



2012 Edition

The Benefits Of Teaching English in China

The gem of Western Australia Perth



Ensure **All** Your belongings are taken care of

Tequila in Mexico
More to it than just lime & salt

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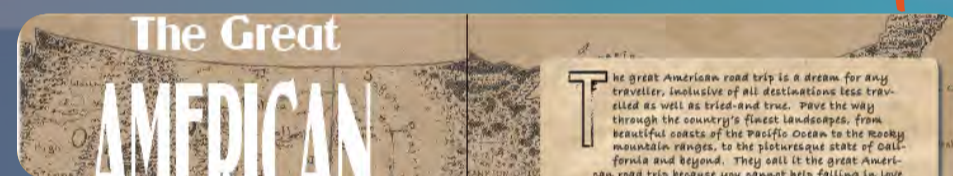
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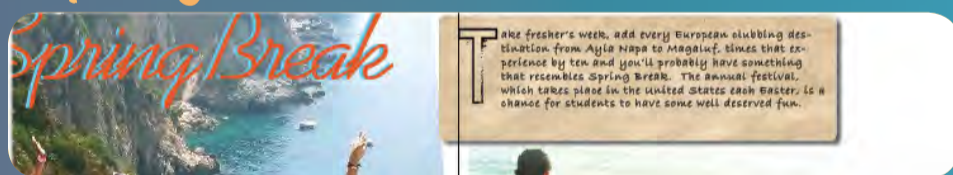
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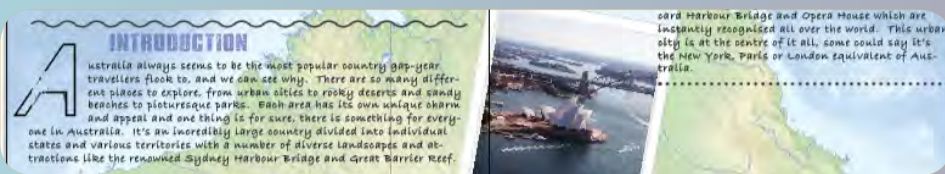
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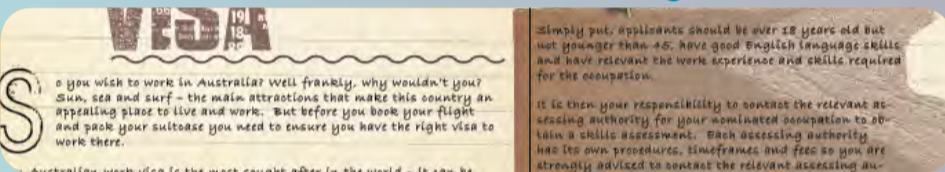
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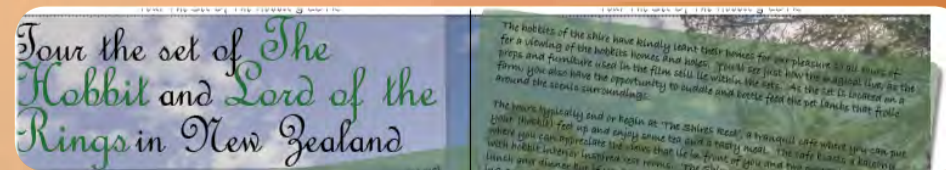
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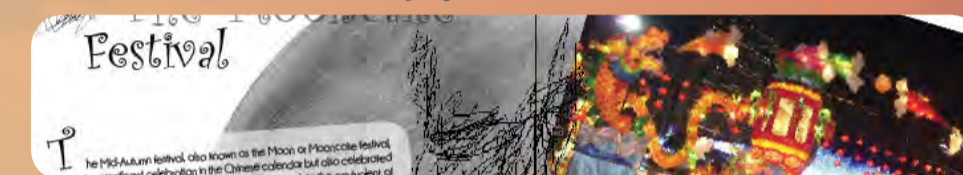
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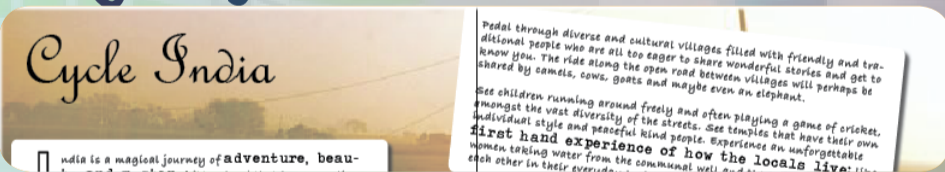
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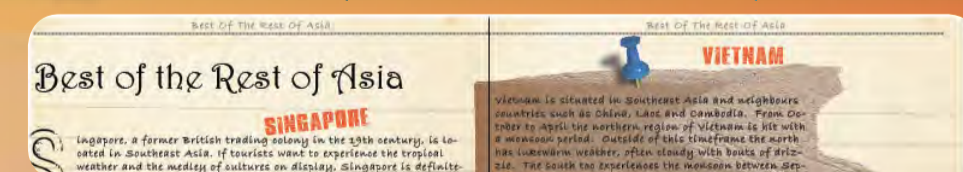
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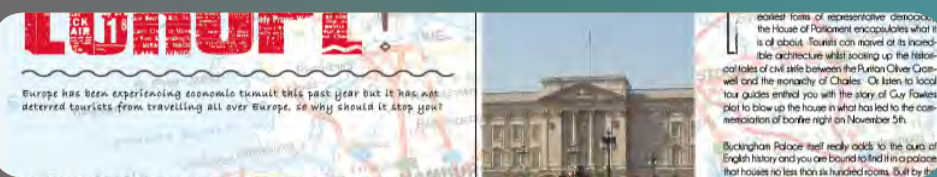
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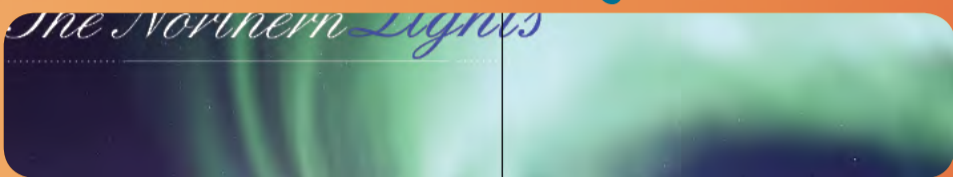
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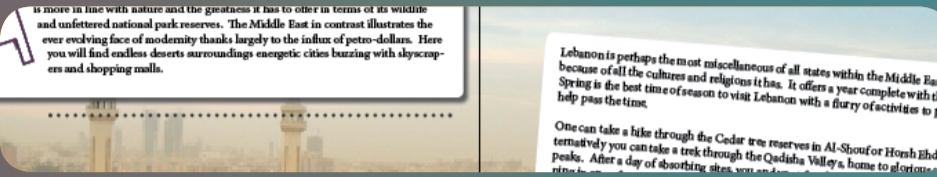
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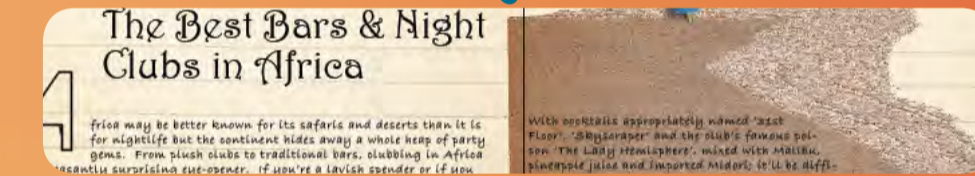
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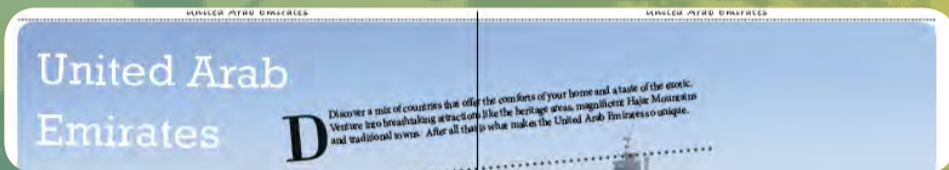
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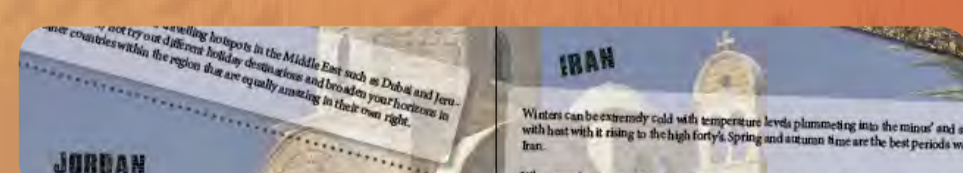
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Editors letter

Hello! Bon Jour! Guten Tag! Etc etc...

If you are reading this magazine then chances are you have already thought long and hard about exploring the world, broadening your horizons and all the other cheesy clichéd sayings. Well, good for you! Whether you are a student, a graduate or already embarking on your gap year, we want to keep you flooded with great ideas for your next adventure.

From giving you the low down on Travel Vaccinations and the latest information on Visa Changes, through to tips and tricks on how to stay safe whilst backpacking, hitchhiking or even just staying in a hostel; this guide will point you in all the right directions. All of our expert team of writers' are speaking from experience and take great pleasure in sharing their infinite wisdom - and in some cases allow you to learn from their mistakes!

Whatever tickles your fancy, there is something in here for everyone. This Global Guide takes a look at each continent, featuring the most popular destinations in every corner of the world. So if you already know which country you would like to visit, that's great! We have indulged all of the gap traveller highlights such as Australia and the United States, as well as throwing in a few hidden gems such as the Cheap and Cheerful destinations of Eastern Europe and getting the very best out of the Middle East on a Student Budget.

While all your friends are entering the scary world of nine-to-five, fighting among the masses for each available job in the saturated market that is the rat race; you will be lapping it up in the sun and embracing new cultures. No wonder those lucky few who get to experience the gap year lifestyle are the envy of all their friends.

So what are you waiting for? It's time to get bitten by the travel bug!

Ciao for now!
James Drakeford
Editor-in-Chief



Competitions

Win some amazing prizes!!

www.igaptravelguide.com/competitions.html



OVERVIEW



Accommodation

Whilst full board accommodation sounds expensive it can save you lots of money on food and drinks. Meal prices easily add up especially in popular tourist destinations. Paying the average price of eight Euros per meal can cost you nearly 30 Euros just for three. Some places in Ibiza charge an extortionate 10 Euros just for a bottle of water. Having said that it's definitely worth researching the prices of accommodation for self catering, half board and room only as well because you may find these more cost effective.

If you decide to go for room only, self or half catering, see if you can take some food to enjoy on your days out from the hotel's continental buffet. When you have internet access, research the restaurants that give you the best value for money, or you could ask at the hotel and tourist information centres. Rather than picking up lots of small bottles of drink, buy big bottles that you can store in your room which will last longer when you're out-and-about. You can even pick up some cheap groceries and cook up what you desire. If you think you can't cook then now's a brilliant time to learn. This could save you a great amount on food, drink and accommodation costs.



How To Book

Travelling the world is an amazing and life-changing experience. There's one thing that unites all student travellers, no matter where they are from, and that is budgeting. If you don't stick to a budget, you could easily over-spend and end up in with a mountain of debt when you arrive home, which will really bring on the holiday blues. So here's our pick-of-the-crop tips on saving you money to help you get the best out of your budget.

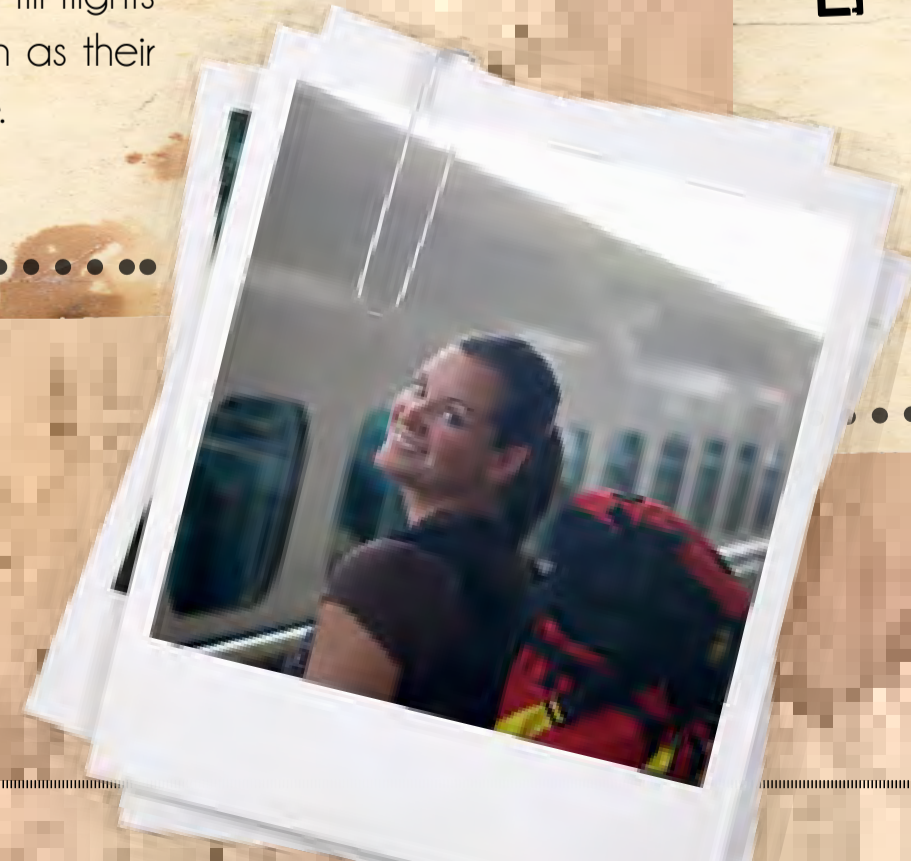
Thoroughly research prices for the destination online and in travel agents. Travel agents may be able to help you find the ideal location and will give you that 'face-to-face' interaction, which is great for first time travellers. By going online and visiting travel agents you can find out if it's cheaper to book the hotel and flights as a package deal or separately, not to mention you'll find the best way to get the most of your travel money.

Booking in advance can save you lots of money, just as much as a late booking can. The advantage of booking in advance is that flights and hotels aren't too expensive because prices go up with more demand. However, with a late booking you can benefit from cheaper deals because companies want to fill flights and seats. If you have access to a supermarket, visit the travel section as their advisers may be able to match your deal or help you find a better one.

Setting Out & Travel Costs

There's no doubt that travelling to destinations alone take a chunk out of your budget. Find out where your hotel is located and what the least expensive way to get there from the airport is. It can be cheaper to use public transport if you are in the city. If your hotel isn't in a popular place for public transport then book a shuttle bus. Check out the shuttle bus prices with your flight bookings and the airport you will be landing in as prices can differ. Getting a shuttle bus or public transport is usually better value for money than a taxi.

Don't cut corners, be assured to get insured. It might sound like a waste of money and time but it could save you a lot more than you thought on your travels and be a huge relief for if and when something goes wrong. After all there must be better ways to spend your timethan getting yourself out of pain and serious trouble when abroad.



In addition to a student card, a rail card can incredibly reduce your travel expenses; take for example if you're travelling in an area like the United States or Europe. When travelling in a group find out if you can get group saver deals. Another important thing you must remember to do is to always hunt around for good deals because it's not just hotels and flights that have special offers. Research public transport costs because there's probably better things you will want to spend your money on than trains and coaches like attractions.

Sightseeing

It's guaranteed you're going to see some fantastic sights and experience brilliant things on your travels, so weigh up the pros and cons about the attractions and activities that appeal to you because this is another way you can easily get swept up in the action and spend more than you want. Think: "Do I really want to spend 10 bucks on this?" and "what am I going to get out of this?" Free activities can be just as fun as paid attractions. Visit the local beach or explore the destination through walks, the possibilities are endless. Your hotel is likely to point out the best free activities and may offer inclusive deals to top attractions, so that's worth a try.

In popular resorts, especially clubbing destinations, there are often ticket sellers on the strips. You may be able to get a bargain but it's worth looking around and taking the ticket seller's details, just in case you can't find a better offer elsewhere.

Combined together, these tips ensure you have the time of your life and come home with an extra treat.



Plan YOUR Journey

Over on the iGap Travel Guide website you can utilise our cool new Journey Planner tool for picking or planning your holiday.

If you know the country that you would like to go to then select the chosen destination under 'Jump to Country' and tick the boxes to the important criteria for your holiday and away you go. When you zoom in on the map it will then show you where every attraction, night club, museum or anything else you are after which should help you plan the trip of your dreams.

If you already know which resort or city you want to go to, you can type the exact city in under 'Location Search'. This fab feature will then let you plan your days by showing you where everything is that you want to discover.

Thinking of studying abroad? Instead of filling in a location, simply tick the box for Universities and get zooming around the globe to fulfil your future.

www.igaptravelguide.com/journey-planner.html

Why Working abroad is a Popular Alternative to the *Rat Race*

Nowadays, finding work as a graduate in the UK is becoming harder and harder. With the economy in crisis and over 1,000 people applying for a job in Poundland it seems impossible to get hired. Despite having a degree most young people are told they don't have enough experience for basic jobs and most employers won't hire graduates in fear they'll leave within a few months for something better. One of the answers for those of you who are currently jobless could lie in booming countries such as America, Australia and Japan. With promising wages, complimentary sunshine and a whole new culture to discover what are you waiting for? Here's how you can do it.

Popular Destinations

These days, the most desirable countries Brits move to are America and Australia. With both speaking English and living a similar lifestyle to us, choosing to live in either country is easy. Other popular choices include Dubai for a high quality of living, Hong Kong for a major business market, Mexico for a cheap lifestyle and Singapore to live in the eighth richest country in the world. Spain also comes up tops with over 750,000 Britons finding jobs in the sunny country.

Popular Career Choices

One of the most sought after and easiest career paths in the global job climate, is teaching English. Japan is always looking for language teachers but currently it seems it's an undiscovered quality so there are plenty available. All you need is a degree, be able to speak fluent English and be willing to live aboard. A typical salary varies where you teach but the Middle East pays the most as teachers are in sparse. Of course some of the most popular and desired careers that Australia and New Zealand all the time demand are doctors, nurses, engineers, builders and dentists. If you are in any of these professions, you could be guaranteed a job.

The Benefits of Living Aboard

Depending on where you work aboard your benefits will differ country to country. Living anywhere in the EU allows you to be close to home and you can receive disability and carers allowance and your state pension. Living in America will allow you a cheaper lifestyle as the US pay little for food and fuel and no taxes. If one of the main reasons you want to escape the UK is because of the climate, then living aboard in countries such as Australia, Turkey, Spain and Italy will tickle your fancy. Canada's economy is rising and getting a job as a nurse in the country could earn you nearly £25,000, more than the average nurse is paid in the UK.

How to do it

Moving to a foreign country is easier if you are able to get a transfer from the current company you are working for or work for a foreign country. Thousands of Brits do this every year and it really is the best option as your expenses (air travel, accommodation etc) and visas are usually paid for and sorted out by your company. One of the most important things to remember when job searching is to make sure you tailor your CV to each country and job you are applying for. Ensure your CV is clear enough for any national to understand it so you don't have any communication problems.

Regardless of all this, hunting for a job aboard can be just as difficult as finding one here so you need dedication, perseverance and patience. Once you find your perfect job aboard, remember to send us a postcard!



Break the Language Barrier



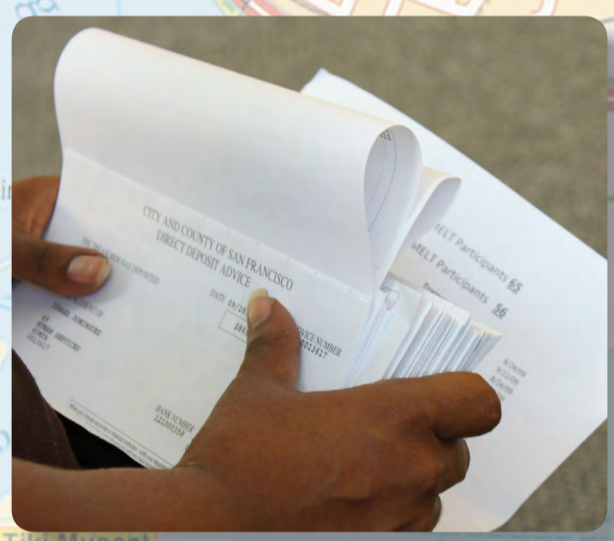
Telling a foreign patient you can't treat them because you don't understand them will lose you your job. Or asking a confused foreign shopkeeper where he keeps his bread in English will only have you leaving empty-handed. Breaking the language barrier is essential; you need to know what language the natives speak. Find out what the most spoken language is in the country you are moving to and learn it. It's important to do your research though because what you may think is the most spoken language, actually isn't. For example, in Finland majority of locals speak Swedish. Take the time to learn it, go to classes, use language learning software or hire a teacher. Make it a priority and stick to it. And remember if you are moving to an English speaking country such as Australia or America try not to use strong British 'slang' as this could confuse the locals.

So you've found your perfect job in a hot sunny country. You've sorted your visa and have packed your bags but before you jet off we're providing you with one last instalment to our work abroad series and giving you all our advice and tips. You can thank us later when you're speaking the local lingo and can answer all the questions about your new home over the locals during a foreign 'pub quiz'.

The Essentials

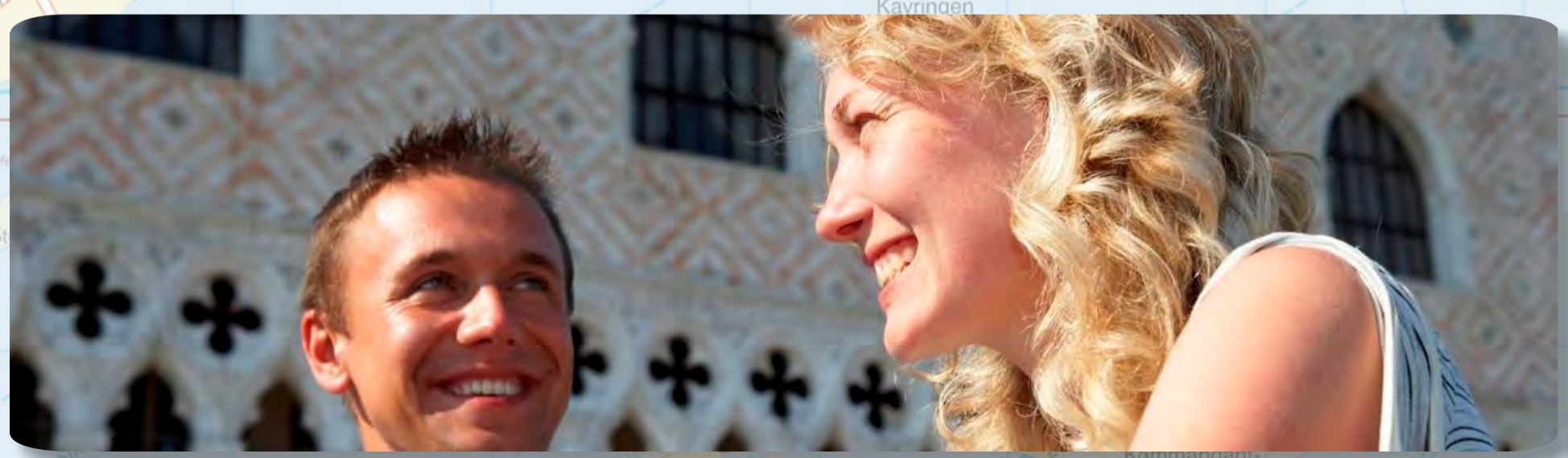
Ensure your passport is in date, double check your visa is valid, finalise your removal date, transfer or close your bank account and ensure you won't be homeless on the other side. It may seem like we're treating you like an idiot but you won't believe how many people make these mistakes. You want to make it as easy as possible for yourself, after all. Find out where your local British embassy is in the country you are moving to, no one likes to think about using an embassy aboard but they are always there to help if you get into trouble or even just want some advice. Discuss a 'settling period' with your new employer, a period of time that allows you to get settled and get acquainted with your new surroundings. Your new boss will more than likely offer this, but if not, ask.

Determine your Pay Check



This applies to any job. Ensure you understand all aspects of your contract the employer is offering you, it should of course be written in English! Discuss and research the benefits you'll receive in the country you are moving to.

Make sure you understand and accept how much holiday you'll get and how the pension system works in the country you are moving to. If you are moving to anywhere in Europe, you can still receive British benefits such as employment, carers and disability benefit.



Learn About the Country

This is the fun part! It's important to know how the government, law constitution and healthcare work in your new home so research this; hopefully you may never have to use them. However researching about the culture in the country is also important, you're not just going over there to work! Find out what the nightlife, restaurants, bookshops, supermarkets, theatres, football grounds and malls are like. Read all about the food, local music and basic lifestyle and you'll feel clued up in no time. It's all trial and error because you'll learn and discover more once you're living there and you can't know everything but why would you want to? The mystery adds to the fun.



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Acquiring the Right Visa

Visas are complicated.

Every country has a different set of working visas with different rules and regulations. If you want to work abroad, the visa is the most important detail to consider before you pack your bags and tell your friends and family about your new life overseas in America, Australia or Europe. With so much information about visas clouding your head it's easy to get lost but don't panic we're here to help!



America may be strict about allowing foreigners into the country but provided you don't have a criminal record and are planning to work or have a job offer you'll more than likely qualify. You can stay in America on a visitor's visa for a few months and look for work but you'll eventually need to apply for a 'greencard' to stay in the country. If you have a job offer waiting for you in the states, your current company can transfer you or if you have family in the US, your visa will be granted to you with a lot less hassle than if you are considering other options. If you are born in Ireland however you can apply via 'normal' circumstances and your chances increase.



Emigrating to Australia and New Zealand is easier than you think. Nurses automatically receive high priority for a working visa; those available include visas for pre-arranged jobs and general skilled migration visas. The general skilled visa is perfect for graduates; you must be under 45 and be eligible for a profession listed in a long inventory of jobs including lawyers, surveyors, health administrators and radio technicians (to name a few). The visa method down under works as points system, a bachelor degree earns you 15 points but a doctorate degree will give you 20. Your work experience and age will also be determined by this.

To get your hands on a Hong Kong work visa you need to fulfil specific criteria. You must obtain a work offer from a company in the country before you leave. If you find work whilst on tourist visa you will have to leave and then re-enter Hong Kong to activate your work visa. The basic guidelines are that you are required to have degree, have relevant experience in the position you're applying for and you must agree to contribute to the local economy. Hong Kong may come across as stubborn but thankfully more applicants are accepted rather than denied. Luckily, if you are looking to work in European EEA countries such as Spain, Greece, Austria, Sweden, Italy, and France, amongst others, allow you to work freely without a visa but on a workers agreement permit instead providing you agree to the same conditions as the countries citizens.



Applying for a visa can be a lengthy process but providing you give all the correct information and documents it'll be a breeze. Firstly, decide what type of visa you'll need and qualify for. You can do all this online, making the visa application easier. With each visa tailored for different countries and lifestyles make sure you read through the guidelines carefully. Once you've figured out the best one for you, we recommend you get yourself an immigration lawyer who can help you through the process and argue your case. If you win, you'll be granted your visa and are eligible to work abroad. Depending on the country, you'll have to renew your visa every couple of years so make this a priority, you don't want to be extradited out of the country after all.



To find out more information about visas and to apply for a Canadian, Australia or American visa visit [here](#).

Pros & Cons

Of Taking A Gap-Year

Taking a gap-year is not for everyone but neither is going straight into further education. It can be difficult weighing out the advantages and disadvantages but this is where we come in....

Is taking a gap-year really the right choice for you?

Pros

Take a break and return refreshed and re-focussed on what you want to do in life

It clarifies your career interests and goals

You gain a sense of maturity and independence

Renews your passion for learning

Develops your life skills

Discover your interests and passions before committing to further education / work

Improves job prospects with employers seeking grads with practical experience

Travel the world and discover exciting new countries and cultures

Meet new people and make friends for life

Add unique experience to your CV which will help you get into further education/a job

Find out whether a particular career is really for you and find your academic niche

Employers look favourably on applications from those who took a gap year to travel or work

Hone how to manage your money well

Cons

If you don't like it when you get there, it might be too late to turn back

Being so far away from your friends and your family

I've never been away on my own before!

Your study skills may diminish

Your friends will have moved on and you will be a year behind them

Can be costly if you don't go about it the right way or don't plan it well enough

Could be dangerous -if you choose somewhere unsafe or you can catch a serious illness

The tuition fees may increase by the time you get back



Become A Hollywood Star

If you want to make it into the movies one day then why not become an extra? Don't scoff; the most famous actresses and actors began their careers as extras. Brad Pitt was credited as a 'partygoer' after starring as an extra in the drama film 'Less than Zero', Megan Fox dirty danced in a club in 'Bad Boys 2' and Bruce Willis sat in on a courtroom scene in the Paul Newman film 'The Verdict'. Read on if you fancy yourself as the Hollywood star.

Becoming an extra is easier than you think. The number one quality you need is patience. Like any other job, it'll take time before you get any responses back so you need to be dedicated and not give up at the drop of a hat. The job itself requires a lot of waiting around and you may be asked to re-take scenes numerous times.

Registering at an agency is one of the best ways to stretch yourself around the acting world because you can join as many as you like. Or research local casting offices in your area, you'll find plenty available and if you still have no hope university student filmmakers are always looking for extras. All agencies in the UK are listed [here](#).

You can be an extra for just about anything! Films, TV episodes, music videos, adverts, student films, you name it, you can do it. Even just living in an area can get you a part in a film. When the 'Harry Potter' franchise filmed in small villages near Bath they hired local children to star as extras in 'The Chamber of Secrets'. Visit the [Screen International website](#) to find out current films in production.

You may not get to say any lines, it's quite vital that you look 'plain' and 'ordinary' and you'll probably be ignored by the biggest stars but you can earn a fair amount of money becoming an extra. The BBC pays around £73 a day whereas ITV pay slightly less. Film extras always earn more of course but that can also depend on the size and budget of the film itself. You can earn more for overtime and wearing your costumes but no matter what TV episode or film you star in your meals are always free. Not a bad day's work.

Previous experience in the acting industry isn't needed at all. However experience will help you to be considered more and give you a better chance because directors could ask if you have ever done any acting, even if you've only ever taken part in the school play of 'Romeo and Juliet' when you were 15, it's still experience. Skills in dancing, fencing and horse riding will give you a higher chance of bagging a 'walk on' part.

Casting agencies usually advise women not to dye their hair or cut their fringe because women extras with period hair do well in the extras industry. So if your hair is bright red unfortunately you won't be accepted on a Jane Eyre TV series. You need to be available immediately for each casting you're booked in for and make sure to arrive on time. Once you're on a set, don't hang around. Find your contact person immediately and remember you're working so no pets, friends, cameras and especially children.

'Sea' the World with a Cruise Ship Job



Art Auctioneer for Park West

Sell art to merry guests and enjoy cocktails in exotic locations on your days off as an auctioneer. An enthusiasm for art and good sales skills are all that's required to sell a 300 year-old Rembrandt to a delighted guest.

Daily activities will include planning and setting up auctions and VIP art events taking place on your ship, managing the gallery, consulting your clients and holding seminars. You'll work with colleagues who talk for their job so meeting outgoing, friendly work colleagues who become life-long friends is a given.

This is not your average 9-5 job. Auctioneers find themselves with plenty of free time when ships are in port and when you're waking up in a new country every day and can take advantage of the complimentary sun, sea and sand on offer, free time doesn't sound so bad.

Earn: Commission based earnings can be anything from £1,400 up to £3,700 per month. Whilst onboard, all expenses will be covered for, including flights, accommodation and food.

How to do it: Log on to the [Mermaid Group](#) for current vacancies or alternatively apply directly through famous stateside galleries such as [Park West](#). Once successful, you'll be flown to America for an all expenses paid, rigorous 4-week training programme that includes being trained in public speaking, knowledge in art and different production techniques. You'll be whisked out to sea days after.

A career that is rewarding and enjoyable is hard to come by nowadays. Most people are stuck in a dead-end job struggling to make ends meet and not receiving the recognition they deserve. You may instantly think of tacky, camp entertainers when someone says 'job on a cruise ship' but there are plenty of worthwhile career opportunities available for everyone.

More and more people are setting sail for a job on a cruise ship with over 1,500 employees aboard a ship according to [Cruise ship network](#) and with everything from hairdressers to sous chefs to personal trainer vacancies the prospects are never-ending. A list of all jobs available can be seen [here](#) but here is a lowdown of the best of the best.

Youth Counsellor on the Disney Cruise Line

Get a job on one of the most magical cruise ships on earth and you'll find yourself in the Caribbean whilst having a catch up with Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Entertain and interact with energetic, lively children as a youth counsellor and with perks including complimentary passes to all Disney theme parks, merchandise discounts and free Disney movies this one job really is for the kid in you.

As a youth counsellor your personality needs to be warm, friendly and have experience leading large groups of children. You'll be supervising up to 1,000 children a day so experience is necessary. Other day-to-day tasks will include assisting on activities at 'Castaway Cay', the private island owned by Disney. Counsellors will also assist on Goofy's PJ party and assist with 'Snow White' performances held onboard the ships. But it's not all magic, as you'll need to clean the play areas, prepare food, clear up equipment and you'll work 70 hours a week with no days off.

Earn: A weekly salary with overtime being paid at an hourly rate. Benefits will include medical care, disability and death payouts.

How to do it: The official Disney cruise line [website](#) lists all the youth counsellor posts at present and explains the application process. A training course is provided before being hired which consists of two days training in Florida and on onboard safety, first aid and public health preparation.

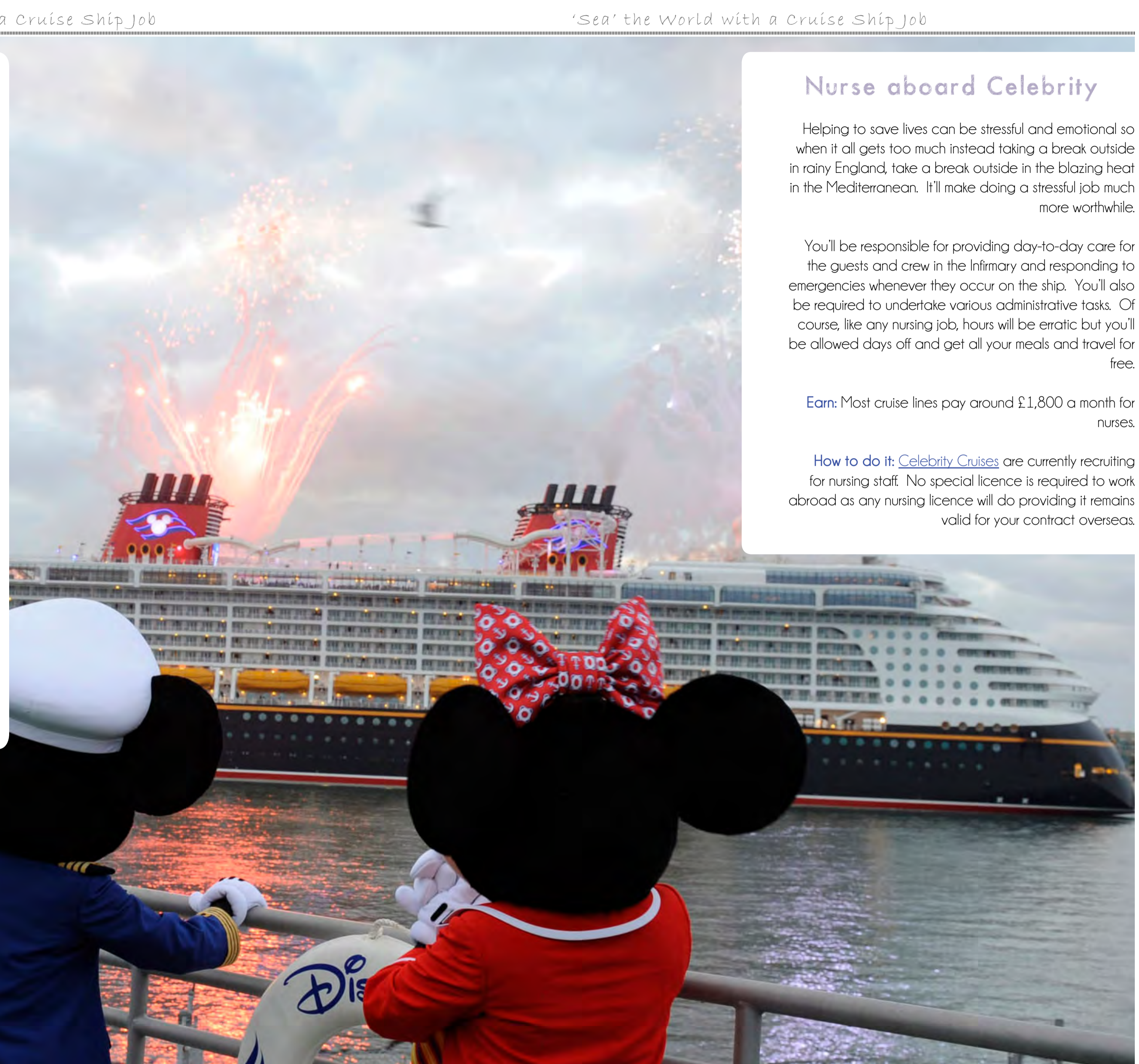
Nurse aboard Celebrity

Helping to save lives can be stressful and emotional so when it all gets too much instead taking a break outside in rainy England, take a break outside in the blazing heat in the Mediterranean. It'll make doing a stressful job much more worthwhile.

You'll be responsible for providing day-to-day care for the guests and crew in the Infirmary and responding to emergencies whenever they occur on the ship. You'll also be required to undertake various administrative tasks. Of course, like any nursing job, hours will be erratic but you'll be allowed days off and get all your meals and travel for free.

Earn: Most cruise lines pay around £1,800 a month for nurses.

How to do it: [Celebrity Cruises](#) are currently recruiting for nursing staff. No special licence is required to work abroad as any nursing licence will do providing it remains valid for your contract overseas.



Bartender on the Royal Caribbean

Aboard a cruise ship merry guests are always thinking about their next drink. Making a cocktail you invented yourself in a classy bar aboard a ship taking you to the Bahamas could be your ideal new job.

In addition to serving and mixing drinks you'll need to stock the bar, prep for happy hour, over look schedules and manage you team of staff. The phrase 'the customer is always right' is exceptionally crucial working aboard a cruise ship. You'll need to be friendly, outgoing and of course patient to deal with those customers who have one too many.

Earn: Between £1,100-1,700 per month but bar managers who manage the entire cruise ship bar staff can make up to £2,400.

How to do it: Previous experience is necessary for cruise bartending jobs as you'll be thrown straight into the deep-end. [Royal Caribbean](#) are currently appealing for loads of bartending job, log on and send your CV and covering letter and get an immediate response.



The Benefits Of Studying Abroad

How to choose which university to go to and what course

Tuition fees are going up to over £9,000 in England, but do not let this put you off a fantastic career and achieving your goals. Many university students are looking to study abroad, and with the bonuses it has, studying abroad is now being recognised even amongst future undergraduates. Universities are extremely supportive of international study, some even mandate it. In the tough world of employment, you need to positively make yourself stand out from the crowd. Employers are interested in your international educational experience, as it gives you the edge over other candidates. Studying abroad also looks great on your curriculum vitae and is a great topic of discussion during interviews.

Identify your career goal(s) and research what country and universities are best suited to these goal(s). Being in a top environment for your study will boost your chances of success. Research how the universities rank against others in the world [here](#).

From this ranking you can also discover which offer financial grants to international students, which is a handy way to save money. If your desired university does not offer grants then it is quick and simple to discover their tuition fees, which are considerably cheaper. Choose a subject that interests you, as you're more likely to excel in a subject that you're keen to learn more about.

Do not be afraid to ask any queries you may have directly. Email is the most efficient way to get your message across, or if you can, call the University for a quicker Response. You never know until you ask. Whilst applying to a university abroad, consider their pros and cons and how they suit you. For example, what is their academic study like? How high are their pass rates? Will you enjoy living your life here?

Experience

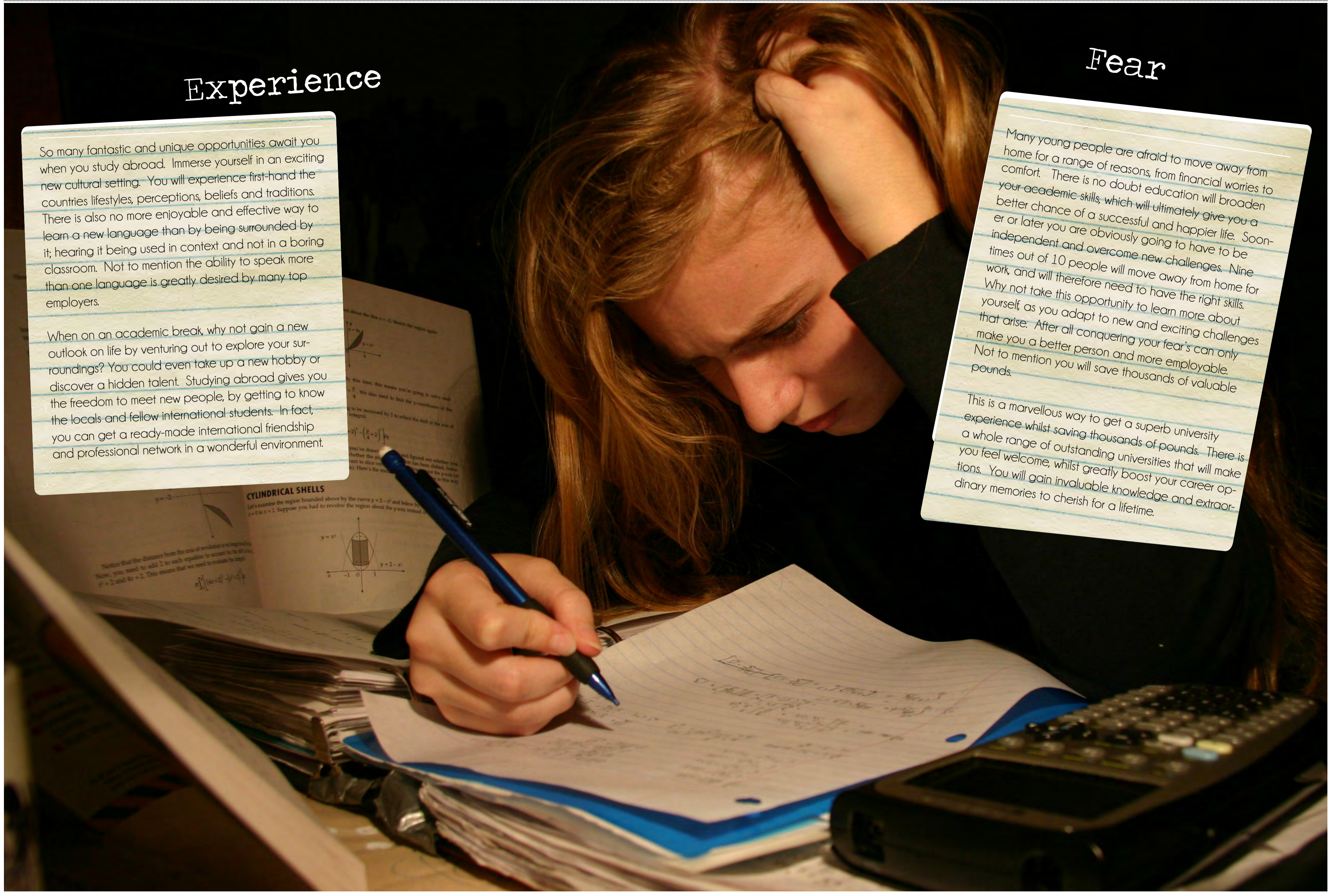
So many fantastic and unique opportunities await you when you study abroad. Immerse yourself in an exciting new cultural setting. You will experience first-hand the countries lifestyles, perceptions, beliefs and traditions. There is also no more enjoyable and effective way to learn a new language than by being surrounded by it; hearing it being used in context and not in a boring classroom. Not to mention the ability to speak more than one language is greatly desired by many top employers.

When on an academic break, why not gain a new outlook on life by venturing out to explore your surroundings? You could even take up a new hobby or discover a hidden talent. Studying abroad gives you the freedom to meet new people, by getting to know the locals and fellow international students. In fact, you can get a ready-made international friendship and professional network in a wonderful environment.

Fear

Many young people are afraid to move away from home for a range of reasons, from financial worries to comfort. There is no doubt education will broaden your academic skills, which will ultimately give you a better chance of a successful and happier life. Sooner or later you are obviously going to have to be independent and overcome new challenges. Nine times out of 10 people will move away from home for work, and will therefore need to have the right skills. Why not take this opportunity to learn more about yourself, as you adapt to new and exciting challenges that arise. After all conquering your fear's can only make you a better person and more employable. Not to mention you will save thousands of valuable pounds.

This is a marvellous way to get a superb university experience whilst saving thousands of pounds. There is a whole range of outstanding universities that will make you feel welcome, whilst greatly boost your career options. You will gain invaluable knowledge and extraordinary memories to cherish for a lifetime.



Travel Vaccinations: What You Need To Know

Travelling can be the best time of your life, but there's nothing worse than contracting an illness abroad - away from the comfort and familiarity of your own country and its medical services.

Nobody enjoys being unwell when on vacation, let alone having to spend the majority of your time recovering in the hotel room - without the right protection your travels could take a turn for the worse.

You need to ensure you're in the know-how of serious illnesses/diseases and have the right protection before setting off on your adventures. Vaccinations protect you against infections, viruses and even serious diseases like cholera, rabies, malaria, yellow fever and polio.

There are a number of things you must consider when it comes to travel vaccinations. The country you are visiting, when you are travelling, how long you will be staying, where you will be staying, your age and medical conditions and what you will be doing - these are all important factors which will help determine which vaccinations you will need and why.

An International Certificate of Vaccination of Prophylaxis (ICVP) is required to visit some countries to show you have been vaccinated against specific diseases. For example, Saudi Arabia requires proof of a meningitis vaccination for people who wish to visit the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages.

Also be wary that certain travel vaccinations have side effects that include dizziness, nausea, a high temperature or soreness at the spot of the injection.

Don't worry if you haven't a clue where to start, we will give you a run-down on the essential facts you need to know about travel vaccinations and immunisations to ensure you have the best possible trip without encountering any life-threatening health problems.

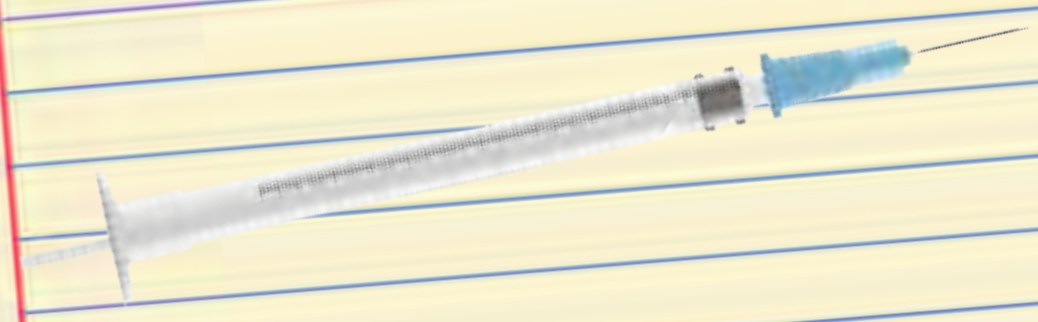
Vaccinations Needed Before Travelling

Hepatitis A (HAV)

HAV is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus which becomes inflamed. It is caught through contaminated food and water or by person-to-person contact where there are poor standards of hygiene.

People experience severe flu-like symptoms with jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes) if they have the Hepatitis A virus. The Indian, African, Central American and South American sub-continent, Eastern Europe and the Far East are the most popular areas prone to catching this virus.

To be immunised against this virus, a single injection should ideally be taken two weeks before travelling, although it can even be given up to the day of your departure. This vaccination protects you for about a year. A booster dose is given 6 - 12 months after the first one which will protect you for up to twenty years.



Hepatitis B (HBV)

HBV is another more serious type of hepatitis virus which results in liver infection - it can be fatal and even cause liver failure. It is spread through contact with contaminated blood or bodily fluids by having, for example, unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing needles with an infected person.

Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pains, lack of appetite, flu-like symptoms such as tiredness and headaches, fever and jaundice are amongst the symptoms of the Hepatitis B virus. There are two phases of infection with the hepatitis B virus: an acute phase which remains for a short period of time or a chronic phase which can go on for months without having any noticeable symptoms.

The hepatitis B virus can occur anywhere in the world but can be found particularly in Eastern Europe, Russia, India, China, South and Central America, Africa and South East Asia.

Several different vaccinations can be used to prevent Hepatitis B - most of which require a course of three doses. The second dose is typically given one month after the first and the third dose is given five months later. You will have a blood test after the immunisation course is complete which should confirm you are protected against Hepatitis B for life. A combined Hepatitis A and B vaccine is available so you are immune from hepatitis overall.



Tetanus

Tetanus is a severe infection that attacks the body's central nervous system. It is caused by a type of tetanus bacteria found in soil which can enter the body through a cut or wound but is fortunately not contagious. The toxins from the bacteria interfere with the normal activity of nerves and muscles.

Tetanus can be found throughout the world. Travellers should be wary of high risk areas where medical attention is lacking or may not be available at all. The most common signs are muscle spasms in the jaw and face along with difficulty swallowing and stiffness or pain in the neck, shoulder or back.

If you have not been given the tetanus vaccination before, three doses of the tetanus jab need to be taken, each one month apart. A booster dose should be taken 5 - 10 years after this followed by another booster shot ten years later so you will be protected against tetanus for life. In the UK, the tetanus vaccination is given to children.

Typhoid

Typhoid is a bacterial infection that can be extremely fatal. It is caught by consuming food or drink that has contaminated with *Salmonellae typhi* or spread through contact with human faeces (stools) usually as a result of poor sanitation and personal hygiene.

Typhoid can be found throughout the world but is commonly found in areas with poor sanitary and hygiene standards. High risk areas include: Africa, the Indian sub-continent, South and South-East Asia, the Middle East and Central and South America. Symptoms range from diarrhoea, constipation, sudden onset of fever, severe headache, nausea, abdominal pain to loss of appetite.

The Typhoid vaccine should ideally be given one month before travelling but can be given closer to your travel date if needs be. It is not 100% effective so you will still need to take precautions with personal hygiene and avoid contaminated food and drink.



Yellow Fever

Yellow fever is a potentially fatal viral infection which is passed onto humans through the bites of infested mosquitoes. There are two types of yellow fever: jungle yellow fever - which is usually found in monkeys and urban yellow fever - which is rare and occurs in individuals who work in tropical rain forests.

Headaches, nausea and vomiting, muscle aches, fevers and bleeding are clear indications of yellow fever. Tropical regions in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South America are high-risk areas prone to this disease.

A single dose of the yellow fever vaccine will provide protection for ten years and must be taken, a minimum of, ten days prior to travelling. After this time, a booster dose will be required. (Note: Some countries require an International Certificate of Vaccination of Prophylaxis (ICVP) which proves you have been vaccinated against this disease)



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Remember these are just some of the travel vaccinations you will need before taking any trips abroad - be sure to do sufficient research because the last thing you want to do whilst on holiday is put yourself at risk of serious illnesses.

Click [here](#) for more information on travel vaccinations and a comprehensive list of what vaccines are needed before travelling to different destinations around the world.

The Hitchhiker's Guide

Preparation

Before you start hitching a ride there's a few things you need to prepare. Buy a map of the area – these can usually be purchased from a local shop or information centre. This will give you and the driver better awareness of how to reach your destination. Plus it's really handy if you get lost.

Along with your valuables there are a few other basic things worth taking like a hat, torch, pocketknife, sun-screen and blanket. It's best to be prepared and these items don't cost or weigh much. Pack some food, preferably with disposable packaging as you could be in for an adventure and you don't want to go hungry. Depending on the length of your trip it might be wise to bring a towel.

Learn the language. This can help improve your communication skills and is great to have a conversation with other passengers, especially if the journey is long. Learning the language also shows that you care therefore the passengers are much more likely to be friendly to you. The intimate atmosphere in the vehicle means there's always room for a friendly conversation. Have a look at the [hitchhiking dictionary](#) for a quick and basic language guide.

Check out the laws of where you are hitchhiking as it may be illegal in some countries or on some roads. It doesn't take too much time to do a quick internet search, or you can ask the locals. After all, this quick investigation could save you money, time or even a trip to prison.

Hitchhiking is not only an inexpensive way to get around but is also the most social one. It's a unique opportunity to meet a range of new people, who can vary from anyone like the C.E.O of a company to a grandmother. Hitchhiking means "giving" and "taking" to many people. There are risks with this unique and fun form of transportation, which you may have heard of, so here's some tips to get the best out hitchhiking whilst being safe.

Staying Safe

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lthough hitchhiking can be fun, inexpensive and adventurous, you need to remember to stay safe. If in doubt about anything in the car including passengers, turn down the ride or ask the driver where they're going and tell them you're heading in the other direction.

Before jumping into the car, make a note of the vehicle's registration with its make, model and colour; if you have a mobile phone, text this information to a friend. Likewise, take a description of the drivers and other passengers, if there are any. Regardless on the driver's appearance and car, choose wisely to avoid danger.

If possible, sit in the passenger seat. Rear doors can have child locks on them and be less easy to get out of in an emergency. If you have to sit in the back then check the child lock is off. Always keep your belongings on you and not elsewhere in the car.

While pedestrians may have the right to walk along most roads, doing so in some places can get you arrested, cited, ticketed, or verbally warned. Find out about which roads you can and cannot walk along either online or by asking the locals. As a general rule try and avoid very busy roads and those without a clear-marked footpath. In some areas where it is legal to walk on busy roads, it may be wiser and safer to stay on the ramp, depending on the infrastructure of the road, like bollards and billboards.

Alternatively you can book a ride in advance online through companies such as Road Sharing, although this will cost you some money it could save you lots of time. If you choose to do this, then still follow the above precautions. Request the driver's ID when you meet; most will understand this precaution. Using a digital system is good for safety as it provides a record of communication between driver and passenger.



Attracting a ride

Obviously getting a ride is the most important part of hitchhiking. Wearing bright clothes can get you spotted more easily. Always try and wear a smile, even if people are nasty because you never know what adventure you could be in for. This will make you more approachable.

Two is a magic number. Hitchhiking with a friend is much safer than jumping into a car on your own. If possible, travel as a boy and girl pair because this gives you a higher chance of getting a lift. A couple or group of girls are more vulnerable and are therefore more likely to be preyed on. Likewise a couple or group of boys can often make the driver feel intimidated. Likewise, travelling in large groups often limits your options to people carriers and coaches.

Choosing A Ride

Needless to say, make a good judgement about the car. A Mercedes-Benz is much more likely to survive the journey than Del-Boy's Reliant Robin. Sometimes you get an offer that brings you in the right direction. This can be okay but if you're in a place where lots of cars stop, it could be better to wait for an offer that takes you a lot further. If not then you can ask to be dropped in a well lit and frequented spot to hitch your next ride like a supermarket, toll place or petrol/gas station. When possible, try to agree about where to be dropped off so you don't end up in the middle of nowhere.

Some drivers may charge a fee for your journey so it's worth asking in advance and being prepared rather than having it sprung on you. Usually the cost just covers their gas/petrol expenses.

Hostel Life

How To Choose

No matter what area you are staying in do your research. Reading reviews can uncover all sorts of scary stories about bed bugs and dirty linen, while looking at pictures can also give invaluable insight into the reality of that hostel. Think about what you are getting for the price you pay. Anything under £10.00 a night is generally under £10.00 a night for a reason!

A hostel experience doesn't have to be anything like a creepy horror film but it does have to provide a roof over your head, so selecting the right one is important. Staying in a hostel is a great way to save money on your travels and meet some great people. If you're lucky you might even be able to pick up a free breakfast.

Meet New People

Many people staying in hostels are backpackers travelling from all over the world so everything about your hostel experience will be a melting pot of cultures. If you are travelling to their country of origin then why not get some tips and advice? Or better yet, if they have been in the country a bit longer than find out what they have already seen. You never know you may just uncover a hidden gem.

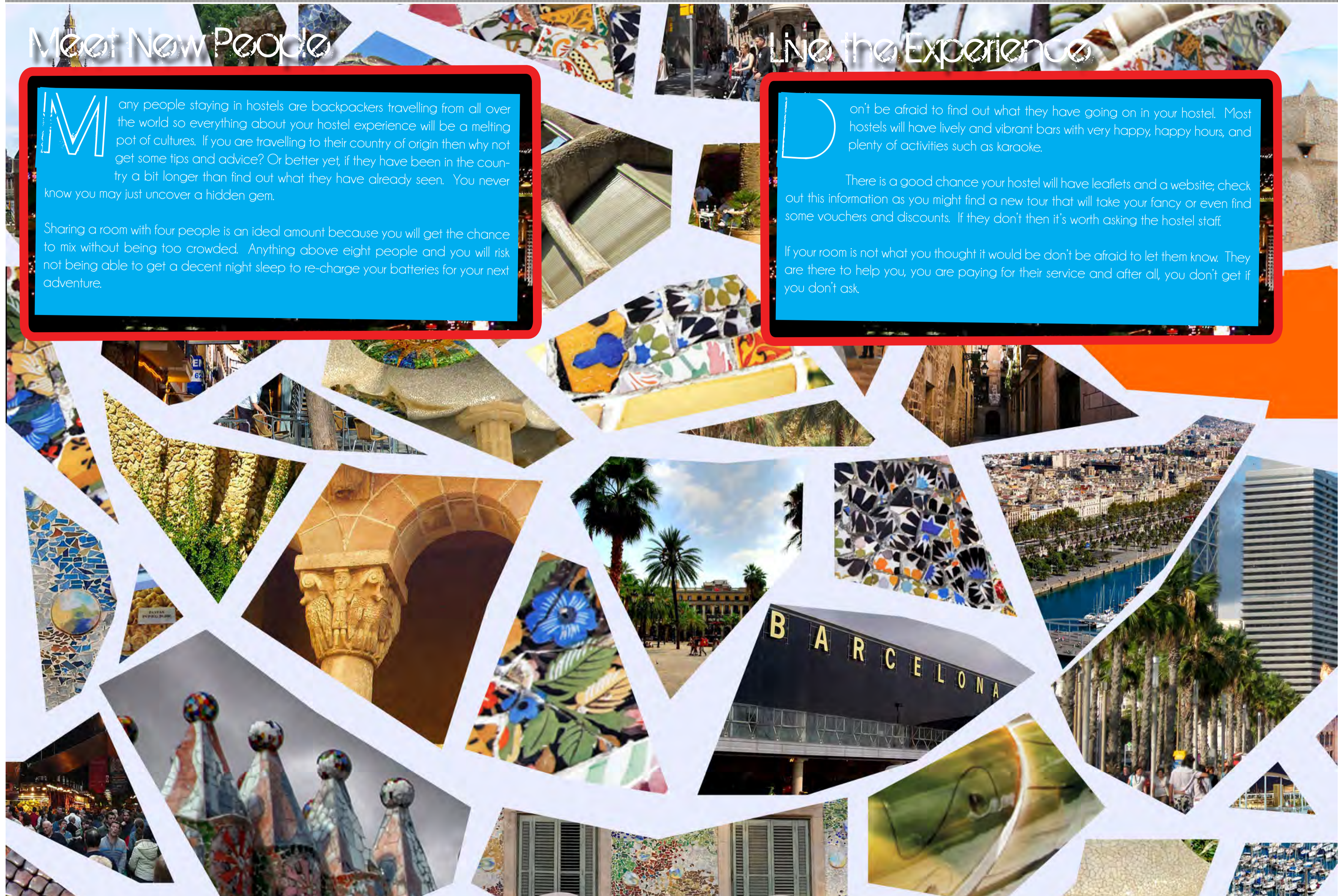
Sharing a room with four people is an ideal amount because you will get the chance to mix without being too crowded. Anything above eight people and you will risk not being able to get a decent night sleep to re-charge your batteries for your next adventure.

Live the Experience

Don't be afraid to find out what they have going on in your hostel. Most hostels will have lively and vibrant bars with very happy, happy hours, and plenty of activities such as karaoke.

There is a good chance your hostel will have leaflets and a website; check out this information as you might find a new tour that will take your fancy or even find some vouchers and discounts. If they don't then it's worth asking the hostel staff.

If your room is not what you thought it would be don't be afraid to let them know. They are there to help you, you are paying for their service and after all, you don't get it if you don't ask.



What to Take

You might be pleased to know most hostels give a free breakfast, which is usually very basic and served at a specific time so make sure you know when it is. Hostels occasionally provide microwaves during serving time so you could cook your own ready meals and microwaveable food. As well as this, make sure you take a padlock; one for each zip on your bag and one for your locker which is usually provided in your room. Safety is essential and for the sake of a £5 padlock the last thing you want is to lose are your possessions.

Get a Job

If you are planning on staying in the country for a while then maybe it's worth finding out if your hostel has any job vacancies. You will find many hostels have reception jobs, cleaning work or even bar work. This is a great way to meet new people, get to know what's happening in your hostel, keep your working skills in tact and most importantly pick up a bit of extra pocket money.

No matter what hostel you stay at you are bound to come back with at least one story. Even the worst situations will make the most fantastic stories. Experiencing hostels for your self is the best - and most fun - way to learn, but keep these things in mind in order to get the most out of your hostel experience.

Playing It Safe - (Liam Neeson Style)

While the risk of being kidnapped by a gang of human trafficking Albanians may be slim you can never be too vigilant and who knows you may actually find yourself in a re-enacted scene from Taken so here is our ultimate guide to playing it safe when you are going abroad with friends for the first time.

Look After Your Valuables

This may sound obvious but your valuables (camera, phone, passport, money etc) can easily be snatched if you're not careful. So always keep them on you in a safe place. Take a decent padlock for the zips on your bag, that way nobody can get into them when you are out and about. Plus the cleaners won't be able to get to your valuables whilst you're out or sleeping in your room. Always take out insurance for you and your valuables. It may sound like a waste of money and time but trust us when we say it can save you in the worst case scenario and will be a huge relief if something does go missing or gets broken while travelling.



Stick To The Hotspots

There is no harm in going off the track a bit but stick to the hot spots. You are much more likely to be welcomed into a safer, more well-known destination than in an area that isn't so well visited. Sticking to the hotspots will allow you to discover the cultural side of things except in a much safer environment. Besides, the hotspots are hotspots for a reason - this is usually where the action is and we're sure you wouldn't want to miss that.

Choose Taxis Carefully

Whilst jumping into a random taxi at the time may seem adventurous and less time consuming, there is a chance something could go horribly wrong. After all you don't want to be ripped off, have a dangerous taxi driver or go through the same experience the girl from Taken went through (guys that includes you too). If you choose to travel by taxi, allow yourself enough time to book one in advance, preferably from your hotel or tourist information centre.

Keep Drinks With You At All Times

When you're on a night out with your mates, sipping a cocktail by the pool, beach or even a restaurant, it's easy to get swept up in the flow of everything. By all means let your hair loose but always keep an eye on your drink. Having your drink spiked with unknown substances is an unwanted experience and a sure way to ruin your time. So what do you do when you want to dance, you ask. Hold your drink by covering it with your hand or put your thumb over the hole in the bottle. When buying water make sure it's bottled with a sealed cap. This way you won't get any nasty surprises that can ruin your trip.



ACCESSORIES & MUST HAVES

Snow Sports

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hen considering a holiday you may pick a particular environment that you wish to enjoy. For example snow sports will require a plethora of equipment in the Alps or Eastern Europe. Maybe you want to go surfing in Australia, in which you will want a surf board, or golfing gear for the lush greens of Dubai. Either way you will want to have the very best equipment available for your trip abroad.

Before even contemplating snow sports you must come fully prepared for the frosty and biting weather you will encounter in mountainous terrain like the Alps. Imperative is the basics which include a winter jacket, snow boots, thick woolly gloves and a hat to match. Once you have these in order you may look to additional accessories to help make your holiday even better on some of the best snow slopes in the world.

For kids sledges may be the choice form of transport. The adults on the other hand will be looking at the best snowboards and skis money can buy. There are numerous types you can get but for first timers entry level snowboards are recommended as they have far more safety bolts in place to prevent you suffering injuries. For those that are a little more advanced perhaps you may want to consider taking a freestyle or free-ride snowboard in order to really test your skills to the limit.

Skis can be purchased just as easily but because they are harder to control and more dangerous than snowboards, a helmet is highly recommended. Wrist braces and body armour can help protect you further if you are person that is safety inclined and you would not be folly to think this way as the slopes can cause great difficulty for novices that will be falling over a lot. Those worried about looking good rather than safety need not worry about fashion faux pas as they can buy snow clothing in brands, though Gucci and Prada may not be available!



Sun, Sea and Sand

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ore appealing to tourists will be the thought of chilling out on a beach sipping cocktails. For the livelier tourists that go somewhere where the tides are high and rip-roaring like Australia, you may wish to go surfing or water-skiing. But before you do this heed the advice of guides to make sure you do not stray further than you need to go.

Also important is sun-block. One cannot stress how prone people will be to the threat of skin-cancer, especially in countries where the heat can be ferocious in the summer, so lather yourself up in cream and protect yourself from the rays of the sun. Pack clothing conducive to the weather like shorts, flip-flops, bikinis and for those that are not shy Hawaiian shirts.

Just because beaches don't have grass does not mean you can't have sports fun. Take a beach ball and set up a volleyball tournament. Starting off with a pair you are bound to attract more people and this is a great way to get to know the local people. If you get bored of this then hop into the sea and go for a swim to cool down from your exertions.

Whatever you do the key issue here is stock up on accessories depending on where you are going to go. This way you won't have to waste time on your holiday looking for vital essentials like a helmet for a ski run or sun cream in order to help protect your skin from frying in the intense heat on a beach.

Skiing Goggles

SKI GOGGLES

Keeping your eyes protected on the slope is essential but why choose comfort and practicality over style? With these ski goggles, you have both at the same time.

ADIDAS 'ID2 PRO' GOGGLE £135.00

These are a great all-rounder when it comes to taking up skiing. They're very popular and it's easy to see why with an interchangeable lens system that you can change in just two clicks. Available in green, black and a white 'crackle effect' pattern the ID2 pro goggles allows you to change your lens in snowy conditions and again to the second lens for improved light filtration when the weather improves. The way Adidas have designed the pair prevents you from having to remove and change the lens manually, perfect for ski beginners.



RECON MOD LIVE
£249.00 AND
'RECON-READY'
GOGGLE SERIES

Recon have introduced the latest in ski goggle technology: the MOD live. The instrument attaches to any pair of Recon-ready goggles ([Alping](#), [UVEX](#), [Briko](#) and [Zeal Optics](#)) and transforms them into a GPS-enabled pair. They are non-obtrusive, offering real-time feedback which includes speed and altitude analytics. They can also notify you of the temperature, and time and when linked up with any Android smartphone they'll provide navigation, resort points, text messaging and 'buddy tracking'-a system that finds your other MOD Recon-ready friends.

Bolle 'Gravity' design
£90.90

The Bolle collection is a favourite amongst celebrities such as Matthew McConaughey and Mickey Rourke for their performance and style. The lenses on the 'gravity' keep them fog and scratch free and they come with a waterproof breathable vent which works by equalizing air pressure between the lenses and preventing any moisture build up. The 'gravity' comes in a classic black with blue or red lenses.



Zeal Optics 'Level' goggle

£90.00

For the most stylish ski goggles on the market there is nowhere else to look but the Zeal Optics 'level' design. With five different styles to choose from, each featuring a unique element such as custom patchwork or a textile inspired pattern luxury oozes out of each goggle. The oversized series is also practical, featuring anti-fog and high density lenses.



The Best Snowboards Around



The snowboard defines the boarder so don't settle for second best! You'll find the perfect balance of style, performance and simplicity with these boards.

GNU B-PRO LIMITED EDITION BOARD £465.00

The women's GNU limited edition board features a bright 'day of the dead' graphic design. Decorated in pink, green and blue sugar skulls and featuring the GNU logo in bright colours, this one is not for the faint-hearted. If you love standing out from the crowd and have a unique sense of style this is for you. The B-Pro also comes with a sugar skull designed felt blanket for protection.



THE BURTON OPERATOR £254.00

Fancy riding the same board as legendary snowboarder Shaun White? For the pro snowboarder the Burton 'Operator' was made for you. The 'operator' has a playful feel that has been upgraded from past models for limitless adjustability. Its flex and shape are directional and this one is perfect for big boots. Coming in a timeless white colour the board also features some unusual geometric shapes and a pair of eyes. Well if it's good enough for Shaun...



Head XL Matrix in 155 £121.00

The Bolle collection is a favourite amongst celebrities such as Matthew McConaughey and Mickey Rourke for their performance and style. The lenses on the 'gravity' keep them fog and scratch free and they come with a waterproof breathable vent which works by equalizing air pressure between the lenses and preventing any moisture build up. The 'gravity' comes in a classic black with blue or red lenses.



An aerial photograph of a vast canyon system. The central focus is a large, prominent red rock formation with distinct horizontal layers. A river flows through the canyon, its water appearing a vibrant greenish-blue. The surrounding landscape is rugged, with various shades of brown and red rock formations extending into the distance under a bright sky with scattered clouds.

THE AMERICAS

Brief Guide To NEW YORK CITY

New York is arguably the world's most renowned travel destination of the USA and a city like no other. To some people it's known as 'The City of Dreams,' 'The Big Apple,' or 'The City That Never Sleeps.'

The diversity and vibrancy of this metropolitan city is extraordinary. You can find an eclectic choice of culture, fashion, music, food, art and people roaming the streets of central Manhattan and its surrounding boroughs.



One of the many iconic landmarks and attractions New York boasts can be commonly found in the likes of films, music videos and artwork particularly the Manhattan skyline. Towering skyscrapers, gigantic bridges and scenic parks are a common sight around the metropolis.

Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park, the Rockefeller Center and Empire State Building are the most well-known amongst the large list of tourist attractions that New York has to offer.

You may wish to pay an emotional visit to Ground Zero, the place where the extremely tall twin towers once stood. Without question there is still an ambience of grief that remains with a mixture of surrealism at the thought of this area in ruins following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In NYC you have an extensive range of cuisines available at your convenience from sophisticated restaurants to cheap and cheerful eateries you can find yourself tasting any world delicacies. One restaurant worth eating in is The View. The name compliments the fact it's a revolving rooftop restaurant that overlooks breath-taking sights of the city and is best seen at night-time when the spectacular skyline lights up to reveal a new found beauty.

The Subway is an experience in itself but if you're used to the everyday manic of the London Underground then this will all too familiar and you'll soon find yourself easily getting around the city.

Regardless of whether you're an avid traveller or enjoy experiencing and discovering new places, everyone should take a trip to New York City at least once in their life.



Washington DC

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When people think of Washington DC the first thing that will spring to mind is of course the White House. American politics is at the heart of this city, however there are many other fascinating attractions this place has to offer – most of which can be conveniently found within close vicinity of each other – hence why Washington D.C. is the second most visited state in the USA.

A

As most people will know, the White House is America's most famous political and national landmark which is home to the president of the United States of America.

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt are amongst the many American presidents who have walked the corridors of this renowned building. At present it is home to Barack Obama but this may soon change after this month's presidential election.

The White House



National Mall

The National Mall is a two-mile long stretch of beautiful parkland - it is the best place to visit to find the majority of the capital's famous landmarks, national monuments and diverse museums. These include the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument - at a whopping 555 feet it is the tallest building in the entire area, and the Capitol Building - one of the three houses of US government. You'll be lucky to see the newest addition to the National Mall - The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. This location also makes for a great picnic spot and is host to numerous outdoor festivals and public rallies and protests.

Smithsonian Institution

Being the largest museum and research complex in the world - the Smithsonian Institution is made up of 19 museums (most of which are free) and galleries plus a free national zoo which features 400 different species of animals like pandas, lions, elephants and orang-utans.

Take an educational trip to the National Air and Space Museum where you can explore the rockets that once blasted into space and the aircraft that orbited the earth amongst many other interesting air and spacecraft icons.

The Museum of Natural History showcases dinosaur skeletons, archaeology and anthropology collections and other unique and historical gems worth discovering, including the 45-carat Hope Diamond.

“Washington DC is a vibrant metropolis and even though we've listed the state's famous attractions there are still many other things to experience so we won't be surprised if you decide to take another trip.”

Labelled the 'City of Angels' and rightly so, Los Angeles is the largest city in California and is home to world-renowned attractions like Hollywood, Universal Studios, beautiful sandy beaches and famous movie stars.

You'll be overwhelmed with the amount of things to see and do in Los Angeles but don't worry we're here to help - below you can find our pick-of-the-crop attractions that we recommend you check out when taking a trip to LA.

Universal Studios

Experience the action of your favourite movies by taking a studio tour and visiting the sets of popular Hollywood blockbusters such as Jurassic Park, King Kong and Jaws - which will make you feel like you're in the movie yourself. You'll even have the chance to go behind the scenes and check out some of the props used in such films.

Take a ride on the thrilling roller coasters in the studios which have been inspired by movies like the Revenge of the Mummy and Transformers 3D - this will definitely get your adrenaline pumping. This attraction has something for everyone but if you're a film fanatic this place will be heaven for you.



Los Angeles

Hollywood

No trip to Los Angeles is complete visiting the infamous district of Hollywood which is home to the world-famous Hollywood sign. LA's most famous boulevards can also be found here like Sunset Boulevard known for its nightlife, Hollywood Boulevard which is home to the Hollywood Walk of Fame which features the names of Hollywood's top movie stars on gold stars engraved in the ground, and Melrose Avenue which is known for its fantastic shopping and dining spots.

Beaches

LA has more than twenty beautiful beaches like Santa Monica beach and Malibu beach for you to choose from. People flock to these to take part in different types of beach and water activities or to lounge around and catch some rays in the glorious sunshine. Take to the waves for a spot of surfing or if you prefer beach-based sports why not play a game of volleyball.



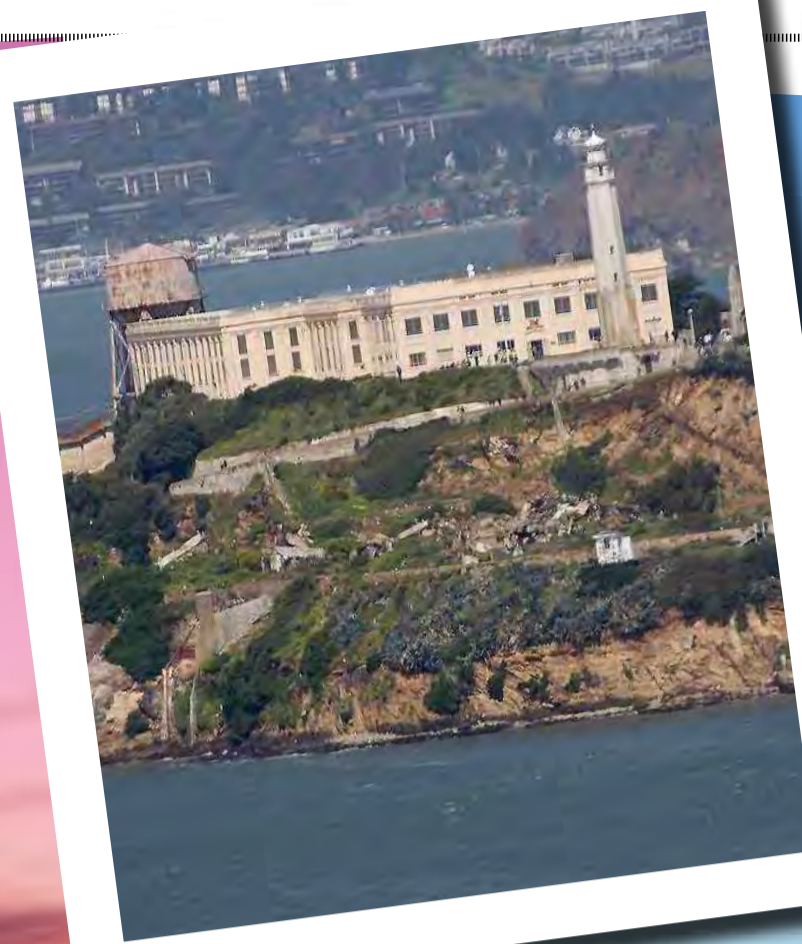
“Los Angeles is a vibrant metropolis that offers masses of exciting attractions which will keep you endlessly entertained for the duration of your stay.”

San Francisco

California is amongst the top ten list of places to visit in the USA and we can see why with it being home to the vibrant city of San Francisco. San Francisco's vibrancy spreads across its landscape, culture, history and people as well as being a very liberal city - it was the first place in the USA to permit gay marriage. With so much to explore you won't know where to begin so we bring you our guide to the essential places to visit when in San Francisco.

Golden Gate Bridge

Experience for yourself the iconic Golden Gate Bridge (pictured) which you will have undoubtedly seen as the setting for major Hollywood blockbusters. This famous landmark is one of the most photographed sights in the world. Whilst you're here, why not pay a visit to the Golden Gate Park to chill out when you're not out adventuring. The park is much larger than New York's Central Park where a buffalo herd, remote-controlled boats cruising on the river, windmills, museums and gardens are among the common sights found here.



Alcatraz

Discover the extraordinary and gripping history of Alcatraz Island - just off San Francisco - which is famous for being a former prison that housed America's notorious criminal masterminds like Al "Scarface" Capone. You will need to take a ferry to reach the attraction which means you'll be able to experience the beauty of this amazing city on its beautiful waters and makes a change from always being on foot. Or take a cable car around hilly "San Fran" - be sure to check out the bizarre Lombard Street where you'll see cars taking several sharp twists and turns down this steep and winding hill.

Chinatown

If you never get around to visiting China the next best alternative is to take a trip to San Francisco's Chinatown - the largest outside of China. Here you'll come across the unique culture, eat some delicious Chinese food and can roam the funky shops for special Asian ornaments to take back home.

San Francisco is a perfect getaway for students who like to add a touch of diverse culture to their travels, and being home to some of USA's most notable attractions we guarantee you'll have the time of your life.



Gambling in



Useful Tips & Information

In almost every Las Vegas casino you will get free drink privileges whilst gambling – even if you're just playing a five cent slot machine – and who can say no to a free drink, especially a student. If you're taking advantage of the free alcoholic beverages make sure you don't get too drunk to the point where you end up betting everything you have. If so, stick to soft drinks. Oh and remember to tip the waitress, it's the least you can do when you're getting free drinks.

Gambling can either be destructive to your bank balance or a fun gaming experience if you go about it the right way. Take a set amount of money with you and leave your bank/credit cards back at the hotel. Play at tables with a low maximum bid so you don't lose a handful of money all in one go. Chances are you won't walk away a jackpot winner but at least you won't walk away poor.

The famous Las Vegas Strip – which is home to the world's most extravagant casinos – is a renowned Las Vegas landmark which can be found in scenes of popular Hollywood blockbusters like Ocean's Eleven and The Hangover.

No trip to Las Vegas is complete without doing a bit of gambling but there are a few tips and advice you may want to know before taking the plunge. Like the fact the minimum age to gamble in Nevada is 21.

Here's our simple guide to gambling in the one and only Las Vegas and get the best experience out of your trip without leaving penniless.



Best Casinos

The Bellagio

Renowned for its magnificent fountains which sit on the doorstep of The Bellagio, this casino is ranked as the second-best in Las Vegas after opening in 1998 along with the hotel. With a simple flip of the card or roll of the dice you can play Black Jack, Three Card Poker and Roulette – just like the professional poker stars do when tournaments are staged at The Bellagio.

The MGM Grand

The MGM Grand has the largest casino in the whole of Las Vegas which is divided into four areas. There are more than 2,500 gaming machines, 140 poker and table games, a state-of-the-art race and sports book (betting area) and an exclusive poker room. The normal slot machines range from \$1 to \$1,000 but the special high limit slot machines can pay-out up to \$500,000 in winnings.

Mandalay Bay

With its exotic architecture, tropical backdrop and 135,000 square-foot gaming environment the Mandalay Bay casino is every game player's paradise. There are over 2000 slot and video poker machines and 120 gaming tables offering Black Jack, Craps, Roulette and Baccarat. Play favourite pokers games like Texas Hold'em in the Poker Parlour – they hold free poker lessons to teach those who don't know how to play.

Caesars Palace

Being the oldest on the list, the Roman-inspired Caesars Palace is broken up into three separate casinos offering masses of gaming space. There are numerous gaming tables, slot machines, bars and a 250-seat sports book (a place where a gambler can place bets on sports competitions) that spread across the 129,000 square-foot casino.





on a shoestring budget

If you have blown your holiday fund on the spin of a wheel, or those pocket aces didn't quite pay off on the poker table, you may well find yourself stuck with no money and plenty of time to kill. Here's our guide on how to experience the best that Las Vegas has to offer when you've overshot your budget.

Circus Acts at Circus Circus Resort

Every day between 11am and midnight, the Circus Circus Hotel Resort is home to the world's largest permanent circus. Circus shows are held every half hour by performers on the centre stage of the Carnival Midway. Acts include: acrobatics, flying trapeze, aerial gymnastics, juggling, roller-skating and contortionists plus no circus is complete without energetic and colourful clowns – free and fun entertainment is guaranteed here so who could ask for anything better.

The Ethel M Chocolate Factory

The Ethel M Chocolate Factory is the best place to visit if you have a sweet tooth. You get a behind-the-scenes look at how popular American chocolate and candy is made and will enjoy tasting famous branded confectionery like M&M's, Mars Bars and Milky Way.

Opposite the chocolate factory is the Ethel M Botanical Cactus Garden which features one of Nevada's largest collections of cacti. Wander around the gardens and explore over 300 species of plants on display.

The Aquarium at the Silverton Hotel

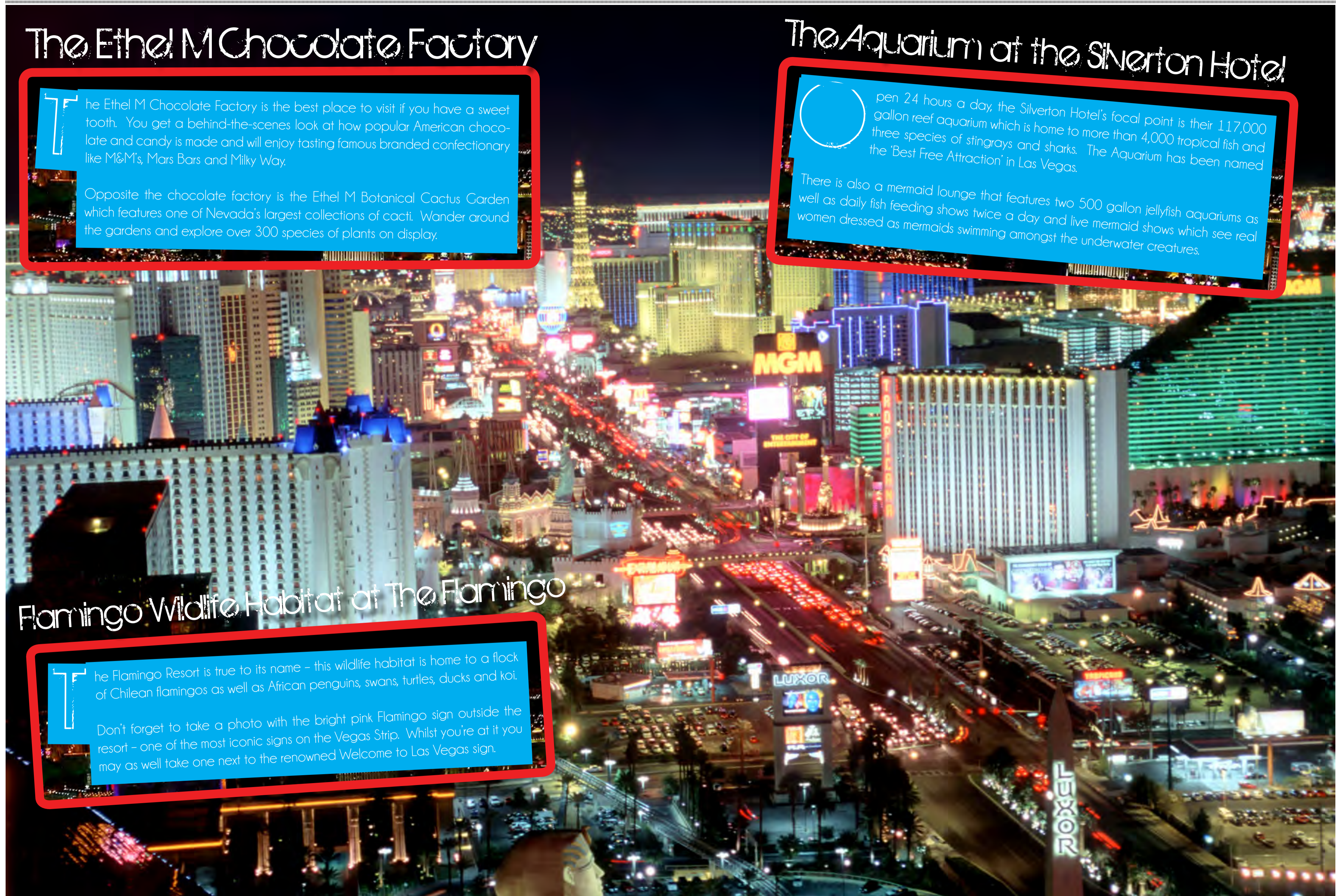
Open 24 hours a day, the Silverton Hotel's focal point is their 117,000 gallon reef aquarium which is home to more than 4,000 tropical fish and three species of stingrays and sharks. The Aquarium has been named the 'Best Free Attraction' in Las Vegas.

There is also a mermaid lounge that features two 500 gallon jellyfish aquariums as well as daily fish feeding shows twice a day and live mermaid shows which see real women dressed as mermaids swimming amongst the underwater creatures.

Flamingo Wildlife Habitat at The Flamingo

The Flamingo Resort is true to its name - this wildlife habitat is home to a flock of Chilean flamingos as well as African penguins, swans, turtles, ducks and koi.

Don't forget to take a photo with the bright pink Flamingo sign outside the resort - one of the most iconic signs on the Vegas Strip. Whilst you're at it you may as well take one next to the renowned Welcome to Las Vegas sign.



Known as the Sunshine State, Florida has something for everyone. If you love kicking back and relaxing on beautiful beaches, enjoy sampling a variety of different cuisines, dancing the night away at a wild night club or finding your inner child at the Walt Disney parks then this is the destination for you. With warm winter temperatures and scorching summers, Florida's weather is inviting all year round.

Florida

Miami

M

iami is popular all year round and it's easy to see why with tons of beach resorts, roads filled to the brim with chic fashion and shopping malls and buzzing nightlife. Every Miami beach features golden sands, clear blue water and beautiful people- like something out of a movie- so whichever one you choose, you can't go wrong.

Head to South Beach for the active bar scene with clubs such as 'Nikki Beach Club' and 'Club Deep' (dancing underwater-yeas really!), renowned restaurants such as 'News Cafe' (where breakfast is served 24 hours a day) and 'Cuban' and Lincoln Road shopping with stores like Victoria's Secret, All Saints, J. Crew and Steve Madden. Viva Miami!

Walt Disney Resort

Disney World is located in Lake Buena Vista, near Orlando and is by far the most magical and popular theme park in the world. The four theme parks to get tickets for are The Magic Kingdom where you'll find famous rides such as Space Mountain and Cinderella's Castle, Epcot for famous international showcases, Hollywood studios with rides such as The Tower of Terror and Pixar Palace and Animal Kingdom. The resort also boasts two heavily populated water parks; Typhoon Lagoon and Blizzard Beach which shouldn't be missed.

The Florida Keys

The Florida Keys islands run south west from the city of Miami. They're considered the American Caribbean with coconut trees alike and features world class fishing, scuba diving, snorkelling and kayaking for the water baby in everyone.

One of the famous islands, Islamorada is known for its fishing. Take a lesson or enjoy a relaxing fishing trip on the island and don't leave without sampling some of the local island cuisine; a variety of different fish of course. Big Pine Key Island is famous for its boating, snorkelling and diving. The island holds the stunning Looe Key coral reef which is dying to be explored so dive in.

Whatever island you choose to visit, get to know the friendly locals around you. They live a relaxed, desirable lifestyle and may offer you some traditional Caribbean food and a glass of rum as a thank you for visiting the island.



The Great AMERICAN Road Trip

The great American road trip is a dream for any traveller, inclusive of all destinations less travelled as well as tried-and-true. Pave the way through the country's finest landscapes, from beautiful coasts of the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky mountain ranges, to the picturesque state of California and beyond. They call it the great American road trip because you cannot help falling in love with everything America has to offer; it is simply sensational. Pick up an American muscle car, put the pedal to the metal, and cruise along the open road. Roll down the window and gaze upon peaceful countryside landscapes and fantastic states; each of them having their own charming personality.



The Pacific Coast



ruise along a coastline that looks like it has been hand crafted by god. From the lush green forests of western Washington DC to the stunning beaches of Southern California, this route is adventurous, open and outstandingly beautiful.

Starting in the northwest at Olympic National Park; most of the Pacific Coast route offers scenic views of the ocean. Participate in a spot of fishing in the communities of Washington. Afterwards, cross the Columbia River and follow the peaceful coastline south, as you pass through wonderfully diverse societies. Along the journey you will pass through the great Redwood Forests, which offer nothing less than nature's purest beauty. Here the tallest and most majestic living creatures line the Avenue of the Giants. Whilst your here be sure to visit the golden age of car-borne tourists: drive through a wilderness of mesmerising trees, see rare and fascinating sights of houses carved out of trees, and many more sights and activities along the way.

As you venture further south you will see that paradise does exist; with friendly locals, stupendous views of the Pacific coastline and a tasteful atmosphere. The coastline is protected from development within the national, state and local parks. The protected areas are a habitat for rare creatures such as mountain lions, condors and gray whales.

With so much to do and see along the Pacific Coast, you can throw yourself into numerous activities and relax on the sun-blessed beaches. The Pacific Coast will simply captivate you like no other destination.



The Longest Road

Stretching right along the land many call "The best", this route is an odyssey from the North Pacific Ocean to the shining North Atlantic Ocean. Explore a dozen different states as well as four state capitals, plus Washington DC. No other route can offer you so many of the nation's most magnificent landscapes; the Sierra Nevada, Appalachian and Rocky Mountains, the timeless farmlands of the Great Plains, and the vast deserts of Utah and Nevada.

From its starting point in San Francisco, the route cuts across California's midsection, passing the state capital at Sacramento, before following the route of the Old Pony Express to the shores of Lake Tahoe and into Nevada. Throughout this experience of a lifetime, you'll get to know the friendly locals who are all too eager to share their enthralling stories with you. For the Nevada portion of the route, enjoy the tranquil solitude that can only be broken by the sound of your engine.

As you travel from west to east, fill your imagination with the fascinating history of Silicon Valley, across the Wild West frontier of the mid-1880s, before arriving at the Atlantic Ocean where you will be close to the oldest and preserved colonial-era landscapes in America. The Longest Road route has it all and much more.



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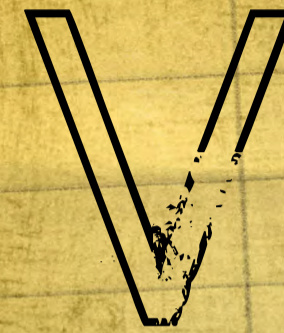
by Samuel Dec. 20th 21

The Oregon Trail Southern Pacific



Get the best of both worlds with longest route in America, the Oregon Trail. Free yourself on the wide open spaces of the West to the lively East. Superlative attractions include at least two wonders of the world, New York's Niagara Falls and Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park. The great cities of Boston and Chicago offer a culture as intriguing as their history. Midway across the country you can visit two notable monuments, Mount Rushmore and Carhenge. As you travel further, eat your heart out in their restaurants and road-stops that offer nothing less than deliciousness. See America's history for yourself in their museums and fall in love with their idyllic towns.

Amazingly the route still remains fairly unexplored by non-Americans. This is a wonderful advantage as you get to be in the centre of natural and excellent American culture, see its history and taste the future. Everything along the Oregon Trail will captivate you.



Venture through lands of cultural diversity and psychically rewarding landscapes. Start your journey in the lively city of San Diego, within a few hours arrive in the uniquely beautiful southwest deserts, which create a picturesque landscape in the sunset. No other route can offer plains of New Mexico and Texas with such clear and wonderful views of both lands. Cruise to the East and explore the notorious culture and friendly locals in a fine selection of states including the famous Mississippi, Los Angeles and California.

Meet a friendly range of people and prevailing customs along the vista rich route; all highlighted by a range of lingos, accents and fantastic lifestyles just waiting for you to get involved in. Indulge yourself in a sensational range of foods that lend a new meaning to the word 'Authentic'. It is not difficult to discover a culinary cuisine here.

They say that everything is better when the sun is shining and if that is the case then you are in for fantastic treat. With views and fun lifestyles that are second to none in America, the Southern Pacific route will leave you in awe.



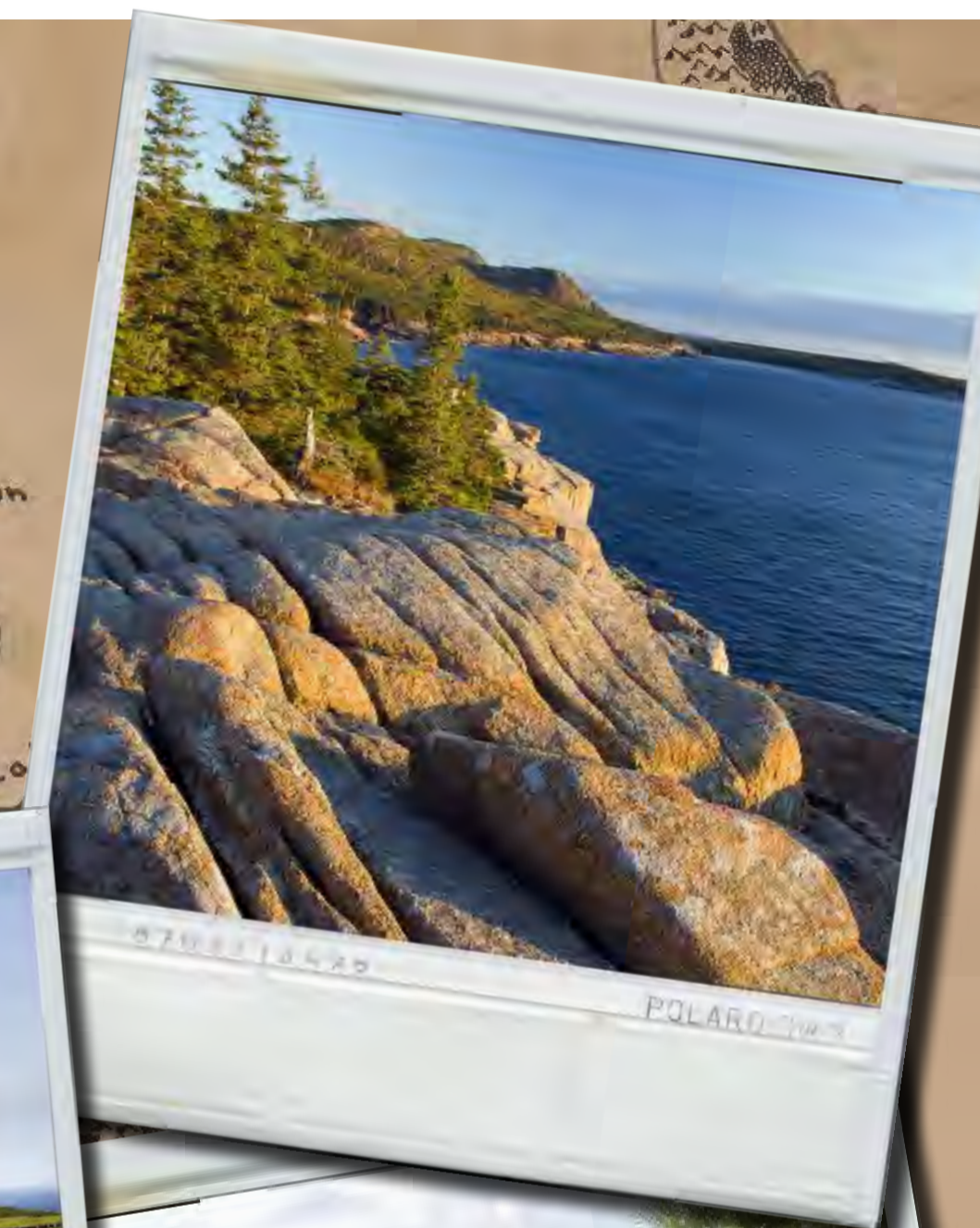
Atlantic Coast

Following the Atlantic Coast route will open your eyes to a whole new world. From wildly differing beach resorts and pristine lengths of coastal city and wilderness, be in the heart of diverse American cultures and see the great Atlantic Ocean in ways like never before. Pass through quirky seaside towns or take part in a spot of fishing in countless traditional fishing villages. These parts of the route have gloriously unchanged much since the day the first explorers first laid eyes on them centuries ago. The venture starts at the world famous Statue of Liberty pacing through exceptional states of Atlantic City, Virginia and the capital Washington DC then reaching the sun-kissed state of Florida.

In between the beautiful beaches are the grand Victorian charms of Cape May to the funky attractions of Ocean City in Maryland. South Carolina boasts boardwalks full of thrilling rides as well as fascinating museums. Not to forget the glitzy casino resorts in Atlantic City.

This route will bring you many fantastic sights. Plus it is a real attraction for travelling, stopping off for an array of delicious food cuisines on hundreds of their roadside stops and restaurants, as well as watching the shrimp boats pull up on the stunning docks and unload their day's catch, or simply going off the track a bit and chatting to the friendly locals.

America is a land of excitement just waiting to be travelled by you. With such embracing diversity, heritage, culture and a positive future, no wonder each one of these opportunities is labelled as the great American road trip.



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by Samuel  Dec. 20th 2011



Do you want to experience the real America? How about being a part of the amazing culture and diversity in the 'land of dreams'? Do you want to be in a place where the people are welcoming and make you feel as free as the birds on the open road? Then Route 66 is for you.

Route 66, also known as the mother road, is the longest road in America. The scenic route embraces the wonderful and diverse culture and heritage of America, which is why it is the most popular route in the land where dreams can become reality. The story of America reveals itself on the open road as it stretches through: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The route is a fantastic way to experience freedom in America's diverse and exciting culture, you might even learn a thing or two along the way.



It's a journey filled with classic diners, drive-in theatres and the odd road-side attractions that you won't find any where else. The fun and relaxing atmosphere and unique design of Wigwam Village Motel #6 in Arizona is an experience in itself. Complete with a museum of memorabilia you will be able to see what the famous Route 66 was like back in its day. And yes, the hotel is actually shaped like a wigwam!

Most of us throw away or recycle used glass bottles, even the colourful ones, right? However, Elmer Long came up with a much better idea. He decided to use space on his property in Helendale (Oro Grande) to build a bottle tree ranch. This is a really colourful form of art and a popular attraction. Or you can see the colourful and large hit attraction that is the Cadillac Ranch, in Texas, with stretches of Cadillacs covered in funky graffiti rising majestically out of the ground in a cool piece of modern art. There are plenty more hit attractions for you to experience throughout the whole compelling journey.

Along the open scenic route you'll find signs that illustrate the legendary history of Route 66 and friendly folks with stories that are all too eager to share. Route 66 is America at its purest, and an experience you throw yourself into, come out and want to do again. Celebrities visit it just for fun and it's the only route in the world that has had legendary songs written about it.



Spring Break



History of Spring Break

Since the 1800s, American college students have celebrated their break from college and have welcomed the warm weather of spring; a welcome change from the cold weather back home. The most popular location was Fort Lauderdale, where the beautiful seaside was a paradise for students. Spring Break didn't really start getting the renowned worldwide reputation it currently has until the 1960s, thanks to the invention of new technologies such as stereos and cars. This allowed college students from all over the country to get themselves to party locations, especially beaches, and let their hair down.

Take fresher's week, add every European clubbing destination from Ayia Napa to Magaluf, times that experience by ten and you'll probably have something that resembles Spring Break. The annual festival, which takes place in the United States each Easter, is a chance for students to have some well deserved fun.



What makes spring break special?

Be part of a festival with a unique story and vibe. The fact that it happens in many locations makes it easy for you to join in the festivities, choosing one that best suits you. Not only that, you can meet amazing new people and get involved in activities that you wouldn't normally have the opportunity to experience. Spring Break offers cheap and cheerful thrills, with like-minded people, in world-famous locations.

Getting in & Getting Out

Tour operators provide travel packages specially Spring Break, which will fix your travel there and back as well as accommodation. With plenty available, it's guaranteed you'll find one to suit you. They offer a variety of locations to meet your taste as well as your budget. Every tour operator specialises in student travel so they'll have everything you want wrapped up in a fantastic package; from local travel destinations to hotels filled with like-minded students. Check out the packages section as well as various party destinations [here](#).

You'll be pleased to know that flight companies often reduce prices around the time of spring break but this doesn't mean their quality goes down with the prices. Aim to catch a flight that will get you to your destination in morning so you can easily get to your hotel and make the most of your day. After all, you want to spend your money and time on having a fantastic time. Have a look at [Student City](#) for good rates.

Spring Break lasts for one week and takes place from February to the middle of April. Although Spring Break happens all over America, some of the best locations are Cancun, New Orleans, Daytona Beach and Lake Havasu.

Cancun has a reputation of being the best place for Spring Break, simply because it's the perfect place to enjoy the sun and world famous nightlife. Cancun is also the perfect starting point to release your inner adventurer, as you explore tropical reefs, jungles and archaeological sites of the old Mayan world. From the moment you get into Cancun's Spring Break you'll be welcomed with tasty drinks and a warm and vibrant atmosphere. Take a cruise on the party boat to Isla Mujeres for the wildest night of your holiday. You can also enjoy the delicious food and entertaining shows before you dance the night away with fantastic music.

If you're looking for an alternative from the beach, then New Orleans is the place to be. They have everything you want for a memorable, adventurous and exciting time you'll never forget! You'll party into the early hours with the fantastic range of live music on offer in many of the city's bars and clubs. Quench your thirst and eat some flavourful food for a cheap price, before you experience the amazing sights of New Orleans' culture, heritage and art.

Florida's Daytona Beach is known for its wide array of activities, which each year features about a half a dozen concerts at the Bandshell and in local bars. On the other hand, you can indulge in daytime activities like giveaways and contests organised by corporate sponsors. To fully experience the Spring Break nightlife we recommend you pick up a "Gold Party Card", which guarantees your express entry to all the best party venues, including the sensational Aqua Lounge, Razzles, Ocean Deck and the Oyster Pub.



Why not rent a boat at Windsor Beach Rentals and take to the water at Arizona's Lake Havasu. Lake Havasu City, which is connected by a bridge to the Island, is also a popular place for party-goers because of its buzzing vibe. With the electric atmosphere party-goers bring to the lake, the unusual destination, adrenaline pumping water sports and everything else Spring Break boasts, it's no wonder Lake Havasu has been voted the best in the West.

Bring back a camera filled with awesome memories, make new friends and get involved with fun activities. The Spring Break experience is one you can throw yourself into, come out and want to do it all over again.

Camping In America

These are the best years of your life so give your summer that 'umph' it needs by volunteering at Summer Camps in the land of opportunity, where anything can be achieved - America. This is a fantastic and satisfying way to make a huge positive difference to a wonderful range of communities. These amazing and highly rewarding possibilities combine volunteering with camping and take them to a whole new exciting level.

La Colonia Park, San Diego

Each year, Kids Korps offers young people an opportunity to work through a series of week-long volunteer camps. Volunteers get the chance to learn about a selected community needs, then participate in a service project with local non-profit organisations that address these needs. Make a difference to children's lives by mentoring to younger children and work with like minded people.

During your time off you can experience the fantastic scenery and tourist attractions like San Diego Zoo. San Diego is a place where blue skies reach over 70 miles of majestic coastline, a gentle warm climate and friendly locals in a diverse vibrant atmosphere create a unique welcoming vibe.



Green Camp

Take care of the world you live in by making it a healthier place at Green Camp, with Kids Korps. Along with an introduction to a variety of community issue subjects including animals, food and shelter, you will get a hands on experience on a variety of environmental issues. Learn how to save water, be a hero to animals as you restore and preserve their natural habitats. Discover the amazing techniques of recycling that take one used material and turn it into another. For instance how aluminium cans be used to build an aeroplane and how to take energy from the sun to power electricity in homes. This is a fantastic opportunity to get closer to nature and experience the beauty of your world and make it even more spectacular.





Behind The Scenes Staff

If your thinking of moving into hospital-ity, tourism or just want to volunteer in camps, Camp America give fantastic and rewarding opportunities to test the industry whilst putting your skills to good use and travel America-the land of dreams. There are always opportunities to work behind the scenes at camps.

In the gorgeous American weather, be a grounds keeper of a beautiful golf course, join a friendly family as their housekeeper or work in the exciting world of cooking. Whichever job you go for, you'll be able to improve your skills, make new friends and make some great memories.



Camp America Sports Jobs

Got a big passion for wild sports like: waterskiing, kayaking and windsurfing? Or do you love to play regular sports such as tennis, golf, football and fencing? Camp America's summer camps give an exciting opportunity to share your knowledge and passion of the sport you love. Even if you have a basic knowledge of the sport, you'll have the time of your life as youngsters look to you for guidance and coaching. Training will be given at the camps and you will receive a warm and friendly welcome with a cosy place to sleep at night.

Private Residential Camps

Do you want to experience a camp with true American style? Volunteer at a privately owned camp to work with children who are eager to learn and have fun from high/ middle class families. These camps are highly enjoyable and relaxing as you can play games or teach the kids something new. Take in the scenery by exploring the wonders the natural woodlands have to boast. The secure cabins and platform tents are lavishly equipped to make you feel at home whilst emphasising the back-to-nature element of camping.

Each trip lasts from several weeks to several months and it's so simple to get your visa sorted. Whichever camp and job your heart takes you to, you are guaranteed to have the time of your life, bring back a camera filled with memories and feel extremely satisfied knowing you've made yours and another person's life better.



The 38th annual Atlantic Antic street festival is held on the last weekend of September in Brooklyn.

The free festival is New York's largest and most diverse street event that encompasses an eclectic array of live music, food stalls, arts and crafts and entertainment.

This family-friendly fair runs along Atlantic Avenue, for about a mile and spans four neighbourhoods, which will be closed to make way for over 500 artists, musicians, craftspeople and food vendors.

The live music stage will feature performances from various genres ranging from rock to classical and abundant number of food stalls will offer delicacies from all around the world.

One block will be reserved for child-friendly activities like pony rides, face painting, bouncy castles and story-telling so there's something for everyone.

Following the Labor Day Carnival, it is Brooklyn's second-largest gathering that brings together thousands of people to bask in the celebrations of this long established New York tradition. It is a brilliant way to experience an eclectic mix of cultures and activities but people are advised to be wary of pick-pocketing.

This year the event will fall on 30th September starting at noon and finishing at 6pm through rain or shine. It is estimated this year's Atlantic Antic will attract an astonishing one million visitors from New York and beyond.

For more information, visit the [Atlantic Ave website](#).



Halloween Holiday Salem Massachusetts

For some, Halloween is the biggest event of the year. As big as your birthday, and as anticipated as Christmas. If you are one of those people that cannot wait to don the fancy dress outfit, head to the Halloween parties or even sit in the dark watching horror movies then this one is for you. In the build up to Halloween, we will be bringing you a new Halloween Horror destination each week - starting with Salem, Massachusetts. Enjoy!

#1 SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Salem is infamous for its history of horrific witch hunting and witch trials which date back to 1692. This alone is the main reason why so many people flock to Salem during Halloween.

Centuries ago, religious Christians (then known as Puritans) settled in Salem. They claimed certain members of the community - usually poor homeless women who were practically outcast from society anyway - practiced evil misdoings. It also didn't help that those accused didn't go to church as Puritans saw this as a sin. As a result, more than 200 people were accused of being witches and practicing witchcraft (previously known as the devil's magic), and were subjected to being hanging while legend has it that 'witches' were often drowned or burnt as a test to see whether they were human or not.



Take a trip to the Salem Witch Museum to relive the strange yet spooky past of Salem and see what implications had on the town following the witch epidemic. A presentation illustrating the town's history is shown every hour. The Witch Dungeon Museum and Witch History Museum are also worth paying a visit.

Walk the candle-lit Witch Trial Trail or take a ghost tour which, without a doubt, will add to the chilling atmosphere of the entire Halloween experience.

There is a free annual Psychic Fair and Witchcraft Expo which takes place in October. Here you may choose to have a tarot card reading, speak to a spirit guide and even make your own magic wand like Harry Potter.

Salem is host to several Halloween events like the Vampire's Ball and Halloween Costume Ball, as well as the Official Salem Witches' Halloween Ball which will be on 26 October this year in the grand ballroom of the historic Hawthorne hotel.

It is worth mentioning that you will discover various bizarre souvenirs whilst visiting Salem not because it's Halloween but down to the fact that Salem was traditionally an unconventional town and has ever since retained that feature.

Aspen

Situated in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, the Aspen Ski resort is one of four mountain ski resort areas, the other three being Snowmass, Buttermilk and Highland. Each of the four mountains have their own ski ability level and appeal so there is something to meet everyone's needs.

This is one of the most glamorous and celebrity filled ski resorts so don't be surprised if you see the likes of famous singers or sports stars. At first thought people may think this resort caters to the rich and famous however it caters to inexpensive budgets and has a lot to offer. The town's Victorian streets feature designer boutiques, top quality restaurants and exclusive art galleries.



See Alaska



Being the largest state of the USA and at the northern edge of the Pacific Ocean, Alaska is a vast populated land that boasts breath-taking natural beauty, diverse wildlife and is every adventure-seeking and snow lover's paradise.

Useful Things To Know

Alaska has very unpredictable weather, even worse than Britain. In the summer season one day you could find yourself basking in the warm sunshine with hot temperatures whereas the next day there could be torrential rainfall with strong winds so be prepared and take appropriate clothing. Be sure to take strong insect repellent as the Alaskan mosquitoes can be fierce especially during the summer so wear neutral clothes and avoid using strong perfume or deodorant.

Haggling is accepted in some Alaskan shops so take for example a souvenir – which you'd like to take home as a memento of your trip – seems too expensive don't be afraid to barter down the price.



Be A Brainbox At Harvard University

Harvard is the oldest University in America. So with that in mind, achieving a degree, even attending the University that educated Barack Obama, Natalie Portman and Bill Gates (to name a few) is a remarkable honour.

Established in 1636 by British benefactor John Harvard, it has always been known as the best university to study law, medicine and business dedicating separate schools to these courses. Harvard is also associated with SAO (Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory), the world's largest research centre for studying the universe.

The potential oozes for those who attend Harvard. With inventions such as the Polaroid camera and Facebook created within the rooms of the university, the possibilities are endless.

Despite this, Harvard has received some criticism for relying too heavily on teaching assistants, accepting students with flawed grades whilst others go to great lengths to attend this Ivy League university by taking up fencing even though they have no interest in the sport and prepping for acceptance from the age of 10.



It's clearly tough to get educated at Harvard but once there, the extra-curricular activities offered to students are vast. Sport at Harvard is famous for having a permanent rivalry with Yale University during ice hockey, American football and squash, causing intense competition at these games. There are plenty of societies such as poetry, dance, science and sororities to choose from to make the most of your singing or scientific ability.



The application process begins with an interview, you will at first be contacted by an interviewer and depending on where you live, one may not initially be available. However this doesn't affect your candidacy. You are required to sit the SAT's and only when you score 2200 or above, will you be offered a place. Fees are high for Harvard but international students receive the same aid as those from the U.S.



Canada

We think you're going to love Canada. It is home to some of the most amazing architecture, culture and sport and we want to share our love for it with you—you're welcome. Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa and Quebec are some of the most famous cities of the country and it's easy to see why. Canadians love it so much, they never want to leave so go ahead and join them in the second largest country in the world.

The country has the best of everything; the French for the food and fashion, the Americans for climate and nature and Britain for monarchy and government. Make friends with a grizzly bear, stay in log cabin in the woods and become a fan of the Canadian sport, ice-hockey, it's all up for grabs in Canada.



Toronto

The city is renowned for giving us Drake and Justin Bieber so if you want to thank them personally; visit the trendy city where you'll meet giant pandas, enjoy a tasty meal and stand on a glass floor 2,000 ft above the ground.

Toronto Zoo

Toronto Zoo is home to over 5,000 animals, from komodo dragons to snow leopards to grizzly bears. The zoo features four different rides, exhibits, gift shops and holds 'meet the keeper' talking and feeding sessions daily with those keepers who care for animals such as African penguins, giraffes and orang-utans (amongst many others). A 'Tundra Trek' is also available to those interested in the effects global warming is having on animals who are due to become extinct in the near future; customers can see polar bears, snowy owls and reindeers. With the zoo awaiting the arrival of giant pandas early next year, you won't want to miss a visit to Toronto Zoo.



CN Tower

It is the 5th tallest free-standing structure in the world so we highly recommend a visit to CN Tower, even if you just take a picture; crane your neck now. Almost 2,000 ft, the tower that is ultimately a TV and radio platform, can be seen from any point in the city. Once you're high above the ground, if you're brave enough stand on the glass floor at the top of the tower inhale the breathtaking view beyond you. For those of you who are hardcore enough experience a hands free Edge Walk, and push your limits to the test. Once it all gets too much, enjoy a relaxing meal in the bistro floors below.

Hot Chocolate & Ballet

The city is home to Canada's largest ballet troupe; the National Ballet of Canada so you know it's going to feature some of the best pointy toes you've ever seen. From Alice in Wonderland, the Nutcracker and Romeo and Juliet ballets, there's something for everyone. But don't forget about the hot chocolate! Canada is famous for its mouth watering hot chocolates and Toronto is no exception. Our favourite place to head for a pick-me-up is Bobbette & Belle. They make their signature hot chocolate with full-fat milk and home-made marshmallows that are blowtorched and float lightly atop your warm hot chocolate.

A vibrant and exhilarating city, Toronto symbolises everything great about Canada. Don't hesitate to book a break to the thrilling Toronto - it'll be your best holiday yet.

Ottawa

For rich history and beautiful architecture there is no other city to head to but Ottawa. The National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian War Museum hold up in the city so dive head first into Canada's history in Ottawa.

The National Gallery of Canada

Housed in a glass building, the [National Gallery](#) holds a variety of paintings, sculptures, photographs and drawings. From Francis Bacon pieces to Rembrandt and Picasso drawings, you'll see everything at the Gallery do don't forget your camera! The gallery is constantly holding exhibitions so whatever day you turn up, you're bound to see something new. If you ever get lost trying to find the gallery, hunt out Louise Bourgeois's 'Maman'-a sculpture of a giant spider that sits at the front entrance waiting for your arrival.



Canadian War Museum

We understand the history of war isn't always interesting to you lot, but with Remembrance Day around the corner, the [Canadian War Museum](#) is holding special tribute exhibitions that are not to be missed. With restaurants, tours, libraries and theatres, the museum has to be one the biggest (and best). It features information and items from all the wars, Canadian soldiers have fought in and with a tour costing only \$3 it's cheap to, with all proceeds made within the museum going towards numerous war charities.

The Rideau Canal

The canal connects the city of Ottawa to the city of Ontario; it's a remarkable stretch of water. In winter, a section of the canal becomes the world's largest skating rink, so the only thing we can suggest is grab some skates and hop on! It has the equivalent surface area of 90 Olympic ice hockey rinks and is a big tourist attraction in the winter. Rideau Canal is so popular; it has a festival named after it. Taking place in August, it focuses on the heritage of the canal and celebrates with tours of Rideau, music and bike tours.

Our condensed version of the city shows the best of the best but to really discover this beautiful city you need to be there. It hides tons of hidden treasures for the avid Canadian fan.



Vancouver

In 2008, 260 films were shot in Vancouver and it is frequently nicknamed 'Hollywood North'. So with that in mind, let us talk to you about Vancouver. We can throw all the fancy restaurants, raving nightclubs and tranquil parks at you but at the end of the day, a visit to Vancouver could result in you seeing or even meeting Joseph Gordon-Levitt or Morgan Freeman. You can't put a price on that.

Film sets

A major film and television production centre, Vancouver has been a popular film-making choice for nearly a century. Famous films such as *Along Came a Spider*, *Catwoman*, *Night at the Museum* and all of the *Final Destination* films have been shot in Vancouver. Recent films to feature the city also include *2012*, *The Cabin in the Woods* and *Charlie St. Cloud*. To put it bluntly; if you stand outside the film sets and production buildings you could see Zac Efron walking around half naked or Halle Berry fighting the bad guys in skin-tight leather.

Stanley Park

Despite us demanding you to visit the film sets, we do also recommend a rest from the excitement. We think 1,000 acres of Stanley Park is the ideal location for a 'rest'. It offers unique views from its rainforests marshland and beaches but best of all, the waterfront views along a seawall. To appreciate everything Stanley Park has to offer, rent a bike, go roller skating, have a picnic, go for a hike or take on your pals for a round of golf. It's the park to be for the adventurous explorer.

Shopping!

Don't forget about shopping, Vancouver holds some of the best shops in the whole of Canada. Head to South Main for a trendy shopping experience, where you can pick up vinyl's at Red Cat Records, designer clothes at Smoking Lily and eclectic art at The Jem Gallery. South Main has a hip mix of restaurants, bars, and food carts and clothes shops so there's no need dress up, your 'Hard Rock Cafe' tee will be fine. If one shopping neighbourhood isn't enough then head to Robson Street for flagship shops such as Hermes, Louis Vuitton and Tiffany & Co and for a Starbucks on every corner.

Vancouver oozes glamour! From celebrities to shopping hot spots and classy restaurants and bars, look no further than the city that is as much fun, as it is inspirational.

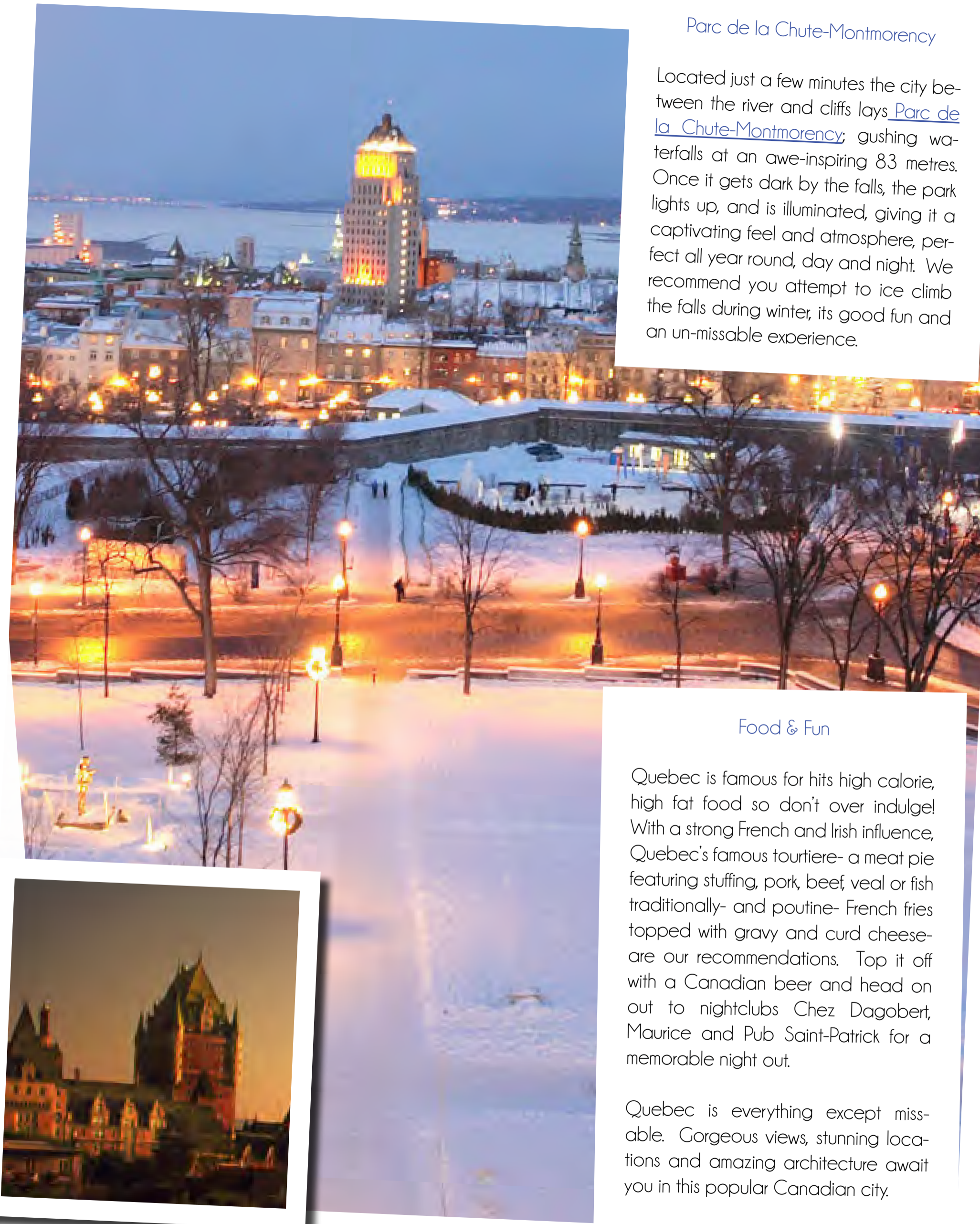


Quebec

Quebec is the only Canadian province with a predominantly French-speaking population and the only one whose sole official language is French at the provincial level. It is also home to the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre but the city's attractions go above and beyond the religious attractions with its stunning nature and wild nightlife.

Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre

If you ever find yourself in Quebec with a broken limb or an illness, don't head to the hospital, take a taxi to the Basilica. It's credited for making miracles and curing the sick. One of the builders, who worked on Saint Anne in 1658, was miraculously cured of his broken leg and since then braces, crutches and canes are all left inside the basilica after people claim not to need them anymore after leaving. Ok, so we understand if you're not interested in visiting for the healing reason, but the building is beautiful both in and out so maybe it'll take your fancy to take a look at one of Quebec's oldest buildings.



Parc de la Chute-Montmorency

Located just a few minutes the city between the river and cliffs lays Parc de la Chute-Montmorency; gushing waterfalls at an awe-inspiring 83 metres. Once it gets dark by the falls, the park lights up, and is illuminated, giving it a captivating feel and atmosphere, perfect all year round, day and night. We recommend you attempt to ice climb the falls during winter, its good fun and an un-missable experience.

Food & Fun

Quebec is famous for hits high calorie, high fat food so don't over indulge! With a strong French and Irish influence, Quebec's famous tourtiere- a meat pie featuring stuffing, pork, beef, veal or fish traditionally- and poutine- French fries topped with gravy and curd cheese- are our recommendations. Top it off with a Canadian beer and head on out to nightclubs Chez Dagobert, Maurice and Pub Saint-Patrick for a memorable night out.

Quebec is everything except missable. Gorgeous views, stunning locations and amazing architecture await you in this popular Canadian city.

Whistler

Decades ago the two Whistler and Blackcomb towering mountains were home to adventurous hikers but nowadays they offer excellent skiing opportunities to thrill-seeking skiers. It rises in the ranks as being the 'Best Ski Resort in the World' after continuously being voted the 'Best North American Ski Resort'.

With over 8,000 acres and annual snow-fall of over 30 feet these conditions make for perfect skiing weather. Six huge high-alpine powder bowls, one of which is called Doom & Gloom, plus tree runs, cliffs, glaciers and chutes make this resort just the thing for thrill-seekers and advances skiers. Though ski lessons are available for beginners taking their first step in the ski world.

There is a large vertical drop and the Whistler's village provides all the amenities skiers and snowboarders need packed with cafes, stores and numerous restaurants specialising in different cuisines to suit everyone's needs.



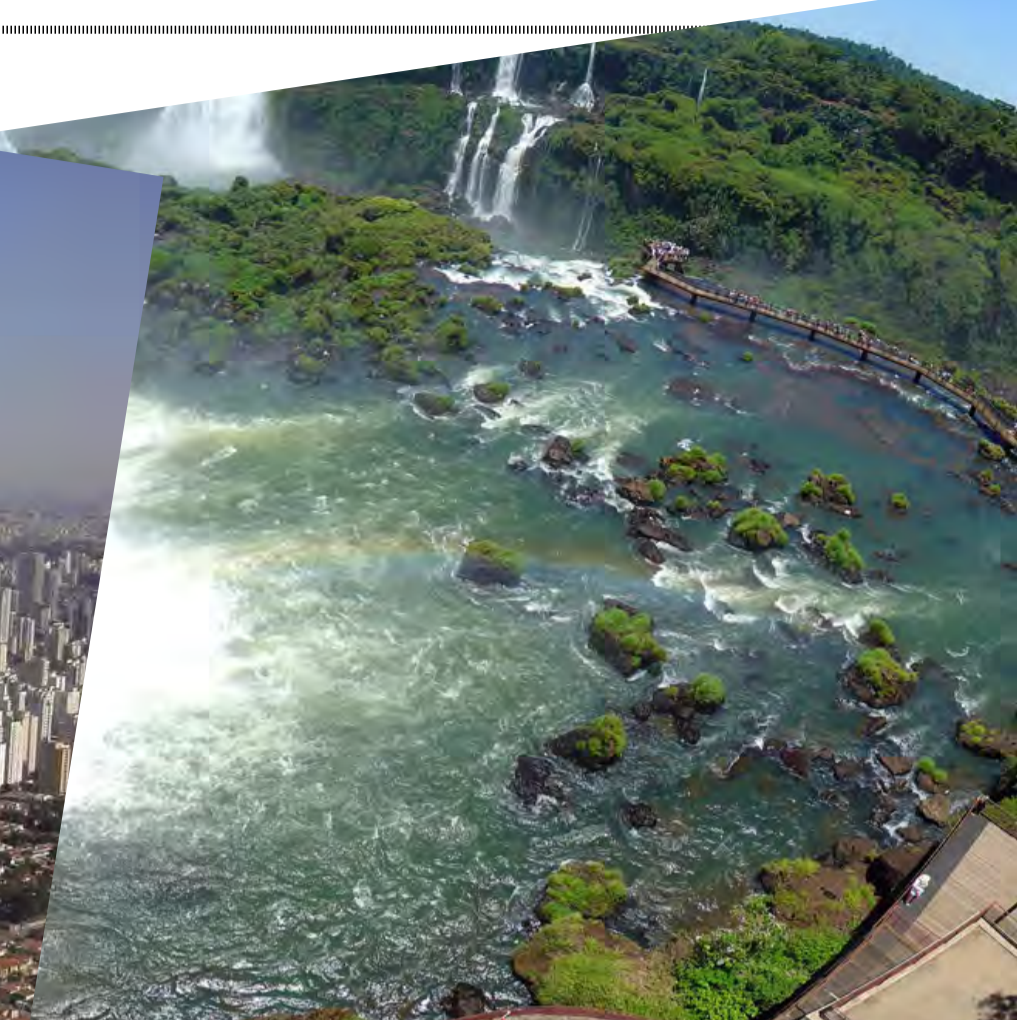
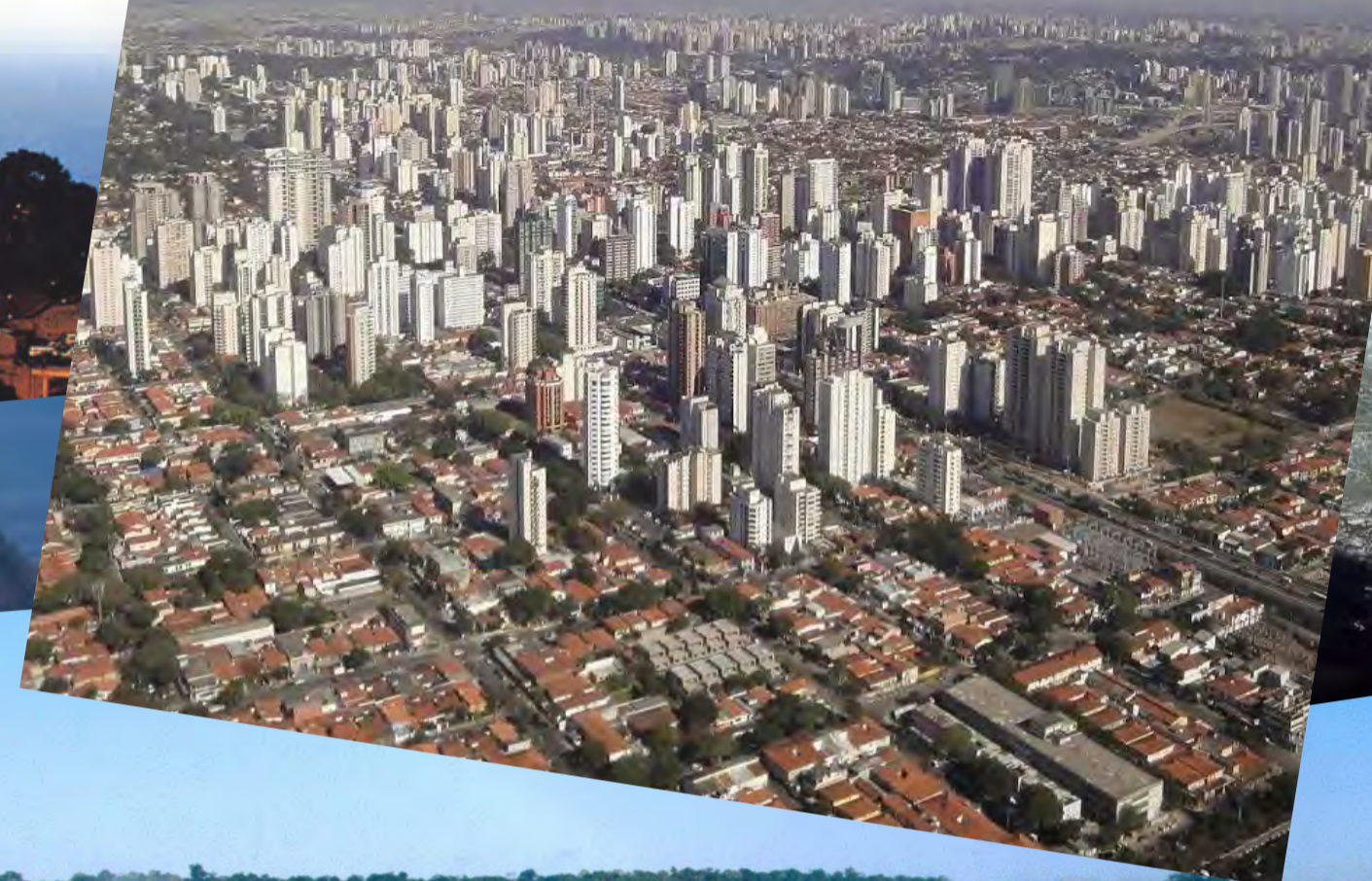
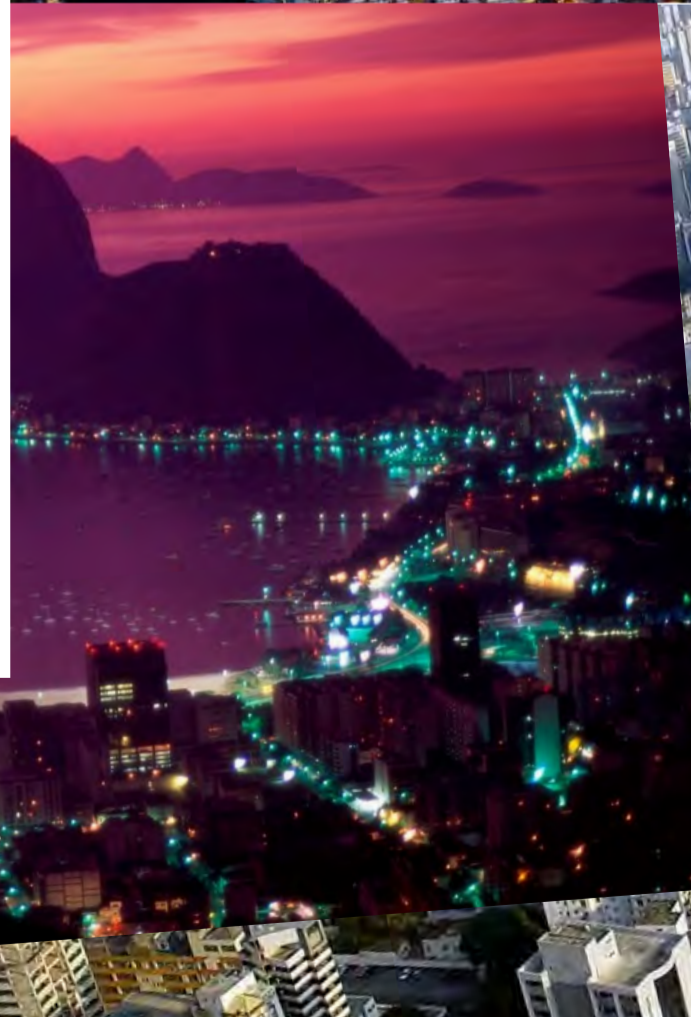


Brazil is the largest country on the South American continent and the fifth largest in the world. Home to a diverse population, Brazil is a tourist's dream with so many things to do and places to see.

Rio de Janeiro

Rio used to be the former capital of Brazil before Brasilia. You can pull out the swimming trunks and sun block as it's full of beautiful beaches and palm trees that capture the imagination of what the city has to offer. And if that isn't enough, why not visit some of the landmark monuments the city has to offer; the Christ the Redeemer statue which stands as a tall as skyscraper building overlooking the city as a whole.

Staying in Rio, it would be sacrilege to not travel to the home of Brazil's national football stadium. The Maracana is steeped in historical tradition. Opening in 1950 the football stadium was designed not only as a home for the national team but to attract tourists from around the world. It once housed 199,854 people for a match between Brazil and Paraguay in 1954, a record that still stands today. It will once again be playing host to the greatest sports final in the world in 2014 when the football World Cup returns to one of its spiritual homes.

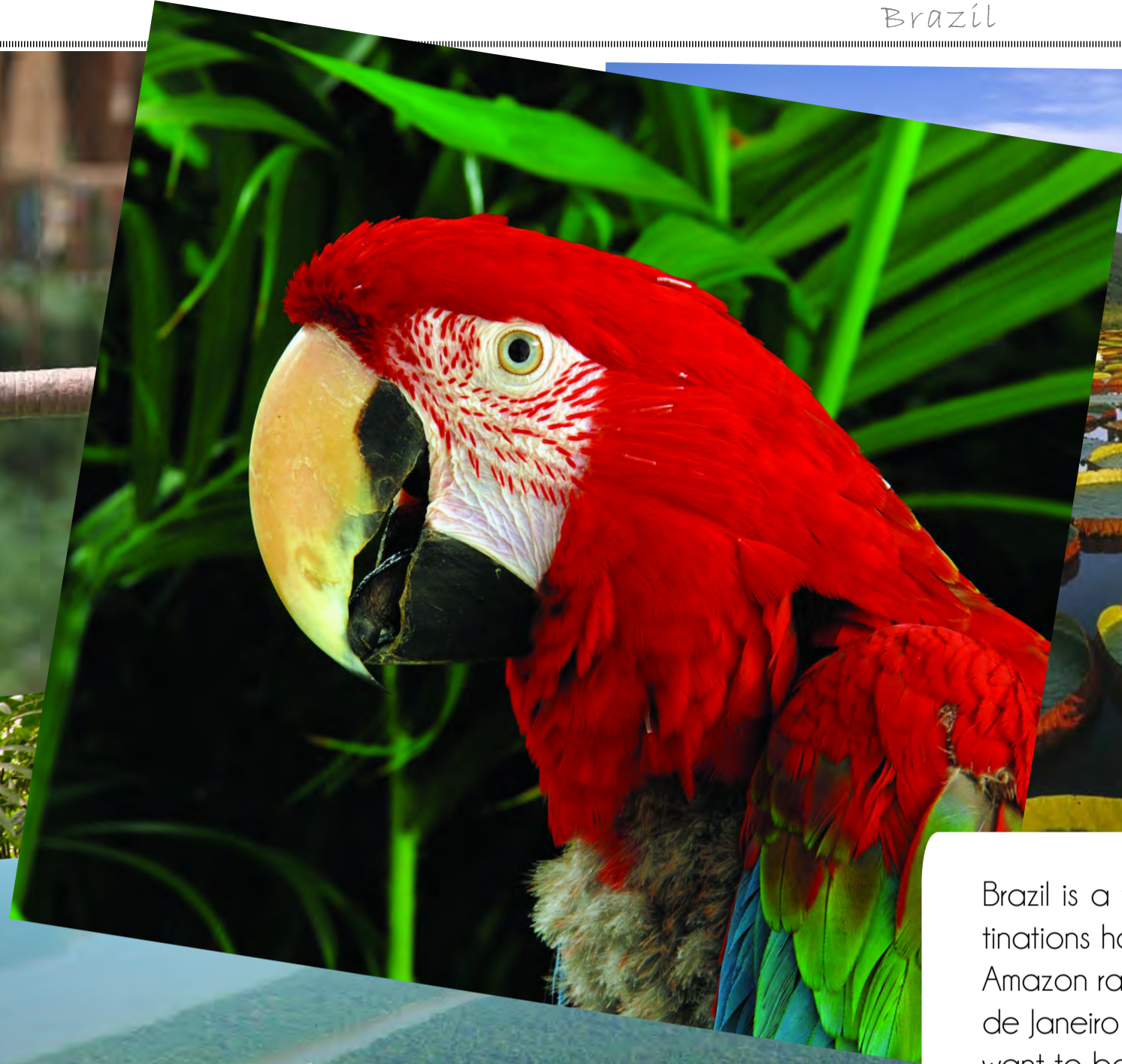


Sao Paulo

Whilst Sao Paulo doesn't have the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, what it does have is a vibrant city life. The wealth on offer attracted immigrants from an array of countries such as Germany, Italy and even Japan. Famed for their multiculturalism, why not take advantage of the world class restaurants on display and fill your bellies with mouth-watering food. If your fancy hasn't been tickled enough perhaps foraging into some clubs and unleashing your samba dance manoeuvres may be required due to Sao Paulo's nightlife constantly buzzing, just don't forget to take bottles of water with you as you may work up quite a sweat.

Iguacu Falls

As one of the greatest natural wonders of the world, the opportunity to travel to Brazil and see the Iguazu Falls would leave you in awe. Situated near the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay the Iguazu Falls has been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Access to it would be done through the Brazilian city of Foz do Iguacu, which has an airport and hotels nearby. Despite safety standards being very reasonable diving at the edge of the cliff is strictly not recommended!

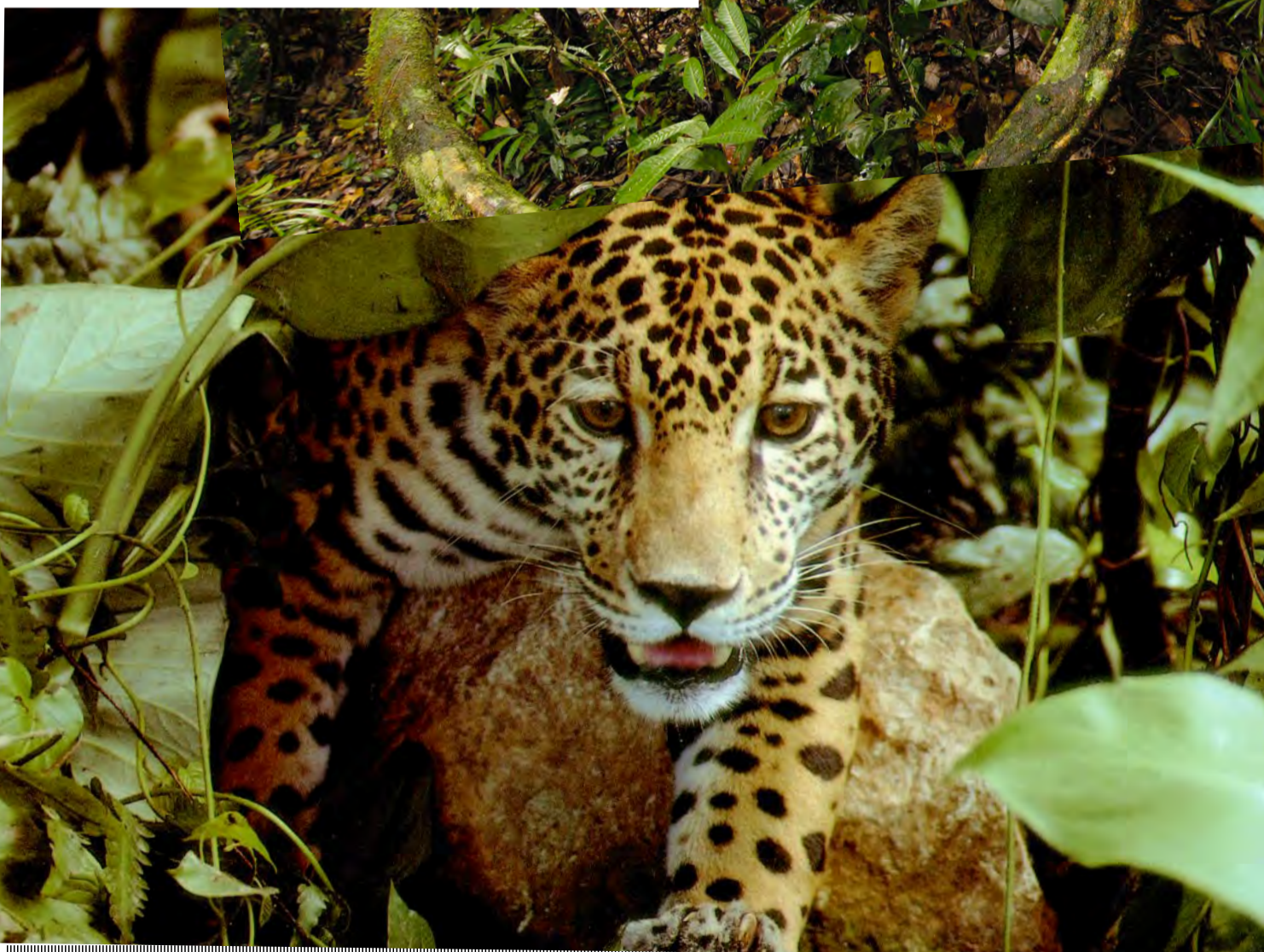


Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world and half of it resides within Brazil's borders. Visiting the Amazon would certainly have you on high alert as predators would be on display such as Cougars and Jaguars, though they often come out at night for hunting purposes. Anacondas and Piranhas are just some of the deadly predators swimming in the river, so perhaps skinny-dipping is out of the question. But overall the canopies and greenery really add to the natural experience when seeing the Amazon and remains one of the star attractions of Brazil.



Brazil is a wonderful country to travel to. Tourist destinations have a largely natural feel to them be it the Amazon rainforest or Iguacu Falls. The beaches of Rio de Janeiro will add to the relaxing theme that you will want to be apart of but this is completely contrasted by the allure of Sao Paulo. If you want to sink some cocktails, do the tango and explore the lavish restaurants of this electrifying city, be fully prepared for fun.



Mexico



Mexico is a North American state laying between the United States of America and Guatemala to the south-east. Mexico has popular food, archaeology and pyramids, lovely warm weather and six thousand miles of shoreline. According to popular polls carried out by the United Nations, Mexico is ranked seventh on the current list of popular destinations for tourists to visit.

Cancun and Acapulco Beach Resorts

Mexico appeals to people of all types. Students looking to party, families and honeymooners who love coming to Mexico because of its grandiose beach resorts. Americans will occupy the Baja Peninsula that is home to modern resorts such as Cancun and Puerto Vallarta. They have become synonymous with "Spring break" where college students flock in their droves in lush sunshine getting their trunks out, drinking and partying wildly unburdening the stress of an enduring semester.

Smaller resort areas in towards the southern parts of Mexico are slightly more eloquent in taste and far more family orientated. The Playa del Carmen is a prime example of this and you will often find resorts offering fishing trips, deep sea dives into the Pacific and amenities of this nature. Acapulco is a watered down version of Cancun for a more mature crowd who will look to enjoy the night life but without endless debauchery and craziness that surrounds students in Cancun.



Mexico City

For history buffs, the capital offers you museums, Aztec ruins and colonial architecture. They form a triumvirate of richness for tourists to explore particularly for youngsters who love to hear about epic wars and a warrior culture, which the Aztec race came to personify.

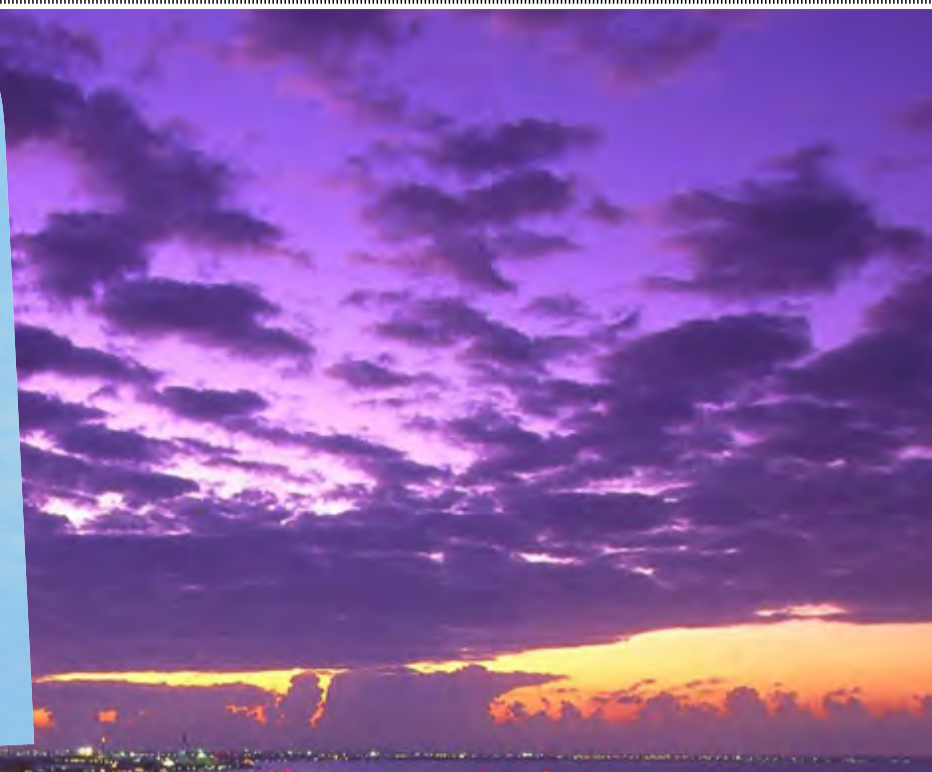
Mexico is awash with Spanish influence in the forms of palaces that belonged to former Dons in the 16th and 17th century when Mexico was a former colony of Spain's. The "Chichen Itza" is perhaps the most infamous of the archaeological sites worth paying a visit to. Known as the "Majestic Mayan City," it was a declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988 and voted one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

There are plenty of parks for families to spend the day out and enjoy picnics as the weather in generally sound all year round. A day out in highland state of Michoacán could lure kids feeling homesick out of their hotels to witness the fascinating site of Monarch Butterfly Breeding. Millions of butterflies come to the area between November and March to create one of nature's great spectacles.



Copper Canyon

Looking for a mini-adventure? Why not travel to Copper Canyon and experience a part of Mexico in complete starkness to the beaches and archaeological sites that Mexico has to offer. You can start off with a ride on the rail, which will take you over eight thousand feet where you will overlook the Chihuahua Desert of Mexico. If you're still in a daring mood there's always hiking up the mountainous rough terrain, horse-back riding and meeting the original inhabitants of the land the Tarahumara Indians known for their spiritual enlightenment.



Guadalajara

Suppose you want a bit of everything. Some warm weather, beautiful scenery, a moderate nightlife then Guadalajara is the place for tourists to travel to. During the springtime the traditional city comes to life with mariachi music being played in between shots of tequila and the locals socialising, so why not be a part of the fun?

Mexico will have you pining to stay! The beach resorts will have student's wilding out, Mexico City offers serenity to families looking to relax and Copper Canyon allows you to really let your hair down and enjoy an exciting adventure. But if you want a bit of everything pack your suitcases and head of to Guadalajara for some mariachi music and tequila shots.



How to enjoy Tequila in Mexico

There's more to tequila than the lime and salt, pounding shot after shot and ending on a dreadful hang-over. It's actually a well-loved spirit and can be enjoyed in many different ways. The Mexicans put it in everything - drinks, food and even use it to 'cure' illness. It's a unique symbol of their culture. So stick on a sombrero, a poncho and some winkle pickers and head down to the nearest Mexican bar.

Cribs!

Tequila & Mexico

Mexico is home to tequila and to this day holds a strong bond with the alcoholic drink; laws declare that tequila can only be produced in the Mexican state of Jalisco and the country has claimed the international rights to the word 'tequila', meaning no other country can use it to name a bottle of alcohol.

Tequila is made from a blue agave plant (pictured) which typically looks like a giant pineapple once dug up from the root and cut up. It is then cooked in the oven which turns the pina (pineapple) brown and sugary and is then mashed or shredded and finally distilled to make tequila. Hard work goes into making tequila; it's still traditionally a manual process and the men who harvest the agave have sacred knowledge about the plant which has been passed down from generation to generation. There are three different types of tequila depending on age: 'Blanco', 'Reposado' and 'Anejo', with each enjoyed in different cocktails - as well as on their own, obviously.



Blanco

Blanco tequila (also known as 'silver') is clear and bottled as soon as it's distilled, meaning it's aged in oak for less than two months. The Blanco taste is harsher than other types of tequila; it's where the agave is at its strongest and is the base for other tequilas. Typically, Blanco tastes the best with mixers in cocktails; margaritas, tequila sunrises and Bloody Marias (a Bloody Mary but the vodka is replaced with tequila). Blanco complements any fruit cocktail well, and is used because it won't distort the colour of a bright cocktail. But don't underestimate its taste; just because it's mixed you'll still be able to feel the refreshing tequila 'kick' in a cocktail of orange juice and bright red grenadine.

Enjoy a bottle of silver [Patron Tequila](#) in your margarita.

Reposado

The Reposado tequila is aged between two months and a year giving it a richer taste. It's a darker, golden brown colour and is smoother and subtle. The mix of the clear distilled Blanco combined with oaky flavour of the Añejo make it an in-between, if you will. Go into any bar outside of Mexico, ask for a shot of tequila and you'll be served Reposado, a slice of lime and handed a salt shaker. Reposado can also be enjoyed mixed in a long island ice tea, cosmoquila (a cosmopolitan made with tequila rather than vodka) and complements peach, watermelon and lemon flavours well.

Enjoy the popular Reposado tequila brand, [Jose Cuervo](#).



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Halloween Holiday in Mexico

If you thrive off the Halloween spirit and have no qualms with spooky traditions then Mexico should be top on your list of places to visit during the Halloween period.

Celebrating Halloween in Mexico isn't about the fright element compared to other places; it is an ancient Aztec tradition celebrating the dead in a joyous way and is taken extremely seriously.

Mexican culture is renowned for celebrating and remembering deceased family members and share a strong connection with the afterlife - the Halloween holiday is when these rituals come to life.

On October 27th is the Fiesta de las Santas Animas (Feast of the Holy Souls) where families begin the fiesta by cleaning their relatives' graves and adorning them with flowers and pine needles.

They then assemble a temporary altar near the gravesite stocking it with candles, food and sometimes alcohol and take turns talking to the departed, offering it food and assuring it that it is loved.

Universally, October 31st is the main day of celebrating Halloween but in Mexico it is the first of several Halloween festivities. La Noche de las Brujas is the night of the witches when you will find most children dressed up as witches and rarely other costumes like vampires or zombies.

Unlike the conventional "trick or treat" you open the door to in Western cultures, in Mexico you are met with the phrase Queremos Halloween which means "We want Halloween."

Then comes two consecutive days referred to as Los Dias de los Muertos which translates to "Days of the Dead" - November 1st is All Saints' Day. The following day, November 2nd is All Souls Day.

In Mexico, people have picnic lunches on the graves of their deceased relatives and make bread for the dead ("pan de muerto") and candy in the shape of skulls, skeletons, caskets and crossbones.

People also light bonfires, set off firecrackers and hang lanterns on trees to help guide the souls of the dead back home.

This is a Halloween experience like no other that we recommend you partake in at least once in your life.



The United Kingdom has long been the top study abroad destination, and it doesn't take a genius to figure out why. For English-speaking students going abroad, it's one of the places where you don't have to be studying a foreign language to get on. Learning a language is hard, right? So if you can get away with doing less work and still studying overseas, all the better. The U.K is one of the most popular destinations for first-time vacationers, so it's not surprising that it would also be popular with students.



When you first picture Mexico you may be familiar with TV or movie scenes showing dynamic spring-break parties, beautiful sandy beaches and top hotels. On the other hand, Mexico's rich ancient history boasts an array of diverse cultures and societies having once been home to the Mayans and Aztecs to name a few.

But did you know this multi-cultural country also offers great study opportunities? With its vast number of institutions and study programmes Mexico has no drawback in attracting students with differing educational interests and overall providing a great place to study.

Mexico will particularly appeal to students who wish to study disciplines like History, Social Sciences, Spanish, Politics or Economics. As well as offering a variety of internship programmes specialising in a number of areas ranging from Biomedical Sciences to Business Management.

Student's intent on studying in Mexico for more than six months must get a student visa before arriving by applying through their native country's Mexican embassy.

Fees start from around \$1,000 USD per semester and can vary depending on the field of study and institution. Loans and scholarships are available as a financial aid, so it's better to research all available options before making any important decisions.

Mexico doesn't fall short in offering natural landmarks, amazing attractions and enjoyable activities. You may wish to roam the Chichén Itzá site - one of the new Seven Wonders of the World - or explore the ancient ruins and colonial sites. If you're feeling adventurous then perhaps climbing Devil's Peak will be more your cup of tea or discovering the world's second largest coral reef for a spot of scuba-diving or snorkelling.

Argentina

According to Travel and Leisure magazine subscribers, its capital Buenos Aires is the second most desirable city worth visiting in the world after Florence. The country is divided up into six tourist provinces that include Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Cuyo, Litoral, The North and Patagonia.

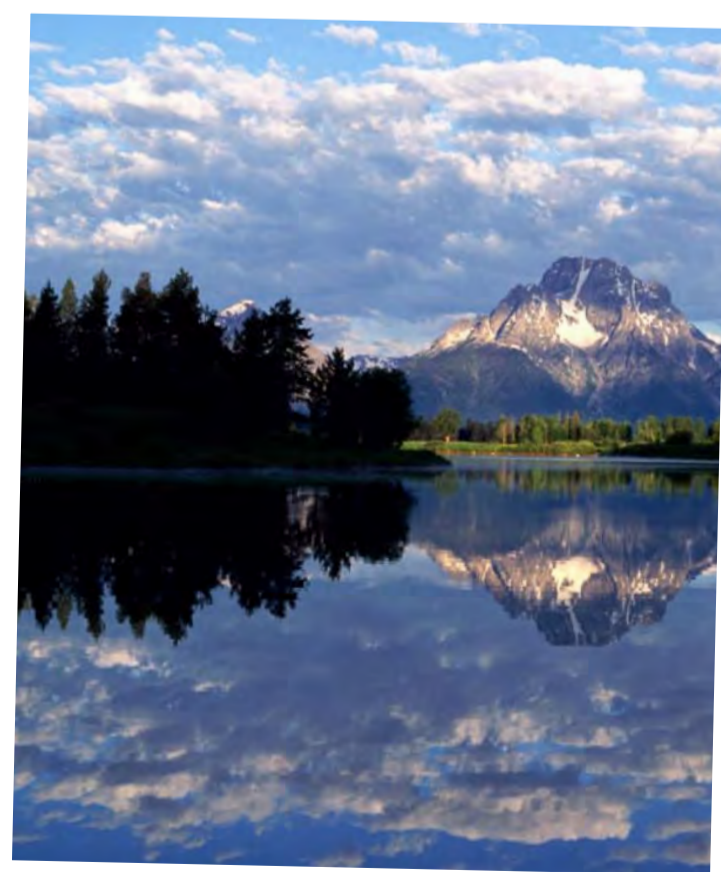
Buenos Aires

The most popular tourist sites are the historic ones of the city comprising Montserrat and San Telmo, which were the administrative centre of the old Spanish Colony. The city also contains the Argentina National Congress in close proximity along with "Catedral Metropolitana," that derives from the colonial period.

At the Buenos Aires Province the Atlantic coast beckons giving tourists the chance to get fresh coastal air down their lungs. Students can have their pick of beaches, the most popular being Mar del Plata.

Cordoba

Favourable weather conditions throughout the year mixed with little towns, scenic beauty, historical antiquities and cave paintings provide an opportunity for families to spend a pleasurable time here. Sierras de Cordoba is home to plains, salt mines, deserts and fertile valleys. This has given way to cattle ranches and that can prove a hit with the kids who are looking to enjoy a day out with the farm animals.



Cuyo

Cuyo is well known for its natural beauty. Tourists should not forget their cameras as Cuyo's provinces La Rioja and San Juan have the highest peaks and snow covered volcanoes in the country. Not to mention the Andes Mountains that have different coloured landscapes shaped by erosion giving way to a spectrum of rock shaped colours.

Litoral

Litoral holds six provinces of its own but is diverse in its own right and popular among tourists. Large rivers make up a vast portion of Litoral that create tributaries towards the large Iguazu Falls on the border with Brazil. Another key attraction is Virgin forest that is full of the rafter with tall trees and lovely red earth.

The North

The North is a reminder to Argentines of pre-Columbian cultures that existed prior to colonialism. It's a land full of gauges and mountains and will again appeal to tourists wanting to continue on an educational journey back to the past of Argentina.

Argentina is unique and the most popular place in South America to visit for tourists because it has everything and I mean everything you could possibly ask for.

PERU

Peru is starting to gain more attention in the world of tourism as a popular alternative to more expensive trips to South American countries such as Brazil and Argentina. Prized with a plethora of attractive places to visit and a cultural heritage that pre-dates the birth of Christ, Peru has excitement to offer students in abundance.

Lima

The first port of call for tourists will be the capital city. Located on Chillón, Rímac and Lurín rivers, Lima is blessed with diverse environments and natural beauty. For student trekkers looking to find the picturesque image that captures the minds of future tourists, they need only to drive out to the desert coast. There lies the mesmerising Pacific, which contrasts wonderfully well with the coarse sandy surroundings.

Located in the centre is the more affluent part of the city where tall buildings and shopping sprees are likely to appeal credit-card flashing tourists. The Larcomar shopping mall will see to all your needs on the retail-therapy front.



Machu Picchu

Perhaps students want to continue their learning experience into the summer during their holidays and what better place to explore than Peru. An amalgamation of cultures, religions and people from various regions on our planet have helped shape Peru's historical heritage. Some sites have been recognised by UNESCO like Machu Picchu.

One of the most intriguing places to see, Machu Picchu represents one of history's great ancient cities epitomising the original occupants of the land the Incas through their complex architecture structures. Recognised as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World, the "Lost City of the Incas," is an amazing opportunity to visit a civilisation that was advanced for its time. The city contained temples, residencies and dry stoned walls. There's even a trail that leads to the former capital city. If you have time it is worth visiting.



Mancora and Tumbes Resorts

Of course Peru is not exclusively based around the capital Lima. For students still entrenched in the party life-style; incorporated with a beach resort or two will find solace in Northern Peru. Particularly hotel Las Arenas de Mancora Hotel in the popular resort of Mancora, which offers palm trees, sandy beaches and sky blue sea. Local clubs are nearby where you can fraternise with the local populous as there is a real community feel about the resort as a whole.

There's also Punta Sal Club Hotel in Tumbes, which is a fully inclusive beach resort with lots of amenities. For fishing aficionados the hotel gives students more of an opportunity to let their hair down on holiday.

Restaurants

Wanting to leave behind the staple British diet of "Fish and Chips," you may wish to sample the local cuisine which never ceases to amaze. Known as the "land of a thousand flavours," Peru is a cross road of food culture offering pre and post-conquest dishes.

The Centraire Restaurante located in the heart of Lima provides food catered towards the more affluent. One of the more extravagant signature dishes on the menu is charred purple corn scented octopus. It certainly sounds outrageous but offers something very unique. For those wanting to eat more Chinese and Japanese based food interspersed with Peruvian flavours, known as "Chifas," they need not go beyond the Miraflores district, which offer hundreds of Chinese restaurants specialising in chicken, whereas the fewer Japanese eateries offer a more seafood based experience.



Best of the Rest of South America

COLOMBIA

Despite the negative media coverage that Colombia faces, it is still an amazing country for tourists to visit. Colombia is swamped with World Heritage Sites approved by UNESCO, the most famous being Cartagena where an old derelict defence system comprised of forts and cannons make for stellar viewing.

One can decide to visit Los Katíos National Park and admire extraordinary diversity of plant and animal life. It became a UNESCO site in 1994 and the 278 square mile of greenery has remained protected since. Something that will light up tourist eyes is the Gold Museum in the capital Bogota. The museum has on display 55,000 pieces of golden items designed during the pre-Hispanic period.

You can pass through Bogota Botanical Garden or Bolívar Square and add visits to the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá to fill your itinerary in the capital.



COSTA RICA

Costa Rica literally means "rich coast" in Spanish. It's situated in Central America surrounded by Nicaragua, Panama, Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean.

The state has natural beauty in abundance and one of its main tourist attractions are the volcanoes, especially Poas Volcano Crater. Since the 1980's Costa Rica has protected its national parks with Cahuita National Park having its own beach! Ecotourism has also given tourists the chance to enjoy something different. An example of this is Cocos Island, which has been declared a World Heritage Site and is full of biodiversity and highly recommended to tourists who enjoy bird-watching and hobbies similar to this.

If you're going to travel to Costa Rica do not forget to pack your swimming trunks and bikinis! On one side of Costa Rica lies the Pacific and on the other coast lies the aquatic Caribbean Sea. The most popular beaches worth travelling to are Zacundo Beach and Manuel Antonio Beach, which too is in a National Park, was listed by Forbes in 2011 among twelve of the most beautiful in the world.



CHILE



Chile has a lovely range of places to visit. One of the first places you may wish to see is Atacama Desert which makes up a large portion of the Norte Grande. There's a broad mix of natural beauty and archaeological sites to see in this region. The Lluta valleys are stunning to the point where tourists should not forget their cameras. Should you remain in the area why not have a wander around the San Miguel de Azapa archaeological museum, home to Chínchorro mummies. The oldest mummies in the world are sure to get families and their kids excited and maybe put the frighteners on a few too!

Maybe you fancy some sea and coast? Then you may want to head on to Arica, which is Chile's coast city and full of sumptuous beaches. Arica is a popular among younger tourists, especially students who look to take advantage of resorts that are saturated with bars and clubs.

BOLIVIA



Bolivia is a unique case for tourists because it has experienced political instability but it still courts tourists en masse. Located in central South America, it is bordered by countries all around it.

The Andes mountain peak in Bolivia is the largest in the world outside of Asia. Considering the arduous journey involved in seeing the Andes, the mountains are wonderful to see. Just as great is the Lake Titicaca, which brings in many tourists who enjoy relaxing boat rides and fishing.

The lake is also home to the Uros, a pre-Incan people that live on artificial floating islands often causing intrigue among tourists as they are set in their ancient ways of life. The Incan Temple of Kalasasaya, still preserved is something tourists may want to see and the city of Potosí, which is a World Heritage Site recognised by UNESCO. So there's a variation of things to do and see.



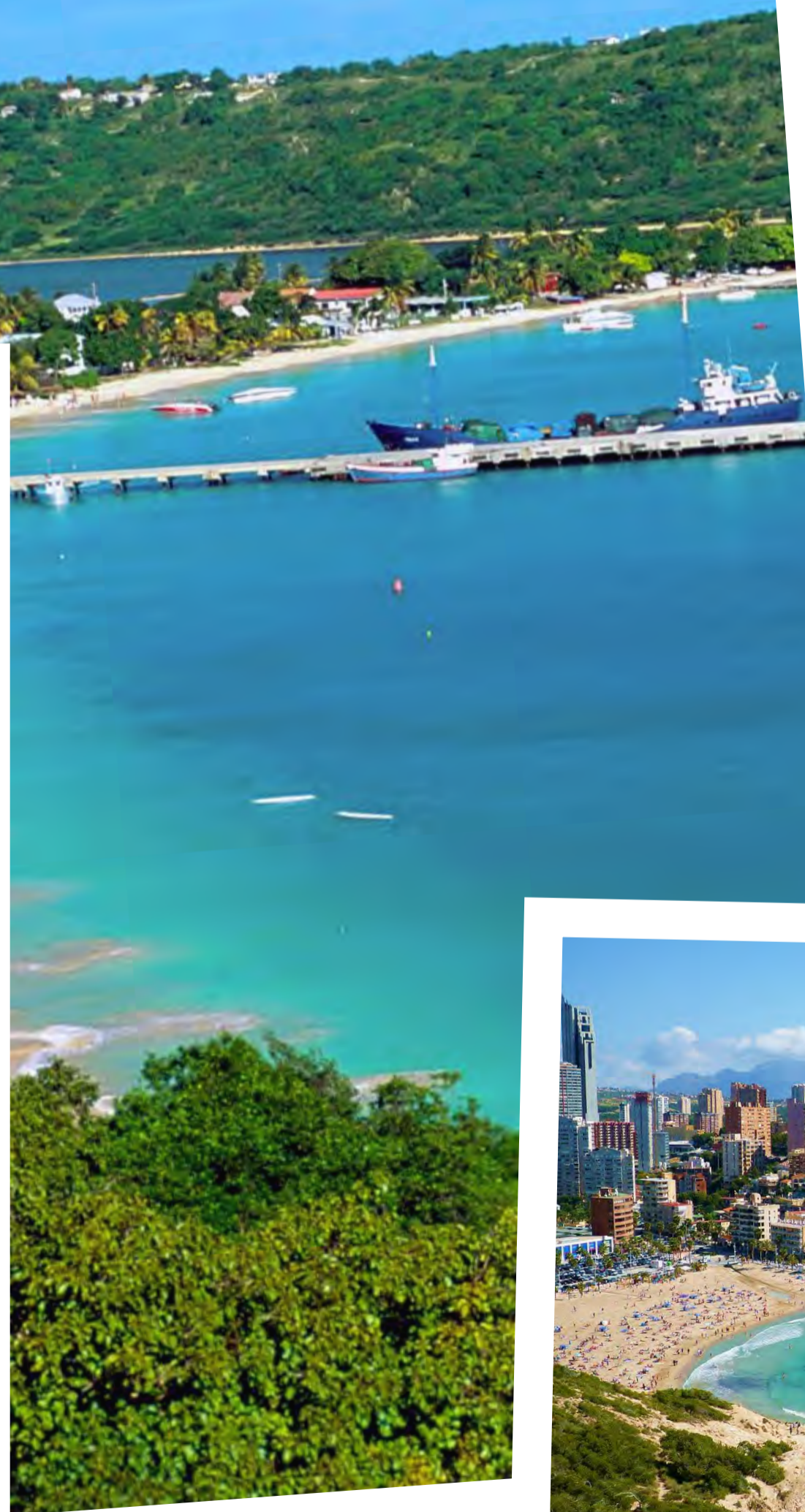
Caribbean

Simply put, the Caribbean is one big paradise destination. Most travellers will know this place as being the world's most popular place for a beach holiday with sun, sea and surf aplenty but there's more to the Caribbean than first meets the eye. It is the home of reggae music, mouth-watering cuisine, vibrant culture and not forgetting rum – the list can go on.

Life's a beach...

Pink skyline, glorious sunset, turquoise waters, golden sand, coconut palms... you must get the idea now. The Caribbean boasts some of the world's magnificent beaches so we won't be surprised if you find yourself spending the majority of your time on any one of these natural wonders. The greatest thing about the Caribbean is its broad selection of colourful beaches offering pink sand, white sand and black sand. And if one thing's for sure, it is that sunscreen is a necessity and with a variety of this many beaches you're going to need a hell of a lot.

Many wonderful stretches of coast lie adjacent to the Caribbean's beach resorts and there's no coincidence that each is close to a coral reef – the main source of the dazzling white which clearly illustrates why the Caribbean is the world's greatest beach destination. Luminous colours of turquoise, blue and jade make up the stunning water displays that are reflected thanks to the blazing sun overlooking the islands. Some beaches aren't that easy to get but that spurs you even more to discover your own exclusive beach sanctuary – there are lots still anticipating their discovery. So rather than admiring the beautiful pictures of this spectacular region, get packing, get going and soon you'll be appreciating them in the flesh laying back on a deckchair with a refreshing cocktail.



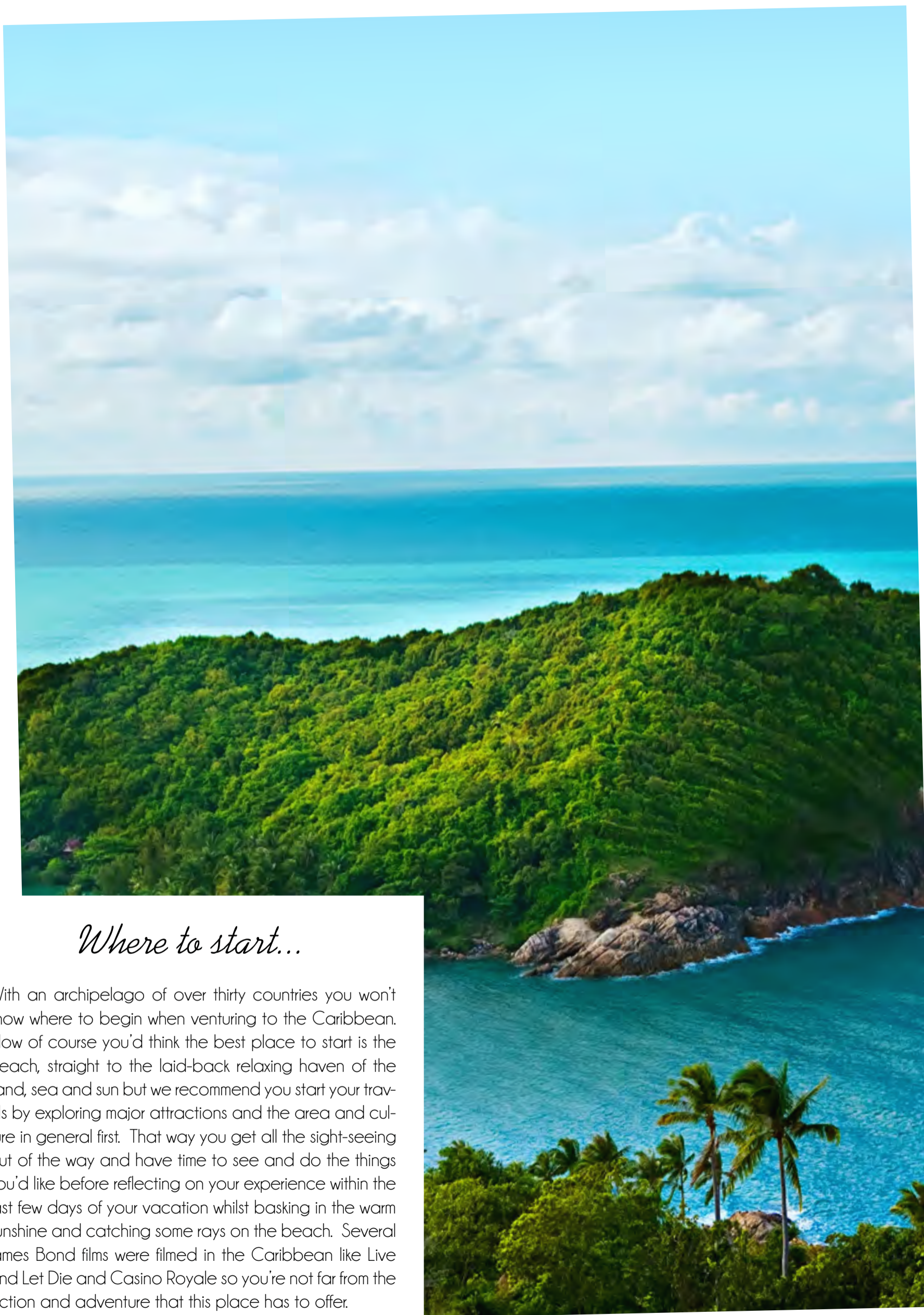
Islands galore...

The Caribbean stretches over an impressive 7000 islands each with its own charm and character. The Caribbean is as remarkable and as colourful as its island beaches and forests – there is nothing bland when it comes to the beauty of the Caribbean, whether it be a relaxing retreat or an adventure holiday, you'll be sure to find what you're looking for here. And with our insight to the Caribbean you'll find out everything you need to know before jetting off to the fantasy island of your choice.

The towering Blue Mountain is the cherry on top of the cake when it comes to the island of Jamaica which years to be explored along with the region's strong musical influence – the world-famous reggae legend that is Bob Marley still lives on in this magical place accompanied with the effervescence of the welcoming locals and culture. Jamaica is famed for being the birthplace of notable figures like the aforementioned Bob Marley but also world-record holder and Olympian Usain Bolt, Reggae, dancing and signature cuisine such as jerk chicken, salt-fish and ackee.

Over 200 pristine white sand islands and 700 cays make up the Bahamas, which is as exotic as its name suggests. The climate is mild all year-round, the beaches are exceptional and there's always plenty of things to keep you entertained – one day you can be snorkelling, the next you could be feeding sharks. The world is your oyster in the wonders of the Caribbean and these are simply a few of the distinct beauties that make up the Caribbean so carry on reading to find out why your next trip should be the vivid and appealing continent of the Caribbean.





Where to start...

With an archipelago of over thirty countries you won't know where to begin when venturing to the Caribbean. Now of course you'd think the best place to start is the beach, straight to the laid-back relaxing haven of the sand, sea and sun but we recommend you start your travels by exploring major attractions and the area and culture in general first. That way you get all the sight-seeing out of the way and have time to see and do the things you'd like before reflecting on your experience within the last few days of your vacation whilst basking in the warm sunshine and catching some rays on the beach. Several James Bond films were filmed in the Caribbean like Live and Let Die and Casino Royale so you're not far from the action and adventure that this place has to offer.

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A RUM GUIDE TO THE Caribbean

How Rum is Made?

R

um derives from the Caribbean, in particular Barbados. The first account of rum distillation was in 1651 with Mount Gay Rum dating back as the first reported production company. Rum is made from molasses - thick dark syrup made of sugarcane, grapes and sugar. Yeast and water are then added to start the fermentation process and aged for at least a year. The colour of the drink depends on what it is aged in, for example oak casks darken the rum whereas steel tanks leaves the rum colourless. There are seven 'grades' of rum, these being light, gold, dark, spiced, flavoured, over proof and premium, with light rum being filtered to remove all traces of colour, spiced made with cinnamon, rosemary and pepper and flavoured rums coming in mango, orange, banana and lime amongst others.

If you fancy seeing how rum is made and want to take a sip of the first drink Daniel Craig orders in Casino Royale visit Mount Gay Rum for tours Monday to Friday 9.30am-3.30pm [here](#).

Y

ou don't have to be Jack Sparrow to enjoy your rum but it does help to be in the Caribbean. The original and finest rum originated from the islands so we'll be telling you how and where to enjoy the best bottles available along with our top recommended rums. If you take our advice however, just like Jack Sparrow and his fellow shipmates, you'll defiantly find yourself asking 'where has the rum gone?'

Where to Enjoy It

Barbados is the island to head to for original rum but neighbouring islands such as St Vincent, the Dominican Republic, St Lucia, and Jamaica all run rum production lines. Haiti in particular is famous for theirs, with it being the country's most popular alcoholic drink. Head to Port-au-Prince, the capital city of Haiti where the family run business 'Rhum Barbancourt' makes the tastiest rum in the country. St Kitts and Nevis produces some of the best flavoured rums sold in a Brinley Gold Company bottle. The company produces unique rum flavours such as coffee, mango and vanilla.

For a more familiar take on the drink, it would be unheard of to visit Bermuda and not try a glass of Bacardi, the place where it all began. Take a lift to the top floor of the Bacardi building where sits a bar which stocks all types and flavours and blends. Order your favourite poison, sit back and enjoy your Bacardi from where it all began.

The Best of the Best

Mount Gay Rum - Barbados

Being the oldest, means it's one of the best. As a dark rum, it's described as having a rich caramel sweetness and leaves a long lingering dry finish. This one is perfect served alone and during the winter to warm you up.

Shillingford Estates - Dominica Republic

This white coconut favoured rum is a favourite around the world and is usually enjoyed with milk, Coca-Cola, pineapple juice, cranberry juice and various soft drinks. The best way we recommend you enjoy Malibu is on the rocks.

Captain Morgan - Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico's signature white rum is sweetened with flavours of vanilla and citrus fruits. It is distilled so smoothly that it's said if you substitute Don Q for vodka in a drink you won't be able to tell the difference.

Best of the Caribbean Beaches

Caribbean Beaches

If the harsh expense of student life has not completely cleared out your bank account this semester, why not escape the trials and tribulations of University with an all-inclusive getaway to the best beaches the Caribbean has to offer? The beauty of the Caribbean islands is well-known, and their beaches are truly spectacular. Clear blue skies, calm and clear waters, exotic marine-life and far-reaching sands, all located on islands that are brimming with life and culture.

REDUIT BEACH ST LUCIA

St. Lucia's premier beach is located near Rodney Bay on the island's north coast. Spend your days at this idyllic beach and admire its smooth white sands and transparent gentle waters. On any day you can look out across the ocean and see luxury yachts that can be chartered from the large marina nearby. However, for a cheaper and much more fun option you can hire one of the beaches' very popular water inflatables. Hang on tight and experience this unforgettable thrill-ride as you are pulled across the bay at speed via boat.

What makes Reduit Beach such a popular beach for visitors is its proximity to the island's vibrant nightlife. So after you've finished your free drinks at the hotel, head on down to Spinnaker's, the hottest beach bar in town. The bar offers a beach party atmosphere and late afternoon happy hours with delicious cocktails for next-to-nothing prices. Finally, Reduit is famous for its view of the stunning St. Lucian sunset, so sit back and enjoy the spectacle.

PINK SANDS BEACH BAHAMAS

There are few places in the world as tranquil as the Bahamas' 'Out Islands'. Amongst these tropical paradises is Harbour Island, and along its eastern coast lies the very usual beach of Pink Sands. This magnificent three-mile stretch gets its name and uniqueness from the florid and vibrant sands that coat its shoreline. The pink colouring that appears when the sun strikes the sand is a sight to behold, and has been known to attract many celebrities to the island. The soft, lush surface of Pink Sands is more than matched by its sea-shore, which is part of the third-largest barrier reef in the world. The clear and sparkling waters make this the perfect place for snorkelling, where divers can witness some of the island's exotic marine life. Use this opportunity to explore reefs and underwater grottos, and get up-close and personal with a range of fish, stingrays and even sharks.

If you wish to venture outside your hotel after hours, we recommend you pay a visit to the Vic Hum Club, which has a sports vibe. Its eccentric and friendly owner, known to most as "Hitler", will more than likely be there to welcome you with open arms.

MARACAS BEACH TRINIDAD

The annual Trinidad carnival is an event that takes place during Easter, all across the Caribbean island. The carnival's biggest celebrations take place in Port of Spain; in which revellers take to the streets to enjoy the two-day music and dance festival and parade. This is perhaps the best time to visit the next luxury beach on our list. Maracas Beach is a 45-minute drive from the Trinidad and Tobago capital, and the drive itself is packed full with breathtaking views of the island's landscape. Maracas Beach stands out from other beaches in the area as it is secluded in a deep cove. The half-moon hideaway is complete with amber sands, shimmering waters and leaning palms. If that's not enough, its backdrop of the Maracas hills makes this beach as aesthetically pleasing as can be.

DICKENSON BAY ANTIGUA

Unlike many beaches in Antigua and Barbuda which are often rather secluded, Dickenson Bay is a lively alternative for holiday goers to visit. Take a walk across the whiter than white sands at Dickenson Bay; look out to sea and you cannot miss the mysterious uninhabited islands that stretch across the reef. Looking inward, the natural beauty of the beach and its surrounding foliage does not disappoint one bit.

Cedar Valley Golf Club is not far at all from the beach, so why not enjoy a round in a setting of sheer beauty. If golf is not your game, and you wish to get in touch with the culture and history of Antigua, the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda is a must see. The museum is placed in the St. John's Court House, one of the most historical buildings on the island and gives an in-depth look at Antigua's fascinating history.

PLAYA DORADA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Our next beach is the essence of beauty and allure with the name to match. The Amber coast of the Dominican Republic is covered with golden sand, and Playa Dorada literally translates into "The Golden Beach". Why not soak up the sun and look out across this picturesque holiday setting. Encased in tropical greenery and offering a sublime view of the popular tourist attractive Mount Isabela, Playa Dorada is the perfect relaxation haven.

However, if you want a bit excitement during your stay; Playa Dorada has an excellent selection of water sports, with something to suit any price-range. The beach is known particularly for its snorkelling and scuba diving excursions, which plunge you amongst the corals, where you are able to swim with a spectacular array of tropical fish. Whether you're keen on trying as many exciting activities as possible, or want to do absolutely nothing, Playa Dorada gives you the best of both worlds.

ROUND UP

Sometimes it pays dividends to save a bit of cash, so if your student loan is still ticking over during the Christmas break then why not head out to the Caribbean and enjoy some tropical sunshine. While booking the hotels and flights doesn't usually come cheap, once you are there many of these resorts are all inclusive and activities like beach volleyball or sunbathing don't cost a dime.



Nobody better personifies the country than Mr. Cuba himself Fidel Castro. As a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary he managed to oust the US backed President Batista through rebellion turning Cuba into a socialist state by nationalising its industries. Castro has served as Prime Minister for seventeen years from 1959 before converting his role to "el Presidente" for another thirty-two years until 2008 when he handed the reigns of power to his brother Raul.

Often found in local markets in Havana are green fatigues, adorned by Fidel symbolising his revolutionary image and by some a sex symbol! They make for great tourist gifts as do the shirts and pictures found of perhaps someone even more iconic, his comrade in arms Che Guevara. He too was a revolutionary that found solace in Fidel's movement.

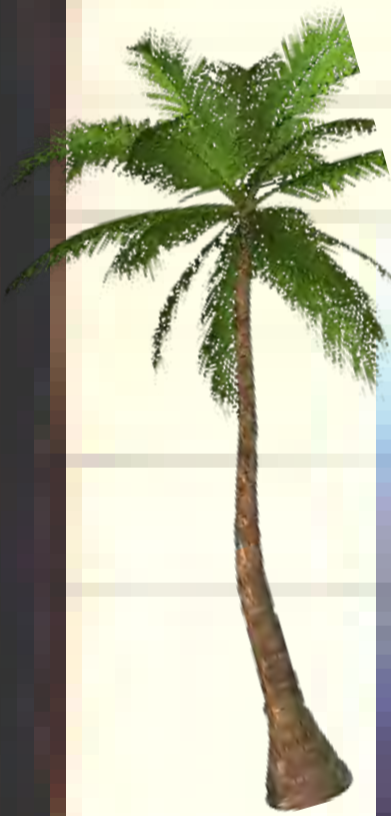
In an interview given with an Italian journalist he posed for a picture that has become the most famous and symbolic image of resistance to capitalism posing in a staunch manner with his army hat. It is a favourite among tourists via shirt imprints and other forms of merchandise. The picture can be visited at the Plaza de la Revolucion, which is a municipality where Che's picture hangs with the slogan "Hasta la Victoria Siempre" attached to it.



For couples looking to shake their hips and feel red hot on the dance floor, one can't look past Cuba's very own style of Latin Music. Those looking for a more upbeat style will love the live bands that play in the centre of the capital. Cuban Salsa has a fiery tinge and can be intense as it extremely passionate. Just as upbeat but without the exhilaration is Latin jazz and it adds to the swinging nightlife in Havana. The Hotel Nacional hosts live acts like Omara Portuondo if you fancy an electrifying atmosphere.

But there is a lot more to Havana than a swinging nightlife and monuments dedicated to their revolutionary heroes. You tourists wanting to sample the local tipples should travel to the Havana Club Rum Factory. Those well behaved may get freebies! One could see La Habana Vieja (Old Town) for photo snapping sessions as it's a World Heritage Site.

Taste the local cuisine at Café Oriente which has splendid mixture of food deriving American, Spanish and Caribbean influences. And if that's not enough get yourself down to Santa María del Mar a beach endowed with palm trees, white sand and blue sea.



Caribbean

The Best of the Rest

The Caribbean is arguably one of the world's most popular tourism hotspots. If you're looking for utter relaxation the Caribbean is the best place to holiday. Home to beautiful islands and peaceful paradises, a vibrant mix of cultures, the best beaches on the planet, tropical climate, exhilarating water sports, awe-inspiring history, wonderful fresh gastronomy... the list could go on, so what's not to love about the Caribbean?

The Caribbean is made up of over an astonishing 7,000 islands, coral reefs, islets (small rocky islands) and cays (small sandy islands above coral reefs) – 13 of which are independent island countries. The Caribbean is such a deluxe travel destination it even has its own exclusive sea which is fittingly called the Caribbean Sea. It was previously named the West Indies, after Columbus mistook the area for being the "Indies" during his famous expedition.

Read on to find out why you should visit four of our hand-picked best of the rest Caribbean countries.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Antigua and Barbuda are exotic neighbouring islands with attractive beaches and splendid reefs, rich colonial heritage, fascinating culture and a healthy mix of leisure and sports activities. Antigua is a lively island, you'd be surprised to think that slavery and sugar plantations once dominated this diverse place, whereas Barbuda is a quiet island which typically attracts bird watchers wishing to catch a glimpse of the native frigate birds. Pay a visit to the country's most popular attraction Nelson's Dockyard, the historical 18th century British naval base which has been converted into shops, restaurants, a market, an art centre and a nautical museum. Life's a beach in Antigua and Barbuda, with an amazing 365 white and pink beaches, there's one for each day of the year. The capital city, St John's is the ideal place for shopping. Here you will also find the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda to delve into the past of this Caribbean Island's history as well as other note-worthy attractions like the Cathedral and Botanical Gardens.

BARBADOS

Barbados is an island with a difference – a coral island to be precise and has one of the highest standards of living. Being such a small island, there's a hell of a lot to do in Barbados. Mainly known for its stunning shoreline and lovely beaches, water sports is a must when on this island, the most popular activities are snorkelling and diving. If you prefer to stay on land there are a number of fine golf courses, eateries, shops, monuments and art galleries at your convenience. You can't take a trip to Barbados without sampling authentic Barbadian cuisine such as the pepperpot and flying fish. That's not all, Barbados has a dynamic night-life which makes it a big hit with students like yourself and if you're a Rihanna fan, you'll already be aware that the renowned singer is from this Caribbean paradise. Barbados annually hosts extravagant festivals and events and offers much more than a relaxing tropical beach destination. So what are you waiting for? Get discovering!



GRENADEA

Grenada is an island of breath-taking natural beauty with its colourful rainforests to its spectacular waterfalls and soft white sandy beaches. It is known as the "Island of Spice" due to its production of nutmeg and mace crops which makes it one of the world's largest exporters of these ingredients. Historic landmarks, monuments, parks and sparkling waters are among some of the reasons why tourists travel to Grenada. The country's major attractions include the beautiful Grand Anse Beach attracts tourists from far and wide which is the usual backdrop for Grenada's tourism advertisements. Levera National Park boasts a scenic coastal area, picture-perfect beach, amazing marine with coral reefs and sea grass beds and a lagoon home to an enormous mangrove swamp which is a haven for diverse bird species and other wildlife habitats.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

With miles of coastline and over 350 beaches, travellers won't find it hard to come across their own slice of heaven in the Dominican Republic. Lounge on the golden sands, take a dip in the refreshing ocean waters or try some invigorating water sports like wind surfing and scuba diving, after all that is what the Dominican Republic is popular for. If adventure is your middle name, try things like mountain climbing, rafting, hiking or horseback riding. The capital city, Santo Domingo, is the Dominican Republic's equivalent to New York – a city that never sleeps. You'll be right in the heart of the entertainment and attractions. Whale-watching is a must in the Dominican Republic and you won't find it anywhere better than in Samana, so if you want a one-off experience we suggest you head there. The Dominican Republic is notably home to the highest mountain peak in the Caribbean – Pico Duarte and the largest lake in the Caribbean – Lake Enriquillo.

Study Abroad: Costa Rica

In addition to Spain and Mexico, Costa Rica ranks highly on the list of potential study abroad destinations for Spanish-speaking students. The country is famous for its lack of a standing army, its general acceptance of foreigners (it's a popular place for expats to retire), and its plethora of ecotourism opportunities. Oh, and if you're cultivating a burgeoning addiction to coffee, you can't go wrong in Costa Rica.

Costa Rica is packed with fun activities to fill your spare time with. Discover the beautiful Buena Vista Rainforest, indulge in a multitude of water sports, or simply study on the beach as you soak up the sensational atmosphere.

Depending on your course and location, fees vary from 2,000 bucks to just over 8,000, with living costs set at around 1,500 per month.

From a traveller's perspective, Costa Rica has the added benefit of being in a cheaper part of the world to visit than many of Europe's most popular study abroad locations. And from a student's perspective, if you're studying anything related to nature you may think you've died and gone to heaven. Unless, of course, there are no final exams in your version of heaven.

With half a billion speakers in over twenty countries, Spanish is one of the principal languages of the world. Academia De Espanol D'Amore is a quality educational institution created to facilitate the learning of Spanish, taking place at one of the most beautiful beaches in - Costa Rica Manuel Antonio in Quepos. They incorporate the total Spanish Immersion process of education to ensure the most efficient learning experience possible.

San José is known to be the biggest cosmopolitan city in Central America. The city is packed with modern lifestyles in a vibrant environment, yet still has fascinating traces of its history. The markets are vibrant and the nightlife is as sophisticated (or debaucherous) as you want it to be. San José is home to numerous museums and there are a few neighbourhoods where colonial styling still radiates.



Studying in Belize



When people think of studying abroad the most heard of countries usually come to mind, so it would come as a surprise for an aspiring student to consider an unfamiliar country like Belize.

Situated between Mexico and Guatemala, Belize is the only Central American country where English is the official language this initially makes it a great universal place to study. Students who understand English will fit right in here or if you don't know any English at all then Belize is definitely the best place to learn.

With a majority of Spanish ethnicities, Spanish is the second commonly used language in Belize so you may wish to brush up on your Spanish reading, writing and speaking skills here especially since free Spanish language courses are available.



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AUSTRALIA

Queensland - Australia's 'Sunshine State' - is the ultimate vacation getaway for outstanding rainforests, vibrant cities and immaculate beaches. It is also the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and beautiful coastal resort Port Douglas which is close to another tourist attraction, Daintree National Park. You may go hoping to find just a few attractions but you'll get more than you bargained for which is the great thing about this place and Australia in general - there's a surprise around every corner.

The **Gold Coast** is one of the most illustrious Australian sun and surf holiday destinations for both relaxation and escapade. Surfer's paradise can be found in the heart of the Gold Coast and certainly lives up to its name with its signature surf beaches, thriving nightlife, amusing theme parks and excellent shopping. Pay a visit to Mount Tambourine with its amazing glow worm caves and waterfalls or appreciate the real beauty of the Gold Coast with wonderful views from the world heritage listed Lamington National Park.



Perth is the sunniest state capital with an average of 3,000 hours of sunshine each year on top of being home to 19 of the most beautiful, clean and less crowded beaches. Located next to the Swan River, Perth boasts one of the biggest inner-city parks in the world - Kings Park and Botanic Garden - which is even bigger than New York's Central Park. For individuals who love retail therapy, the high-end boutique shops and malls found around Perth are a must.

Before you go down under, read our guide to the top places worthy of a visit when venturing to Australia. Make sure you take your camera as there's a lot to explore and discover and be prepared to encounter kangaroos, koalas and other diverse wildlife; it's all a part of the amazing Aussie experience.

PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL



Of course, the best option when it comes to travelling to Australia is by airplane, depending on the country you're departing from. Take for example; it takes at least a whole entire day just to get to Australia from Britain.

But this type of travel also extends to travelling domestically within Australia where getting from A to B is much further than you'd first think. Australians rely on aviation in the same way people from smaller countries rely on trains and buses. It is the best form of transport which allows you to quickly hop between different places if your time in Australia is short. Domestic flights operate between major cities.



Car hire is reasonably priced in Australia and is available to those over 21 who prefer to travel around the country at their own pace. Renting a 4x4 (four-wheel drive vehicle) is one of the best ways to see explore the country. So get behind the wheel and have a real off-road adventure cruising through the Outback.

Jump on a tram which will take you through the lively streets of Melbourne or take a ferry ride and watch the beautiful Sydney Harbour on the relaxing waters. Australia isn't short of clean, affordable and reliable public transport - from trains, busses, monorail, trams, ferries you have everything at hand to get you in and around Australian towns and cities.

Taxis are a safe and affordable alternative to public transport and are easy to arrange or flag down. Meter-operated taxis can be found in most town and cities - there is a minimum 'flagfall charge' on top of the charge for the distance travelled. On the plus side, taxi drivers don't expect to be tipped and some taxis even accept payments made using a credit card.



The only downfall comes with rail travel and the fact that it can be quite expensive and slow. Two services span the continent from coast to coast. The Indian Pacific travels from Sydney on the east coast to Perth on the west coast and crosses Australia's well-known Nullarbor Plain - the journey takes three days and nights. The Ghan travels between Adelaide and Darwin and runs takes two nights.

Australia has heaps of coastline, islands, rivers and lakes and a range of vessels to use at your convenience. So why not take to the water and see the stunning Great Barrier Reef on a deep-sea fishing cruiser or take a paddle streamer along Brisbane River.

You won't be able help but appreciate the beauty of this contrasting country regardless of what mode of transport you use all the same.

DESTINATIONS

Sydney

Sydney is the largest, oldest and most cosmopolitan city in Australia home to two of the country's famous landmarks: the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House. The city is pleasantly located next to vast ocean coastline and golden beaches and proudly had the pleasure of hosting the Olympics in the new millennium.

The first attraction travellers usually flock to in Sydney tends to be the Sydney Harbour Bridge, known by locals as the 'coat-hanger' and we're pretty sure you'll find yourself here at one point. It took 1,400 workers over an eight year period to erect this striking 4.2 million pound steel arch bridge which stands 134 metres above the harbour and was officially opened in 1932.

If you're feeling adventurous, the Bridge Climb is definitely one of the most stimulating activities you will ever experience in your lifetime. Climb through catwalks and up ladders and stairs to be welcomed by a magnificent panoramic view of Sydney in all its glory – you can walk across all the way to the other side towering over the vehicles down below. But if you suffer from vertigo you should steer well away from the Bridge Climb as it isn't for the faint-hearted.

Another notable site is the Sydney Opera House which is considered as one of the 20th century's great buildings and welcomes its doors to over 4.5 million tourists each year. It is one of the busiest performing arts centres in the world and was designed to resemble a ship at sea.



Take a trip to Australia's most famous beach, Bondi Beach which can be found nestled between two rock headlands fifteen minutes from the city centre. Topless sunbathing is accepted here so don't be shocked to find people bare all whilst sunbathing. The promenade is always brimming with modern day entertainment but the area still retains an element of historic sentiment with Aboriginal rock carvings on the northern and southern end of the beach.

Words and descriptions don't do this vibrant city enough justice so you're just going to have to find out for yourself what makes this dynamic metropolis one of the world's top ten cities to live in.

Queensland

The world-renowned Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea can be found in the region of Queensland – this alone makes it a great place to visit. The Great Barrier Reef is the largest UNESCO world heritage area in the world covering an extraordinary 86 million acre region. This area of outstanding natural beauty is home to around 1,500 different species of fish, 400 different types of coral, many endangered species, plus more than 30 historic shipwrecks and numerous archaeological sites which originate from the Aborigine period.

On top of that, Queensland boasts a tropical climate, gorgeous beaches, wildlife sanctuaries, rainforests, friendly locals, relaxed atmosphere and a multitude of things to see and do – hence why it's often called the 'Sunshine State.'

If you're after exhilarating activities then Queensland is definitely the best place for the likes of bungee jumping, scuba-diving, white-water rafting, bushwalking, snorkelling, surfing, abseiling, horse riding and much more. If you're a child at heart, you will have to pencil in a fun theme park visit in your itinerary. There's four to choose from: Sea World, Movie World, Wet 'N' Wild and Dreamworld all located along the Gold Coast.

The Sunshine Coast has miles and miles of beautiful untouched sandy beaches which are the perfect place for travellers to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Or why not pick up a new sport and your surf board whilst you're at it and hitting the waves – surfing is all the rage in Australia so see for yourself why the invigorating sport is so popular amongst Australians.

Brisbane is the vibrant capital of Queensland and a laid-back city with a rich and diverse art, music and culture scene and all year-round weather. In recent times it has become one of the most desirable places to live in Australia so there's no wonder why thousands of people pack up and move to Brissie each year. The cosmopolitan city is a mix of old and new – the Town Hall can be seen proudly standing in the midst of modern monuments like the Gallery of Modern Art along the Brisbane River.

Melbourne

Melbourne is the cultural and fashion capital of Australia. The city's fusion of modern and Victorian architecture, blend well together to create a multicultural entity. Melbourne is a very diverse and vibrant city and this can be seen spread through to its global food, entertainment and lively nightlife. The city has an overwhelming dedication and enthusiasm for sports ranging from cricket, football, rugby, horse racing and of course water sports. Port Philip Bay is the ideal location for sailing, windsurfing and kite surfing. Hot air ballooning proves very popular over the picturesque city of Melbourne or Yarra Valley.

The Queen Victoria's Market is the most popular place to find a bargain when it comes to shopping. It dates back to 1878 and ever since small traders and business owners operate there. Don't be afraid to barter the price if you find something is less expensive than you find. There is also a Dairy Hall, Fish and Meat Market and Organic Market - you'll find everything you need within close proximity.

Federation Square is Melbourne's unique landmarks and cultural precinct plus one of the most visited tourist attractions in the state of Victoria. It is home to The Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, the Centre for the Moving Image, the Australian Racing Museum and many different restaurants, cafes, bars and shops. The Melbourne Visitor Centre can also be found here so it's worth paying a visit to help you plan what attractions and activities you'd like to see and do during your time there.

Pay, or should we say, take a free trip to the Melbourne Museum - Australia's largest museum which houses an indoor rainforest, giant Rubik's cube shaped Children's Museum, the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, and displays featuring dinosaurs and insects and much more.

For the most breath-taking 360-degree views of Melbourne, climb up to the observatory deck of the Eureka Skydeck 88 which is located on the 88th floor of Eureka Tower - that is if you don't suffer from vertigo. If you're gutsy enough you'll love the thrill of The Edge experience - a glass cube that hangs from the side of the building and is suspended almost 984 feet above the ground.

Perth

On your travels you may be persuaded to visit the local sports team as Perth is decorated with an array of them. Perth is sports mad and you can watch football, cricket, rugby, Australia rules football among many others. The most famous teams are Perth Glory and the Western Warriors, both of football and cricket respectively. North American travellers need not be disheartened as Perth even has an ice Hockey and a basketball team!

Perth is the capital of Western Australia and a very cosmopolitan city. Founded by Captain James Stirling in 1829, it did not gain city status until 1856. Perth generally receives moderate rainfall but winters are relatively cool. Summers last from December until March and can be scorching but not devoid of rainfall.

Perth is renowned for the hosts of stars that have heralded from this great city. The recently deceased Heath Ledger and Sam Worthington (Star of Terminator 4 and Clash of the Titans) are just some of the great personalities that have impacted on Hollywood. British television viewers will also be surprised to know Perth is the home of Rolf Harris. The Western Academy of Performing Arts of Edith Cowan University has launched the career of Hugh Jackman, so students looking for a career in acting may be swayed by the great education standards here.

With a heavy influx of English, Scottish and Irish immigrants in the 19th century, potatoes make up a heavy staple in this regions diet. But this has slowly started to change thanks to the influence of Italians, Greeks and Chinese who have now fused Perth's local pallet with the likes of pasta, kebabs and fried rice over the past century.

Outback

The Outback - also known as the last frontier of Australia, back of beyond or beyond the black stump - is divided into different territories such as Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, Palm Valley, King Canyon, The Olgas and West MacDonnell Ranges. Ayers Rock - also known as Uluru - is an enormous sandstone rock formation standing 1,142 feet tall, which the Aborigines considered to be sacred. It is a popular attraction and natural wonder that travellers visit when coming to the Outback. Alice Springs is right bang in the middle of Australia and has a botanic garden, zoo, Aboriginal culture centre and environmental conservation institute.

The Australian Outback is a large area of remote and wild land which covers three quarters of the continent with dry deserts, dramatic rock formations, sand dunes, gorges, plants and varied native Australian animals. The true essence of Aboriginal culture and heritage can be experienced at its best here in the Outback and it proves to be an escape from the hustle and bustle of the cities.

From camels, koalas, dingoes, wallaroos and numbats to unusual reptiles like the thorny devil and frilled lizard are among the eclectic range of wildlife that can be found dotted around the Outback. They have adapted well to the harsh dry climate of their surroundings unlike humans. There are less than 60,000 people living in the Outback.

Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve Park has round, red granite rocks that range from twenty inches to twenty feet in size. According to Aboriginal folklore, these rocks are the eggs of the rainbow serpent. Kakadu National Park consists of miles and miles of rainforest and a vast wetland system teeming with wildlife and ancient rock sites to discover. Litchfield National Park has termite mounds, waterfalls and tropical forests and also has the Lost City, a group of unusually shaped sandstone, formed over millions of years through wind and rain erosion.

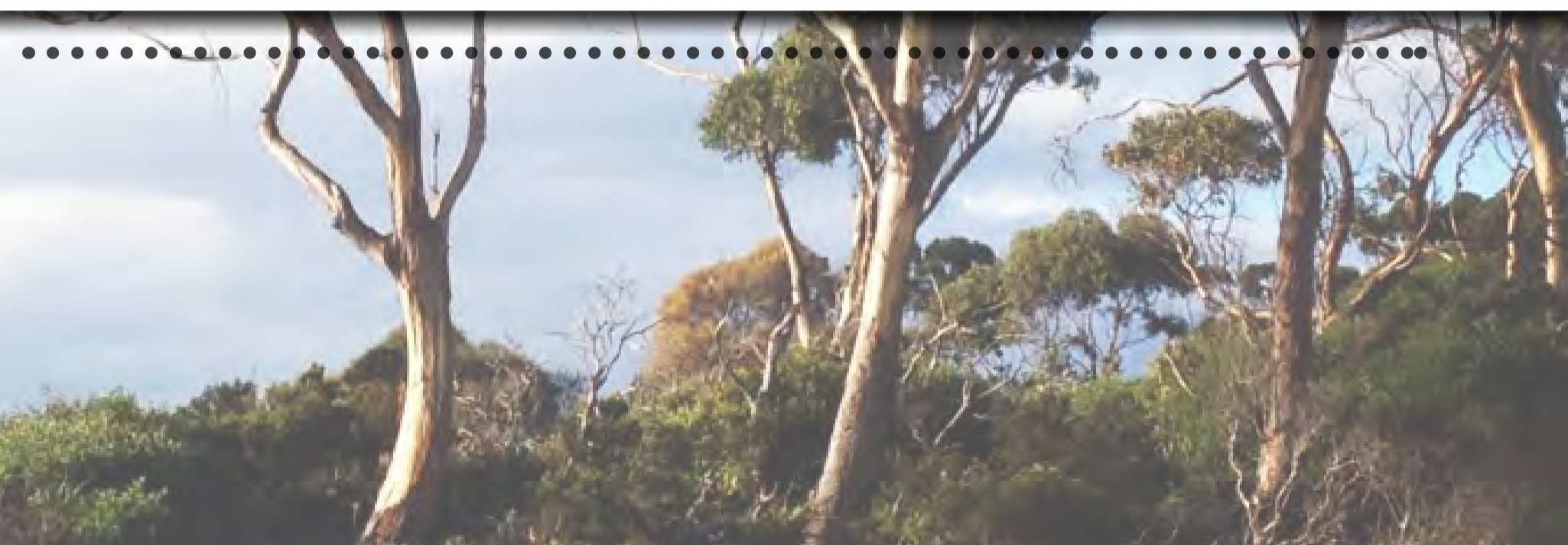
Tours are available for those who wish to explore every bit of the Outback with the guidance and knowledge of a qualified tour guide. Just make sure you bring plenty of water and snacks and dress appropriately as the Outback tends to get extremely hot and the last thing you want is to be stranded.

Nearby Islands

There are a whopping 8,222 islands in and around the borders of Australia. The largest of these are Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, Melville Island, Groote Eyalandt, Bathurst Island, Fraser Island, Flinders Island, King Island and Mornington Island. Now of course, you won't be able to visit all those islands so we've narrowed it down to a handful that are well-worth the trip.

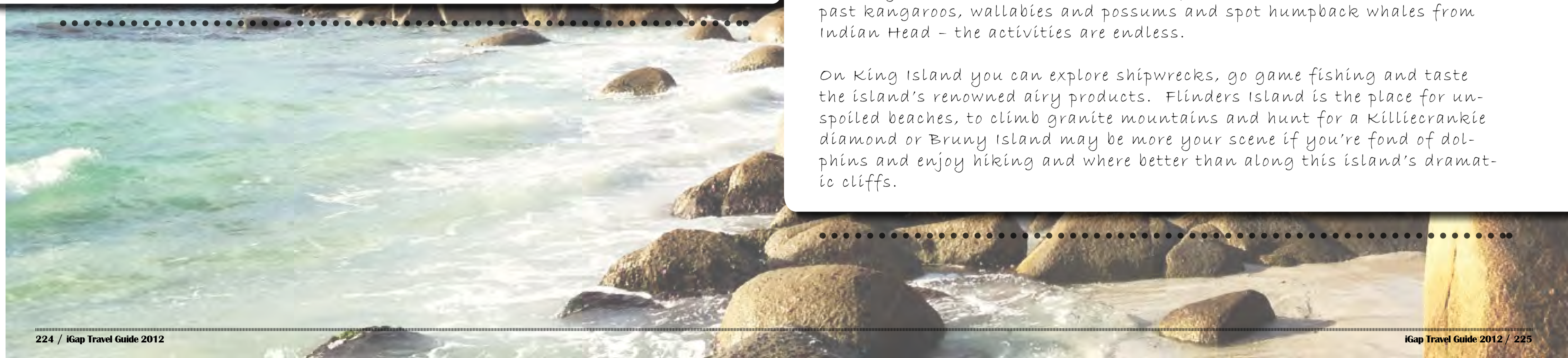
Kangaroo Island, despite its name, features more than its fair share of kangaroos. You'll find sea lions basking on the beach at Seal Bay and koala bears eating eucalyptus trees in Hanson Bay, pink pelicans hovering through the sky plus other wildlife roaming this island. This island has historic lighthouses, amazing underground caves and miles of luscious secluded beaches, one of which was voted 'Australia's Best Beach' - Vivonne Bay. The Remarkable Rocks is truly a remarkable natural attraction to visit in Kangaroo Island - the unusual rocks have been shaped by erosion from the wind and sea spray.

Philip Island is home to Australia's Motorcycle Grand Prix Circuit, contrasting wildlife such as penguins, koalas, waterbirds and potoroos and great beaches to swim, surf and fish from. Take a cruise to Seal Rocks where you'll come across the largest colony of fur seals in Australia or wander through the koala conservation centre to see koalas in their natural habitats. And that's not all, you will have the chance to see the penguin parade when little penguins come ashore at sunset in large groups, this is one of the many attractions Philip Island has to provide its visitors.



The World Heritage listed Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island and a favourite with backpackers. The best way to explore this place is using a 4WD (four wheel drive) and driving on the 75 mile beach like a highway. Visit the historic Maheno shipwreck, hike through the rainforest past kangaroos, wallabies and possums and spot humpback whales from Indian Head - the activities are endless.

On King Island you can explore shipwrecks, go game fishing and taste the island's renowned airy products. Flinders Island is the place for unspoiled beaches, to climb granite mountains and hunt for a Killiecrankie diamond or Bruny Island may be more your scene if you're fond of dolphins and enjoy hiking and where better than along this island's dramatic cliffs.



There are 3 mandatory requirements to get this specific visa:

1. Sponsorship - the employer must be approved by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for a specific number of temporary skilled overseas workers. In order for a sponsoring employer to be approved as a sponsor they need to satisfy a number of DIAC's requirements including the financial capacity to meet the sponsorship undertakings.

2. Nomination - the employer needs to nominate the positions they want to fill with a temporary resident and they must relate to an occupation which meets a minimum skills threshold including managerial, professional, associate professional and tradesman. The applicant must also be paid a minimum salary in accordance with the most recent average salary of Australian employees calculated by the Australian Bureau of statistics.

3. Visa Application - The Applicant needs to demonstrate that they have the skills to match the nominated vacancy and satisfy certain health and character requirements and since 2007 certain visa applicants now need to meet the English language requirements.

Alternatively you can be sponsored by a relative living in Australia or obtain a nomination from a participating state or territory government agency. Any partner and/or dependent children of the successful visa applicant are entitled to live and work in Australia but they are also required to satisfy certain health and character requirements.

You must have sufficient English language ability to be able to work in Australia. This is known as 'vocational' English. Generally, you will be required to sit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test to assess your English language ability. A higher level of English may be required for certain occupations. You can find out if your occupation requires a higher level of English by contacting the assessing authority for your nominated occupation.

SKILLED MIGRANT SELECTION REGISTER

Australia recently introduced a new skilled worker program called the Skilled Migrant Selection Register - also known as SkillSelect - which enables skilled workers interested in migrating to Australia to record their details for a skilled visa by submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI).

This system was brought in following the decision to de-commission the Skill Matching Database on 1 July 2012. Intending migrants can register their interest in being selected for independent (non-sponsored) migrating or seek nomination for a skilled visa from Australian employers or state and territory governments.

WORKING HOLIDAY VISA

The Working Holiday visa (WHV) permits anyone over the age of 18 yet below the age of 31 to live, work and travel in Australia for twelve months with an opportunity to extend it for an additional twelve months (second year WHV) by completing three months of seasonal work. You may leave and re-enter Australia as many times as you wish during this time. Gap-year students usually apply for this visa.

You must be a passport holder from one of the following countries: United Kingdom, USA, Belgium, Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey to be able to apply for the Working Holiday visa. You cannot work for the same employer for more than six months and cannot engage in study or training for more than four months.

Traditionally, in order to get a second year Working Holiday visa you would have to complete three months of specified work in regional Australia whilst on your first working holiday in either one of these industries: plant and animal cultivations, fishing and pearling, tree framing and felling, mining or construction.

But these requirements have now been changed. Instead these rules will apply to jobs in areas such as residential and non-residential building construction, provided the work is conducted in regional areas of Australia and completed during the first 12 months of their WHV.

SKILLED OCCUPATION LIST

The Skilled Occupation List (SOL) below lists all the current eligible occupations/professions which are accepted for permanent and temporary immigration to Australia and the points awarded for each one. Applicants must meet the range of criteria and pass the assessments set by an authorised agency before being eligible.

Australian immigration regularly updates the SOL list to reflect changes in Australian Labour Market and latest demand for occupations in the country.

You must provide evidence that your skills have been assessed by the relevant assessing authority for your nominated occupation before your visa can be granted.

From 1 July 2012, four occupations were added to the SOL and four others were removed. It spells good news for Production Managers (Mining), Metallurgists, Optometrists and Computer Network and Systems Engineers but means bad news for chemists, audiologists, bricklayers and floor tilers as they have been removed from the list.

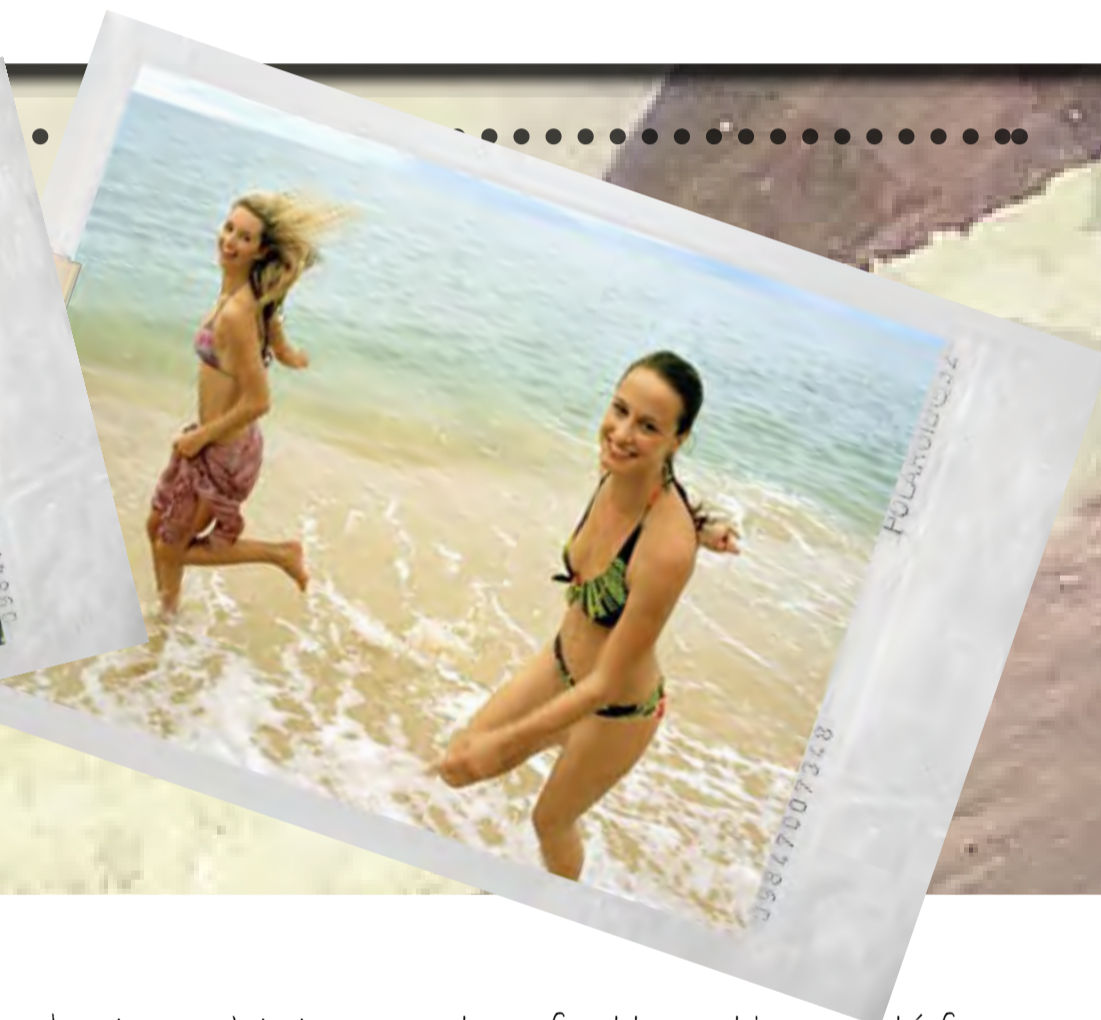
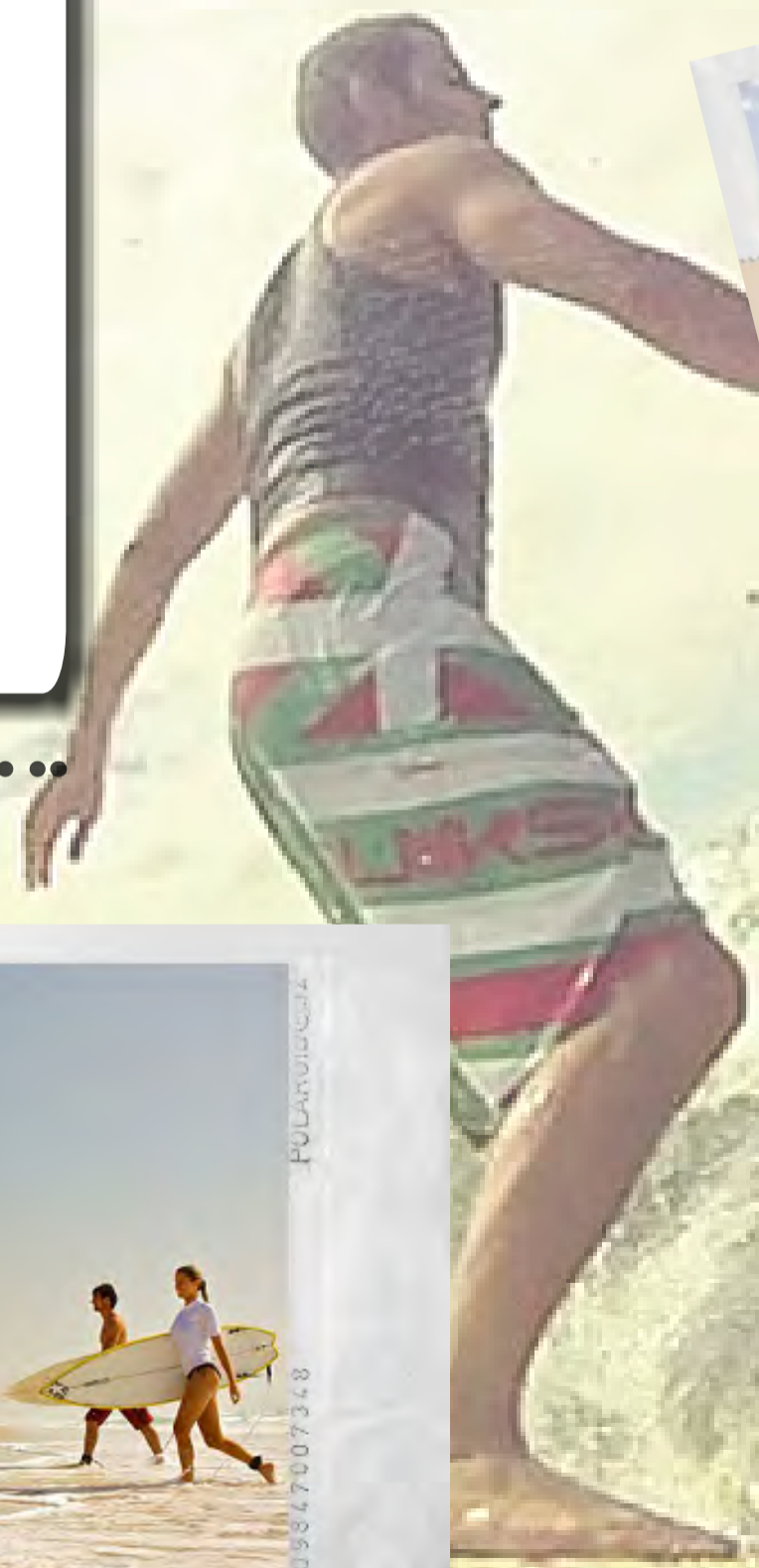
Surfing Holiday In Australia

In Australia surfing is not just a sport, it's a way of life. This passion combined with a sporty and fun atmosphere is second to none so it's no wonder Australia is home to the greatest waves on the earth and surfers from all over the world take to them. Challenge yourself whilst having the opportunity to meet new people all the while having an amazing time as you take to the waves on the beautiful coastlines of Australia.

The south coast is the main surfing area. The famous Bells Beach is a hotspot with its variety of waves. The location is home to the annual Rip Curl Pro competition where surfers can put their skills to the test in a friendly and competitive event. When you're not surfing why not relax on the long golden beaches, sipping a delicious cocktail whilst eating fresh food. Not to mention you'll be amongst like-minded people with the beautiful sun and clear blue skies.

The west coast boasts of being a place where surfers can enjoy the waves in a more peaceful environment with sun-kissed coastlines. Being home to the popular city of Perth, this is one of the world's greatest surfing cities. So why not indulge in the world's most remote capital city with its calming city atmosphere.

The east coast of Australia offers legendary spots such as Kirra and Burleigh Heads. The coast is so fantastic it has been a training ground for previous world champions. All the residential areas here, like that of Queensland, get plenty of attention with their brilliant attractions in a vibe like no other. Check out the colourful reefs, points of attractions and beach breaks. The weather is nothing less than beautiful and the sea temperature is warm, enticing as it sounds.



Surfing in Australia can be taught to people of all walks of life and abilities in all locations. There is always something you'll love about surfing, whether it's watching people do magnificent stunts to enjoying the peaceful tranquillity of the warm waters whilst gazing at the stunning horizon on your board. With the unique thrill you'll get from surfing, you'll want to stay in Australia and keep it up.



STUDYING in Australia

extensive field study at the Heron Island Research Station on the Great Barrier Reef, the Moreton Bay Research Station, and other locations in coastal Queensland.

The Australian Institute of Marine Science offers an outstanding course where you can learn all about the aquatic world; exploring unique plant life and 4,000 fish types of the 22,000 known worldwide. This is taught through practical research of the world famous Great Barrier Reef, as well as theoretical study.

Whilst you're on a break from studying, there are hundreds of activities for you to indulge in. At the Sydney Aquarium, marine enthusiasts can proceed through the huge shark jaws entrance, which will lead you into a world of underwater tunnels; inhabited by 11,000 fascinating sea creatures. With a small-group walking tour, you will discover the hidden secrets of Melbourne's roads and arcades, immersing you in the heritage and culture of this cosmopolitan city.



Going back to the concept of studying in a place that doesn't require English speakers to get too far outside their language comfort zone, we have another English-speaking country on our list - Australia. And as with the United Kingdom, although Australian English really does have its own individual language qualities, it's certainly easier to not have to worry about learning an entirely different language altogether.

The Marine Biology and Terrestrial Ecology Program is an opportunity to contribute to the world-class research that is conducted on such subjects as coral reefs, environmentally-friendly clean beaches, salt marshes and many more at the programs' excellent research stations and teaching facilities. The program features lecturers, laboratory studies, and

Course fees vary from \$4,000 to \$24,000, depending on the time and location you chose to study at. The cost of living in Australia can be expensive, but it's simple to get a job in order pick up some extra cash.

Sydney and Melbourne are two of the more popular cities in which to study, but Australia is a big country. Its huge central region isn't anyplace you're going to find a university, but the western city of Perth is an option if you want to venture beyond where most students go. If you're studying marine biology, it is wise to stay near to the Great Barrier Reef. Overall, students of just about any subject can find lots to enjoy in Australia.





MILFORD SOUND

Rudyard Kipling once called this the "eighth Wonder of the World". The towering mountains, and steep valleys of dense native forest on the State Highway 94 opens up into the deep, narrow fiord of Milford Sound with Mitre Peak rising majestically from the water to give you one of the greatest views in the world. Go kayaking and explore the passage that leads 10 miles to the open sea, or take an overnight cruise on the sounds marvelling at the seals and penguins, and spotting the bottlenose dolphins that often bow-ride the passengers boats. **Simply breathtaking.**

New Zealand may be small, remote and thinly populated but it punches well above its weight with its outlandish scenery, magical outdoor experiences, glorious sunshine and impressive celebration of its indigenous Mauri people. So now it's time to go Kiwi spotting, learn the Haka and join the party.





WELLINGTON

Wellington is the home of Peter Jackson and the set of fantasy trilogy **Lord of the Rings**. The die-hard movie lovers can visit the filming locations, as well as Weta Cave, where you will get to see works created by the team behind Avatar, District 9 and many more. As the capital city of New Zealand, there is so much more on offer. Get a taste of Maori history with a visit to Te Papa - the national museum, and visit the innovative inner city nature reserve, the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. Film nut or not, Wellington will truly enchant you.

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CHRISTCHURCH

This vibrant, multicultural and contemporary city is well worth an overnight stay. Visit the outstanding Christchurch Art Gallery, Hagley Park and the incredible Botanical Gardens before sampling one of the vast arrays of bars and restaurants. When you leave, be sure to ride the TransAlpine Train, voted one of the top rail journeys in the world taking you through dramatically different scenery from the patchwork farmlands of Canterbury Plains and into the dramatic Southern Alps, before gliding into the pristine rainforest of the West Coast.

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CORONET PEAK

New Zealand easily adapts to its seasons so that summer hiking destinations turn effortlessly into winter playgrounds for skiers and snowboarders. If you visit during the winter months of June to October you will find the Southern Alps awash with spectacular rollercoaster terrain ranging from beginner slopes to Black Diamond runs that will be sure to get the adrenaline going.



ROUND UP
New Zealand is an island country comprising of two main landmasses. Whether you travel to the North or the South Island, or even the numerous smaller islands surrounding, you will never experience the same holiday twice - making this a grand destination to visit over and over again.



Tour the set of The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings in New Zealand

With the release of 'The Hobbit' this Christmas, tours to visit the real 'Middle Earth' are becoming hot property. Visiting the picturesque New Zealand village where the 'The Lord of the Rings' shire movie set sits, is easier than you think, with plenty of tours to choose from.

The 'Hobbiton tours' official website offers eleven different tours for the avid fantasy fanatic in everyone. Depending on your budget and time, there's a tour for everyone with most offering all a two-hour guided fascinating excursion around the set and views of the village.

Peter Jackson (director of 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy and 'The Hobbit') filmed the famous shire scenes in the small village of Matamata that lies beneath the Kai-mai ranges. With its idyllic and quaint setting, Alexander farm was the perfect choice and now the farmland welcomes tourists and fans of the films alike. The tour takes guests on a drive around the village for spectacular views of the roaming hills and green countryside. Unfortunately because hobbits are scared of 'big folk' we can't guarantee you'll see one but you may just see a certain Bilbo Baggins hiding in the trees on your adventures.

The hobbits of the shire have kindly leant their homes for our pleasure so all tours offer a viewing of the hobbits homes and holes. You'll see just how the magical live, as the props and furniture used in the film still lie within the sets. As the set is located on a farm, you also have the opportunity to cuddle and bottle feed the pet lambs that frolic around the scenic surroundings.

The tours typically end or begin at 'The Shires Rest', a tranquil cafe where you can put your (hobbit) feet up and enjoy some tea and a tasty meal. The cafe boasts a balcony where you can appreciate the views that lie in front of you and two entertainment rooms with hobbit interior inspired rest rooms. 'The Shires Rest' menu includes breakfast, lunch and dinner but if you're not hungry for a full meal the cafe also offers a morning and afternoon tea and nibbles menu.



Tickets for the tours range between £34 for a standard tour to £174 for a private tour. For a full list of the tours available and to book online visit the official 'Hobbiton tours' website [here](#).

ASIA

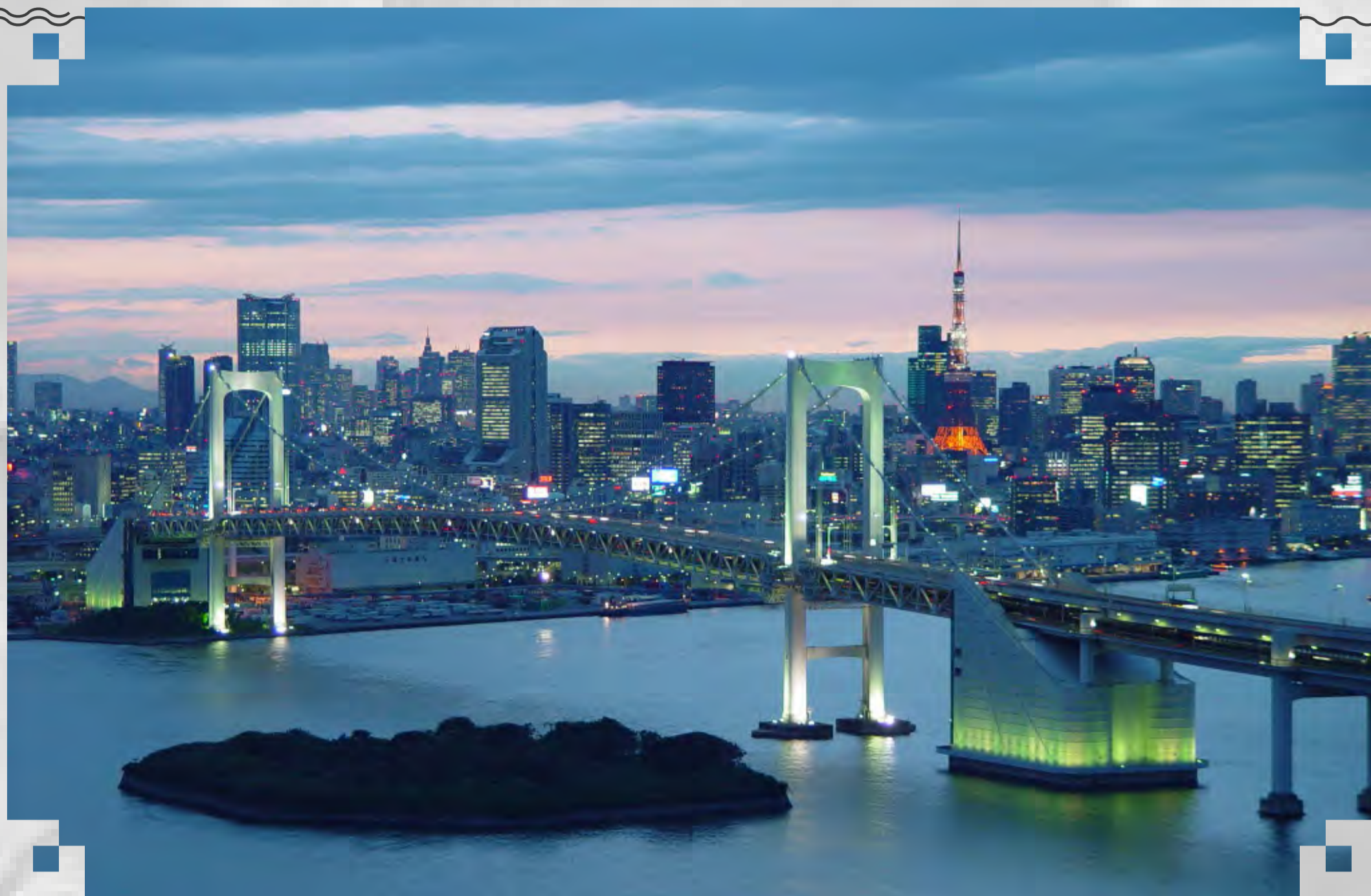


Tokyo

You shouldn't deny the country that gave us **Pokémon and Godzilla**, a visit. Unique and innovative, the capital of Japan, Tokyo is inviting and entertaining, to say the least.

Shopping in Tokyo is great, you can find all the replica Ray-bans and designer bags you wish and get inspired by all the colourfully creative Harajuku girls, Gwen Stefani loves so much. If you fancy dabbling into fashion, but aren't as brave as said Harajuku's then hunt out a Uniqlo. The original Japanese stores are stylish and modern and make shopping enjoyable; tee-shirts are displayed in plastic jars and are displayed in racks like cans of Coca-Cola in fridges.

The food of Japan is the ramen noodle. They may be cheap and taste like plastic in other countries but in Japan, they taste like heaven. They're impossible to avoid in Tokyo so you may as well indulge! For the best noodles in the whole of the city visit Menya Mushai near Shinjuku. The chefs at Mushai cook their signature noodles with yuzu (a Japanese citrus fruit) and with hints of katsu (skipjack tuna).



We'd think it damn right rude if you don't sample an **Ousen** - a hot spring spa - and so would your muscles. They are the perfect place to relax and you'll find them everywhere in Tokyo. They are usually spread over a beautiful rural area and are a perfect place to waste an afternoon in. Let the thermal water do its magic.

For something completely different, the city runs a **'Haunted Tokyo' tour that looks in the supernatural**. On the tour you explore the city's backstreets, spotting areas you may have missed when you have taken a previous stroll around the city. If that isn't enough to spook you, join the 'Shinjuku Ghosts and Demons' tour that takes you on a trip to Oiwa Inari Tamiya Jinja, home to the notorious violent ghost Oiwa - you can't make it up.

We couldn't resist mentioning a typical tourist attraction for you to revel in whilst in Tokyo; the **biggest Ferris wheel** in Japan. Bright blue and 115 meters high, it sits in Fukuoka's Marinda City shopping district and its begging to be experienced.



Studying in Japan

It would seem that nowadays Japan is more famous for anime cartoons and their science fiction dinosaur Godzilla but when it comes to education, **the country has educated some of the finest Nobel Prize winners.** Better yet, their growing economic and cultural expansion makes it the perfect time to study here.

Studying part time (one year or less) at a Japanese language school will only require a tourist visa but a student visa is vital if you wish to become a full time student. The application for a student visa requests an educational institution as their sponsor. Once successful, you are unable to work during your time in Japan unless you acquire permission from the school or university you are studying at. This is to avoid distraction from studies and to get the utmost potential out of students.

A regular undergraduate degree at any Japan University is four years whereas degrees in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy last for six years. The most popular courses are found in the social sciences such as law, business and accounting.

In terms of **cost**, the Japanese government runs scholarships, privately financed and foreign government sponsored programmes for students to fund their fees and master's degree will cost around £1,000 a month.



Japan is renowned for entertaining crowds with their own brand of sport, **sumo wrestling.** Tournaments last for 15 days and are held in 'sumo stadiums' around the country in cities such as Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya.

For a glimpse of Japanese history the legendary temples that are found everywhere around the country are more than worth a visit. **Finding your inner Buddha** is easier than you think as most temples are free to visit in Tokyo.

There is nothing like celebrating and no one does it better than the Japanese. Heaps of **festivals** are held frequently over the summer and the most popular is the 'Kandra Matsuri' which involves numerous musicians, dancers, floats and fireworks.

China

What is China without its food, dragon dancing and pandas? Sure, you can experience all this in England but for traditional Chinese food and to see the pandas in their natural habitat, you need to be in this astounding, beautiful country.

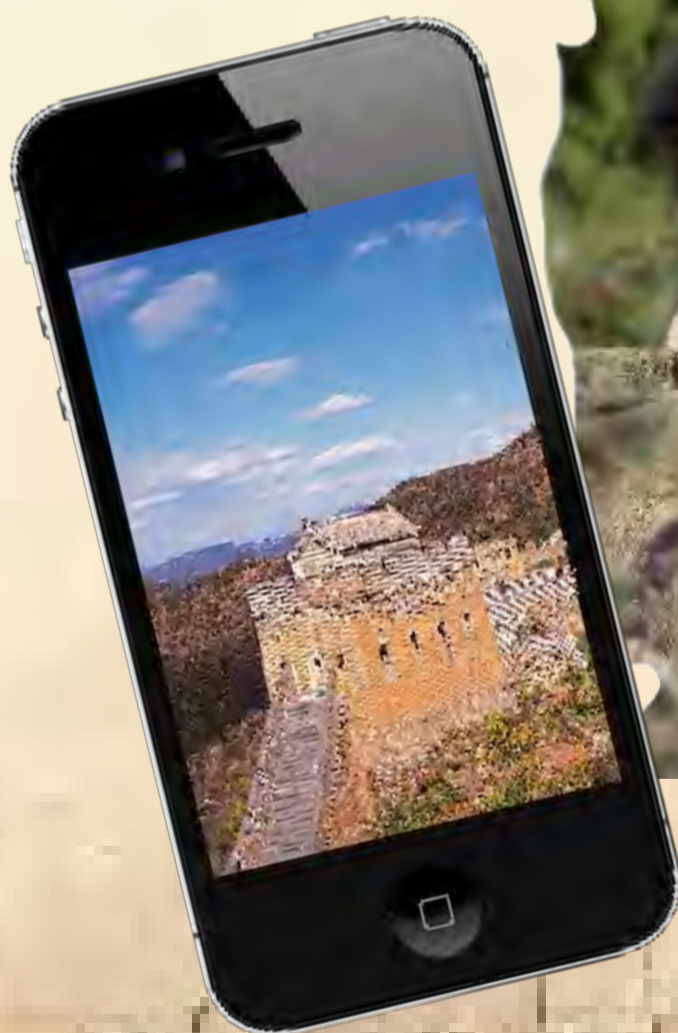
The best time to catch a dragon dance is during Chinese New Year at the end of January-early February. Being in China during their next year is spectacular, anyway. The dragon dance is the highlight of the celebrations but you catch a performance at any Chinese festival all year round. If you're more into sports why not watch a dragon boat race? Traditionally Chinese, Shanghai holds a 'Dragon Boat Festival' every year during the summer where the competitive sport takes centre stage which features a bright colourful atmosphere that is nothing like anything you've seen before.



When you feel like relaxing, you're in the right country for it. Turn any corner in the busy high street of Beijing and you'll see a Chinese traditional medicine therapy shop. If you're ill then pick up any of the herbal tonics for instant effects or if you fancy relaxing, Chinese acupuncture or massages come highly recommended. If you fancy taking part in traditional Tai Chi then head to Beijing's Beihai Park or People's Square in Shanghai early in the morning where you'll see the senior teachers practicing the sport. If you're interested to learn don't hesitate to ask the seniors for a lesson where they'll teach you there and then.

Forget everything you know about Chinese food; chop suey, egg rolls, sweet and sour and fortune cookies, these dishes have all been heavily influenced by the Americans so for a 'traditional' Chinese meal in Beijing, Hong Kong or Shanghai you won't find a Chinese buffet. The food will be served to you how it is in any restaurant; authentic favourite meals include noodle soup, Kung pao chicken, the trademark dish of Beijing; peking duck and for dessert; mooncake. The Chinese are wonderful cooks so head to the popular Din Tai Fung in Shanghai for these special dishes.

Nowadays, Giant Pandas are predicted to be extinct in the year 2045. They might not be around for much longer despite desperate efforts by the WWF so go and see them as soon as you can. The national bear of China, the Yangtze Basin region holds the panda's primary habitat but the panda breeding and research centre in Chengdu is where you can visit these fascinating bears on a day trip to the mountain sanctuary.



Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In China, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) is a fantastic opportunity not to be missed. Imagine walking into a classroom of well-behaved students, all of whom are enthusiastic to learn. As a teacher, you'll be passing your English language skills onto a class of friendly and determined students; knowing that what you're teaching is of great benefit to both your students and yourself.

An advantage of working in private schools is that many institutions will pay for your travel expenses to and from Asia. Many teachers are reimbursed at the end of their contract, so you'll leave with a nice sum of money, along with unforgettable memories and valuable knowledge.

With this fantastic opportunity you will be embarking on an adventure of a lifetime. Additionally, achieving new qualifications in the English and Chinese languages can be a huge advantage in the global job market. Find the right training course for you [here](#) and there's a 95 percent chance you'll develop what employers' desire in candidates. So why not sharpen up your English language skills whilst learning Chinese, as exploring the enchanting land of China and give yourself a wealth of knowledge and memories.

There's no need to miss out, as even if you don't speak the language, the basics are easy to pick up. As a teacher you can expect to be paid, for hours you'd expect from any working day, the salaries range from 3,800 to 6,000 Yuan per month, with an average of 4,500 Yuan. So you'll get paid to embark on the most rewarding adventure of your time.

China is vastly becoming a world leader in technology and education, so now is the best time to jump on board. With nationwide opportunities, it's certain you'll find a programme and school suited to you.



The Mooncake Festival

The Mid-Autumn festival, also known as the Moon or Mooncake festival, is a significant celebration in the Chinese calendar but also celebrated by the Vietnamese and Taiwanese and deemed as the equivalent of celebrating Christmas in Western culture.

The festival, held on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month when the moon is at its brightest, celebrates the end of the Autumn harvest and is an important tradition hence why it was made a public holiday. This year it will fall on September 30th.

There are several elements to the festival such as: moon gazing and eating mooncakes - a Chinese delicacy usually only eaten during this festival. Most mooncakes are imprinted with Chinese symbols which translate into keywords like "harmony" or "longevity" and consist of a dense filling like an egg yolk to represent the full moon. Other customs include: carrying bright lanterns, dancing, family reunions and matchmaking.

The festival dates back to ancient times when legend has it 10 suns appeared all at once in the sky. The Emperor instructed a famous archer to shoot down the nine extra suns and once completed the Goddess of Western Heaven rewarded the archer with a pill that would make him immortal.

However, his wife found it and took it herself; as a result she was banished to the moon. Apparently the mythical Moon Goddess of Immortality can be seen dancing on the moon to this day.

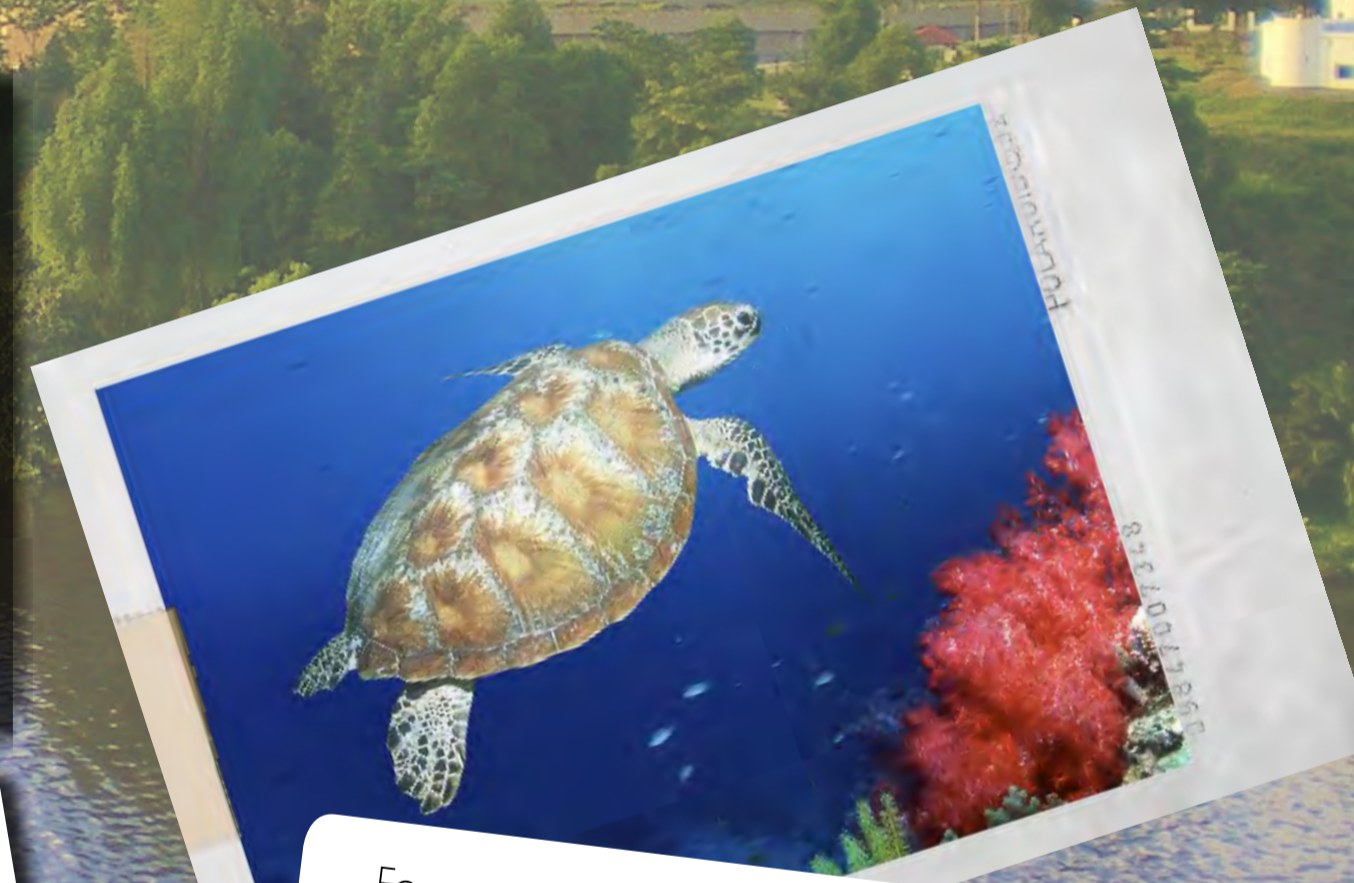


Malaysia



A colourful and vitalising country, Malaysia entertains and electrifies every tourist that flocks here. For a fun-filled and packed holiday, Malaysia doesn't disappoint.

Join the 'Red Ape' trail in the city of Kuching for an adventurous trek through the enchanting rainforest where you'll wild orang-utans and visit remote communities. The trail promises its customers an insight into wild, endangered species that survive in their natural habitat. Visiting the authentic longhouses of the local Iban guides is also on the itinerary, the guides give speeches of their knowledge of the animals and their communities.



Whenever you get hungry, the Top Spot Food Court in Kuching is always there for you. With numerous stalls lit up in neon, spacious dining areas and the freshest of food that includes only the best traditional Malaysian cuisine. Go to the food court for breakfast, lunch and dinner where you'll find delicious dishes such as midin, oyster pancakes and razor clams. Try a dish from every stall to truly appreciate the amazing food Malaysia has to offer.

For remarkable sights and an adrenaline-filled afternoon, take a hike up Mount Kinabalu located in the Borneo Island. Being the tallest mountain the whole of South-East Asia is proof you're going to have a good time. Luckily for all tourists and mountain climbing virgins, is it one of the easiest peaks to conquer, only takes two days and the climber leaders don't ask for any previous experience. Climbers typically take two people a day with an overnight stop at a guest house. Incredibly rewarding and unforgettable, climbing Kinabalu is one activity you can't miss out on.

A night out in Malaysia is surprisingly better than you may initially think. Sky Bar, situated in the centre of Kuala Lumpur is vibrant and glamorous and is the best place to head to for a cocktail in Malaysia- it's situated on the top floor of a hotel after all!

Cheap & Cheerful: A Thailand Adventure

There are so many reasons to travel around Thailand from the undeniably fantastic cuisine, the therapeutic and beautiful beaches to the wildlife to name a few but the main reasons are most likely, to experience a different culture like no other and gain insight into another way of life. Most travellers say the best way to fulfil your Thailand experience is to 'Go native'- this means imitating the locals by embracing their way of life. However this can be expensive so here are the best ways to fully experience what Thailand has to offer on a budget.

BANGKOK BIKE RIDE

There's no need to spend shed loads of money on transport to get around Bangkok or visit attractions when you can simply take bike rides. Get off the beaten track and explore the city as you cycle through lanes, markets, traditional houses, stunning temples and peaceful canals. Not only will you get to be in the centre of the major attractions like the Red Frame Giant and Suthat Temple but you will also get to meet the friendly locals. Not to mention you will get a brilliant insight into Bangkok that few tourists know about. Bike rides are an adventurous and authentic way to discover and fall in love with Thailand.

SHOPPING

Shopping is popular and notoriously inexpensive in Bangkok but that doesn't necessarily mean you pay less for a poor quality product. The best way to experience rural Thai culture is by cruising to the floating markets. Yes, these markets are literally floating and are filled with a wide range of products. These are great places to stock up on produce, especially if you're not staying in Thailand on a full-board basis. At the market you will be welcomed by friendly locals into a sensational aroma and atmosphere like no other. You can pick up anything from fresh exotic fruit that you have never heard of to delicious meat. Thailand is also a major clothing manufacturer and exporter so you can easily get a wide range of garments from "K-mart specials" to designer goods being available at a great value.

HAT MAI KHAO

As a traveller and tourist, when there's a beach nearby it comes as no surprise you will want to take the opportunity to chill out and lounge around, peace and solitude are just a few steps away. So why not soak up the sun on Phuket's longest beach with its fantastic atmosphere? What makes it even better is the fact that you can do this for free. There are lively parts of the Hat Mai Khao beach where you can join in with water activities or simply have a splash around in the warm clear blue sea. If you come between November and February you can witness the Sea Turtles laying their eggs, which is nothing less than a special event.

Whilst at Hat Mai Khao, if you find time to pull yourself away from the beautiful beach, let Phuket seduce you. With a smooth blend of ostentation and seediness, Phuket is as colourful as it is cosmopolitan. After all it has got a renowned reputation as one of the world's most famous travel destinations.

NIGHTLIFE

The great news about the nightlife in Thailand is that you don't have to go far for a cheap and cheerful time. Look around, you will find bars, clubs and other entertainment venues all available at moderate prices. The Bed is a popular place and is regarded as one of the hottest clubs in Bangkok. The place is worth paying a visit just to take pictures of the space-ship like building inside and to dance the night away to great music. Alternatively there are beach bars and clubs along the coastlines; you can dine in any one of these then sip your drinks whilst watching the sky transform from a picturesque sunset to stunning starry backdrop lighting up the sky all amongst a friendly atmosphere.

ACCOMMODATION

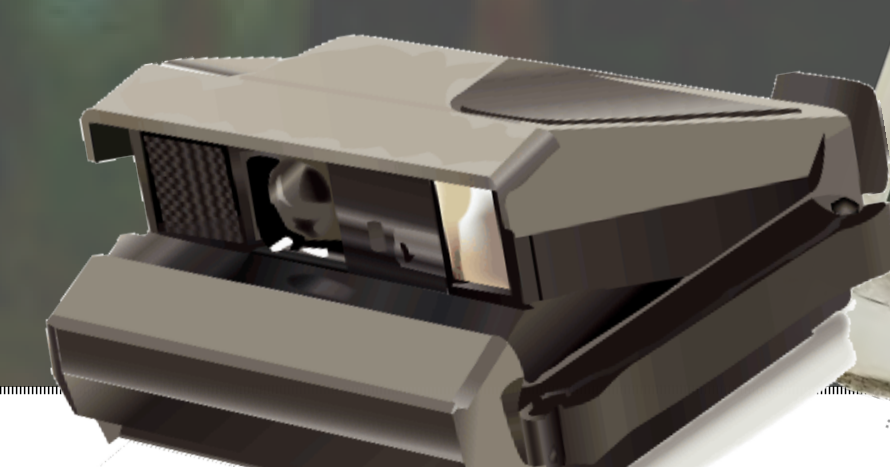
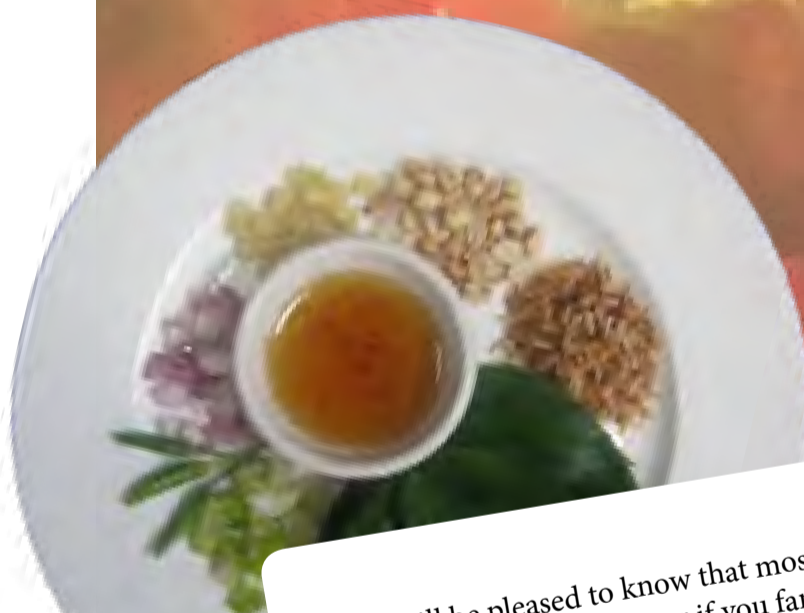
After the culture of Thailand, the next most enticing aspect of travelling here is the budget for accommodation. The country is well numerated with cheap places to stay but it is important to look around in advance so you can get the best accommodation for your money. Most parts of Thailand offer guest houses and low-cost hotels as well decent hostels. You will be pleasantly surprised to find cheap and clean living quarters in many of the cities and towns of Thailand.

FOOD

You will be pleased to know that most of the food is cheap in most parts of Thailand, especially as Thai food is one of the world's most popular cuisines. However if you fancy something different, Thailand's many restaurants will satisfy your hunger. They offer a wealth of culinary expertise with food from almost every part of the world. The popular Fame restaurant is an expensive way to experience the best of Thai or other world cuisines. Their menu varies from western breakfasts to Thai stir-fries. You can also purchase tickets here for local things to do like ferry riding. However, there is an abundance of diners which are an affordable place to eat in Thailand.

ROUND UP

Thailand is a fantastic land to explore so there's no doubt why it's such a popular tourist destination. With these attributes you can have the time of your life and still have money left over; perfect all around.





The previously unknown Khao Phing Kan blissful islands are now a major tourist attraction after they lent themselves to the filming of 'The Man with the Golden Gun'. To walk along the same golden sands Roger Moore did back in 1974 and to re-enact the Bond and villain Scaramanga (Christopher Lee) western shootout scene with your friends take a trip to 'James Bond island'. Unfortunately we can't guarantee you'll see Ursula Andress or Daniel Craig strut out of the water!

James Bond Tour of Thailand

Sometimes it's simply not enough to just watch 007 dipping his feet in crystal clear waters and sipping on Martinis, you want to be there too. Now you can. After 'The Man with the Golden Gun' and 'Tomorrow Never Dies' featured scenes filmed in and around Thailand, tourists desire to visit, rose and this resulted in the renaming of an island and several monuments becoming tourist attractions.





James Bond Tour of Thailand

Tour buses leave Phuket every day to the island which takes thousands of eager Bond fans to popular monkey caves, a spot of lunch at a Muslim fishing village before sailing off to 'James Bond island'. Some bar and restaurants lie on the island, and you're given about an hour to take some photos, have a bite to eat and a beer before you're hustled back onto the boats. The island itself is stunning so if you prefer to have longer to appreciate it, then book yourself onto a June Bartha cruise. After you board a traditional Siamese Junk, the cruise- which can be enjoyed anytime of the day- takes you to the island and allows you to stay for a few hours. The boat itself resembles a similarity to the one Scaramanga owned in the film so practice your evil laugh and gun stance whilst you sail along the green waters.

If you take a drive along Ratchadamnoen Klang Road in the heart of Bangkok, you'll see a few famous monuments that appear in the car chase scene between 007 and Scaramanga in 'The Man with the Golden Gun'. The Democracy monument lies on the Dinso Road intersection which is seen in the film and then further down the road, the 'Giant Swing' comes in shot which is seen briefly during the car chase. The swing sits in front of the 'Wat Suthat' temple that is also seen briefly.



Despite wanting to film half of 'Tomorrow Never Dies' in Vietnam, the production team were forced to relocate to Bangkok. During the second half of the film, James and 'Bond girl' Wai Lin climb down a skyscraper. We don't recommend you climb down the Westin Banyan Tree Hotel but we do recommend you stay there. At around [£140](#) a night it's not cheap but with skyscraper views, a rooftop restaurant, luxurious spas and outdoor swimming pool it's got 007 written all over it. So book yourself a room, and don't worry we won't tell if you use the pseudo, 'James Bond'. For a cheaper version of touristy, visit the idyllic Mahogany Wharf where Bond battles against his enemies in an adrenaline-fuelled bike chase.

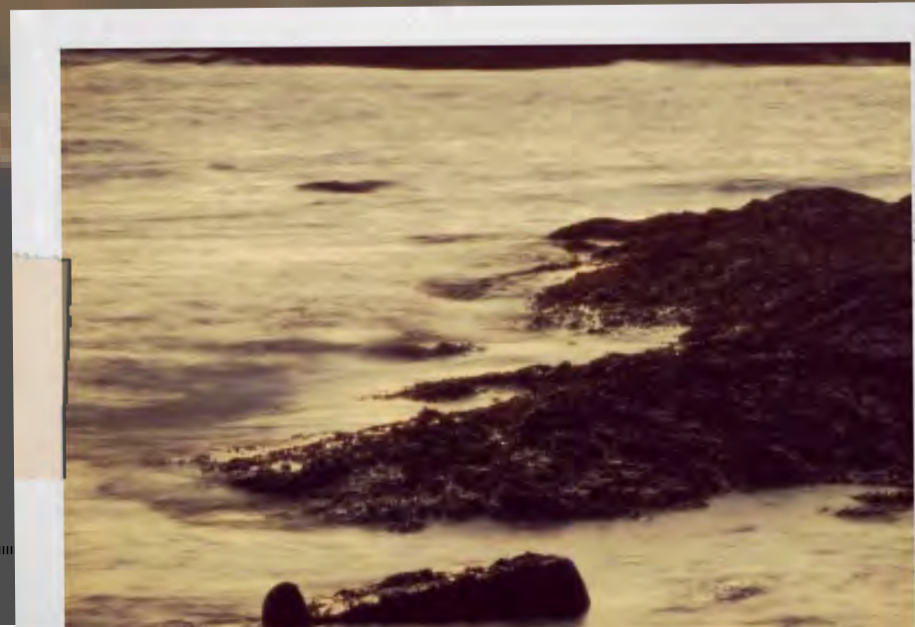
Cycle India

India is a magical journey of **adventure, beauty and mystery**; it's a land that knows no limits on lifestyle. Cycling tours through India are a fantastic way to experience the real India because it's a unique opportunity to see everything, get involved with the vast and diverse culture they have and maybe even learn a thing or two.

Pedal through diverse and cultural villages filled with friendly and traditional people who are all too eager to share wonderful stories and get to know you. The ride along the open road between villages will perhaps be shared by camels, cows, goats and maybe even an elephant.

See children running around freely and often playing a game of cricket, amongst the vast diversity of the streets. See temples that have their own individual style and peaceful kind people. Experience an unforgettable **first hand experience of how the locals live**; like women taking water from the communal well and the villagers helping each other in their everyday to day life.

No other opportunity will allow regular people to tour on bike through the popular Indian states of **Rajasthan and Karala**. Rajasthan is a place where the culture proves to be as diverse as the people and fun events like circuses and fun fairs are regular. The state is the home of tremendous stories that make its history fascinating. Or cyclists can freely explore the secluded areas of Karala on a timeless safari. They'll find that this land is an alternative beauty to Rajasthan. With its lush green mountains, wonderful woodlands, easy going rivers, blue lagoons and abundant wildlife Karala looks like it has been crafted by god's own hands.



Be overwhelmed by the astonishing transformations of deserts and towns as you explore them on camel back: as travellers and nomads have done for centuries. Watching the sunset and sunrise in the **Thar Desert** is a sight that's worth seeing and video recording, because it's so unique and pure. There's no other place on earth to see the magical stars light up the clear mid-night sky in the cool breeze than in this desert.

Accompanied by Indian friends, who know the tours like the back of their hand, through-out the tour cyclists will never be lost and have somebody to share the experience that sums up life itself.

There is **plenty of accommodation**, which is very well priced, throughout the Himalayan Mountain and City tours with friendly hotel staff. Those on the tours can either book in advance or let their inner adventurer out as they choose where to stay once in the destination.

Exploring the vast and remote world of the **Himalayas** is the opportunity of a life time. For centuries men and women have been pulled towards the Himalayas to conquer their peaks and explore the intricate and unique labyrinths of their hidden valleys. This part of the journey starts in the lush foothills of the Kullu valley. From here you will be welcomed into the remote and magnificent peaks, which is like a beautiful and peaceful world of its own. Travellers will ride through unbeatable views of mountains that will enable them to see the vast land for miles. Nature like the large cool clear blue lakes and green trees and pure white snow is unique to the Himalayan Mountains. Even in the Summer travellers will be in the habitat of breathtaking wildness and desolate beauty.



It is easy to read this from a computer, tablet or smart phone screen but you could soon take on the **experience of a lifetime** with a friendly group of companions in what is undoubtedly the most exciting bicycle adventure to be had on Earth.

Best of the Rest of Asia

SINGAPORE

Singapore, a former British trading colony in the 19th century, is located in Southeast Asia. If tourists want to experience the tropical weather and the medley of cultures on display, Singapore is definitely the country for you.

For those of you lovely wives that enjoy shopping and spending your husband's hard earned cash on designer clothes and shopping in general, why not head on over to Orchard Road? The road is literally awash with shops and malls as far as the eye can see. Maybe you want to take your family along with you instead on Christmas Day where you and the children will enjoy walking through a road where palm trees are decorated with reindeers and gingerbread houses covered in fake snow.

Due to the great influx of Chinese and Indian immigrants during the colonial period you would be hard pressed not to find Chinese and Indian restaurants everywhere you go. Tourists looking to sample the sumptuous local cuisine should make their way to Chinatown, which is now a Chinese heritage area. For those heat seekers that can't bear to eat without having their tongues burned, do not look beyond Little India, north of the city core. Most of their restaurants are renowned for their spicy heat!

Want to avoid the congested cities and have a more relaxing time? Pack your slippers and beach towels and head off to the East Coast. Home to Singapore's Malay populous, you will encounter a friendly local community, wonderful coastline and loads of eateries.

VIETNAM

Vietnam is situated in Southeast Asia and neighbours countries such as China, Laos and Cambodia. From October to April the northern region of Vietnam is hit with a monsoon period. Outside of this timeframe the north has lukewarm weather, often cloudy with bouts of drizzle. The south too experiences the monsoon between September and January, but for the rest of the year stays mainly dry and sunny.

Culturally the Vietnamese have lent heavily upon the Chinese. This is very evident in Ho Chi Minh City, where large contingents of Chinese are designated and where Cantonese is considered a second language. But tourists who cannot stand the thought of eating cat meat for lunch can keep their minds at ease thanks to the French! Having once been occupants of the lands themselves, the Vietnamese culture has absorbed a strong French influence too and tourists will be happy to find that baguettes and coffee is popular among locals.

Tourists cannot pass through Vietnam without visiting museums and archaeological sites in Ho Chi Minh City. Americans need not worry; you will be greeted cordially by the locals instead of with a bayonet! If that doesn't tickle your fancy perhaps seeing ancient Vietnamese tribes and beautiful scenery in the northern provinces of Hanoi and Dong Dang. The ancient city of Hue is home to the former kings of Vietnam in the central coast in places like Dong Ha and Lang Co. Seeing tombs and shrines that are beautifully decorated is something worth considering for you holiday-snappers.



MONGOLIA



Mongolia is a distinct nation because of its rich history and still fairly common nomadic lifestyle. The travel season really begins during May and hits its peak around July, with August being ideal for weather conditions.

For those tourists with an interest in history you may want to see the capital Ulaanbaatar. It is adorned with artefacts and museums dedicated to their most popular export Genghis Khan.

For you testosterone-fuelled men wanting to watch some sport and get away from the wives, why not head on down to the town centre in Ulaanbaatar and witness the Naadam festival on July 11-13. Men sporting wrestling attire and jostling for ring supremacy, you will be enthralled. Perhaps women wanting to see some eye candy should tag along too!

Of course tourists can visit Erdenet and look at the copper mines and famous carpet factory. The Altai Tavan Bogd National Park offers scenic beauty, as does the Uvs Nur Lake in the Uvs province, which is a World Heritage site.



NEPAL

It is landlocked in South Asia and contains eight of the ten world's peaks, also home to Mount Everest. Nepal is the home of Gautama Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist faith. Nepal experiences heavy monsoon rains between June and September but cooler weather between October and December, so don't forget to pack your umbrellas!

The Himalayas known as the "roof of the world" will appeal to you tourists that are adrenaline junkies and trekkers. Rock climbing and sport adventures are just some of the things you can do here. But if you want to blow off steam and relax instead, you can always travel to Langtang National Park, which has gorgeous sites in its own right.

Maybe Kathmandu valley sounds more appealing. Home to various cultures and religions, families will tend to enjoy this region more. Sacred temples and monuments can be seen all over places like Patan and Bhaktapur and is popular among tourists.

PHILIPPINES



As an archipelago in Southeast Asia, the Philippines is a unique country. It is made up of no less than seven thousand islands that lie between Philippine Sea and the South East China Sea. Weather is very tropical in general but between March and May the heat can be scorching. Strong typhoons can occur in October, so packing Hawaiian shirts and flip-flops isn't exactly a good idea.



Tourists can join in with the local festivities, for example Easter Sunday. The Chinese New Year offers plenty of colour and street parades and Eid-ul-Fitr offers Muslim tourists a more sombre experience of prayer and ritual. Don't forget Christmas Day also in Baguio, where many tourists tend to flock to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Visayas is the region of islands located centrally and the most attractive destination in the Philippines to tourists wanting to avoid religion and culture and soak up some sea and sand. They have the best beaches throughout and for nature lovers provide biodiversity in great quantity.

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EUROPE

EUROPE!

Europe has been experiencing economic tumult this past year but it has not deterred tourists from travelling all over Europe, so why should it stop you?

Ensure your passport is in date, double check your visa is valid, finalise your removal date, transfer or close your bank account and ensure you won't be homeless on the other side. It may seem like we're treating you like an idiot but you won't believe how many people make these mistakes. You want to make it as easy as possible for yourself, after all. Find out where your local British embassy is in the country you are moving to, no one likes to think about using an embassy aboard but they are always there to help if you get into trouble or even just want some advice. Discuss a 'settling period' with your new employer, a period of time that allows you to get settled and get acquainted with your new surroundings. Your new boss will more than likely offer this but if not, ask.



God Save the Queen

Travelling to England is just something global travellers have to do. Home to one of the earliest forms of representative democracy, the House of Parliament encapsulates what it is all about. Tourists can marvel at its incredible architecture whilst soaking up the historical tales of civil strife between the Puritan Oliver Cromwell and the monarchy of Charles. Or listen to local tour guides enthral you with the story of Guy Fawkes plot to blow up the house in what has led to the commemoration of bonfire night on November 5th.

Buckingham Palace itself really adds to the aura of English history and you are bound to find it in a palace that houses no less than six hundred rooms. Built by the Duke of Buckingham in 1705, it didn't become synonymous with royalty until it was purchased King George the III in 1761. Currently home to Queen Elizabeth II, there are the Throne and State Dining rooms which can be visited by tourists amongst many others.

Once you are through with London hire a car out and drive down the M1 and M6 motorways to see Liverpool. It's about 211 miles away and amounts to a drive which is just under 4 hours. Visiting Liverpool definitely has to be a priority for many tourists. The city is immersed with culture and even held the title "European Culture Capital" not too long ago.

It is the birthplace of the Beatles, regarded as one of the biggest bands in pop culture ever. Liverpool is also home to the Liverpool Football Club which has a worldwide following. You can visit games there on most Saturday weekends at their home ground Anfield between the start of autumn to the end of spring.



The East is Cheap and Cheerful

Eastern Europe can no longer be fobbed off by tourists. There are a plethora of great destinations to travel to. Ever since the communist reign ended in 1991 countries like Bulgaria and Russia have become far more accessible to people from across the world.

Prague in the Czech Republic has especially gained a reputation for its nightlife. Bachelors are turning away from central European capitals like Amsterdam in order to enjoy the thrills of bachelor parties and strip clubs, which are again not too harsh on those looking to have fun for a weekend on a limited budget.

Tourists who may get homesick from Western Europe need not feel they are in unfamiliar surroundings. Croatia can cater to your needs with some wonderful coastline and sites. You can sail around the small archipelagos in Croatia as an alternative or go to the capital Zagreb and take in the culture.

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The mammoth of the east has to be Russia. The currency difference allows you to get your money worth in Moscow and your bound to come home with great souvenirs and a feeling of enlightenment. Russia's rich history dates back millennia but tourists cannot escape the lingering shadow of communism that has held sway over the country since 1917. It took many forms such as Leninism, Stalinism and Trotskyism but the prevalent theme always centred on state authority and a classless society. The Soviet Empire included much of Eastern Europe at one point until the break up of it in 1991 under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Tired of history? Then why not make your way down to Bolshoi Theatre and catch a play for a thousand rubles? Those lovers of art need not feel left out (even if you are few in number), as Tretyakov Gallery will see to all your creative desires.

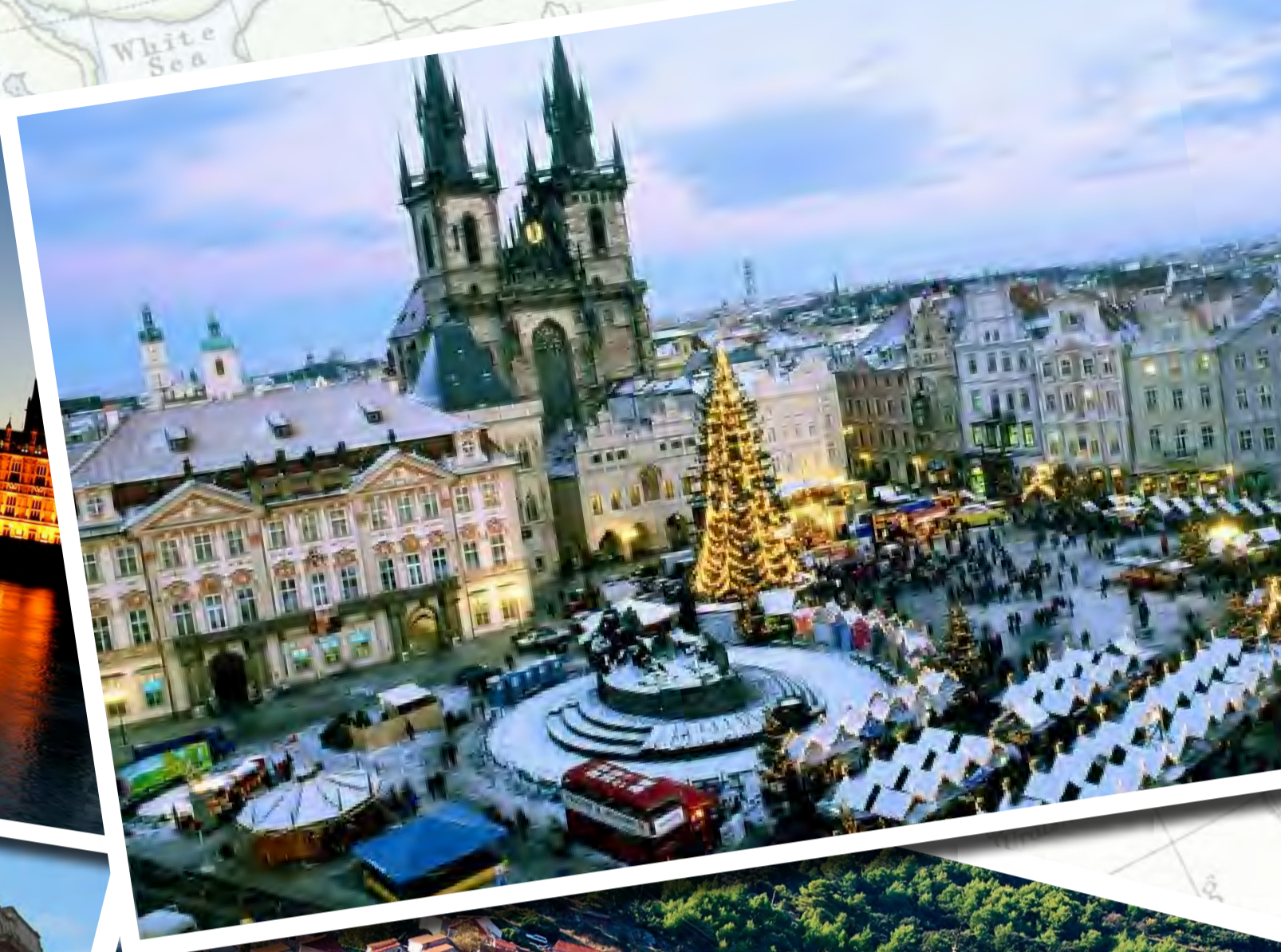
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Where to Start?

Having arrived in Liverpool in the north-west, you can plod your way around the city. Seeing the famous football clubs and museums dedicated to legends like John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles will make you feel at home with the local people renowned for their great sense of humour and thick squeaky accents.

Make your way south towards the English capital stopping off at home of the Royal family at Buckingham Palace. Learn about a family that has lasted an entire millennia, dating its lineage back to William the Conqueror in 1066. Then travel to the House of Parliament and prepare to have your imagination tantalised by the tales of Guy Fawkes attempting to blow up parliament.

With options available to travel all over Europe, cross over by ferry from Dover to Calais in France and work your way through central Europe until you get to the east where you will experience an entirely different way of life. Croatia and the Czech Republic have a slightly more western twinge within eastern borders embodied by the great night life and modern towns open to many tourists. Then when you get to Russia visit the birthplace of communism, travel to Moscow and be truly mesmerised by the Bolshoi theatre and St Basil Cathedral built in 1556.



The Northern Lights

Also known as Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights are one of nature's most spectacular displays. A mysterious, multicoloured light display captivates you as the night sky illuminates with a magnificent and fascinating glow that twists and swirls in a mesmerising way. Indescribable and unearthly, it is one of the greatest things you can experience on your travels.

Scotland

Scotland is a sensational place to watch the Northern Lights, especially if you live in the United Kingdom. Being in the heart of nature's very own spectacular display has never been simpler with flights from major cities. You can take a road trip and stop off at fantastic cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh along the way and experience the fascinating culture, attractions and heritage.

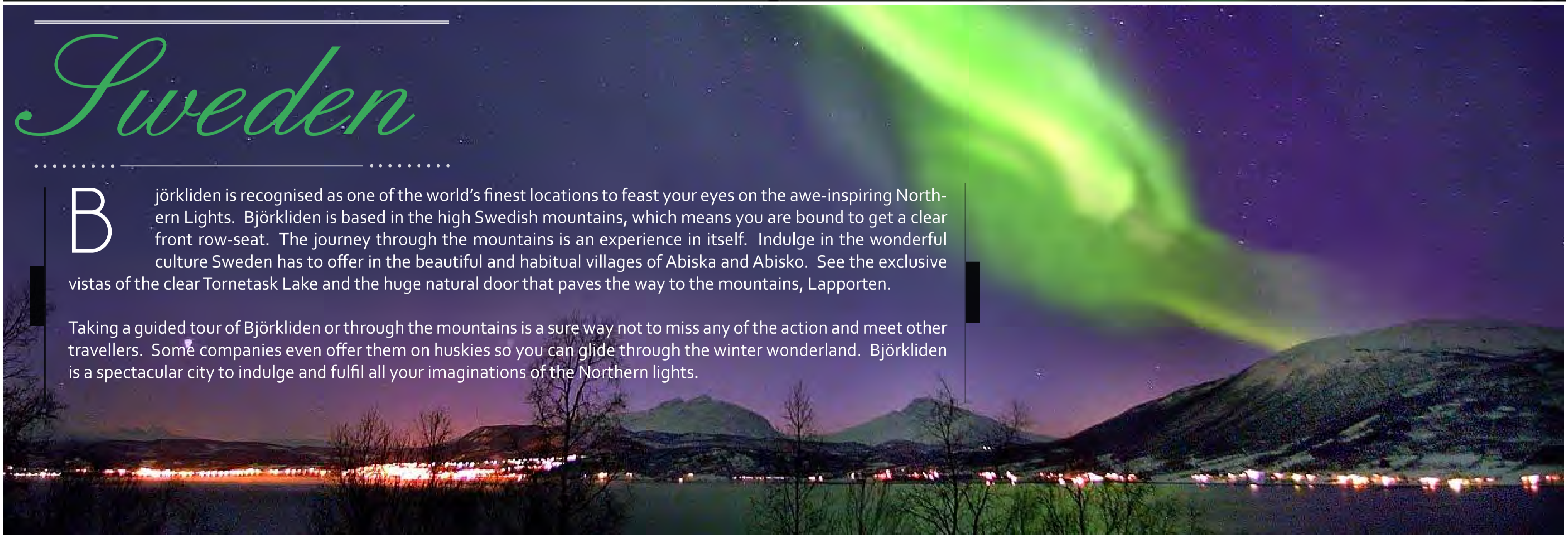
On a clear night in most places of Northern Scotland like Thurso, Inverness and the Orkney Islands, stargazers will have a wealth of entertainment. Spend the day exploring the blue sea on the golden sandy beaches and scenic town of Thurso and get an astonishing view of nature's unique beauty. Or see the Northern lights from Scotland's primary city, Inverness, where highlands give magnificent views of Scottish countryside and you can take a refreshing stroll along the River Ness at the Northern end of the Great Glen. The natural beauty of Orkney Islands, with its spectacular coastline, stunning cliffs and beautiful countryside make for an extraordinary backdrop to watch the Northern Lights, known locally as 'The Merry Dancers'.



Sweden

Björkliden is recognised as one of the world's finest locations to feast your eyes on the awe-inspiring Northern Lights. Björkliden is based in the high Swedish mountains, which means you are bound to get a clear front row-seat. The journey through the mountains is an experience in itself. Indulge in the wonderful culture Sweden has to offer in the beautiful and habitual villages of Abiska and Abisko. See the exclusive vistas of the clear Tornetask Lake and the huge natural door that paves the way to the mountains, Lappporten.

Taking a guided tour of Björkliden or through the mountains is a sure way not to miss any of the action and meet other travellers. Some companies even offer them on huskies so you can glide through the winter wonderland. Björkliden is a spectacular city to indulge and fulfil all your imaginations of the Northern lights.



Tromsø and Finmark are hotspots to enjoy the Northern Lights in Norway. See one of nature's finest beauties swirl and twirl through the sky forming an array of vibrant lights; highlighting warm and golden colours. Not to mention you will be cosy on a clear mountain top, whilst you wait for the entrancing light show to start. You can sip on some tasty drinks and delicious food whilst you wait beside the open fire. Then star gaze either on the snow or chairs and be prepared to be amazed.

For over twenty years, Tromsø has been blessed with the Northern Lights Festival; a musical extravaganza. Each year offers top artists from a wide variety of genres ranging from contemporary to opera and jazz. Be sure not to miss this exciting event at the end of January, dates are still to be announced.

Whilst in Norway why not take part in fantastic daytime activities? Let your adventurous side out as you fully embrace the Norwegian mountain scenery and fascinating wildlife through a snowmobile safari. Alternatively you can go horse riding with a qualified instructor or indulge your taste buds in an array of the finest wines Norway has to offer. Your time in Norway is certain to be highly entertaining, fun and educational.



Norway

Finland

Take the beautiful journey to the Aurora Chalet in Luosto in Northern Finland where, upon arrival, you'll be handed an "Aurora Alarm" which beeps once Northern Lights appear; so you will not miss a moment of the stunning action. Lake Inari is also radiant are to observe the Northern Lights. Here you will be able to catch a glimpse of magical lights in the sky as well as in the smooth reflections of the clear water. As you wait to be dazzled by the display, cosy up next to a campfire with a hot drink and hearty food; maybe even share stories of the wonderful adventures on your travels.

Taking a tour to the Northern lights is a fantastic and exclusive opportunity. Take home a camera full of memories as you travel through the traditional and unique countryside of Finland. You can even visit the world famous Santa Claus Village and fall in love with the culturally rich city of Rovaniemi. As night falls, embark on a wildlife snowmobile safari across the Wild Tundra where the floras and vast mountain scenery give a perfect backdrop as you catch a glimpse of local animals in their natural habitat.



Greenland

Greenland still remains the final frontier for the average traveller and is still fairly unexplored by those from other countries; making it more exclusive to you. The South boasts having fantastic viewing spots for the spectacular Northern Lights display.

Imagine being in the vast shores of the Fjord where you can taste the fresh air and the picturesque icebergs swiftly move in the cool water, then you look up the see the night sky pierced with millions of stars with a glimmer of the moon. Suddenly a greenish light appears resembling a cloud lit by the moonlight. Then the display beings to intensify with a magical blend of colours from the rainbow and before long you are swept up in the beauty of the vibrant movements of the Northern Lights. The display moves and changes with surprising speed forming captivating whirlpools and beams that merge and intensify, then you want to relive the magic all over again.

Greenland is a must see place to take in the Northern Lights – the striking white mountain scenery amongst the water provides a stunning backdrop. It's no wonder people travel hundreds of miles to see the Northern Lights, pictures simply don't do the sensational act of nature justice so go in the flesh to fully appreciate the wonders of the Northern Lights in all its wonder.

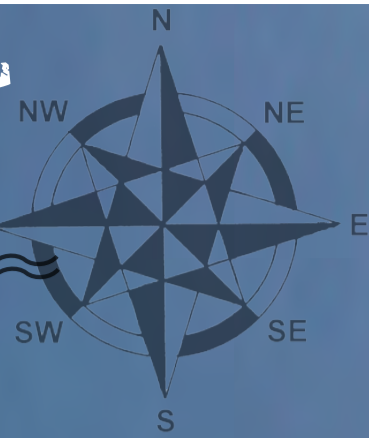
This rare and beautiful work of nature can be witnessed in Northern Europe at any moment between late September and early April; 9pm to 2am tends to be prime viewing time. 2012/2013 happens to be "Solar Maximum" period, which means more sunspot activity, so if you want to see this magnificent spectacle now is the best time. It is delightful how often the lights reveal themselves just as dinner is served or when you're in the beautiful vistas of a European countryside or mountains.

UK other than London

When travellers come to the UK, the usual place they visit is London but there's so much more to see and do outside of the country's capital. Stone Henge, Lake District, the Scottish Highlands are some of the many diverse attractions the UK has to offer its travellers. Each city and town has its own story to tell and cultural and historical significance, all waiting to be explored.



Manchester



Manchester is known for being a vibrant university city, home to one of the most renowned football teams in the world, Manchester United and hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2002. The city leads the way in urban regeneration and has gained a reputation for being the best place to shop, eat and drink and is thought to be the British music capital where bands like Oasis and the Stone Roses first came on the music scene.

On the outskirts of Manchester is the Trafford Centre – the largest shopping centre in the UK which covers a mammoth area of thirty football pitches put together – which boasts over 250 shops and Europe’s largest food court, The Orient. The retail complex also includes the UK’s longest real snow indoor ski slope, an indoor skydiving tunnel, soccer dome and two 18-hole crazy golf courses so you literally will find everything you need all under one roof.

Don’t forget to check out Manchester’s lively nightlife – the Northern Quarter is known for its alternative and quirky culture, Castlefield is a great spot for canal side dining and drinking or roam around Canal Street where you’ll find Manchester’s well-known Gay Village.

There’s an assortment of attractions and activities to suit people from all walks of life in Manchester so you’re bound to fit in somewhere.

“There’s an assortment of attractions and activities to suit people from all walks of life in Manchester so you’re bound to fit in somewhere.”

Birmingham



Being the UK's second largest city, Birmingham is right bang in the centre of the UK which means it has easier and quicker links to the north and south of the country. Popular cities like Manchester and London are just a couple of hours away from the Midlands.

The bullring is at the heart of 'Brum' where you'll find various shops, restaurants, bars, cafes and so much more to suit every budget and taste. Nearby you'll find The Mailbox which features designer and high-end boutique shops and a range of different eateries and the dynamic Brindleyplace canal-side destination which is conveniently positioned just off Broad Street with its array of bars and restaurants plus next to the National Indoor Arena (NIA) and the International Convention Centre (ICC). Brindleyplace is also home to the National Sea Life Centre, Ikon Gallery and Crescent Theatre.

In the day jump aboard a canal boat and take a stroll through Birmingham's waterways and by night treat yourself to a drink in one of the many bars dotted along Brindleyplace, when the whole of Birmingham city centre comes alive.

Pay a trip to the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery to catch a glimpse of the world's largest collection of Pre-Raphaelites. Jewellery lovers, especially the ladies, will enjoy taking a stroll through The Jewellery Quarter.

Chocoholics will feel like they're in heaven at Cadbury World. Take a self-guided tour through the factory of the UK's leading confectionary manufacturer where you'll uncover a world of chocolate through 14 different zones and discover how chocolate is made from its origin of a cocoa bean to its wrapper.

"In the day jump aboard a canal boat and take a stroll through Birmingham's waterways and by night treat yourself to a drink in one of the many bars dotted along Brindleyplace, when the whole of Birmingham city centre comes alive."

Brighton



No trip to the UK is complete without paying a visit to the seaside. Brighton is famous for its pier with classic arcade games and fairground rides, stunning seafront and pebbled beach. This attraction is one of the most familiar sights seen on postcards and TV adverts in the UK so why not see it in the flesh and don't forget to take your picnic basket and deck chair.

The Lanes not only draws people in for being an incredible shopping attraction but its intricate maze of twisting alleyways. Here you'll find a mix of history and heritage lingering amongst its antique, vintage, crafts, jewellery and boutique fashion shops and its quaint cafes and glorious restaurants.

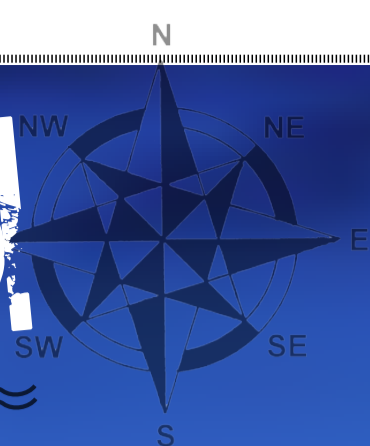
For outstanding views of Brighton, head for the dramatic Devil's Dyke, a deep gorge cut into the cliffs of the coast where you can also take part in sports activities, fly a kite or sunbathe.

Or if its great nightlife you're looking for, look no further, Brighton hits all the right notes having the liveliest music and club scene on the south coast of the UK offering party-goers an eclectic range of musical tastes to suit everyone. Brighton offers visitors a unique mix of chic and sophisticated culture, rich heritage and cosmopolitan fun.



"Brighton hits all the right notes having the liveliest music and club scene on the south coast of the UK offering party-goers an eclectic range of musical tastes to suit everyone."

Liverpool



Liverpool became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004 – thanks to its remarkable waterfront which includes the famous Albert Dock and Pier Head – and now sits amongst the likes of global landmarks such as Egypt’s Pyramids of Giza and the Great Wall of China.

Albert Dock is home to the Beatles Museum and Tate Gallery which boasts a wide range of world-class art like Picasso’s Weeping Woman. The ‘Three Graces’ is the name given to the magnificent threesome – Liver building, Cunard building and Port of Liverpool building – located at the Pier Head, both of these major attractions are well-renowned in Liverpool and the UK. Hop aboard a ferry across the Mersey River to get the best views of these magnificent attractions.

The city was also named the European Capital of Culture in 2008 which speaks volumes in itself and is the birthplace of the legendary rock band, the Beatles. For splendid views of the city take a ride on the 60-metre high rotating Echo Wheel where you can take in the beauty of Liverpool, its waterfront, the River Mersey and the Welsh Mountains.

Liverpool has gained a worthy status of being a party city, from traditional pubs to trendy bars, you won’t be short of entertainment here. The city is home to two premier league football clubs: Liverpool and Everton so a passion and enthusiasm for football runs rich through Liverpool’s veins.

If you want to add a touch of Oriental culture to your travels go to Chinatown where you’ll be welcomed with a striking 44 foot tall arch – that was custom-made in Shanghai and reconstructed in Liverpool and is designed with colourful dragons – which is the gateway to everything Chinese from its shops, restaurants, even litter boxes and street signs.

“Liverpool has gained a worthy status of being a party city, from traditional pubs to trendy bars, you won’t be short of entertainment here.”

Edinburgh



Edinburgh – the capital city of Scotland – is lined with rich history and superb architectural heritage even just walking along the city’s cobbled streets and dark alleyways, so there’s no surprise its been classed as a World Heritage Site. There are two main areas of interest: the Old Town which includes the medieval fortress of Edinburgh Castle and the Royal Mile, and the neoclassical Georgian New Town which dates back to the 18th century.

Edinburgh Castle is one of Scotland’s most popular tourist attractions which is home to the Scottish Crown Jewels, the Stone of Destiny, the famous 15th century gun Mons Meg, the One O’ Clock Gun and the National War Museum.

Travel through time and across the planet at Dynamic Earth in the heart of Scotland where you journey to the centre of the earth and delve deep into its fascinating history, wander through a tropical rainforest and feel the tremble of an earthquake.

“Travel through time and across the planet at Dynamic Earth in the heart of Scotland where you journey to the centre of the earth and delve deep into its fascinating history”

Iconic London

When you visit London, it won't surprise you if you see a tourist having their photo taken next to Big Ben, Tower Bridge or Buckingham Palace but it might surprise you to find others getting excited over being photographed next to a police officer. London is home to some of the most iconic images and culture in the world so when walking through one of the city's busy streets take your time to appreciate and enjoy what London has to offer- there's a reason they were chosen to host the 2012 Olympics after all.



On the Street

Turn a corner in London and blocking your view will no doubt be a big red double-decker bus. Turn another corner and we guarantee you'll see the same. You'll have to get several miles out of London before you stop seeing the big red buses so if you can't beat them join them! If you fancy experiencing being a proper London tourist or if you purely want to get downtown then jump on. And if you want the full shebang then head to the open top deck for views of London.

British police officers patrol areas of London daily so spotting them is easy. A traditional police officer will be dressed in all black with a 'bobby' (black helmet) attached to his or her head. Nowadays most officers will wear hi-visibility jackets but the bobby is still a popular choice. The British police are friendly and understand their iconic status so taking a picture with one won't cause a problem but make sure you ask, or else you could get on the wrong side of the law.

The red pillar-box (post-box) and red telephone box are probably two of the most iconic images of London. Both are dotted around the city in different shapes and sizes but their colour never differs. They're both still in use frequently (although less frequently for telephone boxes as more and more people own mobile phones) and are home to Britain's oldest history.

The best thing about visiting a traditional British pub in London is the names you come across. The World's End, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, the Old Bull & Bush and The Only Running Footman. Whilst you giggle along with your friends about the unusual names, why not tuck into the traditional pub-grub; pie and mash and a pint of beer. The interior may be dark dingy and old-fashioned but it just adds character to the 150-year old pub you're downing pints in.



What to Sample

You can't visit London and not take a bite out of a 'fry-up'. The best and British way to enjoy it is when you're suffering from a hangover. Not only is it the classic hangover cure but it is also the perfect way to start the day. Order the iconic 'full English' from a greasy spoon café and you'll get bacon, fried eggs, grilled tomatoes, sausages, black pudding, fried mushrooms, hash browns and baked beans. Order a side of toast and an orange juice or tea and tuck in.

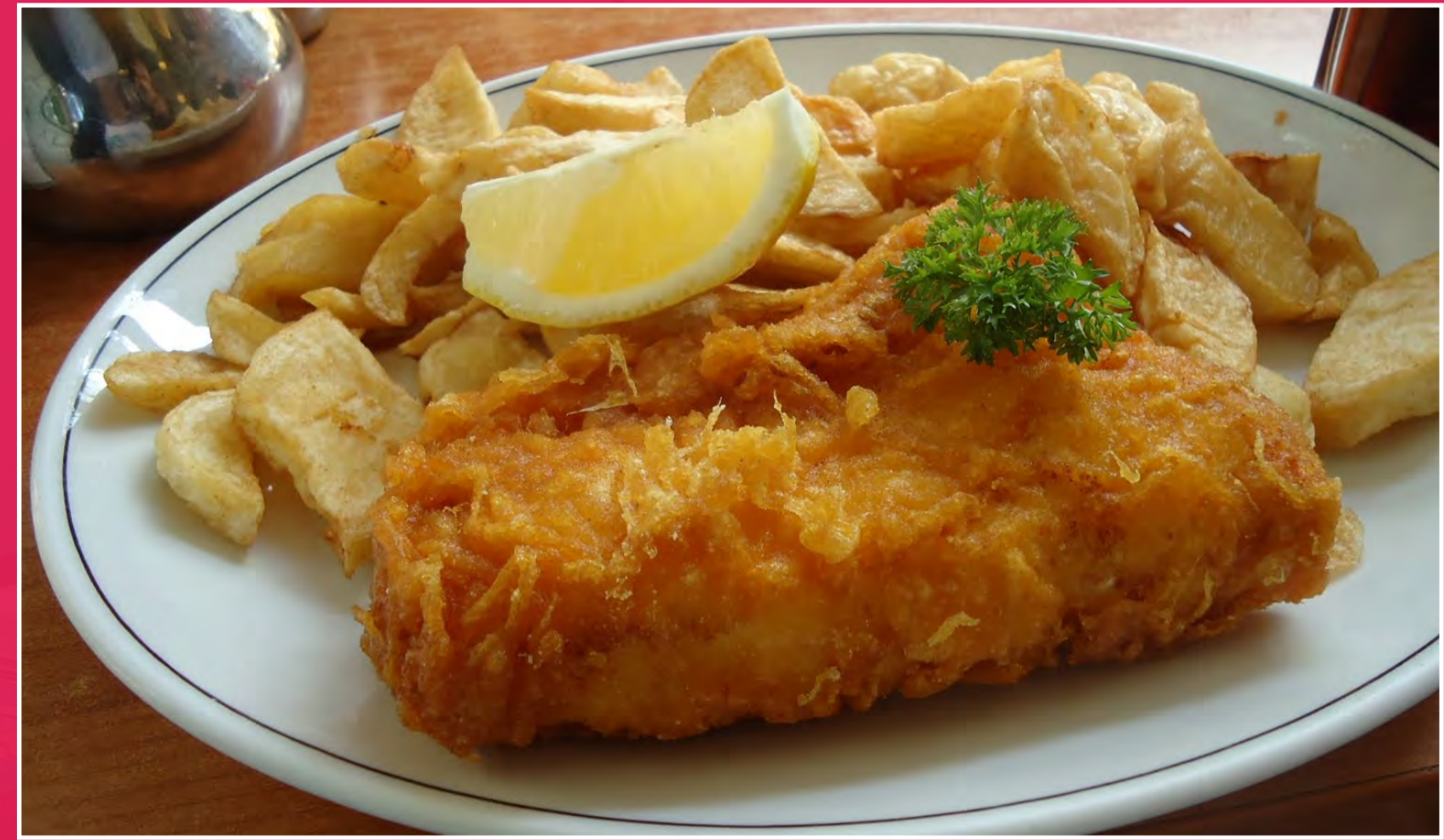


Fish and chips are traditionally served by the seaside but London fish and chips are just as good. Seek out a good fish and chips takeaway and your meal of battered cod or haddock (amongst other choices) and battered chips seasoned with salt and vinegar will come served in newspaper (the old-fashioned and iconic way to serve fish and chips). Pick out a side of mushy peas and wander round the streets pretending you're 'from London geezer!'

Being the largest tea consumers in the world proves how iconic tea is to Britain and to London. One sip and you'll be hooked like the rest of us. We Brits love a 'builder's tea'- strong with lots of sugar- but how you take it is your preference. For the aristocratic in you, have a 'cream tea'- a cup with an average amount of milk and sugar but enjoyed with scones, clotted cream and raspberry jam- and lots of it.

Souvenirs

The perfect London souvenir has the Union Jack splashed across it. Tee shirts, baseball caps, socks, umbrellas, you name it they make it. A collection of tea jars are also nifty souvenirs whilst black cab magnets and royal guardsman teddy bears remain popular for tourists and London citizens. Of course don't be surprised if Olympic souvenirs overwhelm you next time you pop into a shop- London is still living off the hype.





The United Kingdom has long been the top destination to study abroad, and it doesn't take a genius to figure out why. For English-speaking students travelling abroad, it's a place where you don't have to be studying a foreign language to get by. Learning a language is hard, right? So if you can get away with doing less work and still studying overseas, all the better! The U.K. is one of the most popular destinations for first-time vacationers; it's therefore not surprising that it is also popular with students.

There is no doubt that Oxford University is the best University to study business. The reputation of the world famous institution speaks for itself. The Saïd Business School is one of Europe's youngest and most entrepreneurial business schools and has played an integral part in making Oxford University the place it is now. The School embodies the academic rigour and forward-thinking attitude that has made Oxford a world leader in education.

The University College of London is an exceptional institution for teaching languages. It is consistently ranked amongst the best universities in the world, due to its emphasis on innovative teaching and research excellence. It is values such as this that earned the college its first Nobel Prize in 2009.

You can find out about the fees of studying at Oxford [here](#) in the near future. For 2012-13 the course fees are £9,000 for full-time home/EU undergraduates. Students can apply for bursaries for up to £3,500 a year, depending on household income.

On the London hop-on-hop-off sightseeing tour, you'll see all the magical sights of the sensational capital city in a comfortable and secure environment, above the crowds at street level aboard open top buses. Or you can watch a show at the world famous West End. Catch mind-blowing concerts at the fantastic arenas all over the United Kingdom. This doesn't even begin to scratch the surface with activities and sights in the United Kingdom as there are hundreds more just waiting for you to get involved in whilst you're not studying.

In all seriousness, the [United Kingdom](#) offers some of the top study abroad opportunities, whether you're talking about the bustling capital of [London](#), Scotland's historic capital city of Edinburgh, or any number of smaller cities and towns throughout England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. And if you're studying theatre, literature, or history, the U.K. is a great place to be. Oh, and about the language thing - don't assume your English will be like their English. There are differences, albeit sometimes subtle ones, that can make for some pretty entertaining exchanges.

~ The Quirks of OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE ~

Travelling half way across the world to study may seem excessive but if it's to graduate at the university with the most Nobel Prize winners (Cambridge) or to attend the same one that 26 British Prime ministers did (Oxford) then it's worth it. Oxford and Cambridge are the most prestigious universities in the UK and considered two of the best in the world but there's much more to them than league tables. They hide a whole list of quirks so read on to find out why student life isn't just brown buildings and old books.

~ SCHOLARSHIPS ~

Oxford is the only university in the world that grants the 'Rhodes' scholarship to international students. Considered the "world's most prestigious award" those offered the scholarship can study a masters or second undergraduate degree in any subject they desire. Scholars receive a monthly maintenance to cover all accommodation fees and living expenses. The scholarship brings together students from a range of different countries all around the world. To find out more about the 'Rhodes' scholarship visit the website here

~ WEALTH ~

Cambridge is the not only the wealthiest university in the whole of the UK but also the whole of Europe. The university runs on a budget of over £1 billion per year and with so much money funded from the government and benefactors into Cambridge, the better its equipment, books and buildings are.



~ 'BUMP RACING' ~

Oxford and Cambridge are renowned for their traditional, intense rivalry when it comes to rowing. It has become an annual event, is known across the world and screened live on TV. During the event 'bump racing', takes place when a number of boats chase one another attempting to catch and 'bump' with the one in front and is primarily used at both universities.

~ GRADUATION ~

During the Oxford and Cambridge graduation ceremonies, when the Praelector presents the graduate with their degree, they'll read their speech in Latin. This tradition only takes place at the two universities and another quirk which helps them both to stand out from the crowd.

~ IN THE MEDIA ~

Unlike some universities such as Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge allow films and television series to be filmed on site. Legendary buildings from both universities are recognised all around the world in valued films such as 'An Education', 'Chariots of Fire' and TV series 'Inspector Morse' and 'Brideshead Revisited'. Studying at either university has meant an appearance in a famous film for several past students who have been chosen as extras.



Whisky Tours of Scotland

To truly appreciate whisky in its finery there's no other country to visit but Scotland. Home to the Famous Grouse, Johnnie Walker and Bell's, Scotland is the king of whisky and the king of getting you merry. We've picked the best of the best for you whisky lovers out there. Enjoy!

Whisky and Scotland

Distillation of whisky has always been popular in Scotland. The country always had few grapes to make wine due to the weather so when barley beer was used instead, whisky was made.

Whisky can be made from malted barley or grains depending on the type of whiskey. For example, blended malt whisky is made from malted barley, single malt is made from grains and blended whisky is made from both. Whisky doesn't mature in the bottle, only in the cask so the 'age' is determined on the time between distilling and bottling. Aged whisky doesn't necessarily mean a better taste and makeup.

After an English Malt Tax was introduced most of Scotland's distillation of whisky was shut down but there are still distilleries operating today.



Whisky Tours

Glen Garioch

Recently declared as the oldest distillery in the whole of Scotland, Glen Garioch sits on the very edge of the small town of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. The distillery produces a different variety of single malt whiskies particularly their popular 1797 founder's reserve- a sweet whiskey with hints of butter cream and vanilla. If you fancy visiting the distillery it's open for morning and afternoon tours Monday- Saturday and on Sunday at 1 or 5pm. The tours run between July and August only but VIP tours and group visits can be booked, these being especially popular around Christmas and New Year.

To find out more about Glen Garioch visit their website [here](#).

Oban

The Oban distillery takes its name from the town it sits in, in the Highlands, Glasgow. Oban is home to a 14-year old whisky which is sweet and creamy. If you pick to visit Oban for a tour, the distillery treats you to a tasting, watching the distillers at work crafting the rich sweet Oban taste and discount on a bottle to take home yourself. You'll also receive a complementary free whisky glass as a gift from the distillery. Cheers!

The Oban distillery is more flexible with its visiting times so visit their [website](#) for range of times and dates to suit you.

The Famous Grouse

You can't visit Scotland and not see how Famous grouse is made. Located in the city of Perth, the Grouse whisky tours run 9-6pm with limited times in January. There is a tour for everyone with the most popular being the 'experience' that shows you how Famous Grouse is distilled, includes two tastes and takes you to the skies in the distilleries BAFTA award winning interactive show. The 'celebration' tour has been set up to celebrate the Grouse's 30th birthday. The 'celebration' features the 'experience' then allows you to head to the bar sample some of the Grouse malt range which included 5 tastes over all. This one is limited edition so hurry! Finally for the avid whisky fan the 'warehouse' let you tour the distillery, visit a sample room and try all the Famous Grouse range whilst watching the favourite tippie mature in a cask. Each tour ranges in price and experience. The Famous Grouse whisky tour is more than worth a visit but if a tour doesn't interest you why not get married at the distillery? Famous Grouse provides an unforgettable day for the groom and bride-to-be.

To find out more about the whisky and to book yourself on one of the tours visit the Famous Grouse website [here](#).

Something Special

If one whisky tour isn't enough why not join the only malt whisky trail in the world? With 9 distilleries to visit, the trail is famous for sending many a happy (and slightly merry) customer away. Each distillery features its own unique, traditional tour and recipe, of course.

Benromach, Dallas Dhu, Cardhu, Glen Moray, Strathisla, Chivas Regal, Gle Grant, Speyside Cooperage and Glenfiddich are the nine distilleries that feature on the trail, each one more special than the last.



The trail is situated in the Highlands and each distillery tour offers something different, from Benromach's modern approach showing DVD's about the history of the distillery to a 'bistro night' at the Glenfiddich tour where the distillery offers bistro style meals every Friday evening in August with complementary glasses of (what else) Glenfiddich whisky. The trail really lends itself the phrase 'something special'.

To find out more about the trail and to book visit the malt whisky trail website [here](#).

Whisky Festivals

Don't underestimate the Scottish! Not content with holding whisky tours, Scotland also hold a number of well-loved and popular whisky festivals. The festivals offer an array of whisky related activities from master-classes to exclusive tastings, and chances to visit distilleries that aren't normally open to the public.

Visit the 'Spirit of Speyside' five-day festival that takes place in May which includes free whisky food tasting and dancing. If you can't make the summer then Speyside runs an autumn event which is held at the end of September. Or if you prefer a more musical take on whisky the 'Islay Malt and Music' offers local musical talent along with open days at plenty of distilleries over the course of a week.

Find out more about Scotland's whisky festivals by visiting the Scotland whisky website [here](#).

Dublin

More than just Guinness and leprechauns, this capital city of Ireland waves goodbye to many a happy folk every day. From tempting restaurants to buzzing night-life to numerous department stores and a popular gay district Dublin has everything for the city break lover.

Dublin is a cracking night out, after all the Irish do love to drink and 50% of citizens are under the age of 25. Temple Bar, south of the River Liffey could easily rival Camden in London. It comes alive at night, with famous pubs 'The Porterhouse' 'The Turk's Head' and the traditional 'The Quay's bar'. Take a walk around Temple Bar and you'll instantly see what all the fuss is about with street performers dazzling your sights and night-clubs twinkling in the distance. For a classier venue, Alchemy is Dublin's hottest new club on the market and feature stylish decor and chic rooms. Sign up to be a member for free and you'll receive complimentary entry on your birthday and a bottle of bubbly for you and five friends.



The gay district in Dublin is always popular and well loved by the Irish. There are numerous festivals that feature at different times of year including the International Gay Theatre festival and the Dublin Pride festival that are held at the gay district, located on Capel Street. For a fun, lively atmosphere like no other, head on down. Numerous gay bars in Dublin are as popular amongst the locals as they are the tourists; 'The George' and 'Pantibar' are famous for a gay night out.



For a traditional Irish meal book a table at family run restaurant 'Ely Bar & Brassiere' and eat your body weight in hearty food. The restaurant is famous for supporting local Irish suppliers by sourcing their meat from the family's own farm. The food is uncomplicated, great value for money and also offers a long cocktail, beer and wine menu so a merry evening won't go amiss. If you're a trendy tourist looking for a trendy eatery then KOH is the place for you. The menu features Thai, Chinese, Malaysian and European cuisine; an Asian Fusion, if you will. We highly recommend a visit, try the Aromatic Chilli Pork, order your favourite poison and enjoy your evening, full and happy.



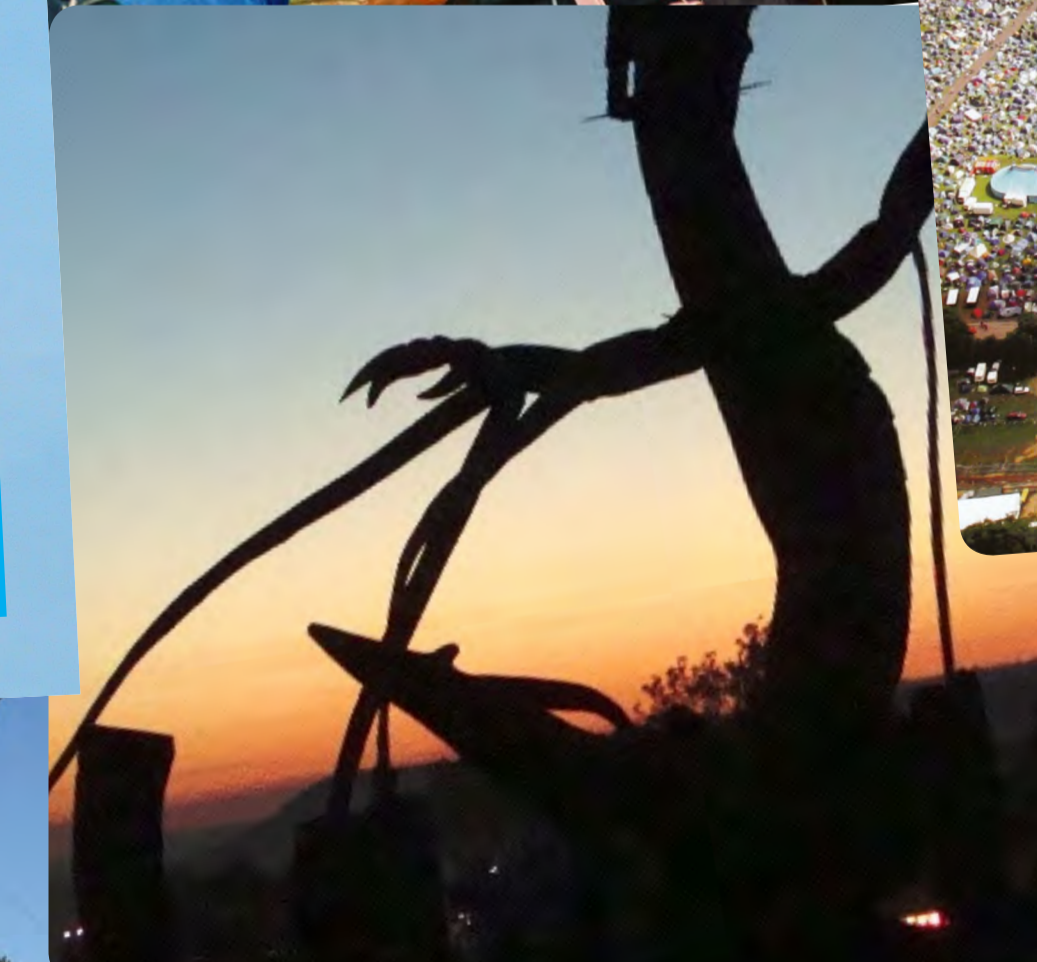
If you fancy a more relaxing and historic day then Dublin is the city for culture and controversy. The city runs a medieval Celtic Christianity tour about the horrors of the bubonic plague and the unique Hellfire Club tour. The Hellfire tour ends on top of the Dublin Mountains and features many interesting (and controversial) settings and scenes. Not to be missed!

Glastonbury Festival Experience

Mud soaks through your wellies, Beyonce's 'Run the world' blasts through your ears and you're pushed to the front of a stage at one of the biggest musical events in history. Welcome to Glastonbury. The festival's 2013 show had people buying tickets frantically on Sunday when after a record time of 1 hour 40 minutes all tickets were sold. People were left devastated after missing out so why the big fuss? What makes the Glastonbury festival experience such a phenomena?

The sheer size of the festival illustrates how big Glastonbury is. Held on Worthy Farm in Somerset, the site stretches to 1,100 acres - that's more than double the size of the Olympic Park and Alton Towers and is the equivalent of 550 football pitches. Each year 150,000 festival goers camp on the fields making it the largest 'greenfield' music festival in the world.

Everyone who's anyone has performed at Glastonbury! Traditionally it was very rock n roll with the likes of popular hippy British band T.Rex headlining at the very first show. In the 1990s however, the festival moved with the favourable 'Brit pop' era and booked Oasis, Blur and Pulp to headline. Nowadays the festival has moved towards generating a more contemporary audience by booking Beyonce to headline last year and her husband Jay-Z in 2008 - although ex-Oasis star Noel Gallagher called it a 'mistake' causing controversy and a rivalry between the two. The 2013 line-up is yet to be released but rumours are already circulating that The Stone Roses, The Smiths, or even the Rolling Stones could headline next summer potentially bringing back the old days of British rock-n-roll.



Glastonbury runs 45 different stages every year with the main attraction being the 'Pyramid' where all the mainstream musicians play. It's a festival error to take one look the headliners listed and choose not to go based on the Eavis's family's booking decisions. There are plenty of stages to keep you busy and bands that headline the third stage are often big enough to headline the main stage at a different festival such as Reading and Leeds. You will find hidden treats everywhere, Fatboy Slim often does surprise gigs and Pete Doherty has been found randomly playing in a bar at the festival on the Thursday night.

One thing we recommend as avid Glastonbury attendees is to find a stage with a line-up you like and stick there for a few bands rather than chop and change each performance. Trying to see Cee Lo Green on the second stage who finishes 15 minutes before Morrissey starts on the main stage is a battle you won't win. Getting through the masses of people who are trying to make the same journey whilst trudging through knee deep mud can make it far too difficult. It's best to keep your spot and enjoy the music.

It's possible to go to Glastonbury not just for the music. There are plenty of non-musical attractions on offer for those who enjoy listening to Tony Benn's popular political talks or those who want to carry on the party, the dystopian, 'Blade Runner' inspired village 'Shangri-La' is open every year.



Going To

without a Ticket

Work as a steward for Oxfam

Tickets for Glastonbury 2013 sold out instantaneously last Sunday leaving those who missed out, sincerely disappointed. Gone are the days when security was relaxed and those without tickets could easily gate-crash the festival. Legend has it someone even managed to dig an underground tunnel to subtly sneak into the festival! Now you no longer need to go to such extremes to get in without a ticket. You can simply work it, and get in for free.

Oxfam organises stewarding every year for Glastonbury and 2013 will be no exception. Along with the security staff, being a steward means you're the eyes and ears of the festival. Duties of stewards include answering ticket-holders questions, monitoring crowds and reporting safety issues. However stewards are warned against getting involved in the security's responsibilities and failure to listen could result in being stripped of your duty.

Stewards are required to work three eight hour shifts and will need to be available for the full onsite dates but once you're off duty you have access to all of the festival and are free to enjoy it in your own way. Your other perks include meal tickets and camping on the Oxfam campsite with your new friends and hot showers.

Becoming an Oxfam steward is easy, no previous experience is necessary as training is required. You'll be prioritised if you've volunteered before but there are always places for new stewards. Just log onto Oxfam's [official website](#) and register [here](#) for your chance to work at Glastonbury for free and for a good cause.

Be a First Aid volunteer

If you currently hold any medical, paramedic or first aid qualifications you can apply to become an on-site medical volunteer for Festival Medical Services (FMS) at Glastonbury. FMS look to appoint doctors, nurses, paramedics, pharmacists and first aid staff, to name a few. Common injuries and health complaints that occur at Glastonbury tend to be camping gas burns, hearing damage from loudspeakers, stomach bugs from bad hygiene and dehydration, to name a few. Medical volunteers need to keep an open mind as there may be complaints they haven't dealt with before.

During your time off, you'll get to experience Glastonbury for free, see your favourite bands and even get a chance at meeting and treating Jay-Z for a hangover. If you fancy becoming a volunteer for FMS you'll need a medical qualification (of any sort) and an up-to-date, cleared CRB check. Insurance and training is covered by FMS. Visit their [website](#) to register and fill in the application form.

Sell food and drinks

There are a variety of different stalls that run at Glastonbury as soon as the festival kicks off. Whether you are running them or working at them, it's possible to do either and get a free pass into the festival and better yet, earn some money while you are doing it! If you want to apply to become a trader, applications are open now for all varieties of stalls and traders are chosen depending on the price of their products, the number of staff and size of stall. To sign up to become a trader visit the official signing up list [here](#).

If you prefer to serve the drinks and sell the clothes however it's worth getting in touch with charities such as Greenpeace and Fairtrade who run stalls at the festival and see if they're after a spare pair of hands. Traders always require staff but they mostly recruit people they know so if you know any traders who go to Glastonbury get in touch with them early on.

Stay tuned for tomorrow's article giving an insight into the Glastonbury festival experience.

Litter Pick

Glastonbury has a reputation for being 'green'. Running the showers on solar power, encouraging festival goers to travel to the festival by bus and planting over 10,000 trees are just some of the ways the festival is helping the planet.

Their extensive recycling programme appoints 1,300 litter pickers, 1,200 of them work in exchange for a ticket. The duties are simple; the clean up lasts throughout the duration of the festival and there are even some jobs in the recycling centre which allow you to enjoy the festival and then volunteer once it is finished. This means you get to enjoy every last bit of the music festival without the disruption of work and then carry on the Glastonbury experience by camping for the extra days. What's even better, Glastonbury founder Michael Eavis often drops by the recycling centre to chat, take pictures and even join in recycling.

A campsite is set up for litter pickers to use for you can take advantage of the cheap food and drinks tents, free hot drinks, hot showers and indoor toilets. You don't need to have any special requirements to become a litter picker at Glastonbury next year, just a dedication to cleaning the fields up. Initially previous volunteers are contacted first but the festival accepts all applications via [email](#).

SNOWBOMBING

1 - 6 April 2013, Mayrhofen, Austria, www.snowbombing.com

Notorious rock and roll firebrands KASABIAN are ready to dust off their salopettes and mittens and set fire to the après-ski celebrations as they prepare to headline the exceptional SNOWBOMBING festival in 2013!

Acclaimed as one of the hottest and most exhilarating live acts on earth, KASABIAN will be leaving behind the stadiums and arenas they're accustomed to in favour of a truly unique gig encircled by crisp winter air and snow-capped mountain peaks. Their eagerly anticipated appearance will provide a suitably out-of-this-world climax to an event without rival - "the greatest show on snow"!

The Leicestershire lads will not only be appearing at the apex of the festival's line up, but will also be scaling the hillsides to another summit as they perform a second and completely exclusive and intimate show 6000 feet up on the powder-topped crest of a mountain.

Snowbombing is Europe's largest snow and music festival. Days are spent skiing/boarding, enjoying music on mountain top stages or relaxing in the spa of a 5* Hotel. Nights deliver cutting edge performances from world class acts in unique venues; from a sky-high igloo, to an enchanted forest clearing. Mystical, musical, without equal.



Snowbombing

Snowbombing



Why wait until Glastonbury to kick off festival season when you can delve right into things as early as April? Prices start from £319 for accommodation and all the entertainment. So don't be shy, secure your place at the world's greatest and wackiest show on snow.



1 WEEK / 14 UNIQUE VENUES / 5 MOUNTAIN STAGES / 4 IGLOO RAVES / 5,000 STRONG STREET PARTY / 1 AWARD WINNING BOARD PARK / 18 SPAS AND POOLS / 639KM OF PISTE / COUNTLESS LAUGHS / MILLIONS OF MEMORIES / 1 SNOWBOMBING



SNOWBOMBING
APRIL 1-6 MAYRHOFEN AUSTRIA 2013

LIVE ACTS ANNOUNCED!

LIVE:

KASABIAN

example

KATY B LIVE

DISCLOSURE LIVE

RUDIMENTAL

FOREIGN BEGGARS. MS DYNAMITE. P MONEY

DJ:

carlcox

SETH TROXLER. ANDY C. SKREAM. MACEO PLEX.
JAMES ZABIELA. DAVID RODIGAN MBE. FAKE BLOOD. KERRI CHANDLER

INNERVISIONS: HENRIK SCHWARZ LIVE. DIXON. AME LIVE & DJ

H NETSKY DJ SET. HIGH CONTRAST. LONDON ELEKTRICITY.
CAMO & KROOKED. S.P.Y

ANJA SCHNEIDER. PAN-POT. JACK BEATS. EATS EVERYTHING. SCUBA.
MISTAJAM. NORMAN JAY MBE. SHY FX. SUBB-AN. ARTWORK. TODDLA T
TODD EDWARDS. JUSTIN MARTIN. DEETRON. ONEMAN. MOSCA. EZ. PLASTICIAN.
A-SKILLZ. KRAFTY KUTS. PLUMP DJS. STANTON WARRIORS.

SWAMP 81: LOEFAH. BODDIKA. MICKEY PEARCE. KLOSE ONE.
WILL SAUL. BICEP. GEORGE FITZGERALD. MIDLAND. BREACH. PAUL WOOLFORD.
SYSTEM OF SURVIVAL. ALEX NIGGEMANN. DOORLY. MARCUS NASTY. GEDDES. HUXLEY. DUSKY.
CRAZY P SOUNDSYSTEM. MAXXI SOUNDSYSTEM. BRACKLES. NORWOOD SOUL PATROL.
FUTUREBOOGIE DJS. SMASH HIFI. MARC ROBERTS.

MCS: GQ. DYNAMITE MC. WREC. STAMINA. SEROCEE. CHUNKY.

PLUS MANY MORE TBA

Spain

What a glorious country Spain is. They have given us paella and Penelope Cruz and welcome us with open arms whenever we visit. Spain is full of interesting and remarkable culture that can't be replaced or forgotten.

Traditional Spanish bull-fighting is hard to find these days as animal-rights activists have aided the abandonment of the sport. Despite this, it naturally falls on the 'to-do' list when visiting Spain and it's defiantly worth hunting one out for an entertaining afternoon. In most cities, bull-fighting is now banned but fortunately Madrid still holds the shows at their two bullrings- Vista Alegre and Las Vents. The city also holds bullfighting festivals, with the most famous festival 'Pamplona Running of the Bulls' being held in July that features bullfights and bull runs.

Spanish food is famous for leaving you wanting more. One of the best Spanish dishes to try is tapas but why not free tapas? In the small city of Granada, walk into a bar and restaurant and your tapas will come free when you order a drink. Another famous dish, paella shouldn't be ignored in replace for Spanish pizza or spaghetti; try food from its origin. Seafood paella is the classic favourite but for a difference, take a trip to Valencia and dabble in the cities meat paella, the original dish.

A trip to Spain wouldn't be complete without a visit to Barcelona. Take a walk up to the Roman Catholic Church, the Sagrada Familia that boasts a beautiful interior and exterior. Barcelona cathedral, port and football ground are also worth visiting and we urge you to see the Magic Fountain of Montjuic once it gets dark, every night it is lit up in different colours.

For the best treat of them all, go and see a flamenco show. The shows can be found anywhere; we personally recommend you head to Seville or Madrid for an un-missable performance that we guarantee will release your inner dancer. Spontaneous performances can break out anywhere from gypsy weddings to prisons but you'll still get an authentic show if you pay to see one. Combine watching a show with food and wine (a 'tablaos') or pop into a flamenco bar for a more informal affair of guzzling sangria and dancing your own version of the flamenco.



BERNABOU & THE NOU CAMP

Over 450 million people tune in to watch El Clasico, making it the biggest football rivalry of all time. They are two of the best teams in the world, who in Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi they each have one of the best footballers of all-time. The meeting between these two giants is not just a game, its theatre, and there are no two better auditoriums in the world to watch it unfold. That is why if you're holidaying in Spain, a visit to both The Bernabou and The Nou Camp is essential. Witness the sheer scale, the history, the successes and the intricacies of how each club is run on a day-to-day basis.

MADRID AS A FOOTBALL CITY...

The atmosphere in Madrid is fun-loving and passionate, as are its inhabitants. As Spain's largest, it is a very modern and cosmopolitan city, with an exciting nightlife.

If you're lucky enough to be in Madrid when an El Clasico comes around, but not lucky enough to possess a ticket to the game, where do you go? Well, Madrid's Irish bars are a fan favourite to experience an amazing atmosphere and witness all manner of drunken antics. The James Joyce Irish Pub, located beside Plaza de la Cibeles in central Madrid, is a sports bar through and through. The first thing you will spot when you enter is that the ceiling is plastered with national fans, as the pub is usually packed with sports fans from around the globe. It is darkly lit and possesses three mammoth screens, allowing you to watch the game where ever you're standing. So, if you want to experience the biggest match of the season in a loud, rowdy and football-mad place, the James Joyce is definitely your best bet.



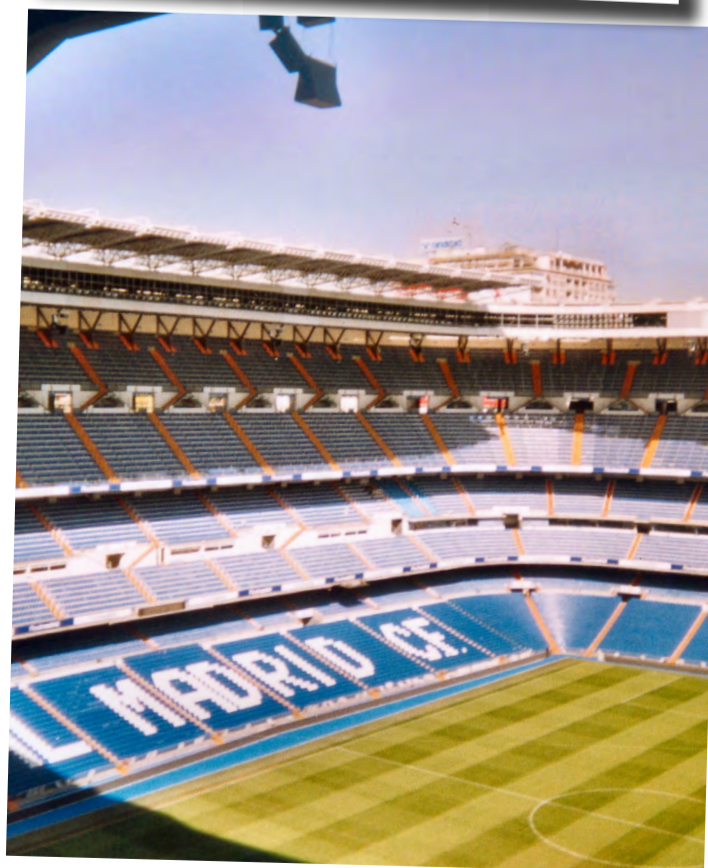
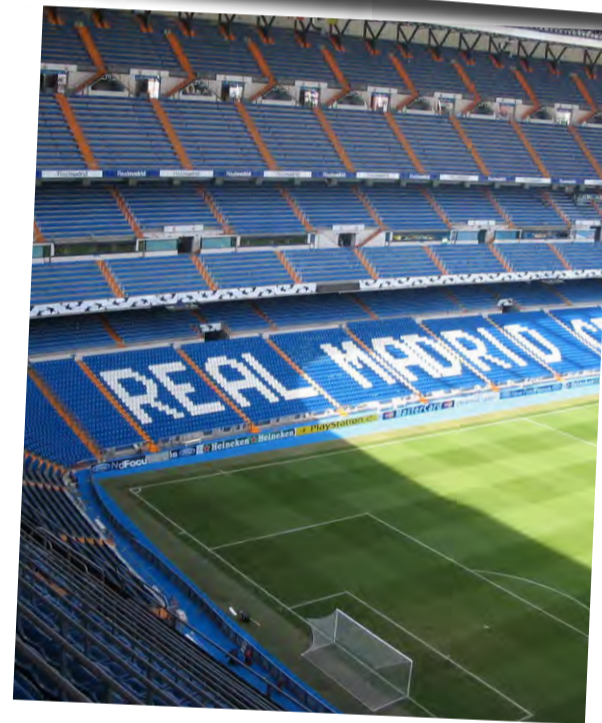
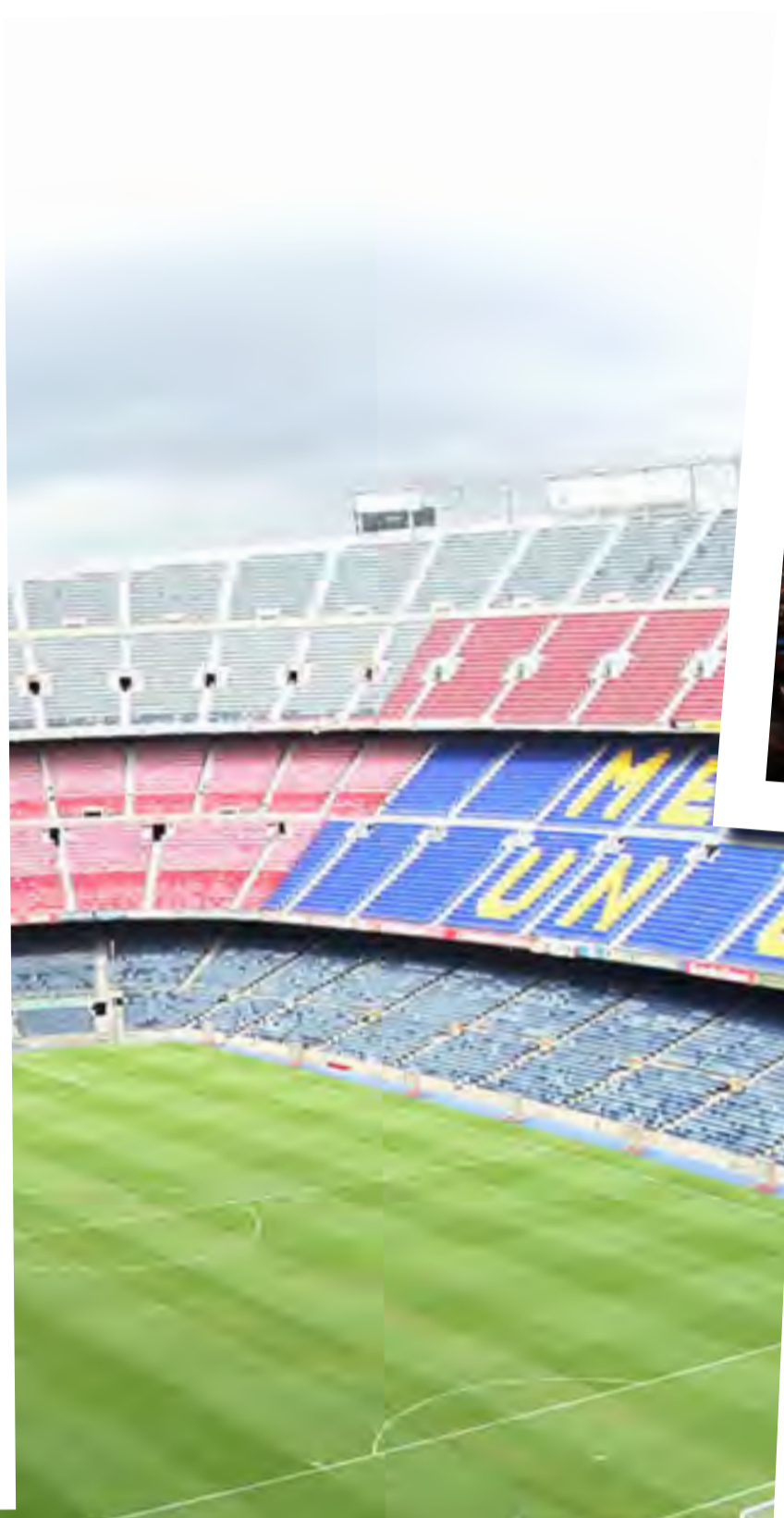
BARCELONA AS A FOOTBALL CITY...

To walk down Las Ramblas in the centre of Barcelona; one of the busiest streets in the world, is to get a taste of what Barcelona is all about. This is a fast-pace, vibrant city that's a little crazy at times.

Sports Bar Ramblas can be found towards the end of the famous street, and the bar does exactly what it says on the tin. It screens a wide range of sporting events, but El Clasico is without a doubt its main event. A wide array of football shirts and sports memorabilia hangs from its walls, alongside sixteen of the biggest TV screens money can buy. Sports Bar Ramblas gives this epic meeting the respect it deserves, by broadcasting it in the finest HD. If you're not keen on over-the-top Spanish commentary, games are always screened in Spanish and English simultaneously at separate corners of the bar. Finally, unbeatable beer deals will keep you entertained even if the game doesn't live up to expectations, although it rarely disappoints.

NOU CAMP STADIUM TOUR...

The Nou Camp stadium tour is the most popular in the world. The first thing to say about it is that it is a self-guided tour that takes around two hours to complete. This means that you can move at your own pace, and although tour guides are available at a price, their absence is made up for by the many detailed displays that are scattered around the ground. As you walk out into the gigantic caldron, you will be astounded by The Nou Camp's size. Looking down from the dizzying heights of the press box, you realise the unfathomable



BERNABOU STADIUM TOUR...

The Bernabou is also self-guided and is as equally well-run. The best way to experience The Bernabou is with a spectacular panoramic view from atop of the stands, and the tour allows you to do exactly that. So be transported to the very top via escalator and take a look around. Then, head down onto the pitch and sit in the dugout, where Real Madrid charismatic manager Jose Mourinho barks his orders from each week. Being the world's most successful club ever, the Real Madrid trophy room is like no other. Having conquered Europe nine times in their history, there is a mass of trophies for visitors to have their photographs taken with. Next door is their state-of-the-art museum, equipped with touch screen panels, telling you all you need to know about El Galacticos' fruitful past and plans for the future.

WATCHING A MATCH...

The Nou Camp houses 99,000 screaming, passionate fans, and the Bernabou has a capacity of 85,000; meaning that these two juggernauts dwarf most of the football stadiums in England. There is no better place to watch from than the Barcelona's Lateral stand, which accommodates the biggest section of home fans. This makes for a truly rocking atmosphere, deafening cheers and first class views of the pitch. As for the Bernabou, there is not a great deal of difference between each stand; each one being known for its incredible steepness. The height of the stands creates a concerto of noise, so that the operatic Madrid anthem "Hala Madrid" can be heard being loudly sung by thousands of Madrid fanatics.

English fans speak with admiration of the magic of the cup; that one-off special occasion where two teams fight for survival under a flood-lit spotlight. Fans of La Liga on the other hand, share that experience on a weekly basis. Unlike the Premier League which generally kicks-off at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon, La Liga enjoys far more of a spectacle with their magnificent night games. These floodlit, warm Spanish nights carry with them an air of glamour. Spanish football gives fans 'the beautiful game' on the grand stage that it deserves, and they don't come much grander than these two coliseums, home to Real Madrid and Barcelona.



The Hottest Nightclubs In Ibiza

There are reasons why Ibiza – affectionately known as ‘beefa’ – has been named as the clubbing capital of the world and you’ve probably heard a few, if not most of these reasons. The reputation speaks for itself but it can’t hurt to name events like Judgement Sundays, Hed Kandi and Ibiza Rocks which have seen some of the best artists, the music industry has to offer, perform.

Whether you’re a seasoned veteran or newbie, you’re bound to have the time of your life in this clubbers paradise. So we bring you the best destinations for clubbing in Ibiza.

Pacha

I At Pacha you can expect to see only the most innovative and creative musicians’ grace the stage, every Thursday you’ll find some of them making the crowd go wild with their party anthems. Get lost in the main room with a large dance floor right bang in the centre along with several bars and VIP areas, all with fantastic views of the DJ. If you’re feeling something different, step into the funky room where the music has a more soulful and disco touch. The roof terrace is a great place to catch a breath of fresh air, whilst enjoying the beautiful view of Ibiza with lounge music, cosy couches and delicious cocktails. Each night you will be welcomed into a bustling atmosphere which graces people from all over the world.



Space

2

There are clubs and super clubs, then there is a place called Space - a staggering six room extravaganza built across three levels, this lively place really lives up to its goliath reputation. Each room has a completely different vibe to the other, some may say they are like different worlds. Space is the place to be to embrace the latest music in Clubland and see the man often heralded as the greatest DJ of all time, Carl Cox.



Privilege

4

The World's biggest club, no matter what you hear about Privilege, you won't be prepared for such an accolade - partying in Privilege really is a privilege. With a main like an air craft hangar this mega club will keep you in awe. In fact all the other super clubs in Ibiza could fit into privilege. Needless to say the music is nothing but the best, being home to world-class DJs like Armin Van Buuren and Paul Oakenfold. Privilege is a place where you can rave in the most exclusive parties and in a spectacular and grandiose setting.



Amnesia

3

The idea behind the club Amnesia is to express a place where people can go out at night, forget their problems and indulge in a wonderful unknown world far away from the ordinary. The club has seen legendary club figures such as: Paul Van Dyke, Pendulum and Deadmou5 grace its four walls. Amnesia has a habit of making people lose themselves in a world full of the latest clubbing music with an awesome vibe.



Es Paradis

5

Arguably, the most beautiful club on the island is Es Paradis, and it certainly lives up to its name. The club is an enchanting garden labyrinth and oozes class. With an enticing glamorous style, Es Paradis has the habit of dazzling any clubber. Coming to Es Paradis is almost seen as a rite of passage to the Ibiza nightlife and is one of the best places to come for the renowned water parties they host. With world class music in a dazzling atmosphere, Es Paradis is one of the original charms of Ibiza's nightlife.

These are just a handful of the mega clubs that make Ibiza the clubbing capital. Each club has an atmosphere of its own and just visiting one of these puts the cherry on top of your Ibiza experience.

Greece

Yes, we're aware of the recession struggles Greece has been dealing with the past few years but don't let that stop you from visiting this enchanting and fascinating country. When you visit, don't limit your time in Greece to just sunning yourself on the beach when there is so much more to see and do.

The Parthenon temple is more than worth a visit since it's survived since 447 BC. Dedicated to the goddesses Athena, the temple is the symbol of Greece and beneath its pillars lays a rich history. Due to its fragile condition the Parthenon, that sits on Acropolis Hill in Athens, is only open for visitors to walk around the outside, but once there you can soak up the history, view beneath you and sun (naturally).



When it comes to drinking and eating, head to the trendiest spot in Athens- Gazi. The former gas-works, Gazi defiantly lends itself to the phrase 'it comes alive at night'. Up Pireas Street and by Perséfoni Street is the heart of Gazi where lies enough restaurants, cafes and bars to shake a Greek kebab stick at. Sardeles, a seafood restaurant comes highly recommended but we really push you to try their wild boar sausages. The restaurant grills any meat you like from venison to boar and compliments all meals with cheese and fine organic Greek salad with plenty of vinaigrette and olive oil, of course. If you fancy a drink then pop on over to the Gazarte, an entertainment complex that features a cinema, live music and a renowned cocktail bar that sits on a terrace with olive, pomegranate and lavender trees for company. Enjoy a refreshing cocktail in the cool summer night.

For something a bit different than ruins and wild boar pop along to the Thission outdoor cinema but remember the popcorn! It's been voted one of the best outdoor cinemas so you know it's got to be good. At dusk, once you've taken your seat; the view of the glowing Parthenon comes into sight. The Thission cinema typically shows the Hollywood classics; 'Singin' in the Rain' and 'Rear Window' have previously graced the Thission projector screen. The owners of the cinema even offer all guests their home-made sour cherry juice with brown sugar, fresh cheese pie and tsipouro (Greek brandy) so don't be afraid to over-indulge, it's a compliment

“... don't limit your time in Greece to just sunning yourself on the beach when there is so much more to see and do!”

The Greece Islands

~A Clubbers Haven~

Malia, Crete



Any avid party-goer worth their salt (and tequila) knows that Malia is a clubbers heaven. It's the kind of holiday that has you spending hours uploading your photos to Facebook once you're home and is the 'Inbetweeners' choice of clubbing destination. So raise a shot and just like the boys shout 'here's to being players!'

Malia's popular clubs include Safari Club, Apollo, Candy Club, Corkers, Banana Club, Zigzag and Lush Bar. With each playing different types of music (cheese, RnB, dance, pop, house, chart etc), super cheap drinks flowing all night and huge slices of cheap pizza for sale at 4am Malia is the perfect island for the broke student; you take minimal spending money and flights and accommodation are always pretty cheap.

If you don't fancy the pool every day, the main beach that lies opposite the strip is Pleasure Beach. Pay €10 for the week and you'll get given a ticket that guarantees you a sun-bed and umbrella, access to the restaurants and bars, all the water sports on offer and chart tunes all day until 6pm when it starts to close. We understand that sunning yourself by the pool or beach every day can get boring, so don't hesitate to book you and your friends onto a booze cruise. We know it sounds tacky but believe us its pure innocent fun (well almost). With endless amounts of drink, BBQ food, music, sea, people and drinking games at €50 a pop they're legendary in Crete so don't miss out.

To experience a proper Malia holiday you'll need to hire yourself a quad bike to whiz around the strip. Walking along the strip in the middle of the day just isn't acceptable in Malia, quad bikes swarm like flies along the roads so if you can't beat them join them!

Package holidays to Malia start from [£304](#).



Greece is the king of clubbing holidays. If the stress of exams or pressure of university is getting to you, grab your closest friends, a suitcase full of beach clothes and fly far away to your choice of Greek island for a non-stop party. The question is, once you've partied in Zante who's stopping you from clubbing in Malia? The way we see it they're like the Harry Potter films; you've got to see them all.

Kardamena, Kos

There's no denying that Kos is the perfect clubbing holiday. It's filled to the brim with clubs, restaurants and beaches to keep you going into the early hours and until you 'Pass Out' just like Tinie Tempah.

It's unheard of to travel all the way to Kardamena and not party on the beach till the early hours. Watch the sunset on the resorts busiest beach listening to festival music provided by the islands resident DJs. Tuck into the free BBQ on offer and organise your plan of action for the night ahead. Once you're tipsy and dressed to impress head out to Bar Street where walking up you'll hear everything from indie to house to urban anthems.

One night it's worth spending a little bit longer at the pool, getting dressed into clothes you're not bothered about ruining (preferably fancy dress) and heading on down to the famous foam party held every Tuesday at Starlight nightclub. It's great fun but in all seriousness take some sunglasses or goggles because your eyes will sting.

During the day there are heaps of beaches, bars and water sports to take part in so sit back, order a mojito and send us a postcard!

Laganas, Zante

Sunning yourself on Laganas beach, jet-skiing in a warm blue sea and downing shots with the bar staff in Rescue night club, welcome to a Zante holiday. You won't forget it in a hurry.

Zante boasts a 300m-long strip of neon nightlife that features our top recommend clubs and bars. Head to Cherry Bay that sits right on the beach front for a cheese-filled night out or if you belong in a crowd then Rescue offers just this, it plays RnB and house music into the early hours and can fit 2,000 people in its main room, outside bar and upstairs terrace so there's plenty of room for you and your friends to do the 'Gangdem style'. We also urge you to stop by Zeros to watch the crazy bar games the staff take part in and Fishbowl for the finest cocktails, and fishbowls, naturally. Drinks range from £2.50 for a beer to £4.50 for a bottle of wine but during September and October when the resort is out of season, the PR promoters will offer you 2 for 1 cocktails and shots for free.

There are plenty of tasty takeaways on Laganas strip to keep the late-night munchies at bay but when you're preparing to line your stomach for the evening's antics ahead, visit Horizon, it rests on the beach front and remains a firm favourite. After the friendly waiters have severed your delicious food and free shots they entertain you with Greek dancing and successfully persuade you to join in.

Zante's beaches are gorgeous enough to persuade you to take some aspirin, chuck on some dark sunglasses and leave your hotel room to sweat your way through your hangover. With jet skis, speedboats and sea turtle spotting on offer you'll be feeling better in no time.

Faliraki, Rhodes

Faliraki is the cream of the crop, the crème de la crème, the best of the best. When it comes to deciding what Greek clubbing holiday to pick don't hesitate to pick Faliraki.

A holiday to Faliraki is like a diamond in the rough. Hidden beneath its reputation lies a wild holiday with scorching temperatures. It becomes alive in the summer and is one of the busiest party resorts in the Mediterranean. It's filled with the best of the best nightlife, restaurants and beaches to keep you going into the early hours and until you 'Pass Out' just like Tinie Tempah.

For the best variety of music and 2 4 1 cocktails head to 'Cactus' bar, it's the perfect place to start the night. Monday nights in Faliraki are all about 'Paparazzi'. Throw on your best outfit and head on over to club 'Bed' for fireworks, DJs and cocktails. Even whilst you queue you'll feel like a celebrity with the famous 'Bed' red carpet beneath your feet. Don't miss 'Matrix' when you're in Faliraki; it hides a chill out garden at the back and features three floors offering different music on each one, it's the place to be any night of the week.

Faliraki has plenty of Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants to tickle your fancy. For a delicious steak hunt down 'Sizzlers Steak Bar' that dedicates itself to giving you the best steak and sauce you've ever tried. And for the hungry clubber there are numerous fast food joints so why not try one every night? With pizza, burgers, chips and kebabs, you'll never go hungry.

Germany

T

hink of Germany as your new favourite country, you may as well think of it because you'll soon be saying it. The Germans love a party so expect drinking, dancing and cultural delights for even the most timid of party animals.

We've already mentioned drinking so why not start with beer tasting at a brewery? The Germans love their beer and are proud of it and we say why not! Kolsch beer is from the city of Cologne which is where you'll find the brewery. When you walk round, you'll be swamped with information about the famous beer, how it's made and how it should be drunk and served but the best part of the brewery is that waiters and waitresses walk around all day handing out 'samples'. Cheers!



Football is BIG in Germany. They're avid supporters and players and boy are they good! If you get a chance, visit one of the famous stadiums; 'Signal Iduna Park' is the biggest and 'Olympiastadion' that sits in Berlin is breath-taking to see. Catch a match if you can, for an incredible atmosphere you can't go wrong.

Obviously a visit to Germany is incomplete without visiting Berlin and Munich. Whatever you do, don't forget about the Berlin Wall. The restored stretch of the wall that remains, holds an incredible and brave history behind it so don't deny it a visit. Take a walk along the wall by the spree and see the East Side Gallery which is dedicated to the famous graffiti art and preserves all the paintings.

How about you take a surfing lesson in Munich? We know it sounds crazy but trust us, it'll be worth it. The city may well be land-locked but this hasn't stopped eager surfers playing on the Eisbach River to create enough waves for some serious board action. The German surfers ignore the 'No Surfing' sign and instead get stuck in, so about joining them? They're famous for being friendly so ask for a lesson and take to the river. Surfs up!

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, likely Berlin, featuring several illuminated skyscrapers and a bridge over a river. The lights from the buildings and the bridge are reflected in the water. The sky is dark, and the overall atmosphere is vibrant and modern.

“The Germans love a party so expect drinking, dancing and cultural delights for even the most timid of party animals!”



OKTOBERFEST

Oktoberfest is the world's largest beer festival annually held in Munich, Germany. The 16-day festival attracts over 6 million people from all around the globe who consume around 1.5 million gallons of beer, 480,000 spit-roasted chickens and 200,000 sausages (Würstl).

Other German dishes include Schweinebraten (roast pork), Steckerlfisch (grilled fish on a stick), Schweinshaxe (grilled ham hock), Brezeln (pretzel), Reiberdatschi (potato pancakes) and Bavarian delicacies like Weisswurst (white sausage).

Large tents are plotted on Theresienwiese ("the field of Therese") which serve beer from German's well-known breweries where people can enjoy live music played by German bands and eat native food all the while celebrating old-fashioned German and Bavarian heritage and culture.

The tradition began in 1810 to celebrate the marriage of Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig to the Saxon-Hildburghausen Princess Therese where people were invited to join in with the festivities. Subsequently, anniversaries were celebrated in the following years and the festival gradually got larger and expanded to the point where it is now one of the most renowned festivals in the world.



Elements of the original festival have changed over time; horse races are no longer held and the agricultural show is held every four years. The main features of Oktoberfest now are beer, food and merriment.

On the first Sunday of the festival the Costume and Riflemen's Processions takes place where thousands of performers dressed in traditional costumes parade through the streets of Munich. The second Sunday consists of an open-air big band concert. Visitors can also enjoy the fairground rides, roam around the haunted house and check out the flea circus amongst many other things.

The festival will run between 22 September to 7 October. It is one of Munich's largest and most profitable tourist attractions. For more information please visit <http://www.oktoberfest.de/en/>



FRANCE

Country of Romance and Culture

France is one of the most visited countries in the world and with good reason; it is a country that caters to young couples looking to celebrate their love. So for you men that hate romance, candlelit dinners and treating your girlfriends and wives grit your teeth because this guide will cause you nightmares.

Men also should be aware Paris is the fashion capital of the world, so if you come to Paris with shopaholics, you may want to have plenty of credit stored on your debit cards as your wallet may take a hit in shops like Ralph Lauren!

Having arrived in Paris you may want to take your partner for a trip round the Eiffel Tower. Holding hands (men don't be shy) will help set the tone for a relaxing walk around France's most prized possession. Once you've settled in you may wish to see Sainte Chapelle, an exquisite glass-stained chapel or the Opera Garnier built in 1875 for a bit of entertainment to help soak up the great culture the Parisians are renowned for.



Carrying on the trend of buying your partners the latest fashion brands, girlfriends will be enthralled at having Chanel and L'Oreal cosmetics available to them. Paris is awash with cosmetic stores that provide creams and lotions to keep you lovely women looking young and pretty for your partners. Perhaps some Calvin Klein aftershave will be required for your better halves should they reek a tad of body odour!

But maybe your looking for a romantic holiday in France with a different theme. Getting your swimming trunks and bikinis on and having a splash in some sea to help expend some of that new found energy that your relationship has conjured up. Then go to Aquitaine where couples will love the lush beaches with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and wonderful scenery in the form of mountains bordering Spain on the other.

You cannot visit Paris without trying out the number of fine restaurants here. Food is known to create a romantic mood and why not try out the oysters in Le Meurice or the creamy chocolate desserts in Maceo. There are any number of Michelin star restaurants in Paris you can go to, just don't forget to order an extra bottle of champagne to take back to your room with you as it can be a great aphrodisiac!



Romantic trips to France outside of Paris will often lead couples to the French Riviera and it is a great alternative. Couples can enjoy relaxing boat rides in the south east region of France where the weather is continually warm and as welcoming as the local community.



BOOZE CRUISE

BRITISH ADVANTAGE

Thanks to the strength of other currencies against the euro, you will be pleased to know the infamous booze cruises are back once again.

for one british pound you can get the highest it has been in three and a half years, which has seen a rise in British ferry passengers and Eurotunnel users travelling from the UK to France to stock up on alcohol.

Booze cruises were popular between 2004 and 2006 when the pound amounted to €1.50 but saw them decline in recent years due to certain factors like the recession.

With the UK's high VAT, currently standing at 20%, buying alcohol in other parts of Europe, where the VAT and excise duty on alcohol is significantly lower, has a greater appeal than ever before.

Following the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, London 2012 Olympics and European football championships people have relished in the perks of buying beer, wine and spirits cheaper from France.



BEST MODE OF TRAVEL

If driving it may be worth taking friends so you can split the cost of crossing the **eurotunnel** between you which takes about 35 minutes. Remember to leave enough space to store the alcohol. You may wish to take a roof box in case you find more than you bargained for and want to stock up for future.

Or you may simply choose to travel via **ferry from dover** to calais which takes between 90 minutes to two hours.

AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL PERMITTED

there is no longer a fixed allowance for importing alcohol (and tobacco if you decide to purchase that also) from most EU countries but customs do ask questions if they suspect people of re-selling purchased goods and have the right to seize them especially if you exceed the limit.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

According to French law you must be **over eighteen** to drive in France. It is compulsory to carry a **reflective jacket, warning triangle, breathalyser kit, adapted headlights and spare tyre** as you don't want to end up being stranded. Your car must also have European breakdown cover and the new EU-style number plate.

Further information can be found on the **hm revenue and customs website**, so it's best to check up on anything you're unsure about before you travel.

Chamonix-Mont Blanc

Chamonix is a traditional Alpine town whose ski areas spread across 10 miles. The resort is well renowned for being one of the top choices for the title of "world's most famous ski resort" so there's no doubt it deserves a place in our world's best ski resorts.

The first Winter Olympic Games in 1924 were hosted beneath the Mont-Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps and second highest mountain in Europe. It also has one of the world's longest ski runs and known as the extreme free-riding capital of Europe.

If you feel daring enough you can climb 121 metal steps to an observation deck that showcase the best panoramic views from the entire Alps. The town also boasts a lively atmosphere with over 100 restaurants and the Alps' coolest bars to unwind in after an exhilarating experience on the slopes.

ITALY

For the most stunning scenery, food and people, the Italians do it better than anyone. Cities such as Venice, Rome, Florence and Naples are all filled with vibrant nightlife, tasty food and interesting attractions but it's the hidden Italian culture that is begging to be explored.

The Colosseum is a must when you're in Rome, looking at photos online of the Italian masterpiece just doesn't do it justice. Built in 72 AD, it's considered one of the greatest works of Roman architecture and despite its ruin still has a jaw-dropping impact on every tourist. Even if you are not religious, a visit to the Vatican can't go amiss. You can access the collections through Rome and is the spiritual hub of Catholic world. Take a peek inside the Vatican Palace and prepare to be amazed.



Visit the unique Leaning Tower of Pisa in the city of Pisa and we highly recommend you go as it may not be here in the next 100 years! The tower famously gets its name, after it began to tilt during its construction caused by unstable foundations. Luckily, builders have managed to stable the building ever since but the tower sinks a rate of 1mm each year so don't hesitate to visit and climb to the top.

Once you get hungry, don't fight your natural instincts, give in to the smells of pizza, pasta and ice cream that have been following you around all day. We know they're obvious choices but it's just silly to visit the foods origin and not sample the delectable food where it all began. For the best spaghetti head to Rome, Naples for the tastiest pizza and delicious toppings, and Florence for the most mouth-watering ice cream and the widest variety of flavours you'll every find; fig, apricot, rice pudding and even trifle amongst many others.

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For those of you who can't resist a bit of shopping on your city break, Milan is the fashion capital of Italy. In the Quadrilatero d'Oro square, sits all the haute couture shops but for designer bargains, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele outlet stocks all out of season men's and women's designer brands. For a drink and dance head to the any club in Rome. With more than enough to go around each club or bar features chart music and a long cocktail list, just remember to dress up; you are in Italy after all!

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Winter Wonderland

Lapland is certainly not just for Christmas and certainly not just for the kids. The vast area is the largest in Finland. The winter wonderland is an abundance of pure snow, arctic wildernesses as well as deep forests of the Nordic spruce and not to mention the sensational Northern Lights; all just waiting for you to relish.

Lapland hosts a range of fantastic festivals; from opera to modern music, theatre and film to sport. Let the wonderful beats of the music festivals beat to your heart and be swayed by the moving rhythms. Or fill your mind with wonderful thoughts in their fantastic plays in the films and theatre. Alternatively you could get active in popular sports like football and skiing.

The nightlife in Lapland is often underestimated. Not only is it extremely friendly but you will experience clubs and bars like no other. The Absolut Ice Bar in The Ice Hotel takes the statement of being cool to a whole new exciting level. Drink out of the glasses, which are made from the very same material that holds up the hotel. In addition to relaxing at the ice bar, you can sit down in comfortable armchairs with reindeer skins and sip your delicious drink. The bar is often decorated with ice sculptures. The nightlife varies so much here that there is something for everybody.

With the location of Finland, Lapland has an incredible mix of culture inspired from its Swedish, Norwegian and Russian neighbours. The land uniquely combines its strong culture with those around it to give you a sensational experience like no other. In West Lapland the operation of Sweden has characterised the way of life in that region. In the East, tradition blends with Russian culture. Consequently the heritage, culture and locals are as charming as the nightlife and activities in Lapland.

There are no limits to the sporting activities in this winter wonderland. Cruise through the silent snow covered wilderness with the wind gently whispering in your ear whilst you see stunning wild animals in their natural habitat; a rare beauty.

Your very own sled will be powered by team of friendly dogs or reindeers. Take a day trip around the cities in a tour or make a walk of it. Take a hike through the pristine national parks, Lemonsjoki is one of the most renowned national parks for its fantastic back-to-nature atmosphere that is purely divine. Shoot down the rapids in a thrilling ride or have a relaxed and invigorating ride along the countless rivers and lakes. Challenge your skiing and snowboarding skills in one of Lapland's many fantastic resorts. To name a few, these activities are the best and closest you can get to the wonderfully exclusive Northern experience.

Lapland is a land like no other and with so many things to do you will not want to leave this magical winter wonderland.

Levi, Finland

Finland's largest ski resort makes for a great family holiday, particularly appealing to kids who get the chance to meet Santa Claus, take a reindeer and husky ride and roam around Lapland.

Not only that but along with the quiet slopes, pleasant welcoming atmosphere, good English-speaking instructors and ski schools make it an ideal place to teach beginners how to ski. For more experienced skiers there are three black slopes.

Thanks to the resort's location in the Arctic Circle there is always enough snow as well as sub-zero temperatures and you may be lucky to get the chance to see the Northern Lights.



Studying in Finland

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Finland is known as the best and most advanced educational system in the world attracting student from all parts of the globe. So what makes Finland such a great place to study?

EU/EEA students and other international students with permanent residence in Finland are exempt from paying tuition fees at public Finnish universities and polytechnics. Students come from outside the European Union may be charged tuition fees if study is carried out in a language other than Finnish or Swedish.

Popular courses to study in Finland consist of Engineering, Design, Technology, Education, Business and Languages to list a few.

Finland is renowned for the snowy Alps, with its winter-sports and picturesque landscapes. If skiing and snowboarding excites you then we suggest you head for Lapland where they even offer dog-sledding, however it shouldn't be confused with Santa Claus' Lapland, although you may find reindeers roaming around. Aside from snow sports you may enjoy canoeing, white-water rafting, jet-skiing amongst the many other types of water sport Finland boasts.

Depending on the length of stay, you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the infamous Northern Lights. Winter temperatures get as cold as -30 degrees Celsius but a blanket of snow is what makes the world renowned Alps even more beautiful.

Finnns have a love for rock music and there's no shortage of it in Finland, in fact, rock music is a key feature of Finnish culture and the people are known to be warm and welcoming so you won't be made to feel like a foreigner even though you are.

Russia

The capital Moscow is one of the world's greatest cities and due to the vast size of the country there are terrains of every kind, a variety of weather from the coldest city in the world like Yakutsk to the sub-tropical beach resorts of Sochi. Russia is entrenched with a marvellous history and there countless museums you can visit to learn about it, especially in Moscow.

Moscow is a bastion for museums and architecture. The first port of call for tourists will be Red Square that lies at the heart of the massive capital. Students of history will be in awe of one of Communism's great leaders Lenin, who has a monument dedicated to him. Further down tourists will be reaching for their cameras again to take snapshots of St. Basil Cathedral built in 1556. Try and get inside to the museum for a sneak peak if possible.

Russia's rich history dates back millennia but tourists cannot escape the lingering shadow of communism that has held sway over the country since 1917. It took many forms such as Leninism, Stalinism and Trotskyism but the prevalent theme always centred on state authority and a classless society. The Soviet Empire included much of Eastern Europe at one point until the break up of it in 1991 under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Tired of history? Then why not make your way down to Bolshoi Theatre and catch a play for a thousand rubles? Those lovers of art need not feel left out (even if you are few in number), as Tretyakov Gallery will see to all your creative desires.

For those wanting to experience the local food, head to Park Sokolniki where you can sample the local Shashlik, a wonderful duet of Russian and Georgian Kebab. The location is also an amusement park and will keep the kids entertained for hours on end, as will the odd beach resorts.

Sochi is a Black Sea beach resort and packed with Russians. It is gaining in popularity and is set to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2014, which will surely provide great advertising for the place. Some people may get enough of this is their home countries so why not head on to Siberia if such is the case.

Siberia is often referred to as a hellhole because of the amount of Russian dissidents that were shipped off there under Joseph Stalin. But look beyond that and you will find a region brimming with gorgeous mountainous scenery and serene lakes. It is very swampy in the north and centre but if it's natural beauty you're after, Siberia will cater to your wants.



Cheap and Cheerful

INTRODUCTION

Western Europe will always be popular to tourists because they find it far more comfortable compared to Eastern Europe that tourists enjoy. But the following countries all have something to offer and should not be shunned on the count of some of the lack of infrastructure which may hinder them.

Since coming out of the Communist bloc they have started to integrate into Europe and provide tourists with a much more accommodating experience. Gone are the days where westerners will be looked upon with suspicion and spied on by KGB agents (just some of the telling tales former tourists came back with on previous escapades).

CROATIA

Croatia is near the Adriatic Sea and the Balkans. The northern terrain is mainly hilly and this gives way to a very cold climate. The part of Croatia located by the Adriatic Sea has a very Mediterranean feel to it and is warm.

Croatia has the privileged title of being the first country in Europe to start the concept of commercial naturist resorts. There are twenty official nudist beaches in Croatia, where tourists are allowed to bare their private parts without being hauled away in handcuffs. Croatia is not only worth visiting but perhaps moving too! Just don't forget to apply sun block on parts of your body you usually wouldn't.

You can sail around the small archipelagos in Croatia as an alternative or go to the capital Zagreb and take in the culture. Croatia too has a medieval feel to it via its architecture and cobbled streets. Local cuisine is diverse so it's hard to pinpoint one national dish. Spicy sausage is popular in the east but the Shepherds Stew is a favourite among many as it involves a number of tasty meats cooked to a slow boil.

BULGARIA

Bulgaria is located to the west of the Black Sea and is an important trade route for the world. Being close to the Turkish straits means its tourist routes are open to Europe and the Middle East. Yet for some reason Bulgaria remains an underrated country for tourists who do not travel to see the beauty of Bulgaria in their millions.

The country is blessed with mountainous regions accompanied by cold snowy weather in the winter but hot and humid summers. If you visit the country you will be immersed into the local traditions as the Bulgarians are naturally considered a friendly people. For instance on March 3rd you can find yourself celebrating Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Or Sts. Cyril and Methodius day on May 24 will see you joining in the local festivities where a vivid display of flowers are on show, folksy music is playing in the background and the odd drink is shared.

The capital Sofia is the engine of the country. But this should not be mistaken for some kind of industrialised town. Sofia is blessed with lovely parks, bars and pubs. As one of the oldest cities in Europe, Sofia has over two hundred and fifty monuments and historical landmarks. So there's no shortage of things to do or places to visit.

Hungary is in Central Europe and this makes it easy for tourists to access the country. The broad spectrum of weather really can go from one extreme to the other. In harsh winters the climate in the eastern parts can plummet to minus twenty degrees. Summers can be extremely hot reaching the high thirties and this can be followed by many thunderstorms leading up to the autumn period.

Hungary is one of the fifteenth most popular destinations in the world and its capital Budapest regarded as one of the most beautiful. There are a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites that tourists can visit, many within walking distance of each other. Lake Balaton is the largest lake in Central Europe and breathtaking. The biggest area of open grassland can be found here too in Hortobagy.

Hungary is also home to the largest Synagogue in Europe, so has a special attachment to those tourists of the Jewish faith. In terms of architecture Hungary has castles and churches in abundance and can be found in the city of Eger.

Fancy some vibrant music and plum brandy? Pack your bags for Kecskemet. Students and youngsters head on down to Győr, which is full of cafes, restaurants, nightclubs and bars.

POLAND

Poland is in Central Europe, surrounded by an assortment of countries but has a lengthy Baltic Sea coastline. The weather is fairly unspectacular in the sense you get mild winters and mundane summers, but this should not detract from a country that is full of natural beauty.

The capital Warsaw is starting to bring in a flurry of tourists since it joined the EU. Thriving new business centres and the abolishment of derelict old towns has really pushed the levels of modernity. There's the Bieloweisa National Park on the border with Belarus if you want to see scenic views, also a World Heritage Site recognised by UNESCO.

The Masovia region known as the "Manchester" of Poland is brimming with manufacturing sites and museums that may intrigue tourists. Perhaps the countryside seems more alluring, if that's the case head to Warmia Masuria a green region with lucid lakes. Lubusz adds to the natural feel surrounding Poland with its diverse landscape and inland dunes. The bird life also attracts avid bird-watchers from all corners of the planet. Lovers of nature will enjoy Poland and is highly recommended to tourists.

Safety standards in these parts of Europe have improved. Unlike the west, much of the region still possesses natural beauty in bucket-loads. For those tourists on a tight budget, Eastern Europe is definitely for you. It is cheap and cheerful and you will enjoy your time in these various countries.

SLOVENIA

Slovenia is surrounded by many elements. It is bordered by countries such as Hungary and Croatia but by the Adriatic Sea and the eastern Alps on its northern borders. The terrain it possesses is of a great variety. It has the beaches of the Mediterranean, the peaks of the Julian Alps and rolling hills in the south. This gives tourists an array of choices in terms of things to do.

The architecture in both the countryside and cities surrounding the Julian Alps are similar to Austria. Tourists will want to take their cameras to snap up pictures of roadside shrines and baroque steeples. The Julian Alps is also home to Triglav National Park, a frequent destination travelled to by tourists. The cities of Maribor and Ptuj also have some fine vineyards should you wish to do some wine tasting. There is a strong Hungarian influence in these cities and is built around the Drava and Mura Rivers where you can take boat rides and go fishing when the weather's appropriate.

The capital Ljubljana is very urban and modern and will cater to all your needs. Shopping for gifts, eating out and sampling the local cuisine in elegant restaurants is the norm here. Slovenia was not apart of the Eastern bloc and is a pretty affluent country, so travelling here is safe.



Study Abroad at Netherlands Oldest University



Leiden is situated not far from Amsterdam so regular trips to the city don't disappoint international students. Rather than head straight to the seedy red light district and cafés that are higher than kites, appreciate the cultural city ahead of you. Cruises offered along the canals are popular as is the Van Gogh museum that gets thousands or visits every year. Edam and Gouda cheese are the nation's speciality, so don't forget to indulge whilst you ride your bike around Leiden. Still not convinced the University is for you? How about this?

Leiden University is credited for its famous Nobel Prize winners and leading scientists. Professor Heike Kamerlingh Onnes was the first to succeed in liquefying helium and was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1913 amongst others during the 20th century. Albert Einstein was fond of the university too, one of his manuscripts on the quantum theory was found in Leiden's libraries in 2005.

So if you fancy yourself as the next Albert Einstein (and let's be honest, who doesn't) order a prospectus from the Leiden University website [here](#).



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ore than just windmills and clogs, The Netherlands is home to Leiden University, the oldest one in the country and features 88th on the global university leader board. Not bad for a University that once came from humble beginnings.

Leiden University, located in the city of Leiden was a gift from William the Silent (a Dutch Prince) during Spanish sieges in the 16th century. Scholars such as Joseph Scaliger and David Ruhnken helped to raise the universities profile, encouraging people to think highly of the institute. At present day, its reputation doesn't falter. Believing international character strengths the reputation of Leiden, the university encourages an international student body.

Because the University lies within the EU, you won't require a visa to study here. You might even want to shun the international dorms, because the Dutch speak English really well so your preparation is cut in half. Leiden accepts all students on a 'study abroad' scheme, as an 'exchange student' and those who wish to study for the full three-year course. The tuition fees differ depending on your country, but the fee is typically the same as the 'study abroad' scheme. The university itself has no central campus but instead the buildings are dotted around the city. Popular courses include psychics, maths, medicine and philosophy amongst others.

The Best of the Rest of Europe

BELGIUM

W Belgium is different to a lot of European states, both to the west and east of it. Its capital Brussels is within a thousand kilometres of most of Europe's major capitals and is considered by many an understated "capital of Europe" because that's where the European Parliament is based. Weather-wise Belgium has mild winters and cool summers and is accessible all year round, a plus point for tourists.

Belgium boasts a rich heritage where past meets present. This is characterised no better than by the capital Brussels, which houses an impressive European Quarter with historical monuments that include World Heritage Sites like the Grand Place. There's the Gothic town hall and St Michaels Cathedral for those who want to experience some religious nostalgia.

The more hip part of Belgium is definitely Antwerp. Perhaps men wanting to buy an engagement ring for potential wives will be lured in to the city to purchase diamonds. Or maybe for those too shrewd to be tied down to the old ball and chain, students may fancy heading off into the city centre of Antwerp home to vibrant clubs and bars that will keep you entertained.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic has really come to the fore in recent decades and its tourism industry is booming. Its capital Prague has become synonymous with men looking to go for a weekend and experience the bars and strip clubs. Referred to as the "Amsterdam of the East," young men and students looking to enjoy stag parties will not be disappointed; just don't forget to ask your girlfriends for permission!

Of course there is so much more to the Czech Republic than clubs and bars. In the north-east region of Prague lays the Bohemian Paradise. Here tourists will find some of nature's finest rock formations and isolated castles. Finer architecture can be visited near Znojmo when you pass by Baroque Castle and St. Margaret's Cathedral.

Lovers of ski sports will find solace in the Nove Mesto na Morave ski resort, which is more than a simple slope. It's a large area dedicated to cross country skiing, so adrenaline junkies looking to take on the mountains within this remote region will have an absolute ball. Unlike a lot of ski resorts in Europe where space is limited, tourists will have more than just a few slabs of snow to improve their ski skills on.

If you want to avoid all that and let your hair down, take a short trip to Mutenice Wine Region and pour yourself a glass of the local tipplw. Just don't drink too much and wind up with your face flat on the local streets wondering where you are the following day!

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is one the most popular tourists attractions in Europe. The weather like much of the states located in Central Europe enjoys fair winters and tolerable summers. Its capital Amsterdam has gained notoriety among much of the world's youngsters because of its tolerance of marijuana and lax drug laws.

Amsterdam boasts great culture thanks to many migrants who have settled here and assimilated from countries that were formerly apart of the Dutch Empire. The canals that run through the city are serene and its museums showcasing artefacts collected from the Dutch Colonial period impressive. Football fans may want to visit the Amsterdam arena, home to the Ajax football team. Famed for their infamous trophy collection during the summer tours can be arranged to learn about their football history and style that has had a profound affect on much of Europe. The accommodating and liberal attitudes leave a good impression on tourists who tend to come back.

For those tourists who want to shun the jam-packed city of Amsterdam one can pack their bags for Maastricht. Maastricht is medieval to the core and tourists will love the culture and atmosphere as the south is a lot more relaxing and family orientated compared to the rest of the Netherlands.

For the complete student adventure where you will be raving from late at night until the morning sunrise, look no further then Groningen. The entire city is dedicated to pure fun, and of course studying during the day. So don't party too hard.



PORTUGAL

Situated in the south of Europe, it shares Spain as a neighbour through the Iberian Peninsula. The climate is generally warm all year round with the temperature rarely dropping below fifteen degrees throughout the country on average, maybe to five degrees during the winter.

Northern Portugal, home to its second city Porto, is littered with historical significance. It carries great weight because it is where Portugal was born as a state nine hundred years ago. Known as the "Invincible City" Porto is located near river Douro and Atlantic Ocean and draws in tourists in droves because of its museums.

Aveiro and Braga give Portugal its European attachment. Aveiro is referred to as the "Venice" of Portugal because the city stands afoot of canals. Continuing with the Italian theme, Braga is the "city of Archbishops" and is a draw to tourists looking to learn or discover religious enlightenment in the city.

The capital Lisbon is home to shopping malls and modernity, clearly a draw to women who love Gucci shoes and Prada handbags. But for those bachelor and bachelorettes looking to paint the town red, enjoy a booze fest and create embarrassing memories head to Algarve. Constant sunshine and lovely blue sea is perhaps what you need after a hard years worth of working or studying. The Algarve will rival any Spanish island in terms of party atmosphere and marvellous beaches.

SWEDEN

Sweden is in northern Europe bordering both Finland and Norway though is physically connected to Denmark through the bridge of Oresund. The Baltic Sea lies to the east of Sweden and conditions are usually very cold in the country, reaching just below mild temperatures in the summer.

Norrland is home to nine provinces of Sweden and the most beautiful parts of the country. The largest cities in the region like Gavte, Umea and Llua are surrounded by lots of wilderness, forests, rivers, lakes, marshes and mountains. The vastness of it takes up half the country alone. The region is great for you tourists looking to go hiking or have some fun on the ski slopes.

The central part of the country is home to its capital Stockholm and the more industrialised parts. Tourists along with the natives are granted the ancient "right to roam." This simply means people can go anywhere they like, even on private property so long as they respect the privacy of people.

Due to Stockholm being made up of islands, you can hire out canoes and go fishing or sailing throughout the archipelago. Watching the sun rise in the background on a chilli morning whilst you hook back your fishing rod will appeal to older folks, so don't forget to tell Granddad and Grandmother to pack their suitcases for this holiday. Sweden is perhaps suited to tourists that take families along with them looking for a more peaceful holiday abroad.

UKRAINE

Ukraine leans slightly more towards the eastern part of Europe bordering Russia along the east and a whole host of countries. Only the north-west is vacant and that's because the Black Sea is there.

The capital Kiev (not named after the much loved Chicken Kiev) is home to leafy hills and wonderful architecture. The Orthodox and Baroque styles can be recognised by those tourists who are experts in architectural styles in the Saint-Sophia Cathedral. Lviv centre is also a World Heritage Site listed by UNESCO, worth seeing if you're in the city.

Hikers will fancy long walks surrounded by gorgeous scenery through the Carpathian Mountains near Rakhiv. Standing at just over two thousand metres tall, it is definitely conquerable for novices who fancy their chances. But remember if your afraid of heights just forget you read this part of the tour guide!

The Crimea Peninsula home to wonderful beach resorts will alert the attention of tourists. The region is favoured by Russian tourists especially and may be very crowded but you will nonetheless enjoy what it has to offer in the summer.

Worth remembering for tourists from Western Europe is not to use Dollars, British pounds or Euros. The local currency is Hryvnia and the best exchange rates are in Kiev. So unless you want to be losing your money to local con artists and dodgy dealers come prepared with Ukrainian currency via legitimate means such as airports where you will find currency exchangers.



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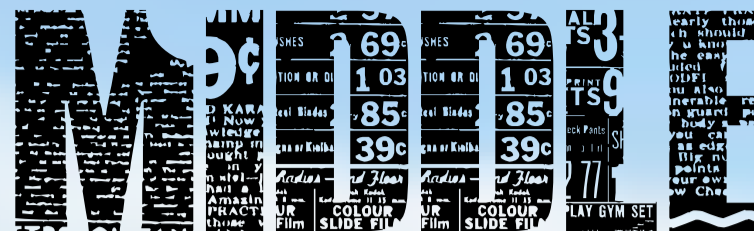
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AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST





Overview

Africa and the Middle East as separate regions are full of life in their own right. Africa is more in line with nature and the greatness it has to offer in terms of its wildlife and unfettered national park reserves. The Middle East in contrast illustrates the ever evolving face of modernity thanks largely to the influx of petro-dollars. Here you will find endless deserts surroundings energetic cities buzzing with skyscrapers and shopping malls.

Lebanon is perhaps the most miscellaneous of all states within the Middle East region because of all the cultures and religions it has. It offers a year complete with things to do. Spring is the best time of season to visit Lebanon with a flurry of activities to pursue to help pass the time.

One can take a hike through the Cedar tree reserves in Al-Shouf or Horsh Ehden. Alternatively you can take a trek through the Qadisha Valleys, home to glorious mountain peaks. After a day of absorbing sites, you and your family may decide to spend a cool evening in one of many of Beirut's open cafes sampling authentic Lebanese cuisine.

One can then catch a plane from the capital Beirut and travel westwards to any of Iran's 98 airports and plan their trip for the vast country. Iran too has natural beauty in abundance. Winters can be extremely cold with temperature levels plummeting into the minuses and summers blazing with heat with it rising to the high 40's. When you do go you will find a country with cultural depth and diverse scenery from the Alborz Mountains in the north to the serene Caspian coast, which has a 143, 200 sq mi surface area.

BARRIAGES OF NATURE

Ghana has a variety of national parks, including one that stands out the Kakum National Park. It is in actual fact a rainforest and home to the rarest of wildlife. It also has a lovely canopy for tourists wishing to take long walks and enjoy the greenery on display.

To witness one of nature's most phenomenal spectacles you have to follow from the beginning of the migration, which starts in the Southern Serengeti plains of Tanzania ending in the Maasai Mara, Kenya. 413 miles separate both Tanzania and Kenya so it is a lengthy trek.

The Wildebeest migration usually takes place between May and December. It is an arduous journey dependent on the Wildebeest's need for food. Roughly during the latter end of April, the Wildebeest are still occupying the plains of the Serengeti in Tanzania.

FEELING AT HOME

Maybe students looking to party prefer a resort, and few will rival Agadir on the west coast of Morocco. A large contingent of western Europeans travel their between spring and summer so you will feel right at home. There are many bars and clubs where you can enjoy an entertaining evening and dance the night away. One can liken Agadir to Greece and Italy.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago located in the Persian Gulf made up of 32 islands tucked in between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It is connected to Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway and bridges the two lands together which are separated by 25km. By far the most relaxed of the Middle Eastern states in regards to liberalism as law allows alcohol to be permitted for minorities, appealing to western travellers. The capital city Manama is very cosmopolitan and practically a social and shopping Mecca.

In April the Formula One race season embraces Bahrain with one of its infamous Grand Prix's. If that's not enough, the football world cup is coming to Qatar in 2022, though it is some time away the sport will be growing in the country appealing to westerners that love the sport and may look to catch a local game in Doha.

The land was also part of Ashanti's infamous empire and has gained notoriety for it as she was a fierce individual. Museums have been made in homage to the first settlers the Dagombas and can be visited to gain an insight into their respected ways of life prior to colonialism.

ROUND UP

Africa and the Middle East are very contrasting. Whereas much of Africa is famed for its natural beauty and wildlife the Middle East is very much as modern as the west with its cosmopolitan way of life. Where Kenya and Tanzania has glorious plains decorated with lions and zebras the likes of Saudi Arabia and Iran have modern cafes and skyscrapers in bustling town centres.

Both regions are blessed with a rich historical past. Wanting to study the birth of Islam and one of the world's largest empires you start with Saudi Arabia in the heart of the country by travelling to Mecca. Back across to the African continent you can learn about empire of Ashanti which stretched across modern day Ghana in East Africa. There is just so much tourists can do when they travel to these two great regions.

Whilst in the Middle Eastern region you may wish to visit Saudi Arabia and witness the Hajj pilgrimage which dates back 1400 years when millions of Muslims descend upon spiritual journey around the House of God. You will also find remnants of the origins of the Islamic empire in Mecca.

Of course parts of Africa will rival the Middle East in this regard. The capital city of Senegal, Dakar in Africa is prized with World Heritage Sites recognised by UNESCO especially Goree Island that is draped with the history of the West African slave trade. Ghana too is adorned with historical artefacts and archaeological sites. Evidence has been found that humans resided in the country around 1500 B.C.

GREAT EMPIRES OF THE PAST



Interesting fact: An elephants' skin is an inch thick.

The African Cape Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) are large animals that can stand at 4 – 6 feet tall and weigh around 700kgs. They can commonly be found in protected wildlife areas through sub-Saharan Africa near to water. Apparently the Cape buffalos have killed more big game hunters than any other animal in Africa. Numbers have fallen because they are regularly hunted for their meat and have been victims of various cattle diseases.

Interesting fact: Buffalos mate and give birth during rainy season.

The African elephant and lion species are endangered whereas the black rhinoceros is critically endangered. The leopard has been classed as vulnerable and near threatened. On the plus side the Cape buffalo is of least concern and is in fact the most popular of the five to be hunted. All members of the "big five" can be found together in certain countries such as: South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The "big five" can be difficult to spot sometimes so always remember to take your binoculars.





These are the best years of your life so make the most of them by journeying to amazing places to help protect diverse and unique communities and ultimately play a small part in building a better world. There are some fantastic projects in Africa, available with Gap 360, African impact and GVI that take volunteering to a whole new and exciting level:

TANZANIA SAFARI EXPERIENCE

Explore the local communities where you will find the locals nothing but friendly, and sample the local and fresh food which will give your taste buds an explosion of flavour. Get up close and personal with exotic and wild animals in their natural habitat and play a significant and rewarding part in making them healthier. You will also keep some endangered animals reserved. When you are not on a Safari or helping save rare animals, you can discover the wonderful and unique culture Tanzania has to offer. Being home to the Olduvau Gorge, the world's most treasured paleontological site Tanzania is filled with fascinating history. This safari experience will leave you with unbelievable memories and the bursting desire to come back.

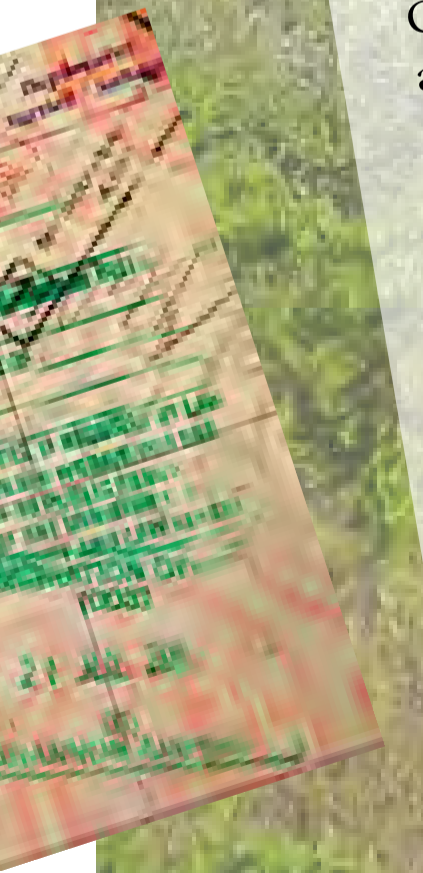
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER SOUTH AFRICA

Gaze out across natural nature wonders, from inside a sanctuary that is home to a range of animals, and feel satisfied knowing you have helped maintain beautiful creatures; working to rescue, rehabilitate and release animals in every form of South African wildlife.

Wake up to the soothing sounds of the South African nature sung over of approximately 250 bird species chirping away. After immersing yourself in the warm blue water and golden sand at Jefferys Bay, find a hurt animal and bring them to care. You'll be a part of an exciting and important experience changing the lives of all the animals in the sanctuary that is specifically designed for each animal's natural habitat. With this project you won't miss out on animal care in a wild African adventure.

KENYA AND UGANDA GORILLA EXPERIENCE

Meeting an endangered animal in its natural habitat is a fantastic feeling like no other. See diverse wildlife in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, you might even get to touch them and join professional trackers while travelling deep into the forests of Uganda for a fantastic once in a lifetime opportunity to watch the extremely rare mountain gorillas in their natural habitat. This unique project will allow you to see diverse wildlife; some of which is unique to Kenya and Uganda and keep it healthy and safe. You will be in the thick of the action by camping in the wilderness, but don't worry you will be in a group with experts. This fantastic and fun experience makes you feel a world apart as you encounter the colourful cultures, beautiful landscapes and wildlife of Kenya and Uganda.



TEACHING INTERNSHIP IN CAPE TOWN

Join GVI's teaching internship in the spectacular city of Cape Town and make a difference to the lives of children whilst developing teaching skills and earning qualifications. After successfully completing the first set of training you'll be able to assist with the running of educational programs including: childcare, sports and creative play.

You will live in an attractive and welcoming village close to Cape Town and Stellenbosch. Every experience will be one to remember with direct exposure to the wonderful local culture and communities. Optional side trips are available to Robben Island, Cape Pont, Table Mountain and Cape Town wildlife safari as well as wine tasting in Stellenbosch. It is safe to say this internship is a truly rewarding experience like no other.

MEDICAL OUTREACH AND HIV EDUCATION

Embrace the glory as you save lives. The Malawi Medical Outreach and HIV Education project makes a positive difference to those who need it. Get to know the locals in assisting home care, support the field dressing clinic and educate local communities on during workshops on HIV, aids and malaria prevention. Enjoying your time with the orphans is also extremely rewarding as you give them the attention they deserve but hardly get. Enjoy free time as you will be in direct contact with the wonderful and cultural communities.

Whichever experience you decide to go for there is no doubt you'll leave (yes sadly it has to end) on a high with unbelievable stories, more athletic and a better knowledge. Not to mention you would have played a vital part in *making the world a more positive place.*

The Best Bars & Night Clubs in Africa

Africa may be better known for its safaris and deserts than it is for nightlife but the continent hides away a whole heap of party gems. From plush clubs to traditional bars, clubbing in Africa is a pleasantly surprising eye-opener. If you're a lavish spender or if you love moshing along to live music, these top 5 clubs and bars appeal to all variations of party animals. Forget Ibiza, head to the buzzing continent for an unforgettable night out.

With cocktails appropriately named '31st Floor', 'Skyscraper' and the club's famous poison 'The Lady Hemisphere', mixed with Malibu, pineapple juice and imported Midori; it'll be difficult not to leave with a fuzzy head. The music on offer ranges from mainstream RnB to house to the retro 70s. For a younger vibe the club is at its most liveliest on a Saturday night but dress smart, the door men in black suits won't let you in if you're not as dressed up as they are.

visit the Club 31 Facebook page [here](#)

CLUB 31 CAPE TOWN



Look up luxury in the dictionary and that's where you'll find club 31. Glamorous and sophisticated, it is the place to enjoy a cocktail, have a dance and experience a skyscraper party like no other. Resting on the 31st floor of the ABSA building in Cape Town, its dazzling décor of chandeliers, an oval shaped marble bar and a glass walled VIP area makes you feel like a celebrity, not to mention the breath taking views of the city below your feet.



SUNSET PALACE TOGO

Sun-set Palace has a reputation as the only place in the country to enjoy the best live music. Less than a mile outside of the capital city of Lomé, slap bang in the middle of the boulevard circulaire, you will at first hear Sun-set Palace before you see it.

Trained musicians flock to the bar to play music most nights of the week to a packed audience whilst traditional African food is served and cheap beer is on tap. When the bands and singers take a break mainstream live CD's are played through the speakers. However don't be surprised if the chosen music is blues and jazz as the owner was once a jazz singer and spent 10 years in New Jersey singing the blues.

APHRODISIAC GHANA



All night parties and current dance tunes keeps Aphrodisiac the most talked about club in the whole of Ghana. If that's not enough to please your inner part animal, it's worth stopping by if you fancy seeing Stevie Wonder, Akon and Jay-Z performing. These famous guests have all taken to the Aphrodisiac dance floor in the past.

That's not all, owner and business woman, Confidence Haugen has previously held 'Big Brother Africa' (BBA) parties at the club after starring in the reality TV show herself. She's known to make an appearance on the odd occasion so it's worth checking out Aphrodisiac even if it's just to see Haugen who notably exposed her breasts in a shower clip on BBA.

Open since 2004, the club's most popular night is without a doubt 'DJ Flava's' Friday night. Along with special guest DJ's, 'Flava' keeps playing hits until 6am in the huge dance rooms filled with podiums, poles, lights and laser shows and bars offer a range of cocktails and shots all at reasonable prices.

Visit the Aphrodisiac website [here](#)



AFRIKA SHRINE NIGERIA

The Shrine may not look like much from the outside but don't be fooled by appearances. It is home to legendary musicians and remains the best place to connect with the finest in Nigerian music.

Grammy-award winner musician Femi Kuti re-opened the night club in 2000 after the original was closed down following his legendary father's death. Fela Kuti was the pioneer of Afrobeat music and was just as famous for his wild, wacky concerts as he was for his 12 wives.

The music never stops in the Shrine. Musicians play most days of the week to a packed crowd and festivals held in honour of Fela light up the stage in vivid colours, traditional dancers and African beats. When live music is off the menu for the night, the club entertains with street dancing competitions, Red Bull events and soccer tournaments.

The Shrine maintains a relaxed bohemian atmosphere so there is no dress code, just turn up! For a truly spectacular night, stop by the Shrine on a Friday or Sunday, when Femi plays a renowned set, singing his father's classic Afrobeat tunes all night. Not to be missed.

To find out more about 'The Shrine' visit their website [here](#)

COCONUTS MOZAMBIQUE

For a chic tropical night out you won't forget, head to Coconuts in Mozambique's trendy capital, Maputo. Open Fridays and Saturdays, the club can easily hold over 1,000 party goers, revealing a mix of rich socialites and the up-and-coming famous.

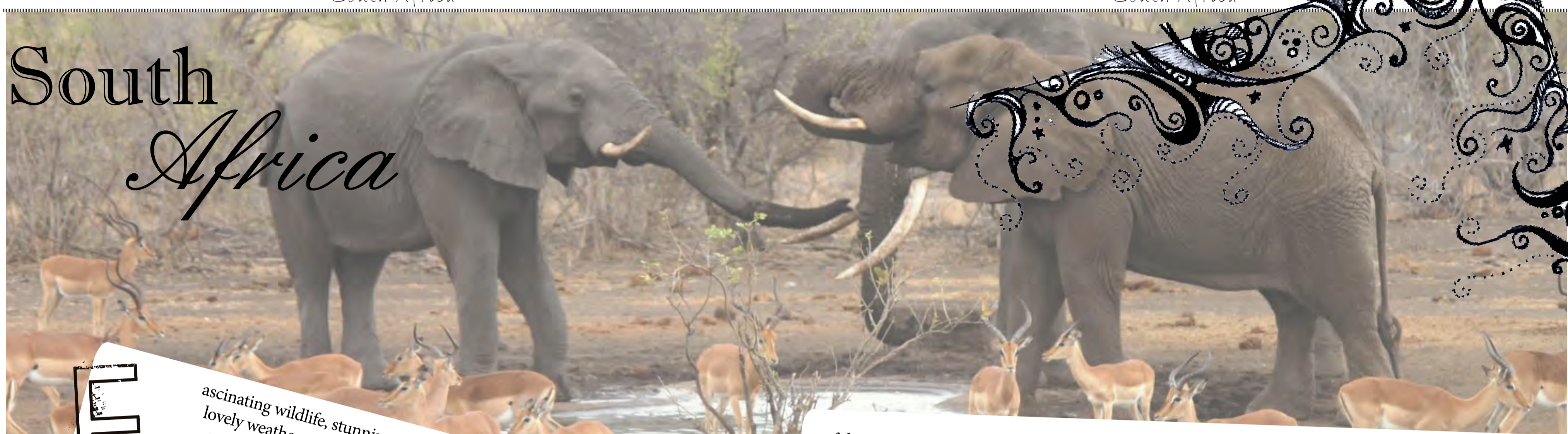


Found on the beach, the club's party gems consist of three huge dance floors with DJs that play pulsating music all night. The phrase 'dance the night away' really rings true at Coconuts. Once you get too hot from dancing take a dip in the club's outdoor pool to cool off or jump on the dance floor pontoon and bop across the water in the moonlight. Drinks flow free all night, indoors and out at the built in bars in the pool.

'Coconuts' has been dubbed as one of the best nightclubs in the capital and it's easy to see why; it's got just the right ingredients for the perfect party. Just don't forget your swimsuit.



South Africa



F

ascinating wildlife, stunning landscapes, adventurous activities, great food and wine, lovely weather, vibrant mix of people – the list can go on. South Africa is a delightful country with so much on offer you'll be spoilt for choice. But don't worry that's where we come in, we bring you the best things to enjoy in South Africa.

Wildlife Safari at Kruger National Park

There's one must-do activity that every traveller should do when they take a trip to South Africa and that's a safari. The Kruger National Park is the perfect place for this. Brag to your friends about how you've seen the 'big five' – South African lion, leopard, elephant, cape buffalo and black rhino. The wildlife is so diverse by the end of your trip you will have the seen some of the world's most popular range of animals.

Kruger National Park is one of the largest game reserves in Africa and is unbelievably the same size of Israel, if not slightly bigger. The park not only protects the local wildlife but also the cultural history

of the area through museums and the preservation of historical sites.

Cape Town

Cape Town is one of those places you have to visit at least once in your life - it is home to South Africa's most beautiful beaches and natural scenery, the wonderful Table Mountain and remarkable Devil's Peak amongst many other popular tourist attractions.

Table Mountain is a famous South African landmark which overlooks the city of Cape Town. Travel up to the mountain peak in the revolving cable cars which provides visitors with breath-taking views or if you're feeling an adrenaline rush there are 300 hiking routes to reach the summit. Just bear in mind the mountain is over 1000 metres high so it will take a while just be sure to wear appropriate footwear.

Great White Shark Cage Dive

Create an unforgettable experience by cage diving with great white sharks – this activity will more likely appeal to adventure seekers and adrenaline junkies – where you can get up close and personal with these in-



credible underwater predators.

You don't need any diving experience whatsoever, all you need is bags of enthusiasm to brave the shark encounters. It truly will be a once in a lifetime opportunity so why not take the plunge, literally.

The Apartheid Museum

South Africa has come a long way since its struggle against apartheid but that's not to say it can forget its terrible yet inspiring history. As soon as you step foot in the Apartheid Museum you will be transformed to the time when there was strictly a 'whites only' privilege through to Nelson Mandela's prison release.

Film documentaries, sound clips, texts and live accounts recapture the essence of life in South Africa before it revolutionised and became a democratic country. This historical change not only shared major significance for South Africa but the entire world.

Round-up

There's no surprise South Africa is the 'Adventure Capital of the World' with so much to explore within such a diverse and enriching country it seems like there's nothing you can't do in South Africa.

Kenya

The Wildebeest Migration

INTRODUCTION

To witness one of nature's most phenomenal spectacles you have to follow from the beginning of the migration, which starts in the Southern Serengeti plains of Tanzania ending in the Maasai Mara, Kenya. It is a lengthy process and one cannot simply devise a plan revolved around the migration despite the consistency of the time frame within which it happens. Environmental factors are taken into due consideration as rain plays a decisive factor in determining when the migration takes place.

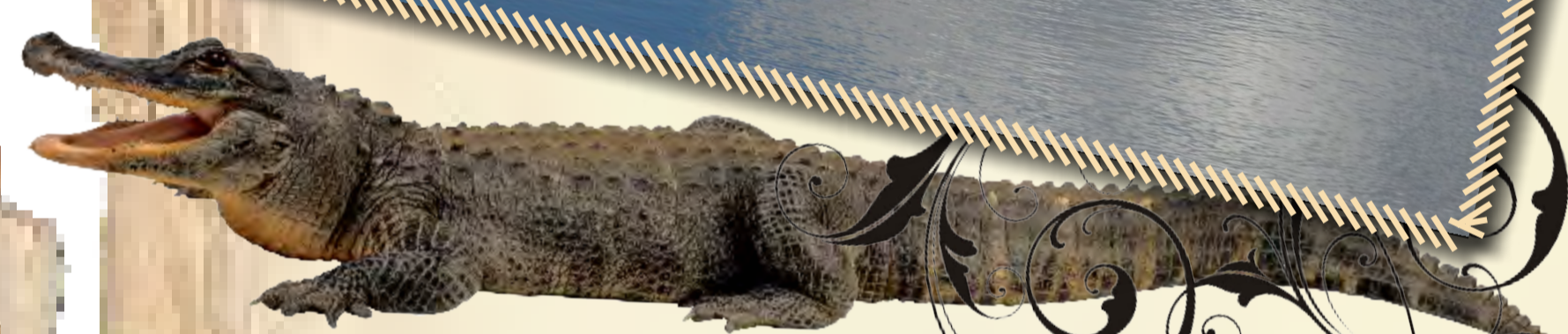


BEST TIME OF YEAR

The Wildebeest migration usually takes place between May and December. It is an arduous journey dependent on the Wildebeest's need for food. Roughly during the latter end of April, the Wildebeest are still occupying the plains of the Serengeti in Tanzania. As rains stop and the land dries out they start to migrate in their droves north and westwards often accompanied by Zebras along a similar trail. Between June and July after the few grass patches of the savannah have dissipated, they move northwards and launch their drive towards the Maasai Mara. By August and early September the Wildebeest reach their destination, often is the case not going beyond the Northern Serengeti into Kenya because the journey is dictated wholly by rainfall.



Some Wildebeest will often cross the border between Tanzania and Kenya and will continue to do so through the period between October and November before deciding to go back to the breeding grounds of the Serengeti.



WHAT TO EXPECT

The Wildebeest migration is absolutely action packed with excitement around July when the Wildebeest have to cross "Crocodile river." The most iconic image of the entire migration is watching the Wildebeest cross the river, trying to avoid the jaws of crocodiles that have patiently waiting for this time of year. The crossing offers a frenetic view of panicked Wildebeest struggling to get through the river as quickly as possible.

There are even bouts of comedy to endure as Wildebeest, not famed for their intelligence can stand on ceremony for hours imagining threats that do not exist at the edge of the river. Once they do cross the river's there are other predators like the Cheetah to avoid also, which conjures up more exhilaration.



ROUND UP

Lovers of nature will find the Wildebeest migration fascinating. The migration is a lengthy process so for those who lack the time to take off months on end for this trip may decide to watch the migration period between June and July during the river crossing. It is jam-packed with stimulating action, breath-taking scenery of vast open grass-filled land and wonderful animals on display.

CAMEROON

With vast rainforests filled with an array of animals, superb city atmospheres and sun-kissed languid beaches, Cameroon is a magnificent country to enjoy a distinctive and fantastic experience.

KRIBI

It is easy to see why Kribi is Cameroon's most popular beach resort. If you come to the beaches during the day you will be able to have the palm-fringed beaches with golden sand and clear blue sea to relax and sun in. During the evening the city comes to life and provides a fun and relaxing atmosphere. Kribi is also a wonderful place to rent a boat for fishing in the Bay of Biafra, whilst enjoying this relaxing past-time you can feast your eyes on the elegant vistas surrounding you and immerse yourself in its beauty.

YAOUNDE

Yaoundé offers eccentric plush green areas in a hilly setting. This lively city is the best place to embrace traditional and modern and African culture combined, in a relaxing environment. Be sure to visit the National Museum of Yaoundé, which forms part of the Benedictine Monastery. The museum has a wonderful collection of masks, bronzes, wooden bas-reliefs and pottery. In fact the building is bursting with fascinating history. The church inside the monastery is beautifully decorated with Cameroonian textiles and crafts.



MAROUA

Trekking in the spectacular landscapes of the Mandara Mountains of Maroua is one of Cameroon's best and most popular attractions. As you travel through the mountains you will discover large stone formations, lush green valleys, not to mention outstanding views that are truly spectacular, and traditional hillside villages. Each village has something different to offer; Rhumsiki with its dazzling mountain scenery, Maga has unique domed houses made purely of clay and Mora holds a vibrant weekly market. Exploring the Mandara Mountains is a fantastic way to indulge in the best of nature's beauty.

LIMBE WILDLIFE CENTRE

The Limbe Wildlife Centre has a renowned reputation as a superb haven for fascinating wildlife and beautiful plants; making it a highly popular attraction. Walk through the lively jungle-like habitat and catch a glimpse of stunning and rare monkey species including Preuss' and gorillas. Awe over the visual splendour of the botanical garden filled with an array of colourful floras. The garden provides a picturesque and tranquil atmosphere that will refresh your soul. The stunning backdrop of Mount Cameroon enhances the beauty of the gardens.

ROUND UP

Cameroon wonderfully combines the best of modern Africa with tradition, so you get the best of both worlds. Either go on small holidays or connect a series of mini-holiday excursions in this African paradise.



WHERE TO STAY: LE MERIDIEN DOUALA

[Le Meridien Douala](#) is a modern building surrounded by lush gardens offering a quiet haven. The hotel overlooks the gorgeous Wouri River. The harbour is just a few minutes away. Le Meridien Douala is ideally located near the city's main commercial and banking areas so you are never too far from the action.

WHERE TO EAT: LA FORT DENSE

Let your taste buds delve into sensational traditional Cameroonian dishes. This upscale restaurant also provides a pleasantly relaxing atmosphere with service that is second to none. La Fort Dense is set in the heart of Yaoundé and will leave you with no more wishes.

WHAT TO DO: GOLF IN LIKOMBA

Relax and soak up the calming atmosphere in a game of [golf in Likomba](#); a fantastic and popular sport in Cameroon. With an invigorating nine-hole course in Likomba both experienced players and beginners will find this to be an exhilarating course to play away.



Republic Of Congo

Delve beyond the surface and experience a country rich with wildlife, adventurous activities and vivacious culture. Explore rural Africa at its best, be in the habitat of fascinating wildlife or relax on their stunning beaches.

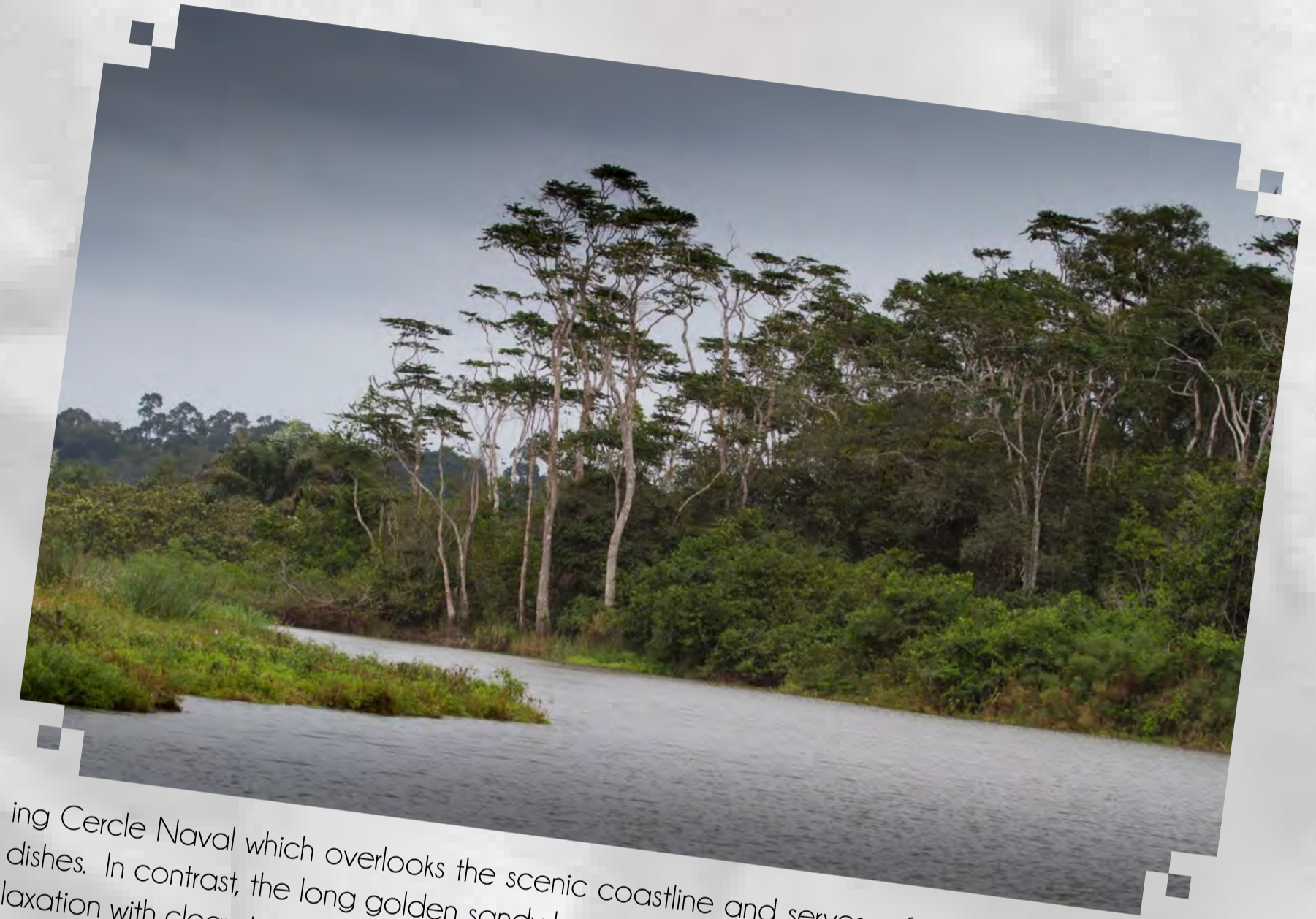
BRAZZAVILLE

With top attractions such as the Basilique Sainte-Anne Of The Congo it is incredibly surprising to find that Brazzaville is a low key city, but that works to your advantage as you can explore the vast and diverse land in peace during the day. Just by looking at it this phenomenal building you will understand why it is considered to be one of the most beautiful churches in the world.

While you are here, transport yourself into the world of royalty with a visit to the Palace Of The Parliament where large chandeliers, marble floors and grand pillars are a regular feature in the rooms. At night the palace illuminates with a golden glow making it look extra enchanting.

POINTE NOIRE

The lively beach town of Ponite Noire has an abundance of lively bars and divine restaurants, includ-



ing Cercle Naval which overlooks the scenic coastline and serves a fine selection of meat dishes. In contrast, the long golden sandy beaches provide an excellent place for pure relaxation with clear sky and charming blue waters paint a superb back drop.

LOANGO

Loango is a place of ultimate relaxation as the friendly locals take life at leisurely pace. Soak up the atmosphere on the gorgeous beaches and divine coastlines. If you can prise yourself away from beaches, visit the Diosso Museum, built in 1952 on the sacred site of all the Royals dating from the 17th century. Diosso is the ancient capital of the kingdom of Loango and the museum served as a Royal residence for the last king of Congo. Given its rich history there are a copious amount of fascinating tales to uncover.

With a culture of such vast contrast, an array of stunning scenery and exciting history, Congo will adhere to your every beck and call.

WHERE TO STAY [Atlantic Palace](#)

The hotel fulfils their idea that each and every guest must be treated as Royalty. Whether on business or pleasure, Atlantic Palace is voted to be the most to be an extremely lavish hotel. They will make you feel like a King or Queen.

WHERE TO EAT [Osaka Restaurant](#)

Let your senses indulge in exquisite Chinese food. The food is both delicious and healthy in equal measures. Most members of staff speak both English and French making it easy to com-



municate.

WHAT TO DO [Odzala National Park](#)

The Odzala National Park is home to lowland gorillas, monkeys, Lions, elephants and many more to capture your heart. With guided tours of just four people you will not miss a moment of the beautiful animals in their natural habitat. With everything they have to offer here it is no wonder they are Congo's most famous national park.



Working in Uganda

Uganda has been labelled as the “pearl of Africa” with its vibrant Ugandan culture, magnificent savannahs and incredible wildlife amongst other gems which make this country not only a great place to visit but work and live.

When people think of Uganda they usually think of a deprived place filled with poverty and poor resources. However Uganda’s economy is on the up along with many other developing countries in Asia and Africa. This means there are more jobs and less competition than you would find in Western parts of the world.

This is good news for students looking to make their first mark in the working world, so why not choose to work in Uganda.

There are numerous opportunities available in Uganda for people who have a broad skill-set. This will put you at an advantage as Uganda is always keen to adopt experienced workers for different industries.



ADVANTAGES OF WORKING IN UGANDA

The good thing about Uganda is that it is an English speaking country where the natives are extremely friendly and hospitable; they will do their best to make you feel at home.

Despite the tropical climate, for most of the year Uganda enjoys hot seasonal temperatures that reach an average of 26 degrees. Uganda also offers a high rate of pay to all its workers and boasts a low cost standard of living.

Although attaining a Ugandan work permit isn't the quickest of processes before being able to officially work in Uganda but it is definitely rewarding and not as complicated as it seems.

In this case it's best to do sufficient research beforehand to make sure you have everything you need prior to making an important life-changing decision like this one. Having said this, the experience that comes with working abroad is special regardless of where you choose.

The Best of the Rest of Africa

INTRODUCTION

When people talk about travelling to Africa, most talked about is South Africa and Kenya. But why not explore Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and Senegal, as these countries start to gain more attention within the tourism industry.

NIGERIA

Despite being a resourceful country, Nigeria is only now starting to reap the benefits of their tourism industry after the many impediments they have had to overcome. For instance now you can take cable bus systems to view the scenic mountains in the Obudu and Kanyang regions. Obudu has been established to such a degree that hotels and lodges are now accessible in the area surrounded by waterfalls, springs and caves, really making it the standout tourist destination spot in Nigeria.

But there are so many more things to do and see than just mountains if you wish. The Yankari National Park in tandem with Wikki Warm Springs are located just off the Gagi river, southeast of Bauchi Town. Opened in 1962, it offers an array of animals on show from crocodiles to monkeys and buffalos.

Still not satisfied? Why not spend a weekend on Coconut Beach west of Lagos sipping cocktails or Tarwa Bay, which is slightly more of a relaxed environment catered towards families.

GHANA

Ghana is on the west coast of the African continent bordering Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Togo. There are two main seasons, just wet and dry. Northern Ghana experiences rainfalls between March to November whereas every city south of the capital has the wet season in full flight between April to mid-November.

Ghana is adorned in abundance with historical artefacts and archaeological sites. Evidence has been found that humans resided in the country around 1500 B.C. The land was also apart of Ashanti's infamous empire and has gained notoriety for it as she was a fierce individual. Museums have been made in homage to the first settlers the Dagombas and can be visited to gain an insight into their respected ways of life prior to colonialism.

It's different to its African neighbours because Ghana has a variety of national parks, including one that stands out the Kakum National Park. It is in actual fact a rainforest and home to the rarest of wildlife. It also has a lovely canopy for tourists wishing to take long walks and enjoy the greenery on display.

MOROCCO

Morocco is one of Africa's most popular countries to travel to for tourists and here there is an array of factors behind this. Nature is never far away when Morocco is concerned as there are Desert Mountains to grasp, valleys to see and a blue sea to have a splash in especially in a country where the weather rarely drops to below mild even in winter.

Sport enthusiasts that fancy a challenge will find a trek up the Atlas Mountains thoroughly enticing. Perhaps adrenaline junkies will be wanting to paraglide off the mountain peak or rock-climb, weather permitting. The Quarzazate desert is a viable substitute for those afraid of heights. Tourists can opt for an encampment instead of going back to a hotel and experience what nature has to offer close up.

Maybe students looking to party prefer a resort, and few will rival Agadir on the west coast of Morocco. A large contingent of western Europeans travel their between spring and summer so you will feel right at home. There are many bars and clubs where you can enjoy an entertaining evening and dance the night away.

SENEGAL

Senegal is the most underrated of countries in Africa that tourists visit because it doesn't get much media coverage, though this trend has started to change since the 1990's. They are beginning to attract tourists in their vast droves offering beaches and resorts to see.

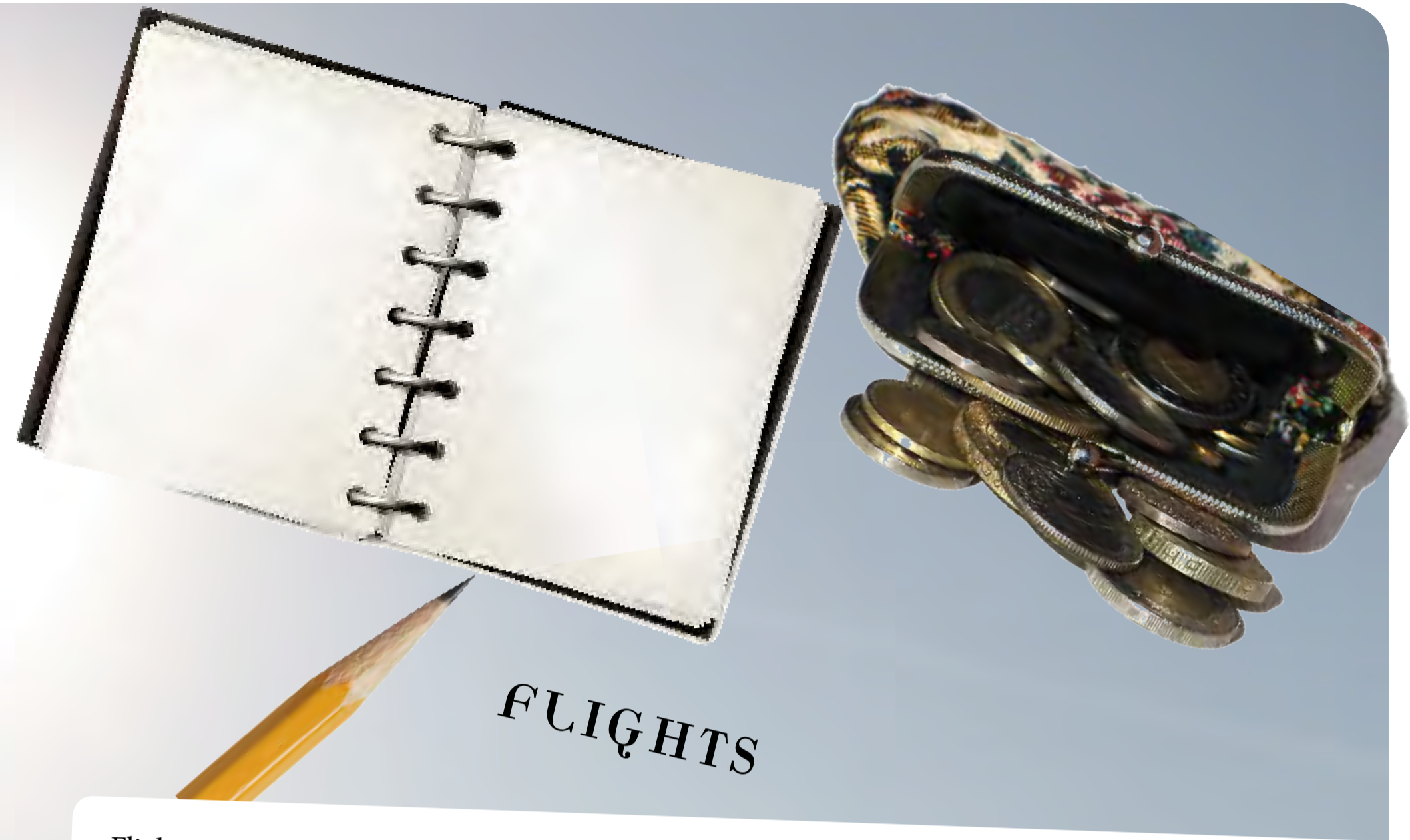
For example unlike most other resorts that strictly cater to Europeans looking to take advantage of booze and bars, the resort town of Saly gives tourists the opportunity to enjoy the allures of fishing. Senegal is a massive player in the worldwide fish market and enables tourists to enjoy the fishing experience, soaking up the sun in a country where the weather is consistently warm.

The capital city Dakar is prized with world heritage sites recognised by UNESCO especially Goree Island that is draped with the history of the West African slave trade. They are all attractions that draw many tourists and is worth visiting if the chance arises.

ROUNDUP

Africa is unique and natural and these four countries offer you just that with a tinge of modern infrastructure in order to make the tours slightly more bearable. They are countries definitely worth considering for a visit.

The Middle East On A Budget



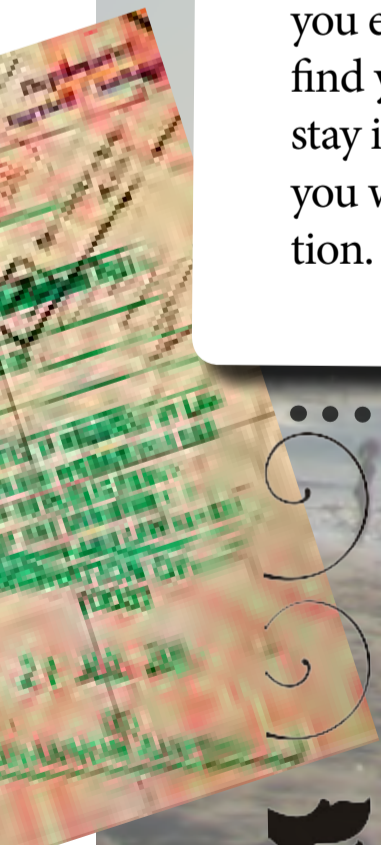
FLIGHTS

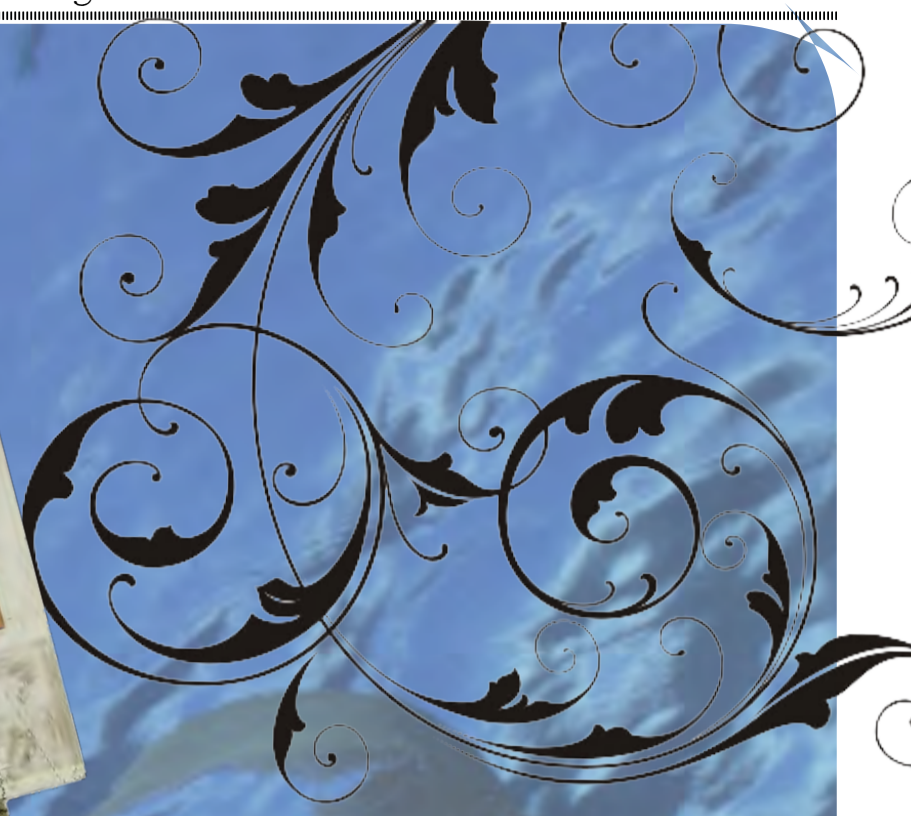
Uluxurious five-star hotels, a personal 24-hour service and top-class cars to be chauffeured around in. That's what the modern day elite expect when they come to Dubai or Qatar, which happen to be some of the most acclaimed destinations in the Middle-East. For the rest of us we can still get a fantastic experience out of these places for much less.

ACCOMMODATION

You don't have to live like a celebrity in order to feel like one. Five-star hotels give you everything a two-star hotel can in Dubai. Check out Asia Rooms, where you'll find you can stay in decent hotels for a small price. When looking for a place, aim to stay in the centre or in a place where you have easy access to the attractions. This way you won't have to spend loads of money on getting to and from your accommodation.

Flight prices have a habit of changing regularly to match their demand. Booking in advance, when they are cheap is great but sometimes a last minute flight also works to your advantage, because flight companies reduce prices in order to fill up spaces. It's worth keeping an eye on flight costs so you can get the best possible price. Airlines add insurance as a hidden cost so always remember to travel with travel insurance. Most of the time your travel insurance will cover you for the flights so check this to save some money. Getting a flight where you will land in Qatar or Dubai's daytime is much better than landing at night. Landing in the day means you can catch the public transport to your accommodation; saving you money rather than forking more than you need for a taxi or shuttle bus.

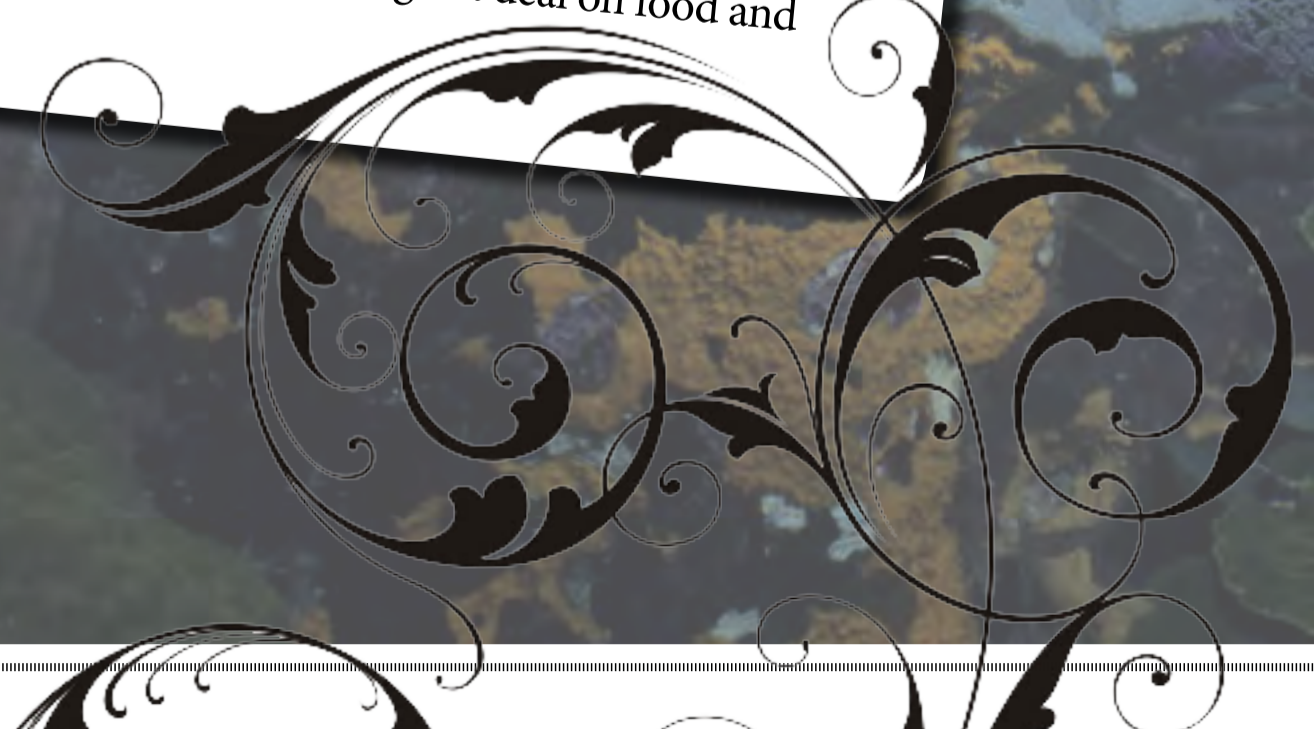




FOOD

As you can see even the most luxurious of locations can be experienced on a budget. It goes to show there's no need to spend lots of money in order to have the time of your life.

See if you can take some food or drinks from your hotel's continental meals to enjoy on your days out thus it saves money having to fork out on unnecessarily over-priced restaurants. Use internet access to research the restaurants that give you the best value for money or ask the hotel and tourist information centres for recommendations. Good quality inexpensive restaurants can usually be found along the coastline. Rather than picking up lots of small bottles of drink, buy big bottles that you can store in your room which will last longer when you're out and about. You can even pick up some cheap groceries and a recipe book to cook whatever your heart desires. If you think you can't cook then now's a brilliant time to learn. This could save you a great deal on food and drink costs.



Dubai

It's not hard to get taken away by the luxury in Dubai, regardless of where you stay, dine or what you do because everywhere has a high standard.

You can't beat the cost of the beaches here as they're free! They also happen to be some of the world's most beautiful beaches. You may decide to spend a day or two on the white soft sands that have pure white shells hidden within the shorelines or choose to take a dip in the warm crystal blue sea. Better yet, if you're feeling adventurous there are many different types of water sports to give you an adrenaline rush. The costs of the water sports depend on what you do but there's a good chance you can find an affordable group saver price.

Dubai is one of the largest gold marketers in the world and at the forefront of technology and fashion. So whilst it certainly costs money to shop, thanks to the duty-free shops you can pick up a bargain. Visit the vibrant markets that sell everything you expect from a market and more in a buzzing atmosphere. Although the high quality products are already discounted you can be cheeky and haggle to take home a better bargain!

Don't forget to enquire about the famous Dubai shopping festivals, an annual yearly heaven for shopaholics. The festivals offer a month long extravaganza where you can check out goods and products from virtually every corner of the globe.

You don't just have to get wet at the beach to have a brilliant time. Wild Wadi is one of Dubai's top attractions. This adventure water park is an ideal way for everybody to beat the heat in a world of pure fun. Lose yourself and become a kid again with incredible rides and water surfing all on an inexpensive budget. Once again don't forget to enquire about family or group saver tickets.

Getting around is easy on the pocket, especially using public transport. Or breathe in the fresh air and take in the sights as you walk. Getting into the attractions like the world famous Burji Khalifa hotel and the Dubai museum costs nothing and they have some brilliant things to show off. Alternatively, if you think you'll be spending hundreds on taxi fares or public transport then you may find it's much better value for money to take a hot air balloon ride over Dubai and see everything for a couple hundred bucks, all in one day.

Working in Dubai

Thinking about working abroad can be a daunting prospect; away from the home and comforts of familiarity but the unique experience that comes with it makes it all worthwhile.

WHY WORK IN DUBAI

Dubai has a lot more to offer than being a popular luxury holiday destination with its beautiful clean sandy beaches, spectacular skyline, amazing architectural infrastructure and hot climate.

Dubai is also a great destination in the UAE for good employment opportunities especially for students from North America and Europe who may currently be finding it difficult find jobs within their own countries.

ADVANTAGES OF WORKING IN DUBAI

One of the main incentives of working in Dubai is the tax-free income on top of not having to pay property tax so if that in itself isn't appealing enough we don't know what is!



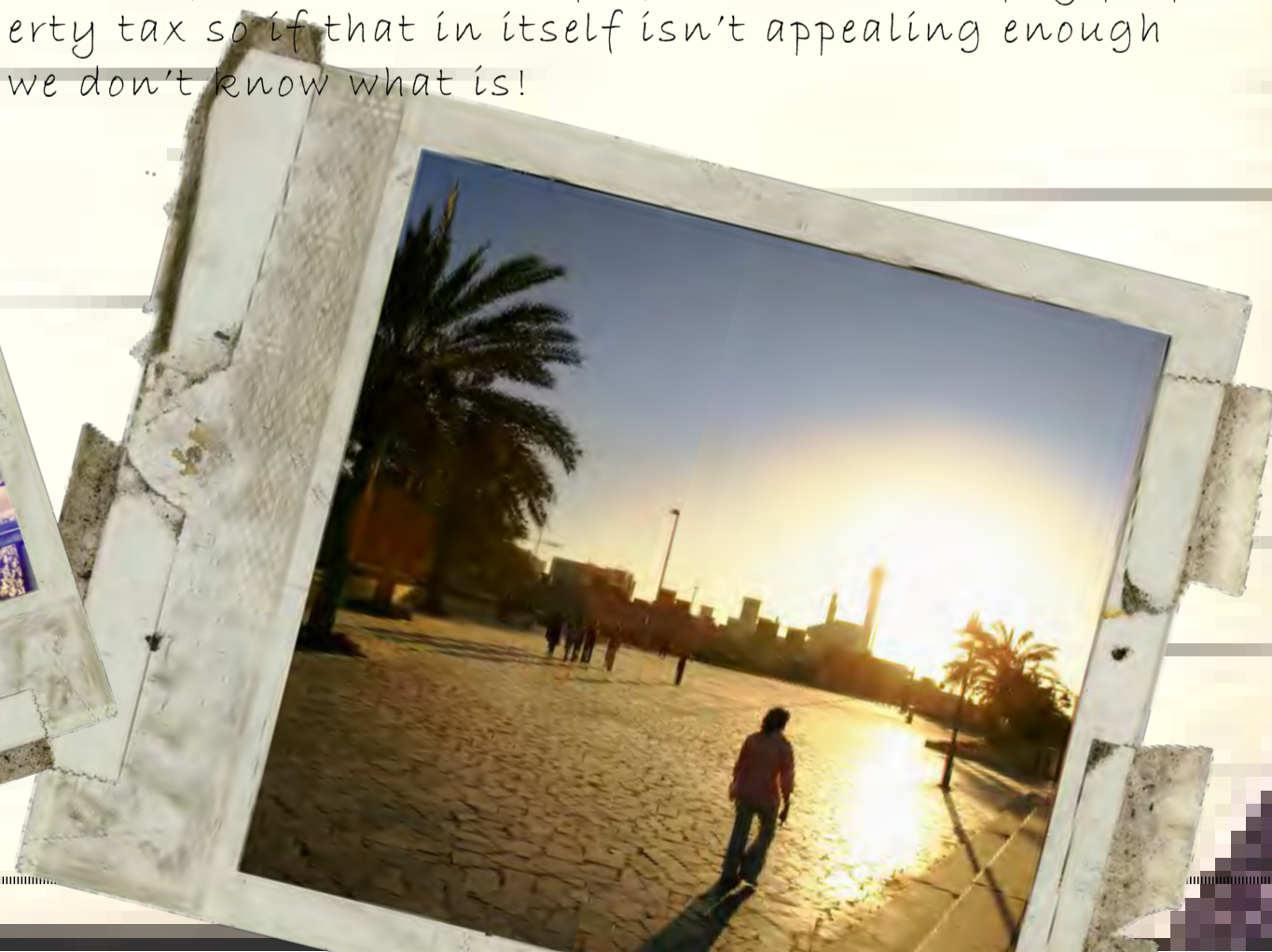
The residency process is quite simple and easy to do for Western nationalities but in general there are numerous ways you can obtain a residency visa for Dubai like employer or family sponsorship.

Dubai encourages and thrives off international experience in their workforce. Around 90% of Dubai's population is made of expat workers across a range of sectors. Career progression is easier in Dubai than it is in America for example.

Dubai offers a better quality of work and living standard and as the fastest developing region of the UAE it is home to the best technological developments in the world.

The only main disadvantage for students working in Dubai is that the legal drinking age is 21 apart from that we can't find anything holding you back.

It can and will take time adjusting to the different time zone and the fact their weekend falls on Friday, their holy day meaning that Sunday is the official start to the working week but you're only young once. Chances like this are better to take on now rather than later, so what are you waiting for?



United Arab Emirates

D Discover a mix of countries that offer the comforts of your home and a taste of the exotic. Venture into breathtaking attractions like the heritage areas, magnificent Hajar Mountains and traditional towns. After all that is what makes the United Arab Emirates so unique.



Al-Ain

Al-Ain is a city just waiting for you to travel the labyrinth streets and embrace the cultural diversity. Known as 'Oasis City' the beauty is radiant throughout the land. A 'must see' attraction is the Al Ain Paradise. This piece of heaven has found its way into the Guinness Book of World Records for being the world's largest garden. Here, the flowers beautifully form every colour of the rainbow and are arranged in a style that is the epitome of artistic horticulture. In fact, the attractions of Al-Ain are much more stunning when you find yourself in the heart of them.

Corniche Beach

Visiting the beaches in the United Arab Emirates is the highlight of any relaxing day out. The Corniche Beach is so fantastic it has been awarded with the blue flag status which is an internationally renowned eco-label for beaches that guarantee clean and safe water. Let the silky blue ocean shores sweep you away with their peaceful sounds. Indulge in ultimate relaxation on their comfortable sun-loungers, soft golden sand and with three miles of beach you are certain to find our own tranquil spot. At Corniche Beach, every amenity imaginable is available.

Fujairah

Fujairah is a ripe and exotic land. Embracing the natural radiance of the countryside in Fujairah is a great way to spend a few days. Take the exciting opportunity to explore the strong ancient forts that have been around for over 300 years, which reveal the city's history and leaves much to your imagination. Let the lush florals and stunning waterfalls excite you in a serene environment. The dramatic scenery from the Hajar Mountains delivers a picture-perfect backdrop to the glorious blue Arabian Sea and the pristine sun-kissed beaches.

Musandam

Venture into a land of splendid scenery like traditional Arabian villages and mountain-hugging roads. A boat trip is the best way to see the finest landscapes that Musandam has to offer including the towering cliffs that plunge into the clear turquoise waters, you may even spot some exotic sea creatures. This picturesque peninsula with its cultural eccentricities is well worth the visit. Musandam offers the best of both worlds as the lively city of Khasab is just a stone throw away. The colourful lifestyle is nothing less than brimming with vibrant culture.

Burji Khalifa

Known to be a masterpiece of a statue, the Burji Khalifa is an astonishing piece of architecture and engineering. Dubai's own 'Tower of Babel' pierces the sky at a staggering 828 metres. The inside of the Burji Khalifa is like a world of its own mixing supreme offices and enviable apartments. The Observation Deck is the cherry on top of this fantastic monument. Catch an unbeatable view of the metropolis city that is Dubai. The Burji Khalifa is worth visiting for these attributes alone.

Round Up

The United Arab Emirates is a sublime series of countries where you can live the high-life. Their attractions, lifestyle, culture and history may just seduce you into a longer stay.

Where To Stay: [Emirates Palace Hotel](#)

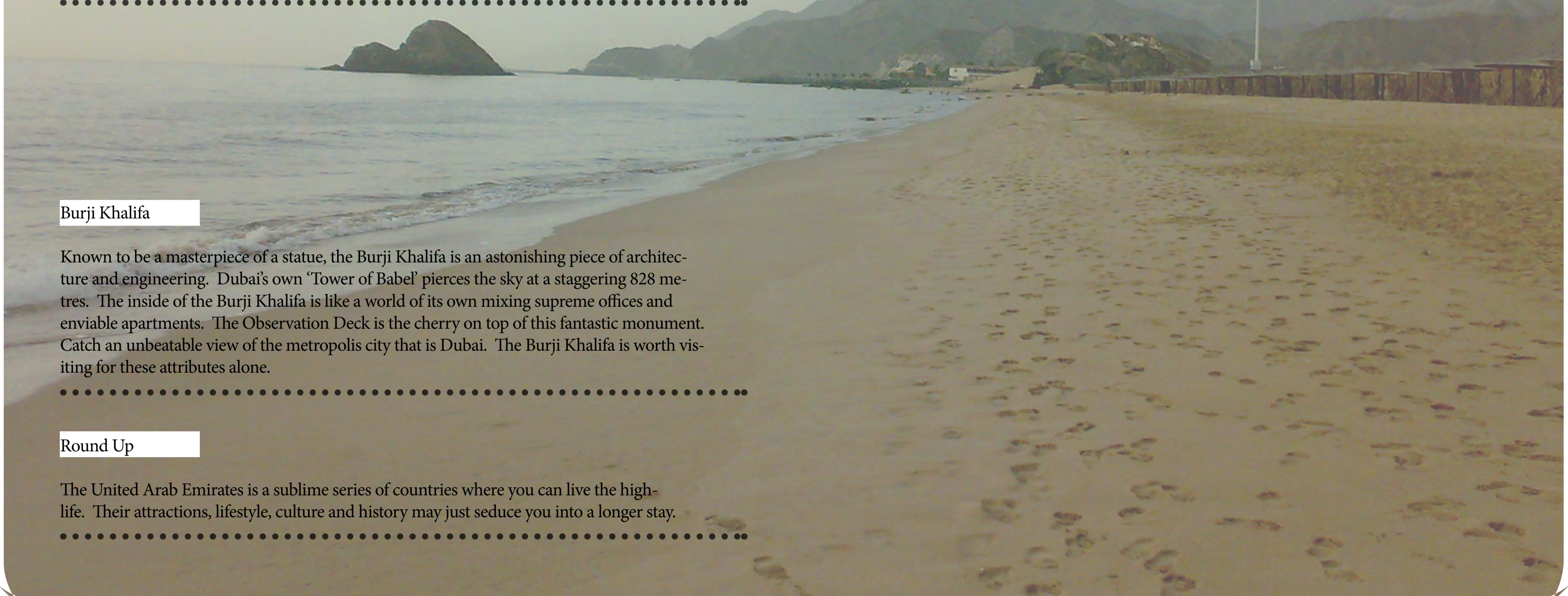
From the extravagant grand decor to the designer toiletries and impeccable service, your stay here will be truly sensational. Located near key sites, this five-star hotel perfects the very best of travel affluence.

Where To Eat: [Al Dhafra Cruising Restaurant](#)

Indulge in an exquisite menu that includes fresh succulent lobsters, continental salads and an array of desserts to tantalise your sweet tooth. With the ethnic charm of the restaurant amongst the water's serenity with the sea breeze softly whispering its secrets, your evening is certain to be memorable.

What To Do: [Helicopter Tours](#)

Get an exceptional bird's eye view of incredible landmarks around the United Arab Emirates; like the amazing Liwa Oasis, vast desert land and monuments. Not many people can say they have seen several famous landmarks all in one day!



Travelling To Israel

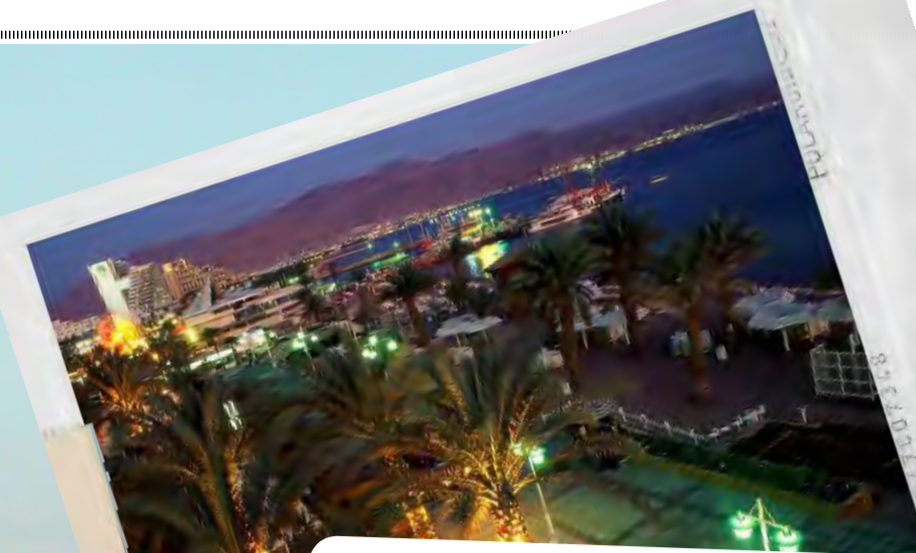
If it's rich history, vibrant culture, religious heritage as well as beautiful landscapes and sandy beaches you're after, then Israel should be top on the list of destinations you travel to next. There are plenty of things to see and do when in Israel which makes it hard to decide which to visit during your time there. To make it easier for you, we give you our low-down of the best places to visit in Israel for the country's top attractions and activities.

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem – Israel's capital – is one of the oldest cities in the world and home to three of the world's major religion: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. With such an eclectic mix of religion and culture it comes as no surprise that tourism is one of the largest sources of Israel's income.

Pay a visit to the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount - one of the greatest Muslim monuments in Jerusalem – which is a world-recognisable Israel sight known for its magnificent golden encrusted dome.

Nearby, you will find the Western Wall – a sacred Jewish site which attracts millions of people from around the world each year, particularly Jews who visit the site for a place of holy worship. In the cracks of the wall you will come across small pieces of papers – these have prayers written on them and you may choose to write one yourself. Best of all these two major attractions are free.



EILAT

Found on the Red Sea is Eilat - the pearl of Israel which offers travellers an array of adventurous water activities. Mingle with dolphins and take an amazing swim along the shoreline with these friendly creatures found at the Dolphin Reef or try snorkelling and scuba-diving in the coral reef.

Take time out to appreciate the beauty of the Red Sea at the beach where you can wind down and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. If you're not afraid of heights why not hike to the top of the Eilat Mountains where you will find spectacular views of Israel. Eilat is also home to Timna National Park, a camel ranch, aqua beach and a lively marina so you won't be short of exciting activities here.

DEAD SEA

Floating on the Dead Sea – the lowest place on earth and the world's second saltiest lake – is a natural wonder that offers a unique experience like no other. It is the equivalent of having a relaxing spa treatment. Spot Israel's finest wildlife in the Ein Gedi Oasis National Park where you'll also find refreshing swimming holes to cool down in with the warm Arab climate.

With so much on offer in what may seem like a small country, travellers that come to Israel will leave having had a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a beautiful and captivating Middle-Eastern country that boasts **fantastic natural landscapes** and attractions, **rich history and culture**, a scorching hot climate for most of the year on top of being home to some of the holiest Islamic pilgrimages in the world.

There's nothing more relaxing and tranquil than the picturesque **Asir National Park** which stretches across the Red Sea coast and into the eastern desert. Appreciate the spectacular natural landscape and breath-taking views of the Jabal Soodah - the highest mountain in Saudi Arabia.

Nominated as one of the magnificent seven world wonders, the **Al-Hasa** is truly heaven on earth. It has an extraordinary three million palm trees and over sixty artesian springs being home to a wide range of birds. This natural oasis - the largest in the world - is a sanctuary for travellers who enjoy exploring the rich history of the Middle-East.



Desert excursions are extremely popular with travellers and the stunning scenery of the expansive Empty Quarter is next to none - where sand dunes stretch for miles and miles.

There are several indoor and outdoor amusement parks in Saudi Arabia to be enjoyed, and everyone knows students love the thrill and adventure of rollercoasters. Many of these can be found near the beaches and malls where you can relax on the attractive beach sands, take a dip in the sea or do a spot of shopping. The **Red Sea coast** is a beautiful attraction in itself but what makes this spot even more attractive is the opportunity to do scuba-diving readily available here.

It's safe to say people don't go to Saudi Arabia for the nightlife or other vibrant forms of entertainment as nightclubs, drinking alcohol and playing music in public are strictly forbidden. It is a conservative and family-orientated country but that doesn't mean you still can't enjoy yourself. There are plenty of other things you can experience like smoking water pipes with flavoured tobacco which is an Arab specialty called shisha.

Saudi Arabia is a sensational place to explore and what better time than on your student travels. The **wonderful culture and atmosphere** will excite you like no other which makes this country an essential vacation destination seeped with masses of traditional character.

Qatar

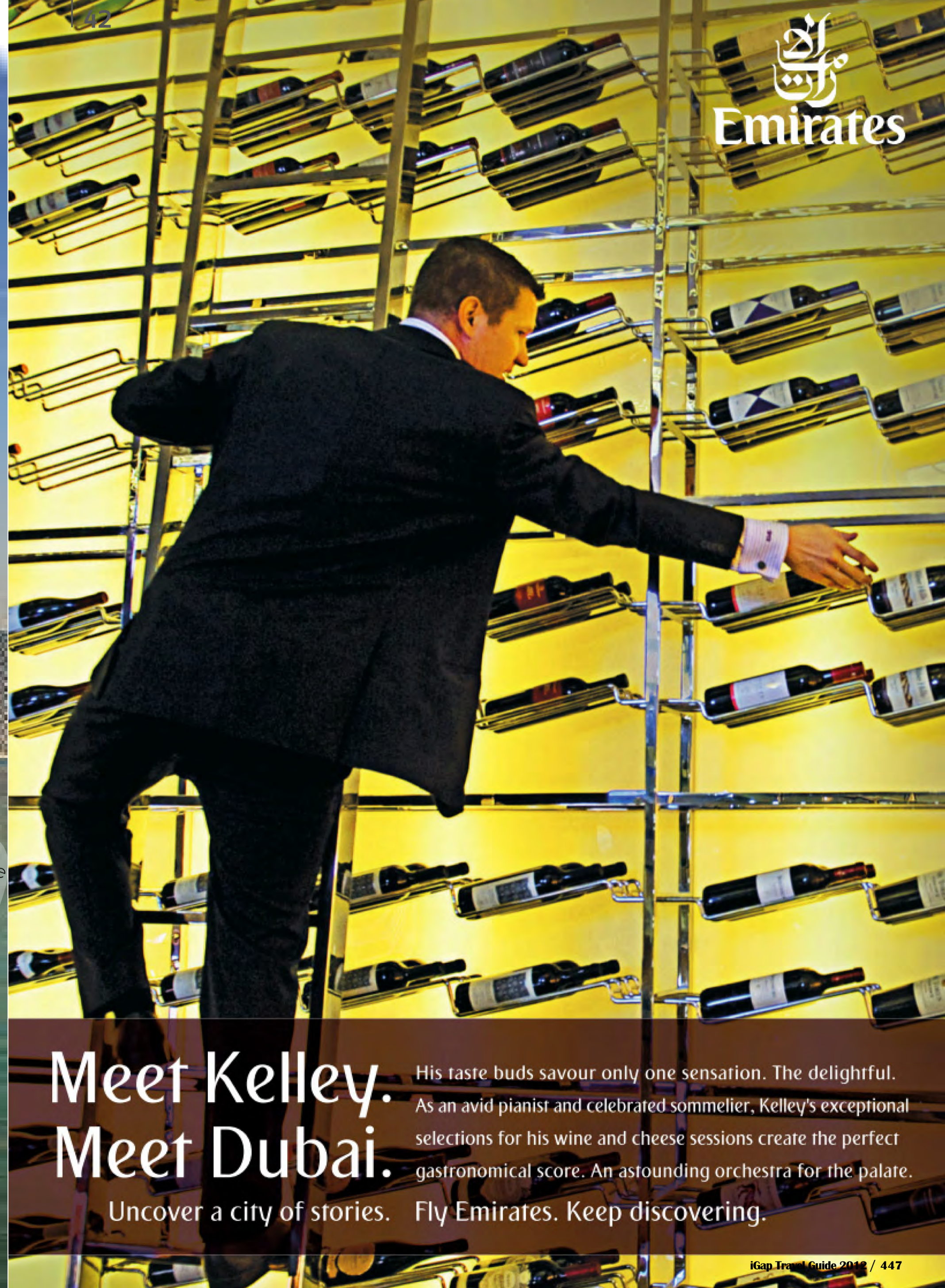


Qatar is quickly becoming a popular place for tourists with the lavish and celebrity lifestyles it boasts. The best bit is you can enjoy all of this, even on a small budget. The Corniche Bay was specially paved for a safe and enjoyable walk. Soak up other vibrant atmosphere and amazing culture of Qatar in an energising walk along the Bay. You can even check out the modern skyscraper of Doha. Lots of other tourist attractions are being redesigned to make them pedestrian friendly, which is great because you can see them without paying huge amounts of money.



Shopping in the glamorous shopping centres is a must, even if you're not a shopaholic. The duty-free will persuade you into getting a good bargain. It's worth visiting the markets as well, with the endless shops offering everything you want, the charm will certainly tempt you.

Qatar is surrounded by water so as you can imagine there are fantastic beaches with water sports that will definitely get the adrenaline rushing through your body. Lounge around in a deck chair on the sandy beaches and soak up the sun with the shore gently whispering in your ear, maybe even build a sand castle. Feeling adventurous? Get involved in a water sport. The majority of them are cheap and you could even get a deal if there's more than one person. Alternatively you can purchase an inexpensive body board on the beach resort and take to the waters. Kite-surfing is increasingly popular for travellers and with the prices of materials it's simple to join in the fun.



Meet Kelley. Meet Dubai.

His taste buds savour only one sensation. The delightful. As an avid pianist and celebrated sommelier, Kelley's exceptional selections for his wine and cheese sessions create the perfect gastronomical score. An astounding orchestra for the palate.

Uncover a city of stories. Fly Emirates. Keep discovering.

The Best of the Middle East

INTRODUCTION

Tired of visiting the same old travelling hotspots in the Middle East such as Dubai and Jerusalem? Then why not try out different holiday destinations and broaden your horizons in four other countries within the region that are equally amazing in their own right.

JORDAN

Tourists are recommended to travel between May and June to catch tolerable warmth where one can bask in hotel pools. In regards to tourist places to visit, how can one not travel to the lowest place on earth ala the Red Sea in Amman? The aura that the Red Sea derives has made it the number one tourist destination place in Jordan.

Going outside the capital opens up a wealth of opportunities pertaining to things worth seeing. In Madaba there is the Church of St. John the Baptist, which since being recognised by the Vatican in 1957 has become a place of pilgrimage. For those parents wanting to avoid historical and religious sites and have fun there's always Padi Dive Centre that allows daily boat dives and snorkelling among other activities.

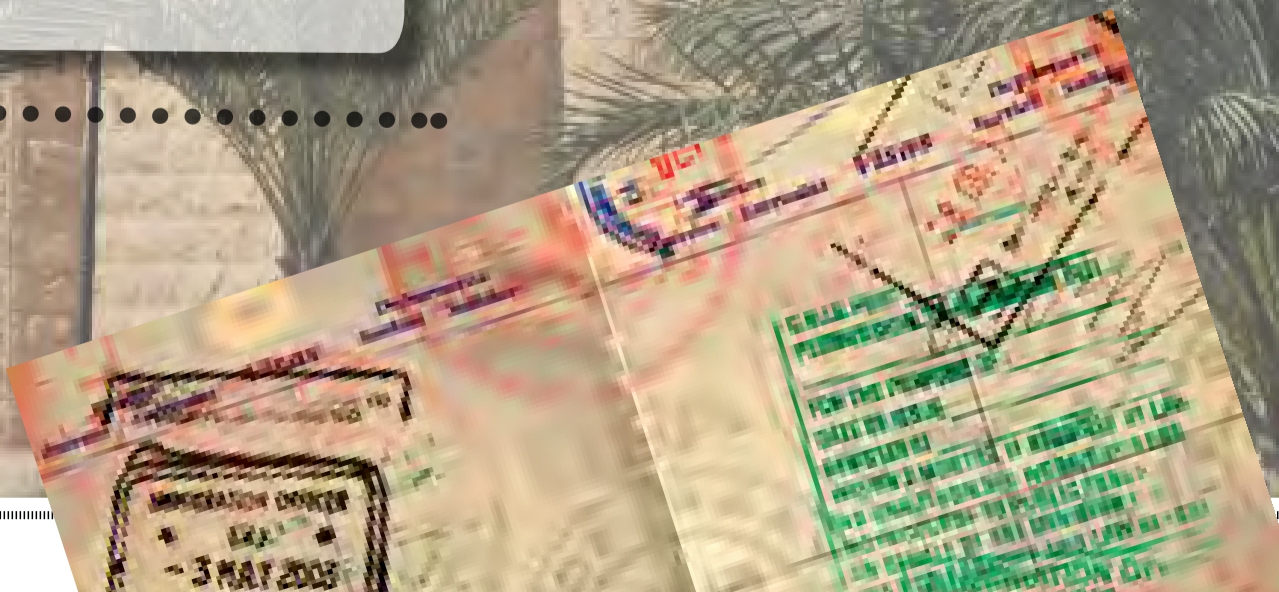


IRAN

Winters can be extremely cold with temperature levels plummeting into the minus' and summers blazing with heat with it rising to the high forty's. Spring and autumn time are the best periods worth going to see Iran.

When you do go you will find beyond the media painted exterior lays a country with cultural depth and diverse scenery from the Alborz Mountains in the north to the serene Caspian coast. The capital city Tehran is awash with modern cafes, art galleries and restaurants specialising in Persian and Turkic cuisine.

You may look to take a trip to Esfahan and see the grand mosques that are so eloquently designed. For couples looking to honeymoon they may decide to visit Yazd, a city renowned for twisting lanes that encompass romantic hotels and restaurants. Finally there's Shiraz, a city that captures the very essence of Persian culture with some architectural gems to grasp and take away as a reminder of what this great country has to offer.



LEBANON

Lebanon is perhaps the most miscellaneous of all states within the Middle East region because of all the cultures and religions it has. It offers a year complete with things to do. Spring is the best time of season to visit Lebanon with a flurry of activities to pursue to help pass the time.

One can take a hike through the Cedar tree reserves in Al-Shouf or Horsh Ehdén. Alternatively you can take a trek through the Qadisha Valleys, home to glorious mountain peaks. After a day of absorbing sites, you and your family may decide to spend a cool evening in one of many of Beirut's open cafes sampling authentic Lebanese cuisine.

There are archaeological sites you can visit that will make the trip worthwhile too. The partially preserved medieval cities of Tyre and Sidon contain mosques that encapsulate the Arab style of architecture of the time. There are also six ski resorts for diehard snowboarding and skiing fans to see in Lebanon should they desire.

BAHRAIN

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago located in the Persian Gulf tucked in between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It is by far the most relaxed of the Middle Eastern states in regards to liberalism as law allows alcohol to be permitted for minorities, appealing to western travellers. The capital city Manama is very cosmopolitan and practically a social and shopping Mecca.

Winters are often mild and tolerable enabling tourist's access to beaches all over the coast, but summers are scorching. In April the Formula One race season embraces Bahrain with one of its infamous Grand Prix's. Off the northern shore the Bahrain fort, which has been restored can be visited for free. If that doesn't tickle your fancy you can pop next door to the museum and appreciate the ancient artefacts on display of the Dilmun Islamic period.

ROUNDUP

These four countries offer everything you could possibly desire be it as an individual, a couple or entire families. Jordan has the Red Sea, Iran has cultural variation and historical heritage, Lebanon has modern cafes and restaurants and Bahrain has sandy beaches and shopping malls that look like palaces in their own right.



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