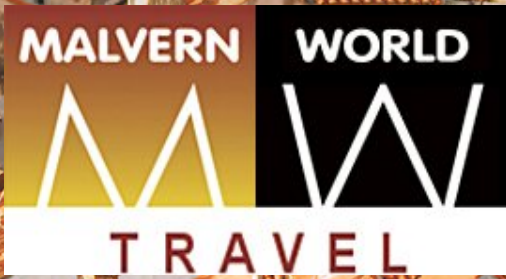


SPRING 2024

# JUDLEY TRAVELLER



TIMING IS  
EVERYTHING

Your travel calendar for the year





12



14



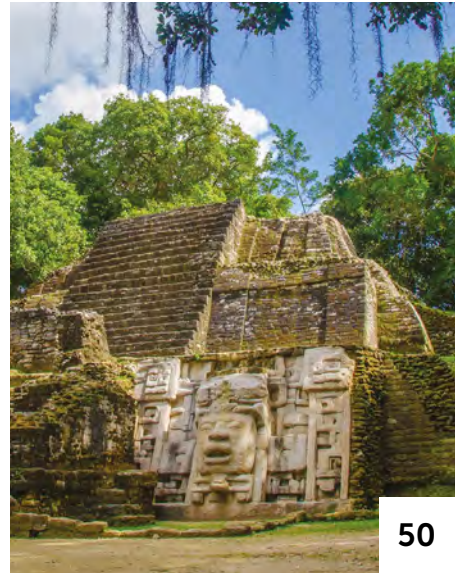
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Garifuna drumming, Maya temples, and reefs ablaze with shimmering fish — specialist Nik's snapshot of Belize.

# Welcome

The longer, milder days of spring always bring a certain restlessness to my soul. This time of year makes me want to spread my wings and head for distant horizons.

If you're feeling a similar impulse but haven't yet planned a trip for this year, I suggest turning to page 14. There, our specialists delve into their top destinations based on when you want to travel.



In fact, our specialists are always on the move. They're already out and about, visiting and revisiting the countries they love to uncover new experiences for you to enjoy on your own travels. Our lead news story (page 8) outlines a whole raft of fresh options you can explore in Sri Lanka.

To get an insight into how our specialists use these experiences to craft a trip, read our feature about Japan on page 22. You'll see how they created three very different takes on the country for their clients — a food lover, a couple who wanted to explore the wild landscape, and a family focused on modern pop culture.

Finally, we're proud to say that we've been recognised once more as a *Which?* Recommended Provider in its tailor-made holiday category. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Mark Hanson  
Managing Director

Nothing about your trips with us is prescribed, so all the prices in the magazine are subject to change. The trips featured are ATOL Protected (4817).

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## Contributors

### Chloe

#### Global Travel Advisor



In our feature on page 14, Chloe uses her global expertise to help whittle down the best destinations based on when you want to travel, bringing in nine specialists to tell you more about each one.

#### Favourite meal abroad?

Having both Caribbean and South American heritage, I was excited to find curried goat empanadas in Ecuador. They were delicious.

### Ni Made Angreni, 'Eni'

#### Tour guide in Bali, Indonesia



A guide for over 20 years, Eni loves to share Bali's natural beauty and culture by taking visitors to see the cascading Jatiluwih rice terraces. She describes how you can explore this sliver of the island together on page 20.

#### Favourite meal abroad?

I love chillis, and the tom yum soup I had during a recent trip to Thailand had the perfect balance of spiciness and sourness.

### Katy Deacon

#### Audley client



When Katy became a wheelchair user, she felt like her world got smaller, so she set herself the challenge of travelling to the USA with her family. Read about her accessible trip on page 46.

#### Favourite meal abroad?

We found a tiny restaurant in the Alps that unexpectedly served the best pizzas, in particular one topped with sweet potato, caramelised onions, and red peppers.

## On the cover

### Traditional Croatian rooftops and towers.

Croatia's Istria is one of the destinations our specialists suggest you can visit this year, based on when you want to travel. **For more information, speak to your travel agent.**









## CHURCHILL, CANADA

By Grace, Canada specialist



‘Visiting the polar bear capital of the world, I of course expected to encounter these enigmatic creatures. But, I hadn’t envisaged just how close up those encounters might be. One morning, an inquisitive male bear strolled right up to our (reassuringly robust) tundra vehicle, and we watched as he sniffed the air, inspected the tyres, then casually wandered beneath our feet. Another highlight of my trip? Sitting in the open-top viewing area of our vehicle at night, taking in the still silence of the tundra beneath the blue-green glow of the northern lights. **Inspired? For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



## ATACAMA DESERT, CHILE

By Nick, Chile specialist



'Orange soil, shallow teal waters, purple mountains, and startlingly blue skies combine to create an otherworldly landscape in Chile's Atacama Desert. On a recent trip, I explored the reflective pools of the Salar de Atacama salt flats, saw bright-pink Chilean flamingoes in Los

Flamencos National Reserve, watched geysers erupt at the El Tatio thermal field, and hiked through the moon-like Valle de la Luna. By night, this high-altitude desert transforms into a stargazer's playground, and a guided astronomical tour revealed constellations you can only see in the Southern Hemisphere, like the Southern Cross.'

**Inspired? For more information, speak to your travel agent.**









# ESCAPE ROUTES

TRAVEL NEWS | CHECK IN | JUST BACK FROM

▾ WHAT'S NEW

## Exploring Sri Lanka

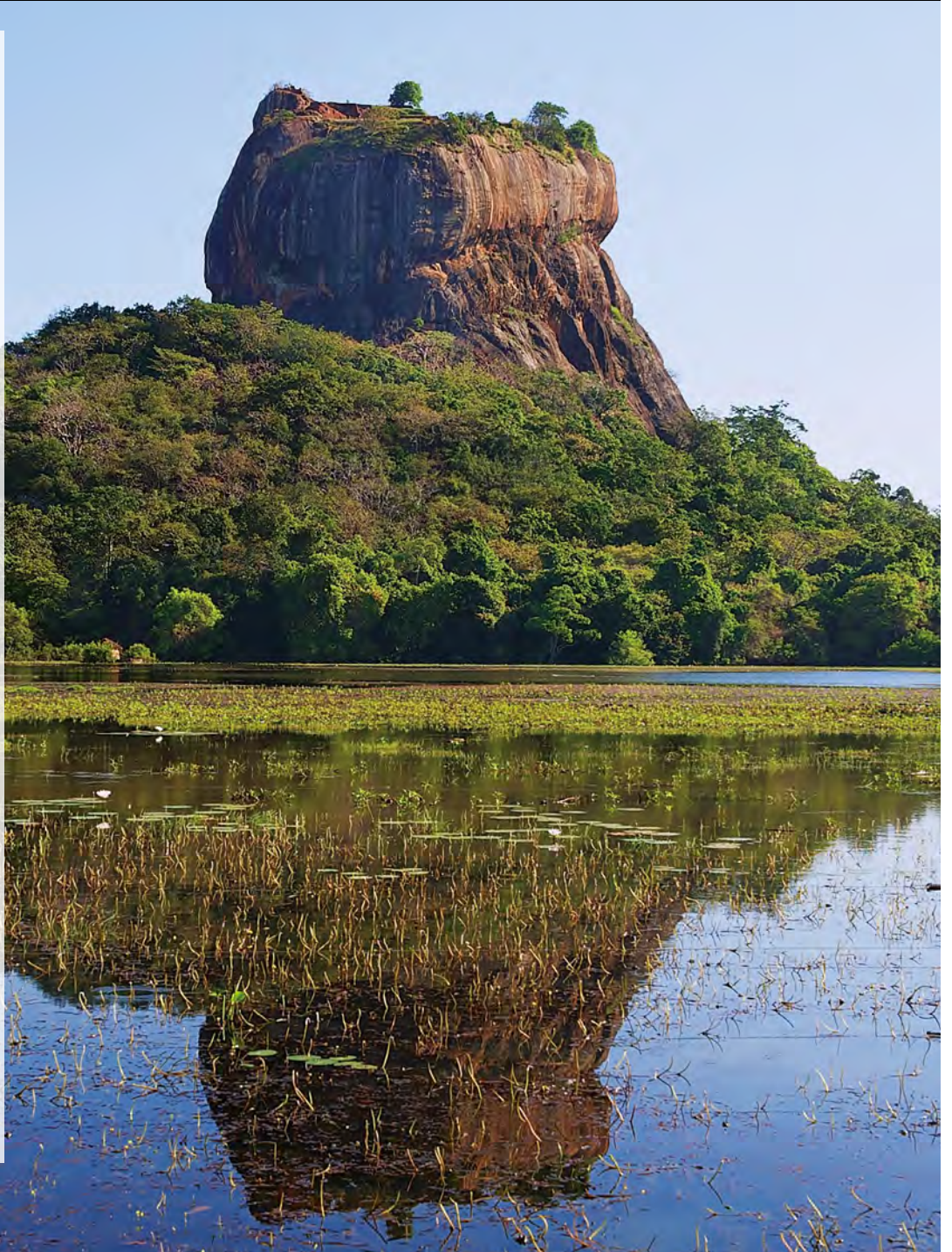
Whether it's your first or fifth visit, you now have a whole host of new ways to experience Sri Lanka.

You can choose to pamper yourself at Anasa Wellness Resort, a boutique spa retreat tucked into the peaceful hill country. Or, for wildlife, you might opt to stay at Wild Glamping, an ecolodge in the remote wilds of Gal Oya National Park.

Sunrise on Sigiriya Rock is one of the country's defining sights, and we've uncovered several new ways for you to enjoy the experience — cruising on a nearby lake where you're on the only boat, riding in the basket of a hot-air balloon, or while eating breakfast atop nearby Pidurangala Rock.

Away from Sigiriya, we can now arrange for you to go whale watching on a luxury catamaran and introduce you to a tea planter for a stroll through the fields of Nuwara Eliya.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





## HELPING YOU MAKE AN IMPACT

We believe in the power of small, responsible decisions that add up to make a big difference. That's why we've hand-selected a collection of stays and experiences across the world that help you get to know your destination in a more authentic way and leave a positive impact after you return home. You can choose from over 250 Responsible Choice options, from ecolodges powered by renewable resources in Malaysia to jaguar conservation tours in Brazil. We'll be expanding our offering throughout the year so you can opt for even more travel experiences that go the extra mile. For more information, speak to your travel agent.



## GATEWAY TO NATURE

Situated at the base of the cloud-kissed Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica, the newly renovated Arenal Pool Casitas at Nayara Gardens are a serene haven. Fling open the doors to the wide deck and slide into your private plunge pool as you're serenaded by the sounds of birdsong in the rainforest that surrounds you. You can spot monkeys clamouring in the trees overhead, join a birdwatching walk at dawn to see toucans, or head out after dark to scout for red-eyed tree frogs.



## FARM-TO-TABLE PHUKET

Should you wish to peel yourself away from Thailand's pristine Phuket beaches, you can venture into the island's interior to indulge in a sustainable farm-to-table feast at Jampa Restaurant. Before you sit down to your thoughtfully crafted seven-course meal, you'll head out to the farm to see just how fresh the ingredients are, plucking a sun-ripened garnish or two as you go. The menu changes seasonally, but you might try coconut river prawns, wild-pepper veal, and honey-sweetened quince.



## WHISKY TAKES FLIGHT

At 2,072 m (6,798 ft) above sea level and only reachable by helicopter, the high-altitude Bad Decision whisky hut might be the most exclusive place for a tippie in New Zealand. Getting here is part of the adventure. From the Mackenzie Helicopters base in Lake Tekapo, you're whisked skyward over the snow-covered Southern Alps with views of Aoraki/Mount Cook in the distance. Land at the little red hut and sample fine whiskies, or another drink of choice, while taking in panoramic mountain vistas.

## New Serengeti retreats

Two camps in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park have introduced new private-stay options, providing an exclusive space for families or groups of friends to enjoy during their safari. Asilia's Namiri Plains in the east of the park and Sayari Camp in the north have each welcomed two of these spaces, called the Retreats, which come with two en-suite bedrooms, wraparound decks, and a pool area to share between them, as well as private guides and safari vehicles, a dedicated chef, and a host who can help plan your time. For more information, speak to your travel agent.





# CHECK IN

## *Authentic homestays*

One of the best ways to experience a new culture is to live it firsthand. Our specialists have chosen four homestays designed to immerse you in local tradition and hospitality.



### MASSERIA SALAMINA, ITALY

#### Why unpack here?

A 400-year-old fortified manor house tucked into Puglia's sun-drenched countryside, Masseria Salamina is a working farm that's run by the De Miccolis Angelini family. The spacious rooms are decorated with richly upholstered furniture, textured wallpapers, and oil paintings. Many also boast private terraces.

#### The best bit?

You can indulge in tastings of the farm's olive oils, sample Apulian wines, and take cooking classes with Chiara, the family chef. She also designs the restaurant's menu, which features farm-to-fork cuisine. Ready to check in?



### DEWALOKAM, INDIA

#### Why unpack here?

Professor Jose and Sinta Alilakuzhy give a warm welcome to guests at this riverside farm nestled in the spice belt of Kerala. A stay here offers a glimpse into the couple's commitment to sustainable agriculture. Your visit will be remarkably eco-friendly, from the solar water heater to the food straight from their farm.

#### The best bit?

The Alilakuzhys offer a wide range of local experiences. You might take walks to explore the village or temples, wander amid the fragrant spice trees, ride a bamboo raft on the river, or take a cooking class. Ready to check in?



### TAMBATUON, BORNEO

#### Why unpack here?

At the foothills of Borneo's tallest peak, Mount Kinabalu, lies a small village blanketed in rice paddies and fruit orchards. Here, you'll stay in a simple guest house hosted by a local family from the Indigenous Dusun community. During your stay, you'll get a closer look into local crafts, fauna and flora, and farming practices.

#### The best bit?

Besides rice, the local area is also ripe with rubber trees. After an evening of home cooking, you'll wake up to hike to one of the nearby plantations, where you can have a go at tapping for sap. Ready to check in?



### CITY LIGHTS, NEW ZEALAND

#### Why unpack here?

Watching over the geothermal town of Rotorua from the slopes of Mount Ngongotahā, City Lights Boutique Lodge has just three en-suite B&B rooms. Owners Grace and David live on site and are passionate about sharing their corner of New Zealand, whether you want to explore Māori traditions or soak in a hot spring.

#### The best bit?

You can meet (and feed) the five resident alpacas that spend their days grazing right outside your room. At dusk, sit out on your private patio and gaze out across Rotorua as its lights twinkle into view. Ready to check in?





## What to WATCH

Lions and hyenas battling in the dark using just sound, baby caimans communicating from within the egg, birds mastering the art of mimicry — **Secret World of Sound with David Attenborough** decodes the noises of the animal kingdom. **Out now.**



## What to READ

In her memoir, **Butterflies In My Soup**, Audley client Sylvia Bowley takes us back to the 1960s when she decided to push aside society's pressures to settle down and instead embarked on a new life as a young teacher in Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania). **Out now.**



## What to LISTEN TO

From Spartan warriors to the world's earliest artworks, **The Ancients** with historian Tristan Hughes delves into our distant past, shedding light on millennia-old individuals, civilisations, and events from across the globe. **Available on most podcast platforms.**



## What to DOWNLOAD

**Timeshifter®** is a science-informed app designed to help you beat jet lag. With a subscription, you can access personalised plans for sleep, light exposure, and caffeine consumption as you move through time zones. **Available on Android and iOS.**

# JUST BACK FROM...

Three of our specialists share finds from their recent trips



## CHINA

### Visited by Chris

'Returning to China after it re-opened was like coming home. I've been going for 30 years and the strides in sustainability have been amazing. You'll find less pollution, with more train routes and electric cars. I'm also happy to report that you can still explore quiet, uncrowded sections of the Great Wall. A highlight was a cycling tour through the karst landscape of Yangshuo.'



## URUGUAY

### Visited by Sydney

'Uruguay's petite size is part of its charm as it's easy for you to get around. Venturing to the countryside to stay at the Narbona Wine Lodge on the shores of the River Plate felt like stepping back in time. Besides the excellent wine, I was blown away by Uruguay's gastronomy, from flavourful steaks (the country has more cattle than people) to fresh seafood.'



## INDONESIA

### Visited by Jess

'Cruising around the Maluku Islands with Aqua Blu, you'll hardly see any other visitors. While there, I sipped sundowners on a pristine atoll, watched pilot whales zip right past my boat, and kayaked around an active volcano. One day, it rained and the sweet scent of nutmeg filled the air, reminding me why the archipelago became known as the "Spice Islands".'



# TRANSPORTED THROUGH VIETNAM

Trekking through expansive cave networks, cycling around former royal houses, and cruising along a forest-fringed stretch of the Mekong River — Vietnam’s diverse landscapes lend themselves to equally diverse modes of transport. We share some of the best ways you can move through this elongated country.

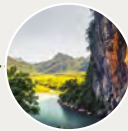
**SAPA**  
**Walk:** Set off from your peaceful hillside ecolodge to hike through rice terraces, mist-shrouded valleys, and past jungle-fringed waterfalls. En route, you’ll meet the Red Dao community and learn about their intricate embroidery techniques.



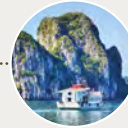
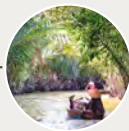
**NINH BINH**  
**Walk & Sail:** Visit 10th-century temples in Vietnam’s ancient capital of Hoa Lu. Then, climb to the top of Mua Cave for panoramic views of the sheer-sided karsts jutting from the open fields below, before relaxing on a gentle sampan ride along the river.



**PHONG NHA-KE BANG NATIONAL PARK**  
**Walk:** During treks through the park’s intricate network of caves, you’ll descend into a mysterious world of subterranean rivers, stalactites, and echoing chambers — often illuminated by your headlamp alone.



**THE MEKONG RIVER**  
**Sail:** Take in rural life along the Mekong on a cruise that passes by small farming communities and floating markets. Opt for a grand voyage in a luxury cruise ship suite or choose a more intimate experience aboard a private wooden sampan.



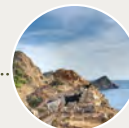
**LAN HA BAY**  
**Sail:** Pass by the limestone karsts of Halong Bay aboard a junk, a modern take on traditional Chinese sailing boats. Then, cruise to the quieter Lan Ha Bay to spend a night or two on the water.



**MAI CHAU**  
**Walk:** Spend a day or two trekking with Avana Retreat, a luxury stay that aims to preserve the area’s natural beauty and heritage. Walk through tangled bamboo forests and past wooden stilted villages, before sitting down for a mountaintop picnic.



**HUE**  
**Cycle:** On a gentle cycle through the rural outskirts of Hue, you’ll stop off at traditional houses that were once home to royalty and high-ranking mandarins. Each timber-framed house sits among formal gardens, providing a moment of stillness before you pedal to the next one.



**DA NANG TO QUY NHON**  
**Train:** Setting off a short drive from Hoi An, *The Vietage* takes you on a scenic train journey from the city of Da Nang to the lesser-visited coastline of Quy Nhon, showcasing Vietnam’s quintessential rural landscapes along the route.



**BEN TRE**  
**Walk, Cycle & Sail:** Venture through the rural region of Ben Tre via an assortment of transport. In this gateway to the Mekong Delta, you’ll experience some of the traditional industries that flourish along the river, including shipbuilding, coconut farming, and rice-cake making.





# ONTARIO

Home to Canada's capital city, its largest metropolis, and the most powerful waterfall in North America, Ontario is your gatehouse to the country.

Whether you want to delve into the cities' history, culture, and food scenes, hike through forested national parks roamed by moose, paddle a canoe on shimmering lakes, or explore Indigenous traditions, our specialists will craft a trip shaped around your passions.



Inspired?  
For more  
information,  
speak to your  
travel agent.

CANADA 



**Kaleidoscopic views**  
(pictured) Gartered trogon,  
Costa Rica; (opposite top)  
Rovinj, Croatia at sunset;  
(opposite bottom) Tower  
Arch, Utah, USA

# READY, SET, TRAVEL...

From spontaneous summer getaways to long-awaited showstopper trips, our travel experts help inspire your travels for 2024 and beyond, whether you want to go soon, later, or plan ahead.

## *Global Travel Advisor Chloe*



Chloe is a member of our Global Travel Team. With a wealth of destination knowledge, Chloe and her team are always on hand to help narrow down your trip ideas before connecting you with a dedicated country specialist.

**T**he best travel moments require a delicate balance between place and time. It can be tricky to pin down where to go and when, while also getting ahead of the rest to secure your ideal stays and experiences. So, if you're yet to plan your 2024 trip, let me help you out. I've chosen nine destinations for the year ahead based on when you might want to travel, and I've brought in nine of our specialists to reveal how you could explore each one, from wildlife spotting in Costa Rica to outdoor adventures in New Zealand.



# TRAVEL SOON

Chloe says...



Flexibility is key if you want to squeeze in a last-minute summer trip this year. But, with a little wiggle room around dates and hotels, you can still enjoy a trip that speaks to your passions. For wildlife spotting, I suggest Costa Rica. An indulgent trip with Mediterranean sun and gourmet cuisine? Try Croatia. Or, for high-thrills adventure, opt for the red-rock landscapes of the USA's Southwest.



## COSTA RICA

By Sam



In June, fewer people are around, giving you a chance for more intimate wildlife encounters. Though it's the start of rainy season, rainfall is sporadic and there are plenty of dry days, too. It's also a great time for river rafting or for hiking to waterfalls, like La Fortuna in the Arenal Volcano region, where you can swim in the blue-green pool beneath the falls.

One of my favourite places to spot wildlife in the country is Corcovado National Park on the Osa Peninsula. Teeming with life, this park holds 2.5% of the world's biodiversity. You might see everything from sloths and monkeys to tropical birds and big cats, like jaguars, pumas, and ocelots.

Staying in the remote rainforest that surrounds the national park, it's not uncommon to be lulled to sleep by the 'plink-plonk' sound of tree frogs and wake up to the chatter of howler monkeys outside your room at dawn.

### Sam's favourite stay:

Lapa Rios, Osa Peninsula

### Get me there:

See how many species you can spot on a wildlife-focused trip to Costa Rica.

## CROATIA

By Samantha



Early summer is one of the best times to visit Croatia (I also love visiting in autumn). You'll have blue skies and comfortably hot temperatures, ideal for beaches and boats, and the crowds haven't reached their peak yet.

This time of year, I suggest skipping the Dalmatian Coast and heading north to Istria. A land of buttery sun and fertile hills, Istria is the culinary capital of Croatia, and I can introduce you to some of the local truffle hunters, vintners, and cheesemakers. The medieval port town of Rovinj is an excellent base for exploring the area. In nearby Brijuni National Park, you can cycle to rocky beaches and explore Roman ruins and dinosaur tracks.

A two-hour drive from Rovinj, just over the Slovenian border, Ljubljana is far from any coastal crowds. You can wander through the city's old town, admiring the many dragons adorning buildings, or drive out to Lake Bled, nestled in the Julian Alps.

### Samantha's favourite stay:

Meneghetti Wine Hotel, Istria

### Get me there:

Explore Istria and Ljubljana on a trip across northern Croatia and Slovenia.

## AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

By Mary



The Southwest has so many national parks to choose from, particularly in Utah, making it ideal for last-minute adventure trips. Most people flock to Zion, so I suggest heading to Capitol Reef National Park and Moab instead. In these underappreciated alternatives, you'll get to experience the Southwest's sweeping red-rock vistas with fewer people around.

In Capitol Reef, you can explore Mars-like Cathedral Valley in a 4x4, go in search of 2,000-year-old Fremont culture petroglyphs, and spend the evening admiring the constellation-lit night sky in a secluded corner of the park or beside the campfire as you toast marshmallows.

Moab is the USA's adventure capital, but you can still explore it with a luxury twist. On my last trip, I hiked through Arches National Park with a private guide who welcomed me with a basket full of my favourite snacks and laid out a picnic lunch on the sun-warmed earth while we rested.

### Mary's favourite stay:

Cougar Ridge, Capitol Reef

### Get me there:

Visit the Southwest's national parks on a trip taking in the region's highlights.





**Just passing by**  
 (pictured) Elephants in the water, Tanzania; (below) Ikuka Safari Lodge, Tanzania

# TRAVEL LATER

Chloe says...



Booking ahead for autumn will give you more stays and experiences to choose from — and a chance to bask in the sun even when summer’s over.

You could go on safari in Tanzania, indulge in a little island-hopping in Indonesia, or take an overnight cruise on a New Zealand fiord.

## TANZANIA

By Arista



Northern Tanzania’s Serengeti National Park is the country’s flagship safari area, but its popularity means you might struggle to secure a stay in its camps for this September.

A worthy alternative, in my eyes, is to take your safari south into Ruaha National Park. It feels more wild, remote, and untrammelled because camps (and people) are spread out across vast distances.

I also love the variety of activities you can do in this region. Walking safaris are incredibly rewarding as you follow your expert guide through untrodden areas, pausing to observe animal tracks, plantlife, and smaller creatures like birds and insects. For an even greater sense of adventure, you could go fly camping

here, sleeping in a mobile camp set up in a new location that you walk to each day.

You could pair Ruaha with a safari in Nyerere National Park, where the Rufiji River means boat safaris are on the agenda — something you can’t do in many other parts of the country.

Gliding along, you might spot elephants splashing around to cool off, antelopes quenching their thirst while keeping one eye on the horizon, and hippos peering above the water’s surface.

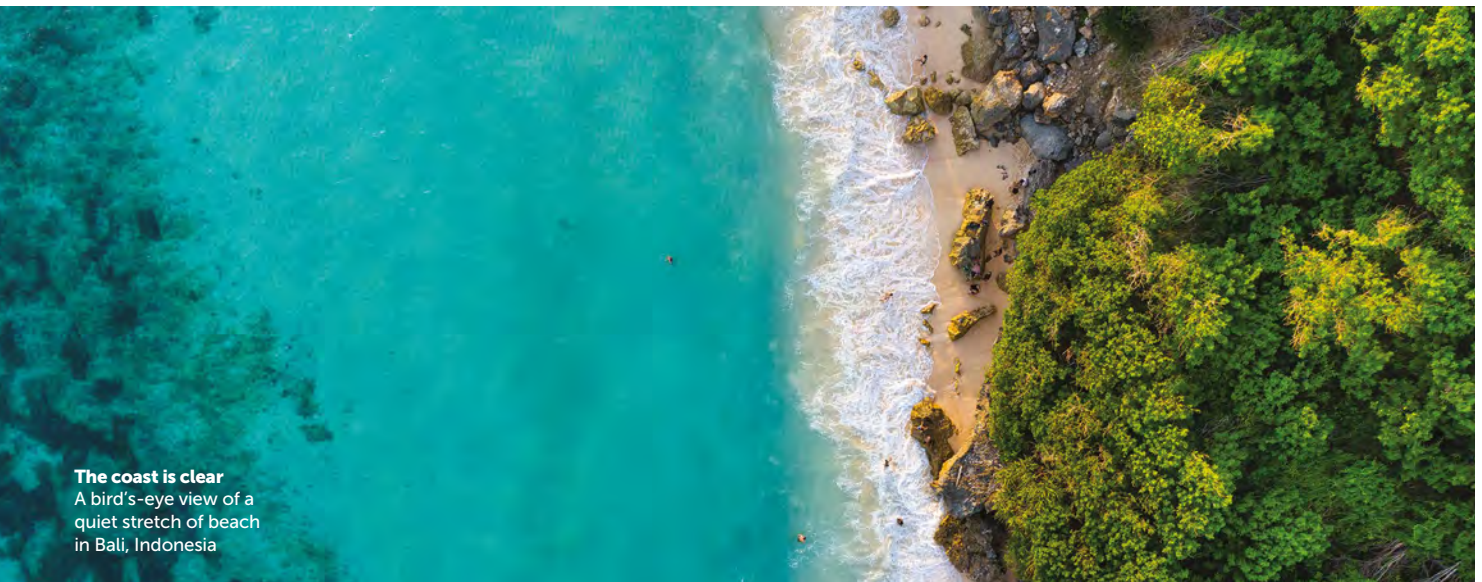
**Arista’s favourite stay:**

**Ikuka Safari Lodge, Ruaha National Park**

**Get me there:**

You could pair a southern Tanzania safari with time on Zanzibar’s beaches

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



**The coast is clear**  
 A bird’s-eye view of a quiet stretch of beach in Bali, Indonesia



## INDONESIA

By Jack



If you're planning an end-of-summer or early autumn trip to Southeast Asia, you can't go far wrong with Indonesia.

While the northern half of the region is mostly wet and cloudy, Indonesia experiences beautiful dry and sunny days.

As the summer crowds taper off, you'll have a wider choice of hotels and experiences. Many people choose to focus on Bali, but I think Indonesia has so much more to offer, particularly if you like to go wildlife spotting.

I suggest starting in Java, where you can visit the UNESCO-protected temples of Borobudur and Prambanan, before heading out to Indonesian Borneo to spot orangutans in the forests. You'll stay on a private boat where fireflies twinkle along the river at night. Demand is high, so it's worth booking early. The same goes if you want to board a private boat that takes you to see Komodo dragons.

Then, wrap up your trip by stretching out on a secluded segment of Bali's sugar-soft-sand beaches.

### Jack's favourite stay:

Wapa di Ume, Bali

### Get me there:

You can spend time in Java, Bali, and Borneo on a varied trip across Indonesia

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



**A watchful eye**  
(pictured) Orangutan in the trees, Borneo; (above) Buddha statue at Borobudur temple, Java, Indonesia

## NEW ZEALAND

By Matt



I always recommend September to November in New Zealand as it doesn't feel as busy, the weather is

warming up, and there's better availability, which is key for boutique hotels and B&Bs.

The further south you go, the more climatic the scenery gets. Surrounded by lofty peaks and set on a lakeshore, Wanaka is a good example of this, as are the many fiords that carve into the South Island's untamed western shores.

To help you fully appreciate these immense landscapes, I could book you onto an overnight cruise on Milford Sound, where cliffs rise from the inky-blue

water of the fiord and waterfalls stream down the valley sides in veil-like wisps or thundering torrents.

Or, to feel a real sense of welcome isolation, head to the quieter stretch of water known as Doubtful Sound, where you might see penguins, dolphins, seals, and whales swimming in the wide fiord as you sail through its many inlets.

### Matt's favourite stay:

Lakeside Apartments, Lake Wanaka

### Get me there:

Hop between the highlights that interest you most on a self-drive trip.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



**Misty morning**  
Clouds rolling over the mountains at Doubtful Sound, South Island, New Zealand



## PLAN AHEAD

Chloe says...



Some trips need to be planned well in advance because the destinations feature on so many people's wish lists. From wintry snowscapes in Japan to traditional homestays in India and active coastal experiences in South Africa, these trips are worth waiting for until the end of the year (or even beyond). And, despite the widespread popularity of these places, our specialists can help you see them in a way that's personal to you.



## INDIA

By Niall



December to March brings comfortable days and cooler nights to India's Golden Triangle. Most people visiting the country for the first time explore the cities that make up the three eponymous points — Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra (home, of course, to the Taj Mahal). A trip limited to the triangle is a manageable serving of the sprawling cultural feast that is India.

I always suggest taking a walking food tour of the old city when you visit Delhi. What you eat will depend on the particular day — you might sample lamb kebabs seared on a grill, smoky chappatis cooked in a clay oven, or kulfi, a sweet frozen dairy treat that's served on a stick (don't worry, it melts slowly, thanks to its richness).

I love the food, but the highlight for me is the chance to meet the people of the city. I've taken this tour several times and met a fascinating roster of residents: the local millionaire who kept his money in an actual mattress; the woman shopping for a sari in the bridal market; a cook who's spent 20 years frying up aloo tikka (potato croquettes) in the same stall.

If you enjoy connecting with local residents, I also suggest taking time to visit more rural areas like Samode. Staying here gives you the chance to really soak up the village atmosphere and glimpse the everyday life of the Rajasthani people. It's also a much more relaxed atmosphere, making it a respite from the urban hubbub.

Many of my favourite stays are in the Golden Triangle, too. You might opt for a rural fort-palace, where you'll stay with a

family who've lived there for hundreds of years. If you're in the city, you can stay at an elegant townhouse known as a haveli.

Wherever you choose, you'll be welcomed as an honoured guest, and how you spend your days there will be tailored to your interests. You might decide on a guided village tour, private cooking classes, farm visits, or, in some locations, 4x4 drives through the green countryside.

**Niall's favourite stay:**  
Dev Shree, Deogarh, Rajasthan

**Get me there:**  
Delve deeper into India's Golden Triangle on a trip taking in its more rural side.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



**A closer look**  
(pictured) Lodi Gardens,  
Delhi, India, (above)  
street vendor selling  
vegetables, Jaipur



## JAPAN

By Adam



Early December is an excellent time to visit Japan, just after the November rush. If the weather's warm, you might catch the tail end of the autumnal foliage — a seasonal display that draws slightly fewer crowds than spring's cherry blossoms, but is similarly stunning.

And, in the north, you can embrace the country's many wintry pleasures. You could go to Yudanaka to see the renowned Japanese macaques soaking in the hot springs at Jigokudani Monkey Park, visit Kushiro to watch the mating dance of red-crowned cranes, or simply stay at a small rural ryokan and admire the snowy landscapes from the comfort of a steaming

natural onsen (hot spring).

If you plan to travel during the last two weeks of December, don't leave it too long. New Year's Day is a big holiday in Japan and many of the best hotels and experiences have limited availability because staff members take time off to celebrate with their families.

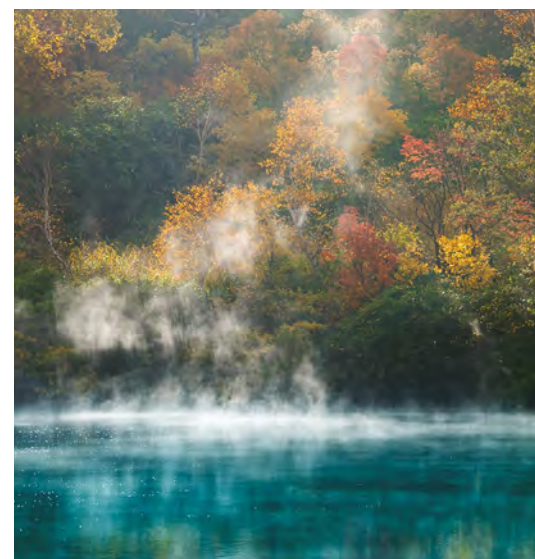
**Adam's favourite stay:**

Kokuya Ryokan, Yudanaka

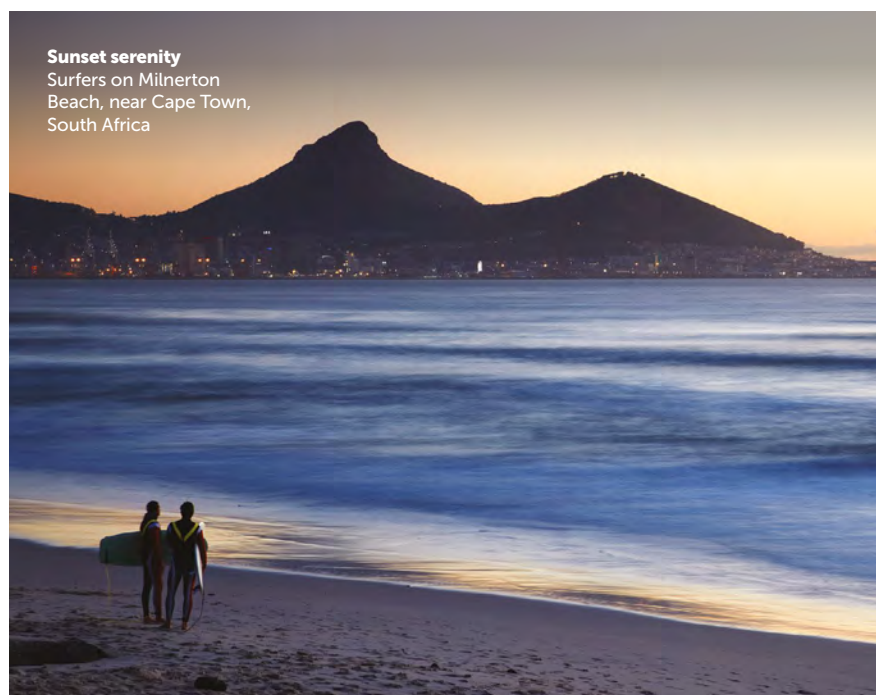
**Get me there:**

You can explore Hokkaido's wintry side on a trip focused around the island.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



**A warm welcome**  
(pictured) Snow monkeys in a hot spring, Japan; (above) lake, Aomori, Japan



**Sunset serenity**  
Surfers on Milnerton Beach, near Cape Town, South Africa

## SOUTH AFRICA

By Harriet



Temperatures soar in South Africa's Western Cape from December to March, though the ocean breeze keeps things comfortable. It's a popular time for visitors, especially during the festive season, so I recommend starting to plan now if you want to take advantage of the dry, sunny days.

I find it's a great time to explore the coast, spending the day with a private guide around the Cape Peninsula. You could learn to surf, spot African penguins waddling on the rocks as you paddle a kayak, or hop between beaches and play games on the sand.

If you like being in the thick of it, Cape Town thrums with activity in December. I suggest exploring the city's food scene on a walking tour of its multicultural districts. And, if you're an early riser, you could hike to the top of Table Mountain with a private guide, who'll take you along less-trodden trails.

Then, I recommend driving north into the Cederberg Mountains, an area that remains relatively under the radar. You'll see ancient San rock art etched into the sandstone and spot wildlife like Cape mountain zebras, bat-eared foxes, hartebeests, and ostriches.

**Harriet's favourite stay:**

Bushmans Kloof, Cederberg Mountains

**Get me there:**

Spend time in Cape Town and the Cederbergs on a South Africa self-drive trip.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





# A guided tour with... ENI

Cascading rice terraces, spiritual agriculture, and carefully spiced cuisine — Bali guide Eni describes a typical day exploring Indonesia's best-known island through the eyes of a local.

**A** guide since 1997 and recipient of a 2023 Audley Guide Award, Ni Made Angreni — known as Eni — finds great meaning in sharing her culture, traditions, and Bali's natural beauty with each visitor she welcomes to her homeland. She lets us in on how you might spend the day together in the rice terraces of UNESCO World Heritage Site Jatiluwih.

I consider guiding to be a dharma — my duty. It's much more than just a job.

I'm Balinese and so are all my ancestors, so I take great pride in sharing my culture and traditions with my guests and put a lot of thought into how I can help them get the most out of their trip. I say to people, 'Let me know what sparks your curiosity, and I'll craft our days around that.'

Bali is a small island, but it contains so much beauty. The mountainside rice terraces of Jatiluwih are a personal favourite spot of mine. Stretching out for miles, the fields wrap around the base of Mount Batukaru in great swathes of vibrant green —

here, everything revolves around nature.

For the time being, the terraces don't attract the huge crowds that the paddies near Ubud do, which is why I'd focus our time there.

Cycling through the area is a wonderful way to soak in Bali's nature and rural culture, and exploring by e-bike will help us cover more ground.

#### **Temples & terraces**

I'll pick you up just after breakfast and we'll pass through small Balinese villages as the morning bustle begins.

As you'll see, there are temples around almost every corner. Bali is predominantly Hindu (unlike the rest of

Indonesia, which is mostly Muslim) and every village has three temples: one for Brahma, one for Vishnu, and one for Shiva — our three most important gods.

Before we arrive at the terraces, I like to make a stop at the 11th-century Batukaru temple, where we'll also pick up our e-bikes. It's one of our pura kahyangan jagat. These are the nine directional temples located in the mountains, which are the most sacred places on the island because they're where our gods live.

Standing in front of the temple's tall, ornate candi bentar (split entrance gateway), I'll teach you about its history, spiritual significance, and how

it features in the annual Hindu pilgrimage up Mount Batukaru, an extinct volcano and Bali's second-highest peak.

Then, we'll set off along a scenic path past dense jungle, rural villages, and, of course, the Jatiluwih rice terraces. It's impossible to miss them — they're all around, rippling down the slopes of the mountain's foothills. We'll cut right through the fields on our bikes and pause to take in the panoramic views.

When you visit will determine what you see. Just before harvest, which usually happens twice a year, the fully grown plants shoot up in their thousands, creating a sea of emerald. Outside those times,





**Welcome to Bali**  
(opposite) Lush rice terraces, Jatiluwih; (pictured) Eni sitting in front of the gate to her family temple

it's not so green, but the pools of water nourishing the early shoots shimmer in the sunlight, creating a completely different effect on the land.

Whenever you go, you'll see farmers busy at work, whether they're planting new crops, hauling golden bundles across the fields, or drying rice grains under the sun.

While we pause, I'll also take some time to teach you about the traditional irrigation system that waters the rice: subak. It's this technique, practised since the 9th century, that has earned Jatiluwih its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In Bali, we believe in Tri Hita Karana — harmony between people, nature, and God. This principle is reflected in subak

and it helps us to yield the best crops. The water comes from the local water temples and flows through a succession of rice fields via a system of canals and tunnels — it's a co-operative effort between temple priests and local farmers.

Even with the added help of an e-bike, I find the journey does work up an appetite, so we'll wrap up our visit with lunch at a local restaurant. It's always fairly busy, but for good reason: you'll get to enjoy your meal with views across the terraced landscape. Despite the hubbub, I find it very calming.

**Bali's fragrant cuisine**

Speaking of food, there are so many Balinese dishes to try, so on our way back to your hotel,

I'll share my recommendations for dinner.

I always encourage a trip to Ibu Oka in Ubud, an authentic restaurant that serves up some of the best babi guling (suckling pig) in town. The skin is crisp, while the meat underneath melts in your mouth.

Another place I'd put high on your list is Café Lotus, a traditionally designed Balinese restaurant overlooking Pura Taman Kemuda Saraswati, a temple otherwise known as Ubud Water Palace. It has a long lilypond leading up to the main temple building, which is lit up at night, making for a lovely atmosphere as you dine.

The food here is authentically Balinese and prepared with ingredients sourced from the island. I suggest trying the ayam betutu, a richly spiced roasted chicken dish with steamed rice.

After dinner, you can also enjoy Balinese dances performed right in front of the temple. It's the ideal way to end a day of exploring the rice terraces, bringing together the beauty of Bali's nature with the beauty of our culture.



**OTHER EXPERIENCES TO TRY IN BALI**

**Mount Batur trekking**  
Caldera views, volcano-steamed snacks, and a lava tunnel await on this scenic trek to Mount Batur's summit.

**Inside Ubud's temples**  
Delve deeper into Bali's spiritual side as you wander around centuries-old temples and witness a Hindu water purification ceremony.

**Ocean views & seafood**  
Head to the south coast to visit one of Bali's oldest temples, perched on the cliffs. Then, stroll along a secluded beach at sunset before tucking into grilled lobster, squid satay, and red snapper at Jimbaran Bay.

**Get me there:**  
You can visit Bali as part of a wider trip to Indonesia, including time in Jatiluwih and Ubud.



**Look up**  
(pictured) Balinese dancer in front of a Hindu temple; (top right) Bali temple

Inspired? For more information, speak to your travel agent.



Ignite your senses  
(pictured) Neon-lit  
nightlife in the  
Dotonbori district  
of Osaka; (opposite)  
Tokyo street food

# THREE VIEWS OF JAPAN

Wild natural vistas, hyper-local cuisine, or animated pop culture? Our specialists suggest three ways to experience this nuanced country inspired by recent trips they've created.





Japan is complex. This is, after all, a country where ancient shrines and wild landscapes live cheek by jowl with futuristic cities and ephemeral pop-culture fads. And, in our experience, each visitor wants to explore a different side. You might want to dive deeply into the traditional cuisine or be dazzled by the neon lights. To inspire your own planning, we sat down with three of our long-time specialists to examine recent trips that explore Japan's many facets.





**A FAMILY AFFAIR:**  
**POP CULTURE, MANGA**  
**& SAMURAI**

By Rebecca



**Inspired by:**

A family of four who wanted a trip that appealed to all their passions. It needed to include plenty of Japan's pop culture, especially anime and manga, as well as time exploring the country's passion for ultra-modern engineering. And lots of sushi.

Family trips to Japan are always a balancing act — I have to choose experiences that match everyone's varied interests, while also scheduling days so adults and children alike have down time.

With that much going on, it can get overwhelming. A good way to counter that is to limit the places you visit, like my clients, who focused purely on Tokyo and Kyoto. I also plan the experiences so they flow well.

While your family is in Tokyo, I suggest taking a guided visit to Tsukiji Outer Market at breakfast. This was once the city's main trading place for fish, and even today it's packed with seafood stalls and eateries. You can enjoy a breakfast of local delicacies like rich tuna sashimi, fish roe, and tamagoyaki (omelettes with dashi).

Tsukiji is far from other sights, which means sometimes visitors don't want to take the time to explore it. But, for someone fascinated by pop culture and high tech, it pairs well with an afternoon spent exploring Odaiba. Located relatively close to the market, this man-made archipelago is a veritable playground for anyone who wants to delve into Japan's cultural obsession with cutting-edge tech. A highlight is Miraikan, a museum of emerging technology.

If you're passionate about Japan's manga and anime culture, I can arrange a private drawing class at Tokyo's international manga

school. (Manga is a narrative art form like graphic novels.) The instructors there can tailor the lesson to suit almost anyone, from accomplished artists to amateurs who've never sketched before.

After the class, you'll be close by to Nakano, an area renowned among the otaku (a Japanese word that means, loosely, geeks). Here, you can peruse wall-to-wall collectibles, memorabilia, and art based around both manga and anime (animated art).

Kyoto is renowned for traditional crafts, but delicate arts like origami and kimono wearing might be too tame for families with high-energy teens. That's why I suggest including a samurai experience here instead. You'll all change into traditional samurai clothing and practise the right way to bow, learn about the samurai lifestyle, and train on traditional samurai weapons including a katana (a curved sword).



Fresh from the sea  
 Chef preparing a meal  
 at a stall in Tsukiji  
 Outer Market





**Slices of Japan**  
 (pictured) Osaka's  
 nightlife; (top left)  
 sushi; (bottom left)  
 samurai katana

**A CULINARY QUEST:  
 RAMEN, SUSHI & BEYOND**

By Clio



**Inspired by:** A solo traveller who wanted to focus entirely on tasting Japan's hyper-local cuisine.

Almost everyone who visits Japan wants to try the food, but some trips take this to a whole other level. Instead of a list of cities or experiences, you might have a long list of certain dishes and restaurants you want to try.

Like Italy or France, Japan's cuisine is remarkably hyper local, varying from island to island and village to village. You'll find delicate, refined seafood in the coastal city of Kanazawa, known

for its reverence for traditional crafts, where I suggest joining a class to learn the delicate art of sushi making, covering several sushi varieties and techniques.

For more down-to-earth fare, head to Osaka, a city known for its boisterous nightlife. Here, you can take a guided evening walk through Tenma, a district packed with bars and casual eateries. You'll rub shoulders with locals as they unwind over a beer and platefuls of kushi katsu, deep-fried skewered meat and vegetables in a panko coating.

Japan also boasts a wide range of restaurant styles, especially in Tokyo. You might enter the hushed elegance of a Michelin-starred eatery, or spend an evening

hopping between casual izakaya (pubs). And, in Yakitori Alley, you'll find tiny restaurants huddled together under a train track, serving meat seared on hot grills.

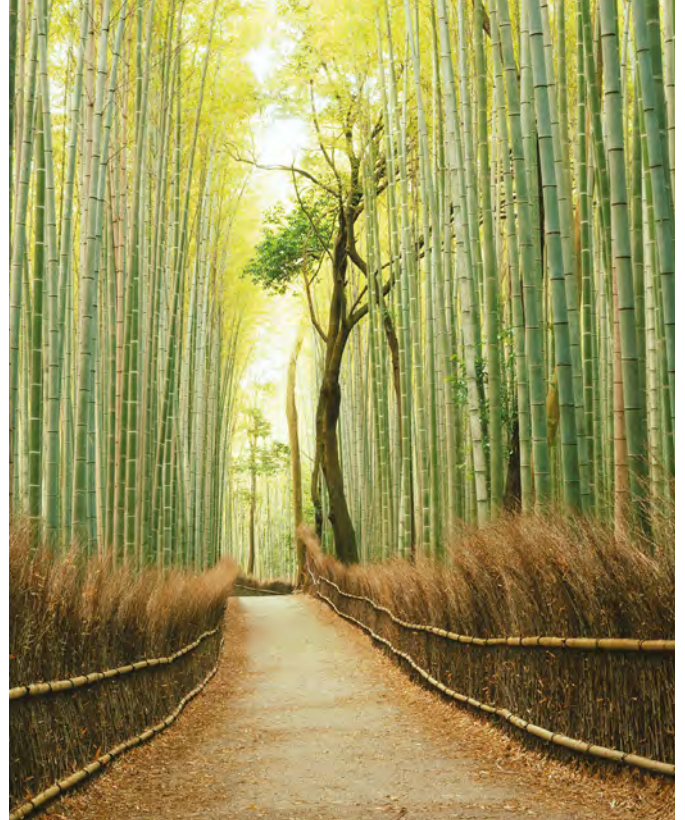
For exquisite kaiseki, I suggest a stay at one of Japan's rural ryokan. Kaiseki are elaborate multi-course meals crafted around seasonal ingredients — tender bamboo shoots in the spring or pale slivered chestnuts in the autumn.

I'll also include introductions to the people who maintain Japan's traditional culinary culture. Former chef Rory guides a tour that offers a detailed gastronomic introduction to the country. And Mac, an expert on Tokyo's whisky scene, who leads an exploration of the best bars in the capital.





**Forest bathing**  
(pictured) Open-air hot-spring bath; (right) Arashiyama Bamboo Grove



**KACHOU FUUGETSU:  
THE BEAUTY OF NATURE**

By Tamatha



**Inspired by:**

A couple who wanted to swap Japan’s urban bustle for its wild landscapes, venturing away from the usual spots.

Tokyo is often the centrepiece of a visit to Japan, whether it’s your first time or your fifth. I’ll admit that I blinked in surprise when my clients asked to skip the capital altogether in favour of the quieter countryside and coastal landscapes. The idea was to spend time appreciating the beauty of nature — what a Japanese poet might call *kachou fuugetsu*.

It’s hard to avoid Tokyo entirely — that’s where most international flights land — but after one night I suggest heading out to the Nihon Arupusu, known in English as the Japanese Alps. Here, you can hike along the Nakasendo Highway, a historic route that once ran between major cities — I particularly like the stretch between Magome and Tsumago. Shaded by soaring cedars, you’ll stroll in the footsteps of the Daimyo lords and their vast retinues who once travelled here.

While you’re in the mountains, the best place to stay is a classic

ryokan. These rural inns, with their open-air hot-spring baths, called *onsen*, are designed for you to immerse yourself in nature, something deeply cherished by the Japanese culture. In fact, Japan has been working to preserve natural landscapes for at least 1,000 years, which means you can enjoy *kachou fuugetsu* even in the cities.

To take advantage of this, stay in Kyoto’s Arashiyama district. It’s best known for its bamboo grove, but the whole area is replete with natural beauty. To get your bearings, I suggest a rickshaw tour. You’ll cover more ground than you would on foot, but the speed is still slow enough that you’ll have plenty of time to soak up the views. Along the way, you’ll see traditional houses, misty mountains, a forested gorge, and Nonomiya Shrine, the setting for *The Tale of Genji*.

While you’re in Kyoto, Hoshinoya Kyoto is perhaps the best place to indulge in the sort of views that have inspired Japan’s brush painters for centuries. You’ll arrive at this elegant hotel via boat, before being escorted into a world of softly lit rooms designed in the gracefully airy style of a 17th-century teahouse. There, your pavilion might look out over boats sailing along the Oi River or maple trees growing on the slopes of Mount Ogura.

Often, tours in Kyoto focus on history and crafts — in many ways, this is the heart of Japan’s cultural traditions.

To get a glimpse of those traditions, and to continue your immersion in nature, you might take a walking tour of Kyoto’s gardens. You’ll appreciate the manicured landscapes tucked away inside the city’s temples as your guide explains design principles like *shakkei*, or borrowed scenery, which incorporates natural features like mountains and streams into the garden design.

**GET ME THERE**

**Flight time:**

Around 11 and a half hours from the UK to Tokyo.

**When to go:**

Year-round, but we like March to May or October to November, when the weather is comfortable and you can enjoy festivals celebrating the changing seasons.

**Start planning:**

Whether you’re interested in cuisine, landscapes, or pop culture, we suggest planning now if you want to visit Japan in 2025.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



# Japan

## BY SEASON



### SPRING

#### Cherry-blossom season

The much-awaited sakura (cherry-blossom season) prompts celebrations large and small across Japan. We advise planning early if you want your visit to coincide.

### SUMMER

#### Fireworks & parades

You'll come across matsuri, traditional festivals sponsored by a local temple or shrine. Most feature fireworks, parades, musicians, and dancers.

### AUTUMN

#### Harvest moon & maple leaves

Visit in mid-autumn to experience Tsukimi, a festival devoted to the harvest moon. You could also enjoy momijigari — viewing the autumn leaves, including bright-crimson maples.

### WINTER

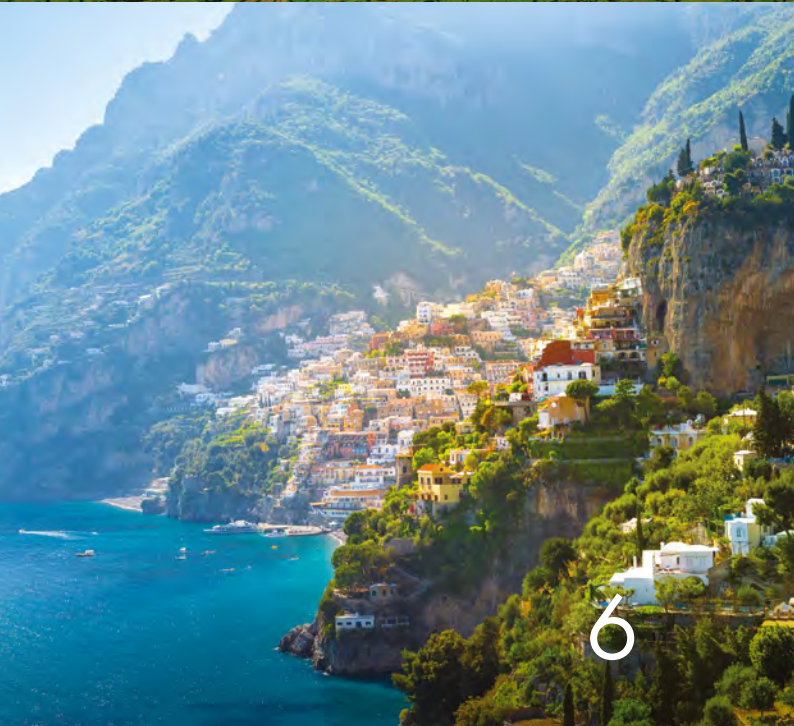
#### Snow & wildlife

Revel in the season on Hokkaido, one of the snowiest places on Earth, where you can see red-crowned cranes' mating dances. Or visit Nagano to glimpse snow monkeys soaking in hot springs.



**The four seasons**  
(clockwise from top left)  
Cherry trees in Kyoto;  
traditional matsuri parade;  
red-crowned crane mating  
dance; maple foliage







# TOP 6 HIKING TRAILS AROUND THE WORLD

Prismatic lava fields, serene tea plantations, and Mediterranean views: our specialists recommend their favourite hikes across the globe.

## 1 Pekoe Trail, Sri Lanka Recommended by Jason



The newly opened Pekoe Trail winds through the jungles, forests, and tea plantations of the Sri Lankan hills. This isn't a hike to challenge yourself — instead, it's a tranquil way to experience the deep-green calm of the tea country. Your guide will lead you along one of the trail's 22 stages, which range from easy to moderate, pointing out the local flora and fauna, including some of the island's brightly feathered endemic birds. As a bonus, you'll be helping to support the villages dotting the path, which are usually bypassed by visitors. It's slow travel at its finest.

## 2 Landmannalaugar, Iceland Recommended by Mareesa



In the highlands of southern Iceland, Landmannalaugar's rainbow landscape instantly catches your eye. You can spend a couple of hours here hiking with a local guide through the dark, twisted rocks of lava fields and past steaming volcanic hills streaked green, orange, red, and purple. Your guide will explain what creates these vivid shades and the other geological formations you pass, and you'll have time to take in the views as you go. Afterwards, I recommend soaking in the naturally heated stream nearby, whose shallow waters soothe weary muscles.

## 3 Cape to Cape Track, Australia Recommended by Tom



Starting at the white-washed lighthouse of Cape Naturaliste, this coastal path in the Margaret River region meanders past red-rock cliffs, sky-scraping karri forests, and fields of wildflowers. Stop to swim or surf at Injidup Beach or walk along the wide swathe of pure white sand on Kilcarnup Beach. Standing tall on a jagged headland at the confluence of the Indian and Southern Oceans, the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse marks the end of the trek. Leaving the trail behind, it's time for some well-earned wine tasting at a Margaret River vineyard.

## 4 Trans-Bhutan Trail, Bhutan Recommended by Amber



Until the 1960s, most travel in Bhutan happened along a central road. It fell into disrepair for a few decades, but has recently been reborn as the Trans-Bhutan Trail. Hiking the full length would take more than a month, but you can easily spend a pleasant morning walking along a section between Thimphu and Punakha with a local guide. This isn't a strenuous hike — instead, you'll stroll along slowly, taking the time to soak up the views of the green valleys, cradled by distance-hazed mountains, as your guide tells you about natural history of the forest around you.

## 5 Salkantay Trek, Peru Recommended by Catherine



Dubbed 'the back door to Machu Picchu', this multi-day hike is a quieter alternative to the well-worn Inca Trail. The Salkantay Trek stands out for the varied landscapes you'll encounter, with snowy peaks and glacial lakes descending into cloudforest and emerald-green jungle before you arrive at Machu Picchu. If you don't have time for a full trek but still crave a challenge, consider hiking to Machu Picchu Mountain instead. The four-hour journey is steep in portions but worth it for the aerial vantage point of the fabled ruins that few others get to see.

## 6 Path of the Gods, Italy Recommended by Caroline



Sheer cliffs that plunge precipitously into the sea, tiny terraced gardens blooming with roses, liquid golden sunshine, and the glittering blue of the Gulf of Salerno... I've seen a lot of landscapes, but the Path of the Gods on the Amalfi Coast is honestly my favourite. This moderately challenging trail begins in Bomerano, where you meet your guide. They'll lead you along the clifftop trail, heading towards Positano, where you can end your walk with an indulgent lunch. Every step of the way, you'll soak up the views that earn the route its divine name.



# 48 Hours in MUSCAT

Blending modernity with tradition, Muscat offers an authentic insight into Oman's tapestried culture before you venture into the mountains and deserts of its interior.

MIDDLE EAST SPECIALIST **MICHAEL**



## DAY 1

### 9AM

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque and the nearby Royal Opera House are both examples of exceptional modern architecture, drawing from styles across the Muslim world and throughout the centuries.

A privately guided tour of the two will immerse you in Omani culture and history from the get-go, so I'll arrange for your guide to pick you up in the morning, just after breakfast.

Before stepping inside, I'd pause and spend a while in

the grounds, admiring the buildings' imposing white-stone exteriors from a short distance. Both settings feel exceptionally spacious and palatial, especially backdropped against the azure Gulf sky.

Inside, more intricate styles start to shine through. The mosque is embellished with elaborate hand-woven carpets and highly decorative ceilings in an array of blues, greens, and gold. The opera house features dark-wood accents and motifs inspired by both Islamic and global art movements. It hosts classical ballets, as well as Arab music and dance shows.

### 1PM

Break for lunch at Al Angham, near the opera house, which offers a fine-dining twist on classic Omani fare.

The decor is true to local style and all the waiting staff are Omani, too, which is actually quite rare. I recommend trying the shuwa, a slow-cooked lamb dish marinated in a rich blend of aromatic spices.

### 3PM

After lunch, head to the coastal suburb of Qurum for a stroll along the beach and through the well-manicured park.

As the sun begins to sink, local families arrive to picnic beneath the shade of the trees, friends catch up in waterfront cafes, and spontaneous games of football spring up on the beach.

### 7:30PM

The Crowne Plaza is a lively spot for dinner and drinks — and you can buy alcohol here, if you wish. As for your hotel, I recommend staying at the elegant Chedi Muscat, whose design blends harmoniously with both contemporary and traditional Omani architecture.

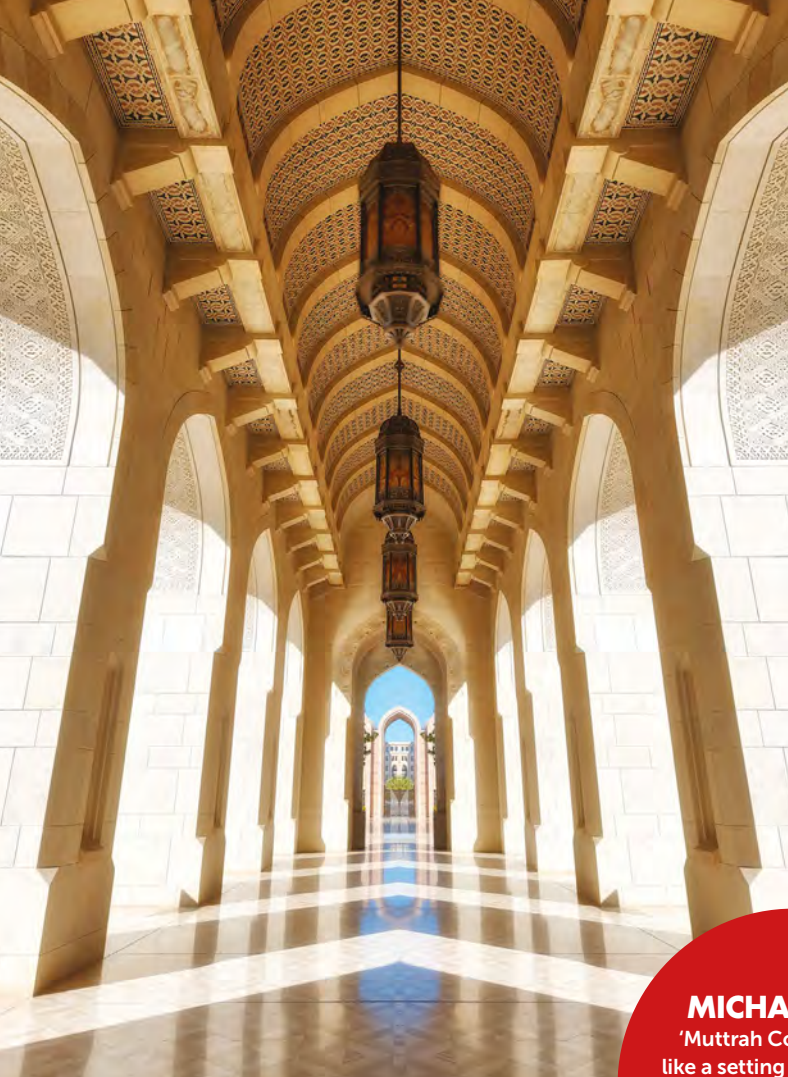




Muscat moments  
(from left) Sultan  
Qaboos Grand Mosque;  
shuwa; Omani man at  
Muttrah Souq







**MICHAEL SAYS**

'Muttrah Corniche feels like a setting from a Middle Eastern folktale — you almost expect Sindbad the Sailor's ship to glide along the horizon.'

**Night and day**

(clockwise from top left) Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque; lamps at a souq; coffee and dates; Shangri-La Al Husn; (opposite) Muttrah Corniche







## DAY 2

### 9AM

This morning, you'll head into historic Old Muscat, shielded from the rest of the city by craggy headlands and thick 17th-century walls.

A good place to start is at Al Alam Palace, one of the Sultan's six residences. You can't go inside, but it's well worth a peer through the crested iron gates.

The cube-shaped palace is strikingly modern-looking with a flat, overhanging roof and large funnel-like columns wrapped around the façade. In bold shades of sky blue and shimmering gold, it's very unlike the surrounding neutral-toned government buildings and the 16th-century fort perched on the rocks behind it.

The Oman National Museum is just a short stroll away and a visit here will put the rest of your trip into context. It takes you through more than 4,000

years of history and culture as you discover the nation's seafaring legacy, agricultural heritage, cross-cultural connections, and everything in between. I like how the exhibits flow in a way that reveals the story of Oman piece by piece.

Before lunch, make your way to Muttrah Corniche to visit the souq, a twisty-turny market still widely used by locals. Its stalls are filled with spices, dates, incense, lamps, jewellery, and kaleidoscopic trinkets, so finding a souvenir or two is all but guaranteed. Just be prepared to haggle for your purchases.

### 1PM

Bait Al Luban is my go-to for lunch in the area. An authentic Omani restaurant with wooden balconies overlooking the harbour, it's not as exclusive as Al Angham, but the food is equally delicious. My advice? Don't skip dessert — the

frankincense ice cream is simply divine.

### 3PM

After a jam-packed morning, you can take things down a notch by heading back to the Chedi for a spa treatment or two before the rest of your evening unfolds.

### 5PM

Setting off just before sunset, you'll step aboard a traditional wooden dhow to sail along the coastline as the sky melts into a soft ombré of pinks, burnt oranges, and golds.

Dinner will be a little later tonight, but you can enjoy Omani coffee and dates on board. During your journey, you'll take in Muscat's twinkling cityscape and natural coves, with its serrated mountain backdrop silhouetted in the distance. I find that the palace views are particularly grand as night falls.

### 8:30PM

While it's a little way out, I think the half-hour journey to the Sultanah at the Shangri-La Al Husn is rewarding. The staff here go above and beyond, and the Mediterranean-inspired dinner service overlooking the bay is exquisite, making your final night in Muscat all the more memorable.

## GET ME THERE

### Flight time:

Around seven and a half hours from the UK if you fly direct.

### When to go:

Between October and February, when the weather is pleasantly warm and sunny.

### Start planning:

You can combine Muscat with Oman's desert and mountains on a varied trip taking in the country's highlights.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





Standing tall  
Cap-des-Rosiers  
Lighthouse, Québec



# CANADA IN FOUR SEASONS

There's a side of Canada to suit every season, whether you're looking for city sights, coastal drives, wildlife encounters, or outdoor adventure. Specialists Lucy, Joe, Emily, and Natasha share their favourite corners for each time of year.



## CANADA

The sheer size of Canada, as well as its varied climate, means you'll find something different to see and do across the whole year. From city sightseeing in spring and coastal drives in summer to autumnal landscapes and high-adrenaline winter activities, our specialists reveal their favourite experiences in Canada, season by season.



Walk through history  
A street in Old Québec

### SPRING IN QUÉBEC: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

By Lucy



Québec is well-suited to a springtime trip between late April and early June, when the days get warmer and brighter, the maple trees are tapped for their thick, sweet syrup, and cities remain fairly quiet before the summer swell begins. In fact, I'd encourage you to focus your time in Québec City and Montréal — they both cater to a wide range of interests, from locally sourced food to art, history, and nature.

In Montréal, I suggest a guided cycling tour that leads you beyond the bike lanes, passing through Mount Royal Park, pausing to admire vivid street art, and taking in the waterfront away from the crowds. It's a good way to get your bearings and take note of anywhere you'd like to return to.

Spring is a particularly rewarding time of year to visit the city's botanical garden, too —

candy-bright blooms celebrate winter's end, trees blush with blossom, and everything feels lush and green.

Like most cities, you'll find a blend of cultures here, which I like to explore using my tastebuds. On a food-focused walking tour, you can sample dishes from all walks of life as you hop between eateries and districts including Little Italy and Chinatown. My favourite Montréal staple is salt-beef bagels, which rival any you'd find in New York City.

A three-and-a-half-hour train journey east gets you to Québec City. Here, I recommend joining a historical walking tour of the UNESCO-designated old town, winding your way down cobbled lanes and uncovering nooks, churches, and cafes you might never come across otherwise.

There are also lots of galleries and museums to lose yourself in, should you experience any spring showers, including Musée de la civilisation, which shines a light on

the Indigenous peoples who live in the province.

For further insight into Indigenous culture, you could visit a reconstructed Huron village at nearby Wendake to learn about Huron heritage and traditions through storytelling, drumming lessons, canoe trips, and hands-on craft workshops.

Finally, if you wanted more time outside the cities, drive out to Saguenay Fjord. Its inky waters are frequented by blue, humpback, and beluga whales, which you can spot on dedicated boat trips, while its lofty clifftops make for some excellent hiking.

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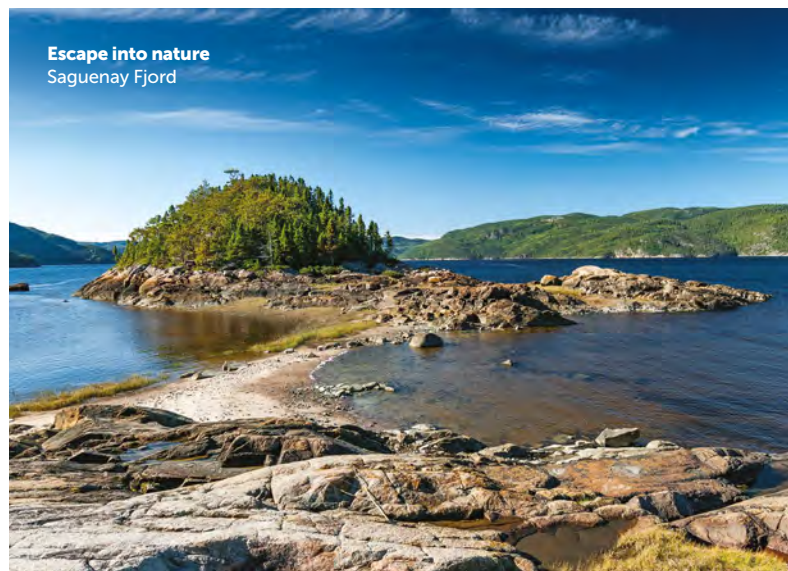
#### Get me there:

- You can combine Montréal and Québec City on a trip that connects eastern Canada's best-loved cities and sights.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



Sweet like sugar  
Making maple syrup taffy



Escape into nature  
Saguenay Fjord





You rock my world  
Atlantic puffins

## SUMMER IN ATLANTIC CANADA: COASTAL IMMERSION

By Joe



Summer — from late June to mid-September — is when visitors flock to Canada for outdoor adventure. While many head west, I prefer to take an alternative route in the east. The four coastal provinces that form Atlantic Canada — Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador — feel relatively undiscovered. Here, you can enjoy balmy days driving, hiking, sailing, or kayaking along their wave-kissed coastlines, breathing in the salty air and embracing a more relaxed pace.

Closing my eyes, I can still taste the fresh lobster I ate in Shediac, New Brunswick. You can head out early morning with a local fisherman to help reel in the day's catch, following sustainable practices to ensure lobster numbers remain healthy. He'll then show you how best to prepare and cook your shellfish before you get to dig in and taste your prize.

New Brunswick's Fundy National Park is another place to

circle on your map — you can hike to Lafferty Falls, or paddle a kayak around Hopewell Rocks and return to see how the world's highest tides ebb and flow around them throughout the day.

Over in Nova Scotia, driving the coastal Cabot Trail should be on your list, of course, but I'd also consider heading to the southern shore between Halifax and the old fishing town of Lunenburg.

This stretch of coast is ripe for a road trip. During your scenic drive, pause to call in at lighthouses like Peggy's Cove, which have stood blinking at the ocean for over a century.

Better still, at Mahone Bay you can embark on a hands-on private sailing trip to see them from the water, spotting seals and seabirds like puffins, ospreys, and eagles as you go while learning about the region's maritime history.

However, there's more to Atlantic Canada's past than fishing. It may be Canada's tiniest province, but Prince Edward Island was where the country's Confederation was agreed in 1864, creating the unified nation we know today.

You can take a walking tour of Charlottetown to hear more about

the event as you stroll the historic streets lined with Victorian clapboard houses. I'd also put aside a day to hop between the island's distinctive rose-gold beaches.

Canada's easternmost province, Newfoundland and Labrador, feels timeless with its petite, brightly painted coastal villages and strong Celtic roots.

Trinity Bay shines a light on what life was like here centuries ago, with preserved saltbox homes and even a working blacksmith's forge. And, in the summer, the Rising Tide Theatre holds open-air performances that move around the village while sharing tales of its early settlers. You can also take boat trips into the bay itself to spot whales, puffins, and in early summer, icebergs.

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### Get me there:

- You can explore all or some of Canada's Atlantic provinces on a self-drive trip across the region

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





**Nature's bounty**  
Basket of apples in  
an orchard



**Misty morning**  
Lake in Algonquin  
Provincial Park at sunrise

## AUTUMN IN ONTARIO: FOOD & FOLIAGE

By **Natasha**



Ontario's autumn may be short (typically mid-September to mid-October), but it's a month of bountiful food and drink, blazing foliage, and mild temperatures that are ideal for exploring outdoors.

Whenever I visit my family there during the season, I like to embrace harvest time with pumpkin picking, apple collecting, and visits to farmers' markets laden with fresh produce. Just north of Toronto in the Blue Mountains, you can follow the self-guided Apple Pie Trail along the southern shore of Lake Huron's Georgian Bay, stopping off at orchards, breweries, and galleries showcasing apple-inspired artwork.

In Toronto itself, it's a great time to join a food tour. I can arrange

for you to explore the city's varied districts with a local guide, calling in at some of the eclectic eateries and drinking holes for a deep dive into the exciting food scene here. The bohemian-style Kensington Market district offers cuisines from eight countries, from Jamaican patties in coco bread to Indigenous frybread, a deep-fried dough drizzled in syrup and dusted with cinnamon sugar.

It's also harvest time on the province's vineyards. A guided trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake from Toronto gives you a chance to taste the region's renowned ice wine (a sweet dessert wine) at a few local wineries on your way to or from Niagara Falls. Of course, the falls' roaring white water contrasts satisfyingly with the surrounding gold and yellow foliage.

To further immerse yourself in the autumnal colours, I suggest spending a few days in Algonquin

Provincial Park, about three hours' drive from Toronto. Here, the still lakes perfectly mirror the red, burnt-orange, and sunny-yellow foliage of the forest surrounding them — that is, until you disturb the water with your oar as you paddle a canoe. As you glide across the water, look out for otters, moose, wading birds, and signs that beavers have been at work.

I also like to follow some of the walking and cycling trails that wind through the trees — the 2-km (1.2-mile) Lookout Trail takes you up to a viewpoint overlooking the treetops. For a longer hike, you could follow the Centennial Ridges Trail, a 10-km (6.2-mile) loop that takes you along two high ridges where you'll be rewarded with panoramic views over the autumnal landscape.

While here, I recommend staying in a log-cabin style property, such as Bartlett Lodge. I think it adds to the feeling of being deep in the natural world. As dusk descends, listen closely and you might even hear the distant howls of a wolf calling to its pack.



**Bohemian like you**  
Kensington Market,  
Toronto

### Get me there:

- Experience Ontario's autumn, including time in Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake, on a journey across the province's best-loved spots.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



## WINTER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: ICY ADRENALINE

By Emily



When I think of British Columbia in its winter months (November to

March), it reminds me of paper-white snow covering great fists of mountains, the warmth of hot chocolate spreading through my body, and the rush of adrenaline from zipping around a frozen lake by snowmobile.

Sure, it's cold out there, but you'll find far fewer visitors at this time of year if you go outside the festive period, as well as activities you can't do in any other season, plus your money goes much further compared with in summer.

Visiting at this time of year also means you won't be self-driving — instead, we'll take you between spots in a private vehicle or with a small group. You won't move between places as much either, basing yourself in one or two locations and really making the most of your time there.

In Vancouver, you'll still be able to join walking tours that focus on the city's history, culture, and food scene — just wear plenty of layers. There are also lots of museums and galleries to explore, including the Museum of Anthropology, which has a huge collection of artefacts and exhibits related to First Nations peoples from the region. And, if you're a sports fan, you could experience the lively atmosphere of a Vancouver Canucks ice hockey match.

Just outside the city, the canopy walkways, trees, and canyons at Capilano Suspension Bridge Park are decked in colourful lights at night so you can walk through the treetops among vibrant purples, blues, and golds.

For an even more spectacular light display, Vancouver is a gateway to the Yukon, where you have a good chance of seeing the northern lights glowing, shimmering, and dancing in streaks across the night sky.

But, my favourite place to head to in winter is Whistler. Here, you can zip-line through the trees

and over an icy river canyon, go snowshoeing along trails that run deep into the surrounding forest, or even have a go at bobsledding.

I particularly enjoyed joining a snowmobile tour through the wild backcountry just outside the town. Kitted out in protective gear, I soon got to grips with the steering and speed control and found myself gliding across ski slopes and a frozen lake, the cold air rushing past as I navigated the fields of perfectly white snow.

### Get me there:

- We can adapt many of our Canada trip ideas for winter, including one that explores British Columbia's highlights.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**

CANADA 



**Winter haven**  
Vancouver's skyline seen  
from Queen Elizabeth Park



**The crunch of snow**  
Snowshoeing near  
Whistler





# TWO SIDES TO...

Look for unusual wildlife in the rainforest or take a deep dive into the island-

It's the age-old question: beach escape or adventure break? When it comes to visiting Queensland, Australia, it can be tricky to decide how to divide your time between Daintree National Park's wildlife-rich rainforest and the glass-clear waters and kaleidoscopic marine life out on the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsunday Islands. Australia specialists Brooke and Jindy share two ways to experience Queensland, whether you're more drawn to the feeling of the fresh sea breeze or the quiet hum of creatures big and small under the canopy of the rainforest.

one of the oldest rainforests on the planet. Sir David Attenborough once called it 'the most extraordinary place on Earth.' I have to agree.

There are many ways to explore here. You could cruise down the Daintree River, watching out for the long snouts of crocodiles poking out of the water. Explore the rainforest at night, listening for the hoot of owls and the high-pitched chirp of bandicoots. Or, join an expert guide on a birdwatching walk, shaded by the giant leaves of umbrella trees, looking out for the

blue neck, exuberant plumage, and horn-like crown of the immense cassowary bird, which can grow to be 1.6 m (5 ft) tall.

The laidback beach town of Port Douglas borders the rainforest. Quieter than Cairns, it's where I prefer to base myself while exploring this region.

You can also stay in the heart of the rainforest at a luxury wilderness lodge, sleeping in well-appointed treehouses perched over the forest floor. Fall asleep to the sounds of birds and wildlife colliding to create a natural white-noise machine.

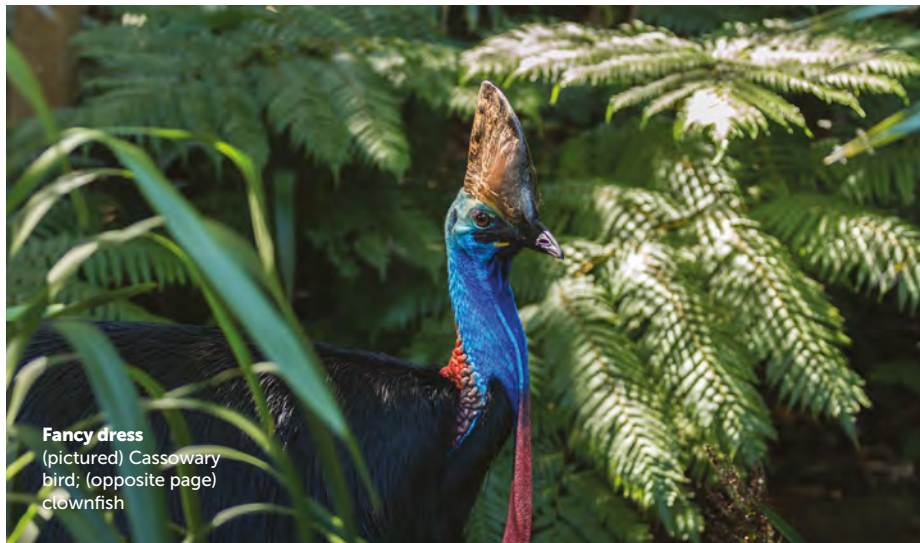
## IN THE FOREST

By Brooke



When people think of Australia, it's easy to picture the turquoise ocean crashing onto a balmy beach, the red clay of the Outback, or the rolling green vineyards. The rainforest is a part of Australia that can fly under the radar, but, in my opinion, shouldn't be overlooked.

On Queensland's coast you'll find the Daintree Rainforest, an expanse that's home to many endemic animal species and more flowering plants than the Amazon. Dating back over 130 million years, it's



**Fancy dress**  
(pictured) Cassowary  
bird; (opposite page)  
clownfish



**Ancient habitats**  
(opposite page) Native  
Australian rainforest;  
(pictured) Hill Inlet,  
Whitsunday Islands

# QUEENSLAND

scattered waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

## BY THE SEA

By Jindy



From the varied colourful coral formations gently swaying in the ocean currents to the marine life thriving among them and the pristine white-sand beaches of the surrounding islands, there's so much that draws me to the reefs and islands of Queensland.

The Great Barrier Reef is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, standing out as the world's largest reef system. I swam with rainbow parrotfish, wide-winged manta rays, and sea turtles that seemed to gracefully dance through the water. Seeing a dolphin leap out of the ocean against the backdrop of the setting sun took my breath away. Of course, you can snorkel or dive among a cascade of flamboyant fish and playful marine life, which I highly recommend, but if you think the only way to explore the reef is from under the water, then think again.

You can take to the sky and see the aptly named Heart Reef from a helicopter or seaplane. I could also arrange for you to cruise by catamaran to the outer fringes of the reef, or sail on board a private yacht that will whisk you around the Whitsunday Islands, stopping off at a quiet beach for a

luxurious picnic lunch on the sand with no one else in sight.

One of the most unusual ways to experience the reef is to sleep floating above it. After visiting an underwater observatory and getting a chance to snorkel on the reef, you'll snuggle into your Reefbed, gazing up at a sky painted with stars while you're lulled to sleep by the waves lapping the hull of the private pontoon.

Many first-time visitors don't realise there are 900 islands scattered along the Queensland coast. Among them are the 74 isles that make up the Whitsundays. I love the variety of places to stay ashore here — you can unwind at a spa hotel, escape to a chic eco retreat, or invite friends to join you at your luxe villa at qualia's Beach House on Hamilton Island.

You'd be forgiven for thinking the reef is for water lovers only, and that landlubbers are better suited to the rainforest, but this isn't the case. While avid swimmers will appreciate the reef, hikers can lace up their boots and take a ramble ashore. The fact that so many of the walks here have 'lookout point' in the name is a testament to the staggering views that reward you at the end of each trail.

I suggest walking up to the Hill Inlet Lookout, where you can see swirling sand formations in the teal waters below.



For a longer jaunt, there's a three-day trek known as the Great Whitsunday Walk, which winds under towering trees and past trickling creeks before arriving at the palm-studded sands of Airlie Beach.

The ideal time to visit the reef is May to October when the water is clear, the sun is likely to shine, and, best of all, you'll avoid the rainy season. It also aligns with the mild dry season in the rainforest.

### Get me there:

- Visit the reef and rainforest of Queensland on a trip that also takes in many other highlights of Australia.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**

Queensland  
AUSTRALIA



A sunset over a savanna landscape with an ostrich in the foreground. The sky is a mix of orange, red, and yellow, with the sun partially obscured by a range of mountains. The foreground is a dry, rocky savanna with sparse vegetation. An ostrich stands on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left.

# Journey along the Garden Route

Beyond South Africa's cities and safaris is a driving route that winds through countryside, mountains, semi-desert, and coastal communities. South Africa specialist Harriet buckles up.





### TIME TO HIT THE ROAD

Stretching from Mossel Bay to the Storms River mouth in Tsitsikamma National Park, the Garden Route is South Africa's best-known road trip for a reason. With landscapes switching between mountains, semi-desert, and untamed coast, an abundance of wildlife both on land and offshore, and oceanside towns bursting with personality — not to mention the delectable food — it's a drive to relish over several days. South Africa specialist Harriet shares her recent experiences behind the wheel.

## South Africa specialist Harriet



Harriet first visited South Africa aged 17 on a six-week tour with her brother's rugby team. She's kept returning since, exploring KwaZulu-Natal, the Drakensberg Mountains, and the Western Cape, including the Garden Route.

**Desert to ocean**  
(pictured) Male ostrich,  
Karoo region; (opposite  
page) part of the  
coastal drive along the  
Garden Route





**Going underground**  
Cango Caves, near Oudtshoorn



**Striking fellow**  
Knysna loerie

**R**ounding the corner of the winding mountain road, the landscape opened out before me and an expanse of blue glittered in the distance — the Indian Ocean. I'd spent the last few days in the semi-desert of South Africa's Klein Karoo region, where ostrich farms pepper the arid landscape and the great humps of the Swartberg Mountains form a backdrop to the town of Oudtshoorn. This vision of blue contrasted nicely with the reddish rocks disappearing in my rear-view mirror.

### OUTDSHOORN

While Oudtshoorn isn't technically part of the Garden Route, it makes sense to base yourself there for a couple of nights on your way over from Cape Town, the Cape Winelands, or the whale-watching hub of Hermanus. A town in name rather than size, it benefited from the lucrative 19th-century ostrich-feather trade. The giant birds are still farmed here, but more for meat than the feathers that were once used to adorn women's hats.

In fact, I'd spent last night at a

guesthouse on a working ostrich farm. La Plume looks out over the rolling farmland and its feathery inhabitants, and the building has retained a traditional style. While here, you can tour the farm to learn about and meet your ostrich neighbours.

I also recommend driving out to the nearby Cango Caves. You can join a guided tour of these cavernous subterranean tunnels, which are punctuated by huge stalagmites and stalactites that have built up over millennia. Simply taking scenic drives through the mountains is another bonus of staying in this region — you'll find plenty of viewpoints to stop at for photos or picnics with far-reaching vistas over the peaks.

That said, I was excited to reach the coast, the inland heat gradually subsiding as the ocean breeze cooled the air. It's a coastline that never fails to take my breath away. Curved clifftops are pummelled by waves in some parts, while in others, sheltered bays embrace huge swathes of white-gold sand, many of which remain empty for most of the day.

### GEORGE & KNYSNA

Along the way, you'll also have a choice of characterful seaside towns to visit or stay in. If you're a golfer, George is a good option, home to several of the country's best courses.

For a more natural setting, Knysna sits on a lagoon hemmed in by two headlands and backed by indigenous forests. Parts are included within Garden Route National Park, where you can explore hiking trails while keeping a lookout for endemic wildlife like the Knysna loerie (or turaco), Knysna dwarf chameleon, and the rare Brenton blue butterfly.

### PLETTENBERG BAY

My destination for the next few days was Plettenberg Bay, an affluent beachside town sandwiched between a large crescent of white sand and the plunging forest-clad cliffs of the Tsitsikamma Mountains.

Whales are often visible from the clifftop trails, or you can join boat trips to see them up close. 'Plett', as locals call it, is also a popular holiday spot for





Capetonians, and its beachfront is lined with shops, cafes, and restaurants that keep them well fed and watered. I especially recommend the seafood here, which is as fresh as it comes.

Speaking of good food, I was in luck when I arrived at Emily Moon River Lodge, a 16-suite boutique hotel overlooking a meandering river, wetlands, and distant mountains, and my home for the next couple of nights. I just so happened to check in as the lodge was preparing to host a chef demonstration. Of course, I booked myself a table right away.

What followed was eight courses of exquisite dishes, from T-bone steak to a seafood broth, each paired with a complementary South African wine. And, it cost no more than a two-course meal back home — the food and drink in South Africa is incredible value.

### TSITSIKAMMA NATIONAL PARK

During my stay in Plett, I headed out with a local guide for the day to explore nearby Tsitsikamma National Park. Here, you'll find temperate forests bursting with endemic flora and fauna, deep gorges carved by the turbulent Storms River, and a rock-strewn coastline that rises to headlands and falls to sandy coves.

It's definitely best to explore this natural splendour with a guide who knows all about the region's flora, fauna, and geology. They'll tell you about the significance of what you're seeing and plan your day according to your interests.

If you like a touch of adrenaline, there are river-tubing trips, canopy tours high in the trees, and one of the world's highest bungee jumps — 216 m (707 ft) — off nearby Bloukrans Bridge (I politely

declined this option, but we paused to watch people braver than me take the plunge down into the valley).

If, like me, you prefer a gentler pace, there are walking trails aplenty, many taking you along boardwalks and across sturdy rope bridges spanning the river mouth and coastline.

The trail we followed also brought us to what's known as the Big Tree, a dizzyingly high 800-year-old yellowwood that stretches 36 m (118 ft) upwards, easily piercing the canopy to reach the sky. While protective ropes stop you from hugging its 9-m (30-ft)-circumference trunk, you can stand close enough to appreciate its size, head tilted upwards and mouth agape.

As you explore on foot, you might come across vervet monkeys swinging and squabbling among the branches, rock hyraxes scurrying on the cliffsides, chameleons and geckos expertly camouflaged against the foliage, and so many birds that I gave up writing down their names. They provided an enchanting orchestral backdrop.

But, my standout wildlife encounter occurred in the most unlikely of places. We'd just found a space in the park's oceanfront car park when my guide beckoned me over, pointing excitedly towards the turquoise waves.

'Can you see it?' he asked. 'Right there, in a few seconds it'll come back up.' As soon as he'd finished speaking, a plume of water shot into the air in the distance, and I made out a dark outline, huge even from land. A southern right whale.

It was one of those moments that you can't quite believe is happening. I'd been out on whale-watching trips twice before in South Africa and failed to see any, so to spy

one here, from the middle of a car park and with no expectation of an encounter, was an experience I'll be reliving and retelling for years to come.

We spent around an hour gazing out to the horizon, using our cameras to zoom in for a better view as the whale was joined by a few others in its pod, their tail flukes emerging every so often above the waves.

My fate was sealed during that captivating hour: I'd be returning to the Garden Route — and soon. I knew that this drive had hooked me, and I was ready and willing to be reeled in again.

### GET ME THERE

#### Flight time:

Between 11 and 12 hours direct from the UK to Cape Town.

#### When to go:

September to April for the warmest, sunniest weather, with whales present from August to November. It can get busy between December and February, so visit outside these months for a quieter trip and wider choice of hotels.

#### Start planning:

You can take a scenic drive along the Garden Route, including time in Cape Town, as part of a trip across South Africa.

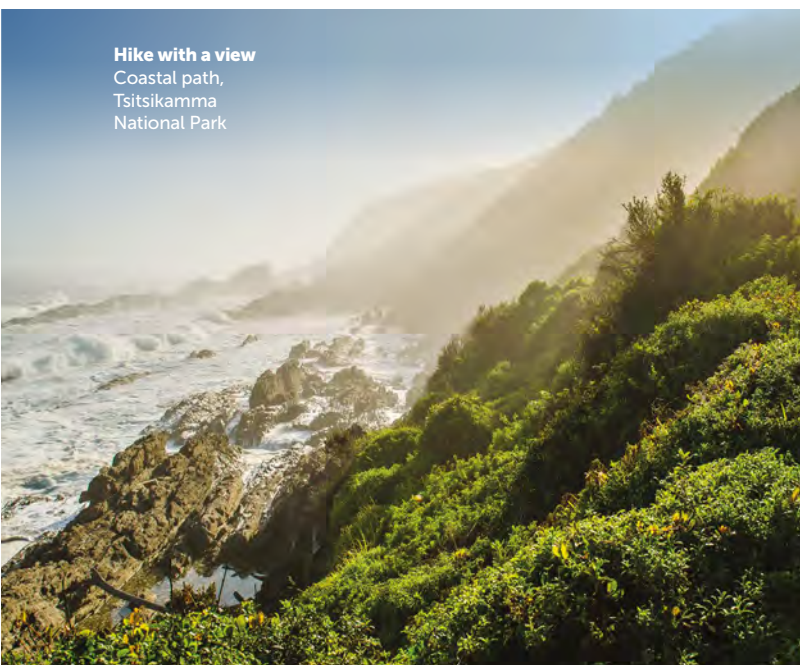
**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**



*Inspiring new ways*

#### Hike with a view

Coastal path,  
Tsitsikamma  
National Park



### PAIR THE GARDEN ROUTE WITH...

- a city break in Cape Town before your road trip, hiking up Table Mountain, exploring the food scene on a walking tour, and visiting the Cape Winelands
- a safari in Kruger National Park after your road trip, catching a flight from Port Elizabeth to a private reserve bordering the Kruger to spot big cats, elephants, giraffes, and many more species
- a tour of KwaZulu-Natal, if you're on a lengthier trip, delving into the history surrounding the Battlefields area and exploring sites like Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift with a local guide who'll bring past events to life



# My perfect trip

East Coast adventure (pictured) Lower Manhattan at dusk, New York; (opposite top) Katy on the harbour, Cape Cod; (opposite bottom) Scott and Katy at a baseball game, Boston

## USA

When Katy became a wheelchair user, she set herself the goal of travelling to the States with her family. USA specialist Dean got to work creating a trip with accessibility in mind.



### THE CLIENT

**Katy Deacon & her family, Scott, Lucas & Darcy**

In early 2020, I became a wheelchair user and, at first, it felt like my world shrank. Then, I attended a course for people with spinal injuries and it motivated me to think differently and challenge myself to see more of the world. First on my list was the USA. I'd been watching a lot of *The West Wing*, so, naturally, Washington D.C. was calling to me. I was apprehensive, but after months of planning with Dean, off I went, along with my husband, Scott, and children, Lucas and Darcy.



### THE EXPERT

**Dean, USA & Caribbean specialist**

Research is key to every trip I plan, but even more so for Katy's. There was a lot to consider, from finding accessible rooms during Boston Marathon week to triple-checking the experiences I'd suggested were step-free. Katy was really open about her needs, so it was a collaborative effort. I remember her telling me that she often couldn't take part in activities during family holidays due to accessibility barriers, so I made it my goal to build a trip where she didn't have to miss out on anything.

### A YEAR BEFORE

#### BUILDING CONFIDENCE

I knew I'd face challenges during my travels, so I spent a year preparing. I learned how to navigate busy cities in my chair and went to a disability centre to practise getting around an airplane. As a former aircraft engineer, it was strange to feel so worried about flying, but the training really helped.

### DAYS 1-4

#### WASHINGTON D.C.

After a successful flight and a waffle-filled introduction to

American breakfasts, we took a trolley tour of the capital's main sights. They were instantly recognisable from *The West Wing*, but what I didn't expect was how spacious the city felt. With no high-rise buildings or tall trees interrupting it, the sky seemed endless.

During the tour, I found our visit to the National Museum of the American Indian particularly poignant. The building is a great curving structure designed to look like rock sculpted by the wind.

We spent a good while meandering around the exhibits and learning about the country's complex history — one that's so entangled with



that of the UK.

On our last day, I decided to rest up in the hotel while Scott took Lucas and Darcy to the zoo. Dean had factored in a lot of free time during our trip — more than I initially wanted. It turned out to be a sensible decision, allowing me to make the most of the days we did have activities booked in.

**Bed for the night:** I liked the Fairmont’s location — just on the edge of historic Georgetown and near the White House.

**DAYS 5-8**

**NEW YORK CITY**

We didn’t want to spend hours driving, so we took the train to New York. They used a clever winch system to raise me up to train level and all the staff were fantastic throughout.

I’d been to New York City as a teenager, so I was eager to share its exuberance with my own children.

We packed a lot into our four days here. My stand-out memories have to be the memorial gardens at Ground Zero (which were incredibly powerful), taking in the thrillingly chaotic atmosphere at Times Square, and spending a few hours peacefully ambling through Central Park.

My daughter was so taken by the city that she was inspired to base a creative writing assignment around it at school, winning the Head Teacher’s Award as a result. It made me



want to show my children more of the world.

**Bed for the night:** It was just a short taxi ride from the city’s main sights to the Shelburne Sonesta, and the porters were extra helpful when I arrived.

**DAYS 9-13**

**CAPE COD**

Exhilarating as the city was, we were ready for the calmness of Cape Cod, spending our days at the beach, flying kites in the sea breeze, and eating some of the best seafood around.

It’s hard to come by accessible beaches, but the hotel we stayed at partners with a local charity that provides purpose-built wheelchairs. It was so special to spend time with the kids as they played in the refreshing spring sunshine.

**Bed for the night:** Sea Crest Beach Hotel is right on the waterfront, and I loved its coastal-themed decor.

**DAYS 14-17**

**BOSTON**

Even though Boston is such a historic city, it felt like accessibility had been designed into everything here rather than simply being an afterthought.

One example was the ‘Duck’ tour we took where you travel around the city in an amphibious bus-boat hybrid. They removed a couple of seats to accommodate my wheelchair and off we went. Along the way, we saw preparations for the Boston Marathon, the historical Old State House, and the Charles River, which we eventually splashed down into.

Scott was also really keen to catch a baseball game in Boston, but Dean took it one step further and arranged for us to take a tour of Fenway Park beforehand. It’s the oldest ballpark in the major league, and we loved hearing how it had evolved over the years.

The game itself was electric and we were completely hooked, waving our giant foam fingers and munching on overflowing tubs of popcorn. Much to our delight, the Boston Red Sox won!

**Bed for the night:** I found The Boxer Hotel’s location ideal for exploring Boston’s historic streets. It also had an accessible pavement outside leading straight to the North End.

**KATY’S ACCESSIBLE TRIP ADVICE**

**Be open:** Let your specialist know about the key barriers you may face on your trip so they can prepare well in advance.

**Practise beforehand:** Whether it’s testing out airplane seats or venturing into big cities, build up your confidence by practising common travel situations before you go.

**Stay positive:** Not everything will go to plan, but there’s almost always a solution and your specialist is just a phone call away.

**Get me there:**

- Spend time in cities like Boston, New York, and Washington D.C. on a trip around the USA’s East Coast by rail.

**For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





# FROM YOU

Letters, photos from your travels, and questions for our specialists: we love hearing from you.



## HOW TO CONTACT US

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editor@audleytravel.com

*'Where's a great place to travel with my whole family this summer?'*

HAYLEY, VIA INSTAGRAM



### Global Travel Advisor Chloe says:

I'm leaning towards Canada, especially if your family enjoys the outdoors. During summer, the weather is typically warm but not too hot and there are plenty of activities to keep children of all ages entertained. For wildlife, I suggest heading west to Vancouver Island where you can go bear- and whale-spotting with expert guides. For a more active trip, base yourself in Alberta, where you can kayak, raft, and hike in the wilderness. You could even go on the hunt for dinosaur fossils in the Canadian Badlands. As for where to stay, I recommend log-cabin-style lodges once you're out of the city. They often have self-catering facilities for added flexibility, offer plenty of space, and open out onto wild spaces.



## Japan

*'We decided on Japan as a family during the pandemic — I'd ask everyone what their top countries to visit were and Japan was always number one. A highlight of our trip last spring was the tea ceremony in Kyoto, where we wore kimonos. We picked every element of our outfits — it was hard to choose from such glorious colours and patterns.'*

**Audra Priluck**



## Egypt

*'Reading Layla's article about her trip along the Nile aboard Historia in your last issue brought to mind our very contrasting journey on a dahabiya, which Audley arranged for us in 2011.'*

*There were just a dozen passengers, and the dahabiya's compact size meant it was able to go where larger ships could not, including small riverside beaches.*

*On one occasion, a crew member even invited us to his village along the*

*shore to meet his family and friends, who welcomed us into their homes.*

*The main highlight was the day they cut the engine and unfurled the sails, transporting us away from the hubbub. The only sound was the lapping of the river against the boat.*

*The large ships are all very well, but for peace and quiet, and a chance to meet the locals, you can't beat a dahabiya!*

**Pam & David Rogers**



# THE LAND OF SUN & SPICE

Tasting organic chocolate fresh from the source. Hiking to lesser-known waterfalls. Browsing for cinnamon and ginger at market stalls laden with fresh spices. Snorkelling in clear seas above an underwater sculpture garden. Dining beachside with your toes in the sand. Welcome to Grenada, the Isle of Spice.

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Flying to 35 destinations across five continents, Virgin Atlantic provide frequent, direct flights between the UK and enviable destinations like the sun-drenched Caribbean. And with their partner airlines, they can connect you with even more places around the globe. Being brilliantly different remains a core part of Virgin Atlantic's DNA, and they always go the extra mile to deliver excellent service while offering their passengers that little bit more, from their rewarding Virgin Atlantic Flying Club to in-seat power charging.



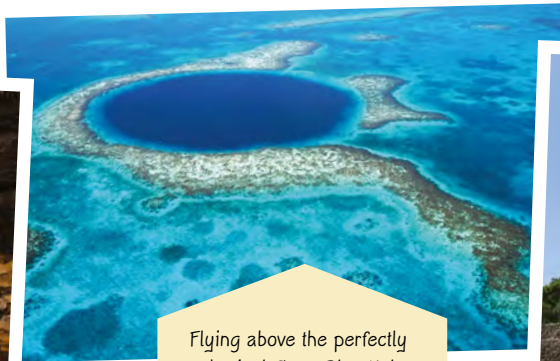
Virgin Atlantic Airbus A350

**Inspired? For more information, speak to your travel agent.**





The dark, twisty caverns in the Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave echo eerily as you climb and swim, knowing Maya sacrifices once took place here.



Flying above the perfectly spherical Great Blue Hole lets you take in its scale and eye-catching colours.



Well-preserved frieze carvings and stepped temples are on display at the Maya site of Xunantunich.

# Woodboard BELIZE

A sensory journey through the jungle and reefs of Belize with specialist Nik.

Snorkelling the reefs off Ambergris Caye reveals an underwater world brimming with rays, turtles, and vivid fish.



*'Jungles, reefs, sacred caves, and Maya cities — wherever you are in Belize, your senses tingle as you connect with nature and the country's mystery-shrouded past.'*

**Inspired?  
For more information,  
speak to your travel agent.**

Navigating small rapids while river tubing from Black Rock Lodge gets your adrenaline pumping as you take in the jungle scenery.



Howler monkey calls reverberate through the jungle canopy at Lamanai Outpost Lodge, which is set beside a lake amid the remnants of a Maya city.



Traditional Garifuna rhythmic drumming creates a soundtrack as you dine on fragrant fish stew.





# TASMANIA

## THE WILD ISLE

While just off the coast of mainland Australia, Tasmania can feel a world away. With miles of wild backcountry ripe for hiking, the chance to get up close and personal with endemic wildlife, and an undulating coastline to explore, there are many ways to see the island. Our Australia specialists share three experiences to connect you with Tasmania, from the air, land, and water.



### Walking in Cradle Mountain National Park

By Lee

Rambling through the bush at Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, you can look out for wallabies, wombats, and silky black-feathered currawongs. All of these animals might wander into view while you walk beneath cloud-topped mountains and past glacial lakes. One creature you don't have to work hard to find here is the Tasmanian devil, which lives in a protected animal sanctuary. I recommend going on one of the ranger-led tours, included in your entry ticket, so you can see the devils' toothy grins and learn about the rangers' rewilding efforts.



### Swimming at a pristine beach on the Bay of Fires

By Haley

Enormous copper-tinged granite boulders lie strewn like a giant's plaything on white sands lapped by turquoise seas. The stretch of coastline known as the Bay of Fires rewards you with dramatic views and unspoiled beaches. I recommend heading out early to follow coastal trails at dawn, watching the sun rise over the east-facing shore. Gazing out at sea, you might spot dolphins cavorting in the morning light or whales passing by on migration. I enjoy nothing more than slipping into the sea to cool down after a trek along this eye-catching coast.



### Flying over Southwest National Park

By Joshua

Tasmania's untamed southwest shore is home to the island's largest reserve, Southwest National Park. This expanse of uninhabited wilderness has swathes of thick Huon pine forests, serene lakes, and windswept beaches. Its remoteness makes it all the more intriguing, but I can make it easy for you to get there by booking a scenic flight that takes you into the heart of this wild place. You'll not only soar over rocky coastline and jagged peaks, but also land and take to the water for a boat ride, then enjoy a lunch of Tasmanian produce and local wine.

Inspired? For more information, speak to your travel agent.

# TASMANIA

COME DOWN FOR AIR



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AUDLEY

