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SUMMER 2023

*The Culture Issue*

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**CRUISES  
ARE  
BOOMING:  
HERE'S  
WHERE TO  
GO NEXT**

p.55



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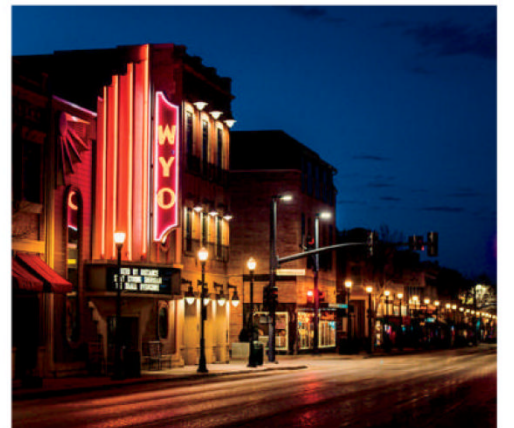
How does a place  
change when the  
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Author Shruti  
Swamy returns to  
her ancestral  
home of Mumbai  
to find out.



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The reason we’d come all this way was not for a well-stocked bar or a beautifully appointed sauna or an extensive library. . . . The reason is out *there*.

ILLUSTRATIONS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SOLJI LEE; CLÉMENCE GOUY; LAUREN TAMAKI  
PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: GERELTSETSEG DAVAAJAV; COURTESY OF THE MERRION HOTEL DUBLIN



A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark, sleeveless dress covered in sparkling sequins, is shown from the chest up. She is looking upwards and to the left with a slight smile, her eyes closed. Her right hand is raised near her head. The background is a vibrant gradient from yellow at the top to red at the bottom. The text "WANDER. *lust.*" is overlaid in white.

WANDER. *lust.*



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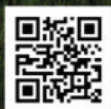
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FOUNDERS Greg Sullivan & Joe Diaz

What museum  
is worth  
traveling for?

“The mostly underground Chichu Art Museum in Naoshima, Japan, was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando and houses pieces by Claude Monet, James Turrell, and Walter De Maria.”

—S.K.

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“I lost hours in the National Museum of African American Music in Nashville last fall—and left with a seriously long Spotify playlist.”

—T.C.

“A trip to Paris is never complete without a visit to the Musée d’Orsay. The building itself—a Beaux-Arts railway station built in the late 19th century—makes for an unforgettable visit.”

—M.S.

“The Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia is intimate and full of an incredible collection of Impressionist paintings.” —A.C.

“I love the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, Tasmania. It is located within a waterfront winery and features a dazzling permanent light installation by Ryoji Ikeda.”

—T.A.





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## BRAD OGBONNA

*Photographer*

Brad Ogbonna is drawn to photographing quiet, intimate moments between people. For **Family Ties** (p.41), he set up his camera at Tanoreen, a popular Palestinian restaurant in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, run by mother and daughter Rawia and Jumana Bishara. Ogbonna, who lives in Brooklyn, wanted to show readers the close relationship—and love—between the two generations: “I work to capture people in their truest form, their truest essence,” he says. See more of his photographs on Instagram @bradogbonna.



## SHRUTI SWAMY

*Writer*

In **My Mumbai** (p.98), novelist Shruti Swamy reflects on India’s most populous city. She’s traveled to Mumbai many times, but last November, she visited for the first time after the death of a beloved family member. “It was meaningful for me to be there and to bring my daughter with me,” she says. Swamy is the author of *The Archer* (Algonquin, 2021). Her work also appears in the *Paris Review* and the *New York Times*. She’s currently working on a collection of short stories about motherhood.



## JENN ACKERMAN

*Photographer*

Originally from Virginia Beach, Virginia, photographer Jenn Ackerman is now based in her husband’s home state of Minnesota. During the COVID pandemic, when lockdowns and social distancing were in place, Ackerman found it difficult to deeply engage with the Twin Cities as she once did. But for **A Place to Call Home** (p.88), she was welcomed into the Swedish, Hmong, and Somali communities, and got to revisit some of her favorite spots around town. “I had shot these places prepandemic and it was so good to come back to them and be reminded of how beautiful Minneapolis really is,” Ackerman says. Find her work on the Instagram account she shares with her photographer husband @ackermangruber.



## MAYUKH SEN

*Writer*

James Beard Award–winning writer Mayukh Sen is the author of *Taste Makers: Seven Immigrant Women Who Revolutionized Food in America* (W.W. Norton, 2021). Rawia Bishara, profiled by Sen in **Family Ties** (p.41), is a co-owner of the Brooklyn restaurant Tanoreen. “[In the ’90s] people from Palestine felt it was one of the few places in the city where they could get a taste of home,” Sen says. He’s currently writing two books, one focused on the Indian-born actress Merle Oberon, the other a collection of essays about American TV soap operas. Follow him on Instagram @mayukh.sen.

# Contributors



## CLÉMENCE GOUY

*Illustrator*

Currently based in Amsterdam, illustrator Clémence Gouy is originally from Brittany, France, and still has a soft spot for her home country. She vividly depicted the City of Light in **Gay Paris** (p.37) through a tableau of cocktails and the rainbow-colored pedestrian crosswalk in Le Marais—an important landmark for the Paris LGBTQ community. “I like to see it as a visible manifestation of all the Parisian queer people who paved the way and walked these streets before,” Gouy says. She recently completed a feminist mural on a basketball court in the 11th arrondissement of the city. She has also worked for Apple, Nike, and Adidas. Find her on Instagram @clemence\_gouy.



## SEBASTIAN MODAK

*Writer*

Brooklyn-based writer Sebastian Modak was born to be a traveler: He grew up in Hong Kong, Australia, India, and Indonesia. For **Where to Cruise Next** (p.55), he muses on one of his latest adventures—cruising to Antarctica with tour company Aurora Expeditions. “There are so few wild places left on Earth,” Modak says. “It’s the closest I’ll ever get to being on another planet.” He also writes for the *Washington Post*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and *Lonely Planet*. Keep up with his adventures on Instagram @sebmodak.



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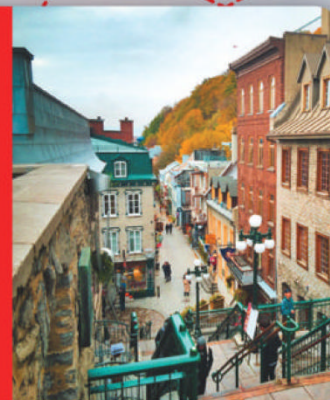
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MAINE

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CANADA\*





# Leave No Trace

I LOOKED OUT the airplane window and saw an endless stretch of white: miles of glaciers, snow, and ice, blending harmoniously with the clouds on the horizon. The sky looked impossibly blue by contrast.

I was about to land in Svalbard, the archipelago more than 500 miles north of mainland Norway, with a delegation from the nonprofit organization Tourism Cares. We traveled last spring to this fragile region to discuss the role of responsible tourism in a place that is already experiencing the impacts of our warming planet.

The conference had started a few days earlier in Tromsø, Norway, where we met with Indigenous Sami leaders. They had generously shared details of their seminomadic way of life in the Arctic Circle: how they follow reindeer, how they use every part of the animal to survive in harsh conditions, and how seriously they take the principle of “leave no trace.” Two women had sung folk *joik* songs for us, and now, as the plane flew over a white sea of nothingness, I could hear their lilting, melodic voices in my head.

At AFAR, sustainability goes beyond protecting the physical environment. Meeting Sami people made me see the Arctic desert as a landscape full of vibrancy and human innovation. My time in Norway reaffirmed my awareness that as travelers, it’s our privilege to observe cultures new to us, participate when we can, and appreciate the singularity of every place we visit.

This issue celebrates cultures around the world. Writer Shruti Swamy travels to Mumbai, India (page 98), where she tries to find joy on her first visit after the death of her beloved aunt. Members of three diaspora communities—Hmong, Somali, and Nordic—explain how they keep their traditions alive in Minnesota’s Twin Cities (page 88). We learn about Thessaloniki, Greece’s “second city,” famous for its carefree spirit and festive food scene (page 76).

My trip to the Arctic introduced me to a culture that is resilient, spiritual, and close to the land. I thought of that connection as I edited the stories on the following pages. Tell me what you think of the issue via Instagram @sarika008.

Travel well,  
**SARIKA BANSAL**  
*Editorial Director*

*The Svalbard archipelago remained uninhabited until the 16th century.*





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**"Its long legacy of art and culture gives the island a deeper quality all its own."**

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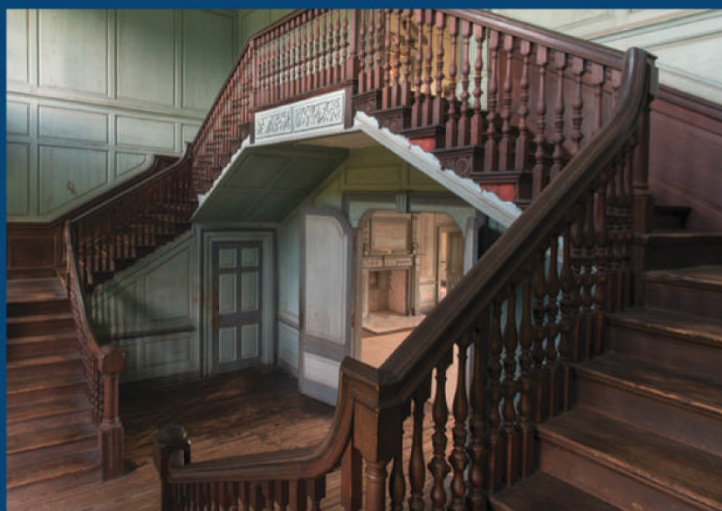


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# On Display

*Museums play a powerful role in sharing knowledge and culture. How can we best engage with them, given ethical concerns about the acquisition of artifacts?*

**STANDING IN THE** British Museum's Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt gallery in 2013, I wondered if I was doing the right thing: paying money to see items that the country of origin asserted were acquired illegally. It was my birthday, and I was decked out in a navy dress with sequins, proud of the way I looked. But I could only manage an uneasy smile as my mama took a picture of me beside a statue of Pharaoh Senusret III.

The critiques that would evolve into a crisis about the state of museums today were well formed and convincing even then. Many objects that filled the halls of the world's preeminent museums had been pilfered from their home countries—looted and trafficked—as an act of imperialism or in the name of scientific discovery.

Since 1983, Greece has formally requested that pieces of the Parthenon be sent back to the country, asserting they belong to the nation. Pope Francis agreed in 2022 to return the three that were in the Vatican Museums' possession; the British Museum—which has 247 feet of the original frieze—has returned nothing. Egypt asked the Louvre to give back four archaeological reliefs stolen from the tomb





**As I make my way through galleries, I ask myself, “Where are the absences? Whose voice is missing?”**

When I can, I try to visit smaller regional museums, which often have more emphasis on the first people of an area. While working on an assignment involving Mount Rushmore in 2016, for example, I skipped museums that focused on the power of the presidents fixed in stone and the white supremacist sculptor who created them. Instead, I visited the Journey Museum & Learning Center in Rapid City, South Dakota, which focuses on the story of the Indigenous peoples of the Black Hills, their traditions, and why the landscape is sacred to these communities. And when people ask my counsel about which museums to visit in places I’ve traveled to, I guide them to those I believe are doing a good job.

Outside of physical museums, social media can be a valuable meeting place. I participate in virtual talks and guided workshops alongside artists, historians, and curators, and my Instagram feed includes art lovers who share the beautiful side of what they see while using captions and voice-overs to examine relevant historical, societal, and cultural issues outside the frame. Lively discussions happen in the comments, and following these threads allows me to better understand the challenges that come with art appreciation and museum ethics.

Today, we have more tools at our disposal to learn about parts of the world that we may never see. And while we can’t change the story of how an object arrived at its current resting place, we do have the power to alter the way we engage with things in the present—to ask questions and to keep asking. **A**

of a noble in the 1980s, and when its request was denied, the country severed ties with the museum in 2009. And for nearly a century, the more than 150 institutions with Benin Bronzes—thousands of objects taken by British troops in 1897 from what is now Nigeria—have faced calls to repatriate the items. Progress, however, has been slow.

Though it has been almost a decade since my visit to the British Museum, I still frequent these kinds of cultural institutions. In fact, I’ve visited more than 40 museums in the past year. Many of them are expansive, formidable, and backed by powerful donors. But now more than ever, I’m aware of my responsibility for how I engage with them. I am more active, less passive—before, during, and after my visit.

To get a feel for the type of museum experience I’m headed into, I check the website for language: If the museum is named after a family, does it tell the truth about how that family got their money and how this place came to be? In details about exhibits, are there words like “primitive,” “native,” and “discovered”?

As I make my way through galleries, I ask myself, “Where are the absences? Whose voice is missing?” When I’m moved by a piece, I jot down the descriptive data so I can research its journey when I’m at my computer. I seek more information about its origins, the political situation when it was crafted, and current social conditions in the country. If an institution offers guided tours, I take them, knowing I’ll get stories about the artifacts that go beyond what’s on the placard. Tours also give me the opportunity to learn more about an institution’s own history, acquisition processes, and present practices.



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Enjoy **Alex Katz's** artwork throughout **The Langham, New York**, **Fifth Avenue**, and stunning views thanks to the hotel's prime location. Book a Club Room for exclusive **Langham Club** access. Ascend the **Empire State Building** and marvel at **Grand Central Station** and the **Chrysler Building**.



## Downtown Boston, Massachusetts

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# TAOS

FOR THE GOOD





# AFAR ANSWERS

Primers for Travelers  
Who Care

by TIM CHESTER

Illustration by SOLJI LEE



## How Can Travel Preserve and Honor Cultures?

When I think back on my favorite trips, it's the cultural moments that stand out: the shake of feathers on a Black Masking Indian's Mardi Gras outfit in New Orleans; the laughter I shared with Fijians around a kava bowl. To me, the most rewarding parts of travel are learning about—and being invited to experience—a community's traditions. But how can we ensure that we're doing right by the people who share those moments with us? Here are some tips.

### Read up

Advance reading on local history, customs, and culture can help you get more out of a trip. For example, [DestinationIndigenous.ca](http://DestinationIndigenous.ca), from the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), has advice about attending a powwow.

### Consider who controls the storytelling

If you're thinking about booking an activity, performance, or tour

that is presented as a cultural experience, consider its context. Will it take place in the tradition's natural environment or somewhere staged? Who's benefiting, financially or otherwise? Ask about its history, suggests Kalani Ka'anā'anā, a Native Hawaiian and chief brand officer at the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. "Nine times out of 10, if they're able to recite and share where their knowledge comes from and what their responsibility is to it, it's going to be a solid experience."

ITAC's Original Original mark denotes businesses that are at least 51 percent Indigenous owned (plus other criteria) and offer accredited, authentic experiences. These include the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler, which showcases the area's First Nations communities, and Coastal Rainforest Safaris, which leads wildlife tours in British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest.

As Tamara Littlelight, ITAC's

director of marketing and a proud Anishinaabe from Keeseekoose First Nation, says, tourism gives Indigenous peoples "a chance to rediscover and take pride in their cultural heritage, while also sharing it with others."

### Uplift traditions and crafts

There are several ways travelers can help sustain cultures around the world. For example, UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list showcases hundreds of endangered oral traditions, performing arts, and skills, some "in need of urgent safeguarding."

Similarly, the U.K.'s Heritage Crafts Association has identified dozens of crafts at risk of becoming extinct within a generation. And at the Fife Arms, a hotel in Braemar, Scotland, travelers can support local skills by learning how to make traditional rag paper and sporrans (pouches).

The U.N.'s World Tourism Organization publishes an annual Best Tourism Villages list, which recognizes places with social, economic, and environmental sustainability initiatives that enable travelers to help preserve local heritage. The 2022 list includes Dazhai, in China's mountainous Guangxi region, where a cable car allows visitors to witness 1,000-year-old farming techniques of plowing and harvesting rice terraces. In Angochagua, Ecuador,

another designee, guests are encouraged to take part in farming, cooking, and crafts as a celebration of the Caranqui people's ancestral heritage, providing a source of income and strengthening traditions.

### Participate—and respect boundaries

Don't be a passive observer. Try to spend time with your hosts. In eastern Canada, Fogo Island Inn's Community Host Program matches guests with a lifelong Fogo Islander for customized half-day orientations about the island's natural and cultural heritage.

Exchanges like this can often be two-way conversations, but some aspects may be off-limits: Sacred ceremonies or ritual practices might be kept from visitors. Of course, obeying local rules, respecting privacy, and asking permission before taking any photos are paramount.

Ka'anā'anā says curiosity and humility are "the recipe for how best to engage with, and be respectful of, culture." Hawai'i is like a mirror, he says, promising that if you come with those two qualities, you'll get them back tenfold. "We have a saying in Hawai'i: *Aloha aku, aloha mai*. In giving love you receive love." **A**

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STAY

# The Art of Hospitality

*In Nairobi, and around the world, hotels introduce their guests to the creativity that surrounds them—and reveal canvases visitors may not otherwise see.*

by Jennifer Flowers



The Langham, Boston



## B

**BARELY 48 HOURS** after landing in Nairobi, I'm on a leafy terrace with a multinational crowd of Ghanaian businessmen, European architects, and Kenyan artists—some just home from the Venice Biennale, others on their way to Frieze Miami. The setting is electrified with chatter, and I'm deep in conversation with painter Shabu Mwangi. His exhibition—hosted by GravitArt, an online gallery that creates pop-up shows throughout the city—is the reason we've gathered at this private residence in the buzzy Westlands neighborhood.

I'm here not because I'm part of the jet-setting art-world elite but because of Hemingways Eden, a boutique hotel opened in 2021 by Anna Trzebinski. (She originally built it with her late husband, Tonio, as their family home in 1992.) I chose the Eden because of its promise to go beyond merely providing a nice place to sleep. Trzebinski is on a mission to connect visitors and locals to Nairobi's creative scene through on-site hotel events and customized art immersion experiences. And she's the right person to do it. Born in Germany and raised in Kenya, she's a fashion designer whose connections run deep in the creative community. Rather than hire professional guides, she recruits friends who have made careers in the arts to lead the way to gallery openings, screenings, concerts, and more. Though the hotel was recently brought into the Kenya-based Hemingways Collection, Trzebinski's influence remains.

The hotel itself is a showcase of creativity. The four-acre, tree-shaded grounds retain their private estate feel. Its nine rooms—many with canopy beds hand carved by artisans based on Kenya's Lamu Island—are spread out over a main house and a studio annex. Artifacts from Kenya's Samburu and Maasai cultures, along with items from Trzebinski's sizable personal collection of contemporary paintings and sculptures by African artists, prepare my eye for the art I'm encountering in Nairobi.

"Africa is on fire in every discipline as far as art is concerned, and Nairobi is a vibrant hub of this," Trzebinski says.



*Hemingways Eden, Nairobi*

The energy and excitement surrounding contemporary art is exactly what the hotel's private art experiences can offer travelers. My visit to GravitArt is part of a gallery crawl I'm on with Peter Achayo, an art aficionado, researcher, blogger, and walking encyclopedia of African artists. He's introducing me to people and scenes I wouldn't have been able to find on my own.

At the GravitArt show, I talk to Mwangi while I gaze at *Supreme Cages*, his oil painting on a nearby wall. It depicts a skeletal white figure, head down and hands folded, with an oppressive, heavy, red line hovering overhead. Mwangi has just returned from the well-regarded *Documenta* exhibition in Germany. He tells me the piece is his response to the media's misguided impression that his work is only about the harsh realities of life in Mukuru, one of Nairobi's largest slums, where he was raised and where he works with a youth-oriented art collective, Wajukuu Art Project.

"When you come from a place like Mukuru, sometimes people [assume] that you can't think globally," he says. "That's something I push back on. In my work, I'm not just talking about Mukuru. I'm talking about global issues and how they have an impact on us all."

At the next gallery, Kuona Artists Collective, a band is playing on a stage under the stars. Achayo introduces me to the young artist Ndunde Bulimo, who immediately hugs me. Minutes later, she's guiding me into one of the venue's





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shipping containers that double as showrooms, explaining the meaning behind her bright-hued woodblock prints. They depict men and women in headdresses and hats—a series about the personal motivations behind hair coverings. I zero in on a print of a woman in a cerulean headdress, who throws an intense stare at the viewer. Soon after, I leave the gallery a new patron of Nairobi art, the tubed-up print in hand, excited to be part of the conversation and grateful to Hemingways Eden for bringing me into it.

Contact the hotel for information about guided art experiences. [hemingways-collection.com/eden](https://hemingways-collection.com/eden)



Hotel Eden, Rome

## More Hotels Where Guests Experience Great Art

### HOTEL EDEN

Rome

This elegant 98-room hotel from the Dorchester Collection is housed in an 1889 apartment building, and the lobby, with its cozy nooks and honor bar, retains a residential feel. In 2022, the hotel launched “Caravaggio—Rebel and Rome,” a private tour with an art historian who leads guests on a two-hour experience of the city through the lens of the baroque-era artist’s paintings and his short but colorful life. [dorchestercollection.com](https://dorchestercollection.com)

### THE MERRION HOTEL

Dublin

In four restored Georgian townhouses, the Merrion displays one of Ireland’s largest private art collections, on par with the National Gallery down the street. Browse a catalog in each of the 142 rooms and suites or take a self-guided audio tour to see paintings by Jack Yeats (poet W.B. Yeats’s brother), William Scott, Louis le Brocq, and others. Every two years, the Merrion Plinth Award displays a contemporary artist’s work alongside the more historic paintings. An afternoon tea features desserts inspired by the collection. [merrionhotel.com](https://merrionhotel.com)

### LE ROYAL MONCEAU, RAFFLES PARIS

Paris

At Philippe Starck-designed Le Royal Monceau, resident art concierge Julie Eugène leads complimentary tours of the 152-room hotel’s permanent and rotating exhibits. Works range from Salvador Dalí paintings to photographs by contemporary French artist Arlette Kotchounian (pieces are in the sprawling Gallery Suites too). Eugène can also arrange studio visits, private dinners at galleries, after-hours tours of the Louvre or the Picasso Museum, and art workshops for children. [leroyalmonceau.com/en](https://leroyalmonceau.com/en)

### 21C ST. LOUIS

Missouri

The U.S.-based hotel group 21c debuts its 10th hotel this summer, part of a citywide effort to revitalize downtown St. Louis through the arts. Located in a former YMCA building, the hotel dedicates more than 14,000 square feet to museum exhibition space that’s open to the public, featuring a rotating collection of works by acclaimed artists and permanent pieces from local talent. Look for public events and site-specific installations too, including a 20,000-pound orb filled with water by Turkish American conceptual artist Serkan Özkaya. [21cmuseumhotels.com/stlouis/](https://21cmuseumhotels.com/stlouis/)



Ellerman House, Cape Town



Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris



OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF THE DORCHESTER COLLECTION; COURTESY OF ELLERMAN HOUSE; HANA LÊ VAN. THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF ROSEWOOD BAHAMA MAR



## ELLERMAN HOUSE

*Cape Town*

Set on a cliff overlooking the ocean, Ellerman House has 13 individually designed rooms. It doubles as an art gallery, thanks to owner Paul Harris's collection of South African art from the 19th century to the present day, including pieces by the late social realist painters George Pemba and Gerard Sekoto. The hotel's art guide Talita Swarts arranges private textile, painting, and printing workshops with contemporary artists, such as Kimathi Mafafo, who incorporates embroidery into her paintings. [ellerman.co.za](http://ellerman.co.za)

## THE LANGHAM, BOSTON

*Massachusetts*

Housed in the former Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the Langham emerged from a renovation in 2022 with a collection of 290 works—many from the Copley Society of Art, the country's oldest artist-focused nonprofit. Pieces by colonial-era portraitist John Singleton Copley and contemporary painter Mary Hughes complement the bank's original murals of Abraham Lincoln and Alexander Hamilton by N.C. Wyeth. Scan a QR code for a self-guided tour with video interviews of contemporary artists. [langhamhotels.com/boston](http://langhamhotels.com/boston)

## ROSEWOOD BAHAMA MAR

*Bahamas*

On the sandy white shores of Cable Beach in Nassau, the 226-room Rosewood offers seclusion and ocean views, plus art-work by the likes of Damien Hirst and more than 100 pieces by John Cox, a prominent Bahamian mixed-media artist. Cox (pictured at left) is also the executive director of arts and culture at the Current, a creative center at the resort complex that organizes art exhibitions, lectures, and workshops. Guests can also snorkel through a coral reef sculpture garden made by local artists. [rosewoodhotels.com/baha-mar](http://rosewoodhotels.com/baha-mar) **A**



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See Lana Del Rey at the **All Things Go Music Festival** and go to **Harman Hall** for the Shakespeare Theatre Company's production of *Evita*, the Tony Award-winning rock opera.

Head to **Arena Stage** for *POTUS*, the Broadway show that brings seven women of different backgrounds together to help one arrogant U.S. president navigate the job's daily pitfalls.



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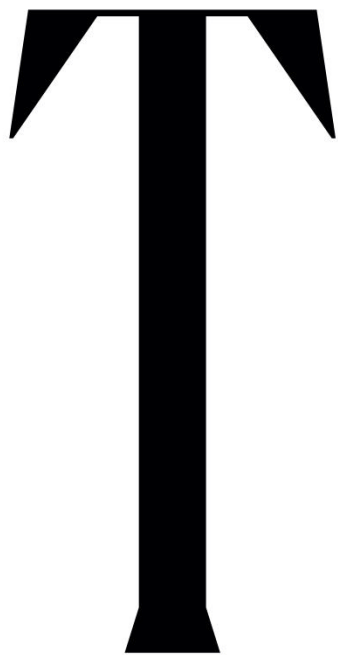
CLOSER LOOK

# Gay Paris

*Sally Kohn discovers  
layers of queerness in the  
City of Light.*

Illustrations by  
Clémence Gouy





**THE FACT THAT** I wanted to stay at the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris because of the French TV show *Dix Pour Cent* tells you a lot about me as a lesbian.

In the penultimate episode of the series, aired as *Call My Agent!* on Netflix, Sigourney Weaver travels to Paris to meet with producers for a film role and stays at the Hôtel de Crillon—in the best suite with the best view, of course—and proceeds to flounce around the city in gorgeous clothes eating gorgeous food. This is the Paris vacation of my dreams. However, there's a different main character who really allures me, intrigues me, and makes me want to embrace the various facets of myself, but in more glamorous lighting: the talent agent played by Camille Cottin. You see, for most of her life, Cottin's character was a confident, hard-partying, fast-loving seductress in the Paris lesbian nightlife scene. By the end of the series, she's a tired, overstretched, often disheveled working mom. I relate to that dichotomy. I want to imagine myself as this glamorous lesbian with a happening social scene that takes place mostly after dark and involves leather pants, but in reality, I just like watching that life on TV.

And sometimes visiting it on vacation. In September 2022, I finally got off my couch, got on a plane, and checked into the as-fabulous-as-Sigourney-Weaver-made-it-seem Hôtel de Crillon, all bold slabs of marble and tall mirrors with impeccably mannered staff whose voices sound like champagne. But when I dipped my toes into modern queer culture in Paris, I learned that the famously tolerant city has multiple sides to it, and there's tension between them, too.

The phrase "Gay Paris"—"Gay Paree," if you will—had nothing to do with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community when it

originated. In French and English, the words "gai" and "gay" both trace their roots to the Old French "full of joy or mirth." It's believed that the term may have acquired its modern meaning in the late 1800s, when a conservative, morality-focused president was ousted in favor of more liberal leadership, which, as it were, allowed for more mirth. Not strictly gay, but queer in a more expansive sense—emerging around the same time as "bohemianism," a distinctly French catch-all for living an artsy, unconventional life.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the word "gay" became increasingly embraced by activists around the globe trying to forge more positive associations around queer identity and, of course, more favorable legal rights and cultural contexts. In 1968, American activist Frank Kameny famously proclaimed: "Gay is Good." And since then, the world has become more tolerant and more accepting. Ongoing studies show that worldwide, more and more people support their LGBTQ friends and loved ones and that more and more nations protect LGBTQ rights. Around 20 countries decriminalized or legalized gay sex and/or marriage in the decade between 2006 and 2017. While violence and criminalization remain all too common in too many places, and some countries are unfortunately moving in the opposite direction, Paris is more representative of the global shift. Today, the city's official tourism website has an entire section devoted to wooing LGBTQ travelers.

Whether due to the tourism campaigns or bohemian history or the fact that we gays love extra-buttery pastry, Paris enjoys a reputation as one of the most LGBTQ-friendly cities in the world. On our third day in town, my partner and I took a two-hour walking tour with Gilles Bry, who works for the tourism bureau and is president of Paris Gay Village. He told us that during the French Revolution in 1791, France—emboldened by a broad liberatory spirit—became one of the first nations in the world to decriminalize sodomy. He showed us the spot in what is now the shopping center Les Halles where a vast food market once stood, and where gay men would cruise in the bathrooms in the early 1900s. He detailed the openly gay lives of such legendary writers and artists as Colette, Natalie Clifford Barney, and Mathilde de Morny. I also learned about Violette Morris, a butch or maybe trans athlete who unfortunately became a Nazi spy. In 1920s Paris there were several—I repeat, *several!*—lesbian-friendly bars, originally in the Pigalle neighborhood and then eventually shifting to the Marais and other areas.

Today, Bry said, it's hard to keep gay bars gay in Paris. He told a funny story about a friend who owns a gay bar who scolded a straight couple making out on the dance floor. It's funny because it suggests that to have more uniquely gay spaces, Paris would have to be somehow *less* tolerant—something that goes against its cultural DNA.

When gayness becomes more accepted, it loses some of the distinctive cultural aura that develops in the shadows of separation and even stigma. Paris inverts this dynamic: Since it's been generally tolerant for centuries, there's less specific gay culture and instead an overall bohemian spirit. In most places, the word "gay" went from happy to homosexual, but in Paris it still means happy—and always will, for



the most part. “We are not a particular spot *for gays*,” clarifies Bry. “We are a place where *gays go*.”

The night after the walking tour, my partner and I, true to form, decided to hang out in our hotel’s bar instead of venturing to one of the city’s handful of lesbian clubs. The Hôtel de Crillon is a Rosewood property, and in my limited experience, Rosewood hotel bars are universally wood, velvet, and aged-mirror throwbacks to a time before anyone was conspiring with Nazis. Now, obviously, it’s a bar in a luxury hotel, so its “inclusivity” is relative on many levels, but on this particular night, as Sarah and I ordered some classic French sidecars and tucked into a banquette, a decidedly queer-vibey all-female band kicked off a night of sultry-toned cover songs in a mix of French and English. Meanwhile, different groups of women at the other tables, some probably gay, some probably not, took turns dancing. Were straight women invading a queer space? Or were queer women invading a straight space? Or did everyone just feel comfortable mixing it up as a French singer who looked surprisingly like Dolores O’Riordan sang a number by Kurt Cobain? Oh Paris, you mille-feuille of moments and meanings.

The next day, Sarah and I hiked up to Montmartre to commune with the spirits of 1920s lesbians and also go to a clothing store we’d heard about, La Blouse de Lyon. It’s an old French workwear uniform store that two stylish partners took over and reimagined, embracing the core history of the brand while exploring fresh materials and twists. Leaning into yet another dichotomy, I bought a pair of moleskin roofer’s pants that could easily be the centerpiece in a chic evening out. But I got them big enough so they’d be comfy when I’m lying around on my couch. Putting the lazy in *laissez-faire*. Here was a store taking traditional men’s workwear and in part refashioning it as gender-neutral fashion for all. Not queer, but

not exactly *not* queer, either. Inclusive. Like the waistband of my new pants, containing multitudes.

A few days later, we stumbled on one of the city’s *passages couverts*, covered alleys lined with shops and cafés that Gilles Bry had told us about. This particular one would never make it into a guidebook; it’s a fairly short passage a few blocks from Le Bon Marché and is home to little more than an old movie theater and a Chinese restaurant. It’s definitely not gay. Yet it’s both quotidian and semihidden. Isn’t that, historically, often what gayness is? Historically perceived to be different and thus hidden, but ultimately radical for being just another beautiful expression of love.

In most places, the word “gay”  
went from happy to homosexual, but  
in Paris it still means happy—  
and always will, for the most part.

To be clear, Paris has a complicated relationship to tolerance. The French interior ministry reported that in 2019, anti-LGBTQ hate crimes had increased by 36 percent from the year prior. A crosswalk in the Marais neighborhood was painted in rainbow stripes in 2018 but has been repeatedly vandalized since. Also, discrimination against nonwhite people, immigrants, and religious minorities is widespread. In 2022, an incident in a swanky restaurant in Paris went viral when Black customers were denied service. French communities of color say the incident was not an aberration but indicative of a more widespread discrimination. Queer French citizens or travelers of color might find the city even less welcoming. My dilemma, as a well-off white lesbian from the States, was whether to drag my tired old self out to a chic queer club. The problem for others may be that, even if they want to go live their young energetic hip social lives, they may not feel safe. Camille Cottin’s TV character and I have the luxury to move between public life and private life, between gayishness and heteronormativity, with ease. But the same fluidity of freedom doesn’t flow everywhere or to everyone.

That night at the Hôtel de Crillon bar, I tried to talk with the singer, the band member I thought was most likely to be gay. It was loud, or she didn’t understand my question. So her reply was irrelevant to what I’d asked and yet, magically, entirely on point: “This is Paris,” she said. “We love everyone.”

Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe, like that mille-feuille, it has layers. And, like my new pants, some flexibility to change with the times—and hopefully become more tolerant and gay, in every sense of the word. **A**







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Pictured: Visit the Alaska Native Heritage Center to witness the preservation of the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native People through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education.



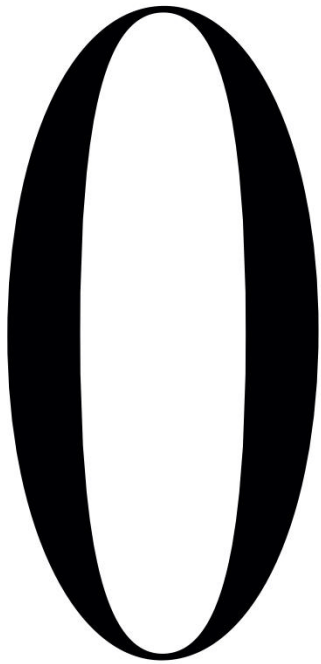
# Family Ties

*In 1998, Rawia Bishara opened Tanoreen to share part of herself, her culture, and her mother's culinary influence. Today, the restaurant's impact stretches far beyond its acclaimed Brooklyn kitchen.*

by Mayukh Sen  
Photographs by Brad Ogbonna







**ONE AFTERNOON SOME** 25 years ago, Rawia Bishara gathered her dearest girlfriends at her home in Brooklyn for a meal that would shift the course of her life. It was like any other Friday: She filled her table with stacks of red snapper she'd fried in vegetable oil, a salad of chopped tomatoes that she'd freckled with jalapeño, fries she'd cut by hand. These dishes appeared often in her Palestinian Arab family's rotation in her hometown of Nazareth, where they would treat "Fish Fridays," as she called them, with ritualistic devotion. She continued to observe this practice once a month in Bay Ridge, a neighborhood on the southwestern tip of Brooklyn, where she'd moved as a young bride more than two decades earlier.

During that meal, one friend voiced an idea that had been lingering in the back of Rawia's mind: *Why don't you open a restaurant, a place that puts your Palestinian cooking on a wider stage?* Rawia sat with it.

She had known a woman with similar dreams—her late mother, Monira, who had died some 15 years before, when she was 59 and Rawia was 30. Before darting off to her work as a schoolteacher in Nazareth, Monira, a devoted cook, would set the table for Rawia and her four siblings with sunny jams made from apricots grown on trees in their backyard and silken *labneh* strained from goat's milk. Cooking wasn't drudgery; it was creative expression. Monira took such pleasure in the art that she wanted to open a restaurant of her own. But people around her actively dissuaded her from doing so. Rawia would later, in adulthood, recall a common refrain her mother heard: Women don't open restaurants.

The opportunity to make something of her talents, and to correct the



injustice her mother faced, energized Rawia. But even after that meal, whenever she vocalized this ambition of hers to others in her orbit, they were skeptical, if not downright discouraging. Barring those supportive girlfriends and her husband Wafa, most family members and other friends told her that her style of cooking wasn't commercial, that her food wouldn't sell, that running a restaurant was too difficult. *It'll never work*, she remembers them saying. Then she counters matter of factly: "But it did."

**RAWIA, NOW 68**, is a self-possessed woman who speaks in a smoky baritone. She recalls the modest beginnings of her restaurant career to me as





Clockwise from left: At Tanoreen, Rawia Bishara's Palestinian restaurant in Brooklyn, the cauliflower steak is a menu stalwart.

Rawia's cooking at Tanoreen draws travelers as well as locals.

Bay Ridge—which was so named in 1853—is known for its diversity and historic homes.

Page 41: Rawia's daughter Jumana joined her as partner in the family business in 2006.



she sits in Tanoreen, the 80-seat establishment she has operated continuously since 1998 in Bay Ridge. Smears of indigo kohl bracket her eyes; she accents her monochromatic brown attire with shocks of honeycomb-gold jewelry: a heavy necklace, rings, bracelets.

Most days, Rawia can be found supervising her staff of 20 at Tanoreen. Though she has a dedicated team of cooks, she will occasionally lend a hand to the creation of dishes such as *molokhia*, a mainstay of the menu. On the day of my visit, I watch as she stews verdant jute mallow leaves—commonly used across Middle Eastern cooking—with coriander, lemon juice, and garlic until the mixture turns the lush teal of lake water. Then she rests two roasted chicken thighs atop it and serves the dish with a riot of rice, vermicelli, and almonds. She radiates such casual confidence before the stove that it's hard to believe that she's ever been unsure of her talents.

Yet when Rawia was a young girl in Nazareth, her mother discouraged her from cooking. *Just study*, Rawia remembers Monira ordering her. No matter her mother's rules, Rawia couldn't help but watch women around her preparing food "from scratch, from zero," she says. Family members from faraway villages would come to stay at their home during the holidays, giving Rawia's house the feel of a hotel. Monira made her own olive oil, fermented her own sweet wine,





distilled her own vinegar. Grapes and raspberries grew in the backyard, and Monira boiled the fruits with sugar and pectin, turning them into smooth spreads.

Rawia missed those tastes after she graduated from high school and left home. She was 18 when she began teaching fifth graders in the city of Haifa some 20 miles away. Rawia, who had already gained admission to university, had aims of eventually becoming a lawyer. But she soon met Wafa, while he was visiting from America, and found herself smitten. Wafa had been living in the States for about 10 years then, and they moved to New York together in 1974, soon after their marriage.

There was something else driving her toward the United States. Despite the idylls of her childhood, she often felt like an outsider due to her ethnic and religious identity. She was Palestinian and a Christian, thus marginalized twice over in



Israel. “We lived in hard circumstances,” she says of her birth country. “I am a Palestinian living in an occupied land that became Israel, and we carry Israeli citizenship, but we’re not treated like citizens. I always felt like this is not the way I want to live, this is not the way I want my family to live. And I really wanted out.”

Bay Ridge was flush with immigrants—Greeks, Italians, Irish, plus second-generation Lebanese and Syrian residents—but Rawia doesn’t remember too many Palestinians around her, cultural companions who could soothe the sting of homesickness. (This was before the neighborhood earned the colloquial label of “Little Palestine” in the aughts.) The comforts of home were missing. “[There was] nothing I grew up with [here],” she says. “It was difficult.”

Rawia found comfort, and eventually even self-assurance, in her home kitchen. She marveled at the potential she saw when she browsed American supermarkets. The squash back in Nazareth seemed “small, gray” to her eye, but the varieties she could find in New York were bigger, yellower, greener. She couldn’t comprehend the size of okra, either.

As Rawia’s palate expanded, though, her mind kept returning to Palestine. She tried cooking everything the way Monira had: rolling grape leaves, stuffing squash and artichoke hearts. Once a month, she asked her mother for recipes. “I wanted to eat that food, so I started calling her,” she says. With practice, she found her footing.

Various jobs nudged Rawia out of the house—she worked in Manhattan at the bridal institution Kleinfeld and at a supermarket that Wafa owned—but she kept a connection to her birthplace. Their daughter Jumana was born in 1975, their son Tarek in 1978, and Rawia would take them to Palestine every summer.

As her children grew older, Rawia volunteered with the Union of Palestinian Women’s Associations, an organization committed to helping female Palestinian refugees acclimate to life in the States. But cooking maintained its luster. Family members frequently visited from abroad, tasking her with playing hostess. They came so often that Tarek dubbed the home



“Hotel Bishara,” with guests staying up to two months or even longer. Rawia was in the kitchen all the time, and she liked it that way.

Still, she was reminded in these moments of the prejudices her mother had faced in an analogous position, taking care of so many people beyond her immediate family. By the time of that “Fish Friday” conversation, Rawia’s children were in college, and she had no desire to mill about at home. Putting two kids through university wasn’t cheap, either: She needed the money. “I wanted a place, a business of my own. I loved cooking,” she says. “It’s the one thing I do with passion.”

So Rawia brushed aside doubts from people who assumed she’d fail, and secured loans from friends who believed in her undertaking. She decided she would call the place Tanoreen, after a Lebanese village whose name was said to be derived from the Arabic word *tannour*, an oven made of clay, which Rawia found fitting. But the choice was also pragmatic: She wanted a name that would be easy for Americans to pronounce.

**TANOREEN EMERGED** in a cultural climate generally indifferent to Palestinian food. It was a time, Rawia remembers, when the dominant American

mindset seemed to be that all Middle Eastern cooking amounted to street food staples—shawarma, falafel, hummus. So Rawia played it safe when she opened the restaurant in 1998: She offered sandwiches and salads.

Rawia soon learned to trust her instincts. She sensed that diners might cotton to the charms of *knafeh*, the dessert of flossy cheese mixed with tiny matchsticks of shredded phyllo dough, baked until it takes on a furious red, then showered with orange blossom syrup and a blizzard of pistachios. She had faith that her customers would respond to cooking with character and that they might even dig a bit deeper to see her. When you eat what someone cooks, she says, “something becomes in common between you and the other person.”

But food only possessed so much power to change minds. The restaurant suffered a serious dip in sales during the year that followed the attacks of September 11. Customers reportedly made snide comments about Osama bin Laden.

Yet the intensity of such prejudices abated with time, and the restaurant bounced back; the quality of the dishes spoke for itself. In 2004, *New York Times* writer Eric Asimov, then in charge of the “\$25 and Under” column, gave Tanoreen rhapsodic notices. “In a business where decisions are too often based on focus groups and consensus, Tanoreen comes down firmly on the side of art over product, of craftsmanship over assembly line,” he wrote.

Attention to Tanoreen grew rapidly: In its 2008 survey, the then-quintessential restaurant guide *Zagat* named Tanoreen the city’s best Middle Eastern restaurant.

A year later, it migrated to a larger location a block away, where it stands today. The restaurant received press befitting its maturation, including a glowing review from the *Times*’ then-new restaurant critic, Sam Sifton, along with positive write-ups in the *Village Voice* and the *New Yorker*, all noting Rawia’s charismatic mien. During the

Clockwise from left: Felipe Garzon is Tanoreen’s kitchen manager.

Tanoreen stuffs its oil-cured *makdous* peppers with chili, walnuts, and garlic.

The dessert *knafeh* dates to the 10th century.



She had faith that her customers would respond to cooking with character and that they might even dig a bit deeper to see her.

next decade, Rawia dispensed her intimate style of cooking in two cookbooks, *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar* (Kyle Books, 2014) and *Levant* (Kyle Books, 2018), displayed today with pride in the windows of the restaurant. Institutional laurels ensued: Rawia was named a James Beard Award semifinalist four years in a row, starting in 2016.

The restaurant’s shift to proclaiming itself Palestinian, rather than loosely Middle Eastern, was an organic one over those years. During that period, America’s perception of Palestinian



# The AFAR Guide to Brooklyn

From art to food, here's what to know about New York City's most populous borough.  
*by Lyndsey Matthews*

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## WHERE TO STAY

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### **Ace Hotel Brooklyn Boerum Hill**

The Ace hotel group opened its second New York City outpost directly across from the Hoyt-Schermerhorn subway station in 2021. Built from the ground up, the 13-story building features a brutalist facade and interiors by designers Roman and Williams. Green leather couches, wood paneling, and fiber art pieces add warmth to raw concrete walls and ceilings throughout the 287-room hotel. For views of the borough, ask for a south-facing Medium Skyline room on the top four floors.

### **1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge DUMBO**

Part of the sustainability minded 1 Hotels, this 195-room property just south of the Brooklyn Bridge is certified carbon neutral. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer skyline and bridge views in many of the rooms. The hotel also has four types of suites, including the 2,000-square-foot, two-bedroom Riverhouse. Don't miss tipping back a spritz at the rooftop bar; when it's time to venture out, the revitalized waterfront Brooklyn Bridge Park is steps from the front door.

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## WHAT TO DO

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### **New York Transit Museum Downtown Brooklyn**

To access this museum—housed in a decommissioned subway station—visitors head underground to a platform that spans an entire city block, where they can board the museum's fleet of 20 vintage subway and elevated cars, which date back to 1904.

### **Pioneer Works Red Hook**

Pioneer Works is a nonprofit cultural center set inside a 19th-century brick building formerly home to Pioneer Iron Works. Its three floors—and expansive courtyard—include studio space for artists-in-residence, rotating exhibits, and interactive workshops and classes. Past showcases have included work by Nan Goldin, Anthony McCall, and Jacolby Satterwhite.

### **Green-Wood Cemetery Greenwood Heights**

A National Historic Landmark and arboretum, Green-Wood Cemetery covers 478 tree-lined acres and is the final resting place of such New Yorkers as conductor Leonard Bernstein and artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. Today it's

avored by bird-watchers, as more than 185 species of migrating birds pass through annually.

### **Marché Rue Dix Crown Heights**

One part concept store and one part nail salon, Marché Rue Dix has its own line of coffees, teas, natural skincare products, and vintage and new clothing designed and made in Senegal. In the back, a full-service nail salon offers nail art and mani-pedis using its own brand of 100 percent vegan, nontoxic, and cruelty-free lacquers.

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## WHERE TO EAT

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### **Sahadi's Sunset Park**

Originally from Lebanon, the Sahadi family started this Middle Eastern grocery in Manhattan in 1895. The store—still family owned—moved to Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 1948, where it remains beloved by locals for its house-made hummus, nuts and dried fruits, and fresh-baked breads. In 2019, it expanded to a second location, a grocery plus sit-down café and bar in Industry City, Sunset Park's sprawling arts and shops complex.

### **Misi Williamsburg**

Located on the ground floor of a sleek building near Domino Park, Misi is a casual follow-up to Lilia—chef Missy Robbins's first Italian restaurant in Williamsburg. It forgoes entrées to double down on pastas, vegetable sides, and dessert. (Consider the ricotta-filled lemon *occhi* a must-order.)

### **Masalawala & Sons Park Slope**

Restaurateur Roni Mazumdar opened Masalawala & Sons in late 2022 with a menu that nods to his father's roots in Kolkata; it features *daab chingri*, made with tiger prawns served inside a young coconut shell, and *macher dim*, a lightly poached, curried fish roe dish. Plan ahead—reservations are one of the hottest tickets in town.

### **Gage & Tollner Downtown Brooklyn**

From 1879 to 2004, this oyster and chop house was easily the most famous restaurant in Brooklyn. In 2021, it reopened with its original wooden revolving door, brass chandeliers, and reupholstered wall panels. Expect classics like seafood towers, strip steaks, and Baked Alaska. Executive chef Adam Shepard offers Clams Kimsino, made with bacon-kimchi butter.



cuisine became more nuanced, says Palestinian food journalist Reem Kassis.

"Many people were probably familiar with hummus and Middle Eastern foods, because most restaurants identified themselves as Middle Eastern," Kassis says. "But almost no restaurant openly labeled themselves as Palestinian, so familiarity with it was not as high." Slowly, the tide began to turn. Publishers released a spate of Palestinian cookbooks, including Kassis's *The Palestinian Table* (Phaidon, 2017) and *Falastin* (Ten Speed Press, 2020) by London-based Palestinian chef Sami Tamimi.

Tanoreen has evolved into a complex creature with age: a reflection of who Rawia is, as a Palestinian immigrant living in the United States, overseeing a kitchen staffed largely by fellow immigrants. Jose Alfredo, originally from Mexico, began working here as a dishwasher 15 years ago; he is now a senior member of the kitchen staff. Next to him on that chain of command is Adrian





Vargas, who has been at the restaurant even longer, for about 18 years. He, too, washed dishes at first, and transitioned to the kitchen after a few months because of his interest in Rawia's cooking. "I was watching, watching—and she said, *You want to learn?* I said yes, and then she started teaching me."

This has long been Rawia's mission—to share her people's food with those who appreciate its virtues. Her daughter Jumana, who joined Rawia as partner in 2006, now feels the call. (Saying yes was a "no-brainer," Jumana says, because she could "promote our culture, our cuisine.") Jumana has spearheaded a partnership with the delivery service Goldbelly, which ships the restaurant's knafeh across the country. "My dream is to have knafeh in the frozen food aisle of every supermarket in America," she says.

Today, Tanoreen is a vital thread in the culinary fabric of the city. Other proudly Palestinian restaurants now exist across New York City, testament to Rawia's impact: Ayat a few blocks away in Bay Ridge, Al Badawi in Brooklyn Heights, Qanoon in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. Some of them cite Rawia as a direct influence, regarding her with reverence.

Bay Ridge sits north of the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, which connects the New York City boroughs of Staten Island and Brooklyn.

Rawia, at Tanoreen, has influenced other Palestinian chefs in New York.



"I love Rawia's work and her commitment to our culture," says Tarek Daka, the chef and founder of Qanoon. He remembers making the pilgrimage to Tanoreen after he first moved to New York in 2007, looking for food that was close to Palestinian. It was also around this time that Nasser Jaber—the Palestinian co-owner of the Migrant Kitchen, a restaurant with Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn locations that braids the flavors of the Middle East with those of Latin America—first ate at Tanoreen. He was a cash-strapped 19-year-old immigrant from Ramallah living in the Bronx when he made the hours-long trek by subway to visit the restaurant, craving the comforts of *musakhan* rolls with strings of shredded chicken tucked into tubes of pita. "I didn't have the money for it," Jaber remembers, "so she gave it to me." Jaber has since come to see Rawia as a "godmother," he says, her restaurant's staying power a lodestar for younger Palestinian chefs like himself. "She made us all believe that we can open a successful restaurant that can last past the five-year mark and succeed," he says. "And become an institution." **A**

*Tanoreen (tanoreen.com) is located at 7523 Third Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.*



An underwater photograph of two divers swimming in clear turquoise water. The diver in the foreground is a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a blue bikini top and blue fins, swimming towards the camera with her arms outstretched. The diver in the background is a man with short hair, wearing a light blue shirt and dark fins, also swimming towards the camera. Bubbles are visible around them. The bottom of the frame features a dark blue diagonal graphic element.

# NATURALLY IN

# Rhythm

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WORKSHOP

# Made in Mongolia

*Gobi Cashmere blends heritage craftsmanship with a modern conscience in the warmest of ways.*

by Billie Cohen



# M

**MONGOLIA GETS COLD.** Really, really cold. In the depths of winter, temperatures can drop as low as  $-40^{\circ}$  (which, someone is bound to cheerily inform you, is the same in Celsius and Fahrenheit). It wasn't nearly that frigid as I walked around the capital city of Ulaanbaatar on a bright October morning, but my fingers and ears were already feeling icy through my thin gloves and ill-fitting hat. In a few days, I'd be heading to the harsh winds of the open steppe and early snows of the mountain valleys—and if I was cold now, I'd be in bad shape then. Mentioning my predicament to my tour guides and a few new local friends I'd made, I kept hearing the same advice: Go to Gobi Cashmere.

Founded in 1981 as a government-owned entity and privately owned since 2007, Gobi crafts its clothing and accessories entirely in Mongolia from 100 percent Mongolian cashmere. Since the country's communist era, which lasted from 1924 to 1990, the fabric has been tied to the national economy. What's more, cashmere has been an agricultural staple of nomadic farmers for generations. The super soft wool—combed from the undercoat of goats that thrive in Mongolia's plains, mountains, and forests—is among the country's top exports along with minerals such as copper and gold. Only China produces more cashmere.

Today, Mongolia is home to about 27 million cashmere goats—more than eight times the number of humans. That has created some issues: The voracious goats, coupled with rising temperatures and climate change, are contributing to the desertification of Mongolia's grasslands.



At the same time, Mongolian cashmere has garnered international attention in the fashion world. *Vogue* and *Forbes* have given shout-outs to Gobi Cashmere, and it's been worn by such celebrities as comedian and actress Robin Thede. As its star rises, Gobi hopes to bridge the gap between honoring the country's ancient cashmere tradition while responsibly ushering it into a more sustainable future.

International shoppers are getting to know the brand too: Gobi launched a U.S. e-commerce site in 2019, ran a pop-up shop in Manhattan





*Mongolia's nomadic herders have tended cashmere goats for thousands of years. The material is one of the country's top exports.*



this past winter, has a brick-and-mortar store in Berlin, and says it is prepping to open more shops in the U.S. and U.K. Its flagship store is a two-story, glass-walled jewel box in the center of Ulaanbaatar, steps from the Parliament building. Walking through its doors on that cold October day, I wanted to wrap myself in the rainbow of items on the shelves, all made in the nearby factory. Gobi's final products can be as varied as a classic ecru beanie and scarf set, a mod-inspired coat embellished with a pop of neon pink, or a brightly striped dress influenced by international

designs—the bold spring/summer 2023 collection was inspired by Mexican architecture. But they all start in the fields with the goats and their caretakers.

"Nomadic herders have grazed cashmere goats on Mongolia's rangelands for thousands of years," says Ivgeel Erdenebat, head of the Sustainable Development Division of Gobi Cashmere. "The goats, along with horses, camels, yaks, and sheep, provide livelihood, food, warmth, and mobility. Cashmere from goats and wool from sheep are pressed into felt to make clothes, bedding, and shelter; their hairs and bones make musical instruments and toys; and even their dried dung is used as fuel for fires to make food and to warm up their homes."

To showcase herders and their nomadic tradition, Gobi puts an emphasis on traceability: It sources its cashmere from nearly 3,000 herding families living across Mongolia. Shoppers can read about the origins of Gobi's cashmere on the



company's website, as well as learn about the herders' lives.

"Mongolian nomadic herders make it their main mission in life to take care of their livestock," says herder Purevdorj Zamind, who inherited his animals from his parents about 25 years ago. Zamind has worked with Gobi since October 2020 and is part of a company partnership between local herders and a team from the Mongolian University of Life Sciences. Together, they combine nomadic practices and scientific studies to improve the well-being of the animals and the workload of herders. The idea is that healthier goats will produce higher-quality cashmere, and more of it, enabling herders to keep smaller flocks and use less land, while maintaining their income.

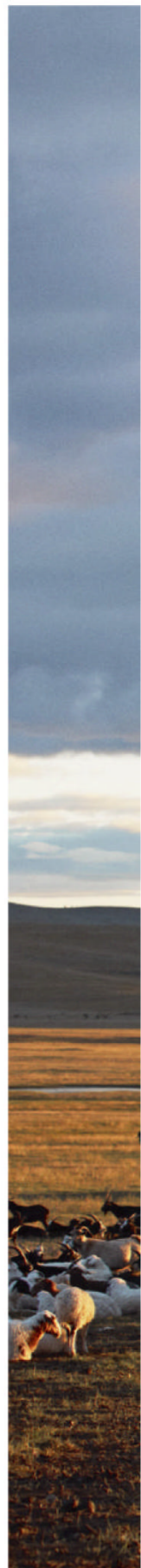
As its star rises, Gobi hopes to bridge the gap between honoring the country's ancient cashmere tradition while responsibly ushering it into a more sustainable future.

Gobi Cashmere is also conscientious about how it sources raw cashmere, deferring to nomadic tradition and rhythms. "As the weather gets warmer, the animals' undercoat [the cashmere] naturally comes loose and sheds," says Zamind, who hand-combs his goats—a point of pride for Gobi. All of its cashmere is hand-combed, which is thought to be less stressful for the animals than mechanical shearing because it is gentler, can be timed to the goats' natural shedding cycle, and leaves their protective overcoat intact. "It also massages the goat," Zamind adds.

Once the raw material is collected by the herders, garment workers at Gobi's factory in Ulaanbaatar transform it into cozy clothing and accessories.

Their first step is to wash the wool and to remove any impurities or coarse hairs. Machines then sort it by width, quality, and its four natural colors—white, dark gray, beige, and blue/gray. White goats are usually found in the Gobi Desert, dark gray in the mountains and forest-steppes, beige in the desert and steppe regions, and blue/gray (the rarest variety) are typically found in western Mongolia.

At this point, some of the fibers get a dose of dye (from plant extracts and minerals when possible—all are certified to meet the international "bluesign" sustainability standards). But other fibers remain undyed, reflecting the wool's four natural colors. They appear in the brand's Organic Collection, which reduces water, energy, and chemical usage by skipping the dyeing step.







Spinning machines—carefully maintained by mechanics such as Byambadorj D., who, at 40 years with the company, is Gobi’s longest-serving employee—then spin the fibers into yarn, which is woven or knitted depending on the kind of product it’s intended for. Next, staffers cut and sew the material into its final form, whether it be a coat, sweater, blanket, baby sock, or blazer.

In its evolution, Gobi has worked on ways to minimize its environmental impact. The company has partnered with ecoprotective projects including the Sustainable Fibre Alliance (a U.K.-Mongolian nonprofit), and adheres to textile production standards jointly set forth by an E.U.-Mongolian initiative. It also repurposes waste material from

the production process into the CashmeREborn collection of sweaters, which launched in 2022. Gobi says the label uses 13 percent less water, 16 percent fewer chemicals, and 31 percent less energy than what’s needed to manufacture new yarn. It says the Organic Collection lowers water and energy consumption and carbon outputs by 20 percent each too.

When I returned to the store at the end of my trip to load up on presents for my friends and relatives back home in New York, I felt drawn to the organic colors—a direct reminder of the families who welcomed me so warmly on the steppe. I left with an armful of earth-toned scarves, hats, and sweaters, and a naturally beige blanket for myself. Wrapped in it now, I think of herder Zamind’s words: “The hard work of herders and the value of natural raw materials are what lie behind all of this.” **A**

*From left: A herdsman hand-combs a cashmere goat; Gobi’s Organic Collection reflects the goats’ natural colors; Mongolia is home to about 3 million humans and 27 million goats.*



# Untold Stories

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# WHERE TO CRUISE NEXT

The most memorable cruises don't just ferry passengers from port to port—they help foster connections between visitors and residents. Read on to find itineraries for every type of adventure and every type of traveler, on every continent.

...

*Edited by Kelsey Lindsey & Billie Cohen*



Guests take in  
Antarctica  
from the deck of  
the *Sylvia Earle*.

DISPATCH  
FROM THE DECK

# Antarctica

*If you're going all the way there, you should  
really dive in. Or ski. Or snorkel. Or kayak.*

...

by Sebastian Modak

**THERE IS NO WAY** to truly know Antarctica: It's too vast, too unpredictable, and too treacherous—a place so unlike the tamed world we live in that it might as well be another planet entirely.

Still, dozens of cruise ships strive to provide a glimpse of the White Continent every year, and due to strict regulations, most offer similar itineraries. But that doesn't mean the experiences are identical. Options range from so-called cruise-by voyages, with more than 500 passengers who never set foot on land, to sailboat expeditions for hard-core adventurers.

As I kayaked in a remote bay where I was greeted by six humpback whales, I was glad to be traveling with Aurora Expeditions. The

Australian company is committed to protecting Antarctica's fragile environment, and it leans heavily into adventure without sacrificing comfort. Its new ship, the 132-passenger *Sylvia Earle*, is climate neutral and features an onboard citizen-science center so that travelers can join investigations into polar plankton, local geology, and more. On our 23-day "Antarctica Complete" cruise, we made stops at South Georgia Island, where we watched king penguins compete for real estate with SUV-size elephant seals, and in the Falklands, a paradise for birders.

The relatively small size of our group allowed for two daily landings or activities, rather than the single one typically offered on bigger ships. And when passengers book the trip, Aurora requires them to commit to their excursion group for sports like kayaking, snorkeling, diving, or skiing. So, instead of being joined by a rotating cast of first-timers who might struggle to get into a dry suit, I was part of a





SAILING  
STYLE

# ACTIVE

## PERU

Launching from Nauta in the northeast, Aqua Expeditions' new 20-suite *Aqua Nera* takes travelers into the Peruvian Amazon for three, four, or seven nights. The rain forest is full of opportunities to kayak, swim, and spot wildlife on trips led by four guides. A fleet of all-terrain bikes is also at the ready for side trips. *From \$4,500, aquaexpeditions.com*

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

On Natural Habitat Adventures' "Southern Africa Riverboat Safari," guests participate in wildlife viewing from both land and water. The 11-day, small-group trip includes three days on a riverboat, motorboat excursions in the Chobe River, game drives in Hwange National Park, a visit to Victoria Falls, and meetings with local villagers. *From \$14,995, nathab.com*

## AUSTRALIA

In summer 2024, Seabourn will start cruises to the sparsely populated Kimberley region on its *Seabourn Pursuit* (with 132 all-veranda, all-oceanfront suites). Excursions include Zodiac rides to spot sharks and rays, helicopter flights to the waterfalls of Mitchell Plateau, and trips to the rock formations of the Bungle Bungle Range. *From \$9,999, seabourn.com*

## OCEANIA

On Lindblad's "Rites and Relics" cruise, travelers can walk a black-sand beach, dive to a WWII shipwreck, or hike to find waterfalls, volcanic pools, and parrots in Fiji's Bouma National Heritage Park. On other days they can witness—and potentially experience—Fijian firewalking and taste kava made by island residents for special celebrations. *From \$13,790, expeditions.com*

*Aqua Expeditions' Amazon cruise includes a visit to a village lodge in Peru.*



DID YOU  
KNOW?

# \$750

Average spending  
per passenger in port cities  
during a week of cruising

tight-knit crew of paddlers who became more comfortable and bolder as the trip progressed. On land, we were often given a perimeter or a path and invited to explore at our own pace, rather than being guided as a single contingent. Even with everyone on shore at the same time, it was possible to seek out moments of solitude.

That spirit of exploration continued during long sea days across the Drake Passage. It's normal for guides in Antarctica to take to the public address system for big-ticket sightings such as a breaching whale or a pod of orcas. But we didn't

miss the smaller moments either. We were rallied when a pair of albatrosses got unusually close, hovering above the ship like silent sentries. We were awakened for an especially spectacular sunrise that coated the surrounding mountains in a dusting of pinks and oranges. The message was clear: The reason we'd come all this way was not for a well-stocked bar or a beautifully appointed sauna or an extensive library—all of which the *Sylvia Earle* has. The reason is out *there*.

*Aurora Expeditions' "Antarctica Complete" itineraries start from \$31,495 per person. aurora-expeditions.com*





*Shimizu-en Garden is near Niigata, a city visited during the "Japan Intensive Voyage" cruise.*

DID YOU  
KNOW?

**44**

**new cruise ships are slated to enter service between 2023 and 2028.**

SAILING  
STYLE

WORLDWIDE

**GREENLAND**

Quark Expeditions' 10-night cruise launches in September 2024 on the 199-passenger *Ultramarine*. Two onboard helicopters will whisk guests to remote glacial lakes and landscapes, and passengers can visit a Greenlandic community or camp in the wild. *From \$13,160, quarkexpeditions.com*

**JAPAN**

Azamara's two-week "Japan Intensive Voyage" visits big

cities Kobe and Tokyo plus smaller ports in the archipelago nation. Guests can see the gardens of Takamatsu and the Shirakami-Sanchi mountains, and excursions include sake tastings and hot spring soaks. *From \$5,450, azamara.com*

**COLOMBIA**

Colombia's Magdalena River is the new hot spot for river cruises, and AmaWaterways is the first major line to get there, starting in spring

2024. Its eight-day sail will leave from Cartagena then head south to UNESCO-listed Palenque de San Basilio; the Magangué area, known for birding; and Barranquilla, acclaimed for its Carnival celebrations. *From \$3,599, amawaterways.com*

**POLYNESIA**

The freshly remodeled luxury cruise ship *Paul Gauguin* explores some of Polynesia's more remote island destinations. The seven-night "Tahiti

& the Society Islands" itinerary includes time at the company's private white-sand beach on Bora Bora and its private islet off the island of Taha'a. It also stops at less-touristed Huahine, with its famous blue-eyed eels and archaeological sites. *From \$3,530, pgcruises.com*

**NORWAY**

Hurtigruten's Norwegian Coastal Express is more than a cruising option: It has served the country's seaside communities since 1893. On a 12-day journey, it sails through fjords, the picturesque Lofoten archipelago, and the Arctic Circle, stopping at 34 towns and villages to provide transportation to residents, procure produce, and offer excursions to guests. *From \$2,107, hurtigruten.com*



# JAMAICA



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**GULF STATES**

Windstar's "Sparkling Sand & Cities of the Persian Gulf" cruise spends 10 days in the region. Travelers stay comfortable aboard the all-suite *Star Legend*, which added two new dining venues during its recent renovation. Shore excursions include a 7th-century monastery in the UAE and a souk in Bahrain. Formula 1 fans can book the Prix du Monde add-on in Abu Dhabi, which includes premium seats and race analysis from F1 sports broadcaster Bob Varsha. *From \$2,999, windstarcruises.com*

**FRANCE**

Scenic Luxury Cruises and Tours' 11-day "Spectacular South of France" itinerary on the Saône and Rhône

rivers features truffle hunting, winetasting, and a cooking demonstration at a three-star Michelin restaurant. But the pièce de résistance, to crib a French phrase, is the option to meet the owners of a family-run olive farm, tour their property, and learn their family recipes in a hands-on cooking class. Back on the 149-guest *Scenic Sapphire*, the last night of the trip is celebrated by bringing a local pâtissier on board. *From \$6,995, scenicusa.com*

**MADAGASCAR & THE INDIAN OCEAN**

On Ponant's "Adventure in Madagascar" trip, guests learn about endemic species and meet the people who call the region

home. Highlights include the opportunity to spot lemurs and a visit with the Vezo people, some of the last "sea nomads" in the world. The 15-night expedition cruise docks at the Seychelles, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Réunion. *From \$9,770, ponant.com*

**UNITED STATES**

Viking's "Grand Mississippi Voyage" takes a leisurely 22 days to float from the delta of New Orleans to St. Paul, Minnesota. The 386-guest *Viking Mississippi* has sleek staterooms and airy public areas, and excursions include Cajun feasts and Civil War battle-field tours. *From \$17,999, viking.com*

WHERE  
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CRUISE  
NEXTDID YOU  
KNOW?**75%**

of cruise ships will be able to use sustainable fuels once those fuels are available at scale.

*The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi is a stop on the "Sparkling Sand & Cities" cruise.*





AmaWaterways' "Captivating Rhine" cruise takes in views of Strasbourg, France.



DISPATCH  
FROM THE DECK

# The Rhine River

*This European river cruise is not what you might think. See if you can keep up.*

...

by Mae Hamilton

**I'M OUT OF BREATH** and panting, somewhere near Heidelberg, a historic German city located near the foothills of the Odenwald. My cycling group and I are pedaling toward Schwetzingen Palace, renowned for its Versailles-like gardens, about six miles away from our ship docked along the Rhine. As I pause in the middle of a cornfield, all my groupmates are a glimmer of silver hair in the distance.

"Don't worry," the wellness instructor says sympathetically. He had stayed behind with me so I wouldn't get lost. "Some of these older people have been cyclists for years."

"They're in such better shape than I am!" I say. He gives me a look. "Well, yes."

It's day five of AmaWaterways' seven-night "Captivating Rhine" cruise. I'm sailing from Amsterdam to Basel, Switzerland, on the 156-passenger *AmaLucia*, which was christened in 2022. One of the newest ships in the company's

fleet, it offers two dining options (a main restaurant and the dinner-only Chef's Table, which seats 32 guests), a spa, a walking track, and complimentary beer and wine.

But what distinguishes AmaWaterways from the seemingly endless array of Rhine River cruises is its wellness program and active excursions. It's no secret that river-cruise passengers tend to be older, but this company is a go-to for those who like to start the day with vigorous bike rides and cap it off with a vineyard-side winetasting. To that end, each ship has an onboard wellness instructor who organizes daily activities, including yoga, cardio workouts, and dance classes. Passengers can borrow bikes at no charge for use on land. AmaWaterways also offers shore excursions, ranging from a gentle cable car ride over vineyards to a Black Forest hike.

Toward the end of my trip, I sat on a stoop enjoying a mango gelato after a long walking tour of Riquewihr, a fairy-tale medieval French town. I had sweated my way down the Rhine for the past week, but it was exactly the kind of vacation I needed. For someone like me, whose mind is constantly racing with worries, staying active allowed me to be more present and connected—even when I was being shown up by people twice my age. Those moments in a new destination, when the responsibilities dissipate, make travel—and the sweat—so rewarding.

*From \$3,199 per person for a seven-night cruise.*  
[amawaterways.com](https://amawaterways.com)

SAILING  
STYLE

RELAXED

## THE MEDITERRANEAN & BEYOND

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will roll out its second ship, *Ilma*, in 2024. Offering what the company bills as one of the highest ratios of space to guest, the 224-suite vessel will have private terraces, outdoor showers, and personal concierges. The ship will also offer a lounge to

enjoy cognac and cigars, plus classical and jazz performances, talks with local artists and historians, and a kids program. Its destinations include Italy, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, Israel, the Amalfi Coast, and Greek islands, the route depending on the season. *From \$6,800, [ritzcarltonyachtcollection.com](https://ritzcarltonyachtcollection.com)*

## THE DANUBE

Riverside Luxury Cruises launched its first ship, the *Riverside Mozart*, in April. It is already the standard setter for ultra-luxury river cruises, with walk-in closets and double-vanity bathrooms in suites and butler service for every cabin. The Danube itineraries, ranging from 3 to 14 nights, deliver must-do

moments in cities, like a backstage tour of Vienna's Spanish Riding School and winetasting in a Slovakian castle. Travelers can choose their own level of activity, from lounging and sipping drinks on the deck to an adventurous balloon ride over Budapest. *From \$1,423, [riversidecruises.com](https://riversidecruises.com)*

## TRANSATLANTIC

Atlas Ocean Voyages will add new itineraries to its yachting expedition cruises in 2024, including 12-, 13-, or 21-day transatlantic sailings. This allows plenty of time to indulge in the L'Occitane spa or the always-included meals, drinks, and cultural immersion activity. *From \$1,999, [atlasoceanvoyages.com](https://atlasoceanvoyages.com)*



*The Silver Origin  
brings guests  
close to nature.*

DISPATCH  
FROM THE DECK

# Galápagos Islands

*After a day of diving with sharks, it's nice to come back to a hot tub and champagne.*

...

by Fran Golden

**THE SEA LIONS** were showing off. As I was deep-sea snorkeling with my fellow cruise passengers, the friendly mammals entertained us by performing curlicues in the water. They weren't alone: Schools of fish came into view as penguins paddled by. A cormorant caused me to flinch, but not as much as the five whitetip reef sharks, each about four feet long. I grabbed the arm of one of the Ecuadoran naturalist guides on hand, glad he was nearby.

You come to Galápagos National Park to get close to these incredible creatures, all of which are surprisingly unfazed by your presence. To explore past the few populated islands, you'll need a park-certified naturalist guide and water transport—preferably Silversea Cruises' elegant *Silver Origin*. At 100 passengers, it falls just within the park's guest limit, delivering a mix of tony service and unique, expedition-style adventure.

Onboard the *Silver Origin*, suites come with ocean-view showers, assuring no missed scenery, plus walk-in closets, designer bathrobes, and fair-trade chocolates from the Ecuadoran Andes. A butler is on call to bring you a cappuccino or the perfect martini, and launder your wet bathing suit by the next day. Anchorless technology allows the ship to hover rather than dig into the seafloor when it stops. (Silversea's sister line, Celebrity Cruises, introduced this environmentally friendly technology in the Galápagos in 2019.) Once the ship is positioned, travelers can board Zodiacs for onshore experiences, such as walking among thousands of mating iguanas or hiking up a scenic volcanic peak.

The ability to sip bubbly in the hot tub is a perk, but *Silver Origin's* true differentiator is its 1:10 guide-to-guest ratio, which Silversea says is the highest of any ship in the Galápagos. One afternoon, when I was out kayaking through the lush mangroves of Isabela Island, a friendly young sea lion came close, showing off an octopus in his mouth. It was a rare sight, according to the naturalist I was paddling with. I wasn't jealous of the sea lion's catch; if I wanted locally caught octopus, it was on the menu back aboard. **A**

*From \$10,950 per person for a seven-night cruise, all-inclusive.  
silversea.com*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Ocean cruise  
passengers:

2019

**29.7**  
million

—

2022

**20.4**  
million

—

2023

**31.5**  
million  
(projected)



# Welcome

## EVERYONE UNDER THE SUN

Welcome thrill-seekers and chill-seekers and kids of all ages. Your beach playground awaits in Greater Fort Lauderdale to make your cruise out of Port Everglades your best vacation ever. Make your plans to stay before or after your cruise and experience the tropical beauty and cosmopolitan delights of this vibrant community. From miles of golden beaches and scenic waterways to world-class dining and nightlife, plus amazing Everglades eco-tours, fascinating discoveries are here for everyone under the sun. Plan your pre- or post-cruise adventure at [VisitLauderdale.com](http://VisitLauderdale.com).



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# Welcome

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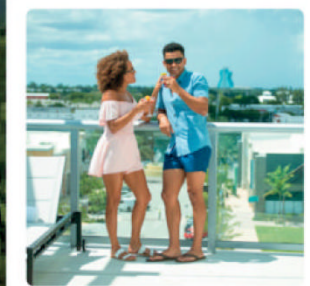
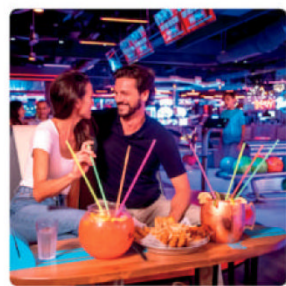
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# Welcome

## NATURE LOVERS

Your incredible journey through nature awaits in Greater Fort Lauderdale, home to the world-famous Everglades. An exhilarating airboat ride provides an up-close look at wildlife, from a variety of wading birds to alligators.

See more than 20,000 live butterflies from every corner of the globe at Butterfly World, the largest butterfly park in the world. Or explore Flamingo Gardens, offering 60 acres of native and exotic plants and trees and 90+ species of Florida native animals.

The area's plentiful golden beaches, scenic waterways, parks, preserves, and nature centers also offer pristine settings for marveling at tropical beauty. Boating, scuba diving, standup paddleboarding, and kayaking are popular activities for immersive nature encounters, and there are many charters and eco-tours available throughout this water wonderland.



# Welcome

## DIVAS



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and Learn More





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# Not Your Typical Day at the Beach

Get your beach fix in Great Fort Lauderdale before or after your cruise. Here's a look at a distinctive offering from each beach.

## Deerfield Beach

Explore the hidden gem of Deerfield Island Park, accessible by water shuttle only, Friday through Sunday.



### Hillsboro Beach

Climb the 175 steps of the historic Hillsboro Lighthouse for a stunning view at the top.

## Pompano Beach

Stroll, fish and people-watch at the 900-foot Fisher Family Pier. Its platform was designed to resemble the head of the city's namesake fish.

## Lauderdale-By-The-Sea

Snorkel and dive on a living coral reef just 100 yards from the shore to see an astounding variety of sealife.

## Fort Lauderdale

At the corner of Sebastian Street and A1A, you'll discover Sebastian Street Beach, named the "Hottest U.S. Gay Beach" by Out Traveler.

## Dania Beach

Visit the Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park, named for Civil Rights Movement leaders who led "wade-in" protests to desegregate South Florida beaches in the 1950s and 1960s.



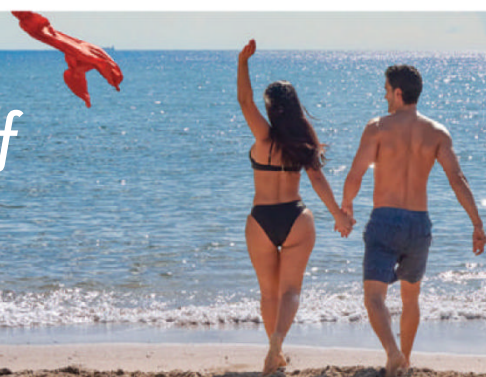
### Hollywood Beach

Bike, stroll, jog, people-watch, or dine at an outdoor café at the Hollywood Beach Boardwalk.

## Hallandale Beach

Get your perfect postcard-worthy moment here with the Beach Ball Water Tower.

Set your sense of adventure free.



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# Think the Caribbean can't get any better? Think again.

Starting next summer, two of our award-winning ships, Celebrity Beyond<sup>SM</sup> and Celebrity Reflection<sup>®</sup> will call Fort Lauderdale home all year long. Short 3- and 4-night escapes let you get away any weekend of the year, and longer sailings give you more time to discover the islands. Plus, for the first time ever, both ships will take you to Perfect Day at CocoCay, Royal Caribbean's private island destination.



## PERFECT DAY

Celebrity **X** Cruises<sup>®</sup>



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# Welcome

## FASHIONISTAS

You're sure to find something fabulous in Greater Fort Lauderdale. We're home to Sawgrass Mills, the largest luxury outlet shopping destination in the U.S., and a variety of other world-class shopping experiences, from the Shops of Las Olas to The Galleria at Fort Lauderdale, The Village at Gulfstream Park, Dania Pointe and more. Here, you can shop 'till you drop - right onto a gorgeous beach.



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- Australia & New Zealand
- Caribbean
- Canada & New England
- Europe & the Middle East
- Mexico
- Panama Canal
- South America & Antarctica

## From Seattle

- Alaska
- Arctic Circle
- Asia
- Australia
- Caribbean
- Pacific Coast
- Panama Canal
- South America
- South Pacific
- Western Canada

## From Vancouver

- Alaska
- Asia
- Caribbean
- Hawaii, Tahiti & the South Pacific
- Pacific Coast
- Panama Canal
- South America
- Western Canada

## From Boston

- Canada & New England
- Caribbean
- Europe
- Iceland & Greenland
- South America

## From San Diego

- Australia & New Zealand
- Hawaii, Tahiti & the South Pacific
- Mexico
- Pacific Coast
- Panama Canal
- South America
- South Pacific
- Western Canada



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# Welcome

## CULTURE CONNOISSEURS

Greater Fort Lauderdale's diverse arts and culture scene is ready to inspire you with dozens of fascinating museums and charming attractions like the Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, a 35-acre subtropical estate, filled with history and whimsy; and the Downtown Hollywood Mural Project, a larger-than-life walking tour featuring 30+ curated contemporary outdoor murals by world-renowned artists.

You'll also be dazzled by Broadway shows, philharmonic orchestras, and performances in opera, theater and ballet at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Other venues such as the FLA Live Arena and Hard Rock Live welcome celebrated performers in music, comedy, and more.

*In Greater Fort Lauderdale, our culture includes plenty of nightlife.*



Scan to Watch  
and Learn More





# Welcome

## TO ACCESSIBILITY FOR EVERYONE



In Greater Fort Lauderdale, we're excited about welcoming everyone under the sun and providing access for all, from beach wheelchairs and accessible pathways to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program at FLL airport. Learn more about local resources and plan your trip at [VisitLauderdale.com/Accessibility](https://www.VisitLauderdale.com/Accessibility).





# Welcome

## CULINARY EXPLORERS



Craving a getaway filled with one-of-a-kind dining experiences?  
Get ready to savor every moment in Greater Fort Lauderdale.  
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along Las Olas Boulevard to award-winning chefs serving up  
every cuisine imaginable, a world-class culinary scene awaits.



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# FEATURES



Art by **REINA TAKAHASHI**









by  
**ANYA  
VON BREMZEN**

# THE CAPITAL OF COOL

*Illustrations by*  
**ARSH  
RAZIIDDIN**

*Photographs by*  
**MARCO  
ARGÜELLO**

In the Greek city of  
Thessaloniki, rich history,  
creative gastronomy,  
and laid-back living abound.





**ON THE NEARLY** 190-mile train journey from Athens to Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city, my partner Barry and I share a compartment with a middle-aged Athenian couple. Soon, they are plying us with homemade spanakopita (spinach and feta pie). After an hour, our new friends point out the window: Mount Parnassus, "home of the muses." Not long before we reach Thessaloniki, they gesture once more: Mount Olympus—"home of the gods"—Greece's mightiest peak, looms as we swing past.

And then the mythological abode of Olympian deities appears again on our stroll through the city in the afternoon. Mount Olympus is now a snow-streaked vision emerging from the haze across the Thermaic Gulf as Barry and I sit at one of the cafés along the *paralia*, the city's three-mile pedestrian promenade, where lovers stroll arm in arm, joggers exercise, and grandmas gossip vehemently. Behind us, Aristotelous Square unfolds in its vastness, surrounded by curving meringue-colored building facades. This is Thessaloniki's famous piazza, designed in 1918 by French urban planner Ernest Hébrard after a fire ravaged the historic Greek-Roman-Byzantine-Ottoman core of the city long known as Salonica.

Later that evening, when the capricious clouds cover Mount Olympus again—or was it just a mirage?—George Palisidis, a chef, culinary educator, and tonight's food guide, uncorks a bottle of sparkling white assyrtiko wine at an outdoor table of the bar Blé Vin. Around us, at tables made of repurposed tree stumps, twentysomethings are smoking,





laughing, and snapping photos of charcuterie boards. “*Ladotyri* cured in olive oil. Aged *gilomeni manoura* ripened in wine lees”—Palisidis annotates our cheeses before ducking inside the bar for a platter of bright red meat. “Buffalo,” he declares, “from Lake Kerkini, a Central Macedonian reservoir.” He’s interrupted by the approach of an athletic woman in a pink dress. “*Voulaaaa!*” A general murmur goes up. Enter Voula Patoulidou, homegrown celebrity and Greek sporting legend for her gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Patoulidou is currently Thessaloniki’s deputy regional governor. Pausing to greet us, she wastes no time promoting her city. “UNESCO named us Greece’s first City of Gastronomy! We have better sunsets than Santorini, so many cultural layers! Thessaloniki, a city of stories!” And then: “A city of extroverts—every night is a party!” With that, she rushes off to a party herself.

I needed no hard sell about this place also known as the *symprotevousa*, or “co-capital,” which has a

population of roughly a million. I had been fascinated by Thessaloniki’s rich history since I’d read British historian Mark Mazower’s *Salonica, City of Ghosts* (HarperCollins, 2004). A thriving port and a crucial trade junction founded toward the end of the fourth century B.C.E., Thessaloniki became the second-largest and second-wealthiest city in the Byzantine Empire, retaining this status under Ottoman rule, which lasted from 1430 for almost half a millennium. When Athens was still a dusty village, Thessaloniki, meanwhile, was a cosmopolitan center where memoirs depicted Jews, Muslims, and Christians living in a “society of almost kaleidoscopic interaction,” in Mazower’s words.

But nationalism is the great enemy of cosmopolitanism. With the Ottoman defeat in the First Balkan War, Salonica became Greek Thessaloniki; folded into the Greek nation-state and hellenized, it eventually lost much of its diversity. By the mid-1920s, a significant portion of its Muslims had been expelled. During World War II, more than 95 percent of the



*From left: Thessaloniki’s boardwalk stretches from the concert hall to the port; much of the seafood served in local restaurants is sourced from the fish market near town; the city’s architecture has led to it being dubbed an “open-air museum.”*



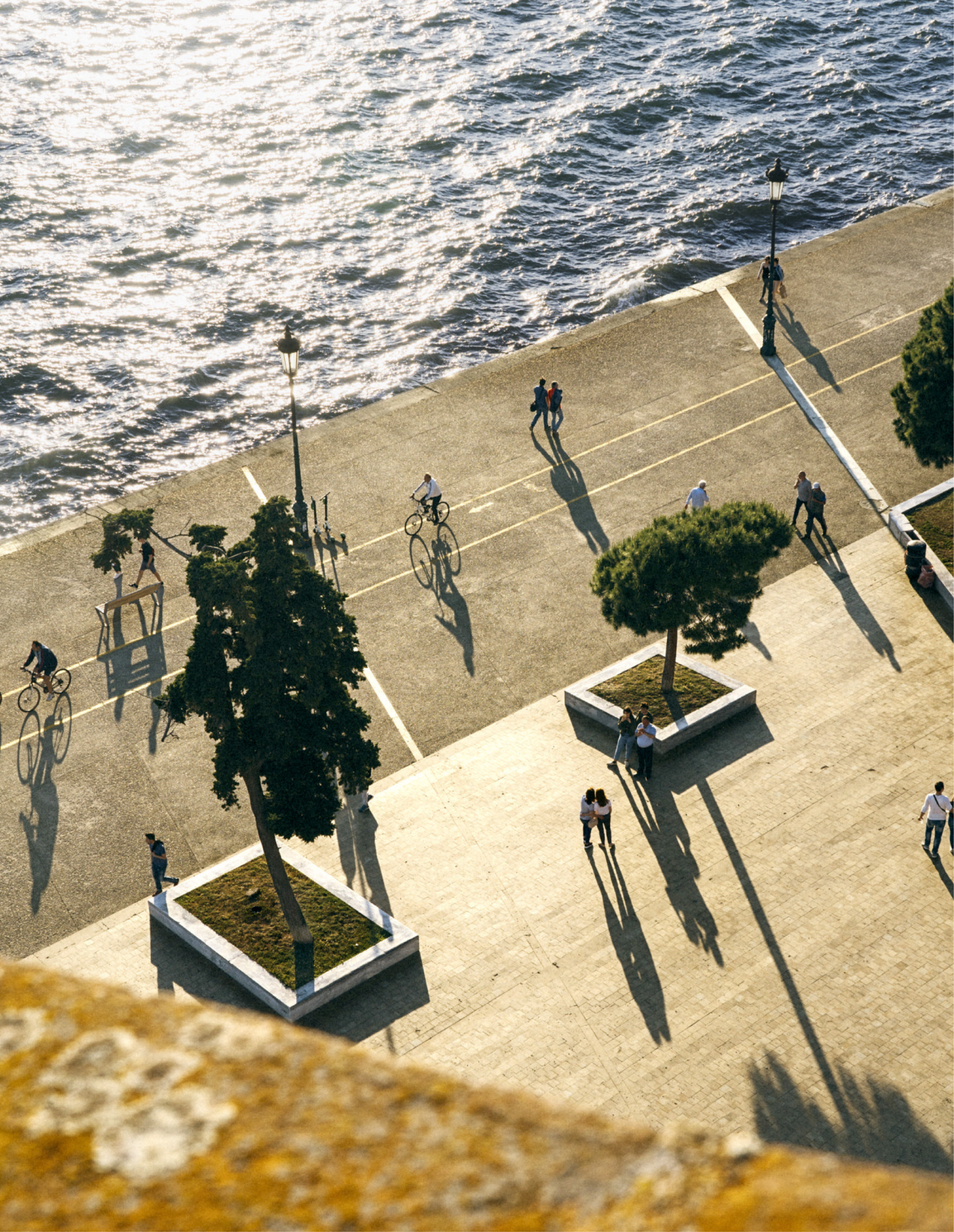


*This page:* Philippos Bantis flips dough for *bougatsa* pastry in the shop opened by his father in 1969.

*Opposite page:* Thessaloniki starts to cool down in September, an ideal time to visit the city.









city's Jewish community was deported in the Holocaust. The once-thriving metropolis was reduced to another postwar Greek city, hardly visited—until, over the past decade, it began attracting international attention.

The city's rise in popularity was due almost entirely to its dynamic former mayor, the tattooed iconoclast Yiannis Boutaris, a scion of Greece's oldest winemaking family. Under his guidance, from 2011 to 2019, Thessaloniki became a "model for all of Greece" (according to a 2014 article in the *Guardian*) amid the country's crippling debt crisis and austerity measures, widely praised for its bustling street life and tourism initiatives. It also gained a reputation as Greece's true food capital, with a new generation of chefs infusing the city's rich gastronomic tradition with a locavore ethos and creative energy.

I began plotting my trip to Thessaloniki in 2019; then the pandemic happened. Years later, here I finally was, for the Roman ruins and Byzantine churches and those rich cultural layers. But also for the mosaics of modern meze and new-school wines. My other mission? To meet Boutaris himself.

**"THESSALONIKI MIGHT BE** the ultimate second city in Europe!" local art curator Christos Savvidis declares during lunch the following day, as he smears goat-milk butter on bread made from an ancient flour called *zea*. "We had the financial crisis, then the pandemic, but we survived—even flourished."

The affable Savvidis develops contemporary art projects to promote social change via his agency, ArtBOX. Savvidis's associate, Lydia Chatziiakovou, who's joined us, adds that as a city with the largest university in Greece and the Balkans—and a student population of

some 150,000—Thessaloniki has a uniquely young public face, fostering the famous carefree vibe in its bars and cafés. Do I know the Greek word *chalara*? Meaning something like "chill"? *That's Thessaloniki.*

Savvidis, Chatziiakovou, and I are at Mourga, a very chill seafood-centric restaurant that, according to them, exemplifies the city's food spirit. Opened several years ago by a pioneer of Greece's gastro-taverna movement, Giannis Loukakis, it has an organic, zero-waste ethos and serves cloudy natural wines. *Rembetika*, the "Greek blues" music, plays from the sound system. On the walls, dramatic magical-realist photos by local artist Nikos Vavdinoudis portray Macedonian characters enacting some Dionysian rite.

I ask my lunchmates to tell me more about Thessaloniki. "It's a lot smaller than Athens," Chatziiakovou says, digging her spoon into *manestra*, a kind of orzo risotto, here loaded with sweet local crab. "But still large enough for things to be happening," contributes Savvidis, distracted by the bowl holding smoked potatoes, flame-torched mackerel, and a pink schmear of beet cream. "If Athens has many centers," continues Chatziiakovou, "here it's all pretty concentrated, making it easier to create networks and connections—a sense of community."

As we take a postlunch stroll, Savvidis talks about how much Boutaris has done for Thessaloniki. As if on cue, he spots a friend, Spiros Pengas, a former deputy mayor for tourism under Boutaris. Pengas recounts to me with great feeling how, in 2012, Boutaris organized the city's first-ever Pride festival. "Thessaloniki was closed and parochial then," he says. "That contributed greatly to its subsequent image of openness."

So too did Boutaris's efforts to publicize Thessaloniki's multicultural heritage. He traveled to Tel Aviv to highlight the city's Jewish history. He visited Istanbul, touting Thessaloniki as the birthplace of







Kemal Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish Republic. As tourism surged, the administration trained local guides and created cultural maps with Jewish and Ottoman routes, templates Thessaloniki still uses. “Residents were also offered free tours on weekends,” Pengas says. “Enormous crowds showed up. People were so eager to learn about their history.”

Although the city’s current administration is more conservative, it has capitalized on Boutaris’s legacy, from continuing to promote the past to successfully petitioning for Thessaloniki to be added to UNESCO’s Creative Cities of Gastronomy network in 2021. A string of ambitious urban projects under development includes a new metro system and the planned renovation of Aristotelous Square.

The more I hear, the more eager I am to talk to Boutaris himself. But he doesn’t respond to my texts. So I keep to my other mission: finding deliciousness. One evening, as the sun blazes down into the Aegean, we feast on just-caught mussels, shrimp, and crab at Hamodrakas, a seafood taverna in Kalamaria, a short drive from downtown. With our meal, local enologist Anestis Haitidis pours amber-hued skin-contact retsinas made by young vintners from the region. Another night, at the super chalara Deka Trapezia, run by chef Manolis Papoutsakis, we enjoy a lemon-glazed choux pastry filled with wasabi-spiked fish roe; *dakos* (Cretan bruschetta) reimagined here as a savory cheesecake with tangy *mizithra*

cheese and pistachios; and melting shreds of boiled *zigouri* (young lamb) on a cream of *trahana* (fermented yogurt and wheat).

**IT’S ALL TOO EASY** in Thessaloniki to get swept up by the cool restaurants, the waterfront bars, the bighearted tavernas. And yet, in this “city of ghosts,” certain dishes evince years of wars and migrations.

Take *bougatsa*, a local breakfast of phyllo pastry cradling sweet semolina custard or a filling of cheese or minced meat. As Palisidis explains one morning at his favorite bakery, Bougatsa Bantis, the pastry resonates with memories of the forced population exchange between Greece and Türkiye in the aftermath of Greece’s defeat in the Greco-Turkish war of 1919–22. Based solely on religion, some

1.5 million Orthodox Christians were expelled from Türkiye while half a million Muslims were ordered out of Greece. Mandated by the Treaty of Lausanne, all were sent to “home” countries entirely foreign to them. In Greece, this forced resettling swelled the country’s population by more than 20 percent. But amid the great suffering, as Leon A. Nar writes in *Thessaloniki: The Future of the Past* (Kapon, 2011), the refugees “brought with them an urban cuisine that was a medley of ancient Greek, Byzantine, and Oriental cooking.”

“Bougatsa is really old, possibly Byzantine,” says Bougatsa Bantis owner Philippos Bantis inside his worn storefront, as he stretches and flings disks of



**This page:** Yiannis Boutaris is no longer mayor but remains a popular figure; at Poster, chef Vasilis Hamam’s dishes nod to his Palestinian Greek heritage.

**Opposite page:** Thessaloniki is home to the largest university in Greece; most of Aristotelous Square was built in the 1950s.



dough in the air until they resemble paper-thin tablecloths. “The original pastry was just this phyllo—*sketi*, meaning plain—without filling.” In cosmopolitan Ottoman centers of what is now Türkiye, wealthy matrons started to fill it with a sweet custard for Westernized afternoon tea. Christian refugees brought their craft to Thessaloniki: They sold bougatsa on streets, then opened shops, which in the post-World War II years would sell scraps of dough to the poor. But it was later that the bougatsa business exploded. And in 1969, Philippos’s father, Dimitris, opened this shop using recipes he inherited from *his* father, a refugee.

Finally, Palisidis and I taste Bantis’s freshly baked masterpieces: one with minced beef procured from a small local farm, another with cheese from a different farm, and a voluptuous custard in a sweet, cinnamon-dusted iteration. Bantis also offers us the “original” unfilled sketi bougatsa, flaky squares of multilayered buttery dough. “Old people come and taste it and cry,” he says. “Because it reminds them of their past and its hardships.”



**“Our city  
has an urban history  
spanning almost 23 centuries,  
a history we shouldn’t  
be imitating, but one we can  
learn from.”**



**THE BIGGEST GHOST** hovering over the city is that of its Jewish community, comprised primarily of descendants of the Sephardim to whom the Ottoman Empire gave refuge after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. For centuries, Jews were Thessaloniki’s largest religious group, earning it the sobriquet “The Mother of Israel.” In 1943, two years after the city fell to the Nazis, most were deported to death camps. As many as 48,000 are believed to have perished; fewer than 2,000 remained in Thessaloniki after the Holocaust.

In subsequent decades, the Holocaust remained a semi-taboo subject until the 2000s, when commemorations for the victims began. In 2013, on the 70th anniversary of the deportation, Boutaris and the remaining Jewish community organized a public march to the city’s landmark Old Railway Station, from which Jews were expelled. The city has been slowly reconnecting with its Jewish identity since, even if only around 1,000 Jews remain here today. Plans for a Holocaust Museum near the site of the Old Railway Station, in the works since 2013, are finally becoming reality. Israeli tourists were Thessaloniki’s top foreign visitors in 2022, thanks to campaigns by the city’s tourism authorities, an initiative Boutaris launched during his tenure.

One afternoon at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, with its “Holocaust Victims Room” displaying the names of 27,000 identified victims, Barry and I fall into conversation with an elderly woman from Tel Aviv. Her parents, she shares, were Thessaloniki Jews who moved

to Israel after surviving 1943. “They died without setting foot in the city again,” she says, tears in her eyes. But she herself has been returning on annual visits for more than a decade “to regain a whole past my parents lost.”

There’s new interest, too, in local Sephardic cuisine, a blend of Spanish, Ottoman, and modern Greek influences that had been hard to find outside homes. After the museum, we stop by Akadimia Art Restaurant in an old Jewish neighborhood now filled with bars and eateries. With Greeks tippling and dining at outdoor tables, it doesn’t seem to immediately inspire reflections on erasures and loss. And as its chef, Kostas Markou (who’s partly Albanian), tells us, he was ignorant of that page of Thessaloniki’s history until he opened his restaurant here.

But former residents started coming in and sharing stories and recipes. Among them was Nina Benroubi, a Holocaust survivor who passed away a few years ago at age 95. Inspired by her book, *A Taste of Sephardic Thessaloniki* (Fytrakis Editions, 2002), and with help from Benroubi’s family, Markou started recreating her recipes. Today he serves them as specials on his menu of Greek classics or prepares them on request for those who book in advance.

Markou brings out several dishes, pronouncing their names in Ladino, the almost extinct Judeo-Spanish language. Here are *huevos haminados*, eggs marbled with coffee grounds that traditionally would be slow cooked overnight to be eaten on Shabbat; and *borrekitas de merendjena*, fried turnovers with a filling of eggplant, which is a vegetable ubiquitous in Sephardic kitchens. As I eat, I try to imagine a world where synagogues dotted this neighborhood, where Jewish merchants traded in olive oil and the streets resounded with Ladino.

Finally, on my last day in town, I meet Boutaris at one of his offices. Now in his eighties, he still looks like the hipster disrupter from photos: red suspenders, stud earring, lizard tattoo on his wrist. “How can a city build a future without knowing its past?” Boutaris responds when I ask him about reviving Thessaloniki’s heritage. “Our city has an urban history spanning almost 23 centuries, a history we shouldn’t be imitating, but one we can learn from.” Thessaloniki is now more inclusive of the “other,” says Boutaris, whose own ethnic background is part Albanian and part Vlach, a disappearing Balkan minority. Then he lights a cigarette to reminisce about his time in office: Israeli audiences crying as he told them how Jews had been instrumental in Thessaloniki’s commerce and culture; his feud with the Greek Orthodox bishop who tried to stop the Pride parade passing by churches; the assault on him by a far-right ultranationalist mob.

For travelers to Thessaloniki, Boutaris suggests exploring the 15 UNESCO-listed Byzantine structures, the Archaeological Museum, the music scene—and, of course, trying the seafood, meze, and *soutzoukakia*, meatballs that are another relic from the population exchange. “Food is about more than just eating,” Boutaris says. “It’s about atmosphere, memories, culture.” And even as Thessaloniki’s minorities left, he continues, their presence has lived on in the dishes.

Thessaloniki has the “fate of second cities all over the world,” he concludes. “Chicago is never New York, and I kept telling everyone we will never be Athens, that we don’t *want* to be Athens. We wanted to be the best-ever provincial capital.” I congratulate him on a mission accomplished, then rush to the paralia for one last look at Mount Olympus. **A**

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*Writer Anya von Bremzen explored Gaziantep, Türkiye, for AFAR’s Summer 2022 issue. Photographer Marco Argüello shot Istanbul for AFAR’s January/February 2020 issue.*





The 111-foot White Tower was built in the 15th century and is a landmark of the city. Once used as a prison (and later, to store antiquities), today it hosts an exhibition dedicated to the history of Thessaloniki.





# THE AFAR GUIDE TO

The city's downtown core is dense with markets, museums, bars, and restaurants—here's where to go.



## WHERE TO STAY

### MonAsty

Thessaloniki's past is present in the design of this Marriott Autograph Collection hotel, which opened in 2022, one minute by foot from Aristotelous Square. Its sleek 91 rooms and 9 suites feature arches and mixed textures; colors, too, nod to the Byzantine—think cream, blush, brown, and bronze. Amenities include an outdoor pool on the ninth floor, a fitness center, and rooftop bar.

### Vanoro Hotel

Housed in a former tobacco warehouse built in 1937, the Vanoro retains its art deco exterior, which has been registered as a work of

art by the Greek Ministry of Culture. Inside, the 45 light-filled rooms are minimalist and contemporary, and the Anza Kitchen & Bar serves breakfast all day. The historic area known for its bars and restaurants, Ladadika, is a 10-minute walk away.

### Electra Palace Thessaloniki

With a curved facade featuring both classical and Byzantine design elements, the 138-room Electra Palace has been a landmark of the city since opening in 1972. After an 18-month renovation beginning in 2020, hallways and public spaces display art from prominent Greek artists, thanks to a partnership with the Metropolitan Organization of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki (MOMus). The Orizontes Roof Garden, which overlooks Aristotelous Square, is a popular spot to sit for an hour (or three) while nursing a frappé.

## WHAT TO DO

### See the Museum(s)

One of the largest and most important museums in Greece, the **Archaeological Museum** offers visitors an excellent primer on modern Thessaloniki. A “Museum on the Go” app—which encourages visitors to “discover” certain finds in the exhibits—was launched in 2022 and is available in 12 languages. The city's **Jewish Museum** features old Jewish newspapers, traditional clothing, and tombstones from the destroyed Jewish cemetery. **MOMus** is comprised of four Thessaloniki-based museums and Athens's Museum Alex Mylona; explore everything from photography to Russian avant-garde works.



# THESSALONIKI



by Katherine LaGrave



POSTER



AKADIMIA ART RESTAURANT



GIANNOULA

## WHERE TO EAT

### Go to Market(s)

The city's beating heart when it debuted in 1930, **Modiano Market** reopened in late 2022 after a multiyear refurbishment. Today it functions as a food emporium, with bars, restaurants, and bakeries (including the buzzy **72H Artisanal Bakehouse**) sitting alongside stores offering honey, wine, nuts, and products from the islands of Lesbos and Crete. Stock up, then head a block north to **Kapani Market** for more; an open-air hall with vendors hawking fresh fruit, fish, spices, candy, olives, and kitchen supplies, it could best be described as “lively”—so be ready to jostle. Inside the market, **Stou Mitsou** is an excellent spot for small dishes and drinks.

### Giannoula

This family-run taverna does Greek classics well. Order *kolokithokeftedes* (zucchini fritters), grilled meat, salads, and fried cheese to share—then load up songs from Stelios Kazantzidis on the old-timey jukebox.

### Blé Vin

Sporting a lengthy wine list, trendy Blé Vin emphasizes local grape varietals and seasonal vegetables.

### Poster

The restaurant's creative, changing menu pays homage to Thessaloniki's diverse influences: think calf's tongue and ras el hanout salsa, and blistered calamari with tahini.

### Deka Trapezia

Close to the White Tower, Deka Trapezia draws crowds for its small plates from chef Manolis Papoutsakis, including lamb meatballs, shrimp ravioli, and grilled green beans.

### Bougatsa Bantis

Specializing in flaky *bougatsa* pastry, this humble café is an institution for a reason.

### Mezen Salonica

A *tsipouro* tavern, Mezen Salonica serves the grape-distilled spirit with snacks such as house-smoked feta and fried mussels.

### Hamodrakas

Opened in 1926 on the water in Kalamaria, this restaurant offers equally beautiful fish dishes and sunset views of the Aegean Sea.

### Akadimia Art Restaurant

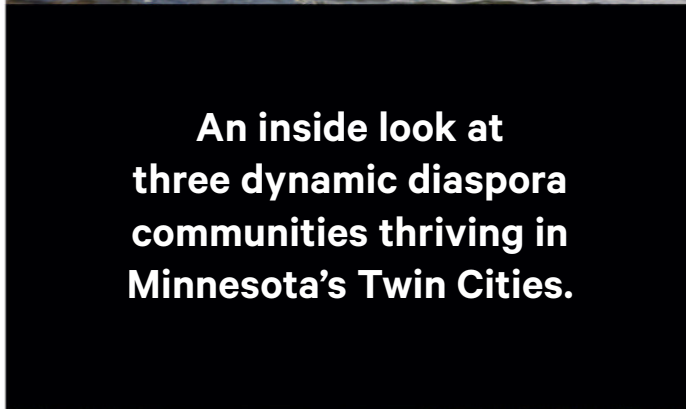
Near the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, chef Kostas Markou serves Greek classics, as well as Sephardic dishes upon request.

### Mourga

With handmade ceramics, artsy interiors, and a dynamic open kitchen, Mourga exemplifies Thessaloniki's creative food scene.











by  
**ASHLEA HALPERN**  
Photographs by  
**JENN ACKERMAN**



**CALL**



**HOME**







You can count on one hand the talking points most commonly associated with Minneapolis–St. Paul: the late musician Prince, Mall of America, and never-ending winters. What may not be as well-known is the metro area’s surprising cultural diversity.

Minnesota has sizable populations who have roots in Scandinavia, Germany, Ethiopia, India, and Mexico. The Twin Cities are home to the biggest Somali community in the U.S., as well as the highest urban concentration of Hmong people, who have links to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and China. With chef Sean Sherman —aka the Sioux Chef—of the Oglala Lakota Nation garnering national accolades for Owamni, his Indigenous fine-dining restaurant, the spotlight has also swung onto the area’s Native American community.

We asked residents from three of the Twin Cities’ diaspora groups to share slivers of their lives: Hmong American pastry chef Diane Moua, Swedish American physician John Litell, and Somali American performance artist Ifrah Mansour. We also offer ideas for how to travel deeper in the area.





## DIANE MOUA

HMONG  
COMMUNITY

*The daughter of Hmong refugees, pastry chef Diane Moua has been nominated for five James Beard Awards, the first Hmong American woman to earn the recognition. After seven years directing the pastry programs for restaurants including Spoon and Stable in Minneapolis, Moua hopes to open her own place in 2023.*

**“HMONG ARE VERY** family-oriented; we stay in our clans. One of our leaders, my grandpa, lived in Providence, Rhode Island, when he came to the U.S. from Laos, where our family got sponsored after fleeing the Vietnam War. When he moved to Wisconsin, my parents followed. They bought a farm in Junction City, where we were the only Asian family in town. The language barrier was hard, and people were so mean. They dumped dead calves in our driveway, threw fish at our door, and vandalized our mailbox.

As a teenager, I was just trying to find myself—learning to be more Americanized at school but then coming home to this traditional house that barely spoke English. My parents were strict too: When the kids weren’t doing homework, we’d be picking bushels of cucumbers or feeding the animals. We were never allowed to just hang out with friends because there was always so much work to do.

Marrying young was my freedom from farming. I had my son at 18 and moved to Minnesota, where my [now ex-] husband’s family lived. I learned quickly how to fend for myself. My mother-in-law worked at the sushi kiosk at Lunds & Byerlys supermarket in Chanhassen. The meat section looked so glamorous, and then there was pastry: cakes on cakes on cakes. I was in awe.

While growing up, dessert was just fruit or McDonald’s apple pie. If it was a special occasion, my family might make *naab vaam*, a tapioca-coconut dessert, or pound out sticky rice and dip it in honey. But there’s no term

*Clockwise from left: Dancers wait to perform at the Hmong International Freedom Festival; the Hmong Elders Center offers many activities, including crafting; the HmongTown Marketplace has its own greenhouse.*



in Hmong for what I do today: How could my parents explain that their daughter ‘plates desserts’ for a living? But then, when I was a finalist for the James Beard [Award] in 2018, I took them to Chicago for the ceremony, and they were like ‘Oh, this is a *whole world*.’ They were really proud of me. After that, the expectations shifted. Like, oh, she can actually work in the food industry and still *be* something.

Though I didn’t appreciate it at the time, I’m happy I was raised on a farm; I wouldn’t have the work ethic I do today without my parents’ tough love. I’ve also been very lucky to work with some great chefs in Minnesota: Adrienne Odom, Tim McKee, Gavin Kaysen. But my dad has always pressured me to do my own thing. For my recent Mother’s Day pop-up, I made passion-fruit pavlova and brown sugar boba torte. I’m finally coming out of my shell, experimenting with Southeast Asian flavors. Being able to transform something like *naab vaam* into a plated dessert is really interesting to me.

The Hmong community here is so strong, you don’t even feel like you’re in Minnesota sometimes. The HmongTown Marketplace has a whole selection of authentic pork curry noodles, rice platters, and fresh papaya salads. It’s cheap and good and there’s a line out the door on weekends.

In making conversation with other young professionals, we’re all just figuring out who we are and what being Hmong means to us. When I think about Sunisa Lee [the St. Paul-born Olympic gymnast], I tear up. I’m just so proud of her for putting us on the map. It’s great to be acknowledged and for people to know that we exist.”







Swedish kids shows, and they attend Swedish school at ASI.

There is generally more robust engagement with the outdoors in Scandinavia than in the States. We are fortunate to have this ribbon of green and blue woven through the Twin Cities; it's easy to find yourself in a park or on a lake or in the woods, because they're all connected. Even in colder weather, there's fun to be had; the Loppet Foundation, which manages the Trailhead at Theodore Wirth Regional Park, does an amazing job with its cross-country ski trails.

And we love to sauna. I have coworkers who nerd out about their backyard setups, but sauna enthusiasm is so widespread in the Twin Cities, you really don't need your own. We visited a lovely sauna on the rooftop of the Hewing Hotel and had memorable experiences through the 612 Sauna Society Cooperative. Their mobile sauna is maintained by people who give a nice orientation, so it's warm and welcoming—no pun intended.

I don't want to sound as if I am over-romanticizing Swedish culture. It has its own issues—like the rise of the political right and the tensions that come from embracing diversity while historically being fairly homogeneous and monocultural. Over the years, I've watched ASI shift from being a primarily nostalgia-based, inherited-traditions kind of social club to the modern, dynamic museum and cultural center it is today, highlighting, among other things, the role of migration in our community and others as expressed through art. We think a lot about how to be a local resource and not just an exclusively white-skinned Scandinavian organization."



## DR. JOHN LITELL

NORDIC  
COMMUNITY

*Born in Sweden, the elder child of two American expat journalists is now a critical care physician. Dr. Litell has served on the board of the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis since 2018. He also won the 2020 Peirene Stevens Translation Prize for his debut literary translation, the English version of Andrea Lundgren's book Nordic Fauna (Peirene Press, 2021).*

**"MY DAD'S PARENTS** are both Norwegian, and my mom's side is Danish, Norwegian, and a little Swedish. I consider myself to be fully Scandinavian. I was born in Danderyd, a first-ring suburb north of Stockholm. We lived in a house across the street from a small lake, similar to what you'd find here in Minneapolis. I spent countless hours walking in the woods, paddling a canoe, and lying on the dock trying to catch fish to give to our cat.

My parents split when I was about six, and my mom decided it would be best to move closer to family in Wisconsin. The American Swedish Institute (ASI) was an important link for us—a place for familiar sights and sounds, especially around the holidays. Through the people at ASI, my mom learned about a summer camp hosted by Concordia Language Villages. Kids choose a Swedish name, use Swedish money, eat Swedish food, and sing Swedish songs. It was a profound way for me to connect to something we had left behind.


My partner, Britt, was also born in Sweden to American parents. Her family is actually more Swedish by heritage than mine is. I speak the language with our daughters; when my five-year-old started speaking it back, it was like my apex moment as a parent. I'd love for us to live in Sweden for a period, but short of that, I'm doing all that I can to maintain her interest in the language, the place, and its traditions. We listen to Swedish radio and watch





*Clockwise from left:*  
ASI hosts a Midsommar  
Celebration every  
year; Ingebretsen's sells  
various Scandinavian  
items; people of all  
ages cross-country ski  
at Theodore Wirth  
Regional Park.





## AFAR'S GUIDE TO THE TWIN CITIES

by Ashlea Halpern

### WHERE TO STAY

In summer 2022, Minnesota welcomed its first five-star property, **Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis**. Local flourishes abound, from the regionally stitched Faribault blankets draped over elegant sofas in the suites to the sculptural installations livening up the spa (the handiwork of local ceramicist Juliane Shibata). **Mara Restaurant & Bar**, the hotel's Mediterranean eatery from chef Gavin Kaysen, is an indulgent treat.

### WHAT TO DO

Tour the museums—big (**Minneapolis Institute of Art**, **Walker Art Center**) and small (**the Museum of Russian Art**, **African American Heritage Museum and Gallery**). The **Norway House** and **Danish American Center** host events inspired by their respective diaspora communities, while the **Somali Museum of Minnesota**

houses upwards of 700 artifacts, including a full-scale reproduction of a nomadic hut. If you visit during the warmer months, get yourself on or near some water: Rent a kayak from **Mississippi River Paddle Share**, cycle your way around the scenic **Chain of Lakes**, or go for a stroll through **Lyndale Park**. **Rose Garden**, a horticulturalist's heaven bordering **Lake Harriet**. In the winter, ice fishing and cross-country skiing take over, and you'll have no shortage of cold-weather festivals (**The Great Northern**, **Art Shanty Projects**, and others).

### WHERE TO EAT

The Jucy Lucy, a molten cheese-stuffed hamburger from **Matt's Bar & Grill**, is a must. So are reservations at **Owamni**, if you can get them. Minneapolis's newest food hall, **Eat Street Crossing**, serves sushi sandwiches and Brazilian pizza. Travelers can

peruse the stands at the always bustling **HmongTown Marketplace** in St. Paul or snack on *sambusas* at **Karmel Mall**, the first and largest Somali shopping center in the U.S. Nearby, at **Quruxlow**, settle in for a hearty spread of beef *suqaar*, spiced rice, and banana. The cardamom- and ginger-heavy milk tea is the perfect finish.

### WHERE TO SHOP

Scour the shelves at century-old **Ingebretsen's Nordic Marketplace** for lingonberry preserves and Norwegian Hardanger embroidery kits. **Birchbark Books**, owned by Pulitzer Prize-winning local author and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa member Louise Erdrich, specializes in titles by Indigenous writers. Head to **24 Somali Mall** for scores of silk scarves. **XIA Gallery & Cafe** in St. Paul's Little Mekong district stocks jewelry, prints, and more by Hmong and other Asian American makers.





Saunagoers heat up at the mobile 612 Sauna Society Cooperative.





*Clockwise from top:* Somali Independence Day is celebrated every July; at Karmel Mall, the country's largest Somali shopping center, visitors can find gold jewelry and more; people form soccer teams at Riverside Park.







## IFRAH MANSOUR

SOMALI  
COMMUNITY

*The work of this multimedia performance artist, 2022 Bush Fellow, and Somali refugee was featured in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's recent I Am Somali exhibition, the first major museum show in the Midwest spotlighting contemporary Somali artists. Mansour's one-woman play, How to Have Fun in a Civil War, played at the Minnesota State Fair and the Guthrie Theater before touring London in 2022.*

**“I WAS AROUND** six years old when my family left Somalia. The civil war was traumatic; there was a funeral in our house almost every day. First we fled to my grandmother's farm in southern Somalia. What I remember most—and what inspired me to make *How to Have Fun in a Civil War*—is that we were able to enjoy our childhood while bombs were falling. The kids would play hide-and-seek in these endless fields. Credit to my grandmother, who found a way to preserve our innocence and make sure violence and war didn't steal our joy. We then lived in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya for several years, waiting for U.S. sponsorship.

The first wave of Somalis came to Minnesota in the early 1990s, when the war broke out. By the time our family arrived, in 1998, the community had already set up businesses

and were able to hire others fresh off the boat. We joke around now and say whoever that first Somali was who decided that Minnesota was the spot should be punished. [Laughs] Why not Texas or California? I grew up wearing sandals and going to the beach; sometimes we would sleep outside. The idea of not seeing your toes for two-thirds of the year was such a foreign thing to us. So why are all these tropical humans here? It's about the power of built community—knowing people who can help you find a job, or buy a cheap car, or get good housing.

As immigrants, we watched how much our parents struggled without education. Most of us go for careers that make money; no one dares to even think about choosing a passion. I thought I wanted to be a nurse—until college, when I got a job at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis as a community liaison to local Somalis. As I watched these African American actors embody beautiful stories on the stage, it dawned on me that I wanted to go to my job more than my science classes. I would skip studying just to see a show. It was a scary decision to follow through on, but I feel like

the arts picked me, not the other way around.

The Somali community views theater as an American thing, not a Somali thing. When I worked at Mixed Blood, some of the elders told me that theater is haram, forbidden. Yet when I was teaching them English, they were reciting poems they had seen in Somali theaters! Some of these elders were so against my passion, the only way to work on it was to hide it. That way, no one could make fun of me or try to change my mind. At the same time, I felt truly seen whenever I had an opportunity to be on stage—like I was finally living for me.

Minnesota's arts community is robust and experimental. I've participated in the MayDay Parade and the Northern Spark festival. I love the small but mighty Little Africa Festival in St. Paul [every August]. And if there's ever a hazing for artists, the [late summer] Minnesota State Fair is it. It's the hardest crowd! People are in food comas; if you're lucky, they might walk your way for two seconds. And here I am, barefoot in the heat, performing a civil war show told from a child's perspective. I'm like, *Is anyone hearing this?* But a few people did, and that was really beautiful. We could be different politically, but the love of food, music, and culture is still there.

Most of my peers could never make this choice. It seems selfish, like, *How dare you play with puppets while your people are starving? You need to get a better job and send money home!* I still feel conflicted, but I know this is my role—to breathe value into my culture. Our stories become a lifeline, a parachute, for others to see themselves.” **A**

*Writer Ashlea Halpern, a frequent contributor to AFAR, lives in Minneapolis. Photographer Jenn Ackerman is profiled on page 12.*







**MY MUMBAI**

AFTER A LIFE-CHANGING LOSS,  
WRITER **SHRUTI SWAMY**  
RETURNS TO INDIA TO  
MEET A BELOVED METROPOLIS,  
ANEW.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
AVANI RAI







IT IS MUMBAI IN NOVEMBER, WHICH IS TO SAY: HOT.  
I HAVE STOOD WHERE I AM STANDING MANY TIMES BEFORE,  
IN ALL ERAS OF MY LIFE—AS A BABY WOBBLY  
ON MY OWN TWO FEET, AS A BESPECTACLED KID  
WITH SCRAPED KNEES,  
AS AN AWKWARD TEEN  
TUGGING DOWN THE  
SKIRT THAT ATTRACTS TOO  
MUCH ATTENTION,  
AS A YOUNG WOMAN  
BACKPACKING AFTER  
COLLEGE, AND AS  
A NEWLYWED, VISITING  
WITH MY HUSBAND.

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**THIS TIME** I am here as a writer, wife, mother. I'm around the corner from the park teeming with morning walkers, in the leafy suburb of Vile Parle, on the street where my grandparents, and then my aunt, used to live in a building called Nav Samaj. I remember every inch of it: the mineral smell of the staircase, the daybed where I spent hours as a child reading piles of *Reader's Digests*. The cool tile floor I'd lie on when the heat was overwhelming, the dark kitchen in which some of the most spectacular meals of my life were created. The almirah in the bedroom that held my grandmother's starched, mothball-scented saris.

But the view has changed; Nav Samaj is gone. A new building, Navasamaj—the name spelled out in large gold letters on the construction's false front, with an image portraying a hulking complex three times the size of the original—is being erected in its place. I point to show my four-year-old daughter, Kavi, trying to explain the rift in my vision. She's never been to India before: She's too young to see this ghost.

There is no city more beautiful and richer with personal history to me than this one—where my parents grew up, fell in love, and left in their twenties for America. And yet, there is also no city in which I feel more out of my depth. Growing up, I'd visit for weeks at a time but rarely see anything of Mumbai. Passed like a parcel between family members, I never touched money, never went anywhere alone, and spent most of my time in the rooms of my relatives. But my mother's sister-in-law (my Mami, in Gujarati) showed her Mumbai to me. Ila Mami understood something about her city and perhaps about me, too.

Once, when I was visiting as a teenager, we bought a CD of pirated Hindi music from a man on the street. Back home, in the apartment that no longer exists, Ila Mami leapt to her feet to dance, egging me

on until I danced, too. Another time, standing outside the market where we had gone to shop, she paused at a guava cart—*you want?* Yes, I always wanted—she wiped the fruits off with her handkerchief before placing them in my hand. There she was haggling for pants for me; there she was stopping to buy me *kulfi*, the frozen dessert brought out of the refrigerated cart, sliced to serve by machete. There we were, in the middle of a rainstorm, drenched and laughing, reveling in the wild kind of rain that comes and goes in an instant. It was not just sharing pleasure and joy with Ila Mami; it was that she lit the city for me. But it is now 2023, and my vivacious, life-loving aunt is no longer alive, gone before her time. Most of my other relatives have moved, and some have left India entirely.

Every city holds a universe inside it, none more so than Mumbai. There are as many pathways through the city as there are people in it, but my path-makers are gone. Seven years after I last visited, I am in Mumbai with my white husband and our mixed-race daughter to try to see the present city. Yes, we will always be foreigners here. But is there a moment, a meal, an exchange that will make Mumbai legible to us? And will I be able to find it, the way my aunt once found it for me?

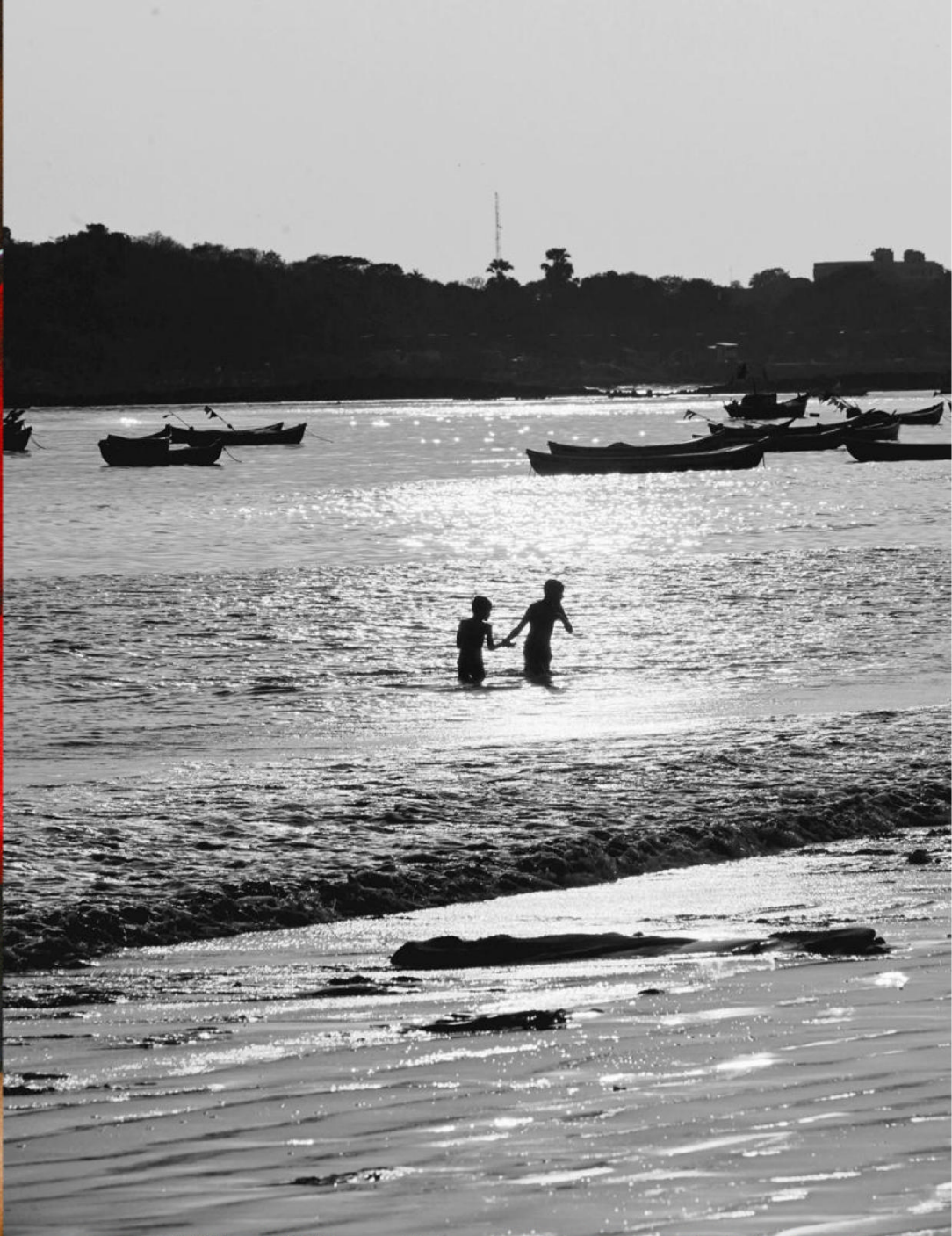
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**THE NEXT DAY**, we take a rickshaw to Juhu Beach, the longest and most popular stretch of sand in Mumbai. The rickshaw passes easily from mostly empty streets through crowded snarls of traffic—and then reaches the sea. Down the expanse of beach, we admire the waterworn faces of the once gorgeous Bombay-deco houses that line the ocean, their colors faded, many windows boarded up. I still find them beautiful. I remember ponies, even elephants, that we could pay to ride, people selling marbled balloons on sticks, *bhel puri* vendors handing over the crispy puffed rice in cones of newsprint. But I also grew up visiting Girgaon Chowpatty Beach in southern Mumbai, and these memories are so fuzzed over with time, I cannot discern if they were from one beach or another. Juhu Beach today is crowded with aunties in running shoes, picnicking families, and boys and men of all ages playing cricket. The shore curves, disappearing into smog and sea mist north to Versova, where people fish in boats painted with eyes.

We walk to one end of the beach and then turn around, hot and a little hungry. We buy a coconut for my daughter but can't communicate to the coconut vendor that we want him to split open the husk to scoop out its cream—a failure my husband and I would have laughed off or rolled our eyes at, but to which my daughter responds with a howl. Now we're kneeling in the sand, American-parenting, with *I hear you* and *you seem very frustrated*, watched by bemused vendors and passersby who apparently have never seen such a tantrum or such ineffective parents. "You promised," she wails, and we had. We pick her up in defeat, to head home. But in the rickshaw, the driver mistakes the address I offer in my American accent to be one in the opposite direction from Vile Parle, and a ride that took 15 minutes on the way there takes four times as long on the way back, the driver alternating between questioning us in exasperated Hindi and shaking his head at our stupidity. Hearing my voice, even as I try to soften its long bland vowels and lazy consonants, makes me blush, trying for bottle instead of baddle, sorry instead of

Mumbai is one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the world. The best times to visit the city are between November and March, when the weather is drier.











Juhu Beach  
stretches  
roughly  
three miles  
along the  
Arabian Sea.  
It is one of  
Mumbai's  
most visited  
destinations.









sawry. Home again in the flat, we're chastened and exhausted and surrender to jet lag much too early.

That night, I lie awake in bed, my body humming with frustration. That I cannot make myself intelligible in Mumbai, as I failed to communicate with the rickshaw driver this morning, shows me the shut face of the city. I realize that no place implicates me in failure more than this one. It is a painful failure that sits inside my privilege as an American, whose face marks her as being of here, but whose voice and carriage highlight her as an outsider. How will I find my way through?

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**SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK** lies like an emerald in the sprawl of the endless city. For me, it's a clean slate, free of memory or expectation. Despite dozens of trips to Mumbai, I've never been to this park, which was established a couple years before my parents left India. It's a place that's around the same age as I am. It's our third day in Mumbai, and we take the train—get off at the wrong station, get on again—and then hire a rickshaw whose stated price becomes absurd once we realize it's an easily walkable journey.

The park is nearly 40 square miles, where abundant playgrounds and fields used for cricket and netless badminton give way, deeper in, to wilder terrain. Together as a family of three we wander through the spacious, tree-shaded landscape and admire the fantastical spotted butterflies, and others, palm-size, whose wings are an iridescent, impossible blue. We find a playground, and my daughter climbs a tree, impressing an older boy who climbs up after her. A little girl ambles over to Kavi attempting to strike up a friendship: My daughter, beset with shyness, puts her hands up at her chest and begins to hop like a bunny. The girl copies her. When we chat with

The Mumbai area is home to multiple parks and gardens, several beaches, and three UNESCO World Heritage sites.

her parents, it feels not dissimilar to the playground conversations we strike up at home—as though we are being seen, for the moment, as ourselves.

Near the boating area of the park, vendors sweep away the dust and spread down cloths to sell their wares: sliced unripe star fruit and guava sprinkled with salty-sweet spice, pressed sugarcane juice, and fresh lime soda. We buy coconut water for my daughter and watch her flushed face ease as she drinks. Without being asked, the coconut vendor splits the fruit for the cream, and hands her a shard of the shell to use as a scoop. Here is a pleasure, one that Ila Mami might have offered me, that I can at last extend to my daughter: a small success to lay against the small failures, the miscommunications, and the tantrums.

Kavi is light skinned and copper haired, but here in the park she wears her Sanskrit name proudly. Her face is streaked with dirt, her shoes are covered in red dust, and her inquisitive eyes are open to the movement of the butterflies and wind-nudged trees, the scattering menace of over-friendly monkeys, and the happy river of faces. I have few memories of my earliest visits to India. *What will she remember of this?*

MOMENT BY MOMENT, THIS CITY  
WILL TEACH ME TO STAY AWAKE  
TO THE PRESENT, TO PAY ATTENTION,  
TO FOLLOW THE THREAD  
OF HUMAN CONNECTION,  
TO TAKE PLEASURE WHERE IT'S FOUND.

We're tired—happy tired—on the train ride home. My daughter folds herself into my lap and sleeps as we pass through the changing city, where gleaming towers of luxury housing are springing up in outer suburban neighborhoods and where forests have been cleared for highways. A different feeling is spreading in me—not of confidence, of mastery, but one of playfulness. An openness to the new. Mumbai is a city that rewards flexibility, something I think my aunt knew best.

In the days that follow, we will delight over little clay cups of cardamom-rich chai and bowls of *sabudana khichdi*, which is spiced just to the edge of tolerance, the soft, chewy tapioca contrasting with the crunch of peanuts and the sharpness of lime. In the mornings, the air will be honeyed and cool, and Mumbai will seem like the best city in the world, lush and gentle and filled with guava, custard apple, and dragon fruit, which I bring home for my daughter to taste for the first time. I will visit a handicraft exposition much like the one I last visited with Ila Mami, and watch Umar, the salesman, as he gently unfurls luminous scarf after scarf, and I will

remember what an absolute pleasure it is to shop in India. My husband will tear into a *lifafa* wrap from Swati Snacks, the both of us nearly shouting at the exquisite mix of mint and fat, the slow burn of chili. Like biting into art. There will be a bright brass band that beckons us to stop and listen as it passes, the festival it commemorates a mystery but our bodies filling anyway with a booming joy. I will watch my daughter laugh, sliding down the tallest slide at the school next to the flat in Vile Parle. I will look at my husband, who wears his out-of-placeness with good humor, who wears the wedding ring we bought together with Ila Mami. Moment by moment, this city will teach me to stay awake to the present, to pay attention, to follow the thread of human connection, to take pleasure where it's found. It will never be Ila Mami's Mumbai that I can offer my family or myself. But her memory has helped us find our own city. **A**

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Writer Shruti Swamy is profiled on page 12. Photographer and filmmaker Avani Rai is based in Mumbai. Her work has been featured in GQ, Vogue, and Architectural Digest.



Given Mumbai's sprawling size and huge population (an estimated 21 million), the city's best experiences can be buried in its hustle and bustle.

Visitors may be sent to the Gateway of India (an archway on the banks of the Arabian Sea) or to stroll Marine Drive, which is flanked by art deco buildings and streetlights that form the "Queen's Necklace." But these sights only hint at the thrumming creative energy of the Maximum City—which comes alive when you enjoy it the way locals do.

—*Sarika Bansal*

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## WHAT TO DO

Cultural offerings abound: Buy tickets for a show at the **National Centre for Performing Arts** or the **Prithvi Theatre**, which specializes in Hindi works. Check out contemporary art at **Project 88**, or visit smaller galleries in the Kala Ghoda area, known for Indian boutiques including **Nicobar**, **Papa Don't Preach**, **Payal Khandwala**, and the visually stunning **Sabyasachi**. Architecture buffs shouldn't miss South Mumbai's impressive colonial buildings; **Khaki Tours** offers immersive walking tours throughout the city.

For shopping at street markets, check out **Chor Bazaar** (Thieves' Market) and **Colaba Causeway** in town or **Linking Road** and **Hill Road** in Bandra. To get prices reduced by a third or even more, come prepared to bargain.

For fresh air, stroll along **Girgaon Chowpatty Beach** or **Juhu Beach** to enjoy sunset views and cotton candy. (To respect local customs, wear clothes, not bathing suits, on the beach.) Or take an hour-long ferry trip to **Elephanta Caves**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to see caves with rock-hewn porticos that date to the 5th century C.E. (and cheeky monkeys that can twist open bottle tops).

## THE AFAR GUIDE TO MUMBAI

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### WHERE TO STAY

#### Taj Mahal Palace

This heritage luxury property, situated across from the Gateway of India, opened its doors in 1903 and has a storied guest list (including the Beatles). The much-photographed exterior is a landmark; the interior features dark wood, period furniture, and arches—as well as 9 eateries, a lavish high tea, 543 guest rooms, and 54 suites.

#### The Oberoi, Mumbai

In the heart of Mumbai's downtown business district, the hotel boasts panoramic views of the Arabian Sea, along with 177 rooms and 32 suites, 2 bars, a patisserie, a spa, and a pool. The red and gold Eau Bar has an outdoor terrace and a dazzling "Tree of Life" constructed from half a mile of brass branches.

#### JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu

The airy lobby, 358 guest rooms and suites, and views of Juhu Beach add to the charm of this hotel, which is located in one of Mumbai's more affluent suburbs. Guests and residents indulge in a memorable Sunday brunch—look for a few Bollywood celebrities.

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### WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

**Masque** reimagines such Indian ingredients as local cheeses and corn varieties into a small plates fine-dining experience; "World's 50 Best" rated it India's top restaurant in 2023. Celebrated chef Floyd Cardoz, who was born in Mumbai and passed away in March 2020, founded two excellent restaurants in the city: the **Bombay Canteen**, which elevates Mumbai classics such as *arbi* (taro root) and *hara chana* (green chickpeas) throughout its menu and cocktails, and **O Pedro**, which serves modern Goan cuisine. **The Table** uses produce from its own farm to craft a globally inspired menu.

Mumbai's quintessential institutions include **Trishna**, which turns out some of the best seafood in the city; **Britannia & Co.**, which serves Persian food from Mumbai's Zoroastrian community; **Soam**, a vegetarian café featuring dishes from the neighboring state of Gujarat; plus **Elco** and **Swati Snacks** for authentic versions of Mumbai street eats, such as *pav bhaji* (vegetable curry with soft rolls) and *pani puri* (bite-size shells stuffed with potatoes, onions, chutney, and more).





WESTERN

II

द्वितीय श्रेणी  
दूसरा दर्जा  
SECOND CLASS

II

द्वितीय श्रेणी  
दूसरा दर्जा  
SECOND CLASS



# The Runway Show Before the Runway Show

by LAUREN TAMAKI



Some kind of painter, probably



Writer I look to for "what is cool" so I don't have to Google "what is cool?"



Fashion intern amoeba



By the goodwill of the gods, every now and then I get invited to fashion shows—and get to experience the strange and wonderful slice of New York City they occupy. Before the runway stomping begins, guests can depend on a delightful display: Fashion mavens, ingenues, and hangers-on who frolic from city to city, hungry for The Next Big Thing.

On a rainy Brooklyn day, devotees of the U.S. designer Christopher John Rogers convened for a showing of his ebullient 2024 resort collection. I reveled in the joyous peacocking from locals and those who "flew in from London *just* for this show."



Model from the 1970s who reminded me that cheekbones are forever



The designer's family, possessing sincerity and big smiles, stood out from the fashion flock in the sweetest way.



Guy with an earpiece and clipboard wearing . . . the same blazer I'm wearing. Only one question remains: Who wore it better?



Overdressed Underdressed (both fabulous)



Basic It girl



Advanced It girl

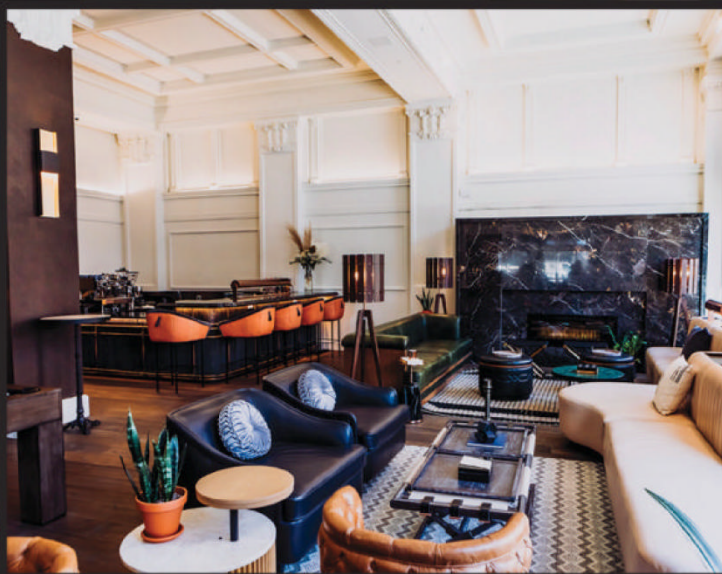


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