

RAINBOW
TOURS

SUMMER
AUTUMN
2016

OTHER SHORES

PIONEERING TRAVELLER

Galápagos & Antarctica

SRI LANKA
WILD FOR WILPATTU

Botswana
Chobe & the
Okavango Delta

Eco-Tourism *in* Costa Rica

WIN

WIN a Páramo
Outdoor
Jacket

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SUMMER 2016 WELCOME

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**RAINBOW
TOURS**

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REGENT HOLIDAYS

holidays with stories to tell

Other Shores is an exclusive magazine for the clients of the ITC Luxury Travel group.

From the Editor



Besides the oh-so-important dose of vitamin D, what summer really adds to our lives is colour. Fresh green leaves. Exquisite pink blooms. Dark seas turned turquoise by dazzling rays. Festivals rolling through streets like the contents of a kaleidoscope.

Just like summer, this issue brightened my day with its spectrum of colourful experiences. Our lead story provides an insight into the vibrant creatures found in Costa Rica's rainforest, like the red-eyed tree frog and his bold green,

orange and blue apparel (p18). We come face-to-face with painted tribes in Papua New Guinea (p28), see peacocks in the wild in Sri Lanka's Wilpattu National Park (p40) and witness the northern lights painting Norway's skies green (p4). And of course it's the golden sands and azure seas that win us over in St Lucia (p48).

Wishing you many multi-coloured travels,

Gill Leaning, Editor

C O N T R I B U T O R S



BEN LERWILL

Ben's travel tales have appeared in more than 50 national and international titles around the globe. He was awarded *Best Off-The-Beaten-Track Feature* at the 2013 PSA Journalism Awards and won the British Guild of Travel Writers' *Best UK Feature* for a 2012 article featured in *The Independent*.



NICK BOULOS

Nick is an award-winning travel writer who has been on assignment to more than 100 countries on all seven continents. He is a regular contributor to *Wanderlust*, *The Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times*, and scooped *Travel Writer of the Year* at the 2013 British Travel Press Awards.



JOE MINIHADE

Joe is a freelance travel journalist who has covered everything from record store tours in Brooklyn to samurai training in Japan for titles including *The Independent*, *Lonely Planet* and *Escapism*. His first book, *Floating*, tracing a wild swimming trail across the UK, is published in 2017.



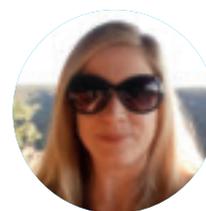
JEN ATKINSON

Jen joined ITC in 2004. Now CEO, she has even more reason to indulge her passion in first-class Caribbean and Mediterranean holidays. Jen's fifteen minutes of fame came this year when she took part in BBC2's *Millionaires' Holiday Club*, a behind the scenes documentary about luxury travel.



STEF STUDLEY

Regent Holidays' Asia Specialist Stef has worked in the travel industry for over a decade, visiting every continent except Antarctica. Some of her top travel experiences include watching the Baining fire dancers in Papua New Guinea and trekking through the mist to Tiger's Nest Monastery in Bhutan.



CANDICE BUCHAN

Born and bred in Johannesburg, Rainbow Tours' Africa Product Manager Candice tries to return to her home continent whenever possible. In fact she's now travelled to Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Pemba Island, São Tomé, Mozambique and Uganda.



ESCAPE

- 6 Travel News**
New arrivals and departures
- 8 World Wines**
Best bottles from around the globe
- 10 The Interview**
Annabelle Thorpe on Croatia
- 11 Ask the Experts**
Your travel questions answered
- 12 The Lux-Files**
Five-Star Caribbean

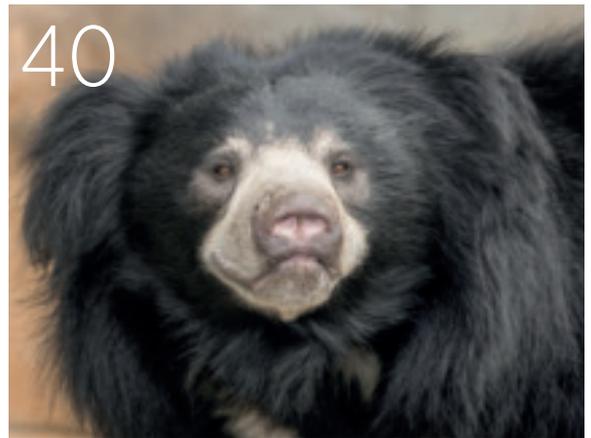
DESTINATION

- 18 COSTA RICA** ➡➡
Joe Minihane discovers pura vida in the rainforests
- 24 GREECE**
Jennifer Atkinson takes her family to Kassandra
- 28 PAPUA NEW GUINEA**
Stef Studley meets PNG's painted jungle tribes
- 32 BOTSWANA**
Candice Buchan goes in search of the Big Five
- 40 SRI LANKA**
Ben Lerwill goes wild in Wilpattu National Park
- 44 RUSSIA**
Gill Leaning takes a luxury Volga River cruise
- 46 ST LUCIA**
Nick Boulos picks a Caribbean island favourite



JOURNAL

- 38 Six of the Best**
Rooms with a view
- 50 Our Shores**
A taste of India at Cinnamon Kitchen
- 52 Pioneering Traveller**
Adventures on the high seas
- 56 Responsible Traveller**
Eco-friendly lodges and retreats
- 58 Family Traveller**
Top trips for your tribe
- 62 Shore Things**
Travel essentials we love
- 64 Competition**
Win a Páramo outdoor jacket



ESCAPE

PICTURE THIS

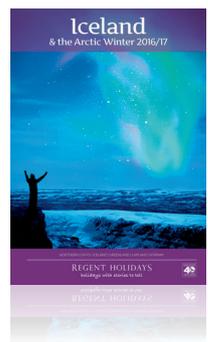




This incredible shot of the aurora borealis over Lilandstinden mountain peak was captured by Vadim Petrakov in the Lofoten islands, Norway.

Regent Holidays has launched a new range of Lofoten Island holidays for winter 2016.

Download or order the brochure at regentholidays.co.uk



TRAVEL NEWS



War and Peace Tour

Those missing their weekly dose of Leo Tolstoy's epic tale can follow in the Rostovs' footsteps on a new private tour from Regent Holidays. *On Location with War And Peace* spends ten days visiting the lavish palaces seen in the BBC adaptation, travelling through Russia, Latvia and Lithuania where the filming took place.

● regentholidays.co.uk



Seven-Star Dubai

The world's only seven-star hotel has redefined its dhow sailboat design. The lavish Terrace of Dubai's super-hotel – the Burj Al Arab – now fans out over the Persian Gulf, adding a swathe of sun-drenched outdoor space that features two new pools, 32 cabanas and a new restaurant and bar.

● itluxurytravel.co.uk

Arctic TreeHouse Hotel

Opening at Christmas 2016, Lapland's Arctic TreeHouse Hotel is the Grand Designs of holiday accommodation. Tucked away in the middle of the forest, each private pod-suite has a glass feature-wall providing unlimited views. Winter travellers can keep watch for the northern lights from the comfort of their own beds.

● regentholidays.co.uk



Tented Camp in Kenya

After the 2013 bush fire that destroyed much of Loisaba Conservancy, Elewana Loisaba Tented Camp is set to reopen this summer. A key migration corridor for Kenya's largest population of elephants, wildlife encounters here are world class. Handcrafted four-poster Starbeds can be rolled out for a magical night under the African sky.

● rainbowtours.co.uk

Daily Flights to Iran

Following the reopening of its London embassy and consulate, Iran has been tipped as 2016's hottest destination.

From July, British Airways will launch a six-per-week direct service to Tehran from London Heathrow, moving to daily flights in the winter.

Return fares start from £384 in World Traveller class

● regentholidays.co.uk



WAVES IN BARBADOS

Opening in July, Waves Hotel & Spa is the latest member of the Elegant Hotels family. Overlooking the white sands of Barbados' Platinum West Coast, this chic all-inclusive resort will have a special focus on mind and body holidays. Guests can enjoy complimentary yoga, Pilates and spa treatments with a Caribbean backdrop.

● westernoriental.com



Boutique Sri Lanka

New this spring, Fort Bazaar is Sri Lanka's most anticipated opening. Sister to the award-winning Wallawwa, this sensitively converted boutique hotel is located at the heart of Galle Fort, surrounded by the UNESCO city's 17th century architecture. Expect Moorish influences combined with modern touches of luxury.

● westernoriental.com



Rainbow at Birdfair

Rainbow Tours will have a stand at this year's Birdfair taking place at Rutland Water Nature Reserve from 19th to 21st August. Those interested in the birdlife of Africa and Latin America can chat with a Rainbow specialist face-to-face. Guest speakers at this year's event include Chris Packham, Simon King and Mike Dilger.

● birdfair.org.uk

Caribbean Beach House

Located on six oceanfront acres, Zemi Beach House is Anguilla's first brand new luxury property for six years. Exclusive views of divine Shoal Bay East are the jewel in this elegant newcomer's crown. Guests have unlimited access to the Beach Concierge Team, who can arrange anything from paddle boarding and snorkelling to island-hopping by private boat.

● itcluxurytravel.co.uk



Maldives Ocean Paradise

Opening on 15th July, OZEN by Atmosphere is set to bring a new level of five-star luxury to the Maldives' beautiful South Malé Atoll. The all-inclusive resort on Maadhoo islet will feature 41 romantic beachfront villas and 49 stilted over-water villas, lapped by the turquoise Indian Ocean.

● itcluxurytravel.co.uk

WORLD WINES

Since launching in 2008, Naked Wines has invested over £25million in more than 130 independent winemakers worldwide. Other Shores picks five top wines direct from the producers.



CALIFORNIA

Matt Parish: Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2013: £14.99

2013 was a long, warm growing season in Napa, with no shortage of intense ripe fruit. Matt Parish has produced a superb deep red Cab Sav, picked by the Financial Times as a best-value buy. Bursting with character and heady dark fruits, pair with steak to complement the touch of spice.



ITALY

Paolo Sacchetto: Sacchetto Janus Pinot Grigio Veneto 2015: £6.49

Paulo Sacchetto is the third generation of his family to make award winning prosecco, so it's no surprise that his other creations are lip-smacking too. This refreshing Pinot Grigio comes bearing notes of green apple and peach, with a crisp finish and a touch more body than many whites.



ARGENTINA

Dominic Hentall: Malbec 2014: £7.99

This Argentinian offering from flying winemaker Dominic Hentall is available exclusively for Naked Angels: a must-try for Malbec lovers alongside a juicy steak. Bursting with deep red fruits and with a super smooth finish, let it breathe before sampling as this elegant number is all too easy to drink.



FRANCE

Benjamin Darnault: Picpoul de Pinet 2014: £8.25

For those whose tittle is often a Sauvignon Blanc, Naked's Winemaker of the Year 2011, Benjamin Darnault, is confident that his relatively unknown Picpoul de Pinet will whet your appetite. Hailing from high in the French Languedoc hills, this intensely fruity, dry white is crisp and refreshing.



SOUTH AFRICA

Carmen Stevens: Catoria Coastal Blend 2014: £12.99

Only the most sophisticated grapes make it into Carmen Steven's South African homage to Bordeaux. Deep and rich, this full-bodied Cabernet packs a punch full of intense blackcurrant and red berries followed by a hint of oak, making this one of the most loved wines from the popular winemaker.

To get wines from around the world delivered to your door visit www.nakedwines.com

GRAPE IDEA

Naked Wines fund independent winemakers across the world, giving them the freedom to produce top quality wines for an exclusive audience. Wine-lovers can become Naked Angels, supporting the winemakers through crowd-funding in return for exclusive access to delicious wines at wholesale prices.

naked wines

THE BAHAMAS ISLAND STYLE

With islands and cays scattered like precious jewels over the clear, tropical Caribbean Sea, one visit to this coral-fringed archipelago is simply not enough.

UNIQUE ISLAND EXPERIENCES

With each of the 16 main islands offering something different, plan to hop on a plane or push out a boat to visit as many as time allows. Sample island-style city living with a few days in cosmopolitan Nassau, renowned for its Duty Free shopping, PGA golf courses and sublime seafood restaurants. If it's romantic seclusion you're after, lie back and relax on the pristine white sand of Long Island's deserted beaches. Divers will delight in exploring the underwater wreck sites off the coast of San Salvador whilst nature lovers can island-hop to Great Inagua to discover the world's largest breeding colony of West Indian flamingos.



WATER WORLD

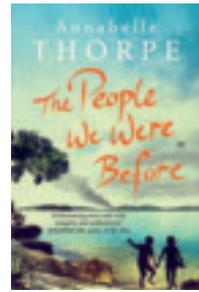
The crystal clear waters surrounding The Bahamas' thousands of miles of pristine shoreline beckon divers, swimmers and sailors; charter a sailboat and indulge in a blissfully tranquil voyage through The Exumas' 160 kilometre-long string of pristine cays. Dolphin experiences, sea lion encounters, shark dives and saltwater fly-fishing are just some of the watery adventures available. For a truly unique experience, take a Harbour Safaris tour to the Exumas, where the island's famous swimming pigs will paddle out to meet you.

FOODIE LOVERS' PARADISE

For a delicious introduction to Nassau book the Tru Bahamian 'Foods of Nassau' experience that combines a walking tour of the downtown area with an exploration of local cuisine. It's no surprise that fish and seafood feature widely on the menu of this island nation, so for a true taste of paradise head to Arawak Cay, known locally as 'Fish Fry', on Nassau's West Bay Street. Be sure to try the local conch: be it cracked (battered and deep fried) or scorched (spiced with lime, onions and peppers), it's one of The Bahamas' most popular foods. And of course as the sun goes down, locally-brewed craft beers and rums are the perfect way to end the day.



THE INTERVIEW



The People We Were Before
by Annabelle Thorpe is published
by Quercus and costs £14.99

Annabelle Thorpe

After nearly 20 years of travel writing and editing for the *Saturday Times*, Annabelle Thorpe has turned her hand to penning a novel. Emma Brisdion catches up with her to discover her inspiration and to talk about all things Croatia

You've travelled to Croatia many times - how have you seen it change and what draws you back?

I find myself returning thanks to how little, astonishingly, some of it has changed. People yearn for the 'Mediterranean as it used to be'; pick the right place in Croatia, and that's exactly what you get. I was recently in Cavtat, a small resort across the bay from Dubrovnik, and it feels exactly as it did when I visited with my family in the early eighties. Dubrovnik is a slightly different story; so much of the city was damaged during the siege that while it is wonderful to see it restored, it feels a little too perfect now.

Your new book, *The People We Were Before*, is set in war-torn 1990s Croatia. How did the region's history inspire you?

I'd visited Croatia when it was still Yugoslavia and found the war really shocking, but many people don't really know what happened. It's easy to ignore the realities of war, but Croatia is part of our continent - barely two hours away by plane. I wanted people to know what happened.

Did you discover anything surprising when visiting for research?

I stayed at the Villa Orsula in Dubrovnik. It's where the foreign war reporters stayed during the siege, and I use the location in the book. It was surreal knowing I was eating breakfast on the terrace where they filed their reports. I've visited most of the country but hearing people talk about their experiences during and after the conflict fascinates me most; how they coped and survived. It's inspiring and humbling.

You're also a travel writer; how did you branch out into writing novels?

I actually always wanted to write novels; journalism began as a way to make money while I wrote my *Great Work!* But travel and life generally proved something of a distraction and finally, almost twenty years later, I managed it.

What's next?

My second novel is underway! This one is set in Marrakech - it's changed hugely since I first visited 14 years ago, but for me it's still the most exotic, *other* place you can get to in the shortest time. Travel is an addiction for me, and to be able to set my novels abroad and write in real depth about a place is an absolute joy after years of short travel features.

● *Regent Holidays' 14-day Highlights of Croatia Fly-Drive* costs from £1,415 per person. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131

ASK THE EXPERTS

Q I understand that Madagascar isn't a luxury island, and I'm prepared for the changeable weather, but is there a 'best time' to visit?

Mr & Mrs Andreae, Reading

a You're right, visitors to Madagascar need to be relatively 'hardy' to get the most out of this country, but that shouldn't dissuade you from visiting – it's thanks to the island's diverse weather patterns that its characteristic wildlife and varied biomes have evolved. While you can visit Madagascar at most times of the year, I discourage clients from travelling in February as violent cyclones can occur. Climate varies according to altitude and latitude, though in general April and May offer great weather and good wildlife viewing. Some of the forests – notably the eastern rainforest – are quieter during the austral winter (June to August) but there is still plenty to see if you are accompanied by an experienced guide. If you plan to visit the hot western plains you'll need to travel between May and November to avoid roads flooded by the summer rains. The spiny desert in the semi-arid southern region lacks rainfall entirely in some years, while in the eastern rainforest band rain falls (whether for five minutes or a few hours) on at least 320 days per year. But, as they say in Madagascar, "it takes a lot of rain to make a rainforest flourish"!

Derek Schuurman, Madagascar Travel Specialist, Rainbow Tours



Q I'm keen to visit India next year. When is the best time to visit the national parks?

Dan Bullock, Horsham

a Most people visit the national parks in the hope of spotting a majestic tiger or two. The parks tend to open from mid-October to the end of June and I would recommend visiting in March or April as by then the park rangers are aware of the tigers' movements. The summer months get very hot, but you do stand a good chance of a tiger sighting as they regularly venture out to the water holes for a drink. If you're into photography, then Ranthambore is the park for you – the ancient ruins in the park are spectacular and make for a stunning backdrop.

Deepavali Gaiind, India Travel Specialist, Western & Oriental



Q What should I pack for a northern lights holiday in Iceland?

Jeremy Long, Cambridge

a No matter what time of year you plan to visit Iceland I always recommend that you bring many layers of clothing as the weather has a tendency to change several times in any one day. Be sure to pack sensible shoes or boots that are warm, waterproof

and above all are comfortable to spend a whole day in, as there is a lot of uneven terrain in Iceland. A warm, windproof and waterproof coat is also essential no matter what the season. For late winter nights searching for the northern lights don't forget your hat and gloves – consider bringing a second fingerless pair if you plan on using your camera regularly.

Jane Slade, Iceland Travel Specialist, Regent Holidays



We love to hear from you. Email your travel questions to editor@other-shores.com and your questions could be answered in the next issue



THE LUX FILES

Your guide to the best in luxury Caribbean travel

1. LUX POOL BAR NIZUC RESORT & SPA, MEXICO

Nestled between beautiful mangrove forests on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, this 29-acre luxury resort is just a 10-minute drive from Cancun International Airport – but it feels like another world. With two gleaming beaches and five swimming pools to choose from, there is no shortage of places to take a relaxing dip. Our favourite is the tranquil pool bar, with its serene infinity pool looking out over the white sand beach and onwards across the Caribbean Sea. The in-water bar provides refreshments to match the view: try the XI NIZUC Cocktail – a tropical blend of mint, cucumber, lime, orange, Grand Marnier, Baron Tequila and spicy Tajin that is sure to put you in the holiday spirit.

● A luxury 7-night break at NIZUC Resort & Spa costs from £1,605 per person including flights with British Airways and 7 nights room-only in a Garden Suite. 020 7666 1303 westernoriental.com

2. LUX ROOM EDEN ROCK, ST BARTHS

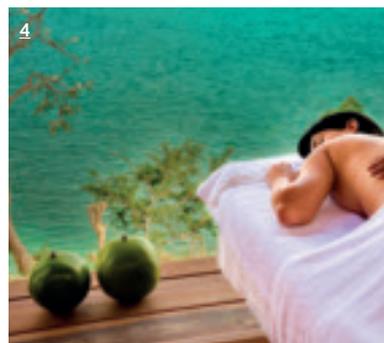
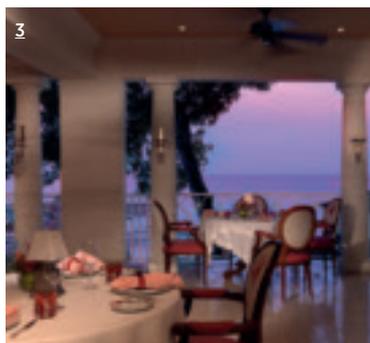
Playground of the rich and famous, with its designer boutiques and lavish yachts, it's no surprise that the hotels on tiny Saint Barthélemy are the crème de la crème. Built in the 1950s as a Caribbean bolthole for Rémy de Haenen and his Hollywood friends, Eden Rock has regained all the glamour of its star-filled heyday. Brand new for 2016 is the spectacular Christopher Columbus suite, with its vast panoramic windows overlooking the white coral sands of St Jean Bay. Expect top-spec in this palatial signature suite, from the luxury spa-bathroom finished with Carrara marble to the private dining area on the air-conditioned terrace and the state-of-the-art entertainment systems.

● A luxury 7-night break staying in the Christopher Columbus Suite at Eden Rock costs from £12,895 per person including flights with British Airways, inter-island flights, private transfers and 7 nights bed & breakfast. 01244 355 577 itluxurytravel.co.uk

3. LUX RESTAURNT L'ACAJOU, BARBADOS

One of the most prestigious resorts in the world, Barbados' elegant Sandy Lane retreat is no secret. Set on the edge of a tranquil coral sand beach, shaded by mature mahogany trees, this classic Palladian-style hotel has long been a firm Caribbean favourite. Of course a hotel of this magnitude has four excellent restaurants, but if it's fine dining you're after, accompanied by a romantic Barbadian sunset, the stunning open-air L'Acajou restaurant is hard to match. Chic, beachfront dining on the platinum coast means a winning combination of refined French and Mediterranean cuisine paired with an amazing selection of Old World and New World wines from the hotel's impressive cellar.

● A luxury 7-night break at Sandy Lane costs from £3,375 per person including flights with British Airways, private transfers and 7 nights bed & breakfast in an Orchid Room. 01244 355 577 itluxurytravel.co.uk



4. LUX SPA CALABASH LUXURY BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA, GRENADA

One of CNN's 2016 Top Ten Hotels of the World, the Calabash is indeed a very special place. With just 30 private suites set in eight acres of tropical gardens, you would be hard-pushed not to feel relaxed at this five-star beachside resort. But the new Spa at Calabash is a personal invitation to turn the chillout-factor up another notch; a place where healing hands tend to mind, body and spirit surrounded by coconut trees and azure seas. Try the wonderful Skin Renaissance treatment for a truly tropical indulgence: dry body brushing and salt exfoliation re-energises the skin before a luxurious body butter massage.

● A luxury 7-night break at Calabash Luxury Boutique Hotel & Spa costs from £1,875 per person including flights with British Airways, private transfers and 7 nights bed & breakfast in a Superior Suite. A one-hour Skin Renaissance treatment costs \$135. 01244 355 577 itluxurytravel.co.uk

5. LUX BEACH PUNTA CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

With over 30 miles of gorgeous palm-fringed beaches, Punta Cana on the Dominican Republic's eastern tip is better known as La Costa del Coco – the Coconut Coast. With its idyllic white-sand beaches and azure waters, sun worshippers and water babies will be equally at home in this little corner of Caribbean paradise. Snorkel amongst stingrays, paddleboard over colourful coral reefs, sail to deserted islands or simply lie back on the soft, powdery sand and drift off under the warm Caribbean breeze. The fabulous Zoëtry Agua Punta Cana has a range of Ocean View suites with French doors that slide back to let in magnificent views of the beautiful Coconut Coast beaches.

● A luxury 7-night break at Zoëtry Agua Punta Cana costs from £1,999 per person including flights with British Airways and 7 nights all-inclusive in a Junior Suite. 020 7666 1303 westernoriental.com

America's Pacific NORTHWEST

Bound by the Pacific Ocean to the west and Rocky Mountains to the east, the Great Outdoors awaits in the US states of Oregon and Washington. Thousands of miles of spectacular walking trails meander through National Parks where active volcanoes, glacier-topped mountains and wild coast provide the backdrop. Take to the roads on a self-drive holiday and explore at your own pace, discovering the region's passion for farm-to-table produce, organic wineries and local microbreweries as you go.

Gateway to the Pacific Northwest, the laid-back city of Seattle is the ideal place to begin. Here, it's all about embracing the local scene – be it music, food or art. Spend days mixing sightseeing with coffee culture, art galleries with live rock music, and fine dining with farmers' markets.

GO GASTRO

Located in the beautiful Sammamish River Valley, just thirty minutes northeast of Seattle, Woodinville Wine Country is home to over one hundred wineries and tasting rooms, from the grand grounds of Chateau Ste. Michelle to small boutique producers. Leave the hire car behind and take one of the many wine tours to fully appreciate what the region has to offer.

Driving at least some of Washington's Olympic Culinary Route is a holiday must. With over seventy gastronomic stop-offs, from farm shops and markets to wineries and seafood restaurants, this stunning peninsula route showcases the region's passion for local produce. Throughout the year foodie festivals fill the calendar, from the Chocolate on the Beach Festival in February to the Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival in October.





2



3



4



48 HOURS IN SEATTLE

Day 1

9am: Start the day with breakfast at Portage Bay Café to refuel with some of Seattle's best local produce.

11am: Visit the EMP Museum and learn more about Seattle's most famous band - Nirvana.

1pm: Head to the Space Needle for lunch where the rotating restaurant provides 360-degree views of the city.

4pm: Discover the amazing Chihuly Garden and Glass exhibition at Seattle Center.

7pm: Book a table for dinner at the Purple Café & Wine Bar before heading out to discover the city's live music venues.

Day 2

8am: Head to Pike Place Market, heart of Seattle's vibrant food scene, and grab breakfast to go.

10am: Discover the roadways and first-floor storefronts of 19th century downtown Seattle on an underground tour.

12pm: Travel to Woodinville Wine Country for lunch and spend the afternoon trying wines from over 200 tasting tables.

7pm: Book a table at AQUA at El Gaucho at the end of Pier 70 for waterfront dining with views over Elliot Bay.



5 SEPT 2016 NORTH CASCADES NP CENTENNIAL PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAMME :

Join photographer Andy Porter after dark and learn how to capture images of the Milky Way.

1. Mt. Rainer National Park
2. Long Beach Peninsula
3. Yakima Valley Wine Country
4. North Cascades National Park (Credit: Andy Porter)

NATIONAL PARK CENTENARY

August 2016 sees America's National Park Service celebrate one hundred years of protecting and preserving some of the world's most incredible wild spaces, and there's no better time to explore the National Parks of the Pacific Northwest.

Pack your walking gear and be prepared for some of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes in the country, from active volcano Mount Rainer - the most glaciated peak in the contiguous USA - to Olympic National Park's seventy miles of wild Pacific coast and otherworldly rainforest trails. Less than a three-hour drive from Seattle, spectacular North Cascades National Park is a jaw-dropping canvas of cascading waters, alpine valleys and jagged peaks crowned by more than three hundred glaciers.

ON THE ROAD

With its dramatic National Parks, sweeping coastal highways and dedicated culinary routes, the best way to discover the Pacific Northwest is on a self-drive holiday. Western & Oriental has a 10-day fly-drive package that costs from £3,235 per person (including return flights) that takes in Seattle, three National Parks and the San Juan Islands. Direct non-stop daily flights into Seattle's SeaTac International airport are available with Delta or British Airways. [020 7666 1303 westernoriental.com](http://020.7666.1303.westernoriental.com)

NEW - VIRGIN ATLANTIC

From 26 March 2017, Virgin Atlantic will fly between Seattle and Heathrow with a B787-9 Dreamliner, replacing the flight currently operated by Delta, and adding 50 seats to the daily service.



KNOWLEDGE BANK



Tom Cloherty
Caribbean Specialist
Western & Oriental



Natalie Russell-Blackburn Perkins
Relationship Manager
ITC Luxury Travel



Stef Studley
Asia Specialist
Regent Holidays



Fiona Herring
Africa Specialist
Rainbow Tours

HOLIDAY HIDDEN GEM



I absolutely love Belle Mont Farm on St Kitts. Brunch comes straight from the farm – and the unlimited Bollinger makes it that extra bit special!

Elounda Gulf Villas are one of Crete's hidden gems. You really can't beat the amazing sea views from the villa's private pools. Total bliss.

The name doesn't sound very exciting I know, but I really recommend the seafood at Top Spot Food Court in Kuching, Sarawak. A great little find.

Africa's brilliant local markets – just stop at the side of the road whenever you see one. I never miss an opportunity to barter for a souvenir or two.

EAT LIKE A LOCAL

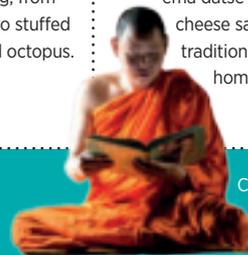
La Roche D'or on Marie-Galante island, just off the Guadeloupe mainland.

It's a tiny family-run restaurant with amazing creole cuisine cooked by the owner and his grandmother. The home-brewed rums are a must!

Greek tavernas are a feast for the eyes and stomach! The locals don't seem to know when to stop bringing food so it just keeps on coming, from fresh olives and feta, to stuffed vine leaves and grilled octopus.

Bhutan is not renowned for its culinary variety, but the local hospitality is first class. I really enjoyed trying traditional ema datse (chillies with cheese sauce) in a traditional village home.

Madagascar has some of the most amazing food. Local stews are full of exotic spices and you'll spot the French influence on most menus. And of course it has the best vanilla and chocolate in the world!



BEACH OR CULTURE?

I always try to combine both. Spend the day exploring local markets, then an hour or two sipping a cocktail on a beautiful beach. It's no surprise I keep returning to the Middle East.

Can I say both? I love afternoons at the beach, especially if there's paddle boarding or snorkelling, but I also love to venture out to experience the local life.

Culture! My travel memories are made of experiences like watching the processions of saffron-robed monks receive alms in Luang Prabang – you won't find that at the beach.

I think an African safari can combine the best of both – follow a Tanzania wildlife adventure in Selous National Park with the Indian Ocean beaches of Zanzibar!

I NEVER TRAVEL WITHOUT...

My iPad. The technology is just amazing. I download my guidebooks, edit my photos, search for useful phrases in the local language. It really is an all-round travel companion.



My mini wheelee suitcase as hand luggage. It's always jam-packed with enough clothes and swimwear to last if my main case were to get lost, so I can relax whatever happens.

Flip flops as they can be shed at a moment's notice to enter homes or temples. Also a lightweight scarf doubles up as sun shade or shoulder cover at religious sites.

My camera – I love photography whether it's on my phone or my DSLR. I always try to capture the moment or essence. It could be local people, landscapes or wildlife.

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RESORTS

WELCOME TO PARADISE

REETHI RAH, MALDIVES

Step from the sea to an elegant structure that appears to float above crystal waters – your sanctuary – a private place enveloped in absolute quiet. Time slows. Your eyes open to petals floating across a private pool, and beyond to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. These are the Maldives, land of blue lagoons and soft white sands. It is here, stretching across six kilometres of secluded coastline, that you will find the One&Only Reethi Rah.



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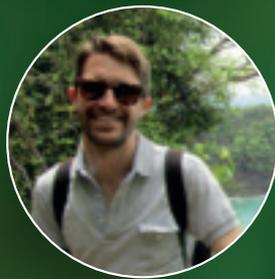
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DESTINATION
COSTA RICA

PURA VIDA IN COSTA RICA



JOE MINIHANE HEADS TO
CENTRAL AMERICA'S
ECO-TOURISM CAPITAL IN
SEARCH OF A LIFE LESS
ORDINARY...



- 1 Sloth inching its way through the canopy
- 2 Zip line through the forest canopy
- 3 Blue jeans frog, also called Strawberry poison-dart frog
- 4 Arenal Volcano
- 5 Colourful Keel-billed toucan

My harness hangs heavy from my waist, my helmet strapped tight beneath my chin. I can hear plenty of chatter, but can't make out any voices. All I can see is the zip line stretching out over low branches before the canopy falls away to nothing. The child-like cone of Arenal Volcano looms on the horizon, smouldering.

I feel a nudge on my shoulder and snap out of my reverie.

"You're up."

I step towards the open ledge, where a grinning Costa Rican guide clips my harness to the wire, along with a set of hefty handlebars.

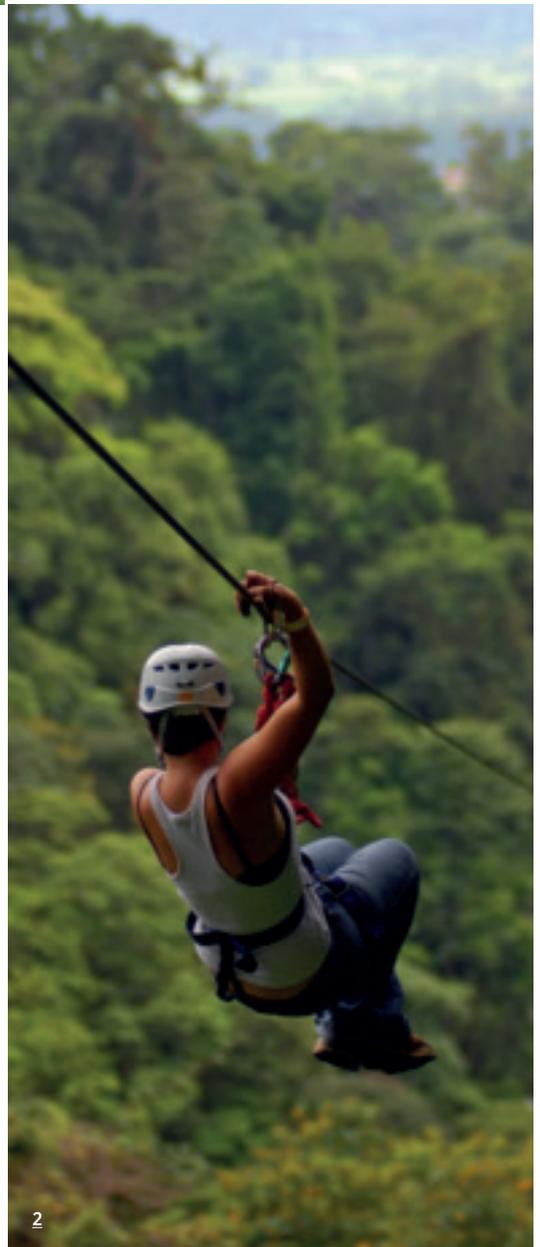
"Now straighten your arms, lean back and cross your legs. Pura Vida!"

With the gentlest of pushes, I begin hurtling over the lush forest, shouts of encouragement behind me from my fellow zip liners fading to nothing. The wind smacks my face and I let out an almighty 'Whoop!' A pair of turkey vultures circle on the thermals below me, their finger-like wings a striking black against the riot of green 660 feet below.

Within seconds, I'm rattling on the line to slow down and being helped onto the landing platform.

"Pura Vida, huh?" says the next guide, unclipping me and helping me back to my feet.

"Pura Vida!" I reply, adrenaline zipping through my veins faster than the 40mph joy ride I've just enjoyed.



“Costa Rica cherishes the environment unlike anywhere else I’ve been. As tourism booms, protecting wildlife for all to see has become essential too.”



Pura Vida is inescapable in Costa Rica. Its literal English translation is ‘Pure Life’, but it’s more than that. For the population of this small, diverse and spectacular little country in Central America, it’s a way of life. It’s an expression of optimism, a greeting and a farewell. And most of all, it’s an exhortation to live life in the moment, to be present.

On the zip lines around Arenal, that’s not a challenge. Experiencing the majestic surroundings while your heart races is Pura Vida in its purest form. There’s simply nowhere else you can be.

But that’s not to say there aren’t more sedate ways to get your fix. Back on the ground, Arenal’s surrounding mountains, forests and spa hotels offer plenty of ways to discover why this country has become a mecca for tourists beyond adrenaline-laden activities. After all, there’s a reason British Airways has just started flying direct to the capital San José from London Gatwick.

NAYARA SPRINGS

Although Arenal hasn’t been active since 2010, the molten lava beneath the surface here feeds hot springs, meaning the area is blessed with numerous resorts where piping hot pools and tumbling water abound. And after winding my way down the six increasingly vertiginous zip lines, hanging on for dear life, my body is in need of a breather.

Fortunately, my villa at Nayara Springs, a short drive from the Sky Tram zip lines where I’ve spent the morning, comes with its own spring-fed hot tub. As I slide in and power up the jets, working out the kinks in my back and legs, I look up at Arenal and enjoy taking in the views of its foreboding peak from a more sedate position.

It could be easy, not to mention overwhelmingly tempting, to spend every waking hour kicking back in my tub and enjoying Nayara’s poolside luxuries and sensational Asian-inspired restaurant. However, there’s plenty of Pura Vida close by to ensure I’m showered and ready to go after a couple of hours’ well-earned rest.

“Costa Rica has 27 national parks and protected areas for wildlife. Nature is serious business here.”



I'm met by my guide Paulo and his friend, Jason, and we head off into the foothills and the home of Otto Mendez. Otto is a botanist and plant fanatic and has created a network of paths through the forest that surrounds his property, with the express aim of nurturing Costa Rica's best wildlife. Although it only covers 0.03% of the Earth's surface, Costa Rica is home to 6% of its biodiversity, making it one of the best places in the world to see exotic birds, mammals, amphibians and insects in their natural environment.

Paulo and Jason are both wildlife obsessives and, as night falls, lead me into the trees. Immediately, our torches pick out some stunning finds. Blue jeans frogs, their tiny blue and orange bodies impossible to miss, perch on garish green leaves. Poisonous tree frogs cling

to branches. Cane toads croak at the edge of a pond. Well-camouflaged stick insects dot the trail edges.

Costa Rica has 27 national parks and protected areas for wildlife. Nature is serious business here. Over dinner of rice, beans and salsa on Otto's veranda, Paulo explains why conservation is so important here. The country produces most of its energy from hydro-electric plants and has slashed the amount of fossil fuels it burns. Palm oil production and farming are heavily regulated. Costa Rica cherishes the environment unlike anywhere else I've been. As tourism booms, protecting wildlife for all to see has become essential too.

The thing is, spotting smaller animals

makes you want to see bigger ones. After we leave Otto's, I badger Paulo for tales of jaguars, sloths, monkeys and crocodiles. Paulo, a veteran guide, has only seen jaguars a couple of times. While he can't promise me a sighting of the big cat, he tantalises me with what other fauna I can expect to see in Manuel Antonio National Park, on the Pacific Coast.

I'm not disappointed. On the long drive south, we cross the Tarcoles River. Paulo pulls up and we peer over the edge of Puente de Cocodrilos. The clue's in the name. I count 22 hulking reptiles sunning themselves in the shallows. One is at least three metres long, patrolling the group and looking for all the world as if he belongs to a prehistoric era.

DESTINATION COSTA RICA



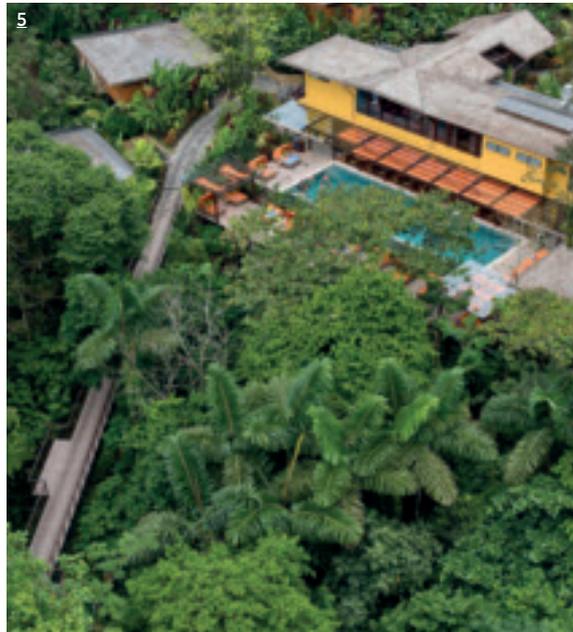
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PACIFIC COAST

Once we reach Manuel Antonio, however, things crank up a notch. This is wildlife, Pura Vida-style. Costa Rica's most famous national park might be small, at just 20km square, but it is home to some of its best-loved animals. On a short trail off of the main path, Paulo picks out a sloth inching its way through the canopy. The relaxed mammal takes a peep down at the tourists staring up at it, seems to shrug and then sets back on its merry way.

Just a few metres more, and the trail becomes sandy, slipping down onto a perfect beach, where the rainforest falls into the Pacific. Waves boom on distant rocks. Paulo and I strip off and head for the water as capuchin monkeys play among sunbathing tourists. The water is warm, the view back to shore idyllic. There are many ways to enjoy Pura Vida, but I think I've found my favourite.

● Joe travelled to Costa Rica with Rainbow Tours. A 7-night holiday visiting San José, the Central Valley, Arenal and Manuel Antonio costs from £1,985 per person including flights with British Airways. rainbowtours.co.uk
020 7666 1304



DESTINATION
COSTA RICA

- 1 Pacific Ocean beach at Manuel Antonio National Park
- 2 Costa Rica is home to 6% of Earth's biodiversity
- 3 Nayara Springs Villa
- 4 Capuchin monkey in Manuel Antonio National Park
- 5 Pool at Nayara Springs surrounded by rainforest
- 6 National park flora
- 7 Hummingbirds are specialised nectarivores



TWO IN TOW IN GREECE

JENNIFER ATKINSON SHARES HOW HER HOLIDAYS HAVE
CHANGED SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF HER TWO CHILDREN

I have always been passionate about exploring the world, especially when much of it can be discovered in style. It's what led me to join the ITC Luxury Travel family in 2004. Jet-setting independently for years, I could be nimble and carefree, booking holidays at the drop of a hat and moving between hotels every few days with ease. Twelve years later, I now have a husband and two small children (aged three and 18 months) so my travels have taken off in a different direction – requiring far more forethought and planning. Hotels, in particular, are carefully selected to suit the needs of my family; catering, accessibility and childcare all now factor in.

Lapped by the turquoise waters of the Aegean Sea, Sani Resort perches on the edge of Greece's Kassandra peninsula, an hour from Thessaloniki. Four luxury hotels and a yacht marina make up the resort, hidden away within a 1,000-acre family-owned eco-reserve. Here, white parasols flutter on private golden beaches and gleaming boats bob gently in the marina, sails rippling gently in the light sea breeze.

- 1 Billy enjoys some shade in the heat of the day
- 2 Sani Asterias Suites
- 3 Little ones can learn and play at the Kids' Club
- 4 White parasols await at the beach
- 5 Sani Resort sits on the edge of an ecoreserve
- 6 Jen and Billy exploring the marina

The whole resort is elegantly designed; pastel stonework complements the Mediterranean countryside and spacious suites boast sweeping coastal panoramas. There's no rush here, life is leisurely and at peace. But perhaps best of all – this level of luxury is family friendly.

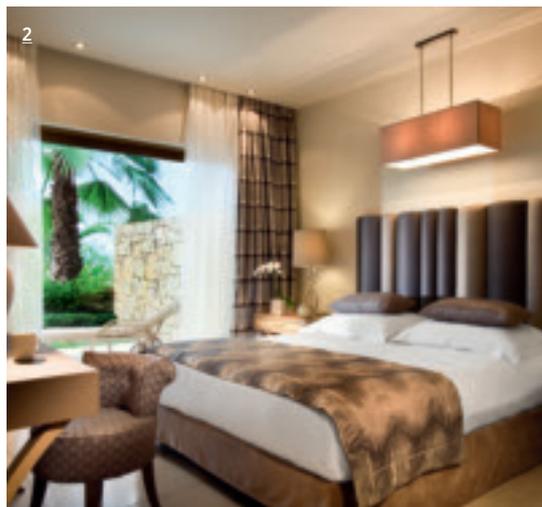
SANI ASTERIAS

Of the four properties, we opted for the Sani Asterias. On arrival I eye up our private terrace; the perfect setting for an evening family dinner using room service. Sani welcomes families and is fully equipped with kids' clubs, water activities and fussy eater-friendly restaurants, but it isn't just a family resort. Choosing to focus on the needs of the adults too, the spa, jazz and veranda bars and Michelin-starred chefs overseeing the restaurants suit my husband and I perfectly.

As every need is effortlessly catered for, we don't even need to leave the resort. Being able to spend the whole break based in one place is essential – I certainly wouldn't want to hotel-hop like I used to with young children.

With the kids unable to contain their excitement for any longer, we set course for the beach. One of my favourite things about taking my little ones abroad is their unquenchable excitement – even for the flight. It reminds me just how exciting travelling is, as it's easy to get lost in the preparations when there's a whole family to coordinate. The military operation of organising has to start weeks in advance. I'm planning for three now; I end up packing more outfits for the kids than for me! It's all worth it though, watching the three-year-old run to the beach in his favourite 'holiday' shorts.

A cheeky smile peeks out from under his curly hair, bouncing in the sun as he sets off on today's sandy adventure. Despite our suitcase overflowing with his clothes, I know he'll insist on wearing these shorts all week – no matter how much ice cream gets spilled on them.





4



6

DESTINATION JUST RETURNED



Sun-worshipping on a gorgeous beach with a gripping book was always high on my priority list, but travelling with children now means that 'me' time is more limited. Blissfully, Sani have a fabulous Babewatch team, offering beachside activities and childcare. After splashing in the shallows all morning, my husband and I let the Babewatch ladies take over child duties for the afternoon. Sinking back into our lounge chairs, we're able to enjoy a cocktail together in the sun. All the while, we can see that our little ones are happy and being professionally looked after. It's our holiday too, after all!

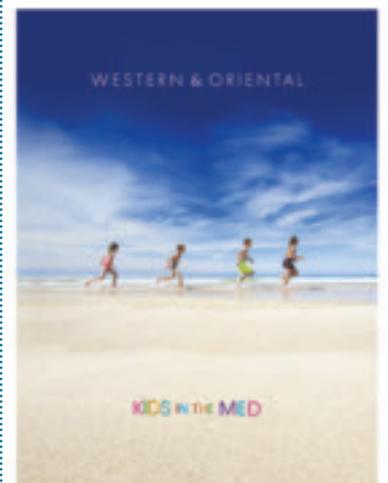
These few precious moments of calm give me time to reflect. It's natural to be a little scared of travelling with young children, but one of the most important things I have learned working in the industry is that it doesn't need to be feared, and you certainly don't have to compromise on luxury. Many hotels are embracing the luxury family holiday market and it is completely possible to enjoy some of the world's finest hotels and lavish resorts.

When they're older I can't wait to take the kids on safari in Africa. The zoo excites them so much at this age, that seeing the animals in their natural habitat will blow their minds.

● A luxury 7-night break in a Suite Marinafront, Marina View in the Sani Asterias costs from £3,109 per family, based on two adults and two children, including flights with easyJet and private airport transfers.
westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303

“Travelling with children shouldn't be feared, and you certainly don't have to compromise on luxury.”

KIDS IN THE MED



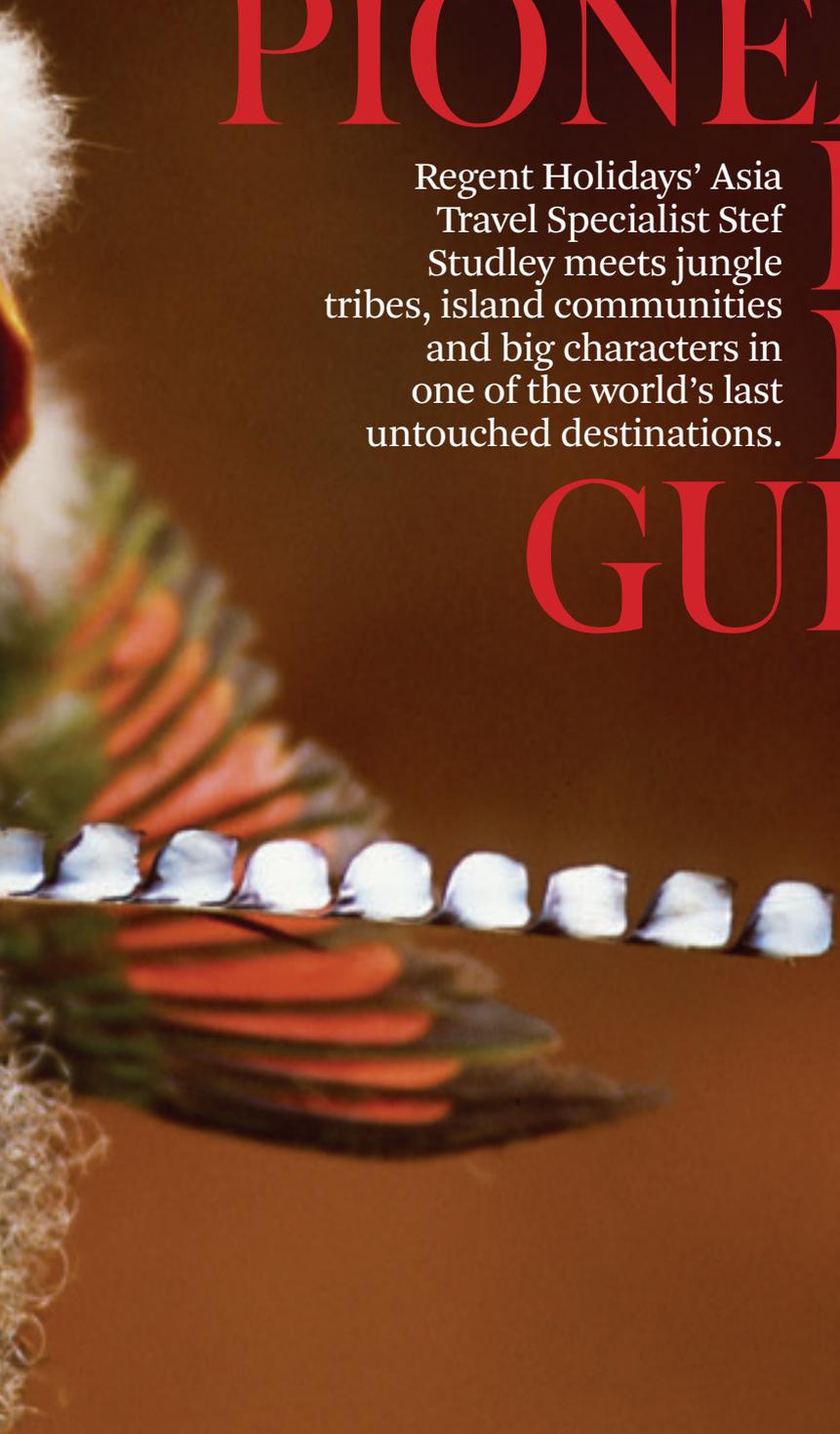
Find the perfect resort for your family holiday this summer with Kids in the Med and Kids beyond the Med family travel brochures. Order your copy at westernoriental.com



DESTINATION
JUST RETURNED

PIONEERING PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Regent Holidays' Asia
Travel Specialist Stef
Studley meets jungle
tribes, island communities
and big characters in
one of the world's last
untouched destinations.



A metallic hiss announced the opening of the cabin door and a distinctly exotic fragrance flooded the plane. The heady, floral scent that reached my nostrils was unmistakable. Plump, white and yellow frangipani flowers litter the lush green islands that make up Papua New Guinea, their sweetness clinging to every drop of humidity hanging in the thick Southern Pacific air.

Just north of Australia, Papua New Guinea is one of the last countries on Earth able to genuinely claim that it is unspoiled by tourism. Its lack of tourist infrastructure combined with perfectly preserved colourful traditions, verdant mountainous regions, idyllic remote beaches and pristine marine environments are precisely why PNG is one of the most compelling destinations for intrepid travellers.

“A sharp screech split the air. Two howling men brandishing long spears and decorated in tribal war paint came tearing out of the undergrowth towards us.”

Coastal village, Tufi, sits on the tip of a mainland peninsula jutting into the Solomon Sea and is best known for its world-class diving. But we had arrived with a different agenda – from here, an indigenous jungle tribe that welcomes small groups of visitors is just a short boat ride away. We cast off from the tiny harbour in an old fishing boat, skirting around the craggy headland and marvelling at the glass-like clarity of the water, before tucking back into the coast and trading our large vessel for two shallow-bottomed outriggers. The small wooden boats had no trouble setting course inland; weaving upstream through the mangroves, slipping under low-lying branches and navigating spindly roots on a course deep into the jungle. We stepped ashore, our feet squelching in a thin layer of mud as our eyes scoured our surroundings, looking for any sign of the village we were intending to visit.

A sharp screech split the air. Two howling men brandishing long spears and decorated in tribal war paint came tearing out of the undergrowth towards us – we weren't welcome. As their footsteps thundered ever-closer we looked to our guide, questioning his decision to bring us here. Confronted with our panic-stricken faces, a broad smile erupted across his face. The trees rang with laughter as he was joined by the warriors that had lowered their spears upon reaching us, content that their practical joke had had its desired effect.

After our initial terror faded, we gladly followed our new friends into their village where we were greeted by curious children, tugging at our clothes, and adults adorned in magnificent headdresses. This nature-lover's haven, nestled in a flourishing patch of biodiverse jungle, is an ornithologist's conundrum; rare birds of paradise flit freely between the trees, but their feathers are also used to craft the extravagant tribal crowns.

A traditional lunch of sago (a carbohydrate refined from tree pulp) and a dance display were followed by a customary facial tattoo ceremony, in which the parents of a girl reaching adulthood pick a design to decorate her face. Nowadays a form of henna ink is used, but looking closely, faded remnants of permanent patterns were etched onto the faces of some of the older tribe members.

DUKE OF YORK ISLANDS

We moved on to East New Britain province, a collection of islands large and small, and boarded another boat to reach a particularly small cluster – the Duke of York Islands. Clear waters gleamed every shade of emerald and turquoise as we approached the bright white-sand beaches. Beaming children splashed in the warm waves and, after sharing our packed lunches with the friendly faces, we were tugged hand-in-hand around the village. Fascinated by our cameras, endless photos were requested and ferocious giggles greeted every image of their wide smiles and sun-bleached curls on our screens. It was with some regret that we left, but this was just a stopping point on our way to meet one of PNG's most famous characters. Just south, the island of New



DESTINATION JUST RETURNED

- 1 Paddling at Tufi © David Kirkland
- 2 Fire dancers in Rabul
- 3 Stef meets the village women
- 4 Confronted by men brandishing spears
- 5 Children of Tufi Duke of York Islands © David Kirkland
- 6 Duke of York Islands © David Kirkland



Britain is known for the most volatile of its inhabitants; Mt Tavorvur. The Papua archipelago was formed at the meeting point of the Pacific and Australian Plates, and while all the islands are volcanic, Mt Tavorvur took the headlines with a large eruption in 1994. Nearby provincial capital, Rabaul, was gradually buried by thick volcanic ash, prompting a move of the town and its residents to Kokopo.

FIRE DANCERS

Like the locals, we headed to Kokopo and settled into our beautiful wooden chalet rooms at the Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort. When the light fell, we were invited to a ceremony that few tourists get the chance to observe. We were led to a neighbouring village and sat around a roaring fire, circled by tribesmen chanting and banging drums. Out of the blackness, groups of adolescent men sporting striking wooden masks emerged to dance around, and even through, the fire. Their bare feet kicked up the crackling embers, sending amber sparks blazing through the dark night. The distorted features of the masks cast strange shadows and created otherworldly silhouettes against the flames. Though native customs are still very much alive in Papua New Guinea, we were aware that this peek into traditional life was a privilege. After a while we gracefully moved on, allowing them to continue their celebrations unwatched.

In the light of the following morning, we could clearly see Mt Tavorvur dominating the distant skyline. Just across the water it often smokes; a constant reminder that life here cannot be taken for granted. The road to reach it snakes through, or rather above, old Rabaul – where the roofs of long-forgotten buried buildings poke through the ground. Stepping onto the barren, lifeless volcanic soil, a powerful sulphurous stench caught in the back of my nose and I could feel the ground radiating through the soles of my flip-flops.

In contrast to the lush vegetation matting the rest of the country, very little grows in the ash-covered region surrounding Mt Tavorvur. But as we turned to leave, our guide pointed to a bush sporting a smattering of white flowers. It seemed fitting that the first plant to slowly creep back through the desolate soil was the fragrant frangipani.

● *Regent Holidays' 12-day Explore Papua New Guinea group tour costs from £5,495 per person, including flights from Singapore and 3 nights at Kokopo Beach Bungalow Resort. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*





On Safari in **BOTSWANA**

Named Lonely Planet's top country to visit in 2016, Rainbow Tours' Africa Product Manager, Candice Buchan, discovers just what makes Botswana such a great safari destination

While many African countries offer a safari experience, none offer anything quite like Botswana. This is due, in part, to the vast areas of unspoiled wildernesses as well as the variety of experiences on offer, from game drives to river cruises and light aircraft flights. The iconic wildlife species – the real stars of the show – are abundant and roam freely. Ideal for animal lovers, this means that the Big Five (and friends) are never far from view, whether you're exploring the hippo-hiding waterways of the Okavango Delta or the arid expanses of the Kalahari – a desert prowled by black-maned lion.

Thanks to an enlightened attitude towards sustainable tourism, Botswana leads the continent in conservation. Over 17 per cent of the country is protected by national parks or game reserves, and responsible mobile camps (tents that are constantly relocated to prevent damage to the ground) are widely found. Botswana's exclusivity also keeps it pristine. A 'low volume, high return' philosophy limits visitor numbers, maintaining the landscape's natural beauty and ensuring that wildlife encounters are intimate and plentiful.

DESTINATION JUST RETURNED

Name-drop Botswana, and the Okavango Delta quickly springs to mind. Aside from being visually stunning – a watery world of partially submerged trees dotted with islands – it offers the unique opportunity to see wildlife from a croc’s-eye view. Surprisingly, the best time to visit is the dry season. Between July and October, the floodwaters from Angola’s summer rains reach the delta, swelling the waterways. As the rest of the country is dry, huge numbers of buffalo, elephant and impala are easily spotted crowding the water’s edge.

The wriggling river channels are perfect for riverboat or mokoro safaris, and the quiet, leisurely pace of the latter promises closer wildlife encounters. I clamber into a wooden canoe that has room for just two people and a ‘motor’ – an oarsman with a pole used to propel us gently downriver.

Brown and white reed frogs, marbled like the region’s cheetah prides, cling undisturbed to reeds that poke from the water just inches from my elbows. Much to my delight, we head towards a herd of giraffe on the banks, bending their long necks to drink.

CLOSE HIPPO ENCOUNTERS

Our ‘motor’ points out a thirsty leopard a few hundred metres further on but my attention is stolen by a noise much closer. A bulbous nose breaks the surface, followed by a wet snort and the unmistakable head of one of Botswana’s most famed characters – a hippo. The dark face stares at us with its tiny eyes and sprouting ears. As one of Africa’s most dangerous animals, this is one creature I’m not keen to have a close encounter with. We sit still and watch it sink back under the murky waters.

Pleased to have spotted two of the Big Five, we head back to Stanley’s Camp by Sanctuary, overlooking the floodplains from a private concession bordering Moremi Game Reserve. Providing an authentic (but comfortable) tented safari experience, these canvas-walled rooms have hot showers, ceiling fans and a private deck with a hammock. I drift off to sleep listening to the rustlings and calls of the wild. We’ve enjoyed a few nights here but lion, buffalo and elephant remain on my ‘must see’ list, so tomorrow I’m bound for Chobe National Park.





2

“This national park is the place to see African elephants in the wild. It’s home to over 50,000 of the graceful giants, the largest population on the continent”

Unfurling beneath us, we begin to appreciate the delta’s vast size as our tiny aircraft sets off for Chobe. This national park is the place to see African elephants in the wild. It’s home to over 50,000 of the graceful giants, the largest population on the continent, and they gather in vast herds, slowly lumbering across the arid landscape in search of food and water.

With our tented camp almost in sight and the jeep preparing to again tackle the river crossing, I’m in luck. A rustle announces the presence of a large bull elephant. Peering through the nearby bush he gives us a good look at his long ivory tusks. Quickly we realise that we’ve stumbled across a whole herd. Seeming to appear from all directions, mothers and babies reach the river and we’re surrounded. I can tick off the last of the Big Five in style.

ELEPHANTS OF CHOBE

Charging through a shallow river crossing, we explore the park in a 4x4. A hazy dust cloud forms in the distance as an immense herd of Cape buffalo starts to move, covering much of the horizon. Trundling through grasslands, our guide spots a pride of lion. A male with his harem of four sit in the shade of a nearby tree. We feel close enough to touch them but when the male yawns, flashing the teeth in his powerful jaw, I’m glad to be safely in the jeep.

As the afternoon draws on we turn back, passing curly horned kudu and vultures perched in treetops, resolving to return tomorrow in search of the final animal on my list – the remarkable elephant.

● *Rainbow Tours’ 11-day Northern Botswana Highlights Safari visits the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park, and costs from £5,205 per person, including flights, accommodation and safaris. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*



8

7



- 1 A hippo emerges from the Okavango Delta
- 2 Elusive leopard on the banks of the delta
- 3 Exploring the delta by mokoro
- 4 Dining room at Stanley’s Camp by Sanctuary
- 5 Okavango Delta from the air
- 6 Chobe is renowned for its huge elephant herds
- 7 Candice meets a local giraffe

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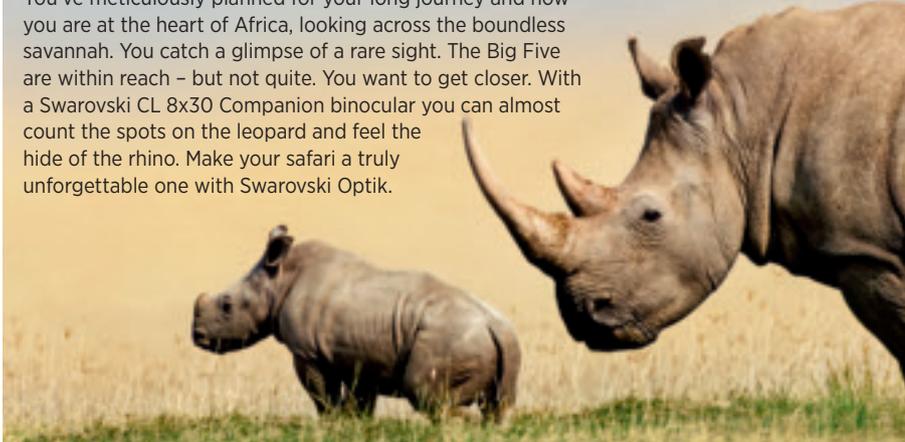
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**SWAROVSKI
OPTIK**

ROOMS *with a View*

From the aurora borealis to the Aegean Sea, Emma Brisdion picks six hotel vistas that can be admired without even leaving the room

1 SANTORINI SEASCAPES, GREECE

The architects who designed Grace Santorini opted for quality rather than quantity. The contemporary Santorini-style whitewashed property has just 21 rooms, ensuring that each can boast a generous slice of the stunning Aegean Sea panorama. From their vantage point high above the remnants of a volcanic caldera, the balconies of this exclusive hotel overlook Skaros Rock, scattered with Venetian castle ruins, and a sweeping azure bay dotted with boats. Each room has its own generous private terrace from which to drink in gorgeous orange sunset views – accompanied of course by a chilled glass of champagne.

● ITC Luxury Travel's luxury 7-night break at Grace Santorini costs from £1,499 per person in a Deluxe Room, including flights with easyJet. itcluxurytravel.co.uk 01244 355 577



2

SPLENDID VISTAS, ST LUCIA

Perched on the edge of the Caribbean, this teardrop shaped island is loved for its delightful combination of perfect beaches, lush hillside greenery and exquisite fine dining. But it's the Pitons, magnificent peaks of two volcanoes rising from the sea, which command the attention of visitors. At indulgent Jade Mountain on the southwest coast, all rooms are designed with one wall completely open to make the most of a staggering seascape that includes the twin volcanoes themselves. Here, grand, open living spaces give way to private infinity pools with uninterrupted views of St Lucia's most famous landmark.

● ITC Luxury Travel's 7-night break at Jade Mountain costs from £3,249 per person, including accommodation in a Sky Jacuzzi Suite on a bed & breakfast basis and flights with British Airways. itcluxurytravel.co.uk 01244 355 577



3 MOUNTAINSIDE MARVEL, PERU

Waking up to sweeping 360° views of Peru's Sacred Valley is not for the faint hearted – this vertigo-inducing mountainside room is strictly for pioneering travellers. Spend the



night in one of three transparent egg-shaped pods – adventure suites – that cling to the side of the canyon, securely suspended 400 metres up. Fearless travellers can clamber up a near-vertical set of iron rungs with a guide and safety harness to the night’s lodgings. Private pods – complete with toilet and double beds – provide a surprisingly comfy spot from which to watch condors soar and enjoy mind-blowing sunset vistas. The following morning, zip line through the Sacred Valley to return to solid ground.

● *Rainbow Tours’ 9-night Ultimate Peru Adventure tour costs from £3,095 per person including 1 night in a Sky Lodge and flights with British Airways. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*



TAJ MAHAL SUNRISE, INDIA

With manicured lawns surrounding the pool, spacious column-lined suites and walls adorned in vintage Indian fabric, the Oberoi Amarvilas is a majestic sight in its own right. But location is what makes this opulent hotel spectacular – just 600 metres from the grand Taj Mahal. Take breakfast on the hotel terrace and watch the marble domes gleam in the Asian morning sun or dine in full view of one of the new seven wonders of the world, illuminated in the evening. Private balconies or open lounges ensure all rooms boast uninterrupted views – the closest on offer short of a visit to the 17th century mausoleum. Make the most of complimentary hotel transfers in a golf buggy and visit the Taj at sunrise to beat the crowds.

● *Western & Oriental’s 7-night holiday at Oberoi Amarvilas costs from £4,445 per person including accommodation in a Premier Room with balcony overlooking the Taj Mahal and flights with Virgin Atlantic. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303*

5 NORTHERN LIGHTS IGLOO, FINLAND

Early darkening of the days and teeth-chattering temperatures announce the start of winter in Finnish Lapland. Yet, as the pristine wilderness freezes, that’s precisely when to visit – when sightings of the elusive aurora borealis are at their best. The dark night skies set the scene for flickering curtains of emerald light, and Finland’s Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, high above the Arctic Circle, offers a bespoke viewing experience. Here, you’re guaranteed front row seats – or rather, beds – to the northern lights. With your own private glass-topped igloo, you just have to lie back amongst the cosy covers and watch the sky above come alive.

● *Regent Holidays’ 4-day Finnish Lapland Winter Escape costs from £985 per person, including 3 nights in a glass-topped igloo at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, flights with Finnair and transfers. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*



6 DESERT DREAMING, UTAH

Most ultra-modern hotels would look out of place in the dramatic Canyonlands of the American Southwest but, situated on a 243-hectare private estate in Canyon Point, Amangiri blends seamlessly into the rugged Utah landscape. Striped layers of rock rise in tall cliffs from the barren desert with the single-storey resort nestling at their feet, mimicking the natural sandstone colour palette. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer sweeping views of the valley stretching to the horizon in all directions. The resort’s open-air sky lounge provides views of a different kind – don’t miss an opportunity for stargazing in this remote spot.

● *Western & Oriental’s 7-night Scottsdale plus Amangiri Utah Desert Experience costs from £3,290 per person, including 3 nights at the Amangiri in a Desert View Suite and flights with British Airways. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303*



DESTINATION
SRI LANKA

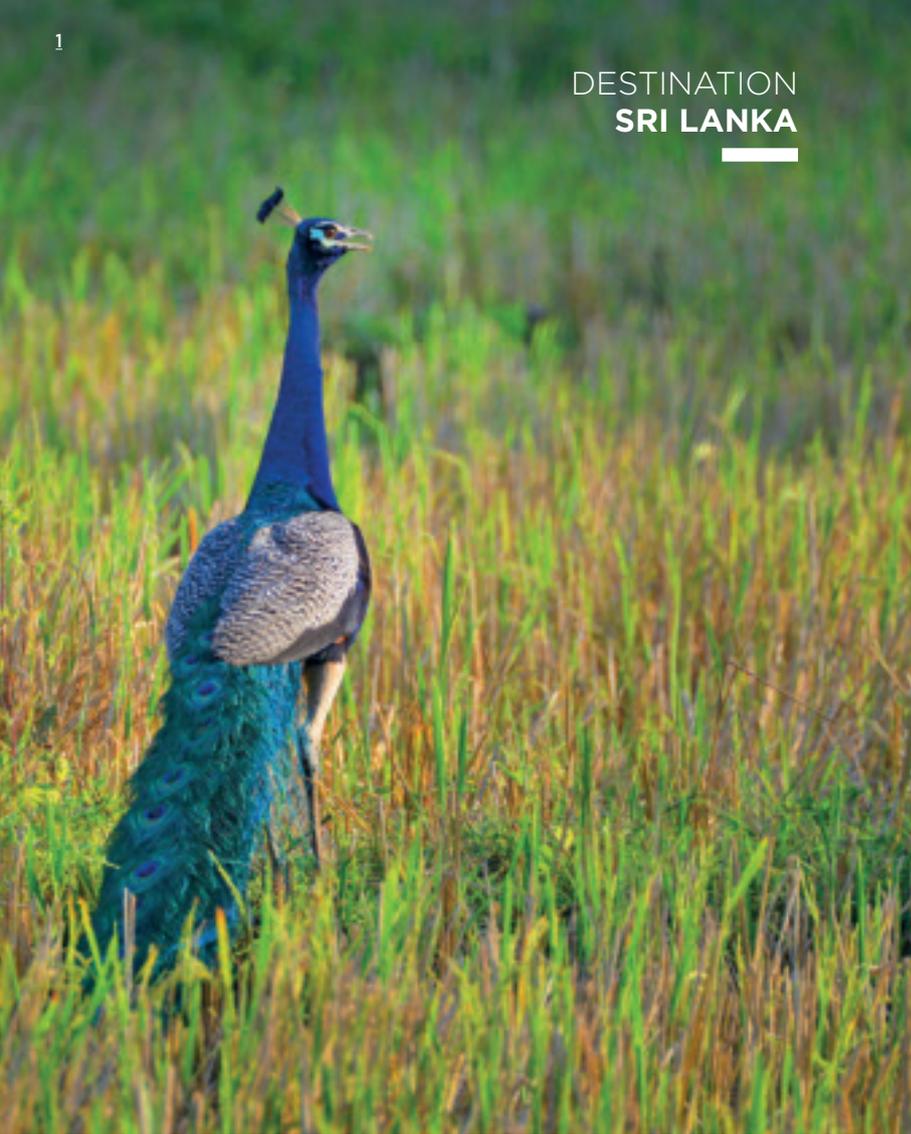




WILD *for* WILPATTU

Ben Lerwill visits Sri Lanka's largest national park and discovers a wildlife haven with a humbling history

DESTINATION SRI LANKA



2



3



When sloth bears are peckish, they don't mess about. The early morning sun was casting its first orange rays over the forests of Wilpattu National Park, and we were watching one of Sri Lanka's rarest animals Hoover up its opening meal of the day. Feet away from our lone jeep, the bear had been using its sharp claws to rip out webs of thick roots from the earth. Now it was faced with its reward: easy access to the soon-to-be-swallowed residents of a large termite nest. It protruded its lips and began noisily sucking up the insects, stamping its shaggy black paws in exuberance. Breakfast in the tropics might not be decorous, but it's clearly enjoyable.

The name "sloth bear" is something of a misnomer. The animal is so called thanks to early naturalists, who saw its claws and gapped teeth and wrongly assumed it to be related to the South American sloth. But this is no lazy leaf-browser. Small by bear standards,

it is immensely strong and can unleash bursts of speed faster than most humans. Like Sri Lanka itself, it is not to be judged by size alone.

This was just my fourth day on the teardrop-shaped island, and the little country was already proving every bit as layered and entrancing as I'd been told. The wildlife? Brightly feathered and scaly-skinned; an ark's worth of bee-eaters, crocs and elephants. The roadside culture? A colour-splash of temples and churches, mosques and monks. The food? Fiery, complex and even better than I'd hoped. And the history? Humbling.

Wilpattu is an extraordinary place, not just for its menagerie of creatures and its raw beauty – much of which centres on the national park's vast willus, or natural lakes – but also for its past. It sits four hours north of Colombo's international airport, a location that placed it on the frontline of the civil war when conflict broke out in the 1980s. It was once the country's most visited park, but was forced to

close in 1988 when, shockingly, its wildlife rangers were murdered en masse. The animal population was decimated by poaching, and its gates only reopened for good in 2010.

TENTED CAMP

I was fortunate enough to be staying at Noel Rodrigo's Leopard Safaris, a high-end tented retreat on the park limits that struck a neat balance between luxury and the outdoors. Nightjars called from the canopy. The coffee was always good. Glass bottles strung between trees acted as an early-warning sign for wandering elephants who had lost their way. But best of all, the camp was staffed by guides who not only knew their stuff but were skilled at imparting their passion for the surroundings.

On my first evening, I sat under the stars with Saj, a local South Africa-trained guide. Fireflies blinked past in the warm night air. Dishes appeared on our table – fish curry, string hoppers, coconut and chilli sambol, banana flowers, Sri Lankan aubergine – and he



June and July are the best months to spot Sloth bears when they venture out in search of seasonal palu and weera fruits.



led me through the basics of using only the fingertips to eat with.

"It's up to you if you want to try it, but it's hygienic - and it actually tastes better too," he smiled. "You're actually in touch with the food." Carefully digging in, I was converted within minutes. The flavours blasted out in waves. "That's right," he continued. "With Sri Lankan food every mouthful should be different. That way, your tastebuds never get bored. It's spicy too, eh? When you get a bit of a hiccup, that's a proper good curry."

By the time I retired to my waterside tent - where the splash of otters and the buzz of cicadas provided a bedtime soundtrack - Saj had talked in depth about everything from astronomy to frog calls.

GAME DRIVES

Wilpattu these days draws only a fraction of the visitors of some of the southern national parks, but this quietness is very much a bonus, as I was to discover over the next three days. On each game drive, once the

jeep had made its way down the long, rutted, birdlife-rich path into the park proper, there was often the feel of being on your own private reserve. Wild boar tottered, mongooses skittered, peacocks preened and kingfishers flashed. Crocodiles basked in the sun at the water's edge while elephants loudly tore off low-lying branches.

Wilpattu's famous leopards remained elusive - we saw fresh pug-marks one morning, but not their maker - although it's testament to the calm and scale of the park that the pang of disappointment I felt was only fleeting. After all, who in their right mind feels the need to grumble when they're being served papaya juice and fresh roti flatbreads while watching sea eagles trace loops above the jungle?

Behind the wheel, Saj's colleague Praneeth was another young guide for whom the park was clearly a deep-rooted passion. He was no less thrilled

than I was when, on my final morning game drive, our breakfasting bear appeared. My time here was just the start to my Sri Lankan itinerary - the old fort city of Galle and the further wildlife treats of Yala lay ahead over the coming week - but I left knowing I could happily have stayed for longer.

Maybe even a lot longer. Praneeth had now spent years here, driving daily along Wilpattu's forest paths and wide lakeside trails. Did he ever get bored, I asked him? He stopped the jeep and fixed me with bright eyes, laughing. "Bored? Every drive is different. It's a paradise for me." And given the turmoil the park has gone through in recent decades, these were heartening words indeed.

● Ben travelled to Sri Lanka with Western & Oriental. A 9-day holiday costs from £1,589 per person, including 2 nights' accommodation at Noel Rodrigo's Leopard Safaris, game drives and flights with Sri Lankan Airlines. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303

- 1 Colourful wild peacock
- 2 Sloth bear in search of breakfast
- 3 On safari in Wilpattu
- 4 Noel Rodrigo meets a local elephant
- 5 Crocodile on the riverbank
- 6 Sri Lankan Green bee-eater

RUSSIA FROM THE RIVER

The iconic duo of Moscow and St. Petersburg often provide our window into the Russian world, but the real Russia is far more than the sum of its two greats – it lies in historic towns and tiny rural settlements preserving centuries-old traditions. A river cruise between the two colourful capitals provides the opportunity to experience a different side of Russia, stopping each day at a new town or village to discover fascinating heritage sites and embrace local culture.



- 1 Aerial view of Kirillov-Belozersky monastery complex
- 2 Approaching the Church of Dīmītry, Uglich
- 3 Transfiguration Cathedral on Kizhi Island
- 4 The Volga Dream departs Moscow
- 5 Golden domes of the Assumption Church, Yaroslavl

THE MS VOLGA DREAM

Accommodating just 100 passengers, the *MS Volga Dream* provides Moscow to St Petersburg river cruises with an added touch of luxury. The vessel's 50 well-appointed cabins are located over four decks and range from Standard to Deluxe Staterooms, all featuring private bathrooms, satellite flat-screen televisions and windows from which to enjoy rural views.

Dinner is a four or five course affair, accompanied by complimentary wine, served in the elegant single-sitting dining room. Guests can also relax in the lounge and bar where a pianist plays each evening, and where afternoon tea is served each day. This boutique boat also boasts its own library, sauna and spacious sundeck from which to watch the world go by.

Daily excursions are led by the boat's expert guides, conducted in groups of no more than 25 (Gold travellers) or 15 (Platinum travellers), ensuring that tours are intimate and personalised. Between trips ashore, the *Volga Dream* entertains guests with an array of cultural activities, including cooking demonstrations, Russian language lessons, piano concerts and even vodka tastings. Guest speakers are a real highlight, sharing their unique perspectives on fascinating historical, political and cultural topics.

GUEST SPEAKER

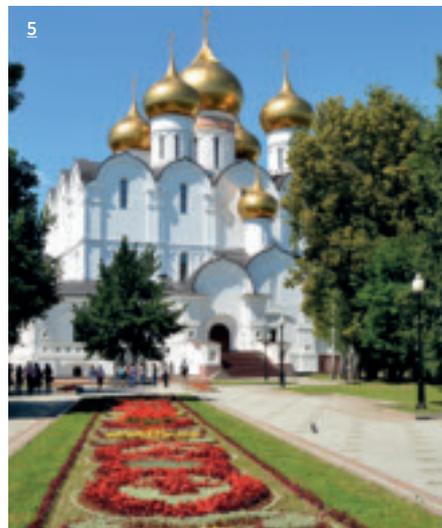
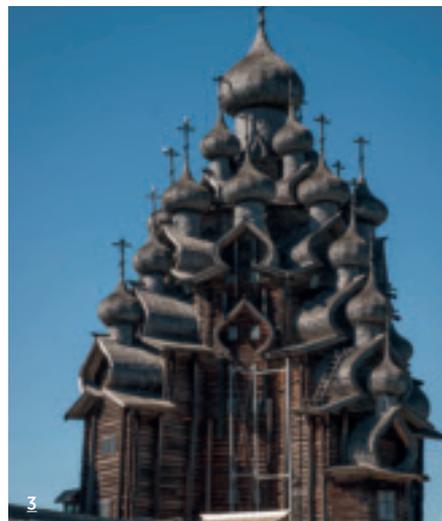
Sir Tony Brenton, Former UK Ambassador to Russia, will speak on the 1st September 2016 departure

MOSCOW

The biggest city in Europe, Moscow is a modern metropolis with a medieval heart. Starting – or finishing – point of every Volga Dream cruise, three days of sightseeing in the glitzy capital are included before departure, or following arrival. Historic treasures here come on a grand scale, from Red Square with its world-famous multi-coloured cathedral, to the Kremlin Armoury Museum with its collection of opulent royal carriages and dazzling Faberge eggs.

UGLICH

The small Golden Ring town of Uglich dates back to 937, but it was in the turbulent times following the reign of Ivan the Terrible that the town became the site of one of the most significant deaths in Russian history. The 17th century Church of St. Dimitry of the Blood now stands on the site where Ivan's young son met his death.



MOSCOW TO ST PETERSBURG IN NUMBERS

1,800 KILOMETRES

19 LOCKS

5 RIVERS

2 GREAT LAKES

2 MAN-MADE CANALS

YAROSLAVL

Jewel of Russia's famous Golden Ring, the 1,000-year-old city of Yaroslavl lies at the confluence of the Kotorosl and Volga rivers. Widely known for its incredible ancient cathedrals, the detailed frescoes and icons of the Church of St. Elijah the Prophet are some of the country's best preserved.

GORITSY

The small village of Goritsy is home to Europe's largest monastery, 14th century Kirillov-Belozersky, visited throughout history by tsars seeking forgiveness for their sins. Take a stroll around the peaceful back roads where just 600 villagers live in traditional izbas – wooden cabins decorated with intricate carvings.

KIZHI ISLAND

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the remote island of Kizhi is now the resting place of some of Russia's most striking historical wooden architecture. The island's 22-dome Transfiguration Cathedral was built in 1714 without a single nail.

ST PETERSBURG

Three days of sightseeing lie ahead of disembarking passengers in Peter the Great's imperial capital. At its height, the 'Venice of the North' was one of the most outrageously wealthy and extravagant cities in Europe, leaving a rich architectural legacy – from the huge golden cupola of St. Isaac's cathedral to the iconic façade of The Hermitage.

BOOKING WITH REGENT HOLIDAYS

Regent Holidays has been a Russia travel expert for over 40 years. A 13-day Volga Dream package costs from £2,345 per person including 5-star accommodation in Moscow and St Petersburg, 6 nights aboard the *MS Volga Dream* in a Superior Stateroom (full board), flights with British Airways and all sightseeing.

● regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131



TWIN PEAKS

VOLCANIC SAND BEACHES, RAINFOREST-CLAD MOUNTAINS, SECLUDED WATERFALLS AND CREOLE CUISINE. **NICK BOULOS** SPILLS THE BEANS ON WHY ST. LUCIA TOPS HIS LIST OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Caribbean islands. They're all the same, right? Well, not quite. Many of them may share some common delights – fruity rum cocktails, hip-swaying reggae and cooling palm trees – but each has its own distinctive personality. So, when it comes to booking a much-needed fly-and-flop getaway to this part of the world it pays to give your island of choice some serious thought. Want culture? It's got to be Cuba. Picture perfect beaches? Look no further than Tobago. Fine food? Book Barbados. But why choose between any of those glorious things when you can have it all?

DESTINATION ST LUCIA

“And while it may be home to some of the Caribbean’s very best hotels, it’s the stop-in-your-tracks scenery that will leave the biggest impression.”

St Lucia, sitting in the middle of a Martinique and St Vincent sandwich, is the most versatile of islands; a wild and untamed isle of volcanic sand beaches and rainforest-clad mountains, a place that delivers highly on both luxury, adventure and everything in between. And while it may be home to some of the Caribbean’s very best hotels (Sugar Beach and Jade Mountain chief amongst them), it’s the stop-in-your-tracks scenery that will leave the biggest impression. The vista that graces every postcard – and even bottles of the island’s beer – is that of the Pitons, the mighty twin peaks that soar from the sea on St Lucia’s southwestern tip in what is arguably the single most dramatic slice of scenery in all the Caribbean.

But the Pitons are more than just pleasing to look at. One of St Lucia’s most interesting chapters of history played out amongst these revered rainforest-clad summits that were formed around 260,000 years ago. During the mid-1700s, when the island’s plantations were tendered to ‘masters’ and ‘slaves’, a band of freedom fighters broke away and fled to the largely impenetrable peaks of the Pitons. They may have escaped a life of gruelling hardship but their new home wasn’t one without its problems. Unable to recapture their slaves, the masters set about releasing poisonous snakes in the foothills of the Pitons.

Thankfully you’re unlikely to come across any of them these days and climbing Gros Piton (2,579ft) is a rite of passage for many visiting the island. It’s not an easy climb – a steep and sweaty ascent of around four hours – but the views from the top make every challenging step worthwhile.

Of course, you can experience the

Pitons in more ways than one. Down at sea level, there’s a new and rather novel approach offered by Sugar Beach, a Viceroy Resort. As the only property to enjoy a privileged location between the two pointy peaks, it delivers unrivalled up close and personal views but that’s not all. It has also recently become the only hotel in the world to offer guests access to Schiller ‘water bikes’, pioneering contraptions that are part bicycle and part catamaran. Take one out for a spin and enjoy the unusual sensation of pedalling on water across the sparkling waters of Anse des Pitons, the bay that separates the mountains.

Things are no less memorable elsewhere on the island. Wallow in the sulphuric mud pools at the world’s only ‘drive-in’ volcano, hike to secluded waterfalls or horse ride through forests and across blissful bays on the northern coast. Or swing from the treetops on a high-octane zip wire course through the jungle canopies.

There’s a strong culinary scene, too. Learn the secrets of Creole cuisine at Spices cookery school, run by Jenni Killam from her home in the hills around Rodney Bay. If that sounds like too much hard work, let someone else rustle up tasty treats at the island’s diverse and plentiful eateries, from home-cooked grub to fine dining feasts. Rustic meals of Creole chicken, perfectly pan-fried mahi-mahi, breadfruit balls and baked plantain are served up at Martha’s Tables, a family run restaurant on the quiet outskirts of Soufriere.

Craving something more sophisticated? Then book the most sought-after table in the Caribbean. Picture the scene: a solitary table for two perched on a piece of decking just off-shore, surrounded by crashing



waves and illuminated by candles and ethereal moonlight. That’s what awaits at Rock Maison, part of the Cap Maison resort in the north. The food (freshly caught scallops and lobster served with pumpkin and mango shavings) is without fault and washed down with champagne that is delivered by zip line. What could be better?

● A 7-night break at Sugar Beach costs from £1,865 per person including flights with British Airways, private transfers and accommodation in a Sugar Mill Luxury Room. 01244 355 577 itluxurytravel.co.uk





- 1 Jade Mountain – a pool with a view
- 2 Beachside bliss at Sugar Beach
- 3 Sugar Beach nestled between the Pitons
- 4 Rock Maison restaurant at sunset
- 5 Cap Maison courtyard at sunset





CINNAMON KITCHEN

Innovation and creativity accompany cardamom and turmeric as staple ingredients in Vivek Singh's restaurant. Emma Brisdion visits London restaurant, Cinnamon Kitchen, to sample his modern Indian cuisine

Since 2001, award-winning chef and author, Vivek Singh, has taken on the London dining scene, forging a new era of Indian cuisine. The longstanding Indian recipes and spices that he grew up with in Asansol are expertly married with ingredients more often found at an English farmer's market. His trademark style is showcased across three modern Indian restaurants in London; the Cinnamon Collection. In March his flagship restaurant, Cinnamon Club, turned 15, sparking a range of new dishes across the group's menu in celebration – including this evening's destination.

Cinnamon Kitchen – the middle-child of Vivek's restaurant family – occupies an old East India Company spice warehouse a short walk from Liverpool Street Station. We duck through the stone archway of Devonshire Square; a sophisticated and immaculate oasis of calm hidden in one of London's most bustling areas, where a set of stone steps lead us up to our dark, elegant wooden table in this intimate restaurant.

At first glance many dishes on the menu sound familiar but hide an unusual twist or flavouring. The delicate squid appetiser cooked in fresh tomato, for example, is playfully paired with sweet apricot. We're advised to try the fried Indian paneer cheese which – through stuffed mouthfuls of biting chilli and mild creamy cheese – we have to concede is a marvellous recommendation.

“I wanted to push the boundaries of the traditional Indian kitchen”



How much:

Appetisers from £5.75

Mains from £12.50

Puddings from £5

Tasting menus are available from £55 per person



A char-grilled fillet of tender lamb with a sweet and creamy Madras coconut sauce follows, served pink with a sharp tomato relish to contrast. The glasses of smooth French Gigondas Syrah, chosen to complement the dish, are momentarily forgotten as our forks compete for each mouthful.

“Combining Indian flavours with Western techniques allowed me to innovate and evolve something different, whilst keeping pace with the times we live in.” Vivek tells us. He constantly adapts dishes to reflect seasonal ingredients and culinary trends while always keeping Indian traditions in mind. Fresh, local produce is also key - the tender lamb, we find out, is from Kent.

When we’ve finished mopping up the last of the sauce with a soft, fragrant garlic naan bread, it’s time for dessert.

We tuck into what appears to be ice cream delicately topped with a thin gold foil. Indulgently creamy, Vivek has

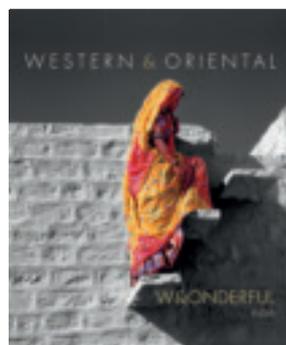
spiced his mango Kulfi – a frozen dairy delight – with cardamom to balance the natural sweetness.

But the pile of profiteroles is where the blending of cultures becomes most apparent - expecting thick white cream to ooze from the cumin-blended choux pastry, we’re greeted instead by Vivek’s take on Mishti Doi, laced with ginger, poached pear, cardamom and spun sugar. Traditionally this West Bengali dessert is a caramelised and fermented yoghurt, but it comes as no surprise that instead, Vivek uses sour cream.

Sweet tooth truly satisfied, we step out into the bustling London night, quite unsure if we’ll ever look at Indian cooking in the same way again. One thing is certain though, there are two more restaurants that need a visit in the near future.

Cinnamon Kitchen,
9 Devonshire Square, EC2M 4YL

● *Order your copy of Western & Oriental’s India brochure at westernoriental.com*



A WORD FROM THE CHEF

ONE DISH TO TRY AT CINNAMON KITCHEN?

Rechado – Goan spiced grilled wild African prawns. We have taken inspiration from the tandoor, an Indian clay oven that imparts smoky charcoal-like flavours.

WHERE DO YOU ALWAYS RETURN TO IN INDIA?

The energy and aromas of the Khari Baoli spice bazaar in Old Delhi are always inspiring. Here the past, present and future coexist – a notion that my dishes try to emulate.

WHICH DISH DO YOU EAT WHEN YOU GO HOME?

Something hearty, wholesome and packed full of flavour like a chicken biryani.

WHICH SPICES ARE YOUR FAVOURITES TO COOK WITH?

I cannot do without turmeric; its peppery, mustard-like, slightly bitter flavour is incredibly versatile in cookery. Also, black stone flower (rock moss) brings out the other ingredients’ flavours in a dish.

Pioneering Voyages on the High Seas

Editor Gill Leaning recommends four of the best seafaring adventures for intrepid travellers



MADAGASCAR MARINE CONSERVATION

Founded in 2009, the non-profit CétaMada organisation aims to preserve the marine mammal populations of Madagascar and their vital habitats. One of their key approaches is to engage local people in ecotourism projects, bringing a much-needed income into rural Malagasy communities. Every year from 1st July to the end of September CétaMada partners with the Princesse Bora Lodge and Spa, a gorgeous beachfront hideaway on Sainte Marie Island, to offer daily whale watching excursions. Budding conservationists will have the opportunity to patrol the Indian Ocean channel where migrating humpbacks spend their summer months, contributing to the collection of scientific data. Rainbow Tours has a 14-day Reef and Rainforest tour that includes seven nights at the Princesse Bora Lodge and Spa. A three hour whale conservation boat tour costs €45 per person.

● *Rainbow Tours' 14-day Madagascar Reef & Rainforest package costs from £2,835 including flights, transfers and accommodation. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*

SEA GYPSIES IN BURMA

For a country that has leapt back onto the tourist map in recent years, Burma's Mergui Archipelago remains largely unexplored. Currently just a small number of sailing yachts offer travellers the opportunity to swim, snorkel and generally get away from it all between the string of 800 islands that stretch out across the Andaman Sea. Amongst the white sand beaches, colourful coral reefs and tangled mangrove forests, some 2,000 Sea Gypsies – indigenous Moken people of Austronesian descent – continue their traditional way of life, free-diving for fish and sea cucumbers as they have done for hundreds of years. Regent Holidays offers a comprehensive Burma package that includes five nights aboard the *Meta IV*, a luxury Mergui sailing yacht, where travellers can learn more about this nomadic way of life on a visit to a Sea Gypsy village.

● *Regent Holidays' 18-day Burma & Mergui Archipelago tour costs from £4,995 including flights, transfers, accommodation and sightseeing. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*



Greenland Poseidon Adventure

With somewhat more success than the ship from the 1972 film, Poseidon Expeditions' *I/B 50 Years of Victory* – the most powerful icebreaker ever built – was designed to pilot scientific ships to hard-to-reach areas of the Arctic and Northeast Passage. Today the Victory's sister ship, *M/V Sea Spirit*, offers luxury Arctic expedition cruises: unscripted adventures around Iceland, Greenland and Svalbard where the

weather and ice conditions call the shots. On 31st August the *M/V Sea Spirit* will depart Longyearbyen in Spitsbergen, crossing the Fram Strait to reach northern Greenland to explore the vast fjord systems of Northeast Greenland National Park. Travellers may also be lucky enough to witness the magical northern lights over the remote, glaciated coast before her Arctic voyage continues to the Westfjords of Iceland.

● *Regent Holidays' Greenland, Iceland & Spitsbergen 15-day Poseidon Expedition Cruise costs from £7,465 per person including accommodation in a Main Deck Suite. Regent Holidays has a special 2017 Poseidon offer with a saving of £750 per person on selected departures when booking before 30th September 2016. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*



GALAPAGOS *close* ENCOUNTERS

Situated more than 600 miles from the Ecuadorian coast, it is the combination of this remoteness and the geographical location at the confluence of three nutrient-rich ocean currents that makes the Galapagos one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. The islands' unique inhabitants, from marine iguanas to flightless cormorants, have captured the imagination of travellers ever since Darwin's historic 1835 voyage. Today, preserving this precious habitat is paramount, with the National Park authorities limiting the number of island visitors. It is precisely this controlled

tourism, combined with centuries of isolation, which makes wildlife encounters here so special. With no instinctive fear of humans, curious sea lions and giant tortoises pose for photographs, and playful sea turtles accompany snorkellers on underwater quests. Rainbow Tours

has a Galapagos cruise aboard the *Santa Cruz II*, a 50-cabin vessel whose parent company are at the forefront of sustainability in the region. Island visits are almost always exclusive, with an average of eleven guests per guide, harking back to a pioneering Darwinian era of discovery.

● *Rainbow Tours' 11-day Discover Ecuador Rainforest & Galapagos Wildlife tour costs from £5,460 including flights, transfers, accommodation and 4 nights on board the Santa Cruz II. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*

DESTINATION
PERU

NEW IN PERU

FROM LAKE TITICACA TO MARVELLOUS MACHU PICCHU, WE ROUND UP
SUMMER'S NEW ARRIVALS FROM THE SACRED LAND OF THE INCAS

BOATING ON LAKE TITICACA

Titilaka, a boutique lodge on the shores of Lake Titicaca, has launched the lake's first boathouse. Equipped with canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and sailboats, *Titilaka's* latest addition will allow guests to explore the world's highest navigable lake under their own steam. From the remote peninsula shared only with the indigenous Aymara community, boaters and borders can now explore the reed beds of this peaceful spot where complex ecosystems provide unique wildlife habitats. The lodge also offers full day excursions including a very privileged visit to the Jallahui family; three generations who live together on a tiny floating reed island.

● rainbowtours.co.uk/peru

ROMANTIC MACHU PICCHU

Honeymooners will fall in love with *Sumaq Machu Picchu Hotel's* new romantic dining concept - the Munayki. Meaning 'I love you' in the Quechua language, the seven-course Munayki dinner is served on a private terrace, decorated with flowers and aromatic candles, overlooking the lush jungle at the foot of the mountain. This gorgeous five-star hotel is all about combining luxury with cultural authenticity; the table d'hôte Peruvian menu includes special touches inspired by Andean history, as well as handcrafted local gifts for the couple. Expect thoughtful cultural touches throughout the stay - from the hotel's Andean storytelling sessions to the indigenous ingredients used in spa treatments and the exotic native cocktails focusing on Peruvian herbs and fruits.

● rainbowtours.co.uk/peru



SACRED VALLEY SPA

Sol y Luna, a gorgeous casita-style retreat in the heart of Peru's stunning Sacred Valley, is opening a new outdoor pool terrace this summer. Guests at the Relais & Chateaux property will be able to enjoy the new heated swimming pool and Jacuzzi, together with a new outdoor lounge bar, from the end of June. Nestled between the jagged peaks of the Andes, *Sol y Luna's* 25-acre estate is an idyllic base from which to explore the rich history and breathtaking landscape of the region. An on-site equestrian and activity centre offers tours to nearby archaeological sites including Pisac, Ollantaytambo and the incredible Lost City of the Incas - Machu Picchu.

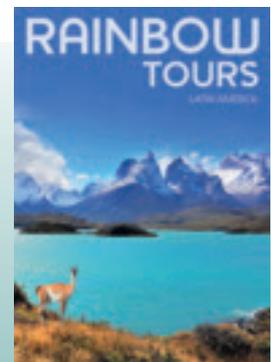
● rainbowtours.co.uk/peru



AWARD-WINNING LIMA

Lima's *Hotel B* has been selected as one of *Condé Nast Traveller's* twenty top hotels in the world. The sole winner from South America, the Relais & Chateaux property was added to the prestigious Gold List earlier this year, with the judges enthusing over the "overriding aura of refinement" and the "concierge to open the right doors". Located in the heart of Lima's Barranco neighbourhood, five minutes from Miraflores, *Hotel B* is the former seaside retreat of Lima's Garcia Bedoya family. Lovingly restored to its former Belle Époque glory, the mansion is also home to a world-class collection of contemporary South American painting, photography and sculpture.

● rainbowtours.co.uk/peru



ORDER YOURS

Order Rainbow Tours' Latin America brochure at rainbowtours.co.uk

ECO LODGES

Choosing to travel responsibly doesn't mean compromising – in fact engaging with environmental practices and community projects can add to the travel experience. Emma Brisdion picks four eco lodges where style meets sustainability

GO WILD FOR BORNEO

The calls of wild orangutans and macaques ring through the trees in Danum Valley Conservation Area. Spanning over 43,800 hectares of undisturbed native flora – the largest area of protected virgin rainforest in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo – the region is home to more than 340 species of bird and 124 species of mammal. Deep in the jungle, lush greenery unfurls in all directions from Borneo Rainforest Lodge, an intimate riverside hideaway with a proud green philosophy.

'Reduce, reuse and recycle' is the mantra of the lodge – solar energy heats the water, eco-friendly insect repellents are distributed, coffee grounds and food waste become compost and reusable bottles are the drinking vessels of choice. Scientific research into the ecology of Borneo's orangutans is carried out in a bid to understand their behaviour and better protect the endangered population that live in the jungle canopy surrounding the lodge.

The environmental impact of the lodge's daily activities and hiking groups are constantly monitored and sustainable development policies ensure that native habitats continue to flourish. In turn this makes for better wildlife encounters in the surrounding jungle, and keeps the sweeping views from the lodge's oversized outdoor tubs and private decks pristine.

● *Regent Holidays has a 14-day Borneo Orangutan Experience that costs from £2,925 per person including 2 nights in Borneo Rainforest Lodge, flights with Malaysia Airlines and private transfers. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*



FROM FARM TO TABLE ST KITTS

Set among 400 acres of fertile farmland and lush tropical forest on the island of St. Kitts, Belle Mont Farm is a firm favourite with foodies visiting the Caribbean. Gourmet guests at this idyllic sustainable resort can choose from luxurious guesthouse or villa accommodation, with verandas that look out over the Caribbean Sea.

Belle Mont is part of Kittitian Hill – an environmentally conscious development where luxury and sustainability come hand-in-hand. Almost all the food in sight – including the daily fruit basket – is organic and sourced from the resort's extensive farm. Belle Mont's organic produce feeds the surrounding community as well as the guests, reducing the island's import requirements. Verdant hillside environments are protected, and farming and construction of bespoke bungalows are undertaken by local tradesmen, boosting the economy and providing stable incomes.

Cultivators tend lovingly to 65 types of mango tree, endless fruit orchards and miles of vegetable patches, while talented chefs creatively blend traditional West Indies culinary techniques and ingredients with more exotic international flavours for the farm's bespoke mouth-watering menu. Travelling responsibly never tasted so good.

● *Western & Oriental has a 7-night all-inclusive break at Belle Mont Farm that costs from £2,665 per person, including accommodation in a Guesthouse King, flights with British Airways and private transfers. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303*

GREEN FINGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Owner-run and lovingly designed, Grootbos Lodge's stylish collection of freestanding suites are nestled in a biodiverse patch of ancient milkwood forest, protected by a private nature reserve, just three hours from Cape Town. While the interiors are chic, complete with lavish canopy beds and cosy fireplaces, it's the private wooden decks outside that demand the limelight, with panoramas that stretch from the surrounding lush greenery as far as Cape Point.

But Grootbos' guests aren't the only beneficiaries of the resort's services. The private reserve is the base for The Grootbos Foundation, a non-profit organisation that invests in the environment and nearby communities through sustainability education and projects teaching employable skills.

At the foundation's Green Futures Horticulture College, indigenous trees



are cultivated and nationally accredited plant-care qualifications taught. A Football Foundation provides leadership training, healthcare education and social development in local children, and unemployed women are taught the vital agricultural techniques needed to find work. A portion of the hotel's revenue directly supports the foundation's projects, but guests can also opt to help horticulture students tend to the seedlings.

● *ITC Luxury Travel has a 7-night Cape Town & Grootbos holiday that costs from £1,799 per person, including 3 nights at Grootbos Nature Reserve in a Forest Lodge, flights with British Airways and private transfers. itcluxurytravel.co.uk 01244 355 577*

MAINTAINING MADAGASCAR'S FORESTS

Perched on the northwest coast of Madagascar – where an astonishing 80% of flora and fauna are endemic – Anjajavy Le Lodge effortlessly combines comfort with responsible travel. The intimate wooden villas of this Relais & Chateaux property can be found at the meeting point of protected dry forest and the gleaming, sandy beaches of the Mozambique Channel.

Isolated from the African mainland for 165 million years, the island's native wildlife has evolved into a unique collection of animals and plants, however species-threatening deforestation is now a countrywide issue. Anjajavy's 750 hectares of private nature reserve protects ancient baobab trees – sacred in Malagasy culture – and conserves the habitats of harrier hawks, brown lemurs and the dancing Coquerel's sifaka. Picking up a shovel is encouraged – guests can adopt a tree in the tree nursery and plant it among the 60,000 indigenous saplings in the hotel's reforestation scheme.



Not content with their on-site efforts, Anjajavy also contributes to sustainable development in four remote villages in the area. The lodge helps fund micro-businesses, purchases agricultural equipment and provides communities with much-needed boats to reach new trading markets.

● *Rainbow Tours has an 11-night Madagascar Made Easy Deluxe tour that costs from £3,750 per person, including 5 nights at Anjajavy Le Lodge, flights with Air France and transfers. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*

trips *for your* tribe

Whether you're a chilled-out family of poolside sunworshippers or pioneering parents looking to explore new territory with your tribe, Gill Leaning has this year's best family holidays covered

HALF TERM SAFARI **SOUTH AFRICA**

Half term holidays can seem so short, but pick the right destination and you can squeeze in something rather incredible. Rainbow Tours has an excellent South Africa family holiday that fits perfectly into a week-long school break. Taking the overnight Friday flight allows eight full days to explore, and with only an hour's time difference there's no grizzly jet lag to deal with before the adventure can get started. Rainbow begins the holiday with four nights at Tuningi Safari Lodge in the malaria-free Madikwe Game Reserve. This private wildlife haven is home to 66 species of mammal, including all of the Big Five. Daily game drives are included for grownups and kids over the age of five, while tots are catered for with ranger-led 'bumbles' – short wildlife encounters at local watering holes. This five-star lodge goes above and beyond to make sure its young guests are kept entertained, with animal-print tracking, treasure hunts and opportunities to make teatime treats with the chef.

● *Rainbow Tours' South Africa Family Half Term Safari costs from £10,876 for a family of 4 including 4 nights full-board accommodation at Tuningi Safari Lodge, 4 nights in Cape Town and flights. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304*



CALIFORNIA KIDS CLUB

With Arnold Schwarzenegger promising over 300 gloriously sunny days a year, it's no wonder the Sunshine State makes our shortlist. Families in the know flock to The Resort at Pelican Hill, where parents and kids are always in seventh heaven. Gracing the glorious coastline of Orange Country, this luxurious Italian-style retreat looks out over Crystal Cove Beach – three miles of pristine sand and Pacific Ocean. Day trips will raise the excitement levels to max – Pelican Hill is a 35-minute drive to Disneyland Anaheim or just over an hour to San Diego Zoo and SeaWorld.

Back at the resort, Camp Pelican is a brilliant full-day or half-day kids club for four to twelve year olds that keeps little ones entertained while parents make the most of the sea view golf club or luxurious spa. Latitude club for teens has 13-17 year olds learning to surf and kayak, or heading out on photographic walking trails, capturing coastal views with their smartphones.

● *ITC Luxury Travel has a Pelican Hill October Half Term special offer. A 7-night stay in a Bungalow Suite (room only) costs from £6,409 for a family of 4 – a saving of £699 – including flights and 8 days SUV car hire. 01244 355 577 itcluxurytravel.co.uk*



BEACHSIDE BLISS IN GREECE

Largely untouched by mass tourism, Costa Navarino on Greece's Ionian coastline is a beautiful slice of Mediterranean paradise; an idyllic place where golden sands melt into clear blue seas. For families with water babies, the five-star Westin Resort is the place to be. There's the stunning stretch of private sandy beach, the two beautiful swimming pools, the gorgeous rooms with their own private infinity pools and – most importantly for young guests – the Aqua Park, with its three outdoor waterslides that provide countless hours of entertainment. Children of all ages are extremely well catered for, with kids' clubs for young ones aged four months to 12 years, and lessons in surfing, snorkelling or rock climbing for teens. Parents can take time out to enjoy the renowned golf course designed by Bernhard Langer, relax at the serene spa or take to the water themselves on a water skiing or scuba diving lesson.

● *Western & Oriental has a 7-night package at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino that costs from £1,995 for a family of 4 including flights, accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis and private transfers. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303*



CITY BREAK IN BELGRADE

Sometimes just a few days away are all it takes to bring the family together. Regent Holidays has a three-night city break in Belgrade, Serbia's compact capital, where parents can soak up Ottoman history and dine on the banks of the Danube before handing the holiday reins to the kids. In the summer months, there's nowhere better for active youngsters than Ada Ciganlija – a lush island in the middle of the Sava River that is jam-packed with outdoor activities for all ages. The basketball, football, beach volleyball, rock climbing and tennis are all free, plus there are bikes, rollerblades and kayaks available to hire, and there's even a Robinson Crusoe playground with a kids' outdoor theatre. If you can manage to tear the children away, there are plenty of interactive museums in the city too, plus the brand new Dino Park in Novi Sad, an hour's drive away, which offers countless dinosaur-themed activities as well as a mini zoo.

● *Regent Holidays has a 3-night Belgrade city break at the 4-star Jump Inn that costs £1,990 for a family of 4 including flights and accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131*



SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP IN MIAMI

Playground of the rich and famous, Bal Harbour on Miami Beach's northern tip is the place to see and be seen. With its perfectly manicured streets, designer condos and chic boutiques, this purpose-built islet is one square mile of total luxury. Pull out all the stops with a family holiday at the wonderful St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort. Awarded the coveted Forbes five-star and AAA five-diamond awards for 2015, this haven of oceanfront elegance prides itself on its impeccable service and exclusive location: sandwiched between 300 metres of pristine white sand beach and the famous Bal Harbour Shops. We reckon it's a super-cool spot for teens and young adults - think Florida sunshine, celeb spotting in designer malls, beach volleyball and poolside hangouts. Younger guests will love the Sea Turtle Club for four to 12 year olds, which leaves parents free to enjoy the hotel's fabulous REMÈDE Spa or nearby PGA golf courses.

● ITC Luxury Travel has a summer holiday special offer. A 7-night holiday at the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort costs from £7,650 - a saving of £1,109 - including accommodation in a Grand Lux Oceanfront Room, flights and SUV car hire. 01244 355 577 itcluxurytravel.co.uk

OPEN AIR CINEMA IN PERU

Nestled between the rushing Urubamba River and towering Andean mountains, Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado is a family-friendly hotel and spa at the heart of Peru's Sacred Valley. Just 46 kilometres from Cuzco, and at considerably lower altitude, it's a great spot to acclimatise before heading out to explore nearby Incan treasures, including spectacular Machu Picchu. Back at the hotel there's plenty to keep kids occupied, from horse riding and river rafting to feeding the hotel's baby alpacas or simply lounging in the infinity pool. We love the weekly outdoor movie night, where children and adults alike gather around the campfire for an alfresco screening of family-friendly films like *The Jungle Book* or *Forest Gump*. Telescopes are available for stargazing and films are accompanied by hand-made pizzas, popcorn and scrumptious desserts made with local ingredients.

● Movie nights cost \$18 per person. Children under 10 go free. Rainbow Tours has a 9-night Peru holiday that costs from £11,580 for a family of 4 including 2 nights at Belmond Hotel Rio Sagrado and flights. rainbowtours.co.uk 020 7666 1304



MEET SANTA IN LAPLAND

The real Santa Claus is taking a bit of time off himself this summer, while some exciting new additions are made to his official home in Rovaniemi, Lapland. Normally open 364 days a year, SantaPark reopens on 19th November 2016 just in time for the Christmas season. This Arctic theme park is more than just an opportunity to meet the man in red - although every young visitor gets to personally deliver their Christmas wish-list - it is a magical day out for all the family. Excitable young visitors can take a sleigh ride to the Elves' Toy Factory, decorate their own treats in Mrs Claus' Gingerbread Kitchen, see spectacular ice sculptures in the Ice Gallery of the Ice Princess and post their Christmas cards from the Arctic Circle Post Office. A winter break in Rovaniemi provides plenty more opportunities for family fun too, with reindeer sleigh rides, husky-sledding and accommodation in ice hotels or glass igloos - ideal for northern lights viewing.

● A two-day SantaPark ticket costs €33 per adult and €27.50 for children aged 3-12. Regent Holidays has a 4-day winter break in Rovaniemi that costs from £2,900 for a family of 4 including flights, accommodation and transfers. regentholidays.co.uk 0117 280 0131



ISLAND LIVING IN **DUBAI**

Stretching out into the Arabian Gulf, Dubai's iconic Palm Islands are as beautiful from the air as they are on land. Superb sandy beaches branch out from the central trunk of Palm Jumeirah – the world's largest man-made island, dedicated entirely to luxury holidays. The Sofitel Palm Resort and Spa promises exactly that. Unfolding leisurely along the sandy shore of the Palm's East Crescent, this chic five-star resort boasts 500 metres of private beach, 14 restaurants and bars, six swimming pools and a state of the art spa. Amura Kids Club is free for children aged four to 12, keeping little ones entertained with a fun-filled play room, cinema and outdoor pool while parents enjoy some well-earned leisure time. There are plenty of activities for the family to enjoy together too – with the sea just steps away, the resort offers enough water-based activities to try something new every day, from paddle boarding and kayaking to windsurfing, water-skiing and wakeboarding.

● *Western & Oriental has a 5-night package at the Sofitel Palm Resort and Spa that costs from £4,729 for a family of 4 including flights and accommodation on a half-board basis. westernoriental.com 020 7666 1303*



SHORE THINGS...

Travel essentials for globetrotters

Scaramanga Leather Travel Wallet

£35 We love this vintage distressed leather travel wallet from handmade leather bag and satchel maker Scaramanga. Perfect for carrying a passport and travel documents, there's also a nifty zipped compartment for money and cards. Matching shabby chic leather luggage tags and cardholders complete the look. www.scaramangashop.co.uk

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Faroe Islands Bradt Guide £16.99 Still the only English-language guide to the Faroe Islands, the brand new 4th edition of James Proctor's Bradt Guide covers everything from where to walk some of Europe's least-known hiking trails to the latest information on seabird numbers in the North Atlantic. An invaluable Faroese travel companion. www.bradtguides.com

Bradt



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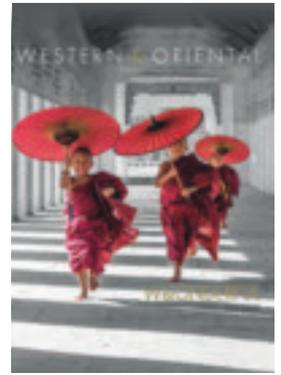
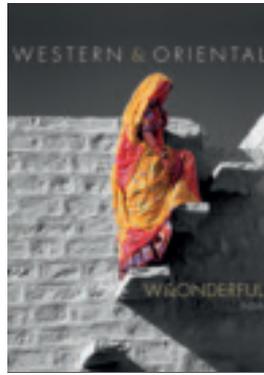
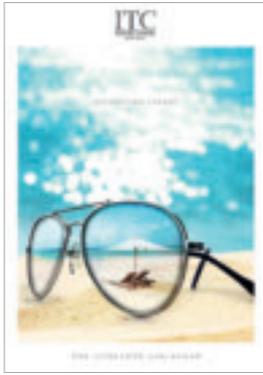
Páramo Hot Weather Shirts £60 Packing for adventures in tropical climates can be a challenge, but Páramo's Men's Katmai & Ladies' Socorro Shirts are just the ticket. Lightweight Parameta A rapid evaporation fabric helps keep you cool in humid or dry heat; tightly woven fibres deter insects and block virtually all UV rays, providing the equivalent protection of SPF 50+. www.paramo-clothing.com

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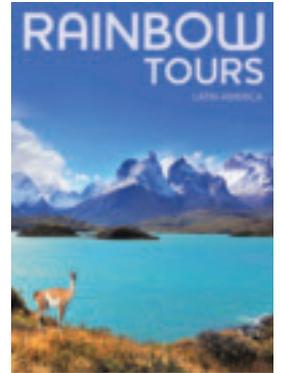
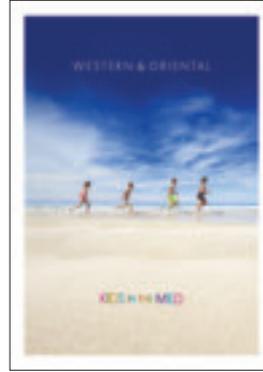
Swarovski Optik Companion Binoculars £850 Every good safari needs a good pair of binoculars. Swarovski Optik's CL Companion binoculars are lightweight and compact – at just 12cm long they slip neatly into a pocket and won't weigh luggage down – and the precision 30mm lenses will get you eight times closer to the action. www.swarovskioptik.com

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Designed with the needs of walkers and hikers in mind, Páramo's high performance Alta III is a durable waterproof jacket, ideal for the most intrepid of travellers. Recommended for some of the toughest conditions – from Antarctica cruises and Patagonia mountain hikes to Iceland glacier walks or Lapland snowshoe treks – the Alta III uses Nikwax Analogy® waterproof fabric for weather protection and moisture management.

Nikwax Analogy® is more than just breathable: it is directional – moving condensation and perspiration away from the body where it can safely drain away. The jacket's ventilation options limit the need for adding or shedding layers with easily accessible upper arm vents, two-way front zip, and sleeves that can be pushed up for cooling. Walker-friendly features are key to the design, from the mesh-reinforced back panel for pack carrying, to the practical storage options for maps or GPS.



TERMS & CONDITIONS

1) The prize is one Páramo Men's or Ladies' Alta III Jacket with an RRP of £280. Size and colour can be specified by the winner. (Subject to availability). No cash alternative will be given. 2) The prize draw is free to enter for Other Shores readers. No purchase necessary. One entry per person only. 3) Entry is via the Páramo website at www.paramo.co.uk/othershores. 4) The competition closes at midnight on 30 September 2016. The winner will be selected at random by a Páramo representative and notified by 31 October 2016. Employees of Páramo, ITC Luxury Travel Group Limited, their friends and family are not eligible to enter. 5) Páramo will collect your personal data to process your entry. Páramo, Nikwax and ITC Luxury Travel Group may contact you about future promotions and events. Your details will not be shared with any third parties. You can unsubscribe at any time. 6) Páramo and ITC Luxury Travel Group Limited may use information relating to the prize for marketing or promotional purposes, including use of the winner's name. 7) Except as otherwise required by applicable law, ITC Luxury Travel Group Limited is not responsible for any loss or damage associated with you entering into these terms and conditions, competition, or the provision or any aspect of the prize or any act or omission of any other person or party, and all warranties, conditions and representations (of any kind) not expressly set out in these terms and conditions are hereby excluded (except in the case of fraud). 8) Entry is deemed as acceptance of these rules.

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