

A full-page photograph of a person standing in a narrow slot canyon. The person is wearing a white tank top, grey cargo pants, and a backpack, looking up at the high, undulating rock walls. The walls are illuminated with warm, orange and red light, creating a dramatic and textured environment. The title 'TravelLife' is overlaid at the top, with 'Travel' in white and 'Life' in a bright blue color.

# TravelLife

SPRING 2022

5 FRESH SPRING  
Jaunts

Post Pandemic  
**PARIS**

**THE YEAR OF THE**  
Friendcation

**ARIZONA'S**  
Indigenous Culture





Where Discovery Comes  
*naturally*

*Fairmont*  
MAYAKOBA





Riviera Maya, México





# CONTRIBUTORS

We asked some of our contributors how the lack of travel over the past two years has affected where they plan to travel this year.



## NICOLA BROWN

POST-PANDEMIC PARIS, PAGE 30

If the world were ending and you could only travel to one place one last time, where would you go? For me it would be somewhere familiar and full of impactful memories. The pandemic has posed many such existential questions to us all. Accordingly, this

year's travel plans are centred around family and familiarity. I'm visiting cousins I haven't seen in over two years in England and returning to the family cottage in southern France. These are the places I have travelled to the most in my lifetime, yet the decision to return once again was (very unusually, for me) unequivocal.



## DOUG O'NEILL

LIVING THE HIGH LIFE ALONG HADRIAN'S WALL, PAGE 34

More fresh air, fewer frenetic activities. The last two years have taught me the beauty of slowing down and not jamming in "10 Top Things To See and Do in a Day." I intend to spend a part of each travel day, or at least a few hours, wandering aimlessly. My next trip

will be a destination that allows me the freedom to head out in the morning without a goal, to connect with locals along the way and truly immerse myself in whatever place I happen to find myself. I'm banking on a lot more cloud watching. The Portuguese countryside, Eastern Canada, a lesser-known European city, or a seldom visited hiking region will be among this year's plans.



## INKA PIEGSA

RELIVING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TRAVEL, PAGE 42

The lack of travel for two years has fuelled my desire to return to the part of the world I like best, which for me is the Middle East. The only country I have not been to in the region, because until recently it was not open to solo women travelers, is Saudi Arabia. So now that it is possible, this will be my next destination.

# TravelLife



### COVER PHOTO:

Antelope Canyon, located on private land within the Navajo Nation.

This majestic canyon was shaped by millions of years of water and wind erosion and was named for the herds of pronghorn antelope that once roamed the area.

Photo courtesy of the Arizona Office of Tourism

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# SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE BY CHANGING UP YOUR DINNER PLATE

BY TAMMY CECCO

## Meal delivery with Hello Fresh makes it easy to feel transported through food

Amidst various stages of lockdown, dining out has been limited and travel even more so, meaning it's understandable that many of us have been craving change—any kind of change. Luckily, change doesn't have to be drastic to make a difference. The simple prospect of seeing something different on your dinner plate; something fresh and colourful and new—can foster the feeling of being transported.

Maybe that first bite of gyro takes you back to Athens, or a mouthful of butter chicken screams Mumbai. Either way, I've found that food has the potential to offer much more than sustenance, especially now. That's why I was intrigued to try out Hello Fresh, a meal delivery service that provides ingredients and instructions that make it easy to diversify your dinner plate—without leaving the house. And even if you've never made a curry from scratch, the straightforward recipes provide a clear path from ingredient to finished product—minus the hassle of second guessing your culinary prowess.



## THINGS I LOVE

- ♥ There are lots of creative options to choose from which rotate regularly so you don't run the risk of boredom.
- ♥ It was a fun way to get my kids involved in dinner prep. My kids can be fussy eaters but I found plenty of options in the selection familiar enough, while pushing them outside of their comfort zone in a way they were on board with.
- ♥ Depending on what your schedule looks like from week to week, you can adjust the total number of recipes per your family's needs and select add-on items such as garlic bread or seasonal desserts (recipes start as low as \$9.69 per serving).
- ♥ Hello Fresh is also going above and beyond in terms of sustainability. Their sourcing, packing and shipping operations generate less food waste than traditional grocery stores because they buy ingredients based on your order, pre-portioned to the gram—so you cut food waste by up to 36 per cent with every meal.

**I may be a little late in jumping in on the meal kit subscription train as the concept is far from new but I am glad I finally did. It succeeded in transporting me when both myself and my taste buds are craving to explore.**

**TRAVEL WITH YOUR TASTEBUDS:  
HELLOFRESH.CA**



# EMBRACING *Spring*



Tammy is wearing the elegant Shirt Dress by Whitney Linen, ideal for vacation-effortlessly chic and ultra-comfortable. A self-tie belt cinches in the waist and the pockets are perfect for stashing lip-gloss or a room key. Her wonderful glow was jump started by Tan on the Run. @tanontherunvaughan (Thanks Sherri!)

It seems as we spring ahead this season, not only do we gain an extra hour of daylight but we also have the opportunity to transform in so many ways. Never before has the changing of the seasons held more hope—for better days and for a renewed perspective on our lives and the way we view the world.

I have become optimistic, if cautiously so. As Canadians, we have experienced much tighter restrictions than many other countries and although some may view this negatively, I choose instead to focus on what we have gained from the experience. Spring has a way of encouraging us to not only look ahead to brighter days, but also to use what we have learned to broaden our outlooks and fully appreciate even the small things that we might have taken for granted just a short time ago.

There seems to be a greater appreciation for the basics—the neighbourly greetings, the small gestures—but also for those who are most important in our lives. Slowly but surely, we're once again embracing freedoms, enjoying special events and time spent with family and friends. And yes, finally even travel has become much simpler. Here at *Travel Life* we are excited about the year ahead now that more concrete plans can be made, and that as our writers travel more freely, the inspiration and connections made by our storytellers will be that much more profound.

I am hopeful that the global pandemic will soon be fully behind us and although not totally gone, we all hope that its negative impact diminishes with each passing day. What I hope does not disappear, is our renewed excitement for not only the act of travel itself, but for all aspects of discovery. I know personally, in my recent travels, I have embraced a new enthusiasm for learning, for exploration, for different tastes, sounds and landscapes.

If you've been craving some new discoveries of your own, it might be time to round up a group of friends (or just one or two) for a reunion abroad. Our story on *The Year of the Friendcation* is filled with tips for planning the perfect group trip. Or, if Paris has been calling your name, one of our writers goes back to the City of Light to discover a *Post-Pandemic Paris* that's both nostalgic and entirely new in surprising ways.

Those with more stress-relieving travel aspirations should take a look at our piece on all the ways Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba not only pampers guests, but also puts a significant focus on sustainability and protecting the environment. And since travel and wellness can often go hand-in-hand, spa-goers should have *Europe's Top Spa Cities and Towns* on their travel radar.

For foodie travellers, I want to highlight *Paella for Purists*, one writer's delicious deep-dive into the iconic Spanish dish. And get ready to pack a basket with goodies and drop your blanket at some of the most scenic picnic spots around the world. Anyone who would prefer sticking closer to home the next time they travel will love *We Have That Too*, which highlights the fact that Canada can equal—or best—some of the world's top sites.

This spring, we're not only looking forward to embracing a new season and bringing you inspiration for your next trip, but also to a collective breath of fresh air—and a fresh excitement for discovering what's next.

Here's to embracing spring and all that comes with a new season!

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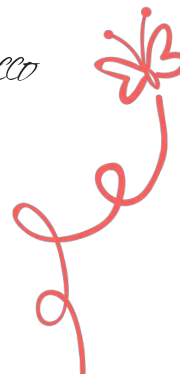
Follow Us As We Travel Once Again



@travellifemag

*Tammy Cecco*

TAMMY CECCO  
EDITOR IN CHIEF





# Loving Linen

FASHION ESSENTIALS FOR EVERY

T R A V E L L E R



## TROPICAL KAFATAN

Add a splash of vacation-ready colour to your wardrobe with a flirty, flowing kaftan that works just as well by the pool as it does for post-beach cocktails. The Tropical Print Lamu Kaftan is perfect on its own, or pair with some statement accessories for a more polished look. Ultra-comfortable and easy to pack, the breezy dress makes a subtle style statement.

## TIMELESS MAXI

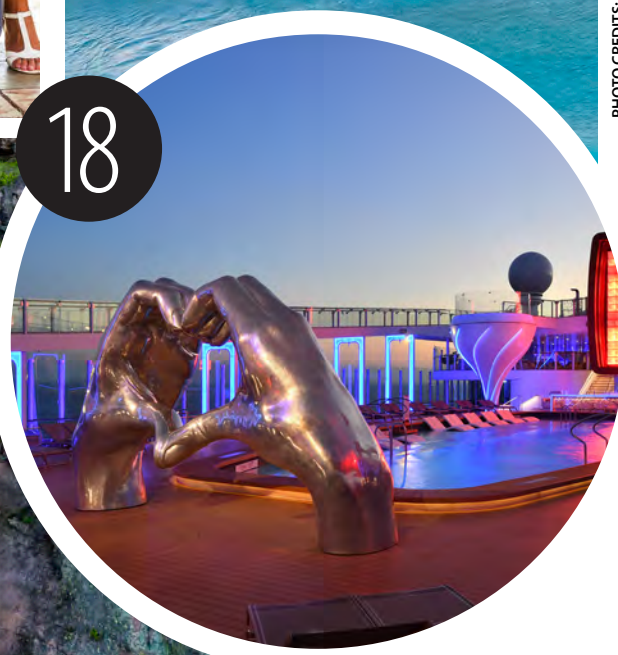
Basic black is anything but when it comes to the elegant Lyn Dress. The softly structured maxi style features a pretty bracelet length sleeve finished with a functioning cuff. A waistband cinches in the waist, creating a flattering silhouette leading to a full, billowy skirt. Pair this travel-perfect piece with strappy sandals and a cute crossbody bag or add heels and a bold necklace to switch things up.





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## STYLISH SLIP DRESS

Every vacation wardrobe can benefit from a simple piece that can serve as a base for building a variety of outfits—and this beautifully minimal dress fits the bill. Made from soft and flowy white linen, the dress is cut on the bias, creating a flattering shape on the body. Add a blazer and flats for a more structured feel, or keep things easy-breezy with a light cardigan and slip-on sneakers.

## TANK AND SHORT SET

Whether worn as separates or together, the Position-Square Neck Tank and Utility Shorts offer a chic twist on the two-piece set, both cut in a shimmery linen with a hint of gold. The tank features a square neckline with wide shoulder straps, while the shorts provide a luxe take on the classic utility style. Worn as a duo, the look is refined and easy to take from day to a casual night out. As separates, the tank works well with a linen pant and the shorts pair perfectly with a simple cropped T-shirt.



WHITNEY LINEN

WHITNEY WESTWOOD,  
founder of Whitney Linen

*"I was always captivated by the relaxed everyday chic of the Cote D'Azur. Casual and off-the-cuff, yet effortlessly stylish. That attitude and lifestyle is the creative muse for our collections. We work exclusively with fine European linen as it's essentially the official fabric of the Riviera, so central to fashion and décor, it just reminds me of being there and all the lovely times I've had."*







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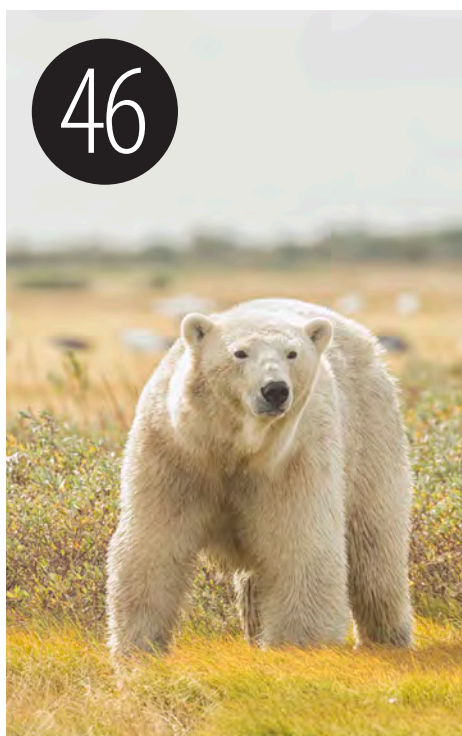
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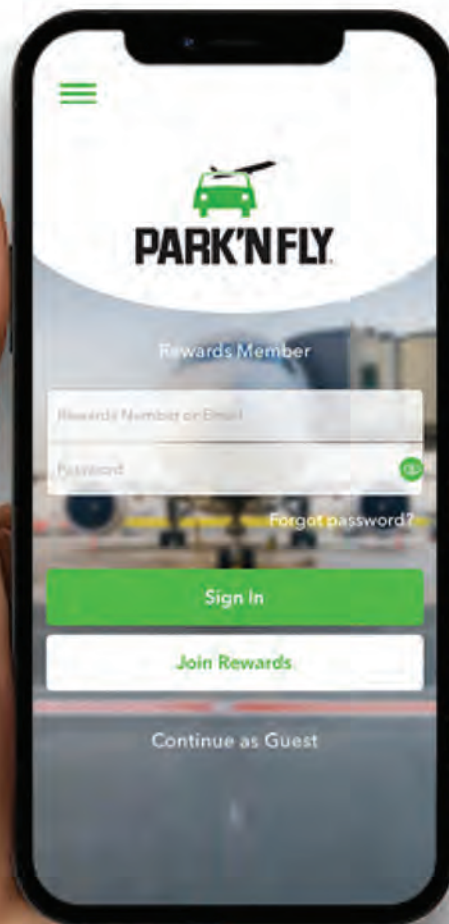
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CANADA CAN EQUAL—OR BEST—SOME OF THE WORLD'S TOP SITES

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# SPRING FOOTWEAR FINDS

## *Perfect for Travel*

### THE HUNTER SPRING COLLECTION FEATURES UPDATED TAKES ON CLASSIC STYLES AND A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS



#### PLAYFUL PUDDLE JUMPERS

Spring showers have nothing on the fun and flirty women's PLAY Short Speckle Boot in a pretty shade of azalea pink (among other available hues). No need to bypass puddles with a pair of these on your side—the waterproof ankle boot is ready for anything the day might toss your way.



#### SUSTAINABLE SANDALS

Anyone in search of a go-anywhere sandal—ideal for everything from grocery store runs to beach-hopping—should consider the Bloom Algae Foam Sandal made from a revolutionary new material harvested from algae. Using algae instead of other materials saves water and reduces CO2 emissions. The result is a flexible, waterproof, lower impact material that also happens to be lightweight and durable.



#### CHIC AND SLEEK

Versatile footwear is an integral part of any successful wardrobe—something that can easily be dressed up or down and that pairs well with multiple outfits. Enter the travel-ready Commando Chelsea Boot, made from ultra-sturdy vegan rubber and sleek enough to elevate any look, in any destination. The slim fit boot, available for men and women, is the perfect low maintenance footwear that also packs a stylish punch.



#### FUNCTIONAL FASHION

Whether you're running errands at home or doing some urban exploring abroad, the Hunter Canvas Desert Commando Boot is your ideal companion. Built for any season, the boots are made from a breathable cotton canvas that keeps feet cool on warmer days while still providing natural insulation in cooler weather. Sturdy enough for longer treks, they're also lightweight, flexible and come in black, white and dark olive.







#### **CITY-READY**

From Paris to Prague and everywhere in between, be ready for anything (rain or shine) with the Hunter Original Rain Boot. Available in both short and long styles and multiple hues, these are a timeless classic perfect for unpredictable spring weather. The chic, waterproof boots were made for sightseeing, school runs, shopping sprees and whatever else you may need them for.



#### **STYLISH SLIP-ON**

Sometimes, life demands swift movements and more to-dos than we might like to be juggling at once. For times like these, the women's Play Mini Rainbow Print Clog offer a stylish slip-on perfect for anyone perpetually on the go. Whether worn with jeans and a T-shirt on a coffee run or in the garden during a weed-pulling marathon, these clogs balance comfort and style with ease (and an eye-catching print to boot).



#### **POOL-READY SLIDES**

Prepare to meet your new favourite poolside accessory. These stylish slides feature a moulded footbed and are crafted from moisture-absorbing terry towelling making them ultra comfortable. Easy to clean and quick drying, they're also breathable, flexible and perfect for relaxing by the pool, whether in your own backyard, at the cottage or a sun-soaked resort abroad.

**HUNTER**

[hunterboots.com](https://hunterboots.com)



# 5 Fresh Spring Jaunts

BY JESSICA PADYKULA

Embrace a new season and satisfy spring wanderlust with a city escape that takes full advantage of the great outdoors

**A**fter what feels like a particularly long winter, spring is finally here and there's no better time to get outside and do some exploring. Shorter city breaks offer an easy way to satisfy your wanderlust when you're short on time or just want a quick break from regular routine. These five cities are ideal spring destinations, brimming with things to see and do outdoors and on the water, as well as great food and unique attractions.



City Park, Denver



Denver Zoo

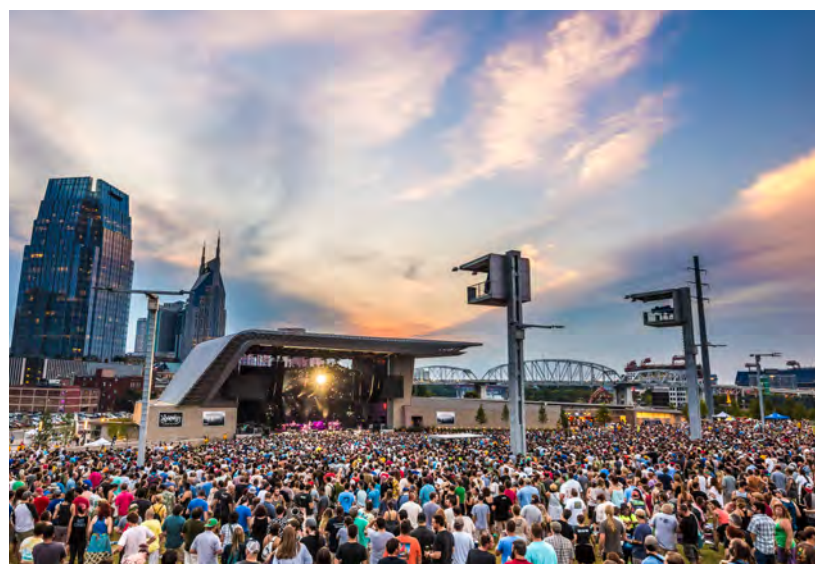
## DENVER

**On the water:** Anyone interested in spending some tranquil time on the water should head to Washington Square Park. Take in the surrounding mountain views as you glide on the lake with a pedal boat, kayak or stand-up paddleboard. Rentals are available from Wheel Fun Rentals, located right in the park.

**Get moving:** Stretch your legs in City Park, the largest in Denver. Hit the jogging/hiking trail or stroll among the flower gardens. The park is also home to Denver Zoo and the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Depending on how long you're in Denver, spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park is just a 90-minute drive from the city featuring well over 500 kilometres of hiking trails.

**Foodie finds:** On Sundays from May-November (rain or shine), South Pearl Street transforms into a farmers' market with dozens of booths selling seasonal produce and locally-produced goods. You're also likely to find some food trucks on site.

**Garden party:** Visit the Denver Botanic Gardens to experience an oasis in the city spread across 24 acres. The extensive collection here covers everything from native Colorado species to internationally-inspired gardens.



## NASHVILLE

**On the water:** One of the best ways to see Nashville's stunning skyline and get a real feel for the city is from the water. River Queen Voyages offer several tours that allow for a leisurely but scenic paddle, ranging from 90 minutes to over three hours.

**Get moving:** Edwin and Percy Warner Parks, collectively known as "The Warner Parks," together span more than 3,100 acres of scenic roadways and overlooks, hiking trails, mountain bike trails, cross country running courses, golf courses and athletic fields.

**Foodie finds:** If you happen to be in town on a Saturday between the end of March and June 18, don't miss the Music City Food Truck Park & Flea Market. Up to 10 food trucks are on site to sample from and beer and cocktails are available for purchase. There's also live music and a weekly flea market to shop.

**Garden party:** Cheekwood Estate & Gardens is a 55-acre botanical garden and art museum that includes 12 distinct gardens and a 2.4-kilometre woodland trail featuring modern and contemporary outdoor sculpture. In the spring there are a whopping 250,000 blooming bulbs.







Lexington Market

## BALTIMORE

**On the water:** A fun way to explore the city, one ticket on the Baltimore Water Taxi gets you unlimited on-off service to more than 30 attractions and neighbourhoods. If you prefer something a little more athletic, guided kayak tours by Waterfront Partnership depart from the Maryland Science Center in the Inner Harbor on Sundays at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. from April to October (advanced reservation required).



Fell's Point

**Get moving:** Whether jogging, walking or strolling as you take in the sights, Inner Harbor Promenade winds around Baltimore's scenic Inner Harbor from Locust Point to historic Fell's Point. The 11-kilometre paved promenade makes it easy to enjoy the waterfront and the many charming neighbourhoods that surround it at your own pace.

**Foodie finds:** Stop by Lexington Market (the oldest continually running market in America) to browse over 100 food vendors selling everything from fresh produce to baked goods. A stop at Faidley's while you're there is essential, famous for their jumbo lump crab cakes, as well as crab soup, oysters and fried fish.

**Garden party:** Spring is the ideal time to visit Sherwood Gardens when 80,000 tulips are in bloom. Even if you miss the tulips, there are still six acres of manicured gardens to explore as well as ample space for a picnic.



## JOURNALS

5 FRESH SPRING JAUNTS

## MONTREAL

**On the water:** If you feel like taking a break from the city, not far from downtown Montreal you'll find the five islands of the Parc national des Îles-de-Boucherville. The scenic channels here are brimming with wildlife and perfect for paddling.

**Get moving:** Lace up your walking shoes and head to pretty Mount Royal to climb the 256-step staircase to the top of the park for epic views of the city. Pack a simple picnic and find a patch of grass to call your own after the climb.



**Foodie finds:** Stock up on local goodies like artisan cheese, fresh bread, sweet treats and seasonal produce from one of the city's public markets, including the Jean-Talon Market, Atwater Market and the much smaller but equally impressive, Maisonneuve Market.

**Garden party:** Don't miss a chance to visit one of the world's biggest botanical gardens. The Montréal Botanical Garden is home to 10 exhibition greenhouses and a diverse range of thematic gardens, from Japanese to alpine to Chinese.



## VICTORIA

**On the water:** Victoria Harbour Ferry offers comprehensive tours of various lengths, as well as water taxis that can easily be used to travel to more than 15 locations around the harbour. In addition, whales can be spotted in the area from May to October with many tour companies offering whale watching excursions.

**Get moving:** Beacon Hill Park in downtown Victoria offers 200 acres to explore, including flower beds, natural areas, meandering footpaths, tennis courts, ponds and playgrounds.



**Foodie finds:** Foodies will want to head straight for Victoria Public Market, located in the historic Hudson building in downtown Victoria. Here you'll find locally-produced cheese, farm-fresh produce, a French bakery and much more. If you're a beer fan, check out "Brewery Bay," a walkable ring of brewpubs and breweries surrounding the Upper Harbour.

**Garden party:** Spring is the ideal time to soak up the scenic surroundings at world-renowned Butchart Gardens, started in 1904. During the spring months, you'll see vibrant tulip displays, as well as a whole host of other gardens in bloom. Starting June 1, the gardens are illuminated with coloured lights in the evenings.





# THE **YEAR** OF THE *Friendcation*

The pandemic may have kept people apart, but the time is ripe for reconnecting through travel

BY JESSICA PADYKULA

**Y**ou may not be able to choose your family members, but you can definitely pick your travelling companions. And after more than two years spent apart from some of our nearest and dearest, it's no surprise we're seeing a serious uptick in the "friendcation."

According to data from travel tech firm Amadeus, 2022 will be all about large and small reunion trips with group bookings having increased by 83 per cent since last fall. Destination searches match that sentiment, with Cancun, Hawaii and Las Vegas seeing a spike in searches—all popular group travel destinations.

Having taken multiple trips with friends—from road trips to bachelorette parties to months-long getaways—I can safely say there's more to a successful "friendcation" than simply packing a bag and hopping on a plane.

**Choose your travel companions wisely**  
Just because you have a great time with someone meeting up for dinner or drinks, doesn't automatically mean you'll make suitable travel buddies. Before you start



the planning process there are a few things to keep in mind (and more importantly) to discuss with potential travel companions before you commit. Do you have similar travel styles? Someone who prefers a tightly scheduled itinerary may not have the best time with someone who would rather go with the flow (and vice versa). Or if you're someone who likes being in bed by 9 p.m. you might not want to travel with a pack of night owls. Similarly, someone who's up for every adventure may be disappointed in a travel companion who would rather stay close to the pool with a good book.

#### Make sure you're on the same page about budget

Maybe this is a bucket list trip you've all been saving for and you want to splash out on everything from activities to meals to accommodations—that's great if everyone is on the same page. But if one or more of you are picturing a less flashy vacation complete with self-catered meals and lower cost activities, that can easily cause friction and arguments. Discuss in advance how much you're all comfortable spending rather than being surprised to discover you'll be shelling out more than you bargained for.

#### Be flexible and open

Travel teaches us a lot about ourselves and those we travel with. You may think you know someone really well—until they're faced with a stressful situation, whether a long flight delay, missed connection, or lost luggage. When travel snafus happen, flexibility is key. Not everyone deals with stress in the same way and this might be the first time you're seeing a friend lose their cool in a way you weren't expecting. That doesn't mean the trip is ruined, just that you need to re-set or recalibrate rather than dwelling on the situation. Be open to learning new things about your travel companions—and about yourself in the process.

#### Take time for yourself (if you need it)

It's perfectly acceptable to take time away from group activities or go off on a solo jaunt while your friends stay at the resort. Some people will naturally want to stick to a group dynamic and that's fine, but others may need a bit of alone time. If you know this about yourself, explain it to your travel companions in advance so they're prepared for you to skip out on a few things here and there. Do your own thing and simply meet up with them once you feel refreshed and ready to dive back in.

## FUN FRIENDCATION IDEAS

- **Make it a foodie-focus:** From market-hopping to cooking classes to food tours, there are many fun ways to incorporate a love of food into a group vacation.
- **Do some volunteering:** Whether you want to plan an entire trip around giving back, or just spend a day or two volunteering, opportunities to lend a hand or help out abound, from beach clean-ups to building projects.
- **Plan a spa getaway:** Have a friend or group of friends who live for pampering? A spa-focused trip or even wellness retreat complete with yoga classes followed by spa treatments can make for a relaxing getaway.
- **Rent a villa:** Larger groups might want to consider renting a villa and even hiring a chef if it's in the budget. That way there's ample room to spread out, but enough proximity to easily plan excursions and activities.
- **Follow a wine or beer trail:** From vineyard visits and wine tastings to brewery tours and pub crawls, your tiple of choice can easily be incorporated into a group or friend vacation.

Whether you go all-out on a bucket-list adventure or make this trip into a yearly tradition to look forward to, a friendcation creates lasting memories for all involved and even helps increase existing bonds bringing everyone closer.







## Carbon Offset Concierge, Dagmara Ava of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba

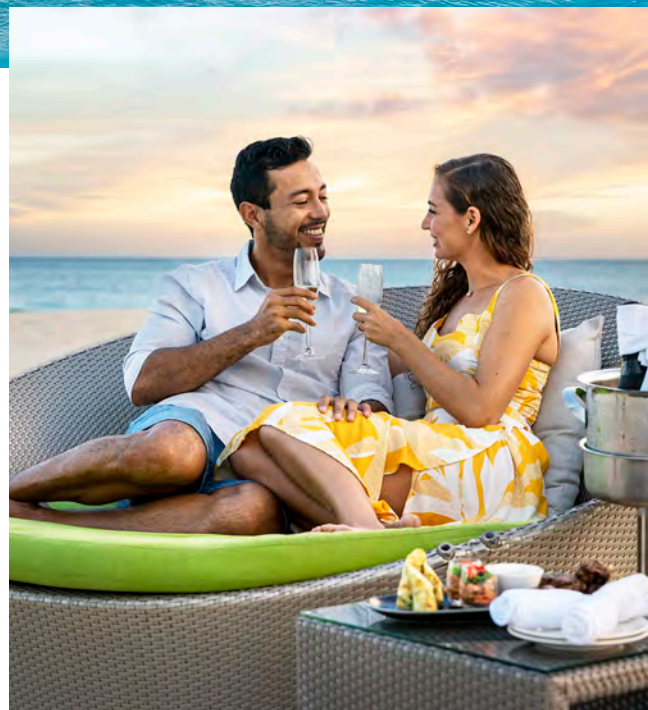
BY CHRIS RYALL

**D**agmara Ava, the world's first Carbon Offset Concierge, puts Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort's commitment to sustainability and becoming carbon neutral into action. "It is a beacon of sustainability," she says of the award-winning property. "I wanted to be part of the solution for this beautiful island, and help inspire other islands and continents to do the same."

Ava also holds the title of chief engineer at the 104-room luxury property, which also happens to be the first carbon neutral resort in North America and the first hotel to win a Global United Nations Climate Action award. Owner Ewald Biemans is internationally recognized as a visionary and leader in sustainable tourism.

Sustainability and eco-conscious practices don't deter from providing five-star service, amenities and comfort says Ava. Guests appreciate the property's efforts and in Ava's role she educates them on the numerous sustainability programs the resort has implemented, as well as on how they can reduce their carbon footprint to offset airport transfers, flights and island excursions. She explains how easy it is for guests to reduce their emissions and finds most people eager to make an effort. The resort's eco-focus is often a major reason why people choose to book a stay.

Prior to arrival, emails are sent out on the resort's sustainability practices and when they arrive, guests are provided with additional information. There is a "green" TV channel featuring the resort's conservation initiatives with tips for conserving water and electricity. Guests can also participate in monthly beach clean-ups and can join the Pack for a Purpose program, which encourages them to save space in their luggage in order to bring essential supplies for a children's home in need. The resort also offers a program wherein guests can adopt an island dog or cat in need of a loving home.



Bucuti & Tara takes a team approach for their concierge services. Ava fills the role on the carbon offset side as well as conducting yoga classes, while Simone van Bokhoven is one of the Personal Concierges assigned to each guest. In addition, Madeline Fernandez assists honeymooners and couples in setting the romance bar high as the specialized Romance Concierge. Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort combines romance, nature-based activities and pampering with sound environmental practices.

Here are the concierge team's recommendations for a memorable holiday in Aruba.





### ROMANTIC RESTAURANTS

Romance Concierge Madeline Fernandez suggests these restaurants for a romantic dinner on the island. Elements Restaurant is perfect for a romantic beach experience, including dinner in a private palapa on the sand or sunset butler service with champagne. Flying Fishbone or Atardi are where to go for a sensational sunset dinner with your sweetheart (and where you can dine with your toes in the sand). Or head to The Old Man and The Sea in Aruba's historic capital, the only restaurant on the island that offers a private overwater cabana dining experience.

### ROMANTIC ISLAND EXPERIENCES

Travelling couples will want to book a seating for a romantic beach dinner at Bucuti & Tara—TripAdvisor named the property second in the world for date night in 2021. In addition, don't miss a sunset or moonlight walk along Eagle Beach or a hike together at sunrise in Arikok National Park. To amp up the romance even more, think about booking a Monforte Luxury Cruise for a memorable time on the water including kayaking and snorkeling.



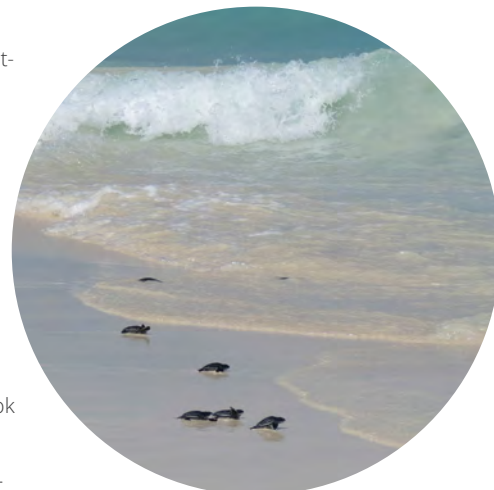
### HIDDEN ISLAND GEMS

Head off the beaten path and make time to check out a few hidden gems. Worthwhile options include the blowholes at Blackstone Beach; Keto, a wild and rugged beach that can be accessed by jeep or dune buggy; and Rodgers Beach where you'll find powdery white sand, colourful fishing boats and few other visitors.



### ARUBA MUST-DOS

Personal Concierge Simone van Bokhoven recommends some not-to-miss activities and attractions guaranteed to showcase Aruba's beauty and culture. For starters, Bucuti & Tara guests can book a scenic sunset sail which includes Champagne, an open bar, hors d'oeuvres and transportation. For a dose of art and culture, make your way to San Nicolas at the south-east end of the island to see the area's many murals surrounding the main street. Active travellers should visit Arikok National Park for hiking, cultural heritage sites and guided nature walks and Eagle Beach is ideal for snorkeling.



### AUTHENTIC ISLAND CUISINE

Head to these much-loved island eateries for a true taste of Aruba: Gostoso, The Old Cunucu House, Marina Pirata, Zeerovers, Driftwood, Coco Plum, Coco's Restaurant, Gasparito, Marshe Aruba and Papiamento.



### SURPRISING ARUBA FACTS

- Aruba is the wreck diving capital of the Caribbean
- On a clear day you can see Venezuela
- Almost everyone speaks four languages in Aruba—English, Spanish, Dutch and Papiamento
- Aruba has more sunny days than any other Caribbean island
- There are only two sets of traffic lights on the island
- Aruba is one of the world's largest exporters of Aloe
- Aruba once had the largest desalination plant in the world



## NEW SHIPS TO

# Get Your Cruise On



BY LYNN ELMHIRST,  
HOST OF WORLD'S GREATEST  
CRUISES ON PBS

Now that cruising is back, you'll want to be among the first guests to board these new ships. Along with health innovations like top-of-the-line ventilation systems and virtual safety briefings, these ships debut trend-setting design and novel experiences that make the vessel you're on just as exciting as the destinations where they sail, both close to home or to remote corners of the world.

From exciting new features and luxe amenities to cutting-edge innovations, there's a lot to look forward to when it comes to cruising



B.B. King's Blues Club on the Rotterdam



Holland America Line's Rotterdam

### *Holland America Line's Rotterdam*

Holland America Line celebrates an incredible 150th anniversary in 2022. The cruise line began in the 19th century transporting passengers from Rotterdam to New York, and the line's newest 2,600-guest flagship pays homage to its milestone celebration.

#### **You'll love:** The live music

At the heart of the Rotterdam is the "Music Walk," a neighbourhood of five live music venues firing up the evenings with world-class performances in partnership with some of the biggest names in music, from Lincoln Center Stage and B.B. King's Blues Club to Rolling Stone Rock Room and Billboard Onboard, plus a 270-degree surround-screen World Stage.

Don't miss the Grand Dutch Café and Rudi's Sel de Mer restaurant or all-new experiences like the Half Moon Bar, where cocktails with backstories trace the history of Holland America Line and world cruising.

**Sail away to:** Scandinavia from Amsterdam in the summer of 2022, followed by Caribbean itineraries that include Holland America Line's private island, Half Moon Cay, in the fall and winter of 2022-2023.



## Celebrity Apex

The 3,000-guest Celebrity Apex is the latest Edge-class ship for Celebrity Cruises and features cutting-edge design like the cantilevered Magic Carpet venue that glides up and down the outside of the ship!

Think stylish, urban resort at sea including two-story villa accommodations with plunge pools; 29 restaurants, bars and lounges; Peloton bikes and new luxury retail boutiques at sea from Bvlgari, Cartier and the first-ever Montblanc.

Don't miss getting a selfie inside the oversized 'heart hands' sculpture on the main pool deck!

**You'll love:** The modern luxury Retreat

This exclusive, ship-within-a-ship neighbourhood has stunning suites, as well as a private restaurant, lounge and sundeck with the most inviting, over-the-pool basket swings! In addition, a team of hosts is on-hand 24/7 to take care of every cruise detail.

**Sail away to:** Northern Europe and the Mediterranean in the summer of 2022, followed by Caribbean itineraries in fall and winter 2022-23.



Celebrity Apex

## Silver Origin

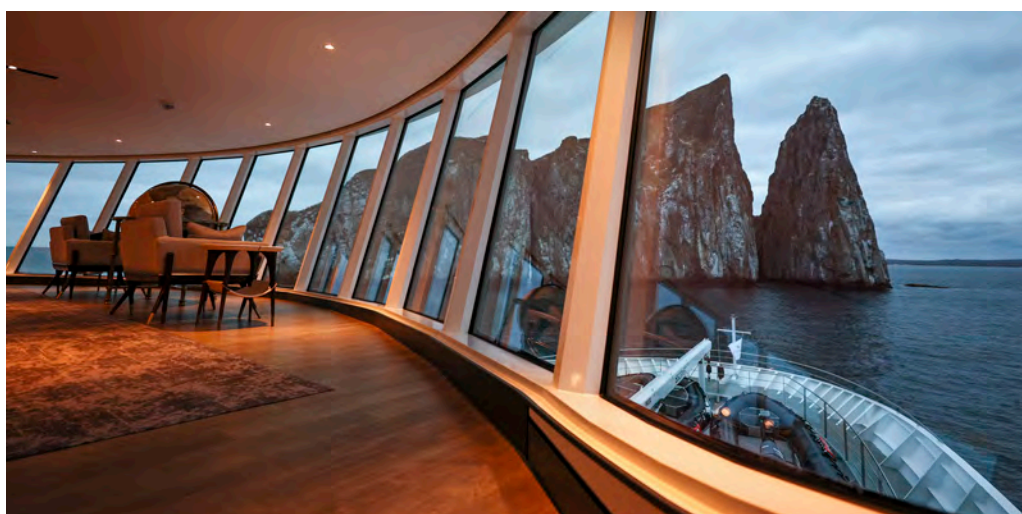
Silversea Cruises' ultra-luxury fleet has launched its first ship purpose-made for expedition cruising in the Galapagos Islands. Year-round, she'll sail just 100 guests to explore the one-of-a-kind landscapes and wildlife in this travel bucket-list destination, accompanied by experts on wildlife, geology, marine eco-systems and more.

The Silver Origin is the only all-butler suite ship in the Galapagos, and it has the highest expert-to-guest ratio. It also incorporates local culture, local Ecuadorian ingredients and its design brings guests closer to the Galapagos seascape with floor-to-ceiling windows in the restaurant, open-air grill and observation areas that bring the outdoors onboard the ship.

**You'll love:** The eco-friendly innovations

Built with the Galapagos Islands' precious environment in mind, Silver Origin incorporates state-of-the-art technology, including a dynamic positioning system that protects the delicate seabed. All suites feature a freshwater purification system that significantly reduces the use of plastic. Silversea even offers reef-safe sun block to guests.

**Sail away to:** The Galapagos Islands; a once-in-a-lifetime cruise.



Silver Origin



EUROPE'S

# Top Spa Cities and Towns

Bathe in culture and healing waters at these historic European spa destinations

BY CHRIS RYALL

Wellness and self-care have never been more top of mind. Nurture your body and soul while also getting a healthy dose of culture and history with the help of Europe's soothing natural mineral springs and baths. Soak amidst century's old architecture and history while basking in the therapeutic mineral-rich waters. These spa destinations serve as the perfect holiday tonic for anyone in need of some serious rest and relaxation.

## Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně, The Czech Republic

Water is the central theme in famous Czech Republic spa towns like Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně, known for numerous natural springs including Cross Spring, Rudolph Spring and Caroline's Spring. The water's documented curative properties are why medical professionals advise drinking as well as bathing. Karlovy Vary welcomes visitors to its colourful, colonnaded houses situated on the riverbanks. Spa walkways lead to various baths, Diana Lookout Tower and many historic Neo-Renaissance and Baroque style buildings. Mariánské Lázně, known for its Singing Fountain, has been a favourite spa destination for notable figures from the past including Chopin, Wagner, Edison, Goethe and European royalty.



## Budapest, Hungary

The Danube River splits the scenic city of Budapest between the hilly Buda district and the flatter Pest. The passion Hungarians have for bathing culture unifies Budapest, known as the Spa Capital of the World with more than 100 natural springs and Turkish influenced baths, like Rudas Thermal Bath built in the 16th century. One of Europe's largest and most popular baths is Széchenyi, a sprawling complex with 10 indoor water pools, a large outdoor pool, underwater jacuzzi, steam rooms, saunas and restaurants. Art and bath lovers can combine the two passions at the beautifully designed and architecturally stunning Gellért Spa. Budapest even offers the chance to soak in thermal beer spas (while sipping a local brew, of course). Post bathing, the city is filled with cultural and historical attractions to explore.





## Baden-Baden, Germany

It's no surprise that the Black Forest region, with its verdant lush forests and natural beauty, is a hub for spa lovers, with Baden-Baden being one of the world's most well-known and popular spa destinations. Like other spa destinations, the natural springs here became a retreat for Romans 2,000 years ago. In addition to its baths, Baden-Baden is also a town for the senses. Treat your musical tastes to Germany's largest opera venue, the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden; sample the savoury cuisine at one of the town's many fine restaurants and appreciate the Old Town's distinctive architecture. Leave time for a visit to one of the many bathhouses, from the historic Friedrichsbad baths reflecting traditional Roman and Irish bathing practices, to the more modern but equally soothing Caracalla Spa.



## Bad Ragaz, Switzerland

The 5-star Grand Resort Bad Ragaz has played host to numerous Olympic athletes and celebrities from around the world who come to soak in the public thermal bath, the Tamina Therme. Classic luxury and exemplary guest service blend seamlessly with modern and technologically advanced therapeutic and medical treatments. Check out the hotel's Sauna Village featuring a variety of saunas, steam baths, hydromassage showers and heated recliners. Then relax in the "Blue Gold" as the spa's thermal waters are known. Take a hike to the nearby Tamina Schlucht, a stunningly beautiful gorge where the hot water flows to the baths, or walk around the village of Bad Ragaz and sample traditional Swiss cuisine, cheeses and chocolate.



## Bath, England

Bathe like a Roman—but without the battle scars. The Romans were the first to harness the healing powers of Bath's natural thermal waters in AD 43 and since that time the city's spas have been attracting royalty, celebrities and tourists alike. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1987, Bath was also accredited by UNESCO as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. Enjoy the same springs as the Romans did 2,000 years ago at the Thermae Bath Spa, but with modern conveniences and additional baths as well as the Wellness Suite offering various spa treatments and a series of saunas and steam rooms. Make time for a stop at the stunning open-air rooftop pool providing views across the city skyline. For a dose of culture, don't miss the Jane Austen Centre, No. 1 Royal Crescent, Holburne Museum, Victoria Art Gallery and much more.





Cosmos with the girls

THROUGH THE LENS OF

# sex and the city

The iconic show gets a reboot with HBO Max's *And Just Like That...*, and in the process, so does the series' iconic setting

BY JESSICA PADYKULA

There's a good reason New York City has been the setting for so many treasured television shows, from *Seinfeld* and *Friends* to *Gossip Girl* and *30 Rock*. Architecturally stunning and culturally rich, the dynamic city also boasts colourful neighbourhoods that run the gamut from gritty to glitzy and everything in between. But there's one TV show in particular where New York City played a starring role alongside its bevy of beloved characters, and that is unequivocally *Sex and the City* (SATC). The iconic show celebrated fashion like no other at the time, and showed a legion of loyal viewers that female friendships could be as complicated and messy as they were uplifting and inspiring.



It's been over 20 years since Carrie Bradshaw, Charlotte York, Miranda Hobbes and Samantha Jones took on the Big Apple and in doing so, put New York City on full display. Six seasons and two movies later, the SATC crew is back onscreen in the new HBO Max series, *And Just Like That...*, which catches us up with the woman (minus Samantha) and once again gives New York a moment to shine.

It should come as no surprise then, that viewers of the show are interested in seeing some of the series' filming locations for themselves. There's an entire arm of the travel industry aimed at taking movie and TV fans to see where some of their favorite scenes played out, from the wilds of New Zealand to the rolling hills of Ireland. Whether you're a diehard SATC fan or a new devotee after watching *And Just Like That...*, there are numerous NYC hotspots you can grab selfies at, from bars to bakeries.

One great place to start (especially for foodies), is CableTV.com's interactive *Sex and the City* dining guide ([cabletv.com/blog/sex-and-the-city-dining-guide](http://cabletv.com/blog/sex-and-the-city-dining-guide)). The comprehensive guide makes it easy to eat your way through the city, stopping off at establishments frequented by Carrie, Charlotte, Miranda and Samantha. There's even a handy "expense meter" rating each place listed with one, two, three or four martini glasses (with four indicating the pricier spots).

Stop by Bubby's High Line in the Meatpacking District for some seriously comforting fare like fried chicken and scratch made burgers. Or grab lunch and a pressed juice at Cafeteria, a Chelsea spot that was a regular lunch stop for Carrie and friends. Either way, don't forget to grab a cupcake (or three) from Magnolia Bakery (also known for their cakes and banana pudding), the spot where Carrie tells Miranda about her crush on Aidan.

If you're looking to see even more of New York City through the lens of SATC and it's follow-up, *And Just Like That...*, go on an organized tour like the Sex and the City Hotspots Tour offered through On Location Tours ([onlocationtours.com](http://onlocationtours.com)). The whirlwind tour (clocking in at about 3.5 hours) includes more than 40 locations featured in the series as well as the movies. Some selfie-worthy stops include Carrie's famous brownstone stoop in the West Village, the upscale boutiques along Bleecker Street and The Plaza Hotel where Big infamously breaks Carrie's heart.

Whether you're visiting New York City for the food, the fashion, the architecture or the nightlife, there's likely a memorable SATC-adjacent location to add to your itinerary.

## FOODIE FILES

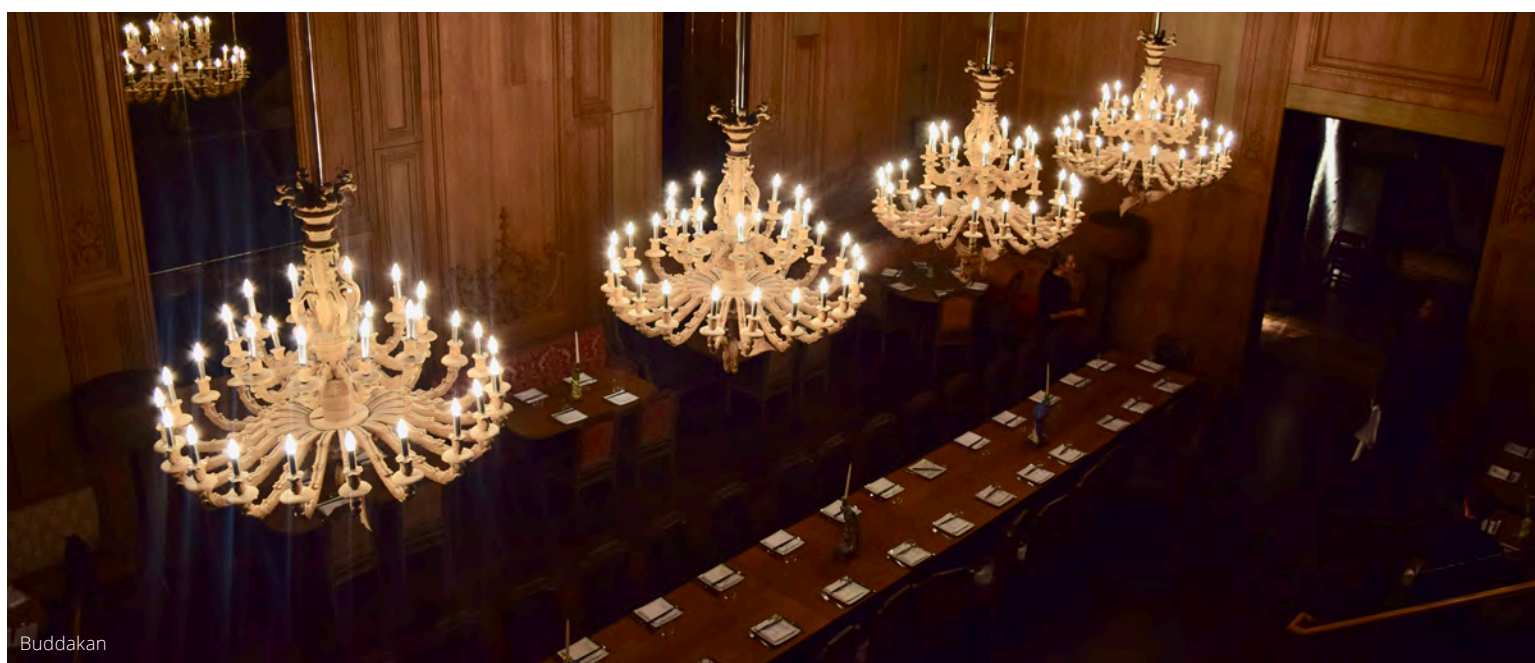
NEW YORK CITY



Cupcake from Magnolia Bakery



Pleasure Chest



Buddakan





# Paella

## FOR PURISTS

**Enjoy Spain's national dish on home ground**

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY DIANE SLAWYCH



Paella simmering to perfection



Everyone in Spain, it seems, has eaten at La Pepica. The King of Spain has reportedly visited the famous paella restaurant in Valencia four times, bullfighter Manolete dined here, as did globe-trotting author Ernest Hemingway, who mentioned the eatery in his book *The Dangerous Summer*.

Photos of these and other illustrious guests cover the walls of this popular eatery, which was founded in 1890. Its reputation for good food combined with its location, at one end of a long row of restaurants that front a beautiful Mediterranean beach, make for a memorable experience.

There are many types of paella (pronounced pie-aye-ya), but the main ingredient is always a short-grain, white rice, cooked in a large, round shallow pan and eaten communally. Its popularity has expanded beyond Spain's borders and can now be found on menus in many other Hispanic countries, and in Europe and North America.



La Pepica Restaurant





But what better place to enjoy Spain's national dish than in the city where it originated? Rice, along with oranges and a local beverage made from tiger nuts (horchata de chufa) are said to have been introduced to Valencia by the Moors who occupied the city for 500 years. Casseroles of rice, seafood and spices were often prepared for family gatherings and special occasions.

You can learn more at Valencia's rice museum, or take a pleasant side trip 12 kilometres south to the village of El Palmar, where much of the rice used in paella is still grown.

Until the 14th century, El Palmar was an island in Albufera Lake, which provided inspiration for various Spanish literary masterpieces including many works by Valencia-born writer Blasco Ibañez. Now, it's also the heart of the picturesque Albufera Nature Reserve, a wetland for wintering waterbirds in Spain with important breeding colonies of herons, purple gallinule and terns.

The lake is separated from the Mediterranean Sea by the Devesa del Saler, a strip of land with pine forests and ancient dunes. We take a 50-minute boat ride on the lake, which includes a visit to one of the traditional houses once occupied by fishermen and rice farmers

Later, at Restaurant Mateu in El Palmar, one of the chefs invites us into the kitchen to watch him prepare a traditional Valenciana paella with chicken, rabbit, green beans and saffron. These days, you can also find seafood paella, mixed paella (seafood and meat) and black paella, made with squid ink. If you're interested in regional specialties, another dish is All i Pebre which contains eels from Albufera Lake.

To truly enjoy paella like a local, eat directly from the pan and revel in the caramelized, toasted rice at the bottom. You can order paella elsewhere in the world, but here you can enjoy it near kilometres of golden sand Mediterranean beaches, and in the case of El Palmar, stunning sunsets.



Albufera Lake



## IF YOU GO

The Albufera Tourist bus offers a 2-hour tour of the Albufera Nature Reserve including a boat trip. Tours are often conducted in Spanish, though written handouts in English are offered. The trip leaves from Plaza de la Reina. For more information, check [valenciabusturistic.com](http://valenciabusturistic.com). For general information on Valencia, check [VisitValencia.com](http://VisitValencia.com).





# NORTHERN IRELAND'S *Bread & Butter*

**Hands-on homestyle bread-baking  
classes in seaside County Down**

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY ALISON KENT



Heading southeast from Belfast, we pull into the drive of Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen a mere half-hour later. Located by the shores of Strangford Lough in County Down, an early morning chill lingers in the fresh seaside air as we step out of the car. Welcoming our group is Tracey herself, ushering us inside her pastoral 17th Century homestead. The deeply rooted history and character-filled ambiance of this picture-perfect setting is unmistakable.

In the bright and airy kitchen, a tableful of freshly made, authentic-to-the-region breads awaits. This impressive spread includes Bannock (buttermilk soda fruit bread), Fadge (potato bread) and Farl (Northern Ireland wheaten soda bread), all accompanied by homemade fruit preserves, swirls of creamery butter and pots of Belfast brew tea served in wonderfully mismatched fine bone china teacups.

The consummate host, local food authority and tour guide, Tracey Jeffery is eager to share her knowledge, while





Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen is a charming attraction, offering a selection of wheat and potato bread-making experiences to suit everyone and any occasion, from individual and group to corporate and customized. After breakfast, warmed by the strong, hot tea, cozy atmosphere and Tracey's engaging spirit, we are ready to don our aprons and roll up our sleeves. In today's class, we're learning to make griddle-baked Farl.

A staple of the region, this quick bread consists of a very simple bread dough that's cut into quarter-wedges (farls) and griddle-cooked, rather than oven-baked loaves more commonly found elsewhere. Farl can be slathered with jam and butter and enjoyed with a cup of tea or coffee, or served at supper alongside a bowl of hot Irish stew. For breakfast, it's commonly eaten as part of a hearty 'Ulster fry-up' comprised of bacon, eggs, sausage, mushrooms and tomatoes, or, as a 'filled soda,' a bacon-and-egg sandwich with a split and toasted farl as the bread.

I measure out freshly milled flour and pour in the same buttermilk we saw delivered to the cottage mere moments before. After a quick kneading on the floured work surface, the dough is shaped into a thick round before being cut into quarters. Onto the griddle it goes, where slow and low heat, and turning farls just once, is key to creating evenly baked bread with a golden-brown crust.

And that's it—beautiful, delicious bread in well under an hour and with hardly any ingredients...or effort. We sample our creations before saying our farewells—bread wrapped to-go and jars of Tracey's preserves tucked safely away for later.



Ingredients for Farl

## NORTHERN IRELAND SODA BREAD (FARL)

Adapted for Canadian kitchens, this simple recipe produces a comparable yet different result to those farls unique to the 'terroir' of Northern Ireland. Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen's soda bread recipe is simpler still, using just two ingredients: 'soda bread flour' (flour with baking soda added) and fresh buttermilk with a tasty salty tang. These briny notes are a result of milk produced by cows that graze on a steady diet of seaside grasses and cannot be authentically replicated on North American shores—hence, the addition of sea salt, here.

**Makes:** 4 wedges (farls)

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup whole-wheat flour, plus extra for dusting  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp sea salt  
1 cup buttermilk

1. Whisk the flour, baking soda and salt in a mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre; pour in the buttermilk. Stir to make a shaggy dough.
2. Tip dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Roll out evenly into a 1/2-inch-thick round (about 8 inch/20 cm across). Cut into quarters.
3. Heat a large heavy-bottomed skillet (cast iron is best) over medium-low heat. Add the farls and cook, turning once, until cooked through and golden-brown, about 24 to 28 minutes total.
4. Remove from heat and leave farls to cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely or split open and eat while warm with butter.



Abernethy Butter

## BUTTER UP

Northern Ireland-based husband and wife team of Allison and Will Abernethy have been producing artisanal butter since 2005. Hand-churned on the family farm, then patted into rich and creamy curls, the fanbase for this award-winning butter continues to spread. What began as a small local business now has Abernethy Butter on the table at Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen, and at Michelin-starred restaurants throughout the U.K.

Additional enthusiasts include food writer and television cook, Nigella Lawson, singing the praises of Abernethy Butter's Black Garlic Butter, while Abernethy's Dulse and Sea Salt Butter was on the menu at Harry and Meghan's wedding reception.



# Stylish Stays

## IN PERU

Peru's exceptional accommodation options offer culture, history and stunning scenic views

BY CHRIS RYALL

There's more to Peru than the spectacular 15th century Inca Citadel, Machu Picchu and the arduous Inca Trail. Peru offers a whole spectrum of landscapes such as the Amazon rainforest with the world's longest river; Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake; the Andes, among the world's longest mountain ranges, as well as the otherworldly Atacama Desert and a coastline boasting the largest left-hand point break in the world (surfers take note).

You can experience Peru's stunning scenery, sumptuous cuisine and vibrant culture with a range of accommodation options like mountainside capsule-like pods, lakeview suites, volcanic rock inns, canyon casitas and historic 1940's luxury hotel rooms. Raise a toast to these unique Peruvian properties with Peru's favourite cocktail—a refreshing pisco sour.



### Skylodge Adventure Suites: Ollantaytambo, Sacred Valley

Skylodge Adventure Suites redefines what a room with a view means. However you will need an adventurous side to get to your bed. No elevators here. Either climb the 400 metre plus mountainside by way of a via ferrata (a climbing path featuring a series of rungs and ladders affixed to rock), or hiking a trail featuring ziplines. Your reward is a spectacular view of the Inca Sacred Valley below. Each of the three hanging transparent dome-shaped modules can hold up to four people and comes equipped with a private bathroom, four beds, dining area, solar reading lamps, privacy curtains and other comforts of home. Snuggle up to your sweetheart and take in nature's beauty from your hanging pod. No noisy neighbours—just the call of the wild from curious Andean condors flying by.



### Belmond Las Casitas: Colca Canyon

Canyon equals luxury at Belmond Las Casitas. Colca Canyon is one of the deepest canyons in the world at 3,400 metres and twice the depth of the Grand Canyon. It is home to lush green valleys and farm communities where Collagua, Cabana and Inca peoples have inhabited the lands for thousands of years. Pampering is a tradition as is the cuisine at Las Casitas. Bask in luxury in one of the 20 casitas, each with a terrace and hot tub. Relax with a spa treatment, take a dip in the pool, read a book in the library and treat yourself to fine Peruvian cuisine. Venture off the property on a canyon trek, or hop on a Peruvian Paso horse for a ride through the Colca Valley. Feed the baby alpacas at the property's farm and complete your canyon getaway stargazing by the campfire at night.





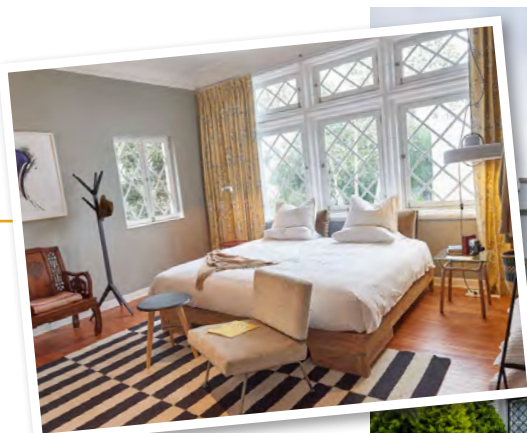


### Titilaka: Lake Titicaca

Titilaka, an 18-room all-inclusive resort on a four-acre private peninsula offers unobstructed lakeside views of Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake at 3,810 metres. Straddling Peru and Bolivia in the Andes, Lake Titicaca is seen by the Incas as the birthplace of the sun and cradle of the world. Every room captures the Inca spirit and atmosphere with local textiles, floral arrangements and lake-facing views. When you visit it's all about the experience, whether you're exploring the floating Uros islands and Island of Taquile, taking a rafting tour through the Totora reeds, birdwatching, cycling, or sailing. You can even get back to your Canadian roots and paddle the lake with one of their Canadian made canoes.

### Atemporal: Lima

Located in Lima's upscale Miraflores neighbourhood close to Peru's best restaurants (like Astrid y Gaston), Atemporal provides a welcome sanctuary from Lima's bustling city life in an exquisite 11-room 1940's style mansion. Each room is meticulously furnished with modern design and conveniences blended with Peruvian antiques, artwork, books and artefacts. Enjoy a cocktail in the private garden, the sitting room or bar soaking in the Peruvian atmosphere and vibrant colours. Explore the nearby boutiques, squares, cafes and restaurants by hotel bike or catch a ride in their chauffeur-driven house car. Peruvian culture right on your doorstep.



### CIRQA: Arequipa

Feeling the need for a sprinkling of spirituality without the sermon? Plan a stay at CIRQA, a Relais & Châteaux property located in the city's historic centre which is a UNESCO protected site. CIRQA brings individuality with high vaulted ceilings and architecture reflecting its former monastery past where monks would provide a tranquil oasis for travellers. Arequipa dates back to 1540 and is known as the "White City" with many of its old colonial buildings made of sillar stone, a volcanic rock that shines brightly in the sunlight. The hotel's eleven rooms combine modern comforts with stylish Peruvian accents and heritage sillar stone architecture. Besides satisfying your palate with Arequipenean countryside cuisine. CIRQA can organize tours to Arequipa's monasteries, volcanoes, salt flats, sillar quarries and around colonial Arequipa.





**POST-PANDEMIC**

# Paris

The city might be different in several unexpected ways, but Paris can still pack a new kind of nostalgic punch

BY NICOLA BROWN



From a cluster of pinkish-red geraniums clinging to the outer edge of a miniature cast iron balcony near the hilly, cobbled streets of Montmartre comes the trill of an unlikely new resident who's joined me for an aperitif before dinner. A cricket, four floors up. His insistent chirp, amplified by the classic stone facades and slate roofs of the city's ubiquitous Haussmann architecture, seems a call for a new take on the term "urban jungle."

He watches as apartment-bound families flood any available outdoor space below for a rejuvenating glimpse of greenery. They circulate shoulder-to-shoulder along gravel pathways surrounding precious empty rectangles of carefully fenced look-but-don't-touch grass.

As the piercing sun sets, masked patrons flash their Passe Sanitaire to grab plentiful portions of buckwheat crepes and Brittany cider at the restaurant on the corner, lockdown-liberating pups at their feet.

Though there are far fewer tourists around when you visit the classic landmarks, you wouldn't guess it from the thronging streets and packed restaurant terraces full of Parisians, some perhaps for the first time appreciating the little pleasures on their doorsteps that people come from all around the world to enjoy.

In many ways, Paris' new normal feels like a long-overdue return to my nostalgic memories of the City of Light. In others, that light has taken on a subtly different quality that's hard to put a finger on.

#### Tunnel vision

In the middle of the city, 20 metres below the busy Montparnasse train station lies the entrance to a subterranean warren of over 200 kilometres of tunnels. Once limestone quarries, a small portion of this decommissioned network known as the Catacombs of Paris now holds the neatly stacked bones of Parisians past, while the remainder sometimes plays host to the odd illegal rave. This might seem like an unconventional place to start, but the history of these man-made passageways is worth contemplating.

PHOTO BY JEFF RENETTE ON UNSPLASH



Montmartre

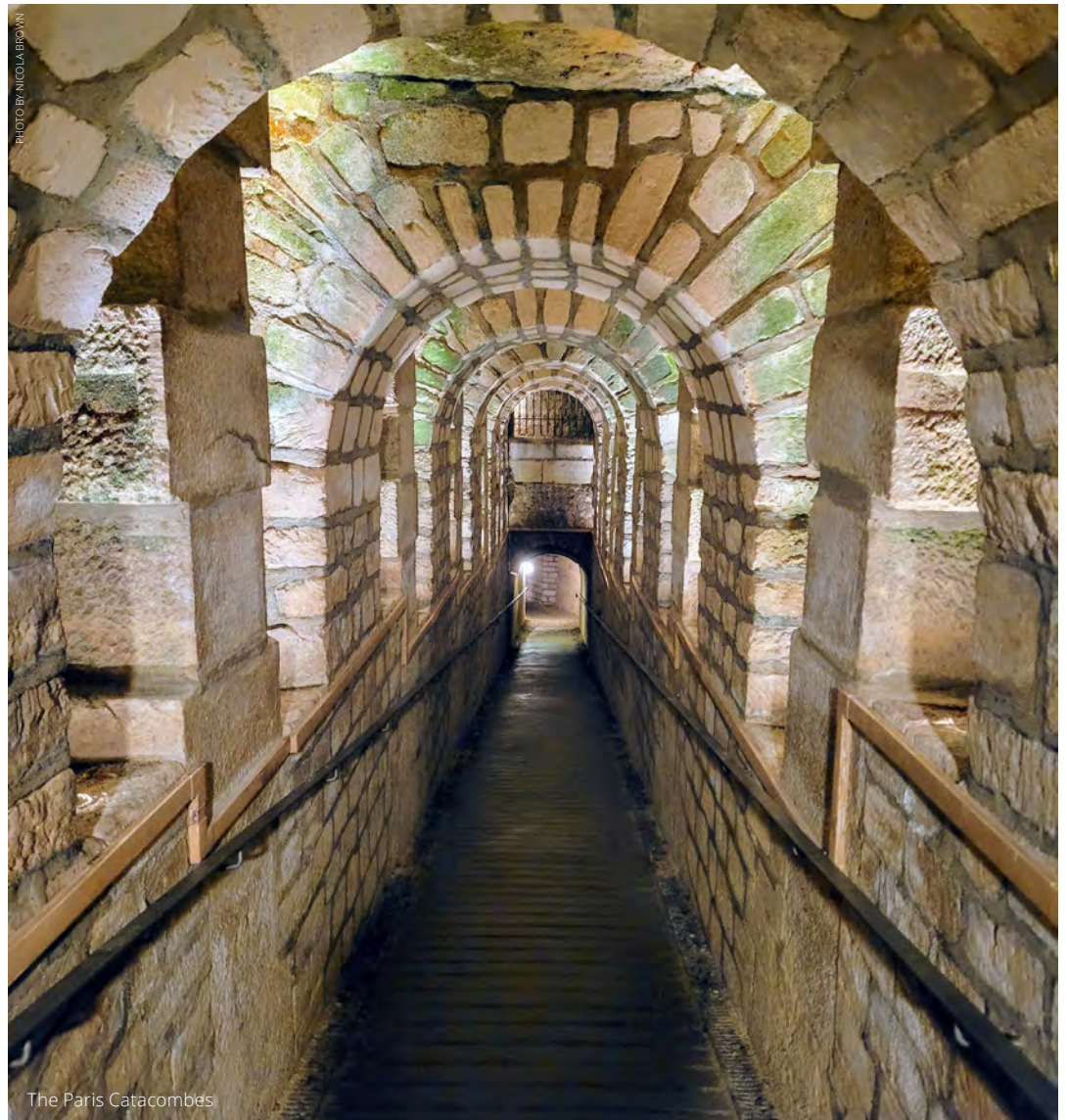


In those days there were no regulations around extracting limestone from the ground—a valuable natural resource for construction. The gold-rush-esque free-for-all that ensued is responsible for the Paris we know and love above ground. Many of the most beautiful architectural buildings and monuments—including all those Haussmann apartments—are made of limestone.

But it turns out that pillaging the earth comes with consequences. It's a lesson that is—or ought to be—rather top of mind for us today. Suddenly missing their foundations, in the 1770s buildings began to collapse into the underground holes from which their walls were formed. In 1777, the Inspection Générale des Carrières (IGC) was created to control, repair and monitor the vulnerable network, but it was only in the 1860s, almost 100 years later, that limestone extraction was banned within city limits.

Touring Paris' stunning and seemingly immovable architectural gems, you'd scarcely realize that just below the surface little bits of paper nailed on either side of cracks measure just how much the earth is shifting beneath your feet.

During the long days of lockdown while these damp, dimly lit tunnels sat empty, devoid of humans (save for the millions of bones in the catacombs) for the first time since the 1800s, thick green carpets of vegetation began to coat the ground, the walls and the ceilings. "Can you smell that?" our guide asks, "it's the organisms growing on the walls all around you. We've never seen anything like it before."



The Paris Catacombes



I wrap my arms a little tighter around me for warmth as the temperature drops the further we descend past row upon row of anonymous skulls and femurs. Gingerly toeing the uneven ground ahead, I'm acutely aware of just how keenly and swiftly the natural world seems poised to swallow up humanity at the next misstep.

### Responsible consumption

We contemplate our fragility over dinner at ANONA, one of only three restaurants in Paris so far to have earned the new Michelin green star for exceptional food and sustainability practices. These environs strike a decidedly more hopeful note.

In the evenings, a 5- or 7-course tasting menu reflects market availability of local and seasonal ingredients. Chef Thibaut Spiwack describes responsible cuisine as the restaurant's *raison d'être*, including reducing waste and water consumption, using renewable energy and even being mindful of the wellbeing of staff. The ethos is built into everything including the furniture, made by local craftspeople of natural materials. The intimate space is a palette of warm whites, dark greens and rich woods. Simple yet comfortable, even serene in its minimalism.

Far from the stuffy image of the austere French chef hidden away in the kitchen barking orders, Spiwack is front and centre, serving drinks at the bar and waiting tables alongside the other servers. Colourful, beautiful and mysterious plates arrive accompanied



by an explanation of what we're eating, without which I'd struggle to identify the creative concoctions. In addition to the unusual and on-point wine pairings, I'm most impressed by how ANONA manages to turn our expectations about what food can and should be on their head. Watermelon mimics meat on the plate where it's served pressed and grilled, while blue cheese becomes effervescent in a dish that I'm still not sure was supposed to be a main or a dessert.

The whole experience felt a little like what I imagine the first fish to start growing legs would have felt had it been aware of the tiny moment in evolution it was participating in. Or perhaps it was just all the great wine.

### Redefining nostalgia

The novelties of post-pandemic Paris were compelling, but I still wanted to dig up the nostalgia of the good old days, so to speak. I wanted some of the old Paris back again. The quaint cafes with rattan chairs, the fresh croissants on every corner, the cobbled streets and the laissez-faire attitude of long lazy summers.

Where better to reminisce about times past than the Musée de Montmartre, a time capsule of the artistic revelry of Paris during the Belle Epoque, concentrated in this bohemian neighbourhood once home to some of the city's most well-known creative minds, works and places of which we're so familiar: The Moulin Rouge and Le Chat Noir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse, Renoir.

Many people believe that this is where and when the soul of Paris was truly born. If only Montmartre had fewer tacky souvenir shops and tourist-trap eateries than it does today. If only it were as romantic and pure as it once was.

But inside the museum I discover another little-known truth. Well before the artistic era of Montmartre, perched on this idyllic hilltop vantage was a lone monastery overlooking an undulating countryside dotted with farms. When the artists began to move in, people bemoaned the ruination of the serene landscape now covered in a shantytown full of degenerates—what sacrilege! If only Montmartre were as beautiful and pure as it once was, they said.

I consider this new information over a pain chocolat the next morning. I think of the cricket, the mossy vegetation and the families clamouring over little squares of greenery. I wonder whether one day Montmartre might be a wilderness again and whether there might be a time when nobody is around to lament the loss of the good old days.

I manage to pull out of my existential spiral just in time to realize I've still got a train to catch. Clinging desperately to my fragile box of macarons as I tug my luggage over the cobbles towards the metro, I wonder if I found the Paris I was looking for on this trip. Or whether, at the very least, I found the Paris I needed.



Musée de Montmartre

“ I wonder if I found the Paris I was looking for on this trip. Or whether, at the very least, I found the Paris I needed. ”



PHOTO BY BASILE BEDELEON UNSPUSH



# Living The High Life

## ALONG HADRIAN'S WALL

History, hiking and haute cuisine along the historic Hadrian's Wall Path in Northern England

BY DOUG O'NEILL

"It's the echo of Roman soldiers you'll hear if you close your eyes and wait long enough," advised Robert, a fellow hiker (rambler in British vernacular) who interrupted my reverie one September morning along a section of the 135-kilometre Hadrian's Wall Path in Northern England. I had stopped to admire the famous Sycamore Gap Tree, a lonely but much photographed sycamore that commands an imposing spot in a dramatic dip along the historic wall between Milecastle 39 and Crag Lough, a few kilometres west of Housesteads Roman Fort in Northumberland. "He's daft," proclaimed Meaghan, Robert's partner who was clearly not as enamored with ancient Roman ruins—nor with hiking as far as I could tell—as her keen companion. "I'm ready for a hot cup of tea."

Try as I might, I didn't hear the voices of Roman soldiers, but I'll allow that I could feel their presence. Perhaps that's because I started my day a stone's throw away at Housesteads Roman Fort, the remains of a 2nd century Roman auxiliary stronghold that's one of a handful of archeological sites along Hadrian's Wall.

Hadrian's Wall Path is an 84-mile (135-kilometre) long-distance footpath that extends from Wallsend on the east coast of England to Bowness-on-Solway on the west coast. It essentially follows the remains of Hadrian's Wall, the mammoth defense system constructed by the great Hadrian, Roman emperor from 177 to 138 AD. A league of 15,000 Roman soldiers built the wall, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, after Hadrian paid a visit to Britain in 122 AD. The once formidable structure, 15 feet high and up to 10 feet thick, stretched from sea to sea, and was intended to secure the Empire's northwestern border and control the "barbarians to the North" (sorry, Scotland!). The original



Corbridge Roman Town



Carrawburgh

wall included 80 small forts (called milecastles) and half-a-dozen giant forts that served as armed cities. Hadrian's Wall Path became one of England's National Trails in 2003.

Of course, not all of the wall has survived intact. Sections suddenly appear in the middle of a farmer's pasture, seemingly emerging from the ground next to grazing sheep. In some sections, especially near Corbridge, I found myself following what appeared to be an elongated "bump" that stretched for miles, only to pass through a farmer's gate and

see a perfectly preserved stone wall straddling a laneway in front of me. It's a walking history lesson through the English countryside of Northumberland.

I started my walk near the village of Corbridge, and from there I covered about 10 to 15 kilometres each day, with time to explore the Roman ruins at Chester's Fort in Chollerford, Housesteads ruins near Hexham and the Vindolanda museum and archeological dig near the village of Bardon Mill.



But it was my morning at Housesteads Roman Fort, where an 800-strong infantry regiment was garrisoned from 122 AD until the end of the 4th Century, that truly immersed me in the daily lives of Roman soldiers, particularly as I wandered through excavations of a commander's house, a courtyard, the troops' bathhouse, granaries, hospital—even the communal Roman toilets.

The landscape along Hadrian's Wall competes with the historic ruins: rolling fields, rugged moorland, unspoiled greenery, jagged ridges that tower a few hundred feet above the valley floor, cattle and sheep-filled pastures, dramatic escarpments, groves of English oak and sycamore and gorse-covered hillsides.

Walking the entire breadth of Hadrian's Wall Path takes about six to eight days. I only had three days at my disposal so I relied on a Sherpa-like service called Celtic Trails, which shuttled me to my starting point at the beginning of each day, transported my luggage to my evening accommodations, and when necessary picked me up at the end of the afternoon. Enlisting a service like this enabled me to hopscotch sections of Hadrian's Wall Path to focus on the areas I really wanted to explore—and, on one occasion, to enjoy a Michelin-inspired dinner in a nearby village, and then pass the night in a four-poster bed fit for an emperor.

**I think Hadrian would approve.**

*For more on Hadrian's Wall Path, visit National Trails UK at [nationaltrail.co.uk](http://nationaltrail.co.uk)*

## HOW TO DO IT

Relying on Celtic Trails Walking Holidays was like having my own team of modern-day Sherpas. The company arranges personalized self-guided hiking tours, luggage shuttles and daily transport. [celtictrailswalkingholidays.co.uk](http://celtictrailswalkingholidays.co.uk)



Walwick Hall

### WHERE TO SLEEP

#### **Walwick Hall Country Estate and Spa:**

Hadrian's Wall Path passes right by this elegant boutique property in Hexham, which has a pavilion pool and spa. [walwickhall.com](http://walwickhall.com)

**Chester's Stables:** Down the road from Walwick Hall, and under the same management, Chester's Stables offers beautifully designed self-catering suites and access to the facilities at Walwick Hall. [walwickhall.com/self-catering](http://walwickhall.com/self-catering)

**Wheatsheaf Hotel, Corbridge:** A choice of six refurbished guest suites, and a dining room that's popular with locals. [thewheatsheafcorbridge.co.uk](http://thewheatsheafcorbridge.co.uk)



Goats cheese beetroot gnocchi



Chester's Stables

### WHERE TO EAT

In addition to the dining room at Walwick Hall, there are plenty of haute cuisine options near Hadrian's Wall Path:

**Restaurant Hjem, Hexham:** This one Michelin star Scandinavian-inspired restaurant sources ingredients from surrounding farms and gardens in Northumberland. [restauranthjem.co.uk](http://restauranthjem.co.uk)

**House of Tides, Newcastle upon Tyne:** Housed in a restored 16th-century merchant's townhouse, the Michelin-starred House of Tides offers a tasting menu that's bookable in advance. [houseoftides.co.uk](http://houseoftides.co.uk)

**Bouchon Bistrot, Gilesgate:** Winner of the Best European Restaurant honour at the North East Restaurant Awards, this traditional French eatery serves dishes such as sea trout tartare, venison medallions and escargots de Bourgogne. [bouchonbistrot.co.uk](http://bouchonbistrot.co.uk)

**Blackfriars, Newcastle:** One of the oldest restaurants in the UK (dating back to 1239), Blackfriars lures history buffs and foodies with its seasonal menu and afternoon tea. [blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk](http://blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk)





# Biking in Rhodes

Connecting with history and slow travel on two wheels

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY CATHY SENEAL

As I careen around a curve and begin a long descent to the harbour, my jaw drops. The village of Lindos appears, stunning enough in its maze of whitewashed buildings, but near magical against an acropolis high atop a sea-flanked mountain.

My Greek history professor would be disappointed. His colourful stories of Spartan battles, told between dizzying chapters of Herodotus' *The Histories*, included locations to see "when you go to Greece," never "if you go to Greece." He assumed anyone living in a democratic country must visit the country of the first known democracy. But on this trip, a cycling adventure through Rhodes, I was focused less on notable battlefields and much more on freewheeling like a kid on a bike down a big hill.



## A perfect place to bike

At 80 kilometres long by 38 kilometres wide, Rhodes is the perfect size to explore by bike. I was here with two longtime friends, Joyce and her husband, Peter, to follow a six day self-guided itinerary. Accommodations and luggage were taken care of. Stops, whether suggested or spontaneous, were always interesting, such as the Castle of Kritinia, with views out to Alimia and Halki, islands in a sea hundreds of feet below, or a gnarled olive tree found roadside. Mostly, the bike route kept us off busy roads and instead, had us humming along past sapphire seas, either Aegean or Mediterranean, speeding high up into cool pine forests, or dawdling through villages and citrus laden orchards in the quiet interior.

## Ancient history and breathtaking beauty

To ancient Greeks, Rhodes was "more beautiful than the sun." Our view this warm September day out of Kalavarda shows blue Aegean waves crashing against black rocks as big as stoves. At our backs, four shaggy goats watch us from a tawny ledge. Later, we breeze into the spectacular palm and minaret lined Old City of Rhodes, another jaw dropping descent. Rhodes has a centuries long history, from the Phoenicians here before the Trojan War to the





Knights of St. John to the Italians who left in 1945. This island is now part of the Dodecanese, filled with monuments resulting from those many influences. One such gem is the aforementioned Old City, dating back 2,000 years. A hotel stay here made it easy to explore the narrow lanes, synagogues and Arabic style markets of this UNESCO World Heritage City—amid restaurants, shops and stone homes where people still live.

### Food as good as the scenery

We were lost only once thanks to clear directions. Sights proved to be a good mix of ancient and modern, such as Kallithea Spa, whose springs were known by Hippocrates. Each day we rode to the door of that night's accommodation, always a simply furnished but bougainvillea bedecked surprise. We ate at places with a few outdoor tables rich with local banter. At one hidden spot, Nikos and his wife Maria, when asked to "offer us whatever is cooking" served us a memorable meze of Greek salad, a distinctive moussaka and roast cauliflower. The total bill: \$20. At one patio near Faliraki, Alexi pulled leaves from fronds overhead and introduced us to his elderly parents rolling dolmas—grape leaves stuffed with rice and fresh herbs—in their kitchen. Innkeeper, Rosa filled our hands with fresh walnuts and figs from her garden.



### Having fun with E-bikes

When Peter suggested we book e-bikes, my guffaws turned to curiosity, and later, after our first long hill, to fist pumping approval. E-bikes made it easy to cycle together, each choosing our preferred level of power. Any effort required to pedal is set by a power shifter on our handlebars. Each night, we unplugged a book sized battery from our bike and recharged it in a room outlet to be ready for the next 35 kilometre day.

### Saying yes to slow travel

I didn't see Delphi or the Acropolis in Athens. But I sauntered with pals through quiet ruins devoid of others, chatted with Rhodians and felt the breeze on long, pine-scented descents. I prefer slower travel and love the connection it provides with the outdoors and the people that a slower pace delivers. For me, cycling around Rhodes will remain my little Iliad for a long time to come.





# 6 SCENIC PICNIC SPOTS AROUND THE WORLD

From Paris to Hong Kong, drop your picnic blanket and enjoy a meal al fresco at these six picnic-worthy parks

BY JESSICA PADYKULA

Some of my best travel memories are also some of the simplest; wandering through parks, blending in amongst locals, maybe finding a spot to sit and read a book—or better yet—have a picnic. A simple spread of cheese, bread and olives in a scenic setting can make for an ideal afternoon.

Now that spring has sprung, there's no better time to take advantage of warmer weather and seek out some greenspace for a memorable meal al fresco. What you pack will be dependant on where you are, but a selection of easily transportable items—whether a spread of tasty tapas or cheese and charcuterie—is all you need. Looking for some picnic inspiration? Here are six of the best picnic parks around the world.

## PARC DU CHAMP DE MARS, PARIS

Opened in 1780, Parc du Champ-de-Mars extends from the École Militaire to the Eiffel Tower making for an ideal spot to snag one of the best views of the city's iconic landmark. You'll find Parisians and tourists alike enjoying the park's sprawling lawns at all times of day. Stock up on a baguette, some cheeses, cured meats and wine from nearby shops for a simple yet satisfying meal with an epic view.

**Bonus mention:** If you happen to find yourself in the north end of the city, Parc des Buttes-Chaumont is a bit off the beaten track, but well worth a visit for its stunning views of the city, abundant spots to picnic, as well as caves and waterfalls.



Parc du Champ-de-Mars





Central Park

### CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK

Set smack dab in the middle of Manhattan, Central Park offers a welcome respite from the city's notorious buzz. While it may be one of the most well-known parks in the world, it's sheer size means that finding the perfect patch of green is easier than you think. Along the way, take in the park's nearly 50 fountains, monuments and sculptures or snap photos of its 36 bridges and arches. Some ideal spots to lay down a picnic blanket include Sheep Meadow, Belvedere Castle, Bow Bridge and Strawberry Fields. The park itself offers a variety of grab-and-go picnic options. Order in advance and pick up one block across from the park's entrance at 100th Street.

### GARDENS BY THE BAY, SINGAPORE

One of Singapore's most unique outdoor attractions, Gardens by the Bay makes for a vibrant backdrop for a picnic. Spacious open lawns beckon, while swaying palm trees and a great view of the Marina Bay skyline help seal the deal. Afterwards, make time to explore the expansive park, featuring a variety of gardens and conservatories, as well as the



Park Güell



The Regent's Park

futuristic-looking Supertree Grove—vertical gardens spanning 25 to 50 metres in height. The park offers picnic packages that include food, a buggy ride to and from your spot and a welcome drink.

### PARK GÜELL, BARCELONA

Famed Catalan architect, Antoni Gaudí created Park Güell and his artistic imprint is everywhere you look—vibrant colour and whimsy abound; mosaic tile in every hue and undulating shapes take centre stage. It's hard not to feel like a kid again, taking all the playfulness in. Built in the middle of the city atop a hill, the park offers some of the best views in Barcelona, and also happens to be a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Just note that not all areas of the park are free to access.

### THE REGENT'S PARK, LONDON

One of London's eight Royal Parks, this lovely spot encompasses nearly 400 acres and is home to green space galore, manicured gardens (including a vast rose garden), a boating lake, an open-air theatre (live events run May through September) and even a zoo. There are also several children's playgrounds if your picnic includes kids. Head to nearby Marylebone High Street to pick up supplies—the area is home to several picnic-perfect shops. For some amazing views across the city (or to work off your picnic), make your way to the top of Primrose Hill.

### HONG KONG PARK, HONG KONG

A favourite among families and groups of friends, centrally-located Hong Kong Park brims with things to see and do, in addition to ideal spots to picnic. Here you'll find an artificial lake, fountains, waterfalls, a playground, a tai chi garden and even an aviary filled with colourful birds. Stop by Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware to learn about tea through the ages and depending on how long you're visiting, LockCha Tea House (located inside the park), offers tea tastings and vegan dim sum.



Gardens by the Bay



# A GUIDE TO *Indigenous Culture* IN ARIZONA

From authentic handicrafts to fascinating museums, Arizona offers numerous opportunities to celebrate Native American history

BY CHRIS RYALL

**Just** like the Grand Canyon, Arizona's rich Indigenous culture spreads far and wide. There are 22 federally recognized tribes in Arizona with settlements dating back more than 12,000 years. The Navajo Nation in northern Arizona accounts for the largest tribal land in the United States.

Discover, learn and experience Arizona's Indigenous history while enjoying a round of golf, staying in a luxury hotel, pampering yourself with a spa treatment, shopping for an authentic craft, or venturing out on a local tour. Just remember to be respectful and adhere to the rules for visitors as some tribes are more open than others to tourism-related experiences.

## Cultural Immersion

Visit one of the most photographed and iconic images in the region, the "Crack," with the sun beaming in at Upper Antelope Canyon in Navajoland while learning about this scenic and sacred area from a member of the Navajo tribe. Antelope Canyon Navajo Tours provides visitors with a fascinating tour of Upper Antelope Canyon while imparting information about Navajo culture and way of life.

Experience storytelling in a traditional Navajo hogan surrounded by the valleys, red buttes and box canyons in Monument Valley in the northeastern corner of Arizona. It has been the site of many western films and television shows over the years but is also home to many generations of Navajos. Observe daily ceremonial rituals and learn about how the Navajo have utilized the land for the tribe's food, clothing and day-to-day living for centuries with Monument Valley Tours.

Silver Spur Tours offers visitors an opportunity to experience the great outdoors. Spend the day hiking Walnut Canyon's cliff dwellings and pueblos at Wupatki National Monument on their Sinagua Indian Ruins tour. Embrace nature and Sinagua culture while you tour Montezuma Castle, Wupatki and Sunset Crater, an ancient lava flow field.

Experience the Sonoran Desert on a horseback riding tour through the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. Home to 3,000 members, a ride with Fort McDowell Adventures takes you on a scenic journey through the ancestral lands of the nomadic Yavapai people.

## Museums Highlight Native Culture

The Heard Museum in Phoenix is world-renowned for showcasing and preserving Native American art and culture through a series of permanent and revolving exhibitions, events and workshops. They are especially renowned for their extensive kachina doll collection, jewellery and historic artefacts that spotlight the importance of American Indian artwork.

The Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix is the largest of its kind, home to a collection



American Indian art collection at Heard Museum



of more than 8,000 instruments from more than 200 countries. The museum pays special tribute to American Indian connections with the hybrid dance music of the Tohono O'odham people and renowned artist R. Carlos Nakai's (Navajo-Ute tribe) personal collection of flutes.

Salt River's Huhugam Ki Museum traces the history of the Akimel O'odham and the Piipaash peoples' pottery, photographs, baskets and other artefacts in the Salt River tribal lands.

### Shopping for Authenticity

Shoppers looking for authentic Indigenous crafts, clothing and art should head to the Native Art Market in Scottsdale (indoor market) and the outdoor market at The Pavilions at Talking Stick. Owned and operated by more than 300 Indigenous artists, they sell only Native handmade items—no imports or imitations allowed. While you shop, be entertained with stories by the artists as well as dances and cultural performances. Pima baskets, red clay pots, kachina (katsina) dolls, rugs and jewellery are all typical items sold in many markets, but be sure you are buying authentic pieces.

### Desert Healing

The Spa at Talking Stick Resort is a soothing open-air space overlooking the Valley of the Sun, Salt River community and the resort's golf course. Surrender your body to the desert's healing properties with a lavender reflexology treatment, or try the organic desert deep cleanse facial that uses red mountain clay to purge toxins, followed by prickly pear superfood to rehydrate and protect skin—all while enjoying scenic views on the outdoor terrace.

Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass Resort's Aji Spa is the only Native American-owned spa to earn five stars from Forbes (and one of only three spas in Arizona to achieve the distinction). They serve up a variety of treatments reflecting healing practices from the Pima and Maricopa tribes and the spa menu has even been approved by spa elders after a thorough review. Enter the spa's lobby with



The Spa at Talking Stick Resort



View from Kai Restaurant at Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort



Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

the tribe's Creation Story depicted in mosaic form. Soak your body in culture beginning with a Vichy shower and exfoliating treatment featuring blue cornmeal, honey, salt and pomegranate. These items represent different elements, from water to the sunset, in the Creation Story.

### The Eagle Has Landed

Golfers may value the elusive eagle on the scorecard, but more important to many American Indians, the eagle represents strength and bravery. Arizona features golf courses residing on tribal lands where you can get lucky twice—seeing a bald eagle soaring majestically in the sky and shooting an eagle on a tricky par five.

We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort sits on Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation land with two highly-rated championship golf courses, Cholla and Saguaro, surrounded by spectacular views of the McDowell Mountains, Four Peaks, Red Mountain and the Superstitions. The Whirlwind Golf Club course at the Sheraton Grand Wild Horse Pass blends seamlessly with the Sonoran Desert to make for a challenging but inspirational outing on the two 18-hole Devil's Claw and Cattail courses. Each hole represents a piece of history from the Pima and Maricopa people.

### Nourishing the Palate

For the ultimate Indigenous dining experience head to Kai, the only AAA Five Diamond/ Forbes Five-Star restaurant in Arizona. Located at the Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass, Kai (Pima word for "seed"), combines contemporary fine dining with Native American cuisine. Menu items include mesquite charred squash, grilled tenderloin of tribal buffalo, fermented Ojibwe wild rice vinaigrette and cactus sherbet. Wash it all down with prickly pear mead. For something more casual, head to the resort's Fry Bread House and treat your taste buds to traditional Indian fry bread.



Native cuisine from Kai Restaurant at Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort





# RELIVING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TRAIN TRAVEL



An epic, once-in-a-lifetime  
journey on the Venice  
Simplon Orient Express

BY INKA PIEGSA

Even as I write these lines, I get a sparkle in my eyes. This comes in part from the fascinating endpoints of an epic train journey I took, Paris and Istanbul, and in part from the sheer glamour of it all. Ever since the Orient Express, now called the Venice Simplon Orient Express (Belmond) left Paris' Gare de l'Est on October 3, 1883 on its circuitous route to the city on the Bosphorus, the train has been synonymous with luxury and intrigue and the subject of many a novel and film. The train stopped serving Istanbul in 1977 to be replaced by other lines, but once a year in August, the legendary original journey is repeated. Reserve the date and reach deep into your pockets if you want to feel the nostalgia and elegance of times gone by.





#### DRESS THE PART

Shiny blue and gold carriages await, attended by conductors and assistants in their snazzy uniforms and white gloves, setting a scene that is anything but casual. This is a six-day journey wherein a 4-course dinner is served every evening, prepared by French chefs, and there are nightly musical events and piano music in the salon car. This is a romantic, nostalgic and luxurious trip requiring a wardrobe to match. You wouldn't imagine past celebrities like Greta Garbo or Agatha Christie having turned up looking anything but impeccable. If you are a woman nobody expects you to teeter along a swaying train in high heels, but be chic. Dress code is jacket and tie for gentlemen for dinner, otherwise veer towards smart-casual (no shorts and trainers here).

#### ENJOY THE ART DECO VIBE AND IMPECCABLE SERVICE

The sumptuous carriages are all original from the 1920s, but they have been lovingly restored and the glimmering chandeliers and ornate mirrors have been polished to a high sheen. Waiters serve with white gloves and cabins are prepared for you each night. The beds are as luxurious and ample as in any good 5-star hotel and there have even been showers added in recent years. Any snacks or drinks you might want you can either have brought to your seat or you can enjoy in the salon or bar. There is AC throughout the train and now, Wi-Fi is also available in all public areas.

#### GLIDE THROUGH SEVEN COUNTRIES

As you steadily move east towards your final destination, you can look out the windows and admire the diverse landscapes of France, Austria, Hungary (seeing the huge Balaton Lake is a special treat), Romania and Turkey. There are three stops and one excursion. The first is to Peles castle in Romania, then there is a city tour and overnight stop in a luxury hotel in Budapest and Bucharest respectively. During the sightseeing tours you can of course dress as you feel most comfortable. The ever changing landscape and fascinating sights you will be shown create a perfect balance between luxuriating in a very special train and stretching your legs exploring famous cities and a stunning castle. As you pull into Istanbul in the afternoon of the last day of your journey, you will have already enjoyed a fantastic Turkish breakfast on board along with views of the glittering Sea of Marmaris.



#### TAKE A MOMENT FOR SIRKECI RAILWAY STATION

Arriving at a destination after a long journey, train or otherwise, many of us tend to rush home or to a hotel as fast as possible. That would be a shame in this case because Sirkeci Gare, built in 1890 as the terminal for the then Orient Express, is an Istanbul landmark. The pink and white Art Deco building with marble tiles and wrought iron columns also contains the original first class waiting room, the Orient Express Bar and a small museum with photographs and exhibits from the original train, including a full conductor's uniform, an ancient typewriter, a tiled stove that heated the dining room and a piano as well as original glassware and cutlery. The custodian is a charming old man with very little English but obvious pride in the treasures he watches over.

#### BE PAMPERED AT THE ICONIC PERA PALACE HOTEL

This particular journey does not include how long and where in Istanbul you may wish to stay, so the choice is yours. You may as well go the whole way and do as the fashionable passengers of the Orient Express used to do—stay at the Pera Palace. As there was no appropriate accommodation in Istanbul for the type of passengers who travelled on the Orient Express, the Pera Palace was purpose built. Overlooking the Golden Horn in Beyoglu and the first building in the city (with the exception of the Sultan's Palace), the Pera had electricity, running hot and cold water and an electrically operated elevator. The hotel opened its doors with a grand ball in 1895.

Room 404 is known as the Agatha Christie room. The famous novelist, a frequent guest of train and hotel, is rumored to have written her novel *Murder on the Orient Express* here. Room 101 is now home to a museum dedicated to Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic who often stayed there. A corner suite is also dedicated to silent film star Greta Garbo. You can stay in this suite or in the one Agatha Christie favoured and, of course, in all the other luxurious rooms and suites. If you're tired from the journey and before going out to explore all the fabulous sights Istanbul has to offer, get a refreshing and relaxing massage or treatment in the hotel's wonderful spa in the basement. Restaurants, a patisserie and the famous Orient Bar where you can see countless autographed photos (from Ernest Hemingway to Jackie Kennedy) and many, many more adorn the walls.

If you want a once-in-a-lifetime experience of the most lavish train journey and hotel stay that evokes all the glamour you know from books and movies, this trip is for you. It definitely was for me.





# TAKE ME TO THE *Swiss Alps*

Switzerland's ultra-efficient transport system gets you to the mountains—fast

BY ELIZABETH HEATH

As return visitors already know and first-timers quickly discover, Switzerland lives up to its hype. The small nation full of big experiences is every bit as beautiful—if not more so—in person as it is in photos. Those high Alpine meadows, crashing waterfalls, mighty glaciers, crystal-clear glacial lakes and storybook mountain villages...they're all there, waiting to be explored.

But from Switzerland's gateway city of Zurich, the Alps look far away. And even from smaller cities and towns, those looming mountains might seem inaccessible to all but the fittest of hikers. Yet thanks to the country's comprehensive, efficient and varied public transportation network, those postcard Swiss experiences are a lot closer than they look. And through Swisstainable, the country's new green-travel initiative, it's easier than ever to get from city to village to mountaintop without ever having to rent a car or even break out your hiking shoes—unless of course you want to!

At so many of Switzerland's high-altitude destinations, getting there is at least half the fun. Here are some ideas for accessing Switzerland's stunning Alpine scenery, in areas that are perfect for summer hiking, dining at panoramic restaurants, or just breathing in that pure mountain air from on high.



## *From Interlaken* Train, glide and climb to the Top of Europe

Tucked between two glacier-carved lakes and amid formidable, snow-covered peaks, Interlaken bills itself as the 'adventure capital of Switzerland.' But even if you don't come here for tandem paragliding, white-water rafting, kayaking, or rigorous mountain-biking, you can still stand on top of the highest publicly accessible mountain peak in Europe. From Interlaken Ost (east) train station, a cogwheel train makes the 30-minute journey up to the picturesque village of Grindelwald. From there, transfer to the Eiger Express cable car to the Eigergletscher (Eiger Glacier) and prepare for jaw-dropping scenery along the 20-minute ride. From the Eigergletscher, take another steep cogwheel train to the 3,454-meter Jungfrauoch—Top of Europe station. There's year-round snow and ice at the summit, as well as restaurants, an ice cave, hiking trails and a viewing platform looking out over the Aletsch Glacier. Back in Interlaken, The Hey is a trendy, comfy 4-star hotel, while the 5-star Victoria Jungfrau is all old-world pomp and circumstance.



## Andermat

### An exhilarating ride to an ancient crossroads

Three high Alpine passes, including the most famous and strategically important Gotthard Pass, spill into Andermatt's valley, which has been a crossroads for traders, travellers and semi-nomadic tribes since the late Stone Age. Today, a brief, thrilling train ride from the small village of Göschenen follows the roiling Reuss River through the Schöllenen Gorge to Andermatt. A highlight of the 20-minute ride is passing the Teufelsbrücke, or Devil's Bridge, a historic arched stone bridge that straddles the deep, dramatic gorge. Göschenen can be reached by train from Lucerne in under two hours.

In Andermatt, find summer hiking and mountain biking ranging from moderate to lung-bursting. Try taking the train back to Göschenen, then enjoying a 90-minute hike into Andermatt, or take it easy with the Gütsch Gondola to Nätschen and enjoy an open-air lunch before riding back down. About 12 kilometers away, the legendary, long-secret Sasso San Gottardo military fortress, right at the Gotthard Pass, is worth a visit.

The fur-clad visitors to Andermatt are no longer nomadic Alpine tribespeople, but well-heeled guests of The Chedi Andermatt, a 5-star spa hotel with a hushed, zen-like vibe. Nearby, the Radisson Blu Reussen is a sleek, new 4-star alternative.

## Vitznau

### Cowbells and cushy comforts

Vitznau is the most delightful Swiss town you've probably never hear of. The small settlement hugs a sharp curve on Lake Lucerne and is the starting point for one of the country's most spectacular day trips—a ride on the Rigi Mountain Railway, a historic cogwheel train that makes the hour climb to the top of the Rigi mountain massif. There, from 1,797.5 meters above sea level, riders are rewarded with views of lakes Lucerne, Zug and Lauerz, as well as resplendent Alpine scenery at every turn. From spring to fall, the soundtrack is made up of jangling cowbells, as herds of soft-eyed bovines happily graze all over the slopes of the Rigi.

The three hour walk back down to Vitznau from the summit at Rigi Kulm is literally downhill all the way. Or you can ride the cogwheel to the village of Rigi Kaltbad and hike the rest of the way down, or pick up the cable car to Weggis, from where you can bus or walk back to Vitznau.

Hands down, the Park Hotel Vitznau is the most luxurious place to stay in town. Apartment-sized suites, many with lake views, a 2-Michelin-starred restaurant, a thermal spa and an outdoor lakefront café all add up to make this one of our favourite hotels in Switzerland. Via public transportation, Vitznau is connected by bus, but it's best reached by passenger ferry from Lucerne.



## Glacier Express Excellence Class

### A full-on luxury journey from Zermatt to St. Moritz

There's more than one way to travel between Zermatt and St. Moritz, the two tony ski resorts on nearly opposite ends of the country. But there's only one way you should make the trip, and that's by splurging on the ultra-luxury Excellence Class of the Glacier Express, the famous 8-hour train ride between the two villages. It's all about the journey on this most coveted of scenic trips, where each plush seat offers panoramic views, points-of-interest narration (or Swiss yodel music) via provided tablets, as well as a 7-course meal with wine pairings.

On either end of the trip, Zermatt and St. Moritz offer plenty of diversions, plus ample chances to enjoy the glorious Swiss summer. In Zermatt, the Matterhorn looms large and pointy, and a network of cable cars, funiculars and ski lifts afford high-altitude views of the iconic peak. In St. Moritz, ski gondolas reach gentle hiking trails, as well as plenty of rustic mountain eateries. Both locations are just rife with grand 5-star hotels. In St. Moritz, we love both the historic Kulm Hotel and Suvretta House, while Riffelalp Resort and Grand Hotel Zermatterhof are top picks in Zermatt.



The Chedi Spa

## ACCESS THE ALPS WITH THE SWISS TRAVEL PASS

Switzerland's public transportation system is the envy of much of the rest of Europe, and the Swiss Travel Pass makes for seamless access to the country's broad network of trains, buses, boats, cable cars, funiculars and mountain railways. It's what makes it possible to go from city to mountaintop, usually in the space of a couple of hours, without ever having to rent a car or plunk coins or a credit card into a ticket machine. Passes come in 3- to 15-day increments and allow for reservation-free travel across the entire public transit system. Access to some panoramic trains and mountain railways costs extra but is usually deeply discounted.





# We Have That Too!

## Canada can equal—or best—some of the world's top sites

BY DIANE SLAWYCH

Isn't it great to live in a country as large and diverse as Canada? Though some restrictions and additional costs associated with the pandemic have put a damper on some overseas travel plans, rest assured, there are plenty of gems to explore close to home. In fact many of the types of attractions we travel abroad to see, exist in one form or another, in our own backyard! And you won't lose money on exchange rates, or deal with major jet lag. Here's a sample of what you'll find.

### Hang 10 in Hawaii? Try surfing in Tofino, B.C. instead

You don't have to travel to the Aloha State to catch a wave. Tofino, B.C. has 35 kilometres of beaches that attract surfers of all skill levels. Home to surf shops, surf adventures and surf schools, including one catering to women (Surf Sister), you can get started with one of the 3-hour private or group lessons on offer. Cox Bay Beach is Tofino's main surfing destination, where most surf competitions are held. Beginners will want to make their way to Chesterman Beach or hang out with surfers of all ages at Long Beach. If you're a stand up paddleboard enthusiast, check out the calmer waters of MacKenzie Beach.



Surfing Tofino



Ottawa tulips

### Holland's Keukenhof vs Ottawa's Tulip Festival

Tulips are synonymous with Holland and the country's Keukenhof Gardens (March 24 to May 15, 2022) are worth travelling to see. But if you can't make it across the pond this spring, a great alternative on home ground is the annual Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa. It happens over two weekends (May 13 to 23, 2022) and features more than a million blooms. The festival was established in 1945, after Holland sent what would later become an annual gift of thousands of tulip bulbs—a token of appreciation for Canada's role in both liberating the Netherlands and hosting members of the Dutch royal family during the Second World War.

Begin your visit at Commissioners Park, alongside Dows Lake, which has the largest flower displays. Then walk, cycle or take a bus to other tulip locations including Major's Hill, a photographer's delight, where Parliament Hill forms the background for picturesque flower beds. Special festival programming will include workshops, guided walking tours, fireworks, music, a kid's zone, craft stalls and more.



### Iceland vs Gimli & L'Anse aux Meadows

Can't make it to Iceland this year? Canada has a few stand-ins. Gimli, Manitoba, home to many people of Icelandic heritage, has the New Iceland Heritage Museum, a large Viking statue and the annual Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Or in Newfoundland, see the UNESCO World Heritage Site of L'Anse aux Meadows, the only authenticated Viking site on the American continent. It was here in the 1950s that two Norwegian archaeologists found remains of an ancient Norse encampment. The site includes costumed interpreters, several recreated sod and timber buildings depicting how life was lived 1,000 years ago, and a visitor center where you can watch a video about the site's discovery and view recovered artifacts. The free guided tours are recommended.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Newfoundland L'Anse Aux Meadows



Alberta Badlands Passion Play

### Oberammergau vs the Badlands Passion Play in Alberta

The Oberammergau Passion Play attracts huge crowds to Germany every 10 years. (Covid delayed the last performance, so the next one is set for May 14 to October 2, 2022). But did you know we have our own version? The Canadian Badlands Passion Play has been performed every summer since 1994 near Drumheller, Alberta. The next edition is July 1 to 17, 2022. The three-hour drama, portraying the life of Christ, involves a cast of more than 200 performers both volunteer and professional actors and theatre crew—as well as animals and music, in an epic, award-winning show. And the setting is spectacular—a natural bowl amphitheater that seats 2,500 people, making it Canada's largest outdoor stage. The location was selected both for its superb natural acoustics and arid landscape, which resembles the Biblical lands surrounding Jerusalem.

### The Dead Sea vs Little Manitou Lake

Can't make it all the way to Israel or Jordan to experience the Dead Sea? Then head to Saskatchewan's Little Manitou Lake which has equally salty waters. Like the Dead Sea, you can enjoy the novelty of floating without effort, as well as the health benefits of these mineral-rich waters. The combination of magnesium, carbonate, potassium, mineral salts, sodium, calcium, iron, silica and sulphur, can help alleviate a variety of ailments including aching joints. At the Manitou Springs Hotel and Mineral Spa, you can soak in the heated indoor pool, which takes its water from the lake. Find this little-known treasure in the resort town of Manitou Beach near Watrous, about an hour's drive southeast of Saskatoon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFFREY SHAW PHOTOGRAPHY

Manitou Springs



### African Safari vs Arctic Adventure

An African safari is on many wish lists. But Canada is no slouch when it comes to extraordinary wildlife viewing opportunities. Switch that dusty jeep for a tundra buggy and venture to Churchill, Manitoba, the "polar bear capital of the world." See up to 1,000 bears on their annual migration to Hudson Bay from October to early November. In the summer, get up close with as many as 3,000 beluga whales. Don a dry suit and swim with them on an excursion through Churchill Wild or see them from a small vessel on the Churchill River. Tour operators will lower a hydrophone into the water so you can hear these "sea canaries," known for having the most varied vocal repertoire of any whale.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHURCHILL WILD/ROBERT POSTMA

Polar Bears



Stratford Festival

### Instead of Stratford, England, why not Stratford, Ontario?

If a trip to the Bard's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon, England is not on your travel calendar this year, check out the next best thing—Stratford, Ontario. Like its namesake, it has a river named Avon, plenty of white swans and is known for staging Shakespearean (and other) plays. Visit during the Stratford Festival from April to the end of October to see one of 10 productions in four theatres. The 2022 playbill includes Richard III, Hamlet, All's Well that Ends Well, Chicago, and Little Women. Watch for the grand opening this season of the new \$72-million Tom Patterson Theatre, designed by renowned architect Siamak Hariri.



A close-up photograph of a woman's eye, which is a striking blue-green color, looking directly at the viewer. The eye is framed by a large, vibrant green leaf with prominent veins, creating a natural, organic frame. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leaf and the detail of the eye.

*A W A K E*

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VENTUS HA'   
AT MARINA EL CID

Spa & Beach Resort | Cancún Riviera Maya