria.” This reminder comes from Cevdet and Murat Güllü, owners of Elmacı Pazarı Güllüoğlu, a legendary baklava shop in Antep’s historic bazaar quarter, and the second stop on my first day in town, with Filiz showing the way. Along with their pistachio confections, glistening with syrup and sheep’s butter, the brothers—whose great-grandfather founded the shop—offer historical context. They share that this region was once the Ottoman province of Haleb. Aleppo was the center of cuisine, culture, and commerce, and Antep was a provincial subdistrict.

In the mid-19th century, the Güllüs’ great-grandfather, Çelebi, stopped in Aleppo on his religious hajj from Antep to Mecca. Awed by the city’s baklava, he returned after his hajj to learn about the business, eventually moving back to Antep. In 1871, he started the shop that still exists today. By the time the Ottoman Empire officially dissolved in 1922—more than 70 years after the Güllüs’ great-grandfather apprenticed in Aleppo—war and politics had drastically rearranged borders, official identities, and historical destinies. Colonial powers carved up the Levant (now Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) into British and French spheres of influence, while Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—“Father Turk”—forged the modern republic of Türkiye. (The independent republic of Syria didn’t emerge until 1944.)

Almost instinctively, we tend to assign national identities to dishes, forgetting that borders are fluid, that so many of the boundaries we think of as fixed are both contorted and recent. And so, my mouth full of baklava, I ask the brothers, “Can one even say that baklava is Turkish or Syrian?” *Well...* they reply. *It’s complicated.* Because after Türkiye’s founding, Antep’s *baklavacı* (baklava makers) did develop a style of their own: stretching the pastry so thin you can almost see through it, then dusting the pastry with starch to make it more delicate, pouring hot syrup over hot baklava after its time in a wood-fired oven. The resulting confection is very different from the Aleppo original, which has thicker pastry and is drier and less sweet. Today, Filiz adds, Antep is legendary as Türkiye’s baklava capital, supplying 95 percent of what’s sold in the country.

Leaving the brothers, Filiz leads us on a quick tour of the Coppersmith Bazaar’s vaulted lanes, which resound with the tuk-tuk-tuk of artisans stamping their wares. I feel lucky to have her as our guide. In addition to being a walking encyclopedia of local food mores, she’s an experienced NGO hand who specializes in integrating migrants through programs including vocational training. That night, for an introduction to the Syrian perspective on culinary and cultural matters, she arranges a dinner with her friend Yakzan Shishakly. We’re to meet at Hışvahan, a restaurant in a 16th-century caravansary (guesthouse) that’s been converted into a chic little hotel. When we arrive, Yakzan is already there, nursing a raki, Türkiye’s anise-flavored alcohol, at a candlelit table. “The





food here's outstanding," he says. "Plus, it's one of the few places in town serving drinks." He looks like he needs one.

In his early forties, Yakzan evokes an empathetic bon vivant who has taken on a tragic, impossible job. A grandson of Adib Shishakli—one of Syria's first presidents, who was assassinated in 1964—he grew up in Damascus. In 1999, he emigrated to Houston, became an American citizen, and ran a successful air-conditioning business. Then, in 2011, "Syria happened," as he puts it.

Heartsick and desperate to help, Yakzan soon found himself back in Syria, where he witnessed hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) surviving in flimsy tents beneath olive trees. He started raising funds to build a camp just north of Idlib, 41 miles from Aleppo. By mid-2012, Yakzan's Olive Tree, the first major displaced-persons camp in Syria, was a vast tent city of more than 20,000 IDPs. (Today, there are more than 180,000 IDPs in the camp.) Currently, his NGO, the Maram Foundation, manages five camps and gives logistical support to more than a dozen others. Although he can no longer travel freely in Syria for fear of kidnapping or assassination, from his office in Antep Yakzan addresses endless crises—to say nothing of the hopelessness of a war without end, a generation of kids in camps with no schools. How does he cope? A resigned little grin: "I listen to motivational speeches first thing each morning."

Yet Yakzan doesn't want to spend our dinner stereotyping Syrians as abject hands outstretched for NGO aid. This, he says, deprives them of dignity. The reality outside camps is of a normal lived life, especially in places such as Antep, which has absorbed a wide swath of Aleppo's middle class. Though, he adds, the trauma is always close to the surface: sudden tears for no reason, a fight with a taxi driver.

"Is it a comfort that the culture and food are so similar?" I ask, remembering suddenly the piercing alienation I experienced tasting American dishes back in the 1970s,

soon after my mother and I arrived in the United States as refugees from the USSR.

"Of course, it softens the culture shock," Yakzan agrees as a waiter delivers spicy dips and stuffed vegetables. "There's our shared love of pomegranates, hot peppers, and olives, our pistachio fixation." A serious cook himself ("It helps with the stress"), Yakzan takes an appraising bite of eggplant-and-tomato dolmas. "[The dolmas] are the same concept as ours but with different spicing," he pronounces. Ditto the *içli köfte*, fried torpedo-shaped bulgur shells with a meaty, oniony filling—kibbeh to Syrians—of which Aleppo has many more varieties. "Then again," he emphasizes, "Syrian food varies hugely from Damascus to Homs to Aleppo."

I recall the words of Armenian writer Takuhi Tovmasyan: "Cuisines don't have nationalities, only geographies." And so, I ask the question that's been on my mind: Are Syrians here reshaping local food and restaurant culture? "Ah, journalists," Yakzan laughs in response, "always looking for catchy headlines!"

Integration is happening, he says. The city has built houses for refugees within neighborhoods, rather than setting them up in camps on the





Opposite page, from left: Yakzan Shishakly, cofounder of the Maram Foundation; *lokum* (Turkish delight); residents relax in a city park.

perimeter. It ensured that all city resources were available to locals and newcomers alike, including community centers where classes in cooking and dancing were offered in both Turkish and Arabic. But integration can be subtle and slow, Yakzan admits—even in this city promoted as a model of tolerance.

“In any society foreigners are seen as a threat,” he continues. Locals were curious about Syrian flatbread, though hesitant to act on their curiosity; they’d buy the bread in secret at night. “But now it’s a part of the culture, plus countless other small interchanges,” Yakzan says. “A Syrian cook uses local mint in a dish instead of Aleppo’s cilantro. A Syrian restaurant puts a Turkish dish on the menu. A Turk buys our seven-spice mix from a Syrian grocer.”



**I THINK ABOUT** Yakzan’s reflections on the melding of cultures the following morning while sampling *lokum* (Turkish delight). I meet with confectioner and business owner Emel Shamma in the fluorescent brightness of Antep’s Women Entrepreneur Support Center. Born and raised in Aleppo, she arrived in Antep in 2017 after four months in a refugee camp, where she witnessed phosphorus bombs exploding from planes, among other horrors. At the time, she was a struggling young mom with just a few gold bracelets to her name. Then she saw the local Chamber of Industry’s ad for vocational training and began apprenticing at an Antep lokum factory. A U.N. grant enabled her to launch her own business two years ago. Now she’s a poster child of Syrian female success in Gaziantep, making a full ton of lokum a day and exporting to several countries in Europe and beyond.

By habit, we associate lokum—from the Arabic *rahat-ul-hulkum*—with Türkiye. But these jewel-like candies were also a huge part of life back in Aleppo, given as gifts to

celebrate the birth of a child or a pilgrim’s return from hajj. Finding Turkish lokum flavors a bit alien, Emel began developing her own, creating unique spice mixes with mastic (a piney resin), muscat, and cardamom. She splurged on aromatic dried Isparta roses, and ensured the pistachios were freshly cracked to retain their intensity, a trick she’d learned from her family, who owned pistachio groves in Aleppo.

“I think of lokum as an amber,” she says, “blending tastes of home with those of my new country.” Sampling a red, pomegranate-flavored “amber” with emerald pistachios suspended in it—unlike any lokum I’ve had in Türkiye—I reflect that this is the kind of cultural “fusion” Yakzan spoke of. It’s not an easily digestible headline, but a small, subtle detail—a tweak. One that might incrementally accumulate, with other tweaks, into a changed food identity for the city. Emel agrees. “Antep and Aleppo are like twins raised in two countries,” she muses. “Separated by war but brought together again.”

As I wander later that day, echoes of Aleppo seem to be everywhere, if one looks.





## How to Visit Gaziantep

Located in southeastern Türkiye, Gaziantep (or Antep, as it is more often called) is the country's sixth-largest city. Thanks to its location at the crossroads of balmy Mediterranean and hot, dry continental climates, Antep's surrounding region teems with pistachio orchards, olive groves, vineyards, and more. For travelers, the city's historic center is a great home base. Given Antep's size and history, consider hiring the Istanbul-based travel company, Item Travel, which offers customized tours and can accommodate individual travelers and small groups. *From \$600 for two people. [itemtravel.com](http://itemtravel.com)*

## Where to Stay

**Anadolu Evleri** / This two-building, 14-room hotel was built of havara stone, famous for its ability to keep interiors cool in the summer and warm in winter. Once inside, be sure to look up at the gabled, inlaid ceilings, and down at the Aleppo-style plaster floors. *From \$42.*

**Hotel Hışvahan** / Located in a converted cotton warehouse built in 1577, Hotel Hışvahan has only 10 rooms. The restoration preserved such details as the underground ruins, visible through glass floors in the common areas. Don't miss a dinner at the hotel's two restaurants—or a trip to the attached winery. *From \$190.*

## What to Do

**Zeugma Mosaic Museum** / One of the largest mosaic museums in the world is a showcase for more than 26,000 square feet of tiles. The collection contains Hellenistic Greek and Roman artifacts, since Zeugma, once a city near modern-day Gaziantep, was important to both empires. Long ago, the museum's most famous mosaic, *Gypsy Girl*, adorned the floor of a Roman villa.

**Zincirli Bedesten** / It's worth visiting this bazaar for its Ottoman-style architecture alone. Following a fire in 1957, the building was used as a butchery until it was fully restored in 2008. It's now home to more than 70 shops where visitors can browse for handmade leather shoes, colorful textiles, jars of spices, and much more.

**Emine Gögüş Culinary Museum** / Located in Gaziantep's historic center, the museum offers a tour of the city's famous culinary history. Programming includes exhibits about *mirra*

(the coffee widely consumed in Türkiye), proper hosting etiquette, and traditional methods for food preservation. Information is offered in both Turkish and English. —*Mae Hamilton*

## Where to Eat

**Orkide** / This restaurant is famous for its extravagant breakfast. But do come back for dinner or lunch: Among the standouts are *dövmeli alaca çorba*, a soup of boiled wheat berries and legumes accented with sun-dried peppers and tarragon; and *ekşili ufak köfte*, tiny bulgur dumplings in a tomato-and-lamb broth.

**Imam Çağdaş** / All the local classics shine at the historic 1887 stalwart located in the city's bazaar quarter. Sample fire-kissed *lahmacun* flatbreads, kebabs with hand-minced meat (try the *soğan kebab* with charred onions), and baklava produced on the premises.

**Metanet Lokantası** / A homey, all-day kind of place, Metanet Lokantası specializes in *beyran*, Gaziantep's signature lamb-and-rice breakfast soup, which is cooked for 12 hours and spiked with local red pepper.

**Lazord Restaurant** / Syrians homesick for Aleppo cooking gather at Lazord for *yalanji* (stuffed grape leaves), rice-filled *mumbar* sausages, and (arguably) the best falafel in town.

**MSM Gaziantep** / Run by the Gaziantep municipality, MSM serves modern updates on regional dishes. The fixed-price tasting menus change weekly but might include quince kebab, green olive *börek* (pastry), and gorgeously presented desserts. The city's celebrity mayor, Fatma Şahin, is often spotted here. —*Anya von Bremzen*

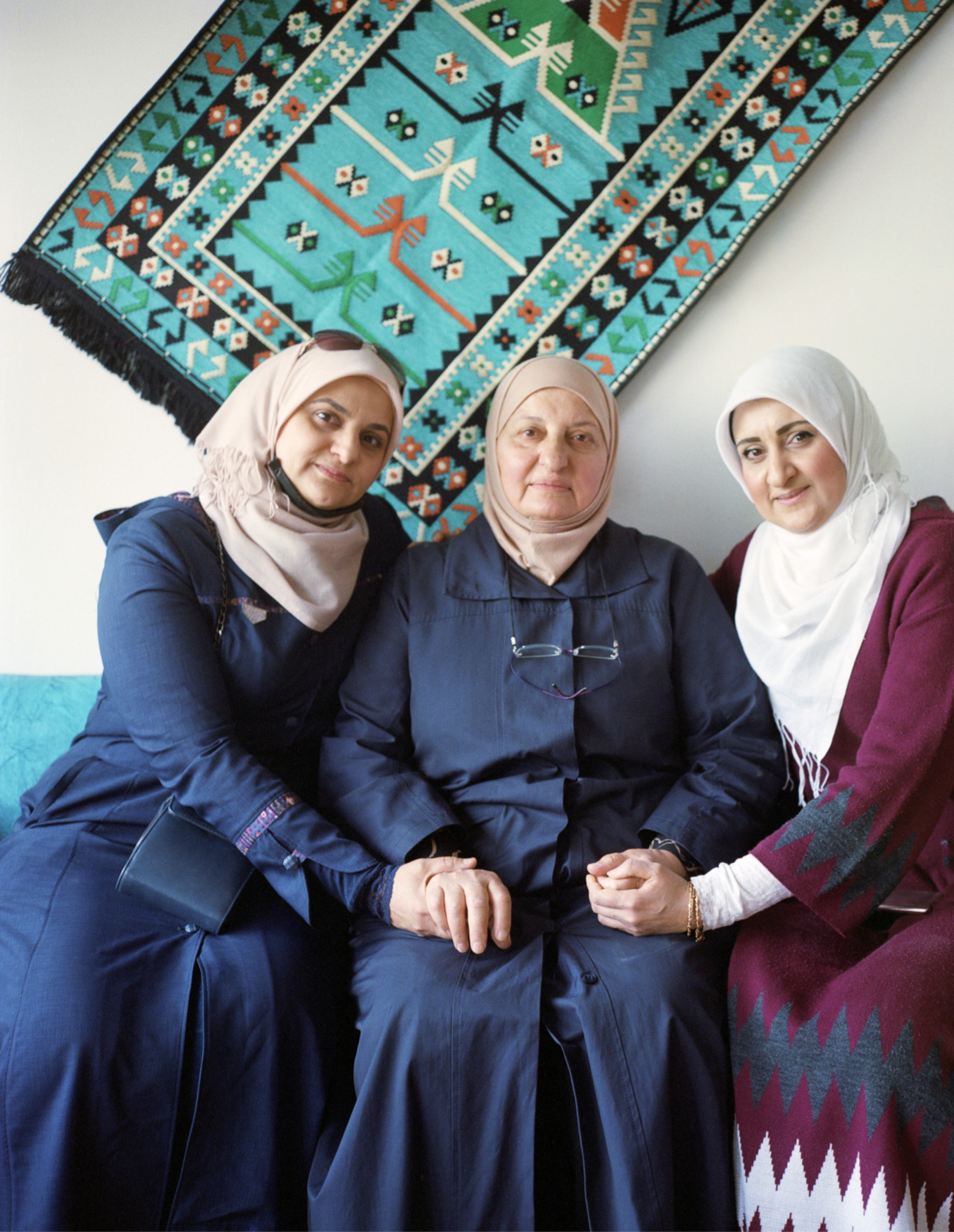






A traditional Turkish breakfast spread, or *kahvalti*, includes olives, marinated beans, and a number of breads and pastries (including *katmer*).







Lobna Helli (right), the chef-owner of Lazord, sits with her mother, Noha (center), and sister, Randa (left), beneath the restaurant's signature tapestry.

They're in the Ottoman mosques and hammams built with striped stone, constructed by order of Aleppo's governors in the 16th century. They're in the hilltop citadel (a smaller version of the one that still stands in the Syrian city), and in the shiny cotton-and-silk *kutnu* fabric, an important Aleppian craft item that, like baklava, developed its own life in the Turkish Republic.



**EAGER FOR A TASTE** of Aleppo cooking in Gaziantep, I'm excited when Filiz arranges a lunch the next day at Lazord. This beloved Syrian hangout exists in a modest strip of small businesses with perky signage in Arabic and Turkish. Two others join us: Rami Sharrack, a consultant on entrepreneurial projects for refugees, and a social activist named Shukran, who fled Aleppo in 2013.

We chat as we swipe floppy Syrian bread into exceptional hummus and *mtebbel*, a creamy compound of eggplant and yogurt ("looser, tangier, with more olive oil than Turkish dips," Filiz assesses). Shukran—a gracious, middle-aged mother of nine adult children scattered across the world—recounts that, soon after landing in Antep, she founded a social initiative to support Syrian war widows through cooking. Starting with \$1,000, Shukran rented and restored an abandoned house that now hosts 50 women at a time. "For them it's a safe house and an income," she says. It's also a chance to provide homesick members of the diaspora with such Syrian dishes as *makdous* (pickled stuffed eggplants) and *shish barak*, meat-filled dumplings in a garlic-yogurt sauce. And what does she miss? I ask. "Here, it's the same region, similar dishes," she says with a shrug. "Maybe wild summer herbs from our hills? Or the stew of the leafy plant we call *molokhia*?"

Rami chimes in: "Syrian farmers started growing molokhia in Türkiye and now export to other countries with large populations of Syrians. And Syrians here sell around 200,000 bags of *khubz* [bread] each morning," he adds. "All small but important success stories!"

While we talk, Lazord's owner, Lobna Helli, bustles around with her teenage daughter and her mother, prepping to distribute 100 meals for the poor, both Turkish and Syrian. They do this every Friday. Once an HR manager in Aleppo, Lobna fled to Antep in 2015 after her husband was imprisoned and tortured by the Assad regime. A modest loan from family enabled her to open a humble café. After COVID hit, she expanded with a charity kitchen called Humanity Gathers Us. She, like Shukran, wanted to connect Syrian women who cook from their homes. Now, she helps them market and sell their food, and funds and distributes grocery cards for the needy.

At a table draped with her grandmother's lace tablecloth—a memento of her past in Aleppo—Lobna catches her breath and joins us for her mother's fresh-baked *fatayer*, pies bulging with spinach. There's also *mumbar*, the dish all Syrians are homesick for, she says. She's stuffed the plump sausages with rice, chickpeas, meat, and her own special spice mix, intense with black pepper. Shukran is over the moon about the *yalanji*, grape leaves with a rice filling that almost throbs with red pepper and pomegranate. And what's the super-secret Aleppian touch that so strikingly sets it apart from the Turkish version? "*Ground coffee*," Shukran whispers. Louder, with an air of authority, she declares that 60 percent of dishes between Antep and Aleppo are similar. "But our Aleppo cuisine is more varied, adaptable, stretchable," she contends, as Filiz nods and smiles, diplomatically—and then can't help adding, "But only Antep has [the pastry] katmer!"

Soon, our stomachs are full, the plates cleared. Time seems to dissolve as I sit sipping syrupy-sweet Turkish (Arabic? Levantine?) coffee with these strong generous women, these community powerhouses, as they sweetly parse variations in recipes and identities. At moments like this, it's hard not to fall for that enduring cliché of food as an existential comfort that ultimately helps bring us together. Even as, a few hundred miles away, across a border that didn't exist until the 20th century and remained porous until a brutal war severed these people from their homes, the conflict grinds on. **A**

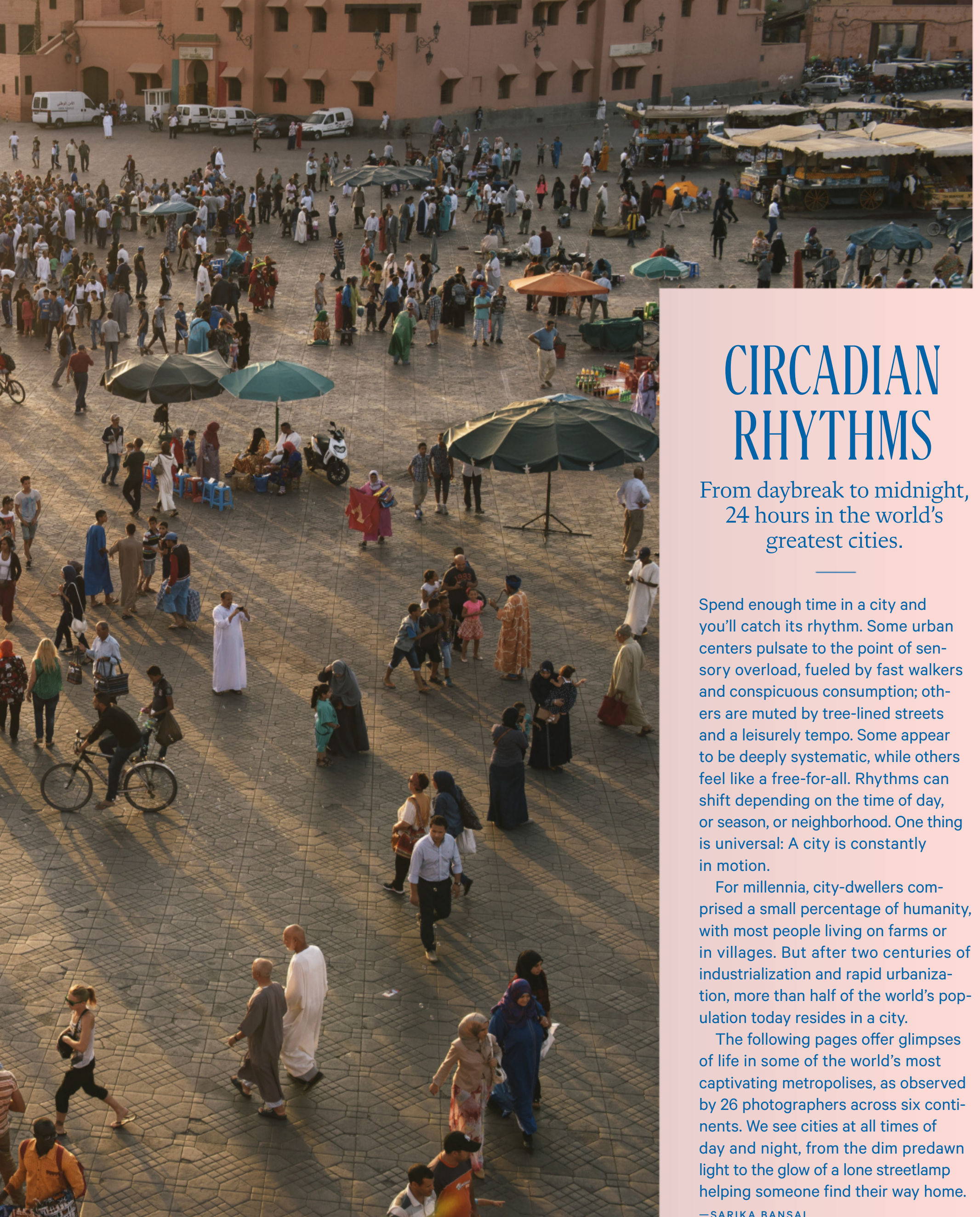
Contributing writer Anya von Bremzen wrote about Turkish manti (dumplings) in AFAR's November/December 2021 issue. Her latest book, *National Dish* (Penguin Press), will be released in 2023. Photographer Rena Effendi is profiled on page 12.





7:26 p.m. Marrakech, Morocco *Matt Dutile*





# CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS

From daybreak to midnight,  
24 hours in the world's  
greatest cities.

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Spend enough time in a city and you'll catch its rhythm. Some urban centers pulsate to the point of sensory overload, fueled by fast walkers and conspicuous consumption; others are muted by tree-lined streets and a leisurely tempo. Some appear to be deeply systematic, while others feel like a free-for-all. Rhythms can shift depending on the time of day, or season, or neighborhood. One thing is universal: A city is constantly in motion.

For millennia, city-dwellers comprised a small percentage of humanity, with most people living on farms or in villages. But after two centuries of industrialization and rapid urbanization, more than half of the world's population today resides in a city.

The following pages offer glimpses of life in some of the world's most captivating metropolises, as observed by 26 photographers across six continents. We see cities at all times of day and night, from the dim predawn light to the glow of a lone streetlamp helping someone find their way home.

—SARIKA BANSAL



MORNING

5:00 a.m. Sydney, Australia  
*Dmitry Osipenko*



6:18 a.m. Bangkok, Thailand  
*Adam Birkan*



6:57 a.m. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia *Abinet Teshome*



9:55 a.m. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
*Marco Argüello*





8:45 a.m. Barcelona, Spain  
*João Canziani*



7:41 a.m. Baotou, China *Antony Sojka*



8:11 a.m. Johannesburg, South Africa *Gulshan Khan*





11:30 a.m. Jerusalem, Israel  
*Ethan Welty*



3:49 p.m. New York City, United States *Brian Finke*





2:43 p.m. Lima, Peru  
*Luisa Dörr*



4:00 p.m. San Francisco, United States  
*Kelsey McClellan*



3:30 p.m. Venice, Italy *Mandy Sham*



4:30 p.m. Mexico City, Mexico  
*Joe Perri*





3:30 p.m. London, England Josh Edgoose







SUNSET

7:15 p.m. Toronto, Canada  
*Brendan George Ko*



5:00 p.m. London, England *Sophie Green*



5:00 p.m. Baku, Azerbaijan *Mandy Sham*



7:49 p.m. Tel Aviv, Israel *Dina Litovsky*



8:19 p.m. Stockholm, Sweden *Felix Brüggemann*



4:45 p.m. Moscow, Russia *Sasha Arutyunova*



AFTER DARK

10:19 p.m. Abuja, Nigeria *Olaoluwa Adamu*



12:35 a.m. Havana, Cuba *Lisette Poole*



8:45 p.m. Los Angeles,  
United States *Jake Michaels*



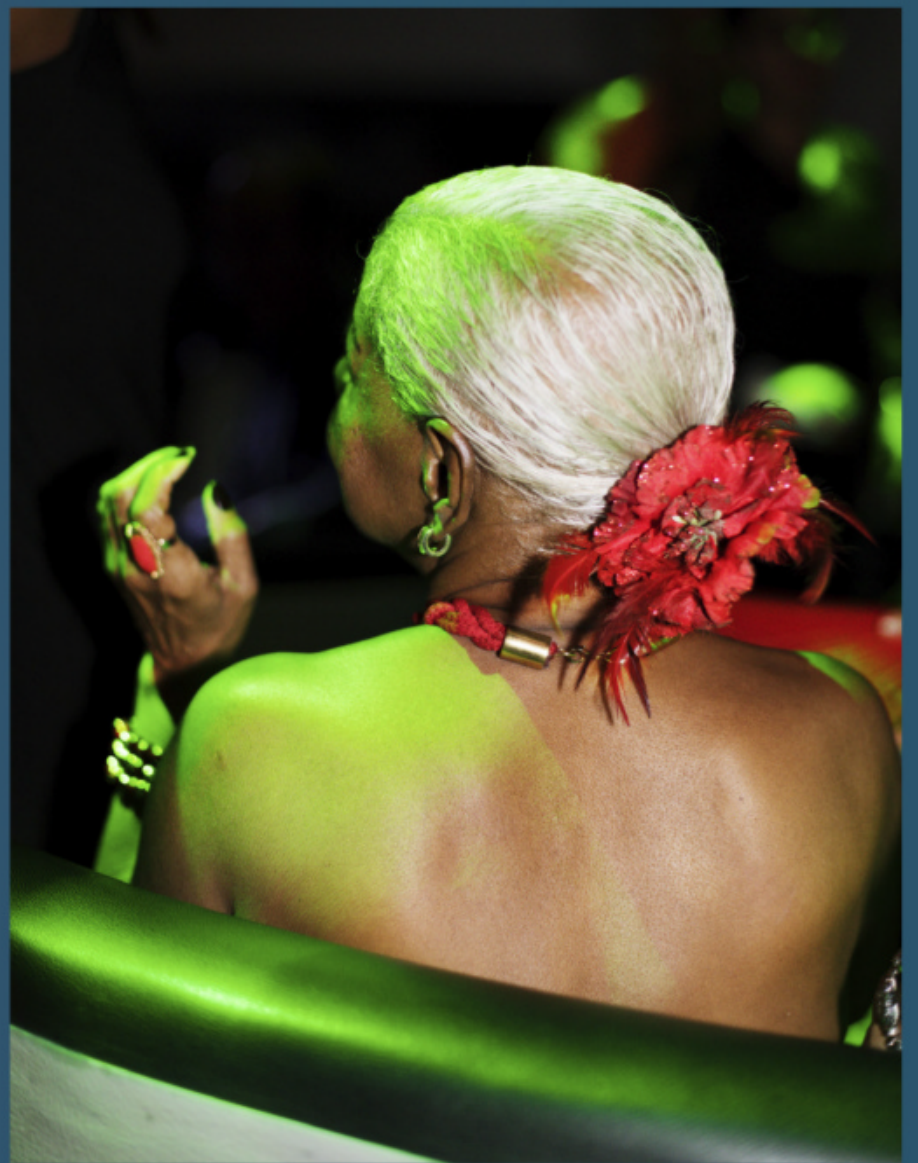




**8:30-11:30 p.m. Chicago, United States**  
*Clarissa Bonet, courtesy of  
 Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago*



**9:30 p.m. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** *Tasneem Alsultan*



**12:01 a.m. Cali, Colombia** *Rose Marie Cromwell*



# SOMETHING LIKE HEALING, SOMETHING LIKE HOPE

Amid a nationwide increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, one writer considers what Chinatown means to America—and to her.

by  
**BONNIE  
TSUI**

Photographs by  
**ALEX LAU**

Illustrations by  
**XINMEI LIU**

華

埠













# MANHATTAN'S CHINATOWN IS MY HOME CHINATOWN.

**FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO**, I snoozed my way through my own baptism at the venerable Transfiguration Church on Mott Street, where countless Chinese and other immigrant families have celebrated beginnings with showy weddings and honored endings with solemn funerals. Mine is not a religious family, so I'd say the baptism served to bless my introduction more to the neighborhood than to God. Chinatown is where my grandmother worked as a seamstress, my grandfather in a fortune cookie factory. Well into elementary school on Long Island, my brother and I wore clothes she sewed, and cookies he had folded were tucked neatly away in our lunches.

Most Sundays, we'd slip into the riverine press of humanity en route to the small apartment on Madison Street that our grandparents shared with three other relatives. Things we saw from our vantage point as kids on these family visits included precarious fruit displays, toy bins, and fishy puddles; affectionate hands squeezed our faces and rewarded us with sour fruit candy. Chinatown was where we could be Chinese, outside of a daily existence spent amid mostly white peers. Ours was an intensely bifurcated upbringing. As a young writer in the East Village, I tried to live differently. I circled back to Chinatown in a more routine way, for everyday things—language lessons, fresh vegetables, a good steamed bun—and for loftier reasons, a connection to something bigger than myself. As a Chinese American kid on Long Island, I never quite felt like I fit in. In Chinatown, I didn't stand out unless I wanted to, and I began to understand that this kind of physical comfort and anonymity in a place is a privilege. Visiting Chinatown made me feel like I maybe *could* fit in, if only I had a better understanding of how my family got here and what the place meant to them.

Chinatown was born of diaspora but also of the human need to gather and make a home. It's the most American story there is.

A little more than a decade ago, I wrote a book, *American Chinatown* (Simon & Schuster), about five of the most significant Chinatowns in the United States—including the oldest, in San Francisco, where

I'd recently moved. I spent time with the late historian and architect Phil Choy, who taught me how to read the distinctive, pagoda-roofed skyline for the story of Chinese American self-invention and self-preservation after the 1906 earthquake. I hung out with earnest teens who were reclaiming their identity by leading lively lion dance troupes and neighborhood tours. And I met recent arrivals, who came in with hearts and minds open to possibility. As they navigated their new lives, I learned along with them. Across geography and generations, people I spoke to had stories of setbacks and struggle, but there was something to share about the paths that led them there: something that looked and sounded like optimism.

The last few years have left many Americans shocked at the precariousness of our sense of belonging. The surge in anti-Asian hate crimes and harassment across the country means my older relatives fear going out alone, anywhere, even to places where they'd always felt at home. Many of the mom-and-pop shops they used to frequent in Chinatown have shuttered; those that remain close earlier than they used to, so their owners can get home before dark. I never thought that my friends and I would be texting each other about how to defend ourselves on public transit or while walking alone in a city at night. These days, I find myself thinking more about how fear and racism built the very first Chinatowns. It's the parallel tale we don't like to tell, the unpleasant companion on the immigrant journey, every bit as American as the dream.

**NOT LONG AGO**, I guest-taught a class of Stanford University medical students on Asian American history, racism, and public health. I was steeped in reminders that the words we use matter: When a cholera epidemic hit New York City in 1832, the Board of Health called it "the Oriental cholera." Later that century, Chinatown was portrayed as home to "an inferior race" and full of "foul vapors." Chinese women were not allowed to enter the country because they were deemed "prostitutes," "filthy," and "morally corrupt," and yet were exoticized and exploited by white men.

In this persistent othering is an unbroken line to "the China virus." Visitors have always sought out Chinatown for the seemingly foreign yet familiar, whether it's to try dim sum, listen to another language, or admire the pagoda rooflines. That forever foreignness is a problem. Last year, after the Atlanta spa shootings left six Asian women dead, the journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones wrote on Twitter that "anti-Asian & anti-Black racism and violence run in tandem," originating from a society "where nationalism has again been stoked & normalized." She

*Opposite page:* Manhattan's Chinatown covers an area of about two square miles.

*Previous page:* Nom Wah Tea Parlor first opened in New York City in 1920, and cooks have been turning out dim sum ever since.





This page, from left: Waverly Place in San Francisco; Brandon Jew, the chef/owner of Mister Jiu's.

Opposite page, from left: a dish of local halibut, ogo seaweed, hot mustard, and lotus root from Mister Jiu's; Portsmouth Square, which is slated for a redesign by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department.

pointed out that both groups were brought to the United States for labor—but with no intention of ever allowing them full and equal citizenship with whites.

In ways that reflect this reality, Chinatown is a place of contradiction. It serves as scapegoat *and* sanctuary. The first Chinatowns were ghettos for male Chinese laborers, who were forced to live among, and yet apart from, whites; Chinese women were barred from immigrating to prevent those laborers from starting families. And yet a Chinatown like San Francisco's is now celebrated as a historic neighborhood, a gateway, an example of the American dream made good. Many Chinatowns have been shrinking for years under pressures of gentrification and remain reliant on a fickle tourism economy. The questions around what Chinatown means—why its existence is important, and how its future should be stewarded—are familiar ones, but they have been made even more acute by the pandemic.

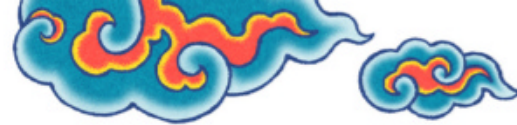
One bright spring afternoon, I went for a walk in San Francisco's Chinatown. I hadn't gone to the area much during the last two years—well, I hadn't gone anywhere much at all—and the familiar kinetic vibration of life in Portsmouth Square, one of my favorite places to people-watch, was comforting: children screaming from the play structures, their minders chatting on benches; elders making their rounds, hands folded behind their backs. A few blocks away on Waverly Place, a narrow lane that's one of the oldest in the neighborhood, I stopped in to see the chef Brandon Jew. His restaurant, the Michelin-starred Mister Jiu's, is only the third business to occupy the 10,000-square-foot space at 28 Waverly Place, after the iconic Four

Seas restaurant, where he remembers attending his uncle's wedding banquet in the upstairs hall. (The restaurant name is his reclamation, a correction to the misspelling of his family's name upon arrival in America.)

Two men stood calmly smoking in the alley as music wafted from under the turned-up eaves of the Eng Family Benevolent Association. Colorful painted goldfish swam on the sidewalk outside the restaurant, which had reopened on a four-day-a-week schedule in January. Jew opened Mister Jiu's—known for creative, meticulously prepared Chinese American dishes that rely on seasonal local produce—in 2016, after working in the kitchens of such quintessential and respected California establishments as Zuni Café and Quince. At this year's James Beard Awards, he won best chef in California and best restaurant cookbook for *Mister Jiu's in Chinatown* (Ten Speed Press), coauthored with Tienlon Ho. Growing up in San Francisco, Jew has strong connections to Chinatown; as a child, he performed with his kung fu class in the district's Chinese New Year celebrations.

"The thing that draws Chinese Americans back to this neighborhood is that this was our





beginning," Jew told me, as his six-month-old son, Bo, who had just learned to crawl, scooted toward me. We chatted in the dining room, which looks out across the main thoroughfare of Grant Avenue and toward the sun-bleached point of the iconic Transamerica Pyramid. Directly across Grant is the Wok Shop, a beloved kitchen supply store where proprietor Tane Chan has been selling Chinese cookware since 1972.

Outside, Chinatown still felt quiet. But behind a neighborhood seemingly lying fallow, there was renewal. Jew pointed out the just-remodeled playground that had reopened across the street; the planned \$66 million redesign of Portsmouth Square by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department; and the scheduled September opening of the Central Subway underground light rail connecting Chinatown to the neighborhoods south of Market Street. The physical and civic investment in the community, he said, signaled support in a time when it desperately needed something like hope.

For Jew, the assaults on Asians in Chinatown and elsewhere in the Bay Area during the pandemic solidified his commitment to the neighborhood and sharpened his understanding of racial injustice. The resilience of his neighbors helped him to push forward and to keep Mister

**"BEING REMINDED OF WHAT THAT OLDER GENERATION WENT THROUGH, IN THIS TIME OF RENEWED HATE, IT HELPS SHAPE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF YOURSELF. AND THAT YOU DESERVE A PLACE."**

Jiu's open. He felt a deep responsibility to the elders who had supported him.

"There is strength in this community," Jew said. At 42, he is of a generation for which this kind of public vitriol had seemed bygone, not least of all because he lives in the Bay Area, home to a robust Asian American population dating back to the mid-1800s. The violence against Asian seniors stunned him, and he felt an urgency to speak up, on social media and elsewhere, about what Chinatown needed and to make noise against AAPI hate. The restaurant raised funds to support the organizations Cut Fruit Collective and the Chinatown Community Development Center. "Being reminded of what that older generation went through, in this time of renewed





Street vendors  
sell fresh fruits  
and vegetables in  
New York City's  
Chinatown.







# CHINATOWN, EVERYWHERE

by Mae Hamilton

San Francisco, New York City—some of the world’s most famous Chinatowns are found in the United States. But with an estimated 50 million ethnically Chinese people currently living outside of China, these enclaves aren’t just a U.S. phenomenon; they’re scattered in major metropolitan areas across the globe.

## YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

Four elaborately decorated gateways mark the entrances to Yokohama’s Chinatown, Japan’s largest, which sits just a few blocks from Tokyo Bay. Pick up some *chūka* (aka Japanese Chinese food) such as *karaage*—small pieces of meat, usually chicken, that have been deep-fried with a light, crispy batter—and peruse the area’s 250 storefronts. Don’t miss the Kanteibyō Temple, considered the spiritual center of the neighborhood.

## LIMA, PERU

When slavery was abolished in Peru in 1854, Chinese indentured laborers were brought in to work on sugar and cotton plantations. After their contracts were completed, many ended up in the Peruvian capital and established one of the oldest Chinatowns in Latin America. Spanning merely two downtown blocks, the Barrio Chino would become the birthplace of *chifa*—Peruvian Chinese food—which features dishes like *sopa wantán* (wonton soup), *lomo saltado* (stir-fried beef), and *arroz chaufa* (Chinese-style fried rice).

## PARIS, FRANCE

There’s not just one, but three Quartiers Chinois in Paris. The original, and smallest, is located in the 3rd arrondissement around Rue au Maire. Better known are the other two areas, one of them in the 20th arrondissement and home to a predominantly Chinese population. The other, and best known, is in the 13th arrondissement and is primarily occupied by people of Chinese and Vietnamese descent who fled Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian countries during the Vietnam War

and in the years that followed. Amid decidedly European architecture, the 13th arrondissement has Buddhist temples, Asian supermarkets, and numerous Chinese restaurants.

## MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Melbourne’s Chinatown dates to 1854, when the first Chinese-owned houses were completed in the Little Bourke Street area. It’s considered to be not only the oldest Chinese enclave in Australia but arguably the oldest continuously inhabited Chinatown in the Western world, since San Francisco’s was decimated by the 1906 earthquake. Think about stopping by RuYi Modern Chinese, which serves reimagined Chinese cuisine in a minimalist setting, or check out the Museum of Chinese Australian History, which highlights the legacy of Australia’s Chinese community.

## JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has the largest Chinese population on the African continent, and Johannesburg, the country’s sprawling metropolis, is home to two Chinatowns. The original, located on Commissioner Street in the city’s central business district, is nearly as old as Johannesburg itself, dating to the late 1800s. The second Chinatown is situated in the suburb of Cyrildene. Known as “New Chinatown,” the neighborhood was formed during the social upheaval of the 1990s and is home to a booming Chinese community. Restaurant options abound, including Delicious Casserole Food, where dishes are cooked and served in clay pots, and Shun De, a local dim sum favorite. Here, diners can enjoy *siu mai*, egg tarts, and other classic Chinese offerings.









hate, it helps shape your understanding of yourself. And that you deserve a place." He paused. "That matters."

**TALKING WITH JEW** made me long for the rhythms of my home Chinatown, so I headed to New York City. For the last few years, I'd been exchanging notes about the state of the neighborhood with Grace Young, the James Beard Award-winning author and culinary historian. She has lived in New York for more than 40 years. In January 2020, she began walking into Chinatown every day to check in on businesses like Hop Lee, a restaurant that has long catered to a working-class clientele of old-timers, postal workers, and local teachers from P.S.1. She hasn't stopped since. "The immediate shunning of Chinatown just took the life force out of the neighborhood," she told me. Restaurants and supermarkets emptied; street vendors had no customers. In the first three months of the pandemic, Chinatown businesses saw their revenues drop by up to 80 percent. By March 2022, nearly a quarter of the ground-floor storefronts in New York's Chinatown stood empty.

A slight, birdlike woman with glasses and a bright smile, Young, 66, had always seen herself as a quiet person. But watching low-income immigrants, workers, and owners struggle to survive, knowing they could lose their jobs and businesses, turned her into an activist. "I never ever dreamed that you could lose Chinatown," she said. She couldn't stand by and let it happen.

Young found her voice as a committed advocate: She began a video series called "Coronavirus: Chinatown Stories," documenting the economic hardships faced by Chinatown residents; she worked with the nonprofits Asian Americans for Equality and Welcome to Chinatown to raise funds for the community; she launched social media campaigns in partnership with the James Beard Foundation, including #LoveAAPI and #SaveChineseRestaurants. "I want people to show up by showing their love," Young told me one afternoon as we dodged weekend visitors on Canal Street. The crowds weren't quite what they were prepandemic, but they were encouraging. "All these people are here because they love the food and the people who carry on those valuable traditions. In a time when people in the

*This page, from top: Bookstore owner Lucy Yu; shrimp, pork, and chicken siu mai from Nom Wah Tea Parlor in Manhattan.*

*Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Scenes from Manhattan's Chinatown; author and advocate Grace Young at Hop Lee restaurant.*







**PERHAPS BETTER THAN  
MOST, PEOPLE IN CHINATOWN  
HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN  
WHAT IT MEANS TO CARE FOR  
THEIR NEIGHBORS.**

community are struggling and afraid, everyone can help by being visible with that love.”

Her humanitarian efforts have won her recognition and financial investment from the James Beard and Julia Child foundations; the former lauded Young’s “work to save America’s Chinatowns amid Asian American and Pacific Islander hate” while the latter honored Young’s “important contributions to preserving and sharing Chinese culinary traditions.” The attention from these historically white organizations felt momentous: Chinatown mattered to them, too. “I have no grand plan for the future,” Young said, as we sat on a bench in Columbus Park, watching seniors attend to card games and young people play basketball on the adjacent courts. We shared stories about our families and pointed out places that meant something to each of us: a favorite restaurant here, a beloved shop there. “But I react to what I feel: Chinatown tells the story of America.”

The long history of Chinatown, and of the Asian American resistance movement rooted there, is also a meaningful anchor for Lucy Yu. In December 2021, she opened Yu and Me Books, a cozy, light-strung bookshop and café on the east side of Columbus Park, on Chinatown’s funeral parlor row. Six months into what had been a whirlwind time for the business, I sat with Yu, 27, as she chatted with customers and pulled coffee drinks from an espresso machine. Behind her, a vivid aquamarine wall was covered with framed prints and paintings, as well as photographs by the late Corky Lee, an influential photojournalist who began documenting Chinatown and Asian American activism and life in the 1970s.

Before Yu opened the bookstore, she worked as a chemical engineer and, later, as a supply chain manager. “It was my personal dream to do this,” she said. “And it’s been surprising and wonderful that it has resonated with so many people. My neighbor’s grandparents came in. They said, ‘I was born and raised on this block. I’ve never seen anything like this here, and I’m so glad you’re here.’ That means so much.”

Part of her mission is to provide comfort and community. In mid-March, a month after Christina Yuna Lee was murdered in her Chinatown apartment just a half-mile away, the bookstore held an event in which it gave out free pepper spray and personal alarms provided by the nonprofit Soar Over Hate. A thousand people showed up; some waited two hours. Brooklyn artist Leanne Gan made art for those who came in. In a time of trauma and loss, everyone was searching for healing.

“I constantly say that I’m three kids in a trench coat,” Yu said with a laugh. “I have zero percent idea what I’m doing.” But she’s bold enough to ask, *What would make me feel better?* Pepper spray: OK. The feeling of being in community: Yes. And sharing drinks and dumplings with friends and neighbors in Chinatown? That’s always a good thing.

**THE WRITER CHARLES YU** told me that, when it comes to place, “we all live in some amalgam of emotional feelings, ideas, and mental assumptions,” whether we realize it or not. “That resonates in an especially powerful way with Chinatown.” His novel *Interior Chinatown* (Vintage), which won the 2020 National Book Award, interrogates the evolving mythology of the neighborhood and the people inside, exposing stereotypes that devalue Asian lives. Yu said that the writing of the book was influenced by his changing perception of his parents’ own immigration story after President Donald Trump’s election. Fifty years into their American lives, the country was back to talking about who gets to be American and who doesn’t. Everything was cast in a new light.

Yu pushes against stereotypes with specificity, by writing about individuals with complex inner lives, fears, regrets, and hopes. In *Interior Chinatown*, Willis Wu lives in a tiny, one-room apartment in Chinatown; he’s also a bit-part background actor. He wants a shot at being Kung Fu Guy—a chance to play the most respected role someone who looks like him can have. This is brilliant, biting satire, but the heartbreak is what he doesn’t yet realize: He can be a leading man, wholly realized, driving the action on his own terms. He can be more.

In some ways, Yu said, imagination is how we hope. The quintessentially American belief that if you work hard enough, you will earn something like success and belonging has always animated Chinatown. Today, the Asian American community inside and outside the neighborhood feels less sure of belonging or even of safety. There’s a brutality to that fact. But the idea of Chinatown as a place rich in possibility is the one I still champion—yes, with fear and hope. It deserves to be seen in its full humanity. And so do we.

What does Chinatown mean to me, years after my introduction? I’m still fiercely compelled to declare solidarity with the community and what it represents: *We’re here. We’ve been here.* It’s staking a claim on being American, and fighting for that right, however uncomfortable and scary it is to do that now. It’s been a long time since I had a daily relationship with Chinatown, but communing with some of the most vocal, visible champions working in the neighborhood restored in me a kind of faith. Perhaps better than most, people in Chinatown have always known what it means to care for their neighbors. It’s not clear how we’ll all get through this difficult and divisive time. Maybe it helps to know that we’re fumbling our way forward, together. **A**

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*Bonnie Tsui wrote about open-water swimming in the Spring 2022 issue of AFAR. Photographer Alex Lau is profiled on page 12.*

*Opposite page:*  
Roughly 24  
square blocks,  
San Francisco’s  
Chinatown  
is a civic and  
cultural center  
not only for  
the city but for  
the greater Bay  
Area as well.



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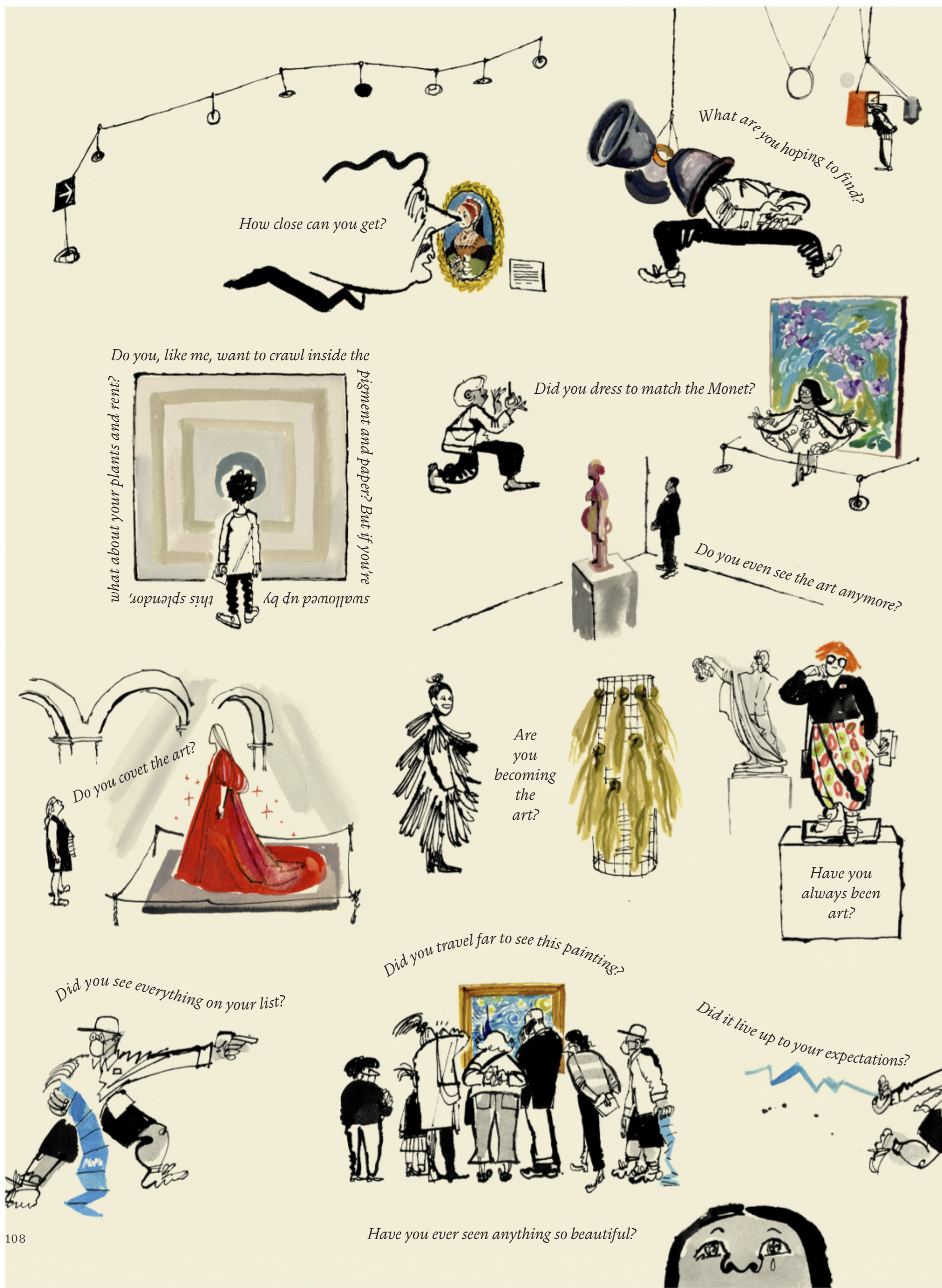
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# Looking at People Looking at Art

by LAUREN TAMAKI





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