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WINTER 2023

Where to Go in 2023

THE
PLACES
ISSUE

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Graz, AUSTRIA
Sharjah, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Bangkok, THAILAND
Brescia & Bergamo, ITALY
Cambutal, PANAMA
The Great Lakes, UNITED STATES
Tasmania, AUSTRALIA
↪ *Prince Edward Island*, CANADA
Salvador, BRAZIL
Transylvania, ROMANIA
Ruaha National Park, TANZANIA
Baltimore, UNITED STATES



PLUS!

Roxane Gay
travels to
Antarctica

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WHEN YOU ARE NAMED
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AND #1 ON OCEANS... AGAIN,
WHERE DO YOU GO NEXT?

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City Market

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PINEAPPLE fountain



Rainbow Row



USS YORKTOWN CV-10



Charles Towne Landing State HISTORIC SITE



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Folly Beach



FORT SUMTER NATIONAL MONUMENT



A FRESH TAKE ON CHARLESTON

DISCOVER A DIFFERENT SIDE OF THE HOLY CITY

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

Outdoor Adventure

Explore the surrounding water and wildlife.

Folly Beach

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

Mount Pleasant

On a Shem Creek tour with Nature Adventures, you can paddle by kayak, passing manatees and dolphins along the way.

Historic Sites

Reckon with Charleston's storied past.

Charles Towne Landing

Where English settlers landed in 1670, now home to a replica of a 17th-century trading vessel.

Fort Sumter National Monument

This man-made island marks the spot where the Civil War began.

USS Yorktown

Tour the interior of the massive aircraft carrier, commissioned in 1943 and part of the Pacific Fleet during World War II, then check out more than two dozen aircraft on the flight deck.

The Charleston Museum

See prominent collections of fossils, cultural artifacts, zoological specimens, and much more at "America's First Museum," founded in 1773.

Food and Drink

Get a taste of the Lowcountry.

Slightly North of Broad

Lowcountry dishes with modern flair—like the local oyster mushroom crepe with whipped feta and crispy parsnips—fill the menu at S.N.O.B., a local mainstay where reservations are recommended.

Bodega

Savor NYC-style breakfast sandwiches and "Bodega Boards"—a play on charcuterie—along with creative coffee drinks and cocktails at this graffiti-filled eatery inside a former train depot.

Home Team BBQ

Multiregional barbecue with a side of Southern hospitality? Yes, please. With three locations around Charleston and craft cocktails, this is a great spot for impromptu meals.

Celebrate Black Culture

Support small businesses and explore heritage.

The Sound of Charleston

Charleston's longest-running musical production combines gospel, Gershwin, music of the Civil War, and jazz.

International African American Museum

Opening in 2023 on the very spot where nearly half of the Africans brought to North America on slave ships disembarked.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site

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

Iconic Charleston

Save some time for the classics.

Charleston City Market

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

Rainbow Row

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

The Pineapple Fountain

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

See the city from a new perspective at ExploreCharleston.com

Where to Go in 2023

In Graz, Austria, the Murinsel is a futuristic island and pedestrian bridge over the river Mur.



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Start planning your 2023 travels to these 12 places—the most exciting, creative, delicious, and soul-reviving destinations of the year.

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ON THE COVER

Canada’s Prince Edward Island just unveiled a new way to experience its bucolic landscapes.

*Photograph by
Brendan George Ko*

Lettering by Abraham Lule

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MY HAPPY PLACE

Illustrator Lauren Tamaki shares her favorite New York City spot to feel at peace.



No place or person remains constant over the years; returning somewhere can feel both familiar and unfamiliar.

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COME BACK SOON

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Penguins, icebergs, and a cloudy eclipse: writer Roxane Gay recounts the chilliest romantic birthday celebration.



Disappear from the ordinary.

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Lost Yet Found

There are still
strides to be made,
but women are
engaged in public
life in a way I
never witnessed in
my childhood.

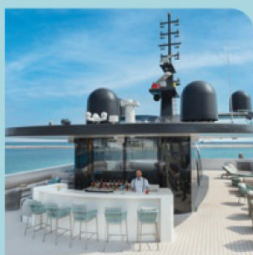
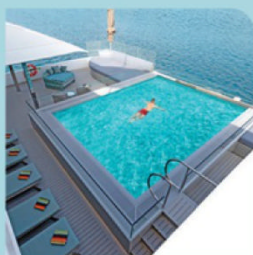
KINGDOM COME

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“I hope to visit Kakamega Forest, a Kenyan rain forest that’s home to giant fig trees and 330 bird species.” —S.B.

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you going in
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“Palau! I’m getting married in September, and the islands seem like a perfect place for an adventurous yet relaxing honeymoon.” —E.S.

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“I’m a new mom, and our first trip as a family will be to Italy. I can’t wait to introduce our baby to the country where I took my first trip as a child.” —K.G.

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“I’m doing an open-water swim race in Türkiye, followed by a sailing trip on a chartered gulet.” —O.M.

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Top 10 Sustainable Trips in Türkiye

If you are a traveler looking to reduce your carbon footprint by exploring less industrialized and invasive terrain, Türkiye is the destination for you with its surprising ecological and cultural diversity. Here is a selection of green adventures and sustainable experiences that will introduce you to the country's unblemished nature reserves, towering mountains and pristine beaches & lakes with minimal impact on mother earth. With magnificent heritage sites, diverse flora and fauna and welcoming local cultures, your epic and picturesque adventure await.



Horse riding in Cappadocia

1 / TÜRKİYE: AN AERIAL CROSSROADS

Throughout history, Türkiye has not only been a conduit for cultures and ideas, but also for the migratory birds for whom the country's skies serve as a flyway for their seasonal journey between Africa and Europe. Two of the most important global bird migration routes pass over Türkiye, through which a variety of fowl relocates to their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere each spring to escape the southern heat, reversing the journey each autumn. Türkiye's great variety of mountains, forests, coasts and wetlands offer a bountiful if transitory home for more than 450 bird species. Hatay acts as a migration gateway to the peninsula of Anatolia, the mainland of Türkiye, while the Bosphorus and Çanakkale straits provide a convenient corridor for birds en route to Europe. Every spring and autumn, the sky of İstanbul fills with hundreds of thousands of storks, hawks and eagles -granting an unrivaled viewing opportunity for bird watchers from around the world. Prime vantage points in İstanbul include the Sarıyer and Çamlıca hills. Indeed many bird sanctuaries can be found around the country, including the Gediz and Büyük Menderes deltas near İzmir. The pristine lakes of Manyas, Uluabat and Bafa, host waterfowls like flamingos, herons and pelicans annually. Artvin and Iğdır (Kars) also provide important ecosystems for those bird species who instead migrate to the Caucasia, each year.

► **Travel tip:** The best months to observe the great annual migration over Turkish skies are March-May in the spring and August-October in the summer/autumn.

2 / THE MYTHOLOGICAL LAND OF OLIVE TREES

On the North Aegean coast of Türkiye, overlooking the Gulf of Edremit, lies the storied mountain range of Kazdağı (Mount Ida) with its soaring peaks, healing springs, and rustic villages. This picturesque locale is not only a popular current destination for seaside holidays and yoga retreats, but also a place rich in Türkiye's agricultural history. The majority of Türkiye's olive groves can be found here, making the nation the second-largest olive oil producer in the world. Some of the olive trees in the region are hundreds of years old, providing a direct link to the country's long history of producing this age-old staple. Adatepe and Ayvalık are home to small local olive producers, as well as museums and tasting centers, converted from centuries-old olive oil workshops and factories. For outdoor enthusiasts, tours of Kazdağı National Park feature valleys, canyons, streams and waterfalls are all connected with majestic trails (including English-speaking guides on request). Among the 800 plant species known to the region, 78 are endemic, making the area one of Europe's leading botanic reserves.



Amphitheater of Termessos, Antalya



Patara Beach, Antalya

► **Travel tip:** As recounted by Homer in the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, Kazdağı (Mount Ida) played a central role as mythological host to the world's first beauty contest that, as legend has it, triggered the Trojan War back in the 12th century BC. To feel the epic history of the region, see the archaeological site of Troy, and its adjoining and exalted Museum of Troy.

3 / COUNTRY LIVING IN THE TURKAEGEAN

The North Aegean Turkish coast hosts several idyllic peninsulas, each encapsulating the joys of country living in Türkiye. Çeşme Peninsula near İzmir boasts many historical, natural, and culinary marvels. The rustic olive oil workshop unearthed in the Ionian city of Klazomenai, near the picturesque seaside town of Urla, proves that the modern olive oil producing techniques were first developed here, some 2600 years ago. In addition to olives, the region has several other renowned food staples and events. Urla is famous for its gum artichokes, while the city of Çeşme attracts visitors to its annual spring-time Alaçatı Ot Festivali (Herb Festival). Here, over 125 kinds of wild, locally grown edibles -like wild asparagus or blessed thistle are showcased in regional appetizers and delicacies. Seferihisar, the first *cittaslow* of Türkiye is famous for its mandarins, consumed fresh or dried. Figs and grapes are grown to perfection in the TurkAegean as well. These local grapes yield *pekmez* (grape molasses)

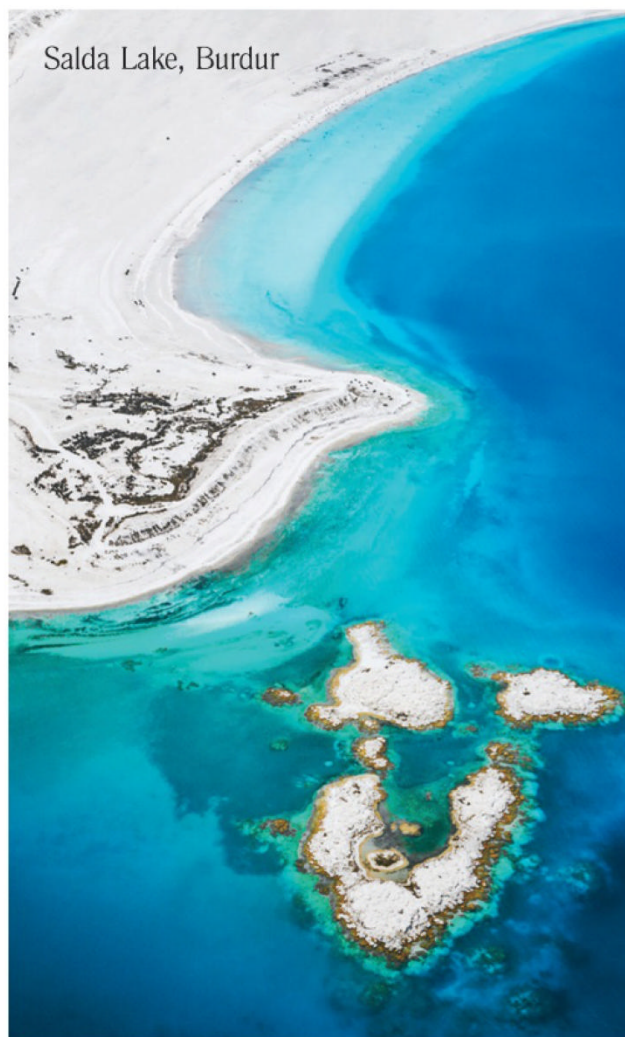
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and wine -two vital products to the area. The ancient city of Teos is famous for the Temple of Dionysus, an exquisite marble monument dedicated to the god of wine. So, it comes as no surprise that the whole region is among the centers of Turkish viticulture today. Along the Urla Wine Route, you can visit a series of local wineries big and small, where some innovative owners are even using sustainable production techniques like gravity flow, allowing the wine to be moved around much more gently. Urla wineries have been carrying on the local winemaking tradition mainly with international varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Sangiovese and Nero d'Avola. Ancient Anatolian grapes on the brink of extinction like *Bornova Misketi* (*Muscat*), *Urla Karası*, *Foça Karası* and *Gaydura* have also been reintroduced to the local vineyards in recent decades.

► **Travel tip:** İzmir is part of the EuroVelo Route 8, a long-distance biking trail stretching from the Atlantic shores of Spain all the way to İzmir, with several points of interest including the ancient UNESCO protected cities of Pergamum and Ephesus. Alternatively, you can enjoy windsurfing in Alaçatı or observe Mediterranean monk seals near the picturesque seaside town of Foça.

4 / PARAGLIDING FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO THE SEA

The scenic sandbank and lagoon of Ölüdeniz lie at the foot of the majestic Mount Babadağ, which soars some 1969 meters above the seaside in Fethiye. Due to the rugged geography of the surrounding area, this pristine bay was only recently discovered in the 60s by a group of adventuresome travelers. The cove later developed into a beachfront resort area with the arrival of the first hotels in the 90s. Today, Ölüdeniz lagoon operates as a national park and paragliding from Babadağ offers a hovering front-row seat to its breathtaking panoramas. Annually, the International Ölüdeniz Air Games hosts competitive international pilots and their fans for a variety of activities, including hot air ballooning, paragliding, microlight flying, skydiving, and base jumping. If you're



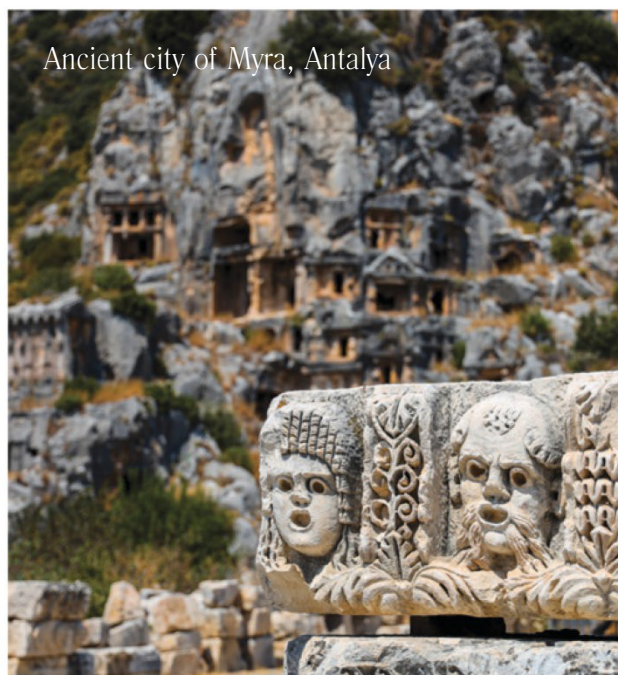
Fresh food markets of
Çeşme, İzmir

not a fan of flying, you can visit the Babadağ summit by cable car year-round to behold one of the best sunsets imaginable.

► **Travel tip:** Usually shortlisted among the most beautiful long-distance treks in the world, Lycian Way offers a 540-km waymarked trail (rated moderate to difficult), starting from Ölüdeniz and ending at Antalya. One can hike the entire trail in a month, or enjoy shorter, multi-day segments of the whole route. The Butterfly and Kabak Valleys are two neighboring natural wonders that display a rich variety of endemic plants, and wildlife including a colorful butterfly colony. Here you can indulge in ecological retreats featuring beach huts and glamping domes.

5 / LEARNING ABOUT THE LIFECYCLE OF SEA TURTLES

Endangered loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) and green sea turtles choose the beaches along the Turkish Riviera as their prime nesting spots, and of these, İztuzu Beach is most notable. This strip of golden sand along the southwest coast of Türkiye lies at the mouth of the Dalyan Stream, the winding runoff connecting Köyceğiz Lake to the Mediterranean. This fertile land was home to the ancient civilization of Kaunos until the 4th century



Ancient city of Myra, Antalya

BC, a strategic and prosperous port city invaluable to the merchant ships traveling between the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean coasts. Today, visitors venture to Dalyan to see the gorgeous temple-like tombs of Kaunos cut into cliff walls. Others come to witness and even volunteer for the conservation projects conducted on İztuzu Beach. Although sea turtles live for about 100 years, it is estimated that only one out of 1,000 hatchlings survives to be an adult. These sustainability efforts are crucial for the survival of the species in the face of modern development.

► **Travel tip:** Sea turtle nesting activities are regularly monitored by NGOs and universities. It is estimated that about 1500-2500 *Caretta caretta*s and 700-1000 green turtles nest along the beaches of Türkiye every year. From May to August, you can also observe the females laying eggs, and the baby turtles hatching two months later along the beaches of Fethiye, Patara, Çıralı, Belek and Anamur beaches, as well as Göksu Delta.

6 / TAURUS MOUNTAINS: A HAVEN FOR BOTANIC ENTHUSIASTS

The Anatolia peninsula is one of the more lush and bountiful habitats on earth enjoying great biodiversity. This is mainly due to its relative warmth during the last Ice Age, which allowed an abundance of plant species to flourish. As the only country on earth which has three biodiversity zones, Türkiye displays the characteristics of a continent, rather than a country, supporting some 12,000 distinct plant species. Indeed 30% of these plants are endemic to this region alone. One-fifth of these distinct plant categories are found in the Mediterranean region of Türkiye, along the Taurus Mountains overlooking the cities of Antalya, Mersin and Adana. These mountains dramatically soar above the azure Mediterranean, hosting flowers and vegetation like snowdrops, crocuses, wild orchids, tulips, hyacinths, narcissi, lilies and cyclamen, as well as the stately cedar forests.

► **Travel tip:** If you choose Antalya as your base for a Mediterranean botanical tour, you can enjoy the serenity of nature in the context of history. Be sure to include stops in the ancient cities of Phaselis, Olympus, Limyra, Myra and Termessos, where you'll find wildflowers among the fascinating ruins.

7 / DIVING IN THE TURKISH RIVIERA

Türkiye is a magnet for experienced divers with its vast coastline stretching about 5,000 miles. The southern summer resort of Kaş in the province of Antalya is the country's leading scuba diving hotspot, both for recreational divers as well as marine biologists, thanks to its rich underwater diversity. The region offers around 40 diving backdrops ranging from islands and banks to reefs, sinkholes, underwater structures and expansive canyons. The aquatic life here is vibrant and colourful with frequently spotted species including sea turtles, barracudas, stingrays, groupers, morays and more. There are several caves under protection as the last shelters of the Mediterranean monk seals as well. Roughly 20 diving schools are available to guide your diving adventures here, organizing expeditions that would suit your level of expertise. New divers can observe several amphoras scattered around the sea bed, and later, patron the famed Archeopark featuring a sunken replica of the 3,300-year-old Uluburun shipwreck, displayed in Bodrum Castle today. The venue hosts a variety of battle artifacts as well, including a World War II Italian bomber and a C-47 military cargo plane donated by the Turkish Air Force.

► **Travel tip:** The best time to visit is from June to September when the water temperature is above 21°C, and the underwater visibility is crystal-clear. Kekova Island and Patara Beach with their remnants of ancient Lycian cities are among the highlights.

8 / A TURKISH LAKE HOLDING CLUES TO LIFE ON MARS

Traveling to Mars may be a fantasy for the distant future, but you can instead consider visiting Lake Salda in Türkiye today -the closest thing to Mars on Earth. In preparation for its Mars 2020 mission, a NASA delegation joined a team from İstanbul Technical University at Lake Salda to study its shorelines and topography. Indeed there are striking mineralogical and geological similarities between Lake Salda and the Jezero Crater on Mars, the landing site for the Perseverance Rover and its mineral excavation. Astonishingly, Lake Salda provides some of the oldest known fossilized records of life on our planet, with its shoreline full of microbial sediments eroded from prehistoric rock formations. Scientists are now searching for similar signs of microbial life at Jezero Crater, suspected to be an ancient lake as well. Visitors can enter this protected natural reserve to relax and swim along the shores of Lake Salda, where the white sands conjure a tropical paradise.

► **Travel tip:** The nearby province of Isparta is famous for its rose farms, providing 65% of the rose oil produced all around the world for perfume, pharmacy and food industries. The biggest lavender fields of Türkiye are also nearby, at the Akçaköy village of Burdur province. Arrive in May and June to witness the rose harvest, and in July for the lavender harvest.

9 / HORSEBACK RIDING IN CAPPADOCIA

Known for its morning skies filled with graceful hot air balloons, the stunning UNESCO World Heritage site of Cappadocia near the city of Nevşehir sits within a unique landscape formed by the eruption of three volcanoes: Mounts Erciyes, Hasan and Melendiz. It's a timeless place where the pace of modern life remains at a distance. The volcanic valleys with powdery white soil and rock formations called "fairy chimneys" along with the historic churches and the cave hotels cut into the tuff, create an otherworldly



İztuzu Beach, Dalyan

feel. One of the best ways of exploring the natural setting is via horseback riding excursions organized by several local ranches. The Turkoman Akhalteke horses, as well as Arabian horses, have adapted to the arid terrain well and offer sturdy support to visitors during the daily horseback tours, and multi-day riding adventures. Here you can leave your vehicles and your worries behind.

► **Travel tip:** The subterranean world of Cappadocia is stunning. Staying in a cave hotel, visiting the underground city of Derinkuyu (once home to as many as 20,000 residents) and admiring the Göreme Open Air Museum with its rock-cut churches (dating back to the 10th century) are some of the marvels that make the region feel frozen in time.

10 / A "HANDS-ON" EXPERIENCE OF HISTORY IN ANKARA

The Anatolian Civilizations Museum, which is the country's most important institution displaying awe-inspiring relics of indigenous ancient civilizations of Türkiye, has recently initiated a pioneering project with a new hall dedicated entirely to visually impaired visitors. The replicas of 22 artifacts symbolizing different periods from the museum's permanent collection have been scanned and modeled by 3D printers, before being displayed in special stands supported by explanations in Braille alphabet and audio descriptions as well. Thanks to this new setting enhancing the accessibility of the museum, visually impaired visitors will be able to touch and feel the artifacts. This new venture is also in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to reduce inequalities by embracing every citizen in all realms of social life.

► **Travel tip:** The museum is located at the foot of Ankara Castle, the first settlement of the country's capital city. Any visit to this little fortified neighborhood, as well as the historical inns surrounding it, would be a rewarding one for history buffs and connoisseurs of antiques.



A Caretta Caretta

DOWNSIZING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT ON AIR

Among the ways to reduce the carbon footprint of air travel, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) stands out as the most eco-friendly solution today. This sustainably sourced aviation fuel is made of forestry and agricultural waste, used cooking oil, as well as the carbon captured from the air, and could reduce air travel-borne carbon emissions by 80%. The airline companies of Türkiye have initiated SAF-based flights to certain domestic and international destinations in 2022, while the local oil refineries have already hit the button to produce SAF that would mark a new era in air travel.





SARAH KHAN

Writer

Canada-born, New York City-based writer Sarah Khan spent the formative years of her childhood in Saudi Arabia. In **Kingdom Come** (p.92), she discusses her relationship to the country and its rapidly changing position on the global stage. “It’s fascinating seeing how it has evolved, and to watch [international travelers] discover it,” she says. Khan’s byline has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Travel + Leisure*, and she recently served as the editor-in-chief of *Condé Nast Traveller Middle East*. Find her on Twitter and Instagram @bysarahkhan.



KEITH DREW

Writer

Keith Drew is a journalist based in Winchester, England. He is the founder of the travel website Lijoma, which offers intel and inspiration for families on the road. There’s no place on Earth more intriguing to Drew than **Transylvania** (p.46), which captured his heart when he edited a guidebook to Romania in 2003. “From the wilderness to the age-old traditions, I marvel at the ways locals are trying to preserve all of this for future generations,” Drew says. Keep up with him on Twitter @keithdrewtravel.



KENDRA PIERRE-LOUIS

Writer

Queens, New York-based journalist Kendra Pierre-Louis has covered climate change in a solutions-oriented way for more than a decade, most recently on the podcast *How to Save a Planet*. In **The Plane Truth** (p.86), she wrestles with the challenges of flying, given its hefty carbon footprint. “How do we adapt to climate change today and how do we prevent future generations from enduring the worst possible outcomes?” Pierre-Louis asks. Learn more in her book *Green Washed: Why We Can’t Buy Our Way to a Green Planet* (Ig Publishing, 2012) and follow her on Twitter @kendrawrites.



ROXANE GAY

Writer

Roxane Gay, author of the *New York Times* best-selling collection of essays *Bad Feminist* (Harper Perennial, 2014), has several titles to her name, including writer, cultural critic, and the most recent addition, the Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. In her piece **Antarctica: A Love Story** (p.104), Gay recounts a cruise she took in November 2021 with her wife, Debbie Millman. “It’s one of those remote places that’s almost untouched by humans,” Gay says. “It was incredibly surprising how eerie it was.” She is currently working on two TV shows: *Negroland*, an adaptation of the writer Margo Jefferson’s memoir, and *The Banks*, which is based on Gay’s graphic novel of the same name. Find her on Instagram @roxanegay74.

Contributors



DEBBIE MILLMAN

Graphic Designer

Designer, author, and podcast host Debbie Millman is a native New Yorker who now splits her time between the Big Apple and Los Angeles. Even before she met her wife, Roxane Gay, Millman had a passion for travel—and big plans to ring in her 60th birthday in one of the most far-flung destinations on the planet. She documented their adventure with typography and mixed media in **Antarctica: A Love Story** (p.104). “Everything was unforgettable in Antarctica,” she says. Millman recently designed a wallpaper honoring theater actors and creatives lost during the AIDS crisis for the Museum of Broadway. View more of her art on Instagram @debbiemillman.



EMMA JOHN

Contributing Writer

For AFAR’s recent Journeys Issue (Fall 2022), Emma John recounted the monthlong train trip she took to reconnect with her European identity post-Brexit. During her travels, John stopped in **Graz** (p.38), the second-largest city in Austria, which was one of the most surprising places on her itinerary. “Graz is not as well-known as it should be,” she says. “It has its own unique climate and an incredible amount of historic architecture.” John is the author of *Self Contained: Scenes from a Single Life* (Cassell, 2021). Check out her adventures on Twitter @em_john.

New Year, New Trips

AS AN OWNER of a travel media company, I'm fortunate to work with a knowledgeable team, publish great stories, and meet people who give me endless ideas about where to go next. The only challenge: It's hard to choose.

One of my favorite sources of inspiration is AFAR's annual Where to Go list. Our editorial team reaches out to writers, reporters, and correspondents around the world for their top picks of places our travelers should visit in the coming year. They then sort through them and select destinations that feel poised for "a moment," whether it's a new cultural institution, park, or food offering.

I just got back from a cycling trip to eastern Canada's Prince Edward Island (PEI). I went there based on an early preview of this year's Where to Go list (yet another advantage to being cofounder of AFAR!). In August of 2021, PEI opened the Island Walk, a 435-mile route that encircles this crescent-shaped province.

I love that a destination would develop such a trail and what it says about how they want people to experience "the Island," as locals call it: slowly, intimately, and up close.

I pedaled about 100 miles over three days in the central portion of the Island, starting in the capital, Charlottetown. At 2,195 square miles, PEI is the smallest of Canada's 13 provinces and territories, as well as the most densely populated. But to me, a resident of San Francisco and New York City, it certainly didn't feel crowded. The ride featured scenic views, family-owned farms, and a beautiful coastline. The people were warm and the seafood was fabulous. The lobster roll at Original Richard's, a fish shack just off the beach outside of Prince Edward Island National Park, was the best I've ever had. That alone was worth the trip.

I urge you to turn to page 31 to read more about PEI and the other 11 destinations we recommend traveling to in 2023. I hope you will find quite a few places to go and reasons to do so soon.

Good travels,

GREG SULLIVAN

Cofounder and CEO



The Island Walk on Prince Edward Island is a long-distance trail modeled after Europe's Camino de Santiago.

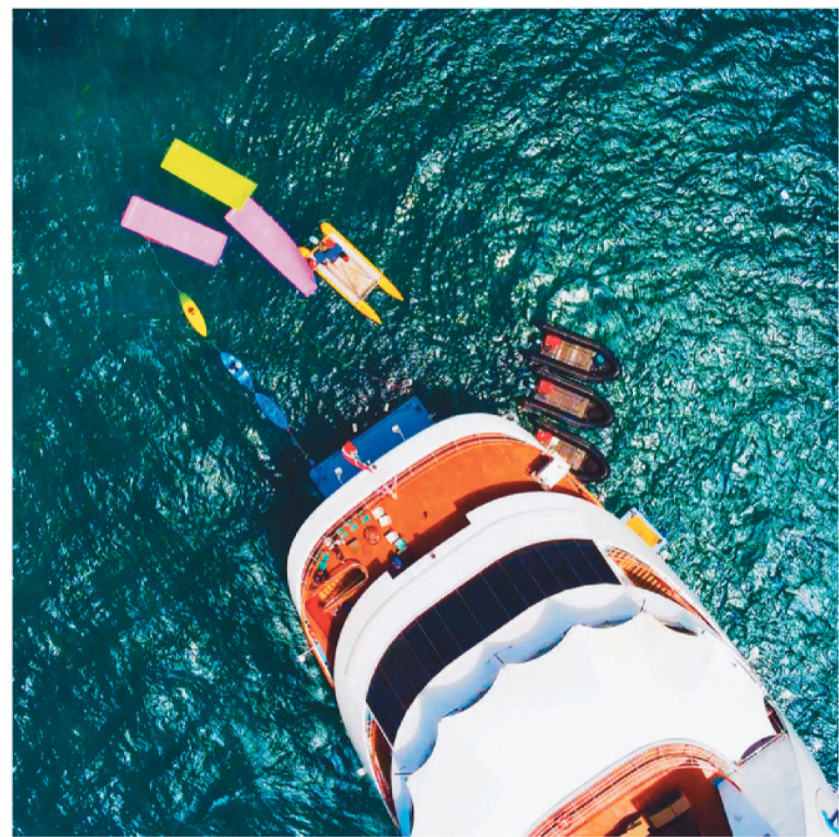
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Answer Asheville's Call to the Wild

From alpine peaks to ancient rivers, Asheville's natural beauty is abundant. Here's how to help ensure this Appalachian treasure remains pristine for future generations.

To love nature is to care for it, and the **WNC Nature Center** truly walks the walk. Located just east of downtown Asheville along the Swannanoa River, it's a zoological park featuring native animals and those with ties to the region, including wolves, otters, black bears, and red pandas. South of the city in the Pisgah National Forest, the **North Carolina Arboretum** sustains 434 acres of flora.

Bordering the Forest and flowing north through the city, the **French Broad River** dates back 320 million years. Today, its waters host myriad outdoor activities, from whitewater rafting to fly-fishing. For a more low-key river activity, head to **Wedge Brewing** on Payne's Way in the heart of the River Arts District or visit one of several other bankside taprooms.

The good times continue just south of the city at **Wrong Way River Lodge & Cabins**, a stylish, sustainably minded option for all adventurers. Responsible romantics might choose the **1889 White Gate Inn & Cottage** to keep things green less than a mile north of downtown.

Saving Local Green Spaces

Through a nationwide, grassroots campaign, Pledge for the Wild wants to empower you to preserve Asheville's greatest assets.

As a **Pledge for the Wild** member, Asheville's first beneficiary is the **Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation**, which works to sustain the gorgeous landscapes and biodiversity of this area also known as the Land of the Sky. Through donations and volunteers, the initiative promotes access to the outdoors with education and by constructing new hiking trails, bike paths, and urban parks.

With their help, you can safeguard access to the marvels of Asheville and its immediate surroundings, from the noble elk of the **Cataloochee Valley** to the mystic mists of the **Great Smoky Mountains**.

To learn more about what you can do to protect Asheville and Pledge for the Wild, go to exploreasheville.com/pledge-for-the-wild



Come Back Soon

Traveling to new places is thrilling. A return visit can lead to an even deeper experience.

THE CLANG OF A BRASS BELL vibrates down my spine, and I watch my grandmother fold her hands in prayer. I mimic her movements, walk behind her, and circumambulate the altar. I am nine years old and visiting relatives in Bengaluru, India, from the United States. My mother, grandmother, and I are in a Hindu temple in Malleshwaram, a middle-class neighborhood that is the geographic center of my grandparents' world. The fragrance of jasmine and champak flowers mingles with the mustiness of the space, and the stone feels cool to my bare feet. "Sit for a few minutes," my grandmother, whom I call Aiji, tells me in Kannada. "We should always sit at the temple when we visit."

As we emerge from the dark interiors, we are greeted by a jumble of hawkers selling bananas, okra pods, sari blouses, and steel cooking vessels. I strengthen my hold on Aiji's hand. Malleshwaram is the neighborhood in India that's most familiar to me. The owners of the local medical shop have





known my family for decades. Across the street is the studio that photographed my mother's graduation portrait in the 1960s.

People here look like me. I, however, am of the diaspora. Where do I fit in? I don't quite know, but the bustling crowds make me feel connected to something bigger than myself. I am the child who is bullied back at school by white children. Being here, though, makes me wonder if I might also be ancient stone and jasmine and my grandmother's firm grasp around my hand.

As an adult, I have been to Malleshwaram more than a dozen times. My trips have taught me that no place or person remains constant over the years; returning somewhere can feel both familiar and unfamiliar. Traveling to new places is thrilling, but for me, a second or third visit can carry more meaning. It makes me feel a bit unsettled—and also a bit restored. In these moments, travel becomes recursive and layered, a way to remember and revise ourselves and our understanding of the world. A place becomes meaningful based on what we bring to it, take from it, and leave behind.

I touch the warmth of my steel coffee cup to my cheek and savor this space, this place, this moment.

supposed to be an expert right now? I feel like a malfunctioning mother duck who paddles faster than her wide-eyed ducklings can comfortably follow. Perhaps I am protective of my memories and sense of self. I know this feeling will eventually pass, but for now, I need to bring this field trip to an end.

Fast-forward another 11 years, to July 2022. My 17-year-old daughter and I spend an evening wandering through Malleshwaram. I point out the dosa spot that my mother—her grandmother—enjoyed as a child. We gaze at the temple that my grandmother—her great-grandmother—used to frequent, resplendent in a finely draped silk sari, with her gray hair braided in a bun. Malleshwaram feels the same and different, probably because I too feel the same and different each time I am here.

"Let's sit down somewhere," I say. "We should always sit for a moment when we visit a place." ^A

I return to Malleshwaram in my mid-20s, this time with my mother. At a fabric store, we feel silk and georgette between our fingers. We sip filter coffee and eat *dosas* from a local joint that my mother frequented as a child. Though she has lived in the U.S. for close to three decades, this is home, and she lights up while reminiscing and sharing lively tales of the past. I listen to get to know her better; I love her laughter! Under the backdrop of Malleshwaram, our relationship feels more peaceful and we bicker less. Here I begin to see my mother as a daughter, a sister, a woman, a fuller version of herself. I touch the warmth of my steel coffee cup to my cheek and savor this space, this place, this moment.

Another 15 years or so pass. I am now fortyish, and as part of my role directing international education programs for U.S. universities, I've brought 15 students to Malleshwaram's market. It's crowded tonight, and people are everywhere. Why, then, do I feel so alone? This is the first time I am here without my family. Maybe I'm missing my grandmother, who has now passed. I'm agitated and can't settle down. I know this market intimately, yet today all I notice is my internal fog. My roles of cultural insider, interpreter, educator, and daughter of the diaspora blur together in a tangled mess. How am I



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AFAR ANSWERS

Primers for Travelers
Who Care

by TIM CHESTER

Illustration by MARTINA PAUKOVA



How should I prepare for a big trip?

After several years of backyard exploration and local getaways, many of us are yearning for longer, bigger, more ambitious trips. But am I the only one feeling a bit rusty when it comes to packing my bags and boarding a long-haul flight?

We asked AFAR readers for advice on how to prepare for a far-flung sojourn. Here are a few of the dozens of tips we received.

Pack smartly—and do the hard work before you leave home

The consensus was that you should bring much less than you think. The general refrain: Make a thorough list of what you really need; pick the right luggage; invest in some packing cubes; edit and edit some more. That comfy flight pillow can quickly turn into an albatross clinging to your backpack once you're on public transport. "Take half the clothes and twice the money," reader Cheryl Moore offered on Facebook.

Readers recommend thoroughly preparing for your trip before departure, making bookings for hotels, transportation, restaurants, and attractions. It's also a good idea to make photocopies of your credit cards and travel documents, including passport (and check that expiry date). "Then enjoy yourself and be ready to pivot when needed," Carla Stocker advised on Instagram.

Prepare for new realities

Travel in '22 was a tale of busy airports, worker shortages, and canceled flights. But there are ways to protect yourself—by booking trips through quieter hubs, purchasing robust travel insurance (four words: Cancel For Any Reason), and ensuring you have a plan B if your trip is unexpectedly cut short or elongated. Look into Global Entry for an expedited experience at airport security on your return. It's \$100 for five years, but some credit card providers

will cover the cost, and it pays for itself the first time you get to bypass a mammoth line.

Aside from the practical preparation, immersing yourself in a novel or memoir set in the area is a great way to get excited about a trip. It will also give you a sense of what to expect—think Elena Ferrante's Naples or the Colombia of Gabriel García Márquez. (On AFAR.com, you'll find recommendations for books from 80 countries around the globe.) The same goes for movies; streaming sites have a wealth of international films buried in their archives.

Go with the flow

Balance all that planning with a sense of spontaneity—and humor—when things don't go exactly as planned. Revel in serendipity, leave your comfort zone at home, and make memories from the unexpected. You don't need to complete a checklist of experiences; if you don't get to do everything you wanted to, that's a fine reason to return one day.

Pack your patience, several readers advised. "Anticipation is good," Kayla Whitney said. "Expectations are not." And remember, as Mike Mentz reflected on Instagram, "The stuff that goes wrong makes for the best stories."

I didn't get to see the famous Haida poles at the UNESCO site of Gwaii Haanas in Haida Gwaii in

British Columbia recently—but our diverted boat trip revealed some equally astonishing specimens, such as the Mosquito Pole, on the west coast instead.

Remember: when in Rome ... or Istanbul

A few shared words go a long way. Learn a little of the local language and familiarize yourself with regional customs. I once traveled around Türkiye reviewing small hotels for a guidebook and was offered a coffee at almost every establishment. A simple "teşekkür ederim" helped me thank the kind hoteliers.

Reflect on the trip afterward

Half a dozen AFAR travelers recommended keeping a journal on a trip or sending yourself postcards from your travels—analog ways to keep track of your memories in a smartphone age. "Journal your emotions, insights, and life discoveries about yourself," wrote Rachel Troyer on Instagram.

A long journey is a significant investment in time and money, but it can bring myriad benefits. "Be prepared to be awed," said Janice Moskoff from Gather and Go Travel on Twitter, "by your surroundings, by the goodness of regular people all over the world that does not get reported in the news, and most importantly, by your capabilities." **A**

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A group of people are sitting around a campfire at night. The campfire is burning brightly, casting a warm glow. In the background, there is a calm lake reflecting the light from the fire and the stars. The sky is dark and filled with many stars, suggesting a clear night. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

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AFAR TRAVEL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Our big, beautiful world is open once again. And a new year of travel possibilities awaits. Read on to learn about spirited cities, seaside villages, national parks, and more. These 12 places are where wonder prevails and wandering is highly recommended.

Illustrations by
DAVID SIERRA MARTÍNEZ

Where to Go in 2023

Edited by
TIM CHESTER &
ASHLEA HALPERN

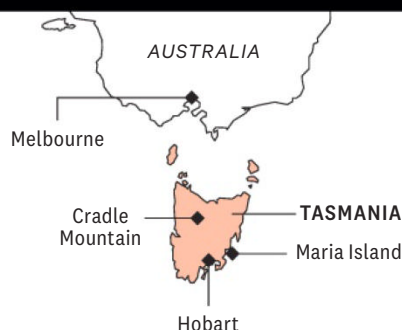


2023

WHERE
TO GO



Population
558,000



Know before you go

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has reconstructed an Indigenous language, now called *palawa kani* (using only lowercase).

Across this secluded and beautiful island state near Melbourne, irreverence and experimentation reign.

by LAURA DANNEN REDMAN

IT WAS MY FIRST TRIP to Australia—my first trip *abroad*—in 2001, and I arrived in Melbourne a green-as-they-come university student, all nerves and adrenaline, ready to pounce on whatever adventure lay before me. *Show me the city!* I screamed silently at our study-abroad orientation leaders. *Let me loose!* We visited the Coney Island–like neighborhood of St. Kilda on the south shore, learned the finer points of Australian rules football, and ferried to nearby Phillip Island, site of a nightly parade of pint-size penguins that dashed from sea to land at dusk, prompting a chorus of “awwws” from everyone with a heart.

Those points of interest were lovely but . . . safe. Introductory. What if I had realized that a couple of hundred miles off the coast of Melbourne was an island known for its irreverent art? For its stark and dramatic natural beauty, its world’s-best single-malt whisky, and seafood so fresh, it asks *you* about the catch of the day? What if I had visited Tasmania?

Much like the Azores in the Atlantic or Malta in the Mediterranean, this Australian island state has been preserved by its isolation. The Tasmanian Aboriginal people—the *palawa*—were said to have been cut off by rising seas in the Bass Strait some 12,000 years ago, marooned on a lush, mountainous mass roughly the size of Ireland. When the British arrived in the 19th century, they thought Tasmania—the end of the Earth—was an ideal place to send criminals. Tasmania’s population numbered fewer than 15,000 Indigenous inhabitants in 1804 but more than 70,000 convicts were transported there by 1853; a bloody Black War between British settlers and the *palawa* decimated the Aboriginal ranks as well as their language, culture, and traditions. Nowadays, Tasmania is the least-populated state in Australia.

Over the centuries, the poignancy and allure of isolation haven’t been lost on Tasmania’s residents. “To find a gaol [prison] in one of the loveliest spots



formed by nature in one of her loneliest solitudes creates a revulsion of feeling I cannot describe,” William Smith O’Brien, an Irish-nationalist inmate with a knack for poetry, reportedly said on arrival to Maria Island, now a national park, in 1849.

Can a place that inspires poetry remain secluded for very long? Surprisingly, it can: The first international airport near Hobart, the waterfront capital city, didn’t open until 1956. And in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, international travelers comprised only about one-fifth of Tasmania’s 1.3 million incoming visitors. Given that Tasmania is a one-hour-and-15-minute flight from Melbourne, it feels like it should—it must—become an extension of any trip to Australia’s east coast.



The Painted Cliffs on Maria Island off the east coast are stained by groundwater.



Almost half of Tasmania’s population lives in Hobart.



“The last time I went to Tasmania was purely to eat,” says Sydneysider and travel writer Krisanne Fordham, who visited twice in 2022. “It’s a food lover’s paradise. Honestly, the best oysters I’ve ever had are from the Freycinet Peninsula on Tasmania’s east coast—specifically [those from] Freycinet Marine Farm. They’re bright and creamy and go amazingly with Tassie bubbles.

“What keeps me going back is that there’s something for everyone,” Fordham raves. “If you’re into nature, almost half of Tasmania’s landmass lies in national parks and World Heritage areas, so you’ve got glittering alpine lakes, rivers, incredible snowcapped peaks like Cradle Mountain and Mount Wellington. If you’re into culture, MONA [Museum of Old and New Art] has really cool exhibits, and there’s always some kind of music or film or art festival happening year-round.”

In recent years, as Australians were confined to travel within their state boundaries, the island saw a flurry of investment, development, and creativity. Take Hobart, for instance, where most visitors to Tasmania begin their trips. Since it opened in December 2021, the Tasman, a Luxury Collection Hotel by Marriott, has been a point of pride in the city, with three distinctive, adjoined structures: an 1840s former hospital at its



Wineglass Bay on the Freycinet Peninsula can be traversed on foot or by kayak.



Wombats are nocturnal and are commonly found in Cradle Mountain–Lake St. Clair National Park.



MONA’s website advises visitors to: “Drink beer. Eat cheese. Talk crap about art.”

How to get there

Qantas, Virgin Australia, and Jetstar all fly direct to Hobart or Launceston from Melbourne, Sydney, or Brisbane.

Nickname

Tas
or Tassie

Stay longer

In Hobart, try the Rox—an 1880s schoolhouse turned into apartments—or the Pavilions, guest rooms run by the Museum of Old and New Art.

The reservation to make

The restaurant Van Bone, located on Marion Bay, serves a four-hour lunch made with the bounty from on-site orchards and nearby organic farms.



What if I had realized that a couple of hundred miles off the coast of Melbourne was an island known for its stark and dramatic natural beauty?



center, a 1940s art deco extension, and a brand-new glass building.

From nearby Brooke Street Pier, it's only a 20-minute high-speed catamaran ride to MONA. The museum's name belies the risk-taking art and happenings here. In addition to showcasing owner David Walsh's private collection (which includes one of the largest assemblies of works by light artist James Turrell this side of the equator), curators have asked such questions as, "Can poo be art?" and have showcased a functioning replica of the gastrointestinal system. They've also organized nude solstice swims. New performance art such as the High Tea for Two invites museumgoers to become part of "a living installation" during a scandalous socialite's teatime.

Food lovers might enjoy Mic Giuliani's foraging tours. Giuliani, who sells his hand-made pasta at Hobart's Farm Gate Market, takes small groups to search for greens, wild asparagus, and edible mushrooms. After the hunt, guests enjoy a six-course lunch with a local winemaker.

Blak Led Tours runs Hobart's first palawa tourism experiences. The Aboriginal-owned and -operated company leads walking tours that teach travelers about resisting settler violence and foraging for native bush foods on Aboriginal land.

Today, this island on the fringes, one of the loveliest spots formed by nature, is a place to learn and experiment, to be irreverent and eclectic.

Laura Dannen Redman is AFAR's digital content director.

Best time of year to visit

June to November.
The camp is closed from
December to May.

Required eating

Bread baked over an open
fire on the spokes of
repurposed bicycle wheels



How to get there

Fly into Dar es Salaam and take
a smaller bush plane to the
Jongomero airstrip, located in
the southern part of Ruaha.



In a remote corner of Tanzania's Ruaha National Park, travelers can find an abundance of wildlife without the crowds—and help with important conservation work.

by JENNIFER FLOWERS

SPRAWLED ACROSS 7,700 square miles in southern Tanzania, Ruaha is the country's second-largest national park. Yet it draws only a tiny fraction of Tanzania's safarigoers, who flock in much larger numbers to the more famous Serengeti in the north. But low visitation rates make biodiverse Ruaha a wildlife enthusiast's dream: This vast landscape of habitats, ranging from savannas to wetlands, feels like a private game reserve, and travelers can go days without seeing another vehicle.

In one of the park's less-visited corners, you'll find the Usangu wetlands, site of a former hunting reserve and home to the Wasangu tribe for centuries. The wetlands feed the Great Ruaha River, a critical water source for people, animals, and hydroelectric dams that supply energy to much of the country. Wildlife audits have revealed populations of cheetahs, leopards, and lions. Topi antelope can exceed 1,000 animals in one herd.

In 2017, the Tanzania National Parks Authority, Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute, and safari lodge company Asilia Africa came together to introduce a tourism model where revenue from visitors helps fund research, management, and conservation. Asilia's Usangu Expedition Camp, which opened in 2022, is the only place to stay for more than 30 miles in any direction. Its four high-ceilinged rooms feature enormous beds, rain showers, and wraparound mesh walls that provide views of acacia-dotted wilderness. The lodgings make a stylish base for exploration in two upcycled vehicles that run on ethanol created from the cane waste of a nearby sugar plantation. Guests pitch in on data collection from camera traps by day and thermal monocular cameras by night.

The area's conservation story is brought to life by the mostly local staff, including Wasangu guide trainee Anderson Pakomyus Mesilla, whose family roots in Usangu run generations deep. "I'm helping to conserve my ancestral home, but this wetland also supplies electricity to a large part of the country, including my village," he said. "We all benefit from conserving the source of the river."



As a camp administrator for Asilia Africa, Leena Lulandala uses telemetry to track collared animals.

Jennifer Flowers is the senior deputy editor of AFAR.

📍 Whistler, British Columbia

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CANADA^{🇨🇦}

**Required eating**

Pumpkin seed oil, which can be found flavoring everything from salads to ice cream

Best time of year to visit

May—for both Design Month and the Lendwirbel festival



Population
295,000

A DIY spirit brings a historic city to life in a riot of yoga, silent discos, and avant-garde music.

by EMMA JOHN

JUST OVER 100 MILES south of Vienna, amid the surprisingly Mediterranean climate of the Styrian wine region, sits Austria's second-largest city. Here, a fairy-tale jumble of baroque and Renaissance buildings clusters at the base of the Schlossberg, the hill that was once Graz's ultimate defense. Back in medieval days, a daunting fortress stood at its summit; Napoleon had it destroyed, but the colorful facades and terra-cotta roofs that sprang up beneath it still shine brightly in the southern Austrian sun. On the east side of the river Mur, Graz's past is a vivid presence.

On the west bank, however, you will find its future. What the districts of Lend and Gries lack in architecture they make up for in creativity and an entrepreneurial soul. At Bo Suppe, Arnd Hoffmann sells different flavors of homemade soup from his kitchen window (try the vegan pumpernickel Bolognese). At Managerie, Maria Reiner sells drinks and crocheted lampshades from the "kiosk shop" at the front of her apartment.

Daily life revolves around the Lendplatz morning market, and small businesses thrive thanks to a fierce community spirit that manifests in a busy calendar of events and projects, such as backyard flea markets, walking tours, outdoor yoga, and knitting circles. Travelers can find out more through the Annenviertel project, which was launched by local campaigners in 2014 to breathe new life into the quarter (or "viertel") around the shopping street of Annenstrasse. Live music at the 1930s bar Café Wolf ranges from Israeli space-rock to an improvisational autoharp trio. The Lendwirbel festival in May fills empty shop fronts with art installations, silent discos, workshops, and discussions.

The Kunsthaus Graz modern art museum, meanwhile, has inspired artists and designers to make their homes and livings here. Stroll along the main strip Mariahilferstrasse and you'll find jewelers, fashion boutiques, and homeware shops. A spirit of social enterprise infuses the city: One of the trendiest accessory stores in town, tag.werk, has helped hundreds of young people find employment over the past two decades by teaching them crafts and life skills. Come to Graz for the history, for sure—but stay for its hopeful vision of the future.

Contributing writer Emma John is the author of *Wayfaring Stranger: A Musical Journey in the American South* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2019). She is profiled on page 17.

▮ The architecture of Graz's Old Town has earned it status as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

< Maria Reiner sells drinks, coffee, and crêpes from her home-based kiosk.



📍 Jasper, Alberta

SOME MEETINGS CAN'T JUST BE AN EMAIL.



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CANADA^{🇨🇦}



Big water

The total combined area of the Great Lakes is 94,250 square miles.



How to get there

Via the gateway cities of Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Toronto, Buffalo, N.Y., and Thunder Bay, Ontario

How to remember them

Super Heroes Must Eat Oats is the mnemonic for Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario.



<

The Original Murdick's Fudge shop on Michigan's Mackinac Island has been in business for 135 years.

L

Towering bluffs and sweeping sand dunes define the landscape at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan.

From charming lake towns to expedition cruises, there are many good reasons to explore the Greats.

by ELAINE GLUSAC

A NATIVE OF MICHIGAN, I have a birthright bond to the Great Lakes, the magnificent five that span two countries and eight states, from New York in the east to Minnesota in the west. Michigan, which claims shoreline on four of the five lakes, always seemed like both the center of it all and a remote peninsula, buffered by its treasures. During high school, when my family had moved to a suburban Detroit home near a smaller lake that connects the Greats, I would fall asleep to the faint bass notes of freighters' foghorns, the songs of vast waters you can't see across, inland seas at once familiar and strange.

All these years later, they remain a place to splash in the calm shallows each summer or brave the waves by kayak. Winter brings ephemeral ice caves and adaptations such as iceboats, or sailboats on blades. "Great" describes not just their size but their influence on culture, history, and our climate future.

The lakes form the planet's largest freshwater system, and the world is waking up to their wonders. As the climate warms, cities such as Duluth, Minnesota, on Lake Superior are being revitalized by newcomers eager to live and play where water is abundant. Last summer, small-ship cruise lines launched on the lakes, calling at tranquil bays, resort towns, and lively cities. New options for exploring this relatively untrammelled part of the United States feature offerings from American Queen Voyages, which recently began operating a pair of 202-passenger ships on the Great Lakes, and Viking, whose 378-passenger *Viking Octantis* and its twin, *Viking Polaris*, both debuted in 2022. Port highlights include Niagara Falls; Thunder Bay, Ontario; and Michigan's Mackinac Island.

Required reading

*The Living Great Lakes:
Searching for the
Heart of the Inland Seas*
by Jerry Dennis
(St. Martin's Griffin, 2004)

Required eating

Don't miss lake-caught whitefish from a "fish boil" in Wisconsin's Door County or the Cornish meat pies known as pasties at Lehto's in St. Ignace, Michigan.



"Before there were roads, even before there were trains, the easiest way to get people and products here was by water."

Robert Buffalo, hereditary chief of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, greets visitors from the Viking Octantis in Bayfield, Wisconsin.

Kayakers navigate the sea caves near Cornucopia, Wisconsin, the western gateway to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

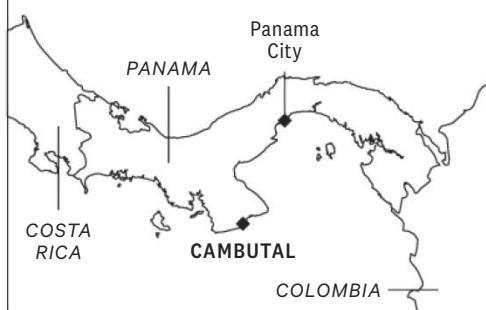
schooner. "Before there were roads, even before there were trains, the easiest way to get people and products here was by water."

Though the Greats often get lumped together, each remains distinct. Lake Ontario in the east is largely rural on the U.S. side but bustling in Canada, and Torontonians rent coastal cottages in beachy Prince Edward County. Industrial Lake Erie is inseparable from Cleveland, once a center for auto and steel manufacturing; it's still a great place to watch freighters navigating the Cuyahoga River as you relax at Alley Cat Oyster Bar or Merwin's Wharf on the waterfront. Hike along glaciated Lake Huron, with 30,000-plus islands and trilobite fossils along its shale shelves, and finish with a swim in the turquoise waters of a natural cave. Brave the searing sand dunes—some 450 feet high at Sleeping Bear Dunes—then sprint down to the cool of Lake Michigan, a recreational playground. Northernmost and largest, Lake Superior is the wild child, where you can skirt color-banded sandstone cliffs by kayak for an afternoon or camp for days along deserted bays in the coastal wilderness of Isle Royale National Park.

Today, I live in Chicago, where Lake Michigan cools the city in summer and warms it in winter, another magical property of these massive bodies of water. It's a physical benefit of a Great Lake, but there are spiritual ones, too. Ken Cole, a psychologist who lives in Milwaukee and surfs Lake Michigan, often sends clients to the lakefront. "Ninety-five percent of surfing is sitting on your board, facing the horizon, being immersed in nature, the sunrise, the birds," he says. "When you turn your back to the land, you can clear your head."

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





How to get there

Drive 5.5 hours south from Panama City. Alternatively, take a 45-minute flight to Pedasí and rent a car for the 1.5-hour drive to Cambutal.

Required eating

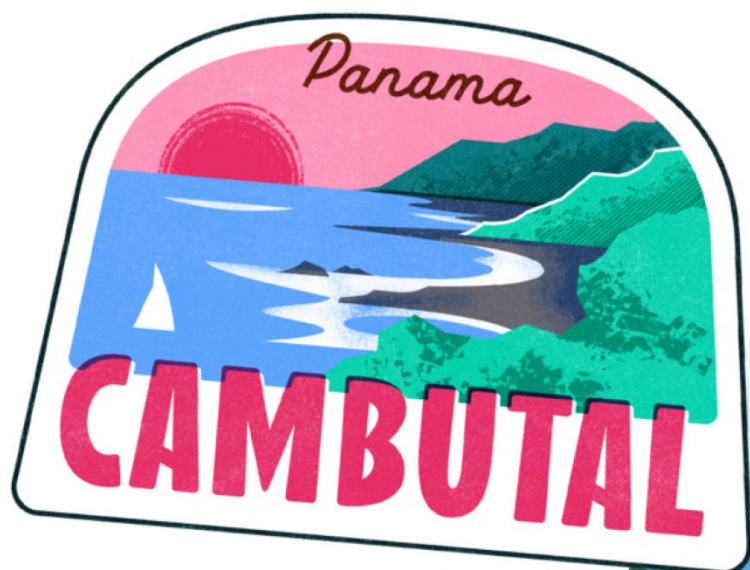
Try the *camarones al ajillo* (garlic shrimp) at La Tierra de Mis Sueños and the fried whole snapper with *patacones* (fried, smashed plantains) at Restaurante Cambutal Beach.

Where to stay

For a luxurious beachfront experience focused on wellness and surfing, book a cabana at the Sansara Surf + Yoga resort.

Adventure and community-centric tourism beckon on the southern coast of Panama's Azuero Peninsula.

by JESSICA POITEVIEN



FEW TRAVELERS who visit Los Santos, one of Panama's least-touristed provinces, venture to the end of the only main road heading south. That's where Cambutal awaits, 228 miles from Panama City—a beach town garnering much-deserved attention from Panamanians and intrepid international travelers alike.

The town sits on the shores of a never-crowded, volcanic black-sand beach with perfectly surfable waves. The surrounding jungles hold rivers, canyons, natural pools, and multitiered waterfalls.

Having spent a lot of time on the southern coast of the Azuero Peninsula during his childhood, Panama-born Bryan Goldner founded Azuero Adventures in November 2020 to help visitors safely explore the region. As Cambutal's only registered tour operator, the company started small, with horseback rides through grassy hills to bring travelers to see petroglyphs carved by Indigenous people.

In 2022, Azuero Adventures introduced multiday trips to Cerro Hoya National Park, just west of Cambutal. Encompassing more than 80,000 acres with no direct road entry, Cerro Hoya can only be accessed by boat, on horseback, or in a 4x4 vehicle, making it one of the hardest-to-reach national parks in Panama. The mostly untouched land is known for its diverse wildlife, including the great green macaw and the Azuero spider monkey, both endangered species. Guests can stay in secluded oceanfront cabins or opt for



full immersion with an overnight camping expedition that includes a hike through the cloud forest more than 4,200 feet above sea level.

With sustainable and equitable tourism at the heart of his operations, Goldner works closely with the people of Cambutal—a vision directly in line with the Panama Ministry of Tourism's efforts to strengthen rural and community-based tourism enterprises.


"We use local captains and local guides," Goldner says. "The idea is not to hire people and bring resources from outside when we have such a rich community that's already here."

Jessica Poitevien is a Florida-based journalist.



Travelers can hike or ride horses on the black-sand beaches in Cambutal, Panama.

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CANADA'S

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Jasper, Alberta

View Film

TravelAlberta.com

How to get there

Most international flights arrive in Bucharest, although there are also airports in the Transylvanian cities of Sibiu and Cluj-Napoca. From Bucharest, the drive is around two and a half hours.



Best time of year to visit

Spring or summer. Bears are active from May to November; visiting early in the season offers the chance to see young cubs. Wild boar and bison can also be spotted across the region.



Nature and tradition thrive in one of Europe's last wild regions.

by KEITH DREW

IT'S BEEN 125 YEARS since Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula*, branding Transylvania as a dark, forbidding land populated by bloodsucking counts with an aversion to holy water. And while perhaps no other book has clouded its readers' impression of a place in quite the same way, Stoker was right when he wrote of the region's wild side. North of Bucharest, in the heart of Romania, Transylvania is home to one of Europe's last great wildernesses: a sprawl of alpine meadows, ragged limestone ridges, and old-growth forests that billow across the landscape in a thick quilt of juniper, spruce, beech, and fir.

These wild mountains harbor some of the highest numbers of large carnivores—brown bears, wolves, and lynx—on the continent. The nonprofit Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC) is in the process of creating a vast reserve to safeguard all this for future generations—a “European Yellowstone” as Christoph Promberger,

FCC's executive director, envisions it—that will stretch for nearly 618,000 untamed acres across Romania's Southern Carpathian Mountains.

The foundation has already started rewilding huge sections of the Carpathians, buying up parcels of land to stop them from being illegally logged or used for trophy hunting, and replanting 3.65 million trees. The plan is to eventually stitch together this patchwork of protected areas and within the next decade return it to the Romanian people in the form of an emblematic national park.

Travelers can put themselves on the front lines of this ambitious project with a trip into the wooded Dâmbovița Valley, deep within the Făgăraș Mountains, in the far south of the region. Guided hiking trips with Travel Carpathia, the FCC's ecotourism arm, lead trekkers to remote wooden hides clinging to the upper slopes. Here, bears lollop across clearings in the half-light of dusk and dawn, and you might see bison, a key-stone species the FCC recently reintroduced to the Făgăraș after an absence of 200 years.

On the other side of the mountains, the villages of southeast Transylvania's Târnava Mare area are starting to embrace ecotourism and agrotourism to help keep their ancient traditions alive. Settled by Saxons from Germany and the Lowlands in the 12th century, the hamlets are full of historic houses—thick walled and wooden shuttered, with facades painted in soft creamy pastels—and many of their fortified churches are UNESCO listed as well, but what is drawing visitors today is the chance to engage with local life. In Viscri, where elderly women in headscarves corral flocks of geese along the main

At Viscri 32, one of many historic properties that have opened across Transylvania, rooms are furnished with antiques made in the region.



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Stay longer

Braşov, Sighişoara, Sibiu, and Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania's main cities, are all worth visiting in their own right. Braşov and Sighişoara have old towns with cobbled streets; Sibiu and Cluj are known for their lively cultural scenes.

The reservation to make

The menu at Viscri 32, a restaurant (and guesthouse) in the village of Viscri, varies depending on what the chefs have sourced from local farms. Expect dishes such as *lucicoş*, a thick cabbage and smoked pork soup, and Saxon chicken with prunes and cinnamon.



^
Wildflowers are at their most beautiful in late June and July across this “European Yellowstone.”

street, Saxon homes are opening up as guesthouses, complete with original furnishings and the opportunity to try traditional foods. (Reserve through tour company Experience Transylvania.) In Criţ, travelers can sample the local beekeeper's honey, made from the seasonal blossoms of hawthorn and acacia. In nearby Saschiz, pottery workshops with conservation NGO Fundația ADEPT use techniques revived from the 1700s to craft plates and pots, while the jams sold at Pivnița Bunicii are made with fruit harvested from courtyard gardens. Rhubarb, rose hips, sour cherry, and green walnut are all regional specialties.

The hills surrounding these villages are carpeted in some of the most pristine grasslands in Europe: a riot of pinks, creams, yellows, and blues in summer, when the wildflowers are in bloom and the dense drone of insect activity is so charged it feels like the air itself is thrumming. Visit the meadows on a horse-drawn cart, or cycle through them on part of the Transylvania Bike Trails, a 62-mile network that links Viscri, Saschiz, and several other Saxon villages.

This is the real Transylvania: wild, traditional, open, untarnished. And not a vampire in sight.

Keith Drew has written for BBC Travel and the Telegraph and has worked on guidebooks for Rough Guides. He's the cofounder of the family travel website Lijoma.com. He is profiled on page 17.



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How to get there

There are no nonstop flights from the United States, but Air Canada launched seasonal service from Vancouver to Bangkok on December 1—the first direct route from North America in a decade.

Where to stay

The Standard, Bangkok Mahanakhon hotel opened in late July with saturated, curvaceous decor and a well-curated concept shop.

Ambitious young Thais are driving a creative reawakening in one of the world's most visited cities.

by KATHRYN ROMEYN



FROM THE END OF an L-shaped bar I watched three chefs in black caps delicately plate 11 dishes of what appeared to be snow. Loud music masked the sounds of the busy Bangkok street outside. “OK guys, this one is titled, ‘Daft Punk Is Playing in My Mouth,’” said chef Sareen Rojanametin, setting the intriguing dish before me. Marvelously on cue, the throbbing LCD Soundsystem song “Daft Punk Is Playing at My House” burst onto the stereo.

The first bite rocked me to my core. At Small Dinner Club, which “pulls apart, questions, and reimagines Thai food,” you’re not handed a menu. The 12-course evenings are a delightful mystery accompanied by inspiration notes from the 32-year-old chef, who opened the hidden boîte in February 2022. “For me this dish represents the essence of Thai cuisine,” he wrote. I expected coconut or lime; instead I got an explosion of Thai green chile. My eyebrows started sweating. I swirled it all up: hot ice, tiny iridescent fish, watermelon, and a sumptuous black sesame sauce. These were the flavors of Thailand composed into an entirely new song. Rojanametin, who spent two years in a forest monastery before opening the restaurant, tells me, “The city has changed a lot in the last four years. People are much more daring.”

Surprise is a theme that came up again and again on my latest trip to Bangkok. Before the pandemic, this was the world’s most visited city, known for its floating markets and ornate temples. Now it’s in the midst of a renaissance, thanks to the creativity of young Thais



COURTESY THE STANDARD, BANGKOK MAHANAKHON (LEFT),
COURTESY TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (RIGHT)

like Rojanametin. A crop of ambitious entrepreneurs, energized by cultural and ancestral pride, are dreaming up galleries and cafés, soulful restaurants, and fun theme bars. “It’s amazing to be in Bangkok at the moment,” Rojanametin says. “The scene is working, the culture is working, and people are into it.”

I caught glimpses of the thronged Chao Phraya River while weaving through the historic neighborhoods of Bangrak-Klongsan (recently dubbed Bangkok’s creative district) and Talad Noi. Local guides from the luxury travel company Smiling Albino bring tourists here on cycling tours, but it’s mostly Bangkok kids who’ve discovered the rich Instagram photo ops. One *soi*, or small laneway, doubles as an alfresco gallery with murals of fantastical Thai and Chinese characters

streaming down one wall, 49 gritty images shot on film by local photographers on the opposite one. Food vendors and jewelry traders embedded for generations work alongside a new cohort opening spots such as Hong Sieng Kong, an antique-filled café in a 150-year-old riverside warehouse with brick walls choked by a fig tree.

Mook Attakanwong, whose parents’ Lek Gallery has been a Bangrak fixture for more than 45 years, opened ATT 19, a multidisciplinary art hub, in February 2019. The family affair includes her sister, Cher, who runs the adjoining 12-seat kaiseki restaurant Mad Beef, and their mom, who makes cakes for ATT 19’s café. Mook, 31, worked in the fashion industry in New York City before coming back

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Bangkok’s khlongs, or canals, snake around Buddhist temples, markets, and schools.

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Minimalist uniforms at the Standard, Bangkok Mahanakhon hotel were designed by local label Fah Chak WO+MAN.

Required eating

Kuay teow reua, or boat noodles, are made with Thai basil, morning glory, and chile simmered in a *tom yum* soup base.

Stay longer

Hop a long-tail boat to Bang Krachao, aka the Green Lung of Bangkok, an island rich in farmland, jungle, and forest. Explore by bike and make a night of it by booking a villa at wellness retreat RAKxa.

Nickname

Bangkok's complete Thai moniker is Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Ayuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit.



to Bangkok with the idea of creating a free gallery that welcomes young people—no appointment necessary. As creative director, she conceives of exhibitions led by emerging local artists that explore topics such as women's equality and mental health.

In the Bang Khun Thian neighborhood, the lush Poomjai Garden is the result of owner Aey Tiensup's tireless work to resuscitate her family's garbage-strewn canal-side land (photo albums show the

earlier mess), creating a living museum, restaurant, and a venue for workshops and private events. Tiensup eagerly walked me through the 2.77-acre permaculture park erupting with hairy eggplant, bilimbi (tree sorrel), *som saa* (bitter orange), and violet-hued butterfly pea, clippers in hand to snip and nibble endemic flora while explaining their various uses and benefits. "It's a weed for someone else, but for me it's food," she said as we strolled in the



Locals roam the grounds, snap photos, and sip muddled tea at Poomjai Garden in Bang Khun Thian.



Switzerland.

Best of Swiss winter.

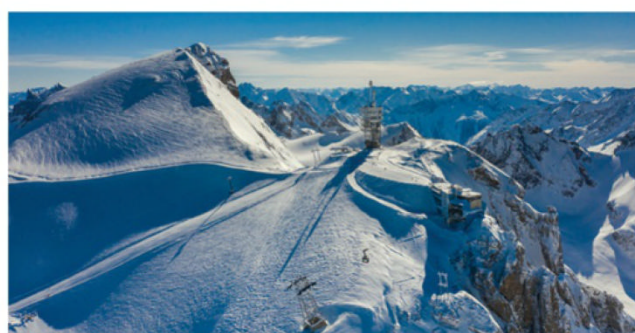
Kayaking near Interlaken

With the upcoming winter season just around the corner, we can start planning to experience snow-capped mountains, fresh snow rustling underfoot, superbly prepared pistes and pristine powder slopes. The possibilities to have winter fun are endless. Here are some of the best.



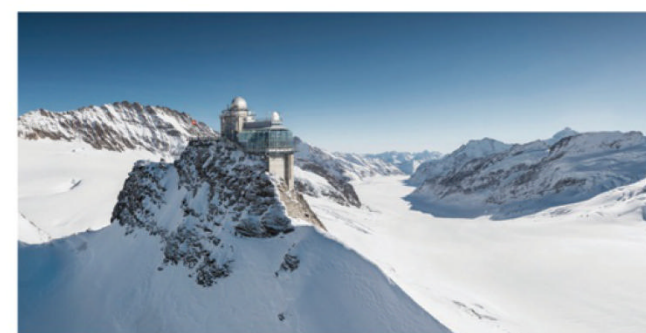
Glacier Express.

Take in everything above and all around you, from the rivers to the mountains, as you travel across Switzerland on what's often called "the window to the Swiss Alps," the Glacier Express.



Engelberg-Titlis.

For thrill-seeking skiers, it's hard to beat the back country terrain you can find in Engelberg. The draw of Engelberg is the promise of unbeatable off-piste experiences on fresh powder snow.



Jungfrau Region.

Picturesque Interlaken is the perfect starting point for exploring the Jungfrau Region. A visit to the Jungfrauoch – Top of Europe puts a jewel in the crown of any visit to Switzerland.



Valais Region.

Nendaz is one of many great ski resorts in the Valais Region. While it boasts world-class winter sports activities, Nendaz has a more approachable vibe that brings all kinds of winter fun for the whole family.



Zermatt.

Zermatt is famous as one of the most incredible mountain resorts and for the iconic Matterhorn. But also for its fantastic dining experiences, making it a perfect choice for both ski and food fans.



SWISS

Swiss International Air Lines offers convenient nonstop service from seven US gateways to Switzerland, offering winter sports enthusiasts free transport of their first set of winter gear.

For travel deals to Switzerland, please visit: AlpineAdventures.net/visit-switzerland
or for more inspiration: MySwitzerland.com/winter



“I want my sons to be proud of the land, proud of Bangkok, proud of Thailand, so cooking the traditional food is really important.”

rewilded lychee garden that has been in her family since before King Rama V’s reign (1868–1910).

While Tiensup worked to save the land and the surrounding community she repeatedly called “precious” on our tour, her 31-year-old son, Andy Chotsrileochoa, noticed his peers getting excited about sustainability and realized the best route to preserve their family heritage was through a revenue-generating business. Now, mother and son, along with staff hired from the neighborhood, welcome 500 people every weekend.

As I dug into Tiensup’s tender *miang kham*—slow-roasted coconut and herbs stuffed into fresh coral tree leaves with slices of sour bilimbi—she opened a large book of maps. “I want my sons to be proud of the land, proud of Bangkok, proud of Thailand, so cooking the traditional food is really important—it connects everything,” she said, eyes dancing. “Food can be a bridge between development, community, and history.” *Poomjai*, it’s worth noting, means proud.

I witnessed Bangkok’s culinary scene thriving at every level. There are currently 30 Michelin-starred restaurants—R-Haan, Khao, and Yu Ting Yuan among them—with more surely coming, such as newcomer Potong, tucked inside chef-owner Pichaya (Pam) Utharntharm’s traditional Chinese herbal medicine pharmacy. She serves a 20-course set menu of meditations on Thai Chinese flavors using local produce for dishes with names such as “beautiful” (blood clam, pomegranate, fermented chile, and lily kimchi).

Being temporarily cut off from the world wasn’t the worst thing for the city. Attakanwong, the founder of ATT 19, noticed many Thai creatives who had been living abroad returned during the pandemic. “And,” she said, “they’re back for good,” having discovered a new sense of purpose, urgency, and appreciation. “There’s been a big exchange of knowledge, and a lot of seeking within ourselves, trying to fix the problems we see in the city.”

Kathryn Romeyn is a Bali-based journalist who covers culture, nature, and design, especially throughout Asia and Africa.



^
The aromatic rice at Small Dinner Club is one in a parade of dishes from boundary-pushing chef Sareen Rojanametin.



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Best time of year to visit

Middle to late February, for Carnival

Required eating

Try *acarajé*, the shrimp-stuffed black-eyed-pea fritters often sold by elegantly attired Baiana women.



WHERE TO GO

2023

The reservation to make

At the restaurant and bar Malembe, co-owner Daiane Menezes makes the city's best cocktails using Brazilian cachaça.

Engaging with Brazil's Black history is essential—and easier than ever in the city of Salvador thanks to new cultural offerings.

by KAYLA STEWART

IN SALVADOR, A PORT CITY on the northeastern coast of Brazil, history isn't relegated to textbooks. More than 4 million people were kidnapped from Africa and forced to harvest coffee beans and sugarcane in the country—a legacy that is most evident in the state of Bahia, where 80 percent of the population is Black or mixed race. Today the descendants of those enslaved people carry on traditions through Salvador's food, culture, and music.

Tour company Guia Negro leads English-language historical outings delving into Brazil's Black heritage, including a walk through the streets where Michael Jackson and Spike Lee shot "They Don't Care About Us," the 1996 music video featuring the storied Afro-Brazilian drum team Olodum. The Casa do Carnaval da Bahia is a museum dedicated to the history of Brazil's annual carnival celebration. The City of Music of Bahia museum, which opened in 2021, invites visitors to experience more than 800 hours of Bahian music, with the goal to educate them about specific styles such as *pagode*, a Brazilian subgenre of samba, and *axé*, an Afro-Caribbean mash-up that originated here.

The painful, racist history of Pelourinho, the city's old town, is preserved in its name, which translates to "whipping post." Once the site of slave auctions, it's now home to brightly painted houses, cobblestoned streets, and numerous restaurants. At the rustic eatery Di Janela, chef Nara Amaral serves the food that brings her joy: roasted garlic with octopus, ruby-red lobster with heavily seasoned potatoes, and traditional fare such as *moqueca*, a seafood stew. At Ana Célia Santos's Zanzibar restaurant, the *moqueca* takes numerous forms. A vegetarian version is prepared with rice and *farofa* (toasted cassava flour), while another is made with shrimp, stingray, and soft-shell crab.


For late-night entertainment, visitors should go to ABOCA Centro de Artes, a theater that hosts Afro-Brazilian musicians such as Mariene de Castro and Mateus Aleluia. After all, there's no better way to end a day in Salvador than by listening to the residents who give the city its heartbeat.

Kayla Stewart is a food and travel writer and the coauthor, with Emily Meggett, of *Gullah Geechee Home Cooking: Recipes from the Matriarch of Edisto Island* (Abrams, 2022).

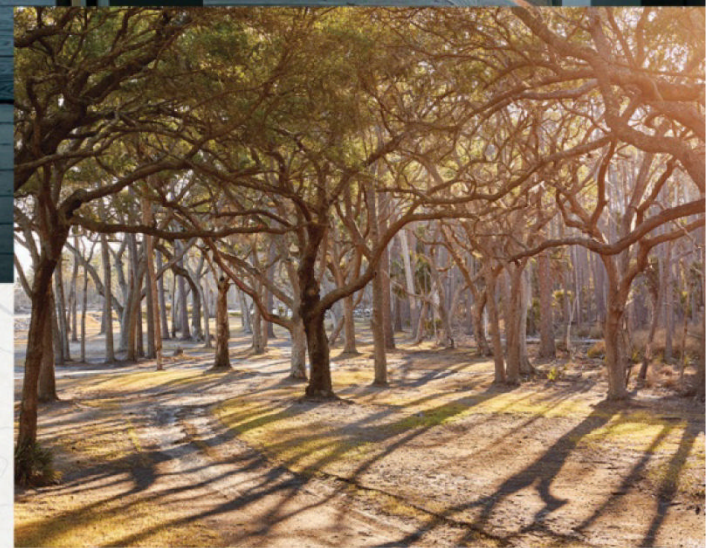


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The drum team Olodum marches through the streets of Salvador.

<
Pelourinho, the city's historic center, is packed with vibrant restaurants, shops, and dance halls.



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How to get there

A taxi from Dubai International Airport to Sharjah's heritage district takes about 20 minutes.



Thought-provoking art and architecture shine a light on an emirate often overshadowed by its glitzier neighbors.

by NICOLA CHILTON



The Rain Room installation by Random International is part of the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection.



Opened in 1987, the King Faisal Mosque was named after the former ruler of Saudi Arabia.

EVER SINCE I MOVED to the United Arab Emirates seven years ago, I've loved Sharjah. It may not have the biggest/tallest/highest superlatives of Dubai or the epic palaces of Abu Dhabi, but understated Sharjah is home to some of the region's most exciting cultural institutions. And 2023 is a big year for the emirate, with headline events showcasing two of its greatest draws: art and architecture.

The 15th Sharjah Biennial runs from February to June, presenting the creations of more than 150 artists from 70-plus countries. Thirty newly commissioned pieces, including works by Moroccan photographer Hassan Hajjaj and British Palestinian multimedia artist Mona Hatoum, will be featured in a program that spans 16 venues and explores the theme "Thinking Historically in the Present." The exhibition spaces are as intriguing as the art: from traditional coral-stone houses to the Sharjah Art Foundation's recently acquired 1970s-era Flying Saucer, a UFO-shaped building that once housed a French patisserie and a fast-food chicken shop.

In November, the Sharjah Architecture Triennial (SAT) returns, curated by Nigerian architect Tosin Oshinowo. It is part of a year-round lineup of workshops, talks, and guided walks devoted to architecture. Launched in 2022, SAT's tours traverse the emirate's lesser-known neighborhoods, delving into their history and visiting such projects as a modernist bus station.

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Population
1.6 million

Required reading

Building Sharjah (Birkhäuser, 2021), edited by Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi and Todd Reisz, is filled with archival photography and accounts of the emirate's development.

Required eating

The breakfast tray at the Arabian Tea House comes with eggs, olives, rose jam, za'atar, *labneh*, Halloumi, fresh cream, honey, and tandoor bread.

Best time of year to visit

Summer is very, very hot. Go between November and April for more comfortable temperatures.

Festivals aside, Sharjah rewards travelers who make the effort to get to know it more deeply. In the Souq Al Shanasiyah, hip coffeehouses sit alongside shops selling perfume and traditional clothing. Local families browse for fabric, sweets, and spices in Souq Al Bahar, a bazaar surrounded by century-old homes topped with wind towers, an ingenious form of early air-conditioning that captures the sea breezes and pulls them inside. Travelers can sift through ramshackle piles of antiques in Souq Al Arsa, where long-stemmed Arabian brass coffeepots line groaning shelves and semiprecious stones hang on strings from the rafters. The market's 60-year-old Al Arsa Café is a welcoming spot for a cold drink and hot biryani.

The Al Mahatta Museum sits on the site of the UAE's first airport. Dating to 1932, Al Mahatta was the Emirates' hub of aviation decades before Dubai's airport was even built. Now ringed by high-rise apartments, the museum is centered around what

was the original control tower. Inside, visitors can see vintage aircraft—including planes you can enter—and old photographs from the airport's heyday.

Just outside Souq Al Bahar, hidden behind pale yellow walls, stands one of Sharjah's most atmospheric hotels, the 53-room Chedi Al Bait. The cluster of restored heritage buildings—the onetime home of the pearl-trading Al Midfa family—is now a peaceful sanctuary of courtyards and shady trees, water features, and hand-carved wooden doors. Two additional houses are being restored and will open in early 2023 with private swimming pools and 12 new rooms in total—yet another reason to opt for the laid-back alleyways of Sharjah.

Writer Nicola Chilton tells the stories of people, places, and unexpected adventures from her home base in Dubai.

The Corniche, located near Khalid Port, is a popular spot for an evening stroll.



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The reservation to make

Dutch Courage gin bar for G&Ts, boozy punch, cheese boards, and tinned seafood

Required reading

Baltimore Blues (William Morrow, 1997) is the first in a murder mystery series by local novelist Laura Lippman.

Neighborhood not to miss

Fells Point, lined with lively waterfront bars and restaurants



Long-overdue upgrades to major downtown attractions are turning Charm City into a veritable food-and-entertainment hub.

by JULEKHA DASH

FROM ITS EARLY days as a thriving seaport to its current status as a seafood paradise, Baltimore is ever evolving. A \$45 million overhaul of Lexington Market—billed as the oldest continuously operating public market in the country, with roots dating to 1782—recently welcomed visitors to an airy, light-filled space enlivened by 16-foot murals from local artist Ernest Shaw Jr. and photographs by Shan Wallace depicting Baltimore's Black food culture. (This is, after all, a majority Black city.)

The developer's gut renovation of the old market reimagined the space as a fresh version of the community gathering spot it had been before it fell into disrepair. Benches flank the central staircase and serve as prime people-watching spots, while an adjacent plaza hosts events and concerts. Input from residents informed the mix of more than 40 stalls, half of them Black-owned, including the coffee shop Black Acres Roastery and the husband-and-wife-run Sunnyside Café. The market also maintains its devotion to the ocean with Faidley's Seafood, the famous crab cake spot, and the Korean family-owned Cho's Sea Garden.

A few blocks away, the CFG Bank Arena will reopen in time to host college basketball tournaments in February and a nearly sold-out Bruce Springsteen show in April. Its \$200 million revamp, backed by singer Pharrell Williams and an investment firm cofounded by NBA star Kevin Durant, gives the 60-year-old facility the updated concessions, audio, and lighting it needs to compete with other venues in the region.

Also notable for 2023: an exhibition of Baltimore native John Waters's personal art collection at the Baltimore Museum of Art (through April 16) and the return of Artscape, a multiday cultural extravaganza in September that, in the past, has featured wildly decorated cars. Festivalgoers can stay in the Mount Vernon neighborhood's new literary-themed boutique hotel, Ulysses, a 116-room property whose name pays homage to both the James Joyce novel and a ship that brought Bavarian immigrants to Baltimore.

Julekha Dash is a writer who's lived in Maryland for 20 years.

^
Jumbo lump crab cakes from Faidley's Seafood are just one reason to visit the renovated Lexington Market in Baltimore.



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Best time of year to visit

May to October. Accommodations sell out quickly in July and August, so you should book well in advance if you're traveling then.



A 435-mile hiking and biking route around Canada's small but mighty province invites visitors to travel slowly and joyfully.

by DEBBIE OLSEN

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, OR PEI, off Canada's eastern seaboard, is home to some of the country's most enchanting pastoral scenery. You'll find fields of potatoes and strawberries, beaches that stretch for miles, storybook villages (the 1908 novel *Anne of Green Gables* was set here), red-and-white wooden lighthouses, and docks anchoring fishing boats. The Island Walk, a new 435-mile walking and cycling route circumnavigating "the Island," as locals call it, gives travelers a unique opportunity to experience it up close.

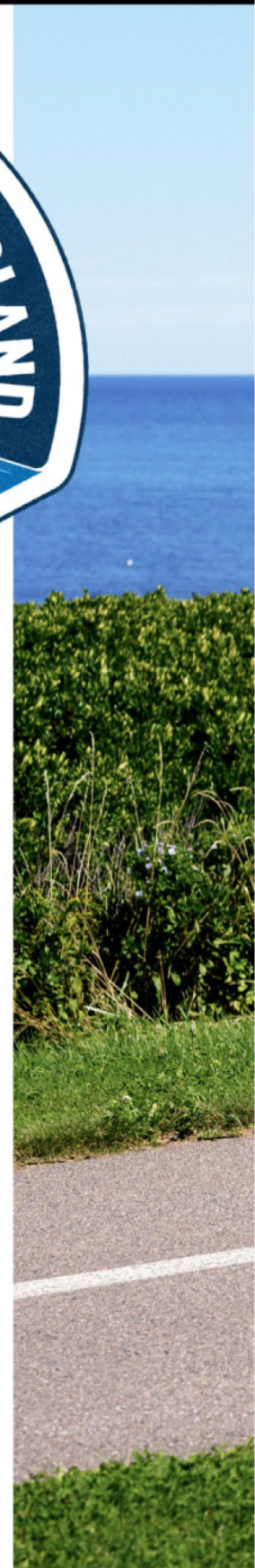
My husband and I cycled 180 miles of the route in June 2022, starting in the compact capital city, Charlottetown, and spending six days working our way across a section in the central region of the province. From Charlottetown, we pedaled 35 miles along crushed-gravel trails, wide red-dirt roads lined with trees, and country lanes—all relatively flat. After checking into the Orient Hotel,

a historic B&B in the tiny village of Victoria-by-the-Sea, we browsed in shops, talked with local anglers bringing in the day's catch, and walked barefoot along an expansive beach with rose-colored sand at the edge of the village. The tide came in while I ate possibly the best lobster roll I've ever tasted—a buttery toasted roll loaded with chunks of tender fresh-caught crustacean and house-made mayo—at the Lobster Barn restaurant.

Over the following week, we cycled past the sand dunes of Prince Edward Island National Park and old wooden churches that date to the 1800s. We discovered national historic sites marking rarities, such as the iceboat mail service that ran in the Northumberland Strait from 1827 to 1917, and random attractions, including the "world's largest handheld egg beater" outside an antique store in the small town of Borden-Carleton. We pulled over whenever something caught our eye, which meant we stopped often.

Long-distance trekking has been a unique tourism niche worldwide for thousands of years. Since medieval times, pilgrims in Europe have traveled hundreds of miles to religious sites to pay homage to saints and penance for sins. El Camino de Santiago, also known as the Way of Saint James, is one of the most beloved pilgrimage routes in the world—and it inspired the creation of this Canadian (and more secular) trek.

Bryson Guptill, a longtime trail volunteer who lives in Charlottetown, conceived the idea of the Island Walk after he and his partner walked almost 500 miles along the Camino in 2016 and, three years later, about 150 miles of the lesser-known Rota Vicentina in Portugal. "My partner, Sue, and I had a wonderful time walking the Camino," Guptill said. "I kept thinking that we could have something like this in Prince Edward Island if we set our minds to it. The idea really gelled on the Portugal walk."





Guptill worked with other members of Island Trails, a nonprofit organization run by volunteers, to research, design, and map out the long-distance trekking route that is now the Island Walk using existing trails and secondary roads within the 2,195-square-mile province.

Once the route was laid out, Guptill and three friends hiked the entire 435-mile Island Walk over 32 days in autumn 2019. The Camino de la Isla, as some call it, opened in August 2021, but it's only now starting to come into its own after pandemic restrictions, with new signage and tour companies to support walkers and cyclists.

It was "wonderful and empowering" for Laura MacGregor of Waterloo, Ontario, who spent 31 days walking the route beginning in late May 2022. "It was an opportunity to take a time-out and step away from my life," she said. "My 21-year-old disabled son died two weeks into the pandemic, and I am still trying to move forward." MacGregor had always wanted to hike the Camino in Spain but never could, due to the demands of caring for



We pulled over whenever something caught our eye, which meant we stopped often.



The Lobster Barn in Victoria-by-the-Sea serves fish-and-chips with views of the beach.



Travelers can rent bikes through MacQueen's Bike Shop & Island Tours in Charlottetown.

How to get there

Charlottetown Airport (YYG) is the main airport on Prince Edward Island. International flights may route through Montreal or Toronto. From the airport, you can catch a cab into the city, pick up a bike rental, and begin walking or cycling the trail.

Did you know?

Much of the Island Walk runs along the Confederation Trail, a 278-mile-long route built in the 1990s along a former railway line. The Confederation Trail is part of the Trans Canada Trail that stretches 17,400 miles.



her son. The Island Walk provided time to reflect and “come to terms with all the changes” in her life.

Whether or not travelers follow the trail, they could spend days immersed in the magical places that inspired Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables*—walking down Lovers’ Lane, wandering the Haunted Wood, and visiting Green Gables Heritage Place and Avonlea Village. Plus, as Anne said, there’s nothing more delectable than ice cream, and the Island is famous for it. A visit to PEI must include a trip to a great shop such as Holman’s Ice Cream Parlour in Summerside or the Cows chain, which started here and now has shops all across Canada.

Prince Edward Island is charming at every turn, but there’s something particularly special about exploring it on bicycle or on foot. My experience on the Island Walk may not have been as profound as MacGregor’s, but it was exactly what I needed. It was a chance to experience a remarkable destination in a special way and to gain a fresh perspective for coping with my own life’s challenges. I came back feeling refreshed, more physically fit, and more in tune with the natural world and the beings I share it with. For me, that was transformative.

Debbie Olsen is an award-winning Canadian-based Métis writer and a national bestselling author.



The reservation to make

Take in a play or live performance at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown or Harbourfront Theatre in Summerside.



Founded on the south shore of the Island in 1819, Victoria-by-the-Sea has become a haven for artisans.



You'll find many beaches ripe for strolling spread across PEI's hundreds of miles of coastline.



Prince Edward Island is Canada's leading supplier of potatoes, so you definitely want fries with that.



Required Reading

The Betrothed, by Alessandro Manzoni, is an Italian classic about star-crossed lovers in 17th-century Lombardy and includes scenes set in Bergamo.

Neighborhood not to miss

Brescia's Areadocks—an old railway warehouse complex—has transformed over the past two decades into an enclave of bars, restaurants, and design shops.

Population

Brescia
197,000
Bergamo
120,000



Find venerable history and hip cocktails in two Italian cities connected by a cycling trail.

by JULIA BUCKLEY

Legend has it that touching the coat of arms on the gate at Bergamo's dome-topped Colleoni Chapel brings good luck.

THE KEY INGREDIENTS of la dolce vita? Golden light beaming across ancient stones, a piazza that bustles at *aperitivo* hour, and streets ripe for a *passeggiata* (stroll) to work it all off. Enter Brescia and Bergamo, two cities in the northern Italian region of Lombardy that have been named joint Italian Capitals of Culture for 2023. If you only know them from news reports in early 2020—the two were hit hard during the pandemic—prepare to be bowled over.

Bergamo is the better known of the two; its historic Città Alta (Upper City) crowns a ridge nearly 300 feet above its more modern section. The Bergamaschi love the outdoors, and they kick

back in deck chairs at the 17th-century gardens of Palazzo Moroni, which opened to the public for the first time in 2020. New *tuk-tuk* rides wind around the Città Alta's UNESCO-protected 16th-century city walls. The lion- and sphinx-surrounded fountain in the main square, Piazza Vecchia, has been restored, and new walking routes through Bergamo's layers of history connect the old and new town. Travelers and locals alike can amble through the nearby Val d'Astino, a valley filled with vineyards, wildflower-strewn meadows, and a monastery that was founded in 1107.

With a ceremonial opening in early 2023, a 47-mile bicycling route will roll from Bergamo past Lake Iseo, then through Franciacorta wine country to Brescia, the most colorful Roman city north of the Italian capital.

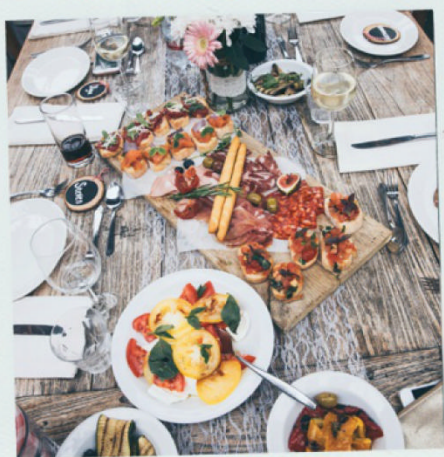
While Bergamo life is mainly outdoors, Brescia is inside; you'll find gourmet pizza tasting menus at Inedito and Roman-themed cocktails at Massenzio. Try the Domitilla at the latter. Named after the wife of Emperor Vespasian, it's a mix of berry gin with grapefruit, rosemary syrup, and egg white. Spend the night at Areadocks Boutique Hotel, where all the modern art-work and vintage furnishings are for sale. Here in northern Italy, the sweet life just got an upgrade. **A**

Julia Buckley is the author of the memoir *Heal Me* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2018).



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Key Largo offers colorful reefs and Cuban spirit close to Miami. Due south, the islands of **Islamorada** are famed for world-class sport fishing and art; **Marathon**, for boating.

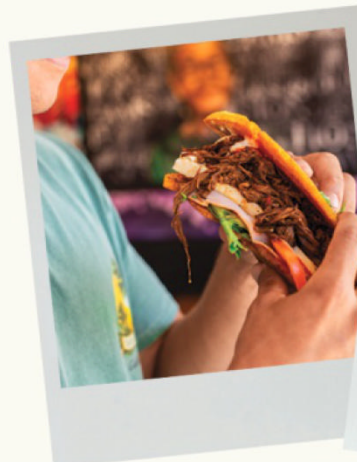
The Lower Keys host unique wildlife, while Stock Island is the place for delicious dining.

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a culinary palette featuring the Gulf's freshest seafood. Art shines bright throughout the region too. Check out the surreally designed **Salvador Dalí Museum**, home to the largest collection of the artist's works outside of Europe, and an internationally acclaimed street art scene.

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features a mini golf "Conservation Course," planetarium, and outdoor amphitheater, along with other hands-on exhibits, events, and activities that will delight and enrich travelers of all ages. It all goes to show that in The Palm Beaches, the sun isn't the only thing to shine.

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Between expeditions, visit independent breweries and eateries on the **Panama City Ale Trail** and **Panama City Oyster Trail**, or drop by **Little Village** for fair-trade shopping, live music, and fresh fish tacos served under its waterfront palapa. By night, the

city's distinct cultural mix comes even more alive at venues including the city's only Irish pub, **House of Henry**, home to regular live music and other events in Historic Downtown Panama City, and at **Burgunbarrel** in the historic St. Andrews neighborhood, which serves global wines and craft beers.

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Fresh and Friendly Fare

Hunt's Oyster Bar serves Florida's best bivalves alongside cold beers. **History Class Brewing Company** educates visitors on the region's past while pouring beers with bar bites. **Big Mama's on the Bayou** embraces its Southern side, pairing chicken-fried steak, baked cobbler, and other delicious specialties with down-home hospitality.

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WHERE LIFE SETS SAIL



More Than Just Beautiful Beaches, Greater Fort Lauderdale Is Florida's Epicenter of Fun

Old World culture meets New World variety in Southeastern Florida's vast aquatic playground.

With more than 300 miles of inland canals throughout Greater Fort Lauderdale, it's easy to see why the area has long been known as the "Venice of America." But beyond the striped-shirted **gondoliers** paddling authentic Italian barges along the lush homes and gardens of **Las Olas Boulevard**, there's much more to be enjoyed that's unmistakably Greater Fort Lauderdale.

A few steps from Fort Lauderdale Beach, the historic **Bonnet House Museum & Gardens** boasts 35 art-filled acres to explore, plus a wide range of cultural events hosted onsite throughout the year. **Broward Center for the Performing Arts**, one of the most frequented theaters in the world, offers upwards of 700 yearly performances, from Broadway to ballet, all in the heart of downtown.

Shopping abounds here, too, including **Sawgrass Mills'** 350+ designer outlets, from Balenciaga to Valentino.

**Find all the fun at
VisitLauderdale.com**



Seaside Seafood and Beyond

Along the Intracoastal Waterway, guests of **Shooters Waterfront** can either enjoy oysters alfresco or take their crab to go. Offering homestyle Brazilian cuisine in a unique outdoor setting, **Regina's Farm** in Sailboat Bend promises an unforgettable evening. By night, bartenders-in-residence keep things inventive at Las Olas' speakeasy, **Rm. 901**, and the views and cocktails at neighboring **Rooftop @1WLO** are tough to top.



Welcome

EVERYONE UNDER THE SUN



Welcome thrill-seekers and chill-seekers and kids of all ages. One of the world's most welcoming destinations awaits in Greater Fort Lauderdale with miles of golden beaches and scenic waterways, cosmopolitan dining and nightlife, amazing Everglades eco-tours and more.

Come share unforgettable moments in a beach playground unlike any other.



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On Amelia Island, Natural Beauty Pairs Well with Every Dish

Stunning marsh waterways to the west, unspoiled beaches to the east, and delicious dining everywhere in between.

Part of a chain of barrier islands just north of Jacksonville, Amelia Island is truly a world unto itself. The island and its 13 miles of powdery beach boast a range of culinary influences, all set among gorgeous natural landscapes.

Starting downtown, charming Fernandina Beach offers waterfront dining and tantalizing options like the dishes made with locally sourced ingredients at **Pablo's Mexican Cuisine**,

casual craft brewery **Mocama Beer Company**, and **Akari Sushi's** quality fresh fish. What's more, upwards of 90 independent restaurants can be enjoyed throughout the island. For standout fine dining, **Salt** at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island uses more than 40 salts from around the world to add depth and flavor to coastal-inspired cuisine.

Food fans have ample opportunity to explore the island's assets

even further with events. Taste-based happenings include Amelia Island Tasting Tours' downtown **Booze & Bites Tour**, and **The Sprouting Project at Omni Amelia Island Resort**, a chef-led, truly farm-to-table experience that only hints at the island's bright gastronomic future.

Discover epicurean heaven at AmeliaIsland.com

A Long Legacy of Shellfish

Having launched the American shrimping industry more than a century ago, the island celebrates the crustacean each spring with the **Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival**. You can indulge year-round, however, at the relaxed **Salt Life Food Shack** and **Timoti's Seafood Shak**, which serves wild-caught shrimp and more.

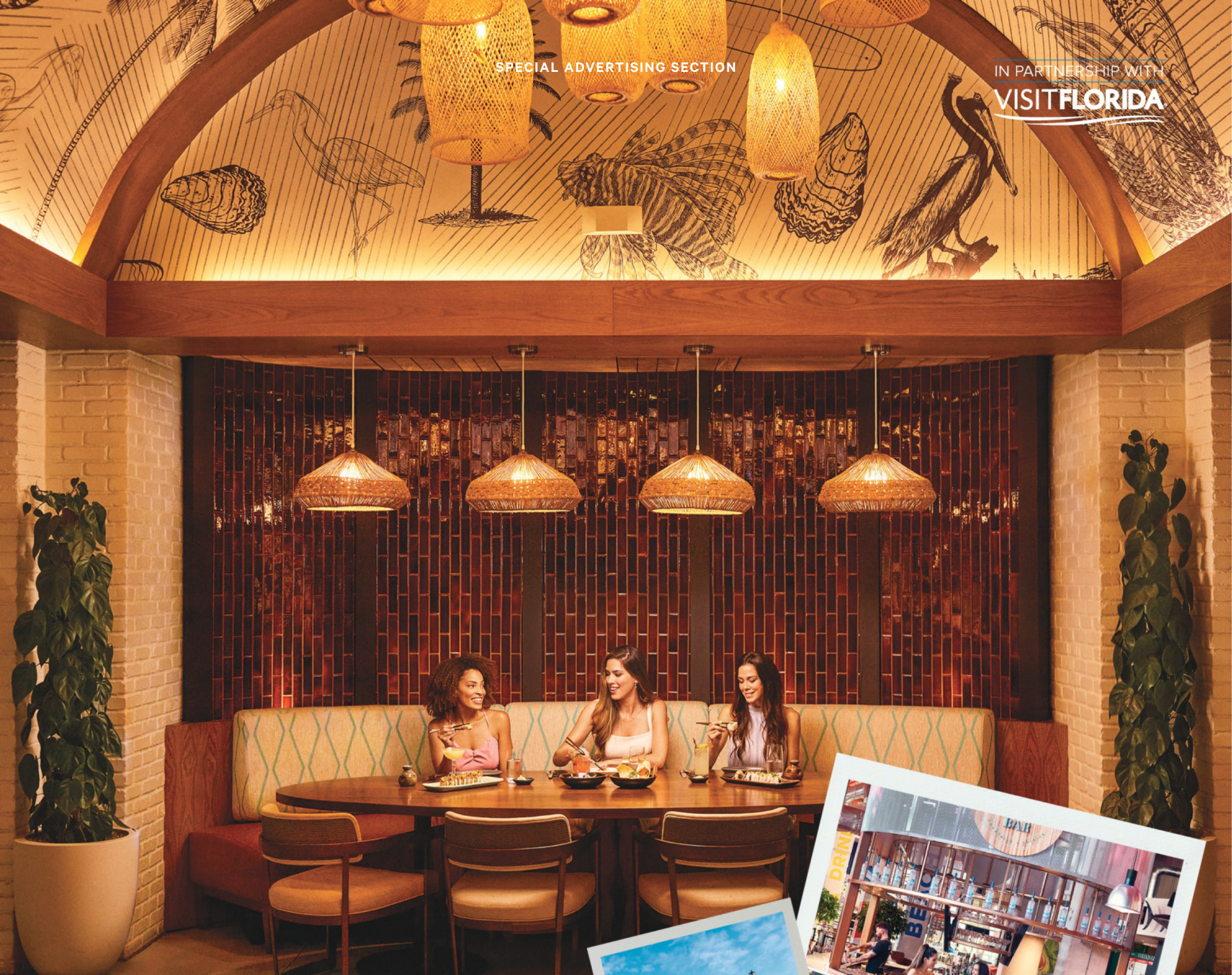


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*Be swept away by the charms of
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AmeliaIsland.com

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reef system when snorkeling or diving around **Peanut Island** or **Coral Cove**. Enjoy restaurants by Michelin-star chefs like **Cafe Boulud** or in casual, seaside spots like **Guanabanas**, where local ingredients meet international influences.

Come with the entire family and discover a place that

surpasses all expectations. For discerning travelers who won't settle for the ordinary, The Palm Beaches are waiting just for you.

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Dine To the Nines

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GO
SOMEWHERE
GOOD.

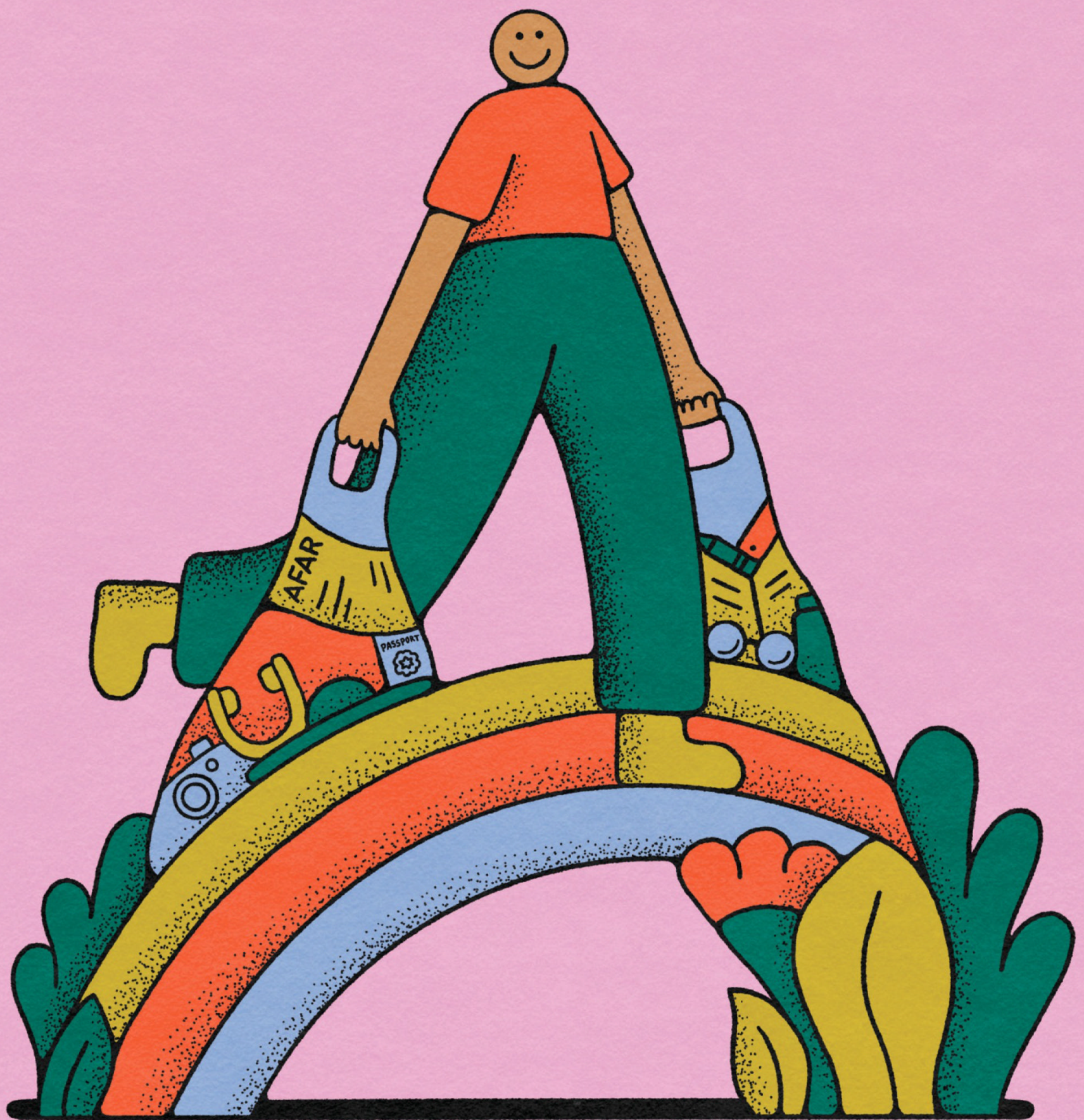
What is Meaningful Travel?

Meaningful Travel is exploring a city with traditional music and urban street art as your guide. When you join an Afro Tour, every dollar spent supports a group of young artists using dance, hip-hop, and cultural heritage to transform what was once Medellín's most-feared district. Learn more about Afro Tours on the Meaningful Travel Map of Colombia.

tourismcares.org/meaningful-map

**Tourism
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FEATURES





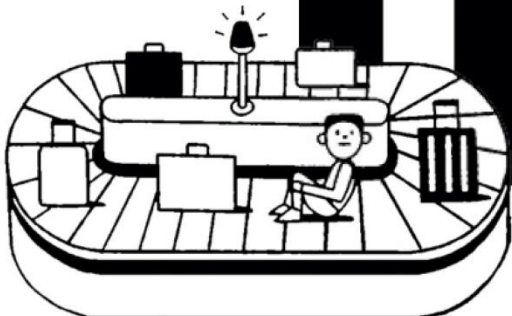
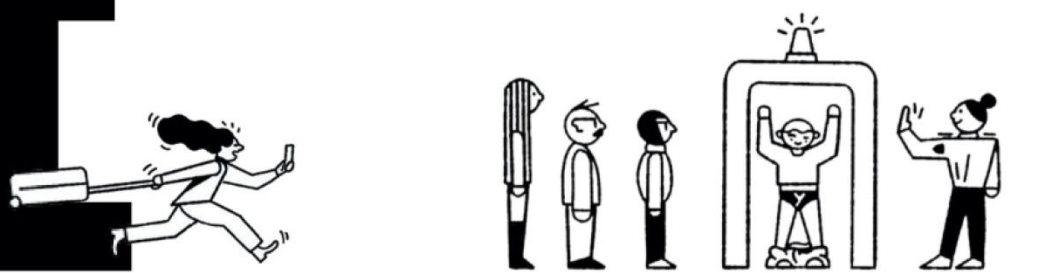


by
KENDRA PIERRE-LOUIS

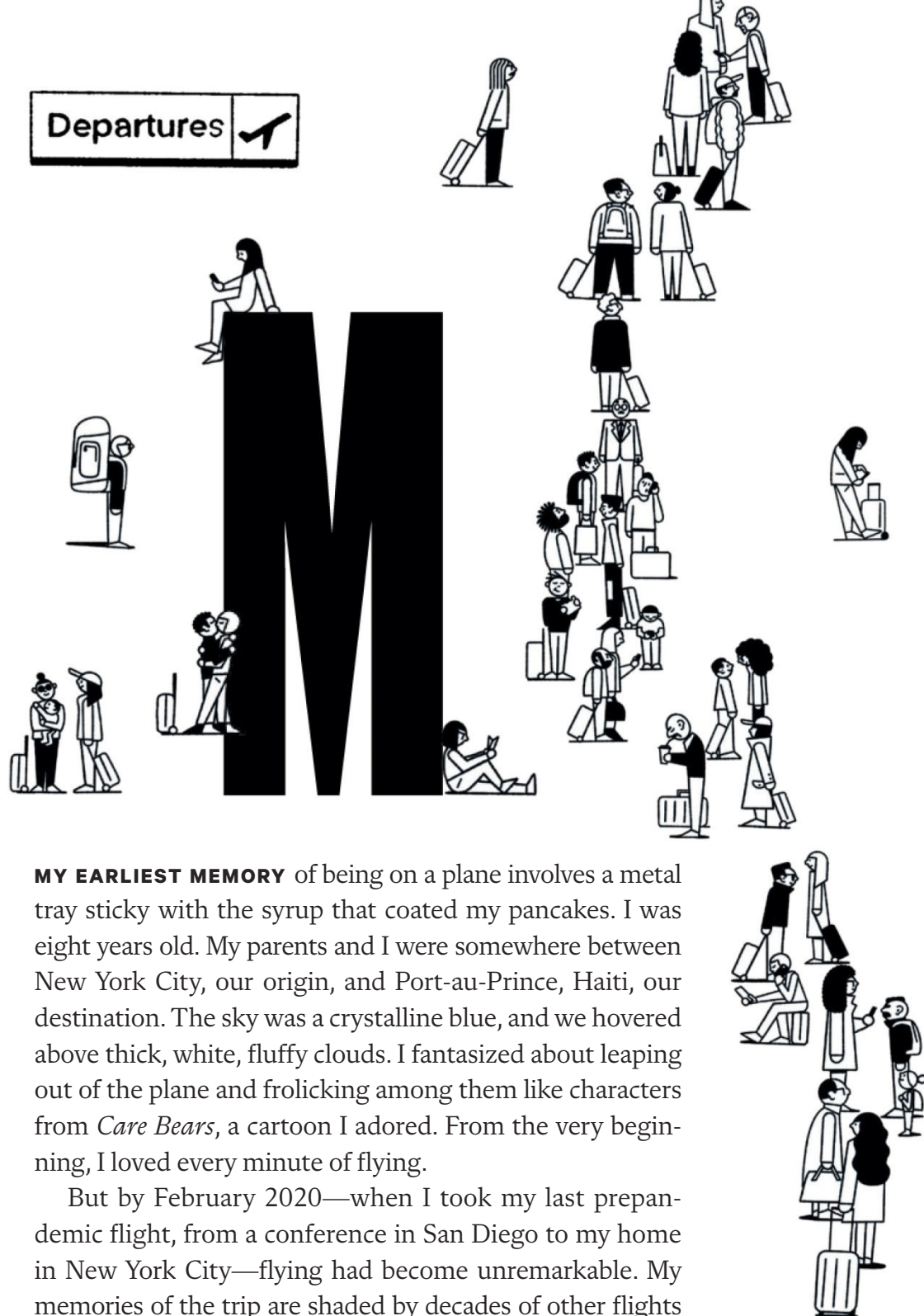
Illustrations by
ROBERT SAMUEL HANSON

Photographs by
MARGEUX WALTER

THE PLANE TRUTH



Air travel comes at a hard cost to the environment—but to save the planet, we don't have to stop flying. How one climate reporter, and avid traveler, changed the way she navigates the world.



MY EARLIEST MEMORY of being on a plane involves a metal tray sticky with the syrup that coated my pancakes. I was eight years old. My parents and I were somewhere between New York City, our origin, and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, our destination. The sky was a crystalline blue, and we hovered above thick, white, fluffy clouds. I fantasized about leaping out of the plane and frolicking among them like characters from *Cave Bears*, a cartoon I adored. From the very beginning, I loved every minute of flying.

But by February 2020—when I took my last prepan-
demic flight, from a conference in San Diego to my home in New York City—flying had become unremarkable. My memories of the trip are shaded by decades of other flights across North America, Europe, Africa, and the Arctic. When I set foot on the jet bridge in San Diego, I no longer dreamt of playing in the clouds; the flight was little more than something I'd have to endure. Of this journey, my last before the COVID-19 lockdown, I remember almost nothing, not even the airline.

Three years later, leisure travel in the United States has returned to prepan-
demic levels, and yet instead of eyeing flight deals, I find myself unsubscribing from newsletters that promise me cheap tickets to Nairobi, intriguing fares to the Yucatán, sexy sales offers to the Seychelles. It's not that I don't *want* to travel. It's that I've learned what flying is doing to the planet.

AROUND THE SAME TIME that I took that NYC flight, a colleague published a piece about frequent fliers in the United States. In the story, she stated that, according to the International Council on Clean Transportation, anyone who takes more than six round-trip flights annually is considered a frequent flier. This rarefied group of people—just 12 percent of them Americans—are responsible for two-thirds of all flights and more than three times the emissions of a nonfrequent flier. After laughing at these fliers' excess, I tallied the flights I'd taken that year. I stopped

laughing when the figure hit double digits. *I* was the problem. And I vowed to do something about it.

Worldwide, aviation is responsible for 2 percent of human-generated carbon dioxide, one of the greenhouse gas emissions that warm the planet, causing climate change. Due to the specifics of that pollution—including that planes release those particles higher up in the atmosphere—flying punches up its harm to the climate. Airplanes are responsible for 4 percent of what scientists call “radiative forcing,” which measures how much heat a given activity (say, flying) is responsible for trapping in the atmosphere. And that heat from human activities is what scientists are referring to when they talk about global warming and climate change.

This percentage isn't huge—in the United States, electricity, combustion-engine cars, or heating our homes each releases more greenhouse gas emissions—but flying is the most difficult to decarbonize. Put simply, engineers don't yet know how to make commercial planes fly without also cooking the planet. It's why, in 2021, the Biden administration put forward up to \$4.3 billion to help such companies as Neste and World Energy develop and expand the production and use of sustainable aviation fuels. And we're at the point where every carbon emission we slash now matters.

The wonky term for what our world is facing is “representative concentration pathways,” but I find myself mostly using the analogy of the planet as a speeding car heading toward a brick wall. Currently, we're going to hit the wall, but our choices determine whether we're going to hit the wall at 300 miles per hour or 30 miles per hour. One will be catastrophic; one will be horrible but survivable. Emitting greenhouse gases at current or even higher levels is like looking at that oncoming wall and continuing to step on the gas. Cutting emissions is like putting on the brakes. To hit the wall at speeds closer to 30 miles per hour, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we must cut global emissions nearly in half by 2030 and effectively to zero by 2050. (This is also the goal of the 2016 Paris Agreement.)

To do that we have to continue cutting emissions now, because there's a lag between putting on the brakes and the car coming to a halt. It takes time to slow an engine this big. And as an American, I have a greater responsibility than most. The United States is the highest historical emitter of greenhouse gases, and, person for person, we remain among the highest emitters today (joined by Canada, Australia, and many Persian Gulf states). More than half of global carbon pollution has been spewed since 1990, the year the IPCC released its first report sounding the alarm.

Knowing all this made me want to take a long look, not just at my flying but also at how travel fits into my life. This was one upside to the pandemic: It was easy to take a vow to not fly and simultaneously reflect on my own relationship with air travel. I realized that, while I had taken a couple of trips for pleasure, it was my job as a climate reporter—visiting locales as disparate as

100
million
Number of
air passengers
in 1960

4.56
billion
Number of
air passengers
in 2019

International
Air Transport
Association
(IATA)

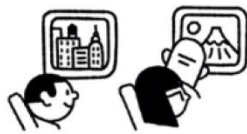
Iceland's Westfjords and Georgia's Brawley Mountain—that had sent the number of my annual flights soaring.

As I started to wrestle with these issues, I reached out to Lenore Fahrig, a Chancellor's Professor of biology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. I had followed Dr. Fahrig since 2015, the year she chose to quit flying—ironically, on a flight, coming home from a workshop in Spain. She'd been reading articles and calculated that air travel was the biggest part of her carbon footprint, in her case producing four times the emissions she created from heating her house with gas and 10 times the amount she generated with her minimal driving.

"The biggest thing that I had control over was my flying," Dr. Fahrig said. "If I wanted to reduce my carbon footprint, that's where I had to start."

At first, she tried to take fewer flights. "I found that I was constantly trying to decide whether a particular meeting or a particular trip was somehow worth the carbon emissions associated with it," she said.

So she ceased flying, but she didn't stop traveling. For Dr. Fahrig, the solution came in the form of trains (which are 34 percent more energy efficient than flying, according to U.S. Department of Energy data) and cargo ships. There's a whole world of people who travel via cargo ship, vessels that would be going to a



80

Percentage of total air travel carbon emissions from flights longer than 930 miles

The Global Environmental Change journal

destination with or without passengers. Typically, a cargo ship is a no-frills experience: Meals are simple, there's little to no Wi-Fi or cell service, and staffers are there primarily for the safety of the cargo, not passengers. But they, along with trains, can be a climate-watcher's solution: By not flying, Dr. Fahrig estimates she's saved nearly 40,000 pounds of carbon dioxide over the last five and a half years.

AND YET A PLANE'S GREATEST virtue is that it is fast. I can fly from New York City to Los Angeles, 2,451 dizzying miles, in six hours. But to get there, the plane must burn fuel, and it must burn a lot of it. To get into the air and stay there, a Boeing 737-800, one of the most popular commercial air-planes, burns an average of 850 gallons of jet fuel per hour. (About a quarter of the greenhouse gas emissions from a plane come from take-off and landing, which makes short-haul flights—those that cover fewer than 500 miles—especially emissions intensive.) To get me, or you, from New York to L.A., a plane will burn more than 5,000 gallons of fuel, emitting more than 110,000 pounds of climate-altering emissions. If the flight holds 200 people, roughly 550 pounds of those emissions will be mine.

Covering the same stretch by train, however, would take at least 67 hours and 20 minutes. I could fly to Los Angeles, spend the weekend, and be home before the train had even





1

Percentage of the world's population defined as frequent fliers

The Global Environmental Change journal



707

million tons

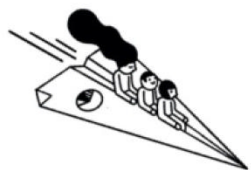
Amount of global carbon emissions from commercial aviation in 2013

920

million tons

Amount of global carbon emissions from commercial aviation in 2019

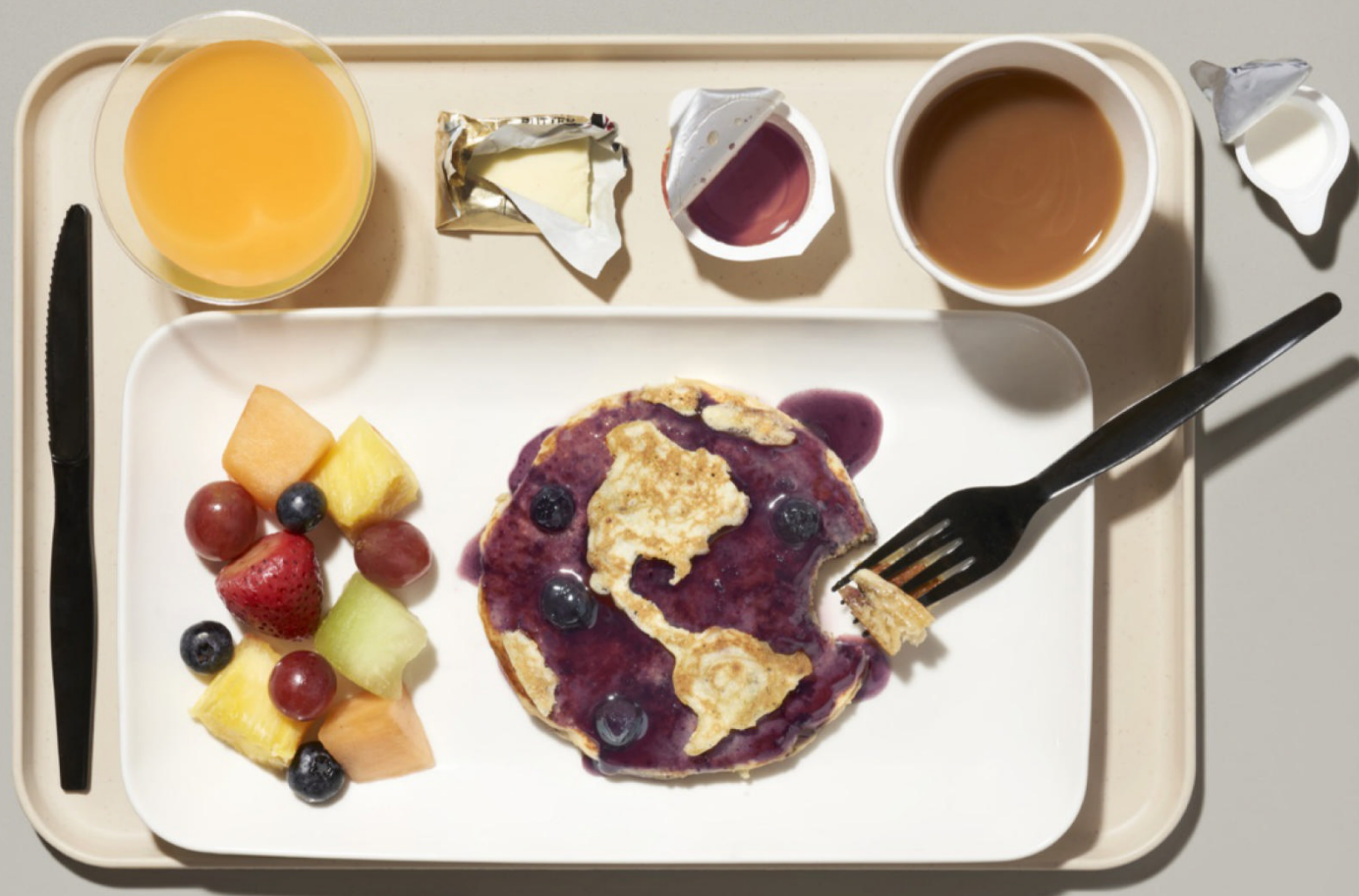
Environmental and Energy Study Institute



55

Percentage that carbon emissions per passenger-kilometer have dropped since 1990 through improved technology and operational efficiencies

IATA



The FUTURE of SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

by Michelle Baran

In October 2022, the 193 national governments that make up the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization—including the U.S.—agreed to an ambitious goal: to achieve net-zero carbon emissions for global air travel by 2050, a metric U.S. carriers had set one year prior.

To get there, airlines will need to reduce and eliminate their carbon output. One major tool: sustainable aviation fuel, produced from such sources as plant oils and agricultural waste, which emits up to 80 percent less carbon than fossil fuel-based jet fuel. President Biden's pledge of \$4.3 billion to fund sustainable aviation fuel includes investments in emission-reducing aircraft technology and support for farmers who produce aviation biofuel feedstocks. By 2050, sustainable aviation fuel should be the only fuel in use, roughly 35 billion gallons annually.

Several U.S. airlines are investing heavily in these new fuels. Alaska Airlines, which aims to be net-zero

by 2040, has teamed up with Microsoft and Twelve, a carbon transformation company. Together, they plan to launch their first commercial flights powered by a sustainable aviation fuel produced using recaptured carbon. (To make the fuel, Twelve employs an electrochemical reactor that transforms water, carbon dioxide, and renewable energy into aviation fuel, similar to the way that plants use water, sunlight, and carbon dioxide to create energy.) American, Delta, Southwest, and United will also increase their reliance on sustainable fuels. United, which pledged to be net-zero by 2050, has invested millions of dollars in sustainable aviation fuel and direct-air capture. It plans to purchase a fleet of pricey supersonic Overture planes, net-zero aircraft that will fly on 100 percent sustainable aviation fuel when they take off around 2029.

Additionally, all the major U.S. airlines have recognized that they'll need to collaborate on some things, such as investment in infrastructure

and the production of sustainable aviation fuel, to scale up technologies and make them more affordable for broader use.

Other measures on the path to carbon neutrality include investment in zero-emissions electric planes, as well as an operational focus on more efficient flight paths and, critically, partnering with companies working on carbon capture and storage technologies.

New methods that prove successful could offer airlines a way to remove any carbon released, and there are several in development. One method removes carbon dioxide from the air through photosynthesis, using wood or grass. Another technology, the aforementioned direct-air capture, removes carbon dioxide through a chemical process. Once captured, the carbon is then stored deep underground, forming what the MIT Energy Initiative refers to as a "closed loop," where the carbon is removed from Earth as fossil fuels and then returned to Earth as carbon dioxide.

reached its destination. As I talked with Dr. Fahrig, I started to think that slower travel has its benefits. She noted that cutting out flying made her more likely to attend small, lesser-known conferences closer to home. Quitting flying didn't narrow her perspective—it shifted it.

That's something echoed by Torbjørn C. Pedersen, a 43-year-old Dane who has nearly reached his goal to visit every country in the world without flying. I first met him in Reykjavík, Iceland, in January 2014, three months into his journey. At that time, he thought the trip would end in 2018. When I checked in on him in early 2022, Pedersen had nine countries left to visit and thought he would be done in 2023.

During our call, he told me there are at least two benefits to eschewing flying. The first: no jet lag. "You're traveling too slowly, so you just sort of adjust with the daylight as it gradually changes," he said.

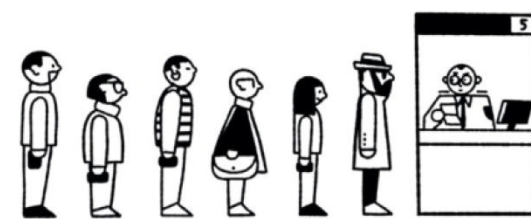
The second was a little more poetic: You get to see the world unfurl before you. He described a moment in Mauritania. "You see one or two rocks, and the rocks, they start building up and then you see a small bush and eventually maybe you see a tree, and you keep going and keep going, and these rocks, they start building up to a hill. The hill turns into a mountain and suddenly you're in a forest," he said. "You see how the landscape gradually changes, versus flying in and suddenly being somewhere else, like walking through the closet [and ending up in] Narnia."

And yet, despite all these years *not* flying, Pedersen said that when his trip is over, he'll probably start again, because, well, it's really hard not to. "I think people are not willing to give up what's convenient to them," he told me. "I think society needs to restructure."

Pedersen's argument reminded me of something that Nick Pidgeon, professor of environmental psychology and risk at Cardiff University in Wales, had shared with me. Environmental psychologists examine the relationship between people and their environment—their field of study suggests that behaviors are locked into systems we can't change, at least individually. People are unwilling to bicycle, for example, if they live somewhere without bike paths and a bike-sharing program, and they're unwilling to take the train if the train doesn't take them where they actually need to go. Dr. Pidgeon says this is why policies such as the push to ban short-haul flights when alternatives (such as trains and buses) exist or efforts to expand train infrastructure—and speed up those trains—matter. But his research goes even further, suggesting that our behaviors are locked into our social networks and commitments.

"If my mom is sick and lives in Arizona, of course, I will need to fly regularly to help her—however guilty I might feel about [my impact on] the environment," he explained.

A solution, many argue, is to incentivize ways to fly less. Some countries are already beginning to eliminate those carbon-intensive short-haul flights. In many places, those distances can reasonably be covered by trains and buses. In the United States, investments in high-speed rail could pay off in climate dividends: High-speed rail is fast and produces less carbon dioxide than flying. More generous leave time and work-from-home policies could



2-4

Percentage of the world's population that flew internationally in 2018

The Global Environmental Change journal



450,000+

Number of commercial flights that have used sustainable aviation fuel since 2011

The Global Environmental Change journal

also allow us to take fewer flights by virtue of allowing us to take longer trips.

There's also something to be said for exploring closer to home. Like many people, I realized during the pandemic that I've seen more of some other countries than I have of my own region. For the first time in years, I started to look at places closer to me with the same wide-eyed curiosity I'd reserved for places farther away. I spent a lot of 2021 in a small coastal town in New England. With nowhere to go and hour-by-hour glimpses of the same piece of ocean every day, I found that I could tell at a glance whether the sea was at high or low tide, and whether that tide was a spring tide, when high tide is very high and low tide very low, or a neap tide when there's almost no difference between the two. It was the first time since I was a kid that I was forced to slow down, to walk the same stretches of land over and over again, to experience intense familiarity with a place and not be bored by it.

MY GOAL WHEN I SET OUT on this exploration was to avoid that six-times-a-year "frequent flier" status. And because of the pandemic, I was able to achieve that in 2020: I flew only once before COVID shut everything down, and not at all in 2021. However, 2022 presented challenges. I flew once for work—on a military flight that would have taken off even if I hadn't been on board. And later in the year, I booked a last-minute plane trip to Florida. A close family member had died, and, worried as I am about the climate, I needed to attend the funeral. It's as Dr. Pidgeon pointed out: Our social networks impact how we move through the world.

But around the same time as the funeral, I was invited to an all-expenses-paid weekend trip to Puerto Rico, a place I've never been. According to one carbon calculator I consulted, the emissions from the flight alone would have been roughly equivalent to the *total* emissions a person in Pakistan generates in a year. In 2022, a third of Pakistan was submerged in floods strongly linked to climate change caused by emissions released by people like me. I said no to the trip—skipping it seemed like the right thing to do.

Though it's easy to think of climate in black-and-white terms, with our choices either saving the planet or destroying it, climate change isn't binary: It's a gradient. Most of us won't be able to live like Torbjørn Pedersen and Dr. Fahrig and eschew air travel altogether. But all of us, each one of us, can certainly be more thoughtful about how, when, and most importantly, *why* we travel. **A**

Kendra Pierre-Louis is profiled on page 17. This is photographer Margeaux Walter's first story for AFAR.

KINGDOM

As part of its commitment to drawing international travelers, Saudi Arabia has stepped up its promotion on the world stage, touting new cultural attractions and major social change. But what does life look like for locals?



COME

by
SARAH KHAN

Photographs by
TASNEEM ALSULTAN



M

1

From 1983 to 2018, Saudi Arabia was home to one movie theater, inside the Sultan bin Abdulaziz Science and Technology Center. It showed educational films. By 2030, there will be an estimated 2,600 movie screens in the country.

2

Vision 2030, a plan the Saudi government released in 2016, aims to reduce the country's dependence on oil. Saudi Arabia has set a goal of attracting 100 million tourists a year by 2030. In 2022, it announced it would invest another \$1 trillion in tourism.

3

Saudi Arabia continues to have a guardianship system that requires every woman to have an official male guardian. Women still need a man's permission to marry but no longer need it to get a job or enroll in university.

MY CHILDHOOD IN Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, during the 1980s, was an eclectic idyll: a pastiche of roller discos and pool parties, monthly road trips to the Great Mosque in Makkah (Mecca), Brownies meetings, spelling bees, and shopping at ancient souks until 2 a.m. Inside my family's expat compound, a sprawling gated community with tidy subdivisions and manicured lawns, life unfolded in a bubble; it could have been the small town in Ontario, Canada where I was born. Outside its gates, certain limitations were simply facts of life: My mother never drove, restaurant guests were segregated by gender, and because of a **ban on cinemas**,¹ visits to movie theaters were reserved for our trips to the States or India.

The Jeddah I grew up in is a distant memory, with the sprawling **Vision 2030**² road map rolling out ambitious reforms to the Saudi economy, infrastructure, and society—and, in the process, transforming the way the cloistered kingdom has operated for decades. Businesses are no longer required to separate customers by gender; film and music industries are booming; and women have the right to drive, hold their own passports, and travel domestically **without a male escort**.³ Since 2019, the Saudi religious police—who once patrolled public areas to enforce the observance of Islamic law—have been largely stripped of power.

A key element of the Vision 2030 plan has been investing in tourism, by transforming long-neglected heritage sites, carving futuristic cities out of swaths of desert, and making the country easily accessible to foreigners for the first time. It's surreal seeing Saudi Arabia

advertised on splashy billboards everywhere from Dubai to New York, but on my visits back to the kingdom in recent years, I've been awed less by the flamboyant new additions—**star-studded concerts**,⁴ film festivals, striking architectural marvels—than by the effect its social transition has had on the fabric of everyday life.

During trips in the past year, I've hired women tour guides and interviewed women fashion designers. A woman wearing a **niqab**⁵ stamped my passport to welcome me back to Jeddah, and friends have told me about being driven home by women Uber drivers. There are still **strides to be made**,⁶ but women are engaged in public life in a way I never witnessed in my childhood.

No one has chronicled the nation's evolution more thoughtfully than photographer Tasneem Alsultan. Whether she's riding with women motorcycle enthusiasts in Riyadh or capturing the quotidian pleasures experienced by Saudi families, Tasneem manages to slow the breakneck speed of change into moments of contemplation frozen in time. Our journeys in the country diverged: I was a Canadian raised in Jeddah during my formative years, while Tasneem was a Saudi who grew up in the United States and England before returning to the kingdom as a young woman. We spoke about our experiences in Saudi Arabia's **future-focused present**⁷ and her approach to documenting it.

SARAH KHAN I'm curious. How did you become a photographer?

TASNEEM ALSULTAN I really enjoyed photography, but I never expected I would be able to do it professionally. When I went to **King Abdulaziz University**⁸ in 2002, there was not even graphic design—but there was home management! My bachelor's is in English literature and linguistics, and my master's degree is in social anthropology and social linguistics from Portland State [in Oregon].

When I moved back to Saudi in 2008, I couldn't find a job. My mom said, "You have a camera: photograph whatever you see, just to keep busy." And I did. Very quickly, I gained a large audience on Facebook, and when I got a job at a university in Bahrain, I opened a studio. Later, I moved to Dubai to teach, but most of my time was consumed with photography. I realized I loved it so much more than being a lecturer. So I quit teaching, and I've never looked back.

SARAH Today the creative scene has come such a long way from when you started. In the

4

Artists including Justin Bieber, Janet Jackson, and the K-pop group BTS have all performed in Saudi Arabia since 2019.

5

A niqab conceals the hair and face, except the eyes. It is different from a burka, which covers the whole body and typically has a mesh screen over the eyes to allow the person to see.

6

While women's rights are advancing, Saudi Arabia's treatment of journalists and activists has come under worldwide scrutiny. "We discussed human rights and the need for political reform," President Joe Biden said after meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2022.

7

Among the modern development projects is the new city of Neom, which the country has budgeted \$500 billion to build from scratch.

8

The coed university in Jeddah counts more than 82,000 students, making it the biggest in Saudi Arabia. The world's largest women's university, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, is in Riyadh. Nearly 28,000 women attend, studying everything from law to physical education.



↑ *This page: A view of the Great Mosque in Makkah (Mecca), Islam's holiest city. It is believed to be the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad.*

↖ *Previous page: Saudis at the opening of a fashion pop-up store in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.*



← Families gather at one of Jeddah's private beaches on the Saudi side of the Red Sea. Some are for members only, while others offer day passes to visitors.

↓ A concertgoer enjoys Riyadh's MDLBeast Soundstorm festival. Launched in 2019, the festival spans three days, includes more than 150 artists, and draws roughly 450,000 visitors.



↑ An audience listens to a performance by Italian singer Andrea Bocelli at the Maraya concert hall, which opened in 2019 in the historic city of AlUla.





Iftar, a meal eaten after sunset during Ramadan, often includes sweet and savory offerings. Friends and family gather to break their fast, then start prayer. ↑

Iraqi women who recently completed a pilgrimage to Makkah stop along Jeddah's 18-mile waterfront. →



← *A traveler walks at Al-Hijr—also known as Hegra and Mada'in Salih—an ancient archaeological site of carved tombs and monuments. In 2008, it became the first Saudi Arabian location to be inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The country now has six properties on the World Heritage List.*



↑ Ouhood, photographed before the driving ban was lifted in 2018, said she felt alive under water. “We can’t drive, but we can dive,” she said.

9
Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is the architect of many of these social reforms. A September 2022 order named him prime minister, further solidifying his power.

10
30.3 percent of the kingdom's population is between the ages of 0 and 14, and 36.7 percent is between the ages of 15 and 34.

11
Saudi Arabia opened its first McDonald's in 1993; today, the kingdom has 214 of the fast-food franchises. None serves pork, which is forbidden in Islam and is not allowed in the country.

12
Only Muslims are permitted in Makkah. More than 2 million Muslims typically travel to Makkah for the annual hajj, or religious pilgrimage.

13
Two years after Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on women driving, 2 percent of women in the country had been issued a driver's license.

past five years alone, it feels like a different country every time I return. Yet what I find interesting is that Jeddah is visually the same—it's the feeling, the vibe, that seems to be different.

TASNEEM I agree. Jeddah is aesthetically slow to change. But in mindset, it depends on who you are. As much as the government⁹ is trying to change things, it's happening so fast that I think, in the next five years, more people will see, "Oh, this is [the new] normal." The younger generation¹⁰ has more confidence in asking for more concerts, more outdoor areas. We want to wear what we're comfortable in. These changes have made the country great for my daughters, who are 17 and 15, whereas my generation was expected to just keep our thoughts to ourselves and not really push back on our families and society.

SARAH When you're photographing this type of social change, what are you looking for? What draws your eye?

TASNEEM I'm aiming to capture a moment that's mundane but important. Change happens in a superficial way when it's architecture, or when it's an event. But I try to photograph when people are happy or in shock. I like sharing perspective on Saudi Arabia: the first time women were allowed to enter a cinema in Saudi, and they're eating popcorn; the woman driving a car, with a McDonald's¹¹ in the background.

SARAH I was in Makkah¹² in 2017, and I was talking to a woman who said, "We all drive when we go overseas. But drivers in Saudi are crazy, so I don't mind not driving." It felt a bit like a rationalization. It's been almost five years since the ban¹³ was lifted. What's it like now?

TASNEEM I was one of those women who never wanted to drive in Saudi because of the roads, the drivers, the cars—like you said, I rationalized it. And now that I've been driving, I don't remember or realize how there was a world where women couldn't drive. It was such a big issue. The most important one was emotional, feeling like you don't deserve to be in control of your own life. It's important for women to have all the same rights because sometimes society governs us more than governments or religions do.

SARAH One of those tropes you hear about countries is "The locals are so friendly." Now that the kingdom is opening up to tourists, do you think Saudis are excited to have visitors they can show their country to?

TASNEEM Saudis are very intrigued by foreign visitors, like, "Wow, you came to Saudi, of all places? What brought you here?" There's excitement. As a society, we have so much that we want the world to see. There's just never been that access. In Western media before, we were either victims—women, especially—or we were villains, especially men. So I'm very happy to have this conversation and dialogue,¹⁴ even if it's visually, which I think is more authentic. My work is not altered. And it's important for the world to see our normal, daily lives.

SARAH Do you feel like the Saudi Arabia being promoted to international tourists is authentic to your experience as a Saudi?

TASNEEM They have all these taglines—Umluj is "the Maldives of Arabia." It sounds very cliché, until you go and see it, and then you're like, *OK*. It's real. The water is pristine—so clear and amazing and natural. There's no one [around]. We have so many untapped beautiful natural spaces.

SARAH When I went to AlUla¹⁵ the first time, everywhere I looked, it was a sea of *thobes* and *abayas*.¹⁶ It seems like locals are really thriving on discovering the country, perhaps in a way they hadn't [in the past].

TASNEEM We Saudis had never heard of AlUla before. We didn't know we had access. And suddenly it became a tourist attraction for locals. When the COVID-19 lockdown happened, for a year and a half Saudis weren't allowed to leave the country. So I went to Umluj. I went to Abha. I saw Tabuk. And those places [earlier] I wouldn't have really been interested in, but now I'm telling my family and my friends, "You need to go."

SARAH My grandfather was an ambassador of India to Saudi, and my grandparents visited AlUla in the 1980s; he must have had some diplomatic access. Now that Saudi Arabia is opening up to international travelers, what tips do you have for people who are finally able to visit?

TASNEEM It's such a huge country. It's more than three times the size of France. The beaches in Jeddah and the west coast are just beautiful: Go to Umluj and book a caravan and stay there for a couple of days. The diving is surreal, and the Red Sea is amazing. Try to find someone to contact before you come to the country. Saudis are very hospitable people. As soon as you know one person, they invite you to their house.¹⁷ You make friends, and that's it.

14
Saudi Arabia hosted more than 4,000 exhibitions and conferences last year, including the 22nd annual World Travel and Tourism Council Global Summit; its 2022 theme was "Travel for a Better Future."

15
AlUla is an ancient city currently being developed into one of Saudi Arabia's top tourist destinations.

16
Thobes are robes with long sleeves, commonly worn by men. *Abayas*—traditional body-length dresses—are often worn by women. In 2018, the Crown Prince said women didn't need to don a head cover or abaya: "The decision is entirely left for women to decide what type of decent and respectful attire she chooses to wear."

17
Offers are typically extended multiple times. Declining the invite initially—and then allowing the person to insist—is part of the expected exchange.

Writer Sarah Khan is profiled on page 17.

Tasneem Alsultan photographed Abu Dhabi for the January/February 2022 issue of AFAR.

*Reem is an artist →
and computer
scientist. In 2020,
women comprised
33 percent of
Saudi Arabia's
labor force.*

*Also known ↓
as the Jeddah
Corniche, the
waterfront hugs
the Red Sea.*



*← Hessah took to
the road the day
the driving ban
was officially
lifted. Her first
stop: McDonald's.*





*Hundreds of men
gather in Riyadh
to break their fast
during Ramadan.
Each day, an anonymous person will
cover the expenses of
the iftars.*

*Saudi high school
students, from
Al Ahsa, pose for a
selfie at a convention in Riyadh.*



*Um holds weights
at her local gym in
Medina, one of Islam's
holiest cities. It is
home to the Prophet
Muhammad's tomb.*



↑ A young Saudi girl near AlUla's Maraya concert hall, the largest mirrored building in the world. In Arabic, maraya means "reflection."



How to Visit Saudi Arabia

Planning a trip to Saudi Arabia can seem mystifying since it's been off-limits to most international visitors for so long. But the kingdom's opening to tourism is bringing with it new infrastructure and processes to make the destination accessible: In a matter of minutes, travelers can apply online and receive a multiple-entry eVisa, valid for one year, for about \$142. Tour operators such as U.K.-based **Wild Frontiers** host immersive trips that take travelers from the world's largest camel market outside Buraydah to ancient petroglyphs around the Jubbah oasis—as well as to the cities of Jeddah and Riyadh. A travel advisor can also help with planning a trip. Visit afar.com/about/travel-advisory-council to connect with AFAR's **Travel Advisory Council** members. —Sarah Khan

WHEN TO GO

November to March brings the most pleasant weather in Saudi Arabia, ranging from the 50s in the Hijaz Mountains to the 70s and 80s on the coast. It's also when the country comes alive with events: AIUla Moments, the MDLBeast music festivals, the Islamic Arts Biennale, the Red Sea International Film Festival, and others.

ETIQUETTE

In recent years, guidelines around women's attire have relaxed considerably, and it's no longer mandatory to wear an abaya (the traditional body-length dress) and scarf in public. However, both men and women travelers should respect cultural norms with modest clothing options covering the shoulders and knees when in public. Women should have a scarf on hand if they plan to visit a mosque, as head coverings are required.

Alcohol is prohibited in Saudi Arabia and is not available at restaurants, hotels, venues, or events.

During the month of Ramadan (March 22 to April 20 in 2023), many restaurants will be closed until after sunset. While some hotels continue to serve meals throughout the day for those who aren't fasting, you should avoid eating or drinking in public during daylight hours out of respect.

In general across Saudi Arabia, it's best to avoid public displays of affection.

WHERE TO STAY

As the country's financial, cultural, and culinary hub, **Riyadh** is the most dynamic city in the nation. The Four Seasons sets you inside the capital's most distinctive skyscraper, the Kingdom Centre, capped by the soaring Sky Bridge.

On the Red Sea, **Jeddah** is a relaxed, cosmopolitan city with history dating back to the 7th century. Opened in February 2022, the gleaming Shangri-La Jeddah is a new addition to the hotel landscape, while the House Hotel Jeddah City Yard, which opened in late 2021 as the nation's first Design Hotel, promises to be the first of many sleek boutique hotels in the country.

With Nabataean tombs carved into rocky outcrops across a vast desert, **AIUla** sits approximately 423 miles north of Jeddah on the historic incense route. It is home to Al-Hijr, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage site, which was inscribed in 2008. In 2021, the government unveiled a \$15 billion plan to turn the ancient city into an international arts and culture hub. Change is already evident: The hotel Habitas AIUla and Habitas's nearby caravans blend into an ochre valley studded with contemporary art installations; the Banyan Tree AIUla also debuted in late 2022 near the Maraya concert hall. Three additional resorts from Aman will launch in the AIUla area in 2023, including a tented camp and a "ranch-style" property. **A**



Antarctica:

by
Roxane Gay



a Love Story

Photographs and lettering by
Debbie Millman

On our very first date, my now wife, Debbie, told me that when she turned 60, she was traveling to Antarctica to see a total eclipse of the sun. My first thought was that this was a very Caucasian ambition. Then I thought it was strange she was planning a trip 20 years in advance. I wished her well on her future adventure because I surely was not going to Antarctica, under any circumstances. Later that evening, she revealed that she was 57. I demanded proof, and she proffered her driver's license, which indicated that she was, indeed, telling the truth. Her unique birthday celebration was closer than I assumed, but it was still not my concern, however lovely our date was.

Three years later, in June 2021, Debbie and I eloped. Because of the pandemic, the big wedding we had been planning would not be possible for the foreseeable future. Instead, our wedding was an impromptu but romantic affair in an office building in Encino, California. Five months later, near midnight on November 27, we were on a flight to Santiago, Chile, to begin a very long journey to the bottom of the world.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL is a relatively new experience for me. As a child, I visited Haiti with my parents, who were born there. We took the occasional trip to Canada. And then, I gained a lot of weight for complicated reasons and got it into my head that I couldn't travel internationally. I was worried about ancient stairs and narrow alleys and judgments I might face. For many years, I didn't have the confidence to believe I deserved to see the world. And certainly, I could never afford it. But then, my career exploded, and suddenly, I could afford to travel. I lost some weight and tried believing I had as much right as anyone else to experience the world at any size.

This was around the time I met Debbie. We soon began to travel together, and fortunately, we learned that we travel well together. I handle the logistics. I apply for the visas and make the arrangements and secure the travel health insurance and take care of all the detail-oriented stuff. She encourages me to make the most of each trip, to overcome my fears, and to embrace the possibilities of a wide-open world.

I am not adventurous, but my wife is. She has climbed to Machu Picchu in Peru and ascended the stairs of the Potala

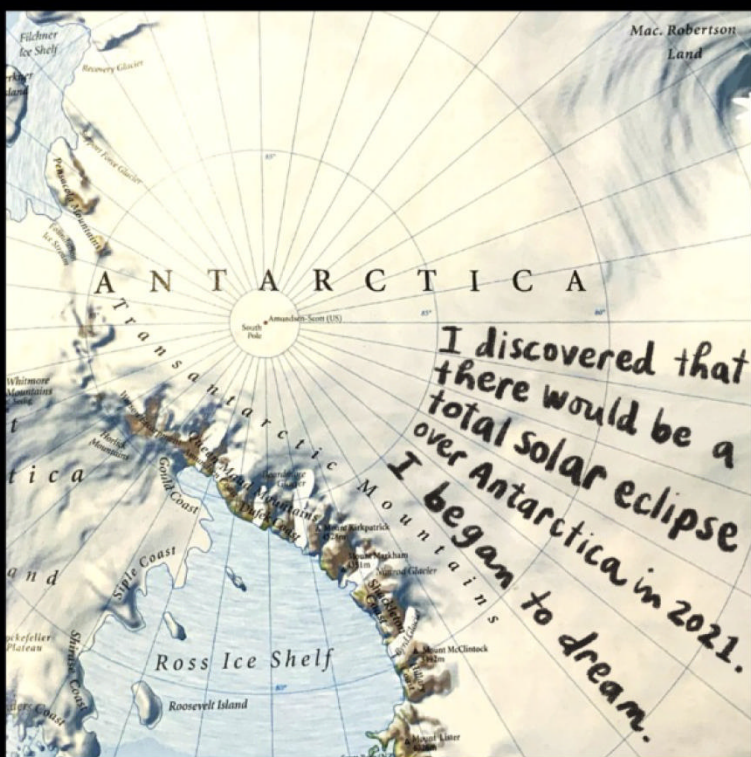
Palace in Tibet. She has snorkeled the Great Barrier Reef and watched the sun rise over the temples of Angkor Wat. She has walked through the red sands of Wadi Rum beneath a blazing sun. She loves travel, and she really commits to each experience. A year after our first date, we went to Egypt. I was content to stand outside the Pyramids of Giza, but she climbed into one of the tombs, where she could barely stand as she made her way through its chambers. When she emerged, she was flushed with excitement. For me, the adventure is working up the courage to leave the comfort of my little life. Or I could say the greatest adventure of my life began the day I met Debbie. And that's why, the day after Debbie turned 59, I started researching how to get to Antarctica.

I had imagined Antarctica as a desolate, frigid place covered in ice and snow, and my research confirmed that. Most of what I knew of the White Continent came from movies about people running away from their lives to study this or that in one of the research facilities dotting the brutal landscape. There was a certain allure to the isolation, but it was also a terrifying prospect.

I soldiered on. I told myself this was just a thought experiment, but I knew that if it were going to happen, I had only a year to plan. Maybe Debbie had forgotten about her Antarctic desires, but just in case she still wanted to go, it was probably wise to see if her dream was even feasible. It was. When you throw enough money at something, all kinds of things are possible.

I discovered a 10-day Silversea cruise that would place us directly in the path of the eclipse. In late spring 2021—just a few months before we eloped—I told Debbie I had figured out how to get us to Antarctica. She was thrilled and pleasantly surprised that I had remembered her wishes and was moving forward with a plan. Before I could change my mind, I bought plane tickets to Santiago, Chile.

But still, we waffled. We were living in a different world from the one where we first met. On that first date, we had no idea that we and billions of others would spend more than a year in relative isolation, trying to stay healthy and safe while an ever-mutating virus worked its way around the world. Travel was fraught in a way it had never been; neither of us had ever been on a cruise before. With COVID-19 limning every decision, going on a cruise seemed like a particularly unnerving notion. Still, we decided to make the trip. A 60th birthday is a milestone; it felt important to mark the occasion with style. Plus, we were vaccinated and boosted. And several family tragedies had given us reason to understand, too intimately, just how short life can be.

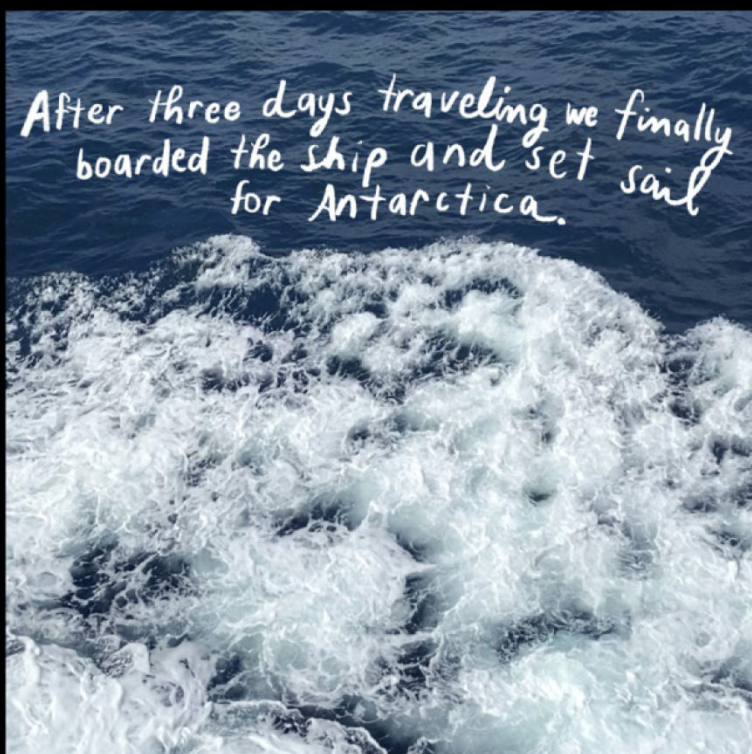




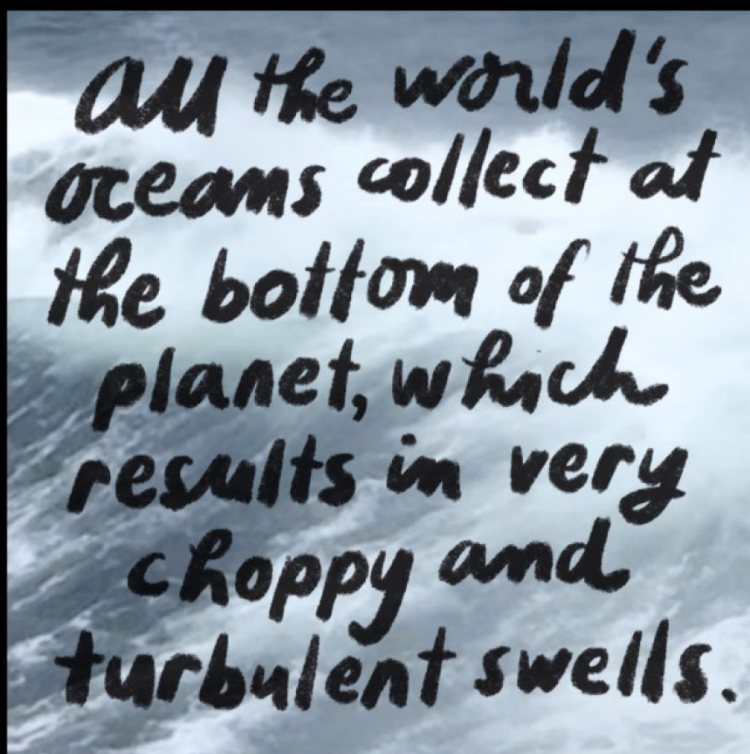
The wind in Punta Arenas is so strong the trees are slanted.



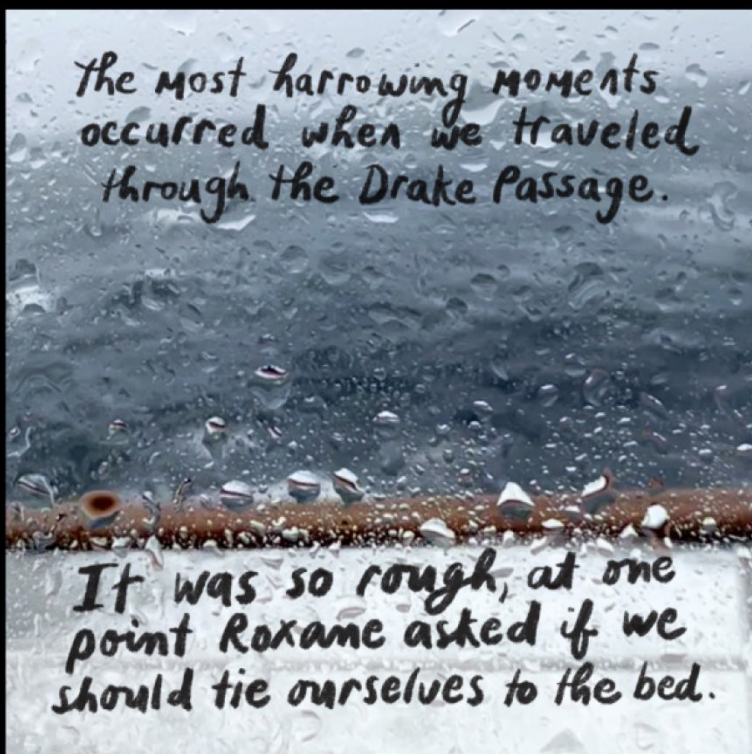
so are some of the boats.



After three days traveling we finally boarded the ship and set sail for Antarctica.

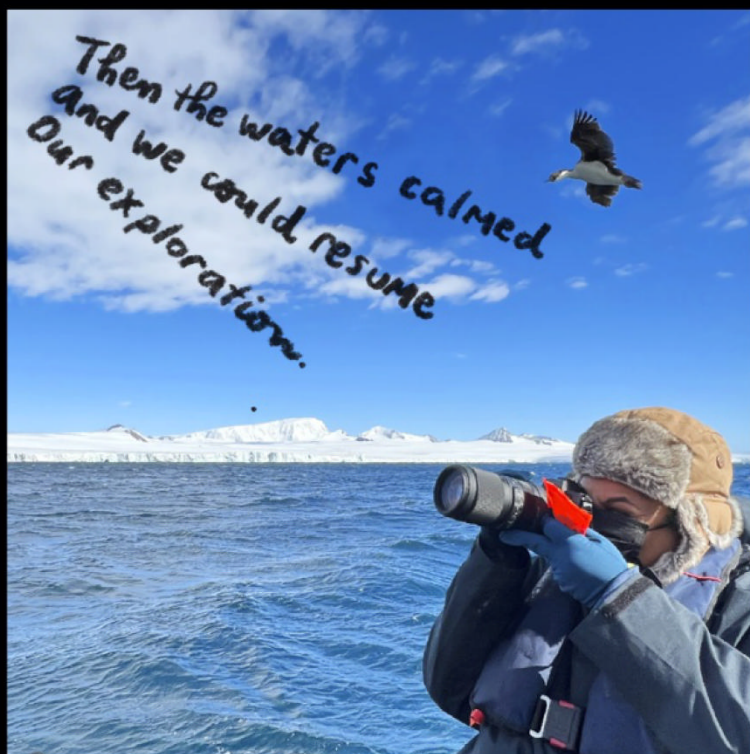


All the world's oceans collect at the bottom of the planet, which results in very choppy and turbulent swells.



The most harrowing moments occurred when we traveled through the Drake Passage.

It was so rough, at one point Roxane asked if we should tie ourselves to the bed.



Then the waters calmed and we could resume our exploration.

You might assume, as I did before the trip, that Antarctica is a couple of hours away from South America, but it is not. It took three days of sailing across the most turbulent waters I have ever experienced to reach the tip of the continent.

A COUPLE OF MONTHS before departure, Silversea sent us a list of needed supplies, mostly things to keep us warm and safe while cavorting on a remote, uninhabited landmass. I went to REI for the first and what will probably be the only time in my life and acquired the necessary gloves and socks and boots and walking poles and hand warmers. Basically, I turned into a walking advertisement for Columbia Sportswear. My wife is the frugal one. She mostly borrowed clothes from a friend. There was, however, a catch. There are specific ship rules about how much your suitcases can weigh, their dimensions, and the like. We meticulously packed and weighed and measured our luggage. (Later, after arriving on the ship, we understood that no one else had followed the rules.)

On the flight down, I was ambivalent about the journey, mostly grateful to be trapped on a plane with Debbie, with no external demands. After we landed in Santiago, we took a tour of the city and saw the highlights: the arts district, an artisan village, the city center. The next morning, we took a charter flight to Punta Arenas, a city at the very southern tip of Chile. After a brief immigration check, we applied scopolamine patches to prevent nausea and boarded the *Silver Cloud*, a 120-suite cruise ship with an ice-breaking hull that can slice through frozen waters. Once we were settled in our lovely two-room suite, our butler, Ashok, introduced himself. For the next 10 days, he would look after us with genuine care and consideration.

You might assume, as I did before the trip, that Antarctica is a couple of hours away from South America, but it is not. It took three days of sailing across the most turbulent waters I have ever experienced to reach the tip of the continent. While I had done the research for the cruise, somehow the Drake Passage never came up. On that first night, a British guy dining alone at the adjacent table asked, "Are you ladies ready for the Drake Passage?" and I thought, "Wow! Drake is dropping a new album and this older chap is hip to it?" It was an innocent time.

Later, I learned that the Drake Passage lies between South America and the White Continent—a body of water where three oceans come together. Depending on the weather—stormy versus mild—you may experience the "Drake Shake" or the "Drake Lake."

Whenever people mentioned the passage, they did so with hushed and ominous reverence.

That evening, back in our bedroom, we felt the ship rock violently as it cut through massive waves. In the next room, I could hear coffee mugs and wineglasses clattering. I held onto the walls as I moved about the cabin. Later, as we were trying to fall asleep while the ship lurched about

the ocean, I turned to Debbie and asked, in all seriousness, if we should lash ourselves to the bed, just in case. She assured me that we were fine, and ultimately, we were. The next morning, I stood on our balcony and blinked as the bright sun illuminated the crystalline blue of the endless ocean. There was no land in sight that morning or the next. It was overwhelming and terrifying. The world is small, but the

planet is vast and unknowable.

We began seeing the pale blue of icebergs on the second day of the crossing. Nothing could have prepared me for their majesty. As word spread through the ship that finally there was something interesting to see, people flocked to their balconies and the ship decks, craning their necks to get a good look. The icebergs were many in number, in every shape you could imagine. They looked surreal, precisely carved, and they floated serenely. When Debbie and I got tired of staring at the icebergs, we made our way to the panorama lounge, sat near a window with a view, and played Scrabble on our cute little travel set. Every so often, people would walk by our table, stare down at the game, and remark, "You're playing Scrabble." Many of these same passengers asked us, excitedly, if we were on the ship to see the eclipse, and then they would tell us long stories about their love of eclipses. It was mostly charming.

On an expedition ship, you aren't merely enjoying the leisure of all-inclusive cruising. There are excursions where you can disembark and look at penguins and more icebergs and step foot on dry land, and, honestly, that's about it. Antarctica is a realm of limited entertainment options, particularly if you are indifferent to the outdoors. The excursions are complemented by daily lectures about Antarctica, its history, and its wildlife—all kinds of birds, penguins, sea lions, whales. The first night, we attended a talk about the protocols that must be followed before setting foot on the continent—no small matter. Your equipment needs to be thoroughly cleaned and inspected. As you step onto the platform to board one of the Zodiacs—speedy little boats





Antarctica is the wilderness of the world.



More than 12 million penguins call Antarctica home.



There are 46 species of birds on the continent.



They have adapted to the most extreme conditions.



The ice is majestic



and utterly surreal to touch.

that take you to dry land—you must stand in a bath of disinfectant. Every effort is made to protect a largely pristine environment that has not yet been corrupted by human stains. The crew took that responsibility seriously, and we passengers did in turn.

Five days into the cruise, when Debbie and I were ready to go on our very first excursion, a private photography lesson on a Zodiac, we dressed in our layers and pulled on our waterproof boots and grabbed the fancy cameras we really didn't know how to use. We strapped ourselves into our life vests and donned our hats and gloves and marched to the hold. I was anxious. The Zodiacs are small, and you basically have to launch yourself from a small platform on a bobbing ship into a bobbing skiff. Everything was cold and wet. There was a line of people behind us, all staring, so I took a deep breath and reached for the hand of the man in the boat and prayed for some dignity in undignified circumstances. Once we were safely seated, off we went, exploring a small bay flanked by low, snow-covered mountains. It was bracingly cold, despite the sun shining overhead. Before long, my cheeks were numbed by the wind. I was thankful for the hand warmers in my pockets and the wonder of fleece.

Alan, the ship's charming photography instructor, escorted us. He spends most of his life cruising around the South Pole teaching people how to beautifully capture the place. It was an exhilarating experience. We were able to get close enough to a small iceberg to touch it. It was covered in penguins, which, you should know, are adorable. They waddle around, chattering amongst themselves. They really do fling themselves into the water headfirst like on PBS. They smell terrible, but we were in their house, and if they wanted to stink it up, that's their business.

We also saw a magnificent glacier and enjoyed birds soaring overhead. We saw a small piece of iceberg floating in the water, and Alan stopped the boat, leaned over the side, and grabbed it. I took a picture of Debbie, bundled in her bright red parka, eyes covered with goggles, beaming as she held the chunk of ice. There were more penguins. We pulled up to a craggy landing and stepped foot on land to . . . say we stepped foot on Antarctica. We admired the landscape, and I was struck by the fact that this really is one of the last places in the world that is largely unconquered. I found an unexpected comfort in that. And then, chilled to the bone, we returned to the ship.

That was enough of an excursion for me. I spent the remaining half of the cruise enjoying Antarctica from the ship. I read a lot. I watched spotty television. And I enjoyed Debbie's stories about the adventures she had on land—touring unearthly calderas, zipping around in Zodiacs to spot penguins, birds, and whales—while we played Scrabble and ate bar snacks in the lounge every afternoon.

We also, of course, had some business with a total eclipse of the sun. As you might imagine, I sang "Total Eclipse of the Sun," my inspired take on the classic Bonnie Tyler song, a ridiculous number of times leading up to the trip. I subjected Debbie to the gentle strains of "turn around," so often that I was forbidden from ever singing the song again. On the morning of the eclipse, December 4, we woke up at 3 a.m. and excitedly got dressed. I grabbed the fancy camera that we *still* didn't really know how to use, and we joined the rest of the passengers on the deck. There were several groups of eclipse chasers on board—people who travel around the world for the sole purpose of seeing eclipses. There were folks from astronomy clubs. There were a couple of people who had no idea an eclipse was imminent. And then there was us.

Sometimes you plan something meticulously, and nature has other ideas. When we stepped onto the deck, it was cloudy—a thick soup of gray hovering over everything. We had about 20 minutes before the eclipse, so we hoped the clouds might clear. Everyone was talking excitedly and prognosticating about the likelihood of seeing the eclipse. The crew did not play "Total Eclipse of the Heart," which felt like a missed opportunity.

Then, it was time. It grew very dark and still. The birds flying overhead disappeared. Everyone hushed. We looked up into the sky, hopeful. I reached for Debbie's hand. We waited and waited,

but there was nothing to see. The heavy cloud cover obscured the eclipse. A couple of the more accomplished photographers caught glimpses, but that was it. The darkness dissipated. All around us, people stared up into the clouds in disbelief. Seconds passed, and then minutes, and yet we all stood still.

Debbie's shoulders slumped, her disappointment palpable. I, too, was disappointed, but I was also calm. I thought about how, on the day we married, we had tumbled headfirst into a great unknown. *This*—this eclipse-less sail, this time, this freshly joined life—was the real adventure. As we looked out over the misty ocean, I put my arm around

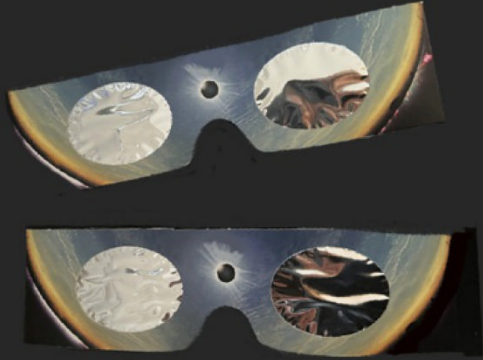
Debbie and held her close. I leaned down and whispered that the trip was worth it, and she gave a small smile. Because the trip *was* worth it. The planet did not care about our little plans, but there we were, together, in a stunning, unimaginable place. I could not hope for more. **A**

Roxane Gay is the author of seven books and head of the Grove Atlantic imprint, Roxane Gay Books.

Debbie Millman is a writer, designer, and artist who has published seven books.

They are both profiled on page 17.

Then, it was time. It grew very dark and still. The birds flying overhead disappeared. Everyone hushed. We looked up into the sky, hopeful. I reached for Debbie's hand.



In preparation for the eclipse
we got special solar sunglasses.

We could hardly contain our excitement.

Everyone on the expedition
woke up at 3 a.m. to see the
total eclipse of the sun.
Alas, there was too much
cloud cover and...

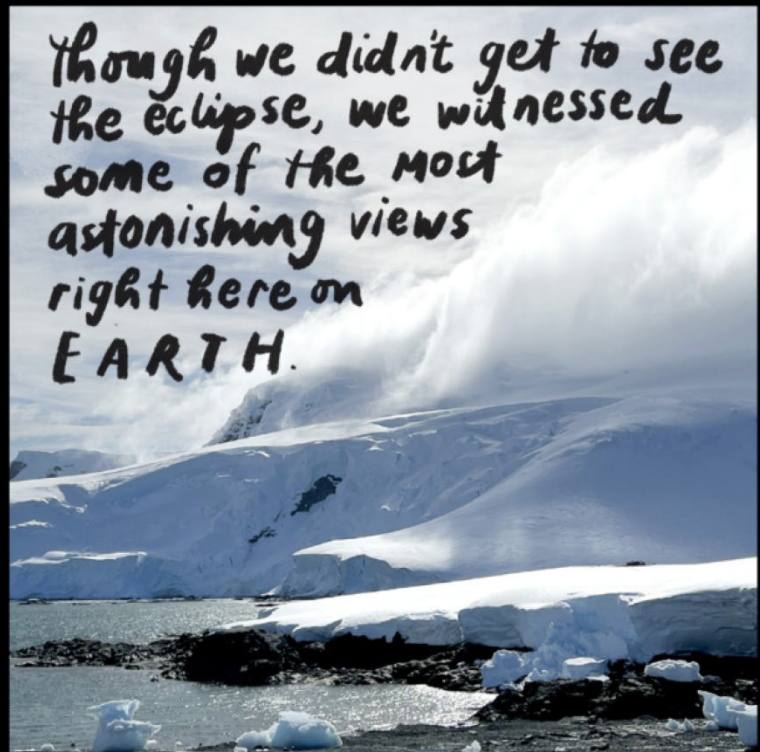


We
didn't
see it.

We were really, really disappointed.

But we continued on our journey.

Though we didn't get to see
the eclipse, we witnessed
some of the most
astonishing views
right here on
EARTH.



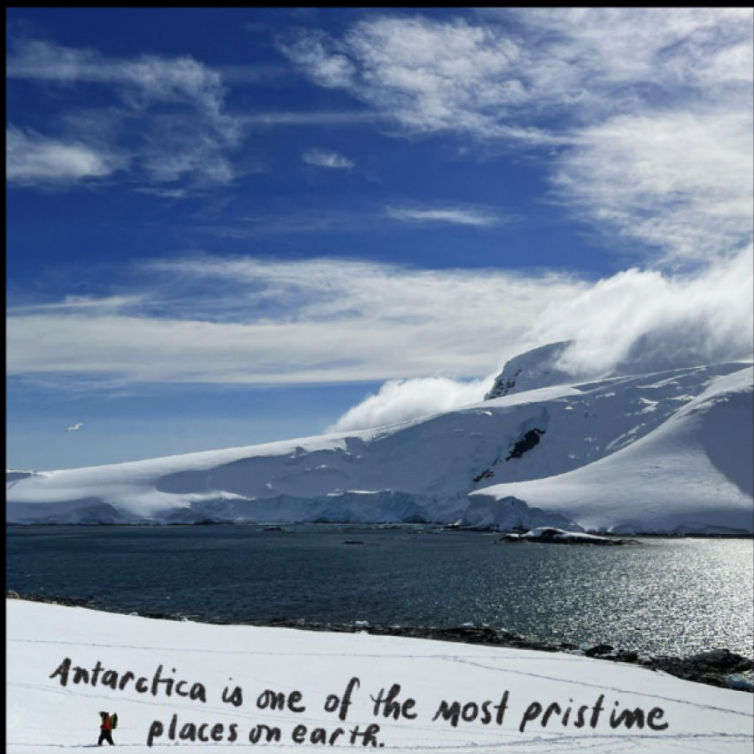
like this



and this

We looked out at the sea on
our last day abroad
with gratitude and humility.





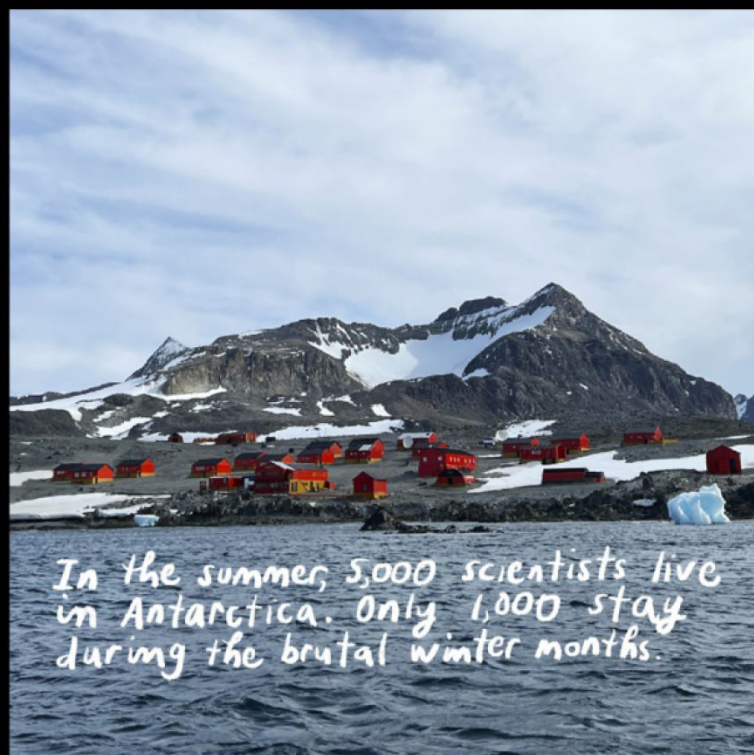
Antarctica is one of the most pristine
X places on earth.



The air and the ocean are crystal clear.



Sea Lions, Penguins, and Birds
all Peacefully co-habitate.



In the summer, 5,000 scientists live
in Antarctica. Only 1,000 stay
during the brutal winter months.



One of the things they are studying
is the effect of climate change.



Icebergs and glaciers are melting.



How to Cruise to Antarctica

Since 1966, travelers have visited the White Continent, including the author and her wife, who sailed with Silversea. Today, it's easier than ever to do so sustainably. Several cruise lines have recently debuted environmentally conscious expedition ships that journey to Antarctica. —*Fran Golden*

ATLAS OCEAN VOYAGES

This company has two Antarctic 200-passenger cruisers, the retro-chic *World Navigator* and the new, yacht-inspired *World Traveller*. Thanks to a hybrid power-management and propulsion system, each vessel uses one-fifth the fuel of a conventional ship. Dining options showcase Portuguese specialties, while travelers can unwind in L'Occitane's onboard spa. *9 nights from \$7,499 (with second guest included)*

VIKING

The *Viking Octantis* and *Viking Polaris* aren't just luxury cruise ships—they're also equipped with scientific labs that provide data to such organizations as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Onboard amenities include private balconies and free internet access. Guests can also join deep-sea diving excursions on the ships' six-passenger submarines. *12 nights from \$13,995, based on double occupancy*

LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS

Sail on one of the company's newest ships, the *National Geographic Endurance* and the *National Geographic Resolution*, each accommodating up to 126 guests. Thanks to their efficient design, the ships emit 70 percent less carbon than many other ships. Additionally, Lindblad went carbon neutral in 2019, so the company offsets each voyager's trip. Consider booking a night in one of the glass igloos on the top deck for an overnight stay beneath the stars. *14 nights from \$15,380*

SEABOURN

Sip champagne on one of the world's most impressive new ships, the 264-passenger *Seabourn Venture*, the first purpose-built expedition vessel from this line. The *Venture* is outfitted with spacious veranda suites for all passengers, as well as two battery-powered submarines. A 26-person expedition team will take groups on excursions to South Georgia Island, the Falkland Islands, and Antarctica. *13 nights from \$17,399, based on double occupancy*

My Happy Place

by LAUREN TAMAKI

A "happy place" is, to me, a mini escape. No matter how high my stack of dishes is, I close my eyes and zoom back to a moment of bliss to lighten my current load. I've had to "travel" to my happy place a lot lately, and luckily, I've had it locked in for years: The Frick Garden Court.



Picture it—Manhattan, 2014, on one of my customary solo birthday museum crawls, I'm perched atop a cool marble bench, bathed in peachy, diffused light, zoning out to the plop, plop, plop of the fountain. New York had been serving up obstacle after obstacle since I'd arrived in 2011, and I finally felt in control of my life. Nowadays, when I close my eyes and conjure the courtyard of this Gilded Age mansion-turned-museum, it isn't only the vision of immaculate pillars and manicured plants that calms me: It's the memory of the contentment I felt in that moment.

And I know I can travel back there anytime I need to.

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