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Arctic Exploring In

GREENLAND

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Music, History and Food in Nashville

Gold Mining in Cave Creek, AZ

Hidden in the Caribbean: Bonaire

October 2023



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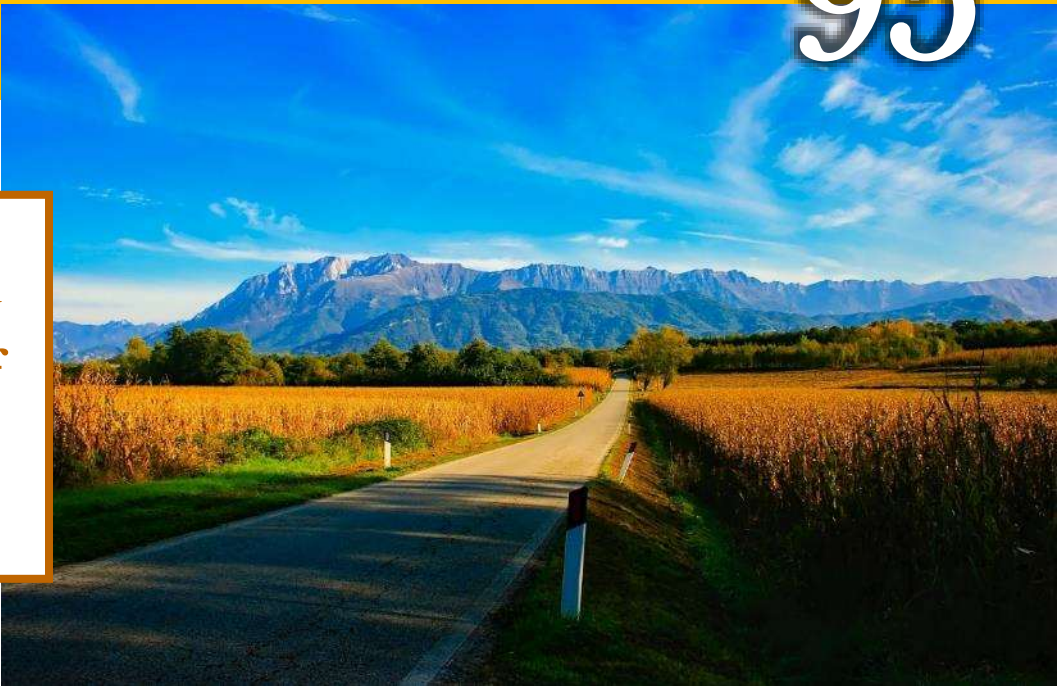


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All travel involves risk.
Confirm directions and critical
information before traveling.
Be aware of health and other
concerns.

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**India's Festival of
the Colors
Holi**

Photo by Khusen Rustamov

A scenic view of a colorful village built on a rocky hillside in Greenland. The houses are painted in various colors like red, blue, yellow, and green. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains under a cloudy sky. In the foreground, a large, white iceberg floats in the water. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

*Experience the WOW factor of
Greenland on a voyage with
Albatros Expeditions.*



An Arctic Expedition To

GREENLAND

Feature by

Debbie Stone



Y

ou've probably heard the opposite is true when it comes to Iceland and Greenland. Iceland is green and Greenland is ice. But perhaps you didn't know how these names came to be.

Story has it that settlers in Iceland wanted to trick their fellow Norsemen into keeping away from their verdant paradise. They decided to call their home "Iceland," hoping to discourage others from coming to its shores.

As for Greenland, Erik the Red, an Icelandic



murderer who was exiled to the island, is responsible for giving this island its name. He wanted to attract settlers to the place and “Greenland” sounded inviting and desirable. However, when people got there, they found an inhospitable world of white, comprised of ice, snow and glaciers.

Knowing that almost 80% of Greenland is covered in ice, however, did nothing to deter me from visiting this destination. In fact, it

was one of the primary reasons for making the trip to this Arctic nation. The country had been on my bucket list for quite some time and I finally had the opportunity to experience its splendor.

I opted to travel with Albatros Expeditions on an eight-day Disko Bay voyage in West Greenland. You might be curious why I chose to explore Greenland via ship. Despite its massive land size, there are no roads or railway system that connect settlements to one another. Yes, there are roads within the towns, but they end at the outskirts. All travel is basically done by

Hiking to the glacier at Icefjord gets you up close and personal with amazing nature.

plane, boat, helicopter, snowmobile or dogsled. Boats are the most popular mode of transportation.

Taking a cruise is the easiest and most convenient way to explore parts of the country in a relatively short time.

Due to the country's size, most itineraries focus on a specific geographical area.



Albatros Expeditions has been offering trips to the most remote regions in the world since 1985. The company is a pioneering polar expedition cruise

operator with a stellar reputation for sustainable travel in the industry. Its ships are modern, state-of-the-art vessels that are designed to reduce their carbon footprint and minimize their environmental impact. They are built for fuel efficiency and reduced emissions, making them a great choice for eco-conscious travelers.

The ship I was on, Ocean Albatros, which launched this past June, is the newest of the company's ships. It boasts 94 staterooms and suites, all with unobstructed sea views, most with their own balcony, two restaurants (the main dining room and Hot Rocks, a specialty restaurant where you cook your meal on a hot stone), a spa,



Aboard the
Ocean
Albatros,

sauna, bar, lecture lounge, two hot tubs, pool, gift shop, library, fitness room and panoramic observation lounge. Décor is Scandinavian in design with clean lines and contemporary furnishings.

Though the rooms had good views, most passengers spent much of the time outside on the decks or mingling in the other public spaces. There were 164 passengers on the ship and they hailed from across the globe. It was fun hearing all the different languages, making it feel like a mini U.N.



We all shared some commonalities despite our varying backgrounds: an urge to visit this Arctic destination now due to the impending disappearance of the

ice; a love of nature and wildlife; a desire to seek authentic and unique experiences with varying degrees of physical activity and cultural immersion; and an appreciation for the fact that mass tourism has yet to swallow this island like it has in neighboring Iceland. To experience such a unique and unspoiled place without crowds was very prominent in most people's minds.

Mealtime on the ship was a treat. Ample buffets are the norm for breakfast and lunch. Dinner is a table service affair. There are plenty of choices for carnivores, pescatarians, vegetarians, etc. There's also afternoon tea, with cakes and finger sandwiches. Cookies and hot drinks are available all day. Just know you won't go

Dining on board or ashore are both great options.



hungry! And of course, there's always the option of eating at one of the restaurants in the more sizeable towns instead of returning to the ship at midday for lunch. I took advantage of this opportunity twice, relishing local seafood soup, fresh halibut and shrimp.

Safety is a top priority for the company and ship protocols are introduced to passengers early in the



voyage. An entire session, for example, was devoted to Zodiac practices. Zodiacs are small inflatable boats used to ferry passengers from the ship to land when the ship can't dock and must anchor out at sea. You'll quickly learn there's a right way and plenty of wrong ways to enter an exit a Zodiac!

The ship's crew was topnotch. Everyone was friendly, hospitable and helpful. And the expedition team, which consisted of a cadre of experienced and knowledgeable leaders, were dedicated to creating an immersive and educational experience for passengers. They were passionate about showcasing the magic of the Arctic, while emphasizing the importance of sustainable tourism.

The Zodiacs
ferry
passengers
to and from
shore.



Greenland is actually the world's biggest island, by area. It is not a continent. At 836,330 square miles, it is larger than the following countries combined: France, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Greece, Switzerland and Belgium.

But even though it's so vast, it also has one of the smallest populations. Approximately 56,000 people reside on the island, with most living in the ice-free coastal regions, due to the fact that the Ice Sheet occupies the mid-section of the country. This is the world's largest glacier, so heavy and thick that in certain spots it has pushed part of the mainland below sea level.



Humans have inhabited Greenland for more than 4,500 years and today the majority of the island's population are Inuit or mixed Danish and Inuit.

The Inuit came from Asia in the 13th century and most Inuit Greenlanders today are their direct descendants. A

number of them continue to practice some of the centuries-old traditions and live a subsistence lifestyle, fishing and hunting to supply their main food source.

During the trip, the expedition staff gave informative talks on subjects such as the geology and



history of Greenland, dogsledding, whales, volcanism, all things ice and modern Greenland.

I particularly enjoyed the lecture on ice – how it’s formed, types of icebergs from growlers (very small floating chunks the size of a fridge) and bergy bits (the size of a car) to tabular formations (ginormous masses shaped like a sheet cake that are often larger than apartment buildings), glaciers, and the holy grail of ice - the Ice Sheet.

I never tired of seeing the icebergs, as they were majestic in size and shape. Some were a vivid green/blue

Icebergs range from “growlers” to giant chunks of ice sheet.



color, as the ice reflected the light. Ninety percent of an iceberg is submerged underwater, so you're actually only seeing a small part of the formation. The largest berg recorded was in Antarctica and it was larger than



the country of Belgium!

As we cruised, there was no shortage of ice breaking from the ends of glaciers, which is called calving. The sound is explosive and a constant reminder that the world's ice is moving rapidly and melting at a similar pace. Seeing glacier retreat was a sobering eye-opener.

The talk on modern Greenland was another one of my favorites. As this is “The People’s Country,” the concept of ownership to land doesn’t exist here. All land is common, and is not owned by municipality,

There is plenty to do ashore and on board.



government, parliament or anybody else.

Fishing is the lifeline and primary industry of Greenland, though tourism is making gradual strides. In the first three quarters of 2022, about 55,000 tourists visited the country, almost equal to the number of residents. This figure is expected to increase with the opening of several new airports in the coming year.

Though the anticipated swell of visitors will bring a welcome boon to Greenland's revenues, they also present a challenge given the island's delicate and melting ecosystem. And then there's the matter of creating the necessary infrastructure to support this growth.



The spoken languages in Greenland are Greenlandic, Danish and English, plus there are also several dialects used among the residents in the towns and settlements. One word in Greenlandic can be a full sentence of maybe 32 letters or more, such as: *Atuarfimmukarusunnigikkaluarpunga*, meaning "I did not want to go to school." And pronunciation for those not versed in this language is, as you can imagine, challenging!

There are 117 days without sun on the island and when the orb returns, there are celebrations with

fireworks and dancing. The longest day of the year, June 21st, is the summer solstice and a national holiday in the country. An amazing phenomenon that occurs in the Arctic is the Midnight Sun. It's common to see locals outdoors at all hours of the night, enjoying the continuous light and added energy that accompanies it.



Time doesn't move quickly in Greenland and many things depend on the weather. This is why planning is always subject to immaqa, meaning "maybe."

Visitors are wise to take a deep breath and accept the fact they can't control everything during their stay.

Expedition guides not only gave talks but led historical walking tours and scenic hikes in and around the towns. These guided activities were always optional.

All passengers were free to head off and explore on their own. Maps of the destinations were available to photograph on your phone.

There were also other excursions available to those on an Albatros cruise for an additional cost. In Ilulissat,



“The Iceberg Capital,” which is located near famed Disko Bay, you could go flightseeing over the Icefjord or take a boat trip to the Icefjord. The former allows for a birds-eye view of this impressive frozen landscape, whereas the latter is a great opportunity to take a closer look at the mesmerizing ice-sculpted scenery.

I chose the boat trip, as I wanted to get that up-close and personal experience. It was an incredibly memorable journey into a dazzling world of ice, with the added boon of spotting several whales along the way.

The bergs come from the Icefjord Kangia, which is

Icefjord
Glacier is
accessible
by boat or
by foot.

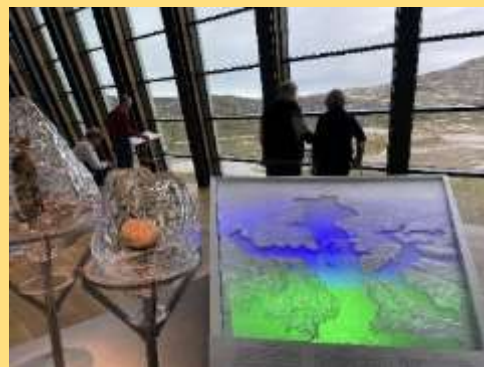


located just a half hour's hike south of town. They are born deeper into the fjord by the enormous Eqip Sermia glacier, the most productive glacier outside of Antarctica. The icebergs produced by this glacier represent more than ten percent of all icebergs in Greenland, corresponding to roughly twenty million tons of ice a day! These astounding facts secured the



Icefjord a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

It was beneficial to see the Icefjord via boat, as well as from land. As noted, you can walk to the entrance of it via a boardwalk trail. When I did the hike, there was a bit of fog and mist, which gave the scene



Icefjord Center and other museums are a great way to learn more about Greenland's history and geology.



an enchanting cast.

At the beginning of the boardwalk is the The Icefjord Center, a striking museum with a design that's interwoven in nature. It's shaped like a twisted structure miming the wingspan of a snow



owl. Here you can learn about the cycle of ice, the wildlife around the Icefjord and the human existence in the area throughout thousands of years. When you're done perusing the exhibits, head to the rooftop for an exceptional panorama.

Seeing the above-mentioned Eqip Sermeq was



another highlight of the trip. This notable natural formation is renowned for its jaw-dropping beauty. We got a front and center view of it, as the captain positioned the ship perfectly, and in time for us to savor the experience during a barbecue lunch on deck.

Other stops along the cruise included Sisimiut, Qeqertarsuaq, Uummannaq, Nuaqorsuaq and Sarfannguit, as well as Kangerlussuaq, the point of embarkation and disembarkation. Sisimiut is Greenland's second largest city with 5,400 inhabitants. A city tour highlighted the historic colonial quarter, museum and the Blue Church, a culturally significant

Eqip Sermeq glacier is over 5 km wide and 50 km long



site dating back to 1775. The buildings are so colorful here and throughout the towns in Greenland, and these splashes of bright hues enliven the scene.

In Sisimiut, we participated in “A Taste of Greenland,” where we had the chance to sample



Greenlandic specialties like dried cod, shrimp, dried Minke whale, whale blubber and muskox soup. Such an experience is a visceral way for visitors to get a feel for a place, its natural bounty, history and culture.



Before we set sail for the next stop, a kayak master from the community did a demo of kayak skills as we watched from aboard the ship. Using his bare hands, he did continuous rolls with his boat, one after another, going upside down, in bracing 38-degree water. Impressive!



Qeqertarsuaq, the “Big Island,” offered dramatic sea views as we hiked up to a ridge and then over to a waterfall. We were also treated to a performance of seven

Polka dances by six locals at the community center, followed by a *kaffemik*, a social event consisting of coffee

Some villages hold just a few dozen people.



and cake.

Uummannaq is distinguished by a prominent, tall, heart-shaped mountain. The town is built onto the rocks of the mountain and offers several good viewpoints of the dramatic surroundings. It also has a good museum, full of exhibits and collections featuring displays on the Qilakitsoq mummies, the whaling era



and Greenlandic history and archaeology. Another display tells the tale of the ill-fated 1930-31 inland ice expedition of German scientist Alfred Wegener, well-known for his theory of continental drift.

How often
do you see a
heart-
shaped
mountain?



Niaqornat and Sarfannguit were the two smallest villages we visited. Niaqornat, an Inuit fishing community, was the subject of a 2013 documentary, “The Village at the End of the World.” The film, which we were shown one evening aboard the ship, illustrated a year in the life of the settlement’s 59 residents and their 100 sled dogs surviving against the odds.



As I walked through the tiny hamlet, I noted that scenes from the film contrasted to the present day reality. The community appeared to have declined in the ensuing years, and currently there are only 35 people residing in this isolated enclave.

Sarfannguit is nestled at the foothills of the mountains, with glaciers in the distance. This settlement's 100 residents live off hunting, trapping and fishing, most often in pursuit of Arctic char, reindeer and musk ox. Time in this community gave us more insight into rural life in today's Greenland. Though there are modern conveniences and technological advancements, locals still place a value on important customs and preserving their traditions and Inuit

heritage.

The vistas of the bay from the village's graveyard were striking, and a hike to the cairn, the highest point, provided an even more rewarding panorama. But the piece de resistance was "Moon," a glass-brick sculpture in the shape of an igloo, situated with full advantage of the views.

At the community center, welcoming locals treated us to another sampling of their specialties, including reindeer, whale blubber and dried cod. Tables nearby were full of handmade crafts for sale such as sealskin clothing, accessories knitted from muskox wool and *tupilaks*, little statues with scary looking faces made of wood, bone and reindeer or muskox horn. As part of

Amazing views of the bay.



Inuit mythology, such figures were special and meaningful for Greenlandic tribes. They were purported to have possessed magical powers to annihilate enemies.



In each of the towns, there were sled dogs. We were continuously told not to feed or touch them, and signs reinforced these rules. Greenlandic sled dogs are working animals. They live as a pack with an alpha to keep order. But their musher is their leader. And as they are used to having a relationship with their musher, they can become hostile to strangers. They are also highly protective of their pack and may attack anyone they feel is threatening them.

Interesting to note that there is only one type of sled dog in Greenland, the Greenland dog or *Canis Lupus Familiaris*. It's one of the purest and most

isolated dog breeds in the world because it is not allowed to mix the Greenland dog with other dog breeds.

There was an expectation among passengers that we would see wildlife during the voyage, especially



It was an amazing trip to an amazing place!

reindeer and muskox, as these are common land mammals in Greenland. However, as hunting is very important to the locals, both culturally and as a means of subsistence, such animals are wary and hard to spot. Though we didn't see any of these creatures, we did see a number of whales – Minke, Fin and Humpbacked – that showed off their spouting skills to their adoring fans. We also saw various birds, including Kittiwake, Snow Bunting, Red-necked Phalarope, Northern Wheatear and Lapland Longspur.

I found Greenland to be a unique and captivating destination. Its striking ice formations, cultural



richness, and the warmth of its people left a lasting impression. However, as the Arctic changes, the need for responsible exploration is crucial. Consider Greenland for your next adventure, a place where nature and culture combine for a one-of-a-kind experience. Your visit can contribute to its sustainable future. Greenland beckons, offering an unforgettable journey that's both meaningful and remarkable.

For more information:

- www.albatros-expeditions.com
- www.visitgreenland.com
- lsfjordcentert.gl/en





Mining History in Cave Creek

*Resounding echoes of
Arizona's mining history
come to life with the
thunderous stamping of
the Golden Reef Stamp
Mill.*



A

At Cave Creek Museum in Arizona, the striking resonance of history comes to life with the rhythmic pounding of massive 1,000-pound stamps at the Golden Reef Stamp Mill, Arizona's sole fully operational ten-stamp ore crushing mill.

As visitors step onto the museum grounds, the unmistakable sound and vibration of these synchronized behemoths echoes through time,

transporting them to an era when mining was the heartbeat of the region. This captivating attraction, along with a meticulously reconstructed tramway and a treasure trove of artifacts, offers an immersive journey into the rich mining history of the Cave Creek Mining District.

The mining legacy of Cave Creek holds a mirror to the relentless spirit of the early settlers who sought riches in its rugged landscape.



The museum holds artifacts from the gold mining era and back into prehistory.

To truly appreciate Cave Creek Museum and its treasures, one must delve into the annals of this small Arizona town's captivating history. From its early beginnings to the vibrant present, Cave Creek's narrative unfolds like a tapestry, woven with the threads of mining, resilience, and community. The origins of Cave Creek can be traced back to the late 1800s when prospectors and settlers flocked to the area

in search of precious minerals. Their tenacity was matched only by the ruggedness of the terrain. In those early days, Cave Creek was a place where dreams were etched in rock, and fortunes were forged in the crucible of hard work and determination.

The town's fate became intertwined with mining. The discovery of valuable minerals, including gold, drove a mining boom that defined the region's identity. The town became a bustling hub for miners, and the surrounding mountains echoed with the sounds of industry.

Cave Creek's history also encompasses a chapter of compassion.

During the early 1920s, the town provided sanctuary to individuals suffering from tuberculosis. The town's dry and welcoming climate attracted those seeking respite from this contagious lung infection. Notable figures like Doc Holliday and Peggy Goldwater sought healing within Cave Creek's embrace, leaving behind a legacy of hope amid adversity.



Cave Creek's significance extends beyond its mining past; it represents a collective effort to preserve and share the remarkable saga of a resilient community. It invites all who visit to delve into the tangible remnants of a bygone era and to appreciate the indomitable human spirit that thrived in the face of adversity. In essence, Cave Creek encapsulates the very essence of Arizona's mining history, making it a place of paramount importance for those seeking to unearth the treasures of the past.



As you wander through the vast expanse of Cave Creek Museum, you'll quickly discover that it's not just a single attraction but a multifaceted journey through time. Each corner of this historical treasure trove offers a unique sensory experience, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Arizona's mining heritage.

The heart of the museum beats with the rhythmic thumping of the Golden Reef Stamp Mill, where 1,000-pound stamps slam down in synchronized motion,

Patients with tuberculosis escaped the crowded cities for dryer climates like Cave Creek.



pulverizing ore into fine gravel. The sensation of these colossal machines in action transports you back to the late 1800s, evoking the physicality of the mining process.

Adjacent to the stamp mill, the meticulously reconstructed tramway beckons exploration. Cabled ore carts, once dormant on the mountainside, now come to life, showcasing the ingenuity of the miners who devised this efficient means of transporting ore across rugged terrain. The sensation of the tramway's metal parts in your hands connects you directly to a past marked by resourcefulness.

When you step into the working blacksmith shop, the clang of metal on metal reverberates. Here, the craft

of blacksmiths from yesteryears is on full display. Witnessing the physicality of their artistry provides a tangible connection to the skills that were vital in the mining era.

You can experience a life-sized replica of a house constructed by the pre-Columbian Hohokam tribe. Constructed from materials native to the high desert, the reconstructed abode invites exploration. The touch of the materials and the rustic feel of the structure offer a glimpse into the living conditions of early inhabitants of the region.

Of course you'll want to try your hand at gold panning, just as prospectors did in the past. As you swirl the large trough, the sensation of sifting through sand and water might just reveal a glimmer of genuine gold flake, connecting you to the excitement of the gold rush.

Throughout, you'll walk through history, but be

Volunteers have restored some amazing pieces of equipment and built exhibits for the museum.



sure to visit the museum's archaeological wing which showcases pottery, projectile points, and stone tools from excavations at Spur Cross Ranch. Delicate, expertly woven baskets and intricately crafted pottery will let your imagination transport you to ancient times.

These are just a few of the experiences awaiting you at Cave Creek Museum. With each step, you'll delve deeper into the physical sensations of a bygone era, connecting with the past through touch, sound, and sight, and gaining a profound understanding of Arizona's mining heritage.

Cave Creek Museum is in Cave Creek, Arizona. Nestled within the picturesque foothills of Arizona, the town of Cave Creek boasts a vibrant and close-knit



community that shares a deep appreciation for the rich history and natural beauty of the region. Visitors to Cave Creek Museum will find themselves welcomed not only by the museum's treasures but also by the warm hospitality of the local residents who take pride in their town's heritage.

The museum is typically open from October through May. Be sure to check the museum's official website or contact them for exact opening and closing dates, as they may vary from year to year. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early, as the museum opens at 9 AM. The specific closing time may vary, so verify the hours in advance.

Cave Creek Museum hosts outdoor demonstrations, including those of the Golden Reef Stamp Mill & Tramway, which offer a hands-on experience of mining history. These demonstrations typically occur on specific dates during the season, so check the museum's schedule for details.

The resonant echoes of history at Cave Creek Museum are not to be missed. From the thunderous stamping of the Golden Reef Stamp Mill to the tactile experiences of a bygone era, this museum beckons travelers and history enthusiasts alike. Cave Creek's significance, forged in the crucible of mining, encapsulates the relentless spirit of those who shaped its narrative.

For more information

- cavecreekmuseum.org

Cave Creek Church wasn't just a place of worship, it was also the center of cultural activity for Cave Creek settlers.




Krakow, Poland's Wawel Castle

The royal gardens and courtyards give scenic views of the city and the Vistula River.

The castle holds numerous museum sections for visitors to explore.

The castle offers guided tours, audio guides, and interactive exhibits.



A photograph of Wawel Castle in Krakow, Poland, featuring a large brick church with a green spire and a white building with a red roof. The sky is blue with some clouds. The image is framed by a yellow border.


For centuries, Wawel Castle was the royal residence of Poland.

Built in 13th century by King Casimir III the Great.

Within the castle is Sigismund's Chapel with the tombs of Polish kings.

A dragon statue commemorates Wawel Dragon that terrorized the city.

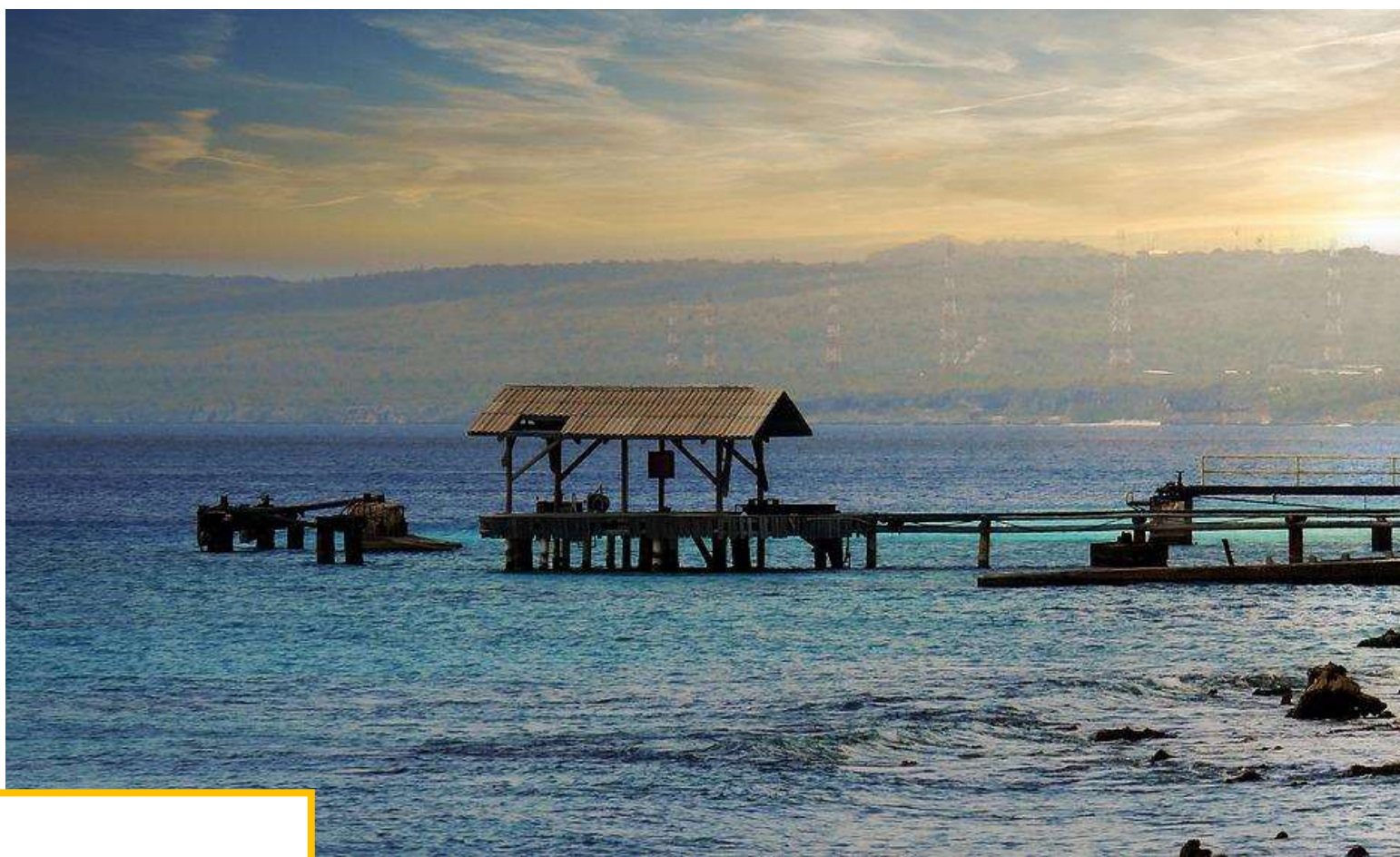
The Dragon's Den, a cave under the castle, can be toured too.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town in Bonaire, showing a mix of colorful residential buildings, a waterfront promenade, and a large, modern yellow building complex. The town is built on a hillside overlooking the ocean. The water is clear and blue. The sky is bright with some clouds. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

*Discover the hidden
Caribbean gem of Bonaire,
where unspoiled beauty,
world-class diving, and
European charm converge to
create an unforgettable
tropical paradise.*

Off the Beaten Track in Bonaire





W

andering through Bonaire's unspoiled beauty is akin to stepping into an untouched paradise.

As you traverse this Caribbean gem, your senses awaken to a world of natural wonders. The sun-warmed sands beneath your feet invite exploration of a landscape adorned with cacti-studded hills and rugged coastlines. The air carries the subtle scent of saltwater and the earthy aroma of the island's flora, creating an olfactory symphony that blends seamlessly with the rhythmic sounds of the sea lapping against the shore.

Bonaire's low-profile on the tourism radar ensures that you can indulge in moments of solitude and



tranquility, surrounded by unspoiled vistas stretching as far as the eye can see. Here, privacy, seclusion, and off-the-grid adventures await those who seek the serenity of nature at its most authentic.

Bonaire stands apart as a Caribbean destination in several distinctive ways. Unlike some of its more crowded counterparts, this hidden gem has managed to preserve its natural beauty and serenity, free from towering beachfront resorts dominating the

shoreline.

Beneath the waves, Bonaire boasts the title of the oldest marine reserve in the world. Designated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as having the healthiest reefs in the Caribbean, Bonaire is an underwater Eden. With over 340 species of fish, vibrant coral reefs, and crystal-clear waters, Bonaire offers a diving and snorkeling experience unparalleled in the region.

Bonaire's geographical location sets it apart as a destination that enjoys stellar weather year-round. Unlike many Caribbean islands susceptible to

Bonaire is in the Dutch Antilles, not far from South America.



hurricane disruptions, Bonaire lies outside the hurricane zone. This geographical advantage ensures that travelers can plan their visits with confidence, knowing that their vacation won't be derailed by unpredictable weather patterns.

Adding to Bonaire's allure is its status as a municipality of the Netherlands, which infuses the island with a cosmopolitan vibe and European flair. This unique blend of Caribbean warmth and Dutch sophistication creates an inviting atmosphere for travelers seeking cultural diversity and international charm.

Bonaire is not just a paradise for sun-seekers and divers. It's also a place where history weaves an

intriguing tapestry that adds depth to the island's natural beauty.

Long before European explorers set foot on these shores, Bonaire was home to the Caquetio people, a branch of the Arawak tribe. They left their mark on the island, with traces of their presence still echoing in the archaeological sites that dot the landscape. Their artifacts can be viewed at the Terramar Museum in the heart of the island's capital, Kralendijk.

In 1636, Bonaire's destiny took a different course when the Dutch captured the island from Spain. For centuries, it remained under Dutch control, and its story became entwined with the history of the



Underwater or on dry land, there is plenty to see and do on Bonaire.

Netherlands. The Dutch influence is visible not only in the charming architecture of its capital, Kralendijk, but also in the names of streets and landmarks.

Bonaire's history is marked by the salt pans that stretch along its coastlines. Salt, often called "white gold," was a precious commodity during colonial times,



and Bonaire's salt flats played a pivotal role in its economy. This history also carries the somber legacy, as the Dutch continued the Spanish slave trade, forcing people to labor in the salt pans and across the island.

In 2010, Bonaire underwent a significant transformation, becoming a special municipality of the Netherlands. This change brought greater autonomy and a stronger focus on preserving the island's natural wonders, especially its vibrant coral reefs. Today, Bonaire boasts the Bonaire National Marine Park, a testament to its commitment to protecting its

underwater treasures.

The island's dedication to sustainability and conservation efforts, particularly in protecting its surrounding waters as the Bonaire National Marine Park, showcases a commitment to preserving its natural wonders for future generations.

The pink salt pans take advantage of the dry warm air. Nearby are the slave huts used by those forced to work there in a former era.



There is a myriad of must-do experiences that will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on travelers seeking adventure, relaxation, and natural beauty.

Windsurfing Adventure: Bonaire is one of the world's premier windsurfing destinations, offering thrilling experiences for beginners and pros alike. The exhilarating sensation of wind in your hair, the salty breeze on your skin, and the adrenaline rush as you glide over the water make windsurfing a memorable adventure.

Flamingo Encounters: Bonaire is home to over



10,000 pink flamingos, creating a surreal and picturesque landscape. The sight of these elegant birds, the soft rustling of their feathers, and the occasional distant calls offer a unique opportunity to connect with nature. Additionally, the island boasts a dedicated flamingo sanctuary.

European Charm: Explore the island's distinct cosmopolitan vibe and European flair, a result of its status as a municipality of the Netherlands. Stroll through charming streets, where the scent of international cuisine mingles with the sounds of different languages, creating a unique cultural tapestry.

Culinary Delights: Despite its small size, Bonaire boasts a diverse food scene that will tantalize your taste buds. Savor Mediterranean cuisine at Sebastian's, sample local specialties like Iguana Soup at Karel's

Beach Bar, or indulge in Spanish-inspired dishes at La Balandra Restaurant. Each bite tells a story of the island's rich culinary heritage.

World-Class Diving: Bonaire's reputation as a diver's paradise is well-deserved. With the oldest marine reserve in the world and over 340 species of fish, the island's underwater world is a vibrant spectacle. The scent of the sea, the feeling of warm water enveloping you, and the sight of colorful coral reefs and marine life create an immersive diving experience.

Underwater Viewing Cameras: Even if you're not a diver or snorkeler, you can still partake in the island's aquatic wonders. Harbour Village Beach Club provides a unique opportunity with its underwater viewing

Flamingos,
old world
charm, and
dining add
to the
Bonaire
experience.



cameras that open up the mesmerizing world beneath the waves to everyone, allowing you to witness the underwater beauty without getting wet.

Beyond its must-do experiences, Bonaire boasts a wealth of other captivating details that enrich the



island's tapestry of attractions. Bonaire's geographical location places it outside the hurricane zone, guaranteeing visitors a sunny and enjoyable experience year-round. You can explore the island's treasures without the worry of unexpected weather disruptions.

Bonaire's remarkable natural beauty extends beyond its underwater realms. The island's terrestrial landscape is characterized by arid terrain, cacti-

studded hills, and rugged coastlines. Exploring this diverse terrain, you'll encounter the island's native iguana species, creating tactile and visual connections to its unique ecosystems.

Getting to Bonaire is a breeze with direct flights



Harbour
Village
Beach Club
has the
amenities
that make
your visit a
pleasure.

from major U.S. cities such as New York, Houston, Atlanta, or Miami. The convenience of travel ensures that you can start your Bonaire adventure without hassle.

The Harbour Village Beach Club, named Bonaire's top hotel for seven consecutive years is an excellent choice for a home base for exploring the island, and not just the underwater viewing cameras. The four-acre



resort sits on a private peninsula, has a 64 boat slip, on-site restaurant, spa, and diving instructor. From there you can explore Bonaire on land and under the water.

Wherever you stay, embarking on a journey to



Bonaire is like discovering a hidden treasure trove of natural beauty, cultural richness, and unforgettable experiences. As you wander through this Caribbean gem, you'll find yourself immersed in a world of wonders, from the vibrant coral reefs beneath the waves to the charming streets echoing with diverse languages and the tantalizing flavors of local cuisine.

Whether you're a diving enthusiast exploring the world's oldest marine reserve or seeking solace on the island's private beaches, Bonaire offers an authentic Caribbean experience that lingers in your senses long after you've left its shores.

With easy accessibility, a diverse range of accommodations, and a warm welcome awaiting you, Bonaire invites you to uncover its secrets, indulge in its pleasures, and create memories that will forever be etched in your heart

For more information:

- www.infobonaire.com
- www.harbourvillage.com



Harbour Village's private beach looks out on blue Caribbean waters.

Bonaire Lighthouse stands 75 feet tall and was constructed in 1837.





*Nashville, where music,
history, and culinary
delights harmonize to make
the perfect trip.*



The Culture and Sound of Nashville

OLE OPRY



Feature by

Debbie Stone



I

If you're a first timer to Nashville, you're in for a treat. Expect to have ample opportunities to hear quality music, both in hallowed halls, as well as in the numerous bars and honky-tonks. After all, this is Music City!

But you might be surprised to discover that museums also take centerstage in Nashville. You can delve into the lives of well-known musicians and producers, learn about Civil War and Tennessee State history, explore science and technology, and appreciate multi genres of art. And to top it off, the town's a foodie



Nashville's
Lower
Broadway is
the place
for nightlife.

mecca, so along with your comfy walking shoes, bring an appetite.

To get the lay of the land, opt to do the hop-on, hop-off guided tour with Old Town Trolley Tours. As you travel through this vibrant city, your drivers provide entertaining and informative commentary. The full tour goes on a twelve mile loop and makes fourteen stops. It's a great way to get a snapshot of the

multiple neighborhoods in Nashville with its many points of interest.

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum is a major attraction in Nashville. Often called the "Smithsonian of country music," this venerable institution, which opened in 1967, has built the world's largest and most significant collection of materials documenting and preserving country music. Its collection numbers more than 2.5 million artifacts, including musical instruments, recordings, photos, stage costumes and other memorabilia, such as Elvis Presley's gold-plated caddy and Taylor Swift's tour bus.

Galleries in this multi-floored museum follow the evolution of country music as it relates to American history. The artifacts on display, combined with video footage, sound recordings and biographical panels, help to tell the stories of those who shaped the music, from Hank Williams through Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton, to Garth, Reba and beyond. The touchscreen



interactives are especially fun and engaging, as you can record your own song, finish the lines of popular lyrics, find out which career in the music industry would most likely suit your talents (spoiler alert: I learned I would be a songwriter) and more.

The Country Music Hall of Fame was founded in 1961 to honor the best and most successful creative artists and music industry members of influence. And the Hall of Fame Rotunda is where you'll find all these

The Country Music Hall of Fame holds more than 2.5 million artifacts.



venerable titans. There are 149 members as of October 2022. The first inductees were Jimmy Rodgers, Fred Rose and Hank Williams. Each member is represented with a likeness of him/herself on a bronze plaque along with career highlights.



There's also the Music City Walk of Fame across the street in the Walk of Fame Park, which honors important contributors to Nashville's musical heritage and accomplishments in the music industry. Each honoree has a commemorative star embedded in the sidewalk.

Add on the guided tour to historic RCA Studio B either before or after you've been to the museum. Located on Music Row, this is Nashville's oldest surviving recording studio, where so many of the greats – Chet Atkins, the Everly Brothers, Dolly Parton, Elvis, Charley Pride – called home and helped establish the Nashville Sound.

It's the birthplace of more than 35,000 songs and over 1,000 hits and it's still going strong.

And you can stand on the "sweet spot," where those songs were recorded!



Elvis recorded over 200 songs in RCA Studio B.



Put the National Museum of African American Music at the top of your list, too. It's the only museum dedicated to educating and preserving music that was created, influenced and/or inspired by African Americans. You'll start your experience in the Roots Theater with an overview of African American history, emphasizing the creation of African American musical traditions that spring from historic and social contexts. Then move

NMAM was named one of the "World's Greatest Places" by Time Magazine.



through the galleries, which highlight different genres of music, including gospel, blues, jazz, R&B and hip hop.

If you're a fan of Johnny Cash and/or Patsy Cline, there are museums devoted to each of these artists. In the Johnny Cash Museum, you'll find the largest collection of artifacts and memorabilia from this music icon. There are films, handwritten notes and letters

penned by the Man in Black himself, costumes and guitars, music awards and exhibits spotlighting different periods of Cash's life, such as his stint in the Air Force, his marriage to June Carter, his prison concert tour and his film career.

Upstairs, in the same building, is the Patsy Cline Museum, which is dedicated to the legendary songstress. There are numerous personal belongings, videos, letters, costumes and interactive exhibits detailing Patsy's life, from her early upbringing and rise to fame, to her tragic early death at the age of thirty. Patsy was the first solo female artist to be admitted to the Country Music Hall of Fame and is best known for her rendition of "Crazy," written by Willie Nelson.



You might think you're in Greece when you see the Parthenon, one of Nashville's several art museums. Standing proudly in Centennial Park, this full-scale replica of the Athenian original was built for the state's 1897 Centennial Exposition. It serves as a monument to classical architecture.



Wonder why this nod to Greece is in Nashville of all places? The reason relates to one of the city's monikers, the "Athens of the South," a name that the town has had since the mid-19th century. In a region of the country, which at the time wasn't known for educating its populace, Nashville was proud to have several noted colleges, universities and specialized academies. It seemed natural at the time that a structure like the Parthenon would be an ideal way to honor Tennessee's centennial celebration. Today, it serves as an art museum with paintings by 19th and 20th century

The statue of Athena at Nashville's Parthenon is over 40 feet tall.

Pasty Cline's mother sewed her costumes herself.



American artists. The piece de resistance, however, is the dazzling re-creation of the 42-foot Athena.

Music is everywhere in Nashville and you can listen to it 24/7. Two of the iconic venues are the Grand Ole Opry and Ryman Auditorium. The Opry is the show that made country music famous. What began as a little radio program in 1925 is now radio's longest-running show. Multiple generations of artists from legends to rising stars grace the Opry stage. On the night I attended, the stellar lineup featured Vince Gill, Trace Adkins, Jamey Johnson, Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers, Gary Mule Deer and others.

To enhance your Opry experience, get tickets to the backstage tour. Tours are held during the day and after

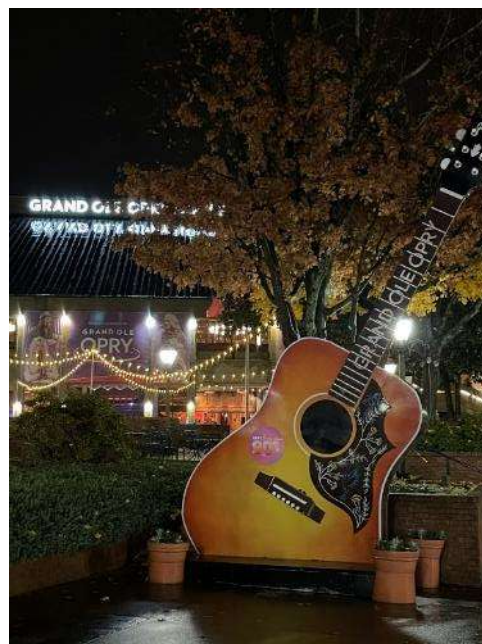
select evening performances. You'll get to see a whole different side of this fabled seat of country music and learn about its founder, George D. Hay, along with some of its illustrious early members such as Minnie Pearl, Little Jimmy Dickens and Roy .

There are currently 69 members of the Opry and once an artist becomes a member, he or she can perform or even host any show they wish. Induction into the Opry is one of the highest honors in country music.

The tour takes visitors through the VIP spaces of the Opry as a performer would experience them, starting with the Artist Entrance Lobby. Each member of the Opry is assigned a box at the Grand Ole Opry Post Office in the lobby, where fans may send correspondence to their favorite star. And each gets a dressing room, which is numbered with an oversized guitar pick embedded in the floor in front of the door. The dressing rooms are themed, such as “Stars and Stripes,” “Women of Country,” “Bluegrass,” “Cousin Minnie Pearl,” “Welcome to the Family,” which is used for inductees to the Opry on induction night, and “Into the Circle,” for performers making their Opry debut.

In the Opry House Family Room, there's a mural done by Opry

The Grand
Ole Opry is
an
experience
like no
other.





and “Hee Haw” cast member, Archie Campbell. The scene is Campbell’s interpretation of the organized chaos that epitomizes each Opry performance. Nearby is a bronze marker, which indicates the high water mark during the 2010 flood. The Opry House was inundated by the Cumberland River and suffered major damage, requiring shows to be held in other venues around Nashville during the five month restoration period.

You’ll get to walk onstage and view the scene from the performers’ perspective. And you’ll have the opportunity to stand on the six-foot circle of oak floor boards taken from the Opry’s former home,

historic Ryman Auditorium. The circle represents the Opry's unbroken connection to its history and traditions. Performers view the circle with reverence for all the titans who preceded them.

The Ryman Auditorium is a Nashville landmark. Known as the "Mother Church of Country Music," the venue began as the Union Gospel Tabernacle. Local businessman Thomas Ryman built it as a permanent location in 1892 for tent revival-like gospel meetings, but it also became the site of lectures and eventually the first home of the Grand Ole Opry. Over the years, the venue has been updated and today, the more than 2,300-seat auditorium is known for its incredible acoustics and for hosting world-



The Ryman Auditorium hosted the Opry in the early days and is still in use.



Behind the scenes tour of the Grand Ole Opry lets you peek into some of the dressing rooms.

renowned performers.

The show I attended featured The Mavericks. This band with its fusion of country, rock and Latin influences electrified the audience. And yes, the acoustics were amazing. But if seeing a performance at the Ryman isn't in the cards during your



Nashville visit, take a self-guided tour of the place during the day. A film details the auditorium's history and you can peruse the cases of memorabilia from various artists who have performed there over the years.

Head to Lower Broadway or Honky Tonk Highway, where numerous bars and clubs can be found

pumping their music out into the streets day and night. There's no cover charge to enter any of them. Stroll along and when you hear something you like, pop your head in, order a drink and stay for a tune or two, or more. It's fun to check out a few places, as the bands vary along with the crowds and atmosphere. One thing that stays consistent, however, are the three songs that the performers will play if and only if the audience coughs up a collective \$100. These numbers are: Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird," Charlie Daniels Band's "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen. For other requests, it's \$20 a pop.

Some of the most popular places, like s Orchid Lounge, The Stage, Whiskey Row, Jason Aldean's Kitchen + Rooftop Bar, A.J.'s Good Time Bar and Kid Rock's, are typically the busiest and you'll find yourself waiting in line to enter, then packed in like sardines once inside. The rowdiness element increases as the night grows later and people have had their fair share (and more) of libations. On weekends, Lower Broadway becomes a pedestrian-only zone and the overflow from the honky tonks fill the streets. To make your way around all the weavers and stumblers, prepare to do some combat walking.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the retail experience in Nashville. If you've come to shop for that coveted pair of cowboy boots and hat, or rhinestone decorated



Broadway
hosts not
just
Honkytonks,
but also
some great
shopping.

duds, this is the place. Stores abound with all the country music wardrobe accessories you can imagine, not to mention souvenirs galore.

For something a bit different, check out Marathon Village, a neighborhood created from buildings that once housed the Marathon Motor Works from 1910-1914. This



company manufactured and sold the first cars in Tennessee. Today, it serves as a model for re-purposing historic structures. Inside, the halls are lined with authentic industrial parts and equipment – a nod to the essence of the bygone factory.

You'll find a host of unique items, from quirky junk and

antiques to high-end knives, one-of-a-kind jewelry and Harley-Davidson apparel. There are even flagship stores from History Channel’s “American Pickers” and legendary whiskey maker, Jack Daniels. And if you want to see four out of the eight Marathon cars still in existence, head to the Marathon Museum across the street.

No visit to Nashville is complete without a deep dive into the food scene. Know that you’re never far away from good eating, as this town is brimming with restaurants, cafes and bistros to suit all budgets and tastes.

Barbeque is a staple, with joints like Edley’s, Martin’s and Peg Leg Porker grilling up some finger-

There’s
more to
Nashville
than music.





licking goodness. Then there's something called Hot Chicken. If you're unaware of this specialty, take note. It's basically fried chicken with a kick, mainly due to the cayenne pepper in the sauce. How much of a kick is up to you.

Story has it that this fiery invention is the work of a scorned Nashville woman whose partner, Thornton Prince, a lady's man, had a habit of coming home late. One morning, after a night of debauchery, Prince awoke to the smell of fried chicken cooking in the kitchen. Little did he know that his woman had put a generous dose of cayenne pepper in the dish as she wanted to teach him a lesson. Her plan backfired, however, because Prince loved it so much that he used her recipe

to open the first Nashville Hot Chicken shop, which is now Prince’s Hot Chicken Shack.

At Prince’s the chicken ranges from mild to XXXHot. Over at Hattie B’s, another favorite spot in town, the heat extreme is labeled, “Shut the Cluck Up!!!” and has a “Burn Notice” warning.

For breakfast, Biscuit Love is a favorite of locals and visitors alike. This café, which now has four locations, serves up the fluffiest biscuits in a variety of combos, with sausage gravy, eggs, fried chicken, etc., accompanied by yummy cheesy grits. They also offer something called Bonuts – fried biscuit dough topped with lemon mascarpone, over blueberry compote. Go hungry!

Pick your dining locations carefully because there’s too much to choose from to eat everything.



At lunch, make a beeline for Assembly Food Hall, where you'll have your choice of everything from Hawaiian poke bowls, hand-crafted Neapolitan pizzas, crepes and gourmet burgers to Indian street food, Pho and lobster rolls. Enjoy the rooftop bar, where you can sip a libation while listening to live music.



For dinner, Makeready L&L bills itself as a social gathering hall with a menu of familiar favorites focusing on Italian sensibilities. At its helm is the talented

Executive Chef Chris Neff. Start with the hearty Tuscan White Bean Soup or Baby Gem Caesar, then take your pick from entrees such as Spaghetti Pomodoro, Pappardelle Bolognese, Chicken Parmigiana or Shrimp Bucatini. The latter is a tasty meld of squid ink pasta, shrimp, wild mushrooms, radicchio and parmesan.

The contemporary space has an industrial chic feel to it, and a small, but lively bar. Black, hand-cut silhouettes line one wall. They represent local Nashvillians who were at the restaurant's opening in 2018 and agreed to have their photos taken. The photos were then turned into silhouettes.

If you're craving Mexican, try Calacas. This convivial spot celebrates traditional Mexican culture and cuisine, using recipes passed down through the generations and paired with bold approaches. Begin with the guac and salsa or the Esquites – roasted corn off the cob with cotija cheese – then select from an assortment of tacos with marinated chicken, fried fish, slow roasted pork or crispy cauliflower, or opt for the Carne Asada or enchiladas with mole sauce. Accompany it with a guava or pineapple margarita.

Seafood lovers will revel in the offerings at The Optimist over in German Town. Begin your meal with the Smoked Fish Chowder or Crispy Octopus. Oyster connoisseurs can select from a special mollusk menu with eight or nine varieties on ice. Entrees feature yellowfin tuna, snapper, redfish, halibut, mahi mahi, swordfish and scallops. Add a side of corn milk hushpuppies or crispy Brussels.

While Nashville may make you think of country music and home cooking, you can also indulge in amazing upscale food too.

When it comes to sweets, a stop at Goo Goo Chocolate Co. is a must. It's the home of the famed Goo Goo Cluster, America's first combination candy bar. This confection of caramel, marshmallow nougat, roasted peanuts and milk chocolate was invented in Nashville. There are also other combos with ingredients like peanut butter, pecans and dark chocolate



peppermint ganache. And one that's jam-filled and biscuit-inspired. You can even create your own recipe for a Goo Goo original.

In the heart of Nashville, newcomers find a treasure trove of sights and sounds waiting to be discovered.

From the historic landmarks to the lively music scene, this city offers something extraordinary at every turn. So, whether you're a music enthusiast, a history buff, or simply seeking a memorable experience, don't miss out on the magic that is Nashville. Plan your visit today and immerse yourself in the wonders of this remarkable destination.

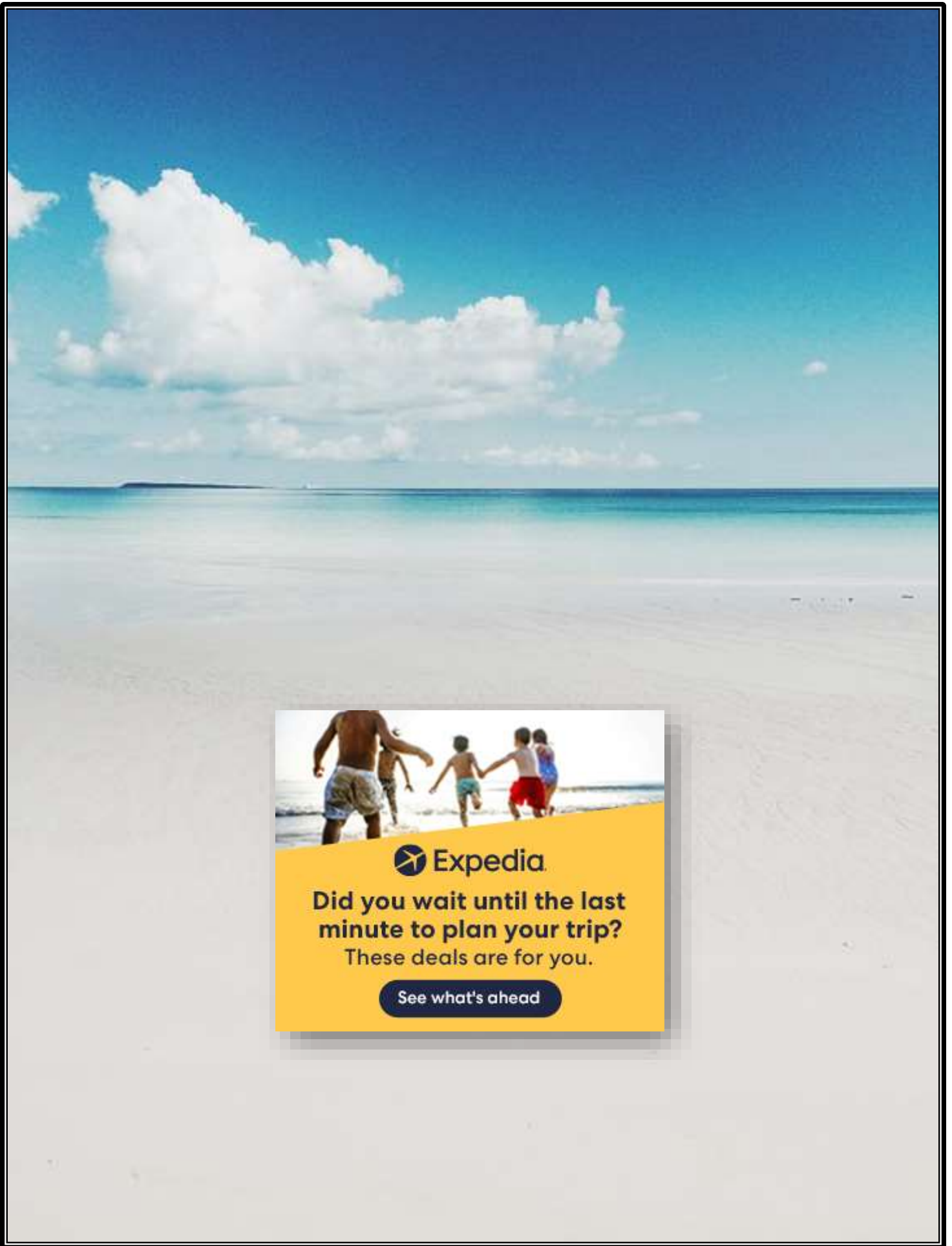
Yep, this is
where Goo
Goo
Clusters are
made.



For more information:

www.visitmusiccity.com





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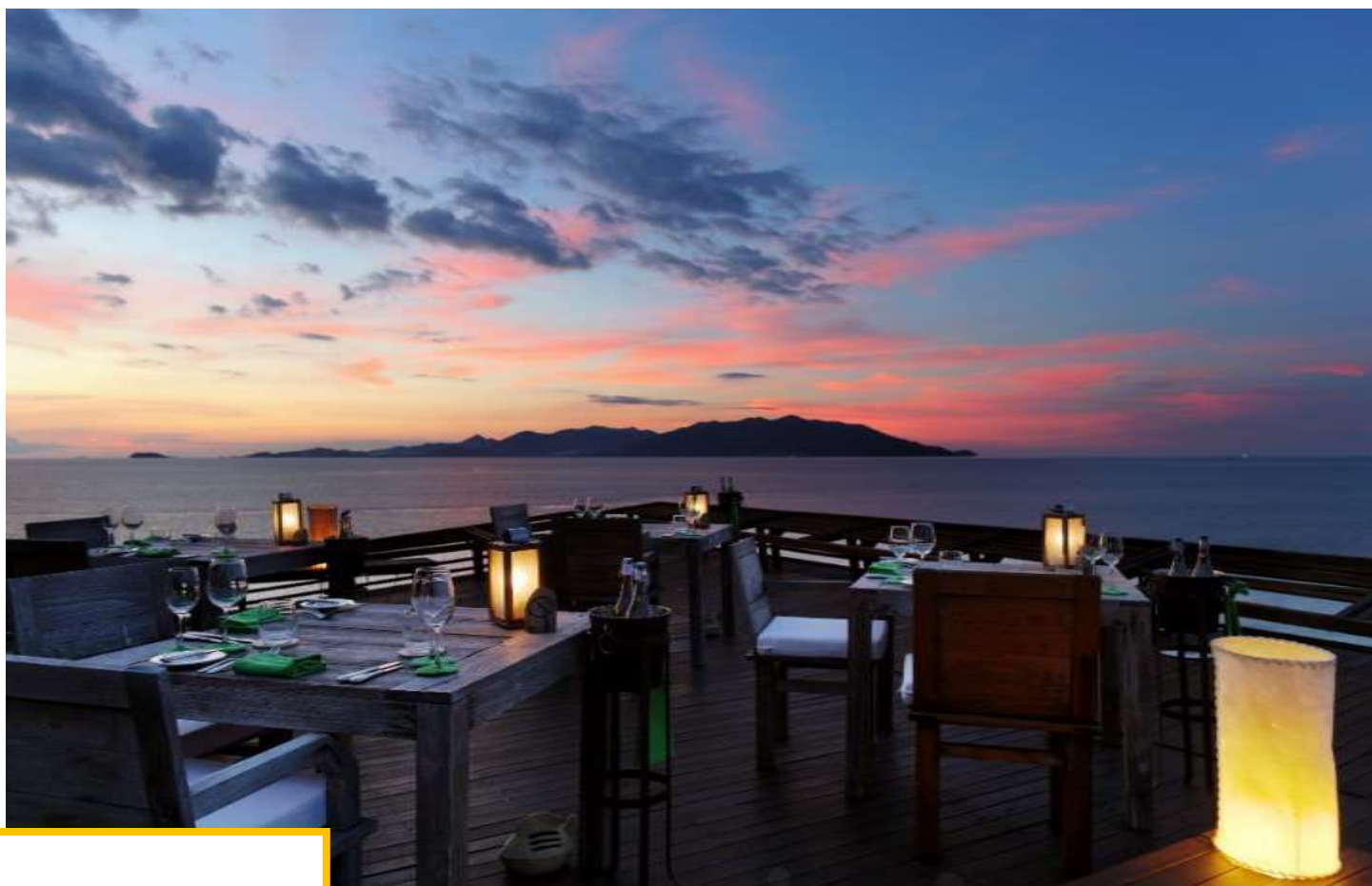
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**Culinary Art Meets
Spectacular Scenery
Dining on The
Rocks**

Article by
Janet Chan

***Dining on the Rocks at
Six Senses Samui,
Thailand's Epicurean
Haven.***



S

uspended on a rugged cliff edge overlooking the azure waters of the Gulf of Thailand, the multi-awarded Dining on the Rocks at the Six Senses Samui offers more than just a meal. The ten terraced decks of weathered teak and bamboo provide the perfect stage for an unforgettable experience where world-class gastronomy intertwines with curated wines, exceptional service and breathtaking vistas.

At the helm is the charismatic Executive Chef Kien Wagner, an alchemist in the art of flavors. With an impressive culinary career spanning 18 years across multiple continents, Chef Kien has cultivated a keen eye for the extraordinary. Melding the mastery of his classical French training with a love for Asian cuisine, his approach to cooking is that of an artist, where food is the canvas and the ingredients are the colors. Every dish is a vibrant tapestry of flavors, techniques, and creativity that tells a story of Chef Kien's gastronomic travels and his endless quest for exceptional ingredients.



And what better ingredients than those provided by the bountiful local landscape itself? The tasting menus at Dining on the Rocks are a tribute to Thailand's diverse and rich culinary heritage. The freshest produce, sourced from local farmers and suppliers,

forms the backbone of a menu that dances between the seasons, as each dish showcases the very best that nature has to offer.

The restaurant's signature offering, “The Taste of Rock”, is a six-course tour de force. From the tart punch of a Beef Tartare with tiger prawn, Dijon mustard, parsley, caper berry and cured egg yolk to the decadence of the Chumphon 72 percent

Thai dark chocolate Grand Cru lava pudding, every bite is a thrilling symphony for the senses.

“The Sea Tasting” is a siren call for seafood lovers. Featuring exotic dishes like the Thai Bouillabaisse with



scallop, calamari, salmon roe and plankton oil to the Andaman White Snapper flavored with kaffir lime and Hua Hin caviar, it's a culinary journey that rides the waves of Thailand's bountiful seas.



For the plant-based epicurean, “The Plant Tasting” weaves a flavorful tale of the earth's offerings. With dishes that champion

veggies like zucchini in a zesty tomato spice sauce, beetroot with a tangy goji berry sauce, and the inventive Plant Chocolate with orange and a coconut ice ball, this menu brings a playful spin to vegetarian dining.

There are also shorter four-course introductory tasting menus as well as a small a la carte menu. Amid the tantalizing courses, don't forget to indulge in the palate-cleansing homemade sorbets and artisanal cheeses, a handpicked selection from local and international producers that adds another layer to this gourmet adventure.

Dining on the Rocks offers more than just a culinary feast; it's a celebration of the senses. An evening here explores vibrant flavors, local ingredients, and innovative techniques, all coming together with Chef Kien's culinary wizardry and the spectacular ambience of Six Senses Samui. So buckle up, culinary explorers; as taste-bud-tingling journey awaits in Thailand's Samui Island.



Six Senses Samui Island might just be the highlight of your trip to Thailand.

For more information

- www.sixsenses.com





***From Portofino to
Tuscany, discover the
timeless beauty of autumn
in Italy.***

Autumn in Italy The Color of Tranquility





E

xploring Italy in autumn reveals a serene, authentic side of this enchanting land. The scorching days of summer have passed, replaced by a gentle, temperate climate. The countryside adorns itself in warm hues, and the air carries the inviting scent of olive harvests and truffle hunts.



Autumn in Italy is a time for flaming red grape vineyards.

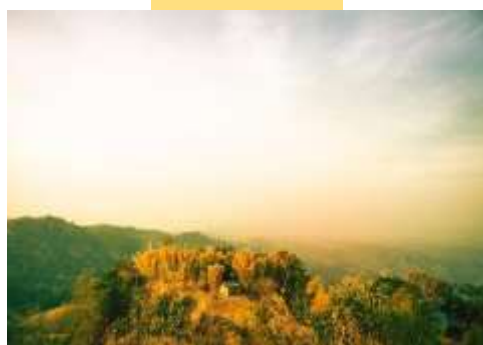
Touring Italy in autumn offers advantages like fewer crowds and ideal weather for outdoor exploration. Sightseeing becomes a joy as you explore historic landmarks, art-filled churches, and charming food markets without the oppressive heat. The clear skies in the fall provide an excellent backdrop for stargazing, allowing you to admire Italy's celestial beauty while sipping local wine.

Autumn in Italy is a season of harvests, with chestnuts, truffles, and new wine to savor. It's a time to immerse yourself in local customs and the warmth of Italian hospitality. The slower pace of the fall season

allows for leisurely exploration, from meandering through medieval cobblestone alleys to discovering the country's art-filled treasures.

In essence, touring Italy in autumn offers a harmonious blend of favorable weather, cultural richness, and the serenity of a quieter, more contemplative Italy. If you're considering the best time to explore Italy, autumn stands as an enticing choice, where nature, culture, and the spirit of *la dolce vita* combine to create a memorable journey.

Italy's diverse regions offer unique autumn experiences. In the north, Lombardy boasts Milan's fashion and Lake Como's luxury.



Veneto enchants with Venice's romantic waterways and charming countryside.

Rome blends ancient ruins with modern life, and the Vatican City stands as a spiritual center, but in the autumn the cooler weather and lighter crowds makes it that much better.

Further south, Campania's Amalfi Coast impresses with cliffs, turquoise waters, and towns like Positano. Puglia surprises with whitewashed villages and historic trulli homes.

Sicily, the Mediterranean's largest island, offers a blend of Greek temples and Arab palaces. Sardinia tempts with pristine beaches and rugged landscapes. Each region tells a distinct story through culinary specialties, traditions, and dialects. Now, let's explore three captivating autumn regions in Italy.

Autumn in the Portofino Coast beckons travelers to discover its natural wonders and



Rome,
Campania,
Portofino,
and Sicily
are
delightful in
the autumn.

authentic experiences. Coastal trails, bathed in autumn's gentle glow, offer ideal settings for hiking. Nearby Cinque Terre, with thinner crowds and cooler temperatures, provides panoramic views of the shimmering sea during scenic walks. **Olive harvesting season paints the rolling hills with draped olive trees, creating a captivating landscape.** Travelers can even join in this centuries-old tradition as farmers spread nets across the terrain. In Liguria, the region's authenticity shines through during the slower



season, allowing travelers to witness skilled craftsmen at work, like silk weavers in the charming hamlet of Zoagli, whose artistry reflects the region's rich heritage.



Lake Como, renowned for its timeless allure and stunning vistas, transforms into a tranquil haven during autumn, revealing a different yet equally captivating side of Italy. **Nestled in Lombardy, this iconic lake enchants travelers with serene waters, picturesque towns, and lush gardens.** The annual Orticolario event, set against Lake Como's stunning backdrop, blends design, art, and thematic gardens, featuring over 290 exhibitors showcasing rare plants and artistic craftsmanship. Lake Como also pays homage to its unique traditions

in October with the I Strii de Ruena festival, dedicated to witches and chestnuts. This festival delves into the region's folklore and culinary heritage, celebrating local women skilled in healing herbs.

Lake Como
and Tuscany
offer
distinctly
different
autumn
experiences.



As autumn's warm hues sweep across Italy, Tuscany emerges as a region where nature, culture, and cuisine harmonize to create unforgettable experiences. This beloved Italian region, known for its rolling vineyards, historic hilltop towns, and deep connection to art and heritage, invites travelers to witness its iconic landscapes adorned in warm autumn shades. **The rolling hills and vineyards form a painter's palette, crafting a breathtaking backdrop for adventures.** Tuscany's autumn also brings forth a bountiful harvest of chestnuts, truffles, new wine, and olive oil,

allowing travelers to savor the region's flavors, indulge in culinary delights, and explore local food markets. The season's slower pace and cooler temperatures create the perfect atmosphere for discovering Tuscany's art-filled churches and museums, dining at charming food markets, and wandering the medieval cobblestone alleys of hilltop towns. Under the clear skies, stargazing becomes a serene pastime, ideally accompanied by a glass of Castelfalfi vino.



From the charming Portofino Coast to the tranquil beauty of Lake Como and the heart of Tuscany, each region offers a diverse range of accommodations to suit various preferences. Along the Portofino Coast, picturesque villages host boutique hotels, luxurious resorts, and cozy guesthouses. Lake Como boasts lakeside villas, boutique hotels, and historical properties with stunning lake views. In Tuscany, you'll find a mix of home rentals, country inns, boutique hotels, and historic villas.

With the crowds of summer leaving and hotel prices dropping, the autumn is the perfect time to indulge in luxury accommodations.

Nestled in the heart of Tuscany, Castelfalfi is an excellent example of the embodiment of luxury, history, and tradition. This

remarkable 5-star retreat offers an immersive experience seamlessly blending the region's rich heritage with modern comforts. Situated within a sprawling medieval village encompassing 2,700 acres of protected vineyards, olive groves, lakes, and a wildlife reserve, Castelfalfi provides travelers with a unique and unforgettable escape.

Following extensive renovations and upgrades, Castelfalfi has been meticulously transformed into a destination that pays homage to its historical roots while embracing the modern era. The resort features 151 rooms, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding hills and vineyards, creating an idyllic backdrop for your stay. The newly opened spa promises relaxation and rejuvenation amidst Tuscan charm.

At Castelfalfi, guests can enjoy diverse experiences without repetition. Explore the



Castelfalfi resort offers unique autumn experiences.



medieval village, participate in interactive art workshops, savor local culinary delights, and indulge in wellness treatments. Nature enthusiasts can hike through the Tuscan countryside, while history buffs can immerse themselves in the stories hidden within the village's ancient walls. For stargazing enthusiasts, the clear autumn skies make it an ideal place to admire the cosmos, perhaps with a glass of Castelfalfi vino in hand.

Castelfalfi is deeply rooted in preserving the authenticity of the region and supporting the local community. The resort collaborates with local artisans, chefs, and experts to create a tapestry of experiences showcasing Tuscany's heritage while providing economic and cultural support to the community. As the only property in the area with a working olive oil mill, Castelfalfi invites neighbors from across the region to participate in the autumn olive oil harvest, a cherished local tradition.

When it comes to indulging in luxury accommodations across Italy, you have a wealth of options to choose from. Whether it's the timeless elegance of Villa d'Este overlooking Lake Como, the



Luxury accommodations, amazing scenery, and a chance to immerse yourself in the culture of Italy stretches from the Alps to Sicily.

elevated sophistication of Belmond Hotel Caruso perched on the Amalfi Coast, the opulent charm of the Gritti Palace in Venice, or the tranquil retreat of Castelfalfi in the heart of Tuscany, each promises an exquisite experience, ensuring you discover the very best that Italy has to offer to visitors during the cooler, crisper, and quieter autumn.

Italy in the autumn beckons travelers to savor the quieter, more contemplative side of this enchanting country. From the picturesque Portofino Coast to the serene beauty of Lake Como and the timeless allure of Tuscany, Italy's regions offer a tapestry of experiences that harmonize with the changing hues of autumn. Plan your visit, and discover the magic of Italy in the autumn - a season like no other.

For more information:

- Discover Italy www.italia.it
- Portofino Tourism www.portofinotoursim.com
- Lake Como Tourism www.lakecomotourism.it/en
- Visit Tuscany www.visittuscany.com
- Castelfalfi Tuscan Resort www.castelfalfi.com





**1-Hour cruise of Ellis Island
and the Statue of Liberty**

Museum of Modern Art

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Leave the Camera Take the Memories



Reflections by
Paul Pence



A

As we embarked on our bucket list journey to Alaska's rugged wilderness, my wife and I chuckled at our shared addiction – cameras.

This was a bucket list trip, one that we should have been striving to experience to the fullest, but the travel writer in each of us struggled with the idea that we need to chronicle it for posterity. Should we capture this extraordinary experience or truly live it?

Amidst Alaska's awe-inspiring landscapes, our camera conundrum became evident through our compromise between experiencing and chronicling our adventure. I was armed with a professional camera and an array of lenses, relentlessly pursuing the

perfect shot, while my wife, settling for her trusty cell phone, reveled in the pure essence of the moment.

The contrast was vivid at calving glaciers. While I fumbled with camera gear, adjusting settings and battling the rocking boat, my wife lived the experience. She whooped and hollered as massive ice chunks thundered into the frigid waters, her laughter unburdened by my photographic stress. She got rained on while I worried about water on the lenses. She held on tight as the boat bounced in the aftermath of the calving while I had to manage the camera and pray I didn't go overboard.

Throughout our Alaskan odyssey, the camera hung around my neck like an albatross. It was constantly in the way, taking up space, stealing my attention, and at times irritating those around me. But I was afraid to leave it behind in case I saw something to take a picture of. Frustration welled as I pursued elusive perfection through the viewfinder and the sense of failure at getting the perfect shot overwhelmed the joy at having the perfect experience.

Just packing for this adventure was an ordeal.

My camera gear, with various lenses and accessories, dominated my luggage. There wasn't room in the carryon bags for a tripod, which made the telephoto lenses almost useless. As we worked our way through airport after airport, I envied my wife's minimalist approach, her cell phone effortlessly tucked away.

Trekking on the glacier later in our trip was no less challenging. My camera, dangling from my neck like an albatross, seemed determined to remind me of its presence. While my wife gracefully traversed the ice, I wrestled with the camera, nearly toppling over.

The true test of my camera addiction came when nature intervened. A bear darted in front of our car, a magnificent blur of fur and muscle. There was no time for cameras, and barely enough time to slam on the brakes and avoid being labeled a "bear murderer" for

A close
encounter
with a
Highland
Cow that I
did manage
to get on
camera.

the rest of my life. It was an experience that no camera could have caught, but I was frustrated that I couldn't show everyone a picture of the majestic wild creature that almost became our new bearskin rug.

These moments were poignant reminders that the camera couldn't capture Alaska's heart-pounding thrill. It was a tool, often an obstruction, that repeatedly threatened to keep me from fully embracing the untamed beauty around us. Lens caps. Batteries. Straps. Flash attachments. Memory cards. Backup drives....

At some point it should be experiences, memories, and being in the moment.

When it comes to bringing your camera on your travels, consider the unique contexts that might warrant its presence despite the aggravation. At cultural festivals or ceremonies, your camera becomes a gateway to preserving the essence of local traditions, offering you the opportunity to revisit these cherished moments for years to come. In the presence of awe-inspiring landscapes like the Grand Canyon or the enchanting Northern Lights in Iceland, don't hesitate to have your camera ready to immortalize these natural wonders.

But do you need a professional camera if you're not a journalist? For that matter, do you even need a camera at all? The



post cards at the gift shop will outdo almost everything you can catch yourself, except that selfie of course. And if you do manage to get a thousand wonderful pictures of the experience, they will likely stay on a memory card the way your grandmother's trip to France remains on the slides you store in the basement, neglected and without an audience.

In the age of smartphones and advanced cameras, it's easy to get lost chasing the perfect shot. However, my journey through the wilds of Alaska has taught me that the true treasure lies in fully embracing the journey itself, beyond just snapshots.

So in your travels, consider the wisdom of leaving your camera behind occasionally or letting it be a silent observer. Engage with your surroundings, immerse yourself in the atmosphere, and connect with the people and cultures you encounter. Let your senses guide you,

relish the feeling of being truly present.

As you embark on future adventures, take a deep breath, pack your bags, and set forth with open eyes, an open heart, and perhaps slightly lighter luggage. Your extraordinary travel experiences await, camera or not.

Bon voyage!

Yes, we will be writing about our trip soon, and sharing the pictures.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Paul Pence not only writes many of the articles in the pages of this magazine, he is also the publisher and editor of all of the magazines in the Amygis Publishing's family of travel magazines.



He loves exploring, traveling the back roads, experiencing the world, and finding what is unique and memorable about the places he visits.

And he loves writing – poetry, short stories, essays, non-fiction, news, and, of course, travel writing.

For over 20 years, he has shared his explorations with readers in a wide variety of outlets, from groundbreaking forays into the first stirrings of the dot-com boom to travel guides, local newspapers, and television, including Runner's World, Travel Lady, Providence Journal, and Northstar Travel Media. He currently publishes and writes for Amygis Publishing's magazines Jaunting, Northeast Traveler, and Rhode Island Roads.

Debbie Stone is an established travel writer and columnist, who crosses the globe in search of unique destinations and experiences to share with her readers and listeners.

She's an avid explorer who welcomes new opportunities to increase awareness and enthusiasm for places, culture, food, history, nature, outdoor adventure, wellness and more.

Her travels have taken her to all fifty states and nearly 100 countries, spanning all seven continents.

Her stories reach over three million readers and listeners, and appear in numerous print and digital publications, including Luxe Beat Magazine, Big Blend Radio & TV Magazine, Parks & Travel Magazine, Northwest Prime Time, Woodinville Weekly, Santa Fe Fine Lifestyles Magazine, Edmonds Beacon, Outdoors Northwest, Southwest Stories Magazine, Go World Travel and Travelworld International Magazine, among others. She can also be heard sharing her travel adventures on Big Blend Radio.



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