

# Jaunting

The Magazine of Recreational Travel

## Singapore's Street Food

Domestic Travel

Kissing the Blarney Stone

Soaking Up History at Hot Springs

Wine, Art, and History in Walla Walla

East LA Celebrates Mexican Independence Day

August 2023





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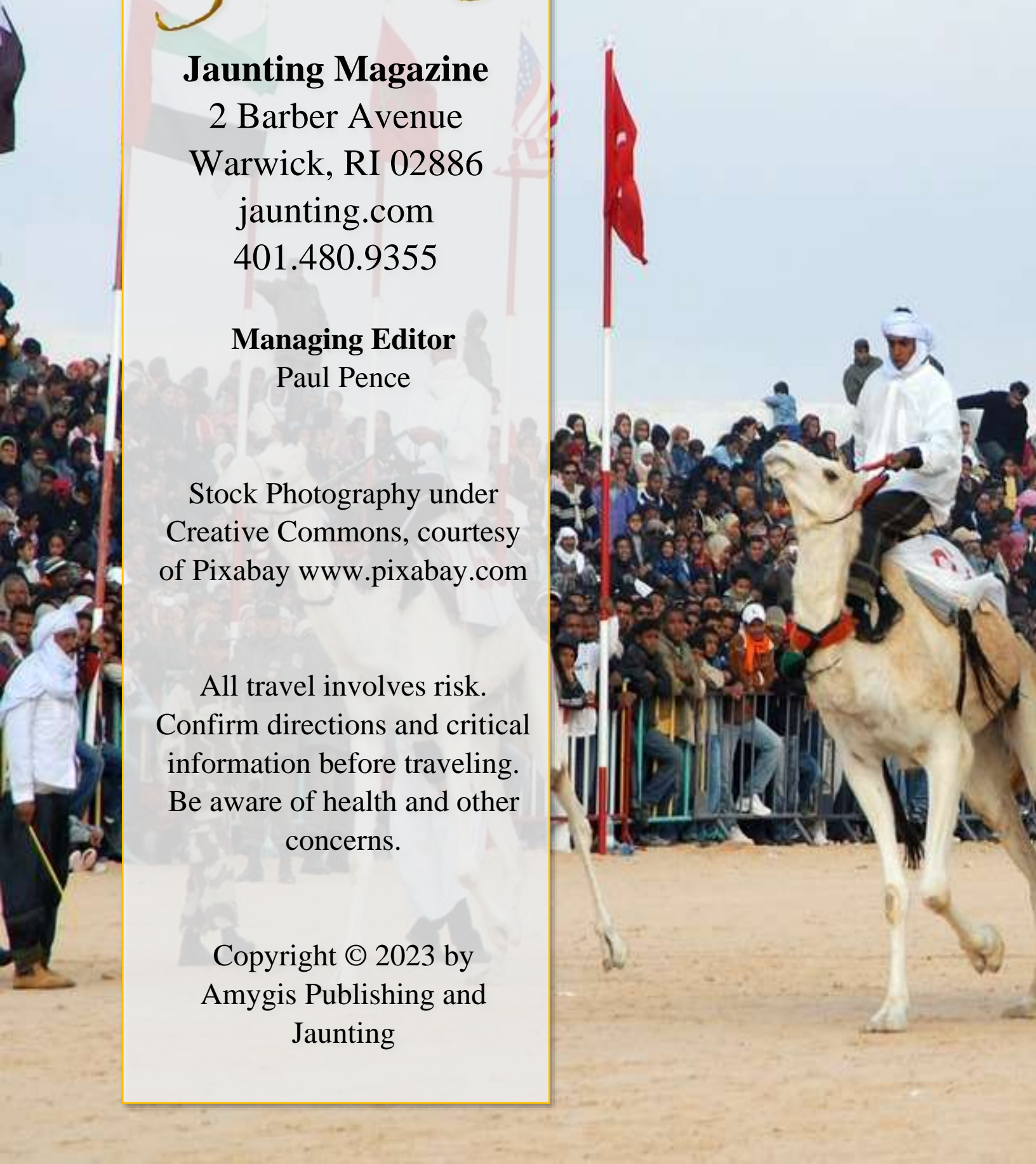
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Confirm directions and critical  
information before traveling.  
Be aware of health and other  
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# Camel Racing in Tunisia

Photo by Herbert Bieser



*A flavorful journey through  
Singapore's vibrant hawker centers,  
where each dish tells a tale of  
history, culture, and shared  
experiences.*







# How to Survive Singapore's Street Food

Feature by

**Max Reynolds**





In Singapore, food is not merely sustenance; it is a cultural emblem that reflects the city's soul and binds its people together.

Beyond the delectable flavors and aromatic spices, dining transcends into a cherished communal ritual, an expression of love, unity, and shared experiences. From intimate family gatherings to bustling social gatherings, every meal becomes an opportunity to forge connections and strengthen bonds.

The act of sharing a meal transcends linguistic and





societal barriers, serving as a universal language that fosters understanding and kinship.

When it comes to savoring the delectable delights of Singapore, the term "street food" hardly captures the essence of the culinary extravaganza that awaits you. In this urban gastronomic wonderland, the traditional notion of street vendors has gracefully evolved into the vibrant realm of Hawker Centers.

These bustling hubs of culinary creativity house an array of culinary treasures that beckon locals and travelers alike to embark on an unforgettable epicurean journey.

Gone are the days of precarious and questionable food stalls lining the bustling streets; Singapore has ushered in a new era of food exploration within its meticulously designed Hawker Centers. These vibrant havens of flavors offer a diverse tapestry of aromas, tastes, and textures that reflect the rich cultural mosaic of this city-state. Yet, the true challenge one might

Despite being in hawker centers, the streetside food vendor atmosphere and mystique lingers.



encounter here is not surviving the street food, but rather resisting the tantalizing temptation to indulge beyond measure.

Hawker centers in Singapore stand as vibrant epicenters of culinary culture, distinct from their Western counterparts found within mall food courts. While Western food courts often offer a varied but standardized selection of familiar fast-food chains, Singapore's hawker centers radiate an authentic and diverse array of flavors, each stall a testament to generations of culinary expertise.

Beyond mere sustenance, hawker centers embody a rich cultural heritage, where traditional recipes are passionately preserved and innovatively reimaged. The communal spirit is palpable, as locals and travelers gather in these bustling hubs, engaging in lively conversations and sharing stories while indulging in a







It may not be easy to choose with so many vendors in one location.

tapestry of Asian and international cuisines. It is within the hawker centers that the heart and soul of Singapore's food culture truly come alive, inviting you to immerse yourself in an unfiltered, and genuinely Singaporean gastronomic experience.

Begin your culinary adventure by selecting a hawker center that resonates with your desired flavors and ambiance. Each center boasts a unique character, whether it's the bustling atmosphere of Maxwell Food Centre or the historic charm of Lau Pa Sat. Take a stroll through the aisles, observing the stalls and gauging the crowds to find the one that beckons you with its aromas and energy.

Here are some major hawker centers in Singapore that you should consider visiting to experience the city-state's vibrant street food scene:

**Maxwell Food Centre:** Located in the heart of



Chinatown, Maxwell is one of the most famous hawker centers in Singapore. It's renowned for its Hainanese chicken rice, popiah (spring rolls), and various local delights.

**Chinatown Complex Food Centre:** Another gem in Chinatown, this hawker center offers a plethora of options, including char kway teow, bak chor mee (minced meat noodles), and dim sum.

**Tiong Bahru Market:** Situated in the charming Tiong Bahru neighborhood, this hawker center is known for its innovative and traditional food offerings, including chwee kueh (steamed rice cakes) and roast meats.

**Old Airport Road Food Centre:** This iconic hawker center is beloved for its diverse range of dishes, from satay to oyster omelette, and its central location makes it easily accessible.





**Lau Pa Sat:** Located in the central business district, Lau Pa Sat is a historic hawker center known for its satay, grilled skewers of meat served with a flavorful peanut sauce.

**Tekka Centre:** Situated in Little India, Tekka Centre is a hub for Indian and Malay cuisine. Don't miss out on dishes like biryani, murtabak, and various curries.

**Amoy Street Food Centre:** Found in the bustling Tanjong Pagar area, Amoy Street Food Centre offers a mix of traditional and modern flavors, including chicken rice and innovative fusion dishes.

**Geylang Serai Market and Food Centre:** Located in the vibrant Geylang Serai district, this hawker center specializes in Malay and Indian-Muslim cuisine, with dishes like nasi padang and mee rebus.

**Golden Mile Food Centre:** This hawker center is known for its diverse selection of dishes, including Thai and Vietnamese cuisine, making it a favorite among locals and expatriates alike.



A food tour can help you navigate and appreciate Singapore's cuisine.





**Adam Road Food Centre:** Situated near the Singapore Botanic Gardens, this hawker center is famous for its nasi lemak, a fragrant coconut rice dish often served with an array of accompaniments.

**Bukit Timah Market and Food Centre:** Located in the western part of Singapore, this hawker center offers a mix of local and international dishes, making it a great spot for foodies with diverse tastes.

**Holland Village Market and Food Centre:** Found in the Holland Village neighborhood, this hawker center



is known for its chill and trendy atmosphere, offering a range of local and international fare.

In addition to the hawker centers, keep an eye out for festivals like Satay on the Bay and night markets.

They add a ephemeral touch to the well-recognized hawker markets and is a great way to expand your exposure to new tastes.

Once within the hawker center, your senses will be tantalized by a



Keep an eye out for special food events and night markets.



plethora of options. Trust your instincts and opt for stalls with a bustling queue – it's often a sign of delicious authenticity. Engage with fellow patrons; their recommendations and spirited discussions can lead you to hidden gems that might have otherwise eluded your radar.

The term "hero" in the context of hawker centers and street food typically refers to a specific food stall or vendor that is particularly renowned for its exceptional dishes. These "hero" stalls are often known for their mastery of a specific dish, the quality of their ingredients, and their ability to consistently deliver a memorable culinary experience. They have often garnered recognition from both locals and food enthusiasts, sometimes even receiving awards or accolades.







Many hero stalls are known for their signature dishes. These dishes are often the ones they have perfected over the years. Start by trying the signature dishes of each stall to get a sense of their expertise.

Ultimately, discovering hero stalls involves a bit of trial and error. Don't be afraid to try different stalls and dishes. You might stumble upon a hidden gem that hasn't been widely mentioned but offers exceptional food.

While hero stalls are known for their excellence, don't limit yourself to just these options. Every hawker center has a diverse range of stalls, and you might discover other hidden treasures that suit your taste

Singaporean cuisine is a product of diverse cultural influences due to its history as a trade hub. While it

Some stalls  
at hawker  
centers  
have earned  
Michelan  
stars!





shares culinary similarities with neighboring countries, it boasts distinct traits. In Malaysia, dishes like Hainanese chicken rice and laksa are popular in both nations, yet Singapore's cuisine reflects international fusion due to its global role. Indonesia's satay and endang are appreciated in Singapore, but with subtle local variations.







With a blend of multiple cultures, the cuisine of Singapore has nearly endless variation.

Thailand and Singapore both adore spice, yet Thai cuisine leans spicier with different herbs. Simplicity characterizes Vietnam's pho, while Singaporean food showcases complexity from multicultural roots. Chinese cuisine parallels, but Singapore's Chinese dishes evolved with local twists. Indian cuisine thrives in Singapore, featuring adaptations like fish head curry. Similarly, Peranakan (Straits Chinese) cuisine



connects both countries, but Singapore's version carries unique local influences. Amidst these shared elements, Singaporean cuisine's standout feature is its harmonious blend of flavors from diverse cultural inspirations, rendering it a truly exceptional culinary adventure.

So what do you order? How about Hainanese Chicken Rice, a beloved national dish, Hainanese chicken rice consists of poached chicken served atop fragrant, seasoned rice. It's often accompanied by chili sauce and ginger paste. The chicken is tender and flavorful, and the rice is cooked with chicken stock for added richness.

Chili Crab is another popular dish, chili crab features crab cooked in a spicy, sweet, and tangy







Chili Crab and Hainanese Chicken Rice are at the top of the list but don't stop there.

tomato-based sauce. It's often enjoyed with mantou, a type of steamed or fried bun, to soak up the delicious sauce.

**Laksa:** Laksa is a spicy noodle soup with a coconut milk base, Char Kway Teow, a stir-fried noodle dish, and the skewered and grilled meat (often chicken, beef, or lamb) called Satay are all great choices.

But for most people, especially those raised on western cuisine, avoid durian: Known as the "king of fruits," durian is infamous for its pungent smell that

some describe as overpowering and very unpleasant.

Singaporean cuisine can also incorporate some very spicy elements, so it's important to gauge your tolerance. In general, but not always, red sauces tend to be associated with highly spiced foods.

And some people might prefer their foods to be prepared behind closed doors, where they can pretend that what happens in the kitchen is magic performed without the touch of human hands or a dash of chaos. Those people might prefer dining at a more traditional restaurant, of which Singapore has in abundance.

Once you order, not forgetting to say your pleases and thank yous, you'll need to find a seat. The hawker centers can get crowded, so you might end up waiting a while. Do not claim a seat where there is some small





personal item on the table – it’s already claimed and the item is marking the person’s claim. But also, don’t be afraid to ask to join someone at a table who has just arrived at a table themselves, people in Singapore are very friendly and enjoy meeting foreigners.

Once you've satisfied your cravings, clear your table by returning your tray and utensils to designated areas. It's a simple yet meaningful gesture that contributes to the shared responsibility of keeping the hawker center clean and inviting for all.

Embarking on a culinary voyage through Singapore's vibrant hawker centers is an exploration of not only flavors but also the very essence of this remarkable city-state. As you traverse the bustling alleys, indulging in a symphony of aromas, tastes, and



Dining in Singapore’s hawker centers is always best done together.



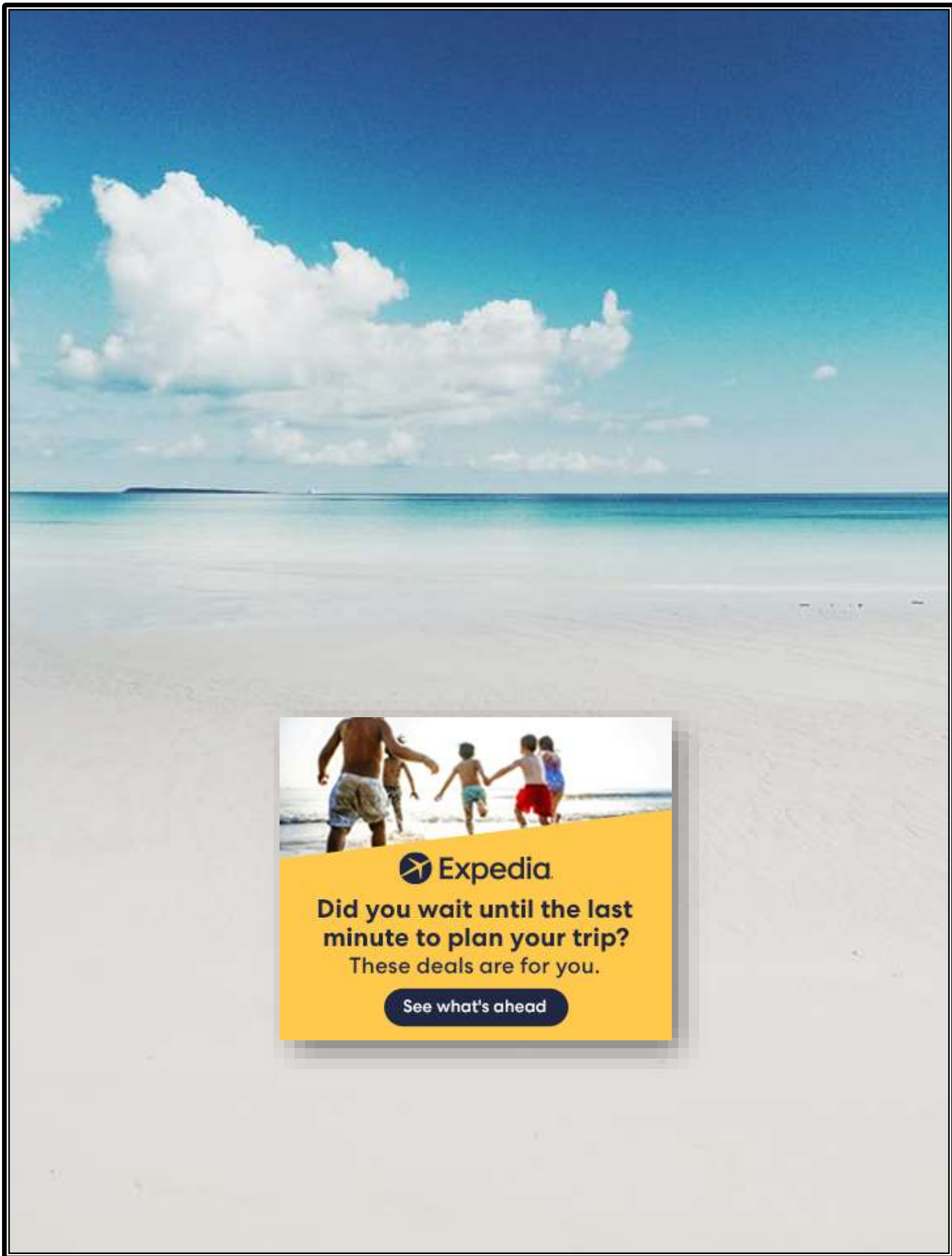
textures, you're not just tasting food – you're tasting history, culture, and the warm embrace of shared experiences.

From the savory dance of laksa to the delicate notes of Hainanese chicken rice, each dish is a chapter in Singapore's captivating narrative. So, when your travels bring you to this enchanting destination, don't merely visit; immerse yourself in the heart of Singapore's gastronomic heritage. Let your taste buds be your guide, and with each bite, discover the stories that have shaped this culinary wonderland. Your journey through Singapore's hawker centers is an invitation to partake in a cultural feast, to embrace the unfamiliar, and to forge memories one delectable dish at a time.

**For more information:**

[www.visitsingapore.com/en/](http://www.visitsingapore.com/en/)





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*Immerse yourself in history as you explore the healing waters and vibrant past of Hot Springs, Arkansas, America's first national park.*







# Soak up history in Hot Springs, Arkansas

## Springs onal Park

rk Service  
ment of the Interior

Feature by  
Debbie Stone





I

It's perfectly legal to be naked in Arkansas' Hot Springs National Park. Yes, you read that right - the caveat being as long as you're in the Buckstaff Bathhouse! Simply don your birthday suit and soak your troubles away when you visit this historic bathhouse within one of the most unique national parks in the country.

Hot Springs was essentially America's first national park, predating Yellowstone by forty years. President





Andrew Jackson viewed the mineral waters in this area as a coveted natural wonder and deemed the land protected, designing it as the first federal reservation in 1832.

This was the start of the Golden Era of Bathing when such waters were thought to have medicinal properties and the ailing, encouraged by their doctors, flocked to them for relief from a variety of conditions.

At first, bathing facilities were rustic, but eventually the waters' healing reputation combined with laws necessitating more sanitary and fireproof buildings, mandated changes. The new accommodations had to suit the destination's nickname, "the American Spa," and were thus appropriately opulent and imposing.

Today, visitors can stroll down historic Bathhouse Row right in the heart of the town of Hot Springs. Eight ornate buildings, each with a different architectural style, are the marquee attraction in the National Park. They were constructed between the years of 1892 and

The Buckstaff has been soaking away pain for 100 years.



1923 and include Fordyce, Buckstaff, Quapaw, Lamar, Superior, Hale, Ozark and Maurice.



Stop in at the Fordyce Bathhouse first. This striking Renaissance Revival style building now serves as the park's Visitor Center and museum. You can take a self-guided tour through all three levels of the place to see what a bath experience was like back in the day. Special bathing and medical equipment, an exercise gym, dressing and massage rooms, and more are on display, along with beautiful stained-glass skylights and ceilings, mosaic floor tiles, statues and marble fixtures.



As you read the informative signs,



you'll learn that a typical day at the bathhouse in the 1900s-era involved the following:

First, soaking in a tub while an attendant scrubbed your back, arms and legs; then being wrapped in hot towels; next, a few minutes in the steam cabinet; followed by a dip in the sitz bath (think of a bidet for your rear end – reportedly good for soothing hemorrhoids!) and finally the needle shower, where pressurized jets hit you with water all over your body.

Oh, and depending on your needs, you might also get to spend time in a special hydrotherapy bathtub, where an attendant would stick an electric probe in the water, issuing shocks



Exhibits at the Fordyce Bathhouse show how treatments were delivered in a bygone era.



to supposedly relax your tense muscles or activate nonfunctioning ones.

If you're interested in soaking in one of the bathhouses during your visit to Hot Springs, you have two choices, Buckstaff or Quapaw. For an authentic experience (swimsuit optional, men and women use separate facilities) that includes a soak, hot towel wrap, steam cabinet and sitz bath, book a reservation at Buckstaff, the oldest, continuing bathhouse in Hot Springs, dating back to 1912.

For something more contemporary, head to Quapaw and soak in the communal mineral pools (swimsuit mandatory, coed) or get your own private



bath. Better yet, opt for The Quapaw package, which features private bath, massage, foot conditioning and scalp massage. Lamar Bathhouse is now Hot Springs National Park's gift shop, while Ozark is the park's Cultural Center and displays artwork from the park's Artist-in-Residence Program. Hale is now a luxury hotel and Maurice is currently vacant.

Superior Bathhouse, on the other hand, is home to the only brewery in a United States National Park, and



Superior Bathhouse offers a different way to enjoy the hot springs' waters.

the only in the world to use thermal spring water to make its beer. Get a flight of four or take a “beer bath” and sample all eighteen craft beers on tap. Or try one of the famous root beer floats, also made with the spring water.



You can also drink the thermal water at one of the town’s “jug fountains,” free of charge. Hard to miss them, as that’s where you’ll typically see the locals lining up to fill their bottles. The public consumes a whopping 700,000 gallons a day and



many swear by the water’s positive effects. As I waited my turn to fill my personal container, one man told me since he’s been drinking the water, he feels better and gets sick less often. “It’s really good for you,” he said.

Check out nearby Hot Water



Cascade on Arlington Lawn to see the water exit the earth. This is the largest visible spring in Hot Springs National Park. The water emanates from the hillside, flows under a path, down a cliff and into two pools. Steam rises, letting you know this stuff is hot. How hot, you ask? 143 degrees Fahrenheit to be exact!



Among those who came to Hot Springs years ago to experience the purported curative powers of the thermal

waters were numerous notable gangsters, outlaws and Major League Baseball players. The infamous figures, in particular, were attracted to the area, not only because of its reputation as a wellness mecca, but also because there was plenty of entertainment available at the gambling



(L) Many locals get hot springs water at the town's "Jug fountains".  
® The town remembers the bad old days.



establishments, clubs and brothels. Pick your vice!

**Hot Springs offered Las Vegas amenities before there was even a Las Vegas.** Most importantly, these men knew that the town officials and police often looked the other way when it came to questionable activities. The gangsters were welcomed and their actions tolerated because they spent lots of money during their visits, were friendly to the locals and some even engaged in charitable endeavors.

To find out more about the underworld presence in Hot Springs, join a guided tour at the Gangster Museum of America. You'll hear fascinating stories about how some of the most notorious criminals in the country



rubbed elbows with the residents of this little valley hamlet in the Arkansas mountains.

The museum has seven galleries, each with audiovisual experiences, photos and artifacts. The Madden Gallery, for example, focuses on Owney “The Killer” Madden, a big player in NYC, who amassed a fortune from a number of enterprises, including the Stork Club and the Cotton Club. However, after serving a stint in Sing Sing, Madden was told in no uncertain terms that he was no longer welcome in New York State. He subsequently moved his wealth and skills to Hot Springs, where he sought a slower lifestyle, while helping to build an even bigger illegal gambling operation.

Gambling and all sorts of vice were out in the open in Hot Springs.



Although Madden was regarded as one of the toughest criminals among his peers, he also had a reputation as being one of the most generous. And the town of Hot Springs was a recipient of this largesse. As an example, Madden constructed the biggest Boys and Girls Club in the state of Arkansas at the time. He also purchased uniforms for the high school band and made many contributions to churches and other organizations.

The Power Brokers Gallery is an exposé on the political machine that helped create the largest illegal gambling operation in the country. At its helm were then Mayor Leo Patrick McLaughlin and Judge Verne Ledgerwood, who “organized” the town and kept it under their iron grip for twenty years.

Al Capone gets his turn in the spotlight in a gallery of his own. Though a feared crime boss in Chicago, Capone was known to be an amiable guy and generous tipper during his regular visits to Hot Springs. He





considered the town to be an enjoyable vacation spot, as well as a safe hideout due to its secluded location and “agreeable” police force, and would always bring an entourage with him of up to forty people.

Learn more about those days at the Gangster Museum of America.



The New York Connection Gallery showcases the many gangsters from NYC who came to Hot Springs, often under the auspices of seeking advice from Owney Madden. They included crime bosses Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Frank Costello and Ben Siegel.

The Outlaw Gallery introduces some new players to the scene. Alvin Karpis and the Ma Barker gang, Bonnie and Clyde, Jesse James and Frank “Jelly” Nash, all passed through the area, seeking a place to hide out when the heat was on.

As for those baseball players I mentioned earlier, they came to town for spring training. Hot Springs is known as the birthplace of Major League spring training and between the late 1800s through the middle of the

20th century, it hosted more than 300 professional ball players. Included on this roster were Hall of Famers Babe Ruth, Cy Young, Jackie Robinson, Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Hank Aaron and others.

It all started in 1886 when the Chicago White Stockings, now the Cubs, went to Hot Springs to “boil out the winter.” The team held practices on a makeshift field and the players “took the waters” to soak any ailments away. When the White Stockings went on to win the National League’s pennant that year, other teams paid attention.

For a picturesque view of Hot Springs and its environs, hike the 1.5-mile trail from town or take the





scenic drive up to Hot Springs Mountain Tower. An elevator transports you 216 feet to the observation decks, where at an elevation of 1,256 feet above sea level, you'll overlook 140 square miles of surrounding countryside, including the entire National Park and part of the Ouachita Mountains. The lower deck is enclosed and air conditioned and contains exhibits about the park and local history. The upper deck is open-air and provides the best viewing site. From this vantage point, with the landscape a lush green as far as the eye can see, you'll understand why Arkansas is called The Natural State.

Garvan Woodland Gardens is another highlight in the area.



There's more in Hot Springs than just hot springs.

Nestled on 4.5 miles of wooded shoreline along Lake Hamilton, this botanical paradise is only fifteen minutes from Hot Springs.

Verna C. Garvan started the gardens in 1956, plotting out the paths, selecting the plants and choosing their locations. Later, she gifted the 210-acre property to the





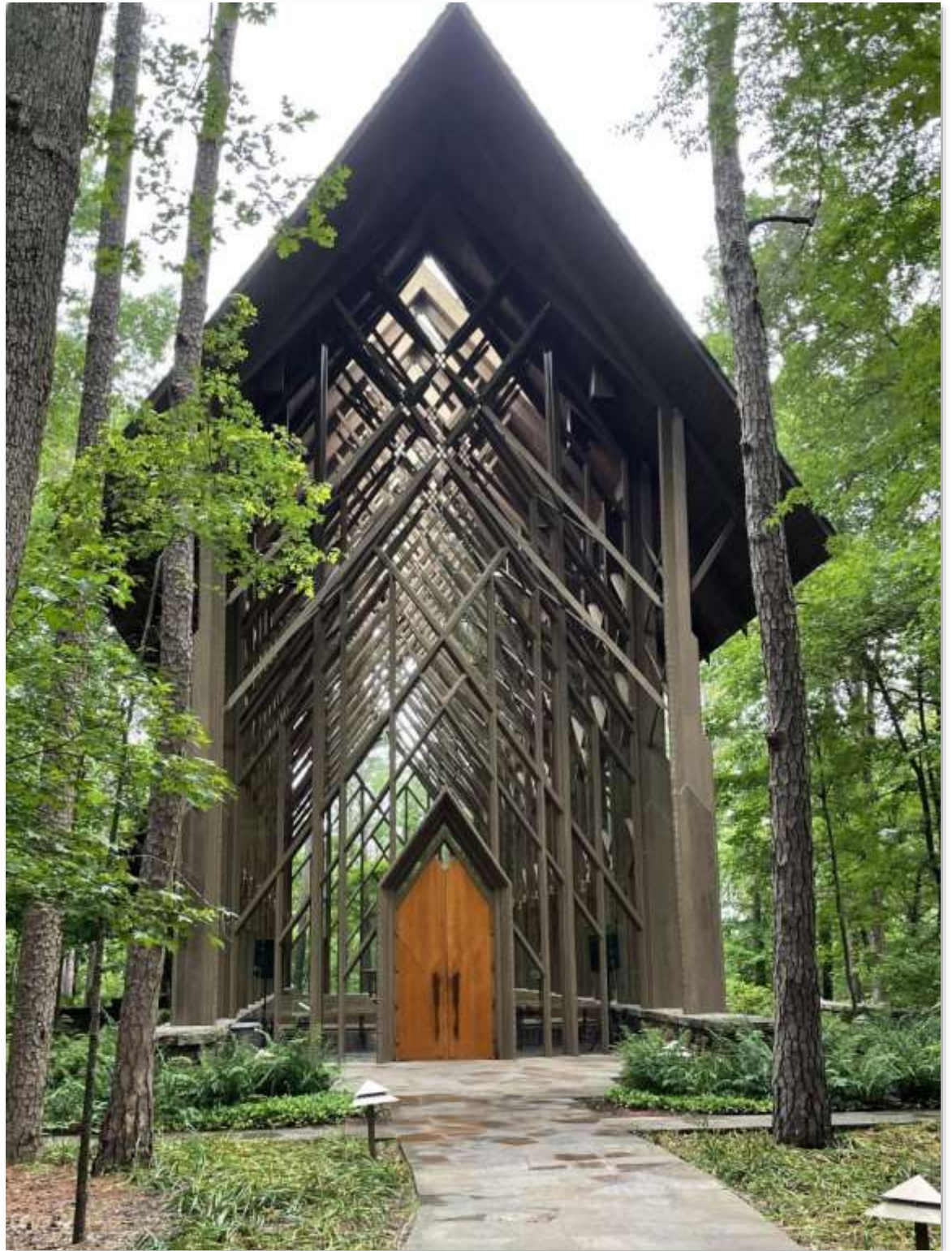


Department of Landscape Architecture through the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

This lush Edenesque oasis boasts majestic landscapes and dynamic architectural structures. Ornamental and native shrubs and wild flowers bedeck the

Garvan Woodlands Gardens is a great place to relax and enjoy nature.





place, along with a four-acre Asian garden, several notable bridges, a children's adventure garden, nature



preserve and the spectacular Anthony Chapel.

As you stroll through this verdant setting, you'll discover treasures around each corner. Like the Garden of the Pine Wind, one of the best Asian gardens in North America. Hundreds of Asian ornamental plants and trees create a serene and peaceful setting. And if you're there in spring, you'll be surrounded by a host of colorful azaleas and peonies. Key features include the Sunrise Bridge and the Joy Manning Scott Bridge of the Full Moon (the sphere-shaped arch in the majestic bridge resembles those found in China), a 12-foot waterfall, koi pond and four pools.

The pièce de resistance, however, is the Bob and Sunny Evans Tree House. It's every child's (and adult's, too!) dream. Suspended amid the oaks and pines, each of the four levels is based on a different part of the tree.

The Hixson Family Nature Preserve looks out over the lake and encompasses 45 acres. There are educational displays along the walkway and benches for bird watching. The Audubon Society has identified more than 120 species of birds here, so keep your eyes peeled and cameras ready!

**Don't miss the Anthony Chapel, one of the state's most unique and requested wedding venues.** Made of native wood and glass, it boasts a 57-foot vaulted ceiling that appears to reach to the sky. Reportedly, the chapel has amazing acoustics that musicians adore. A gorgeous grand Steinway piano sits ready on the stage.

You'll probably work up an appetite as you tour the

The  
Anthony  
Chapel in  
the Hixson  
Family  
Preserve  
echoes the  
tall trees of  
the Hixson  
Family  
Nature  
Preserve.

numerous attractions in and around town. Rest assured, good food can be found in Hot Springs. Start your day at Kollektive Coffee + Tea with an Iced Mocha or French Lemon Ginger Tea, accompanied by a build-your-own bagel or Breakfast Bowl of Goodness.

For lunch, try Café 1217, where you'll find fresh, unpretentious food, made from scratch. The salads and sandwiches are delish, and service is efficient and friendly.

If you need an afternoon treat, make a beeline for Kilwin's, an old-fashioned confectionary shop selling handmade sweets, chocolates and ice cream.

Enjoy dinner at The Porter House, especially if you're a carnivore, as the restaurant's fame to claim is its prime steaks. But even if you're a pescatarian like me, you'll find plenty of options from shrimp skewers to grilled Atlantic Salmon and polenta crusted Chilean Sea Bass.

If you're in the mood for south-of-the-border fare, try Rolandos Nuevo Latino. Good guac and a range of tasty entrees including enchiladas, tamales and quesadillas can be found at this popular local establishment.

Dine with a view at Fisherman's Wharf on Lake Hamilton. This laid-back spot is all about seafood. Opt to eat your grilled or fried fish on the spacious patio, right next to the water, and get there at sunset for the rosy glow.

Check out the Ohio Club when you're thirsty for a libation or just want to get a look at the famous mahogany back bar. The Ohio Club is the oldest bar in



Arkansas, dating back to 1905, and it also served as a speakeasy, cigar store and casino in its time. Everyone from celebs and gangsters to baseball greats and well-known musical acts graced the place. Nightly live music is still the mainstay.



Hot Springs offers many excellent choices for food and drinks, including the Ohio Club. (Bar photo courtesy of Hot Springs Tourism.)

When it comes to accommodations, you'll be happy to hear there are plenty of options in town, from historical hotels to quaint inns. I chose to stay at Hotel Hot Springs,



a contemporary, newly renovated property just a few blocks from downtown. Rooms are spacious and comfortable and all the necessary amenities are available, including an onsite restaurant with an elevated pub menu. Complimentary breakfast is included, as well as complimentary shuttle service to area attractions if you prefer not to walk.

### For more information

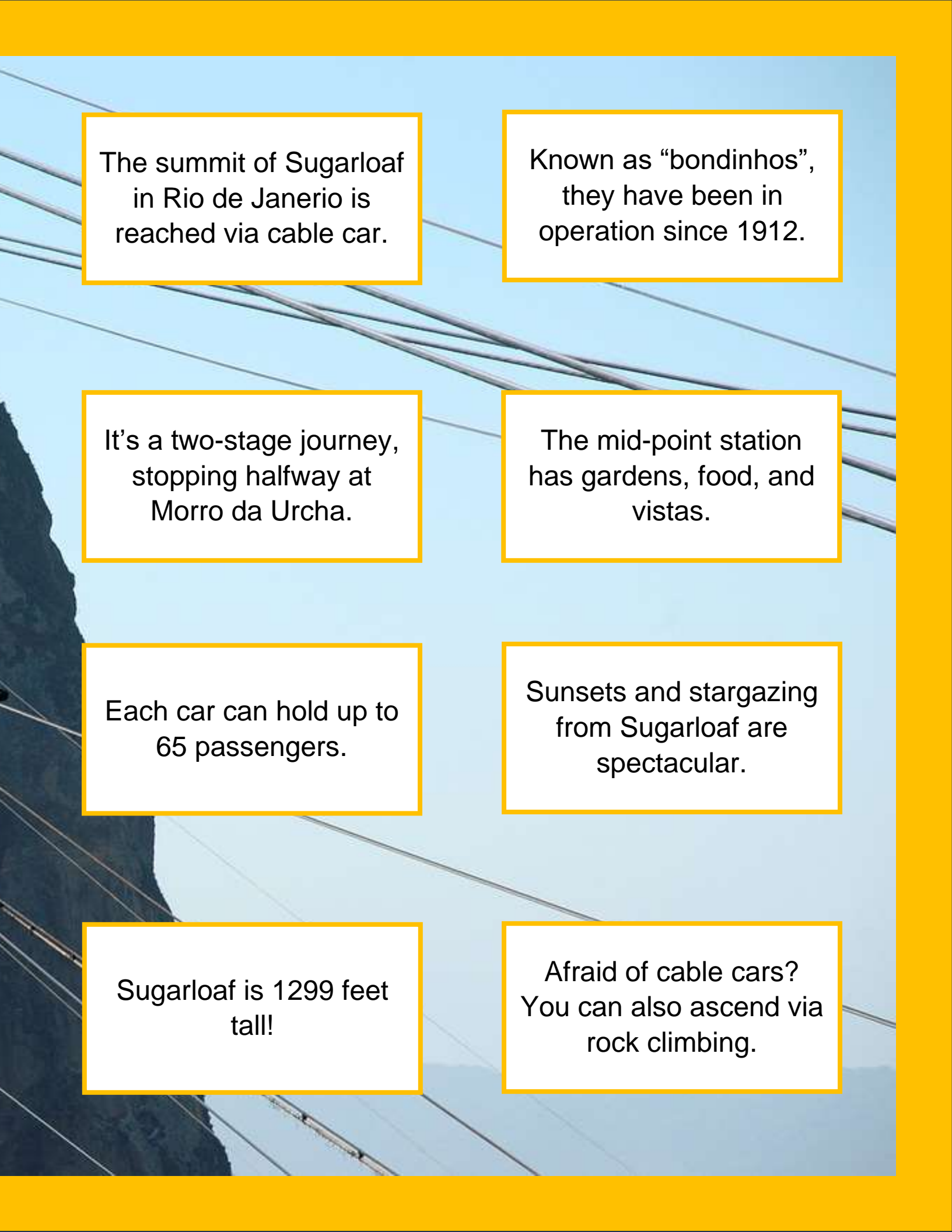
- [www.hotsprings.org](http://www.hotsprings.org)
- [www.hotelhotsprings.org](http://www.hotelhotsprings.org)



# Sugarloaf Mountain's Cable Cars







The summit of Sugarloaf in Rio de Janeiro is reached via cable car.

Known as “bondinhos”, they have been in operation since 1912.

It’s a two-stage journey, stopping halfway at Morro da Urcha.

The mid-point station has gardens, food, and vistas.

Each car can hold up to 65 passengers.

Sunsets and stargazing from Sugarloaf are spectacular.

Sugarloaf is 1299 feet tall!

Afraid of cable cars? You can also ascend via rock climbing.





*Experience the silly ritual inspired  
by a tall tale woven by the master  
of flattery and deception.*

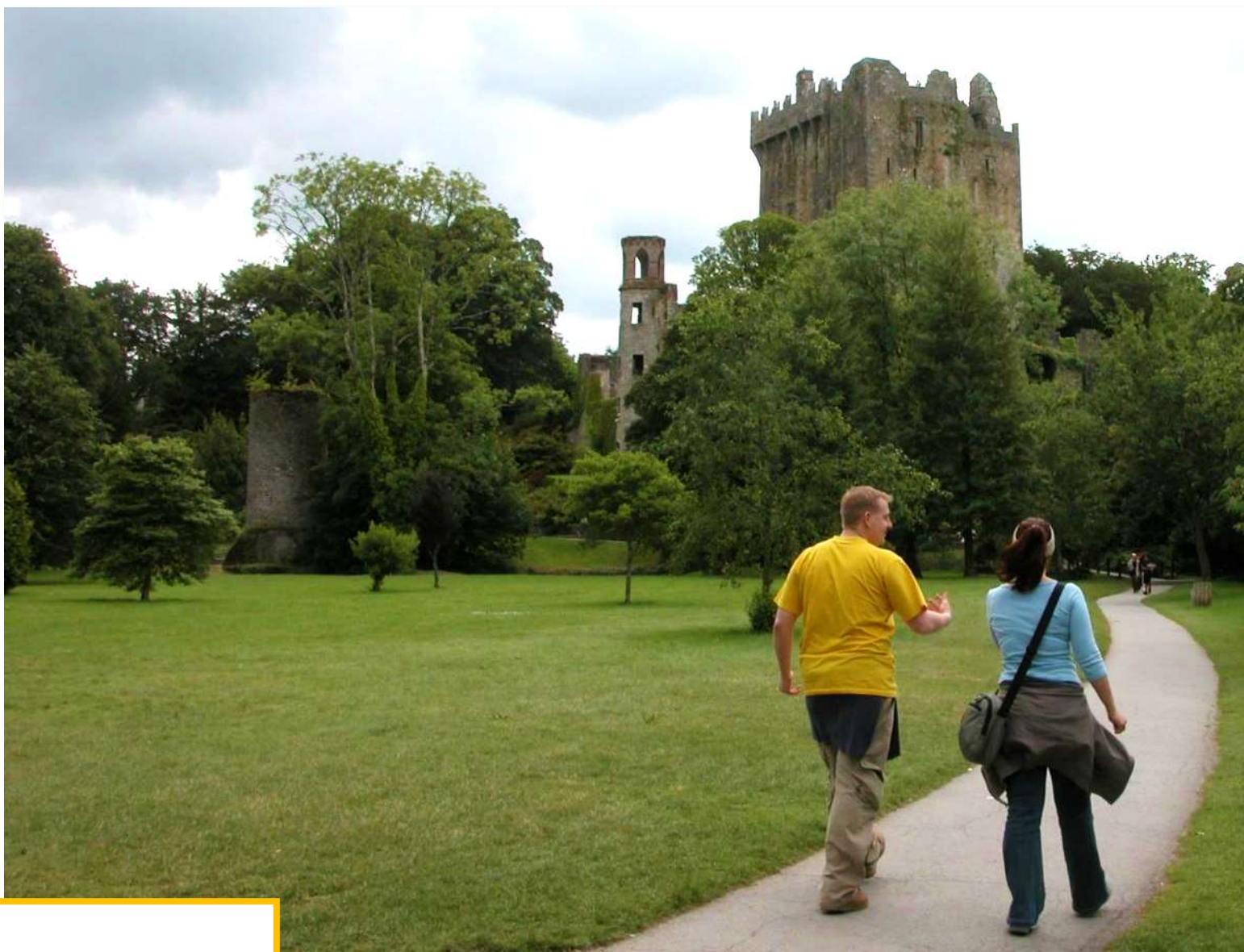




Romancing the Stone  
*Kissing the Barney Stone*

Feature by  
**Paul Pence**





*A*

As I laid on my back, precariously stretched over the edge of the ancient parapet, arched over a void and hands gripping iron rails, I couldn't help but think that this was an awkward position for a grown man to put himself simply to do a silly thing that millions of tourists have done before.





My head tilted backward, almost defying gravity, we peered down at the ground far below. The faint aroma of damp stone and centuries-old history wafted through the air, mingling with the nervous excitement that tingled in our bellies. This, they said, was the way to unlock the legendary "gift of gab." This was the moment I would join the ranks of countless tourists who had come before us, seeking eloquence from a simple act of smooching a stone.

Kissing the stone is ingrained in the traveler's psyche. Like riding a gondola in Venice, pretending to hold up (or push over) the Tower of Pisa, or for the more daring running with the bulls in Pamplona, it's expected that if you travel to Ireland, you are expected to do it.

According to lore, Cormac McCarthy, Lord Blarney was known for being able to lie to your face so believably that you'd accept the most ridiculous things – an action

he succeeded in doing repeatedly to Queen Elizabeth the First to maintain his power without directly upsetting the crown. When asked how he developed such a talent, he spun yet another ridiculous tale. He said that he once found himself embroiled in a complex political situation, his words trapped in a web of diplomacy and intrigue. In a dream he was told that if he could kiss the large stone near the top of the castle, he would be granted eloquence enough to talk his way out of his situation. So he had his servant hold him by his ankles and dangle him over a 90-foot drop as he kissed the stone, magically gaining his persuasiveness.

**Of course it was another example of his trademarked “blarney”, a whimsical fabrication.** But it spawned a steady flow of believers for 400 years.

For the first three hundred years, before it became a true tourist attraction with proper safety precautions (along with kissing the backside of the stone rather than being dangled by your ankles), alcohol-fueled believers probably snuck into the castle late at night and had their equally-drunk buddies dangle them over the edge. While safety measures are better now, it's still unnerving to be bent over backwards peering down at the rocks nine stories down.

Being in Cork, we wanted to tour a castle and grounds anyway, so why not que up to smooch a rock? The tale of the Blarney Stone weaves through guidebooks and folklore, beckoning visitors like us to partake in this peculiar rite. "You simply must do it," they'd say. And so, joining generations of fellow explorers, my wife and I took our place in line.



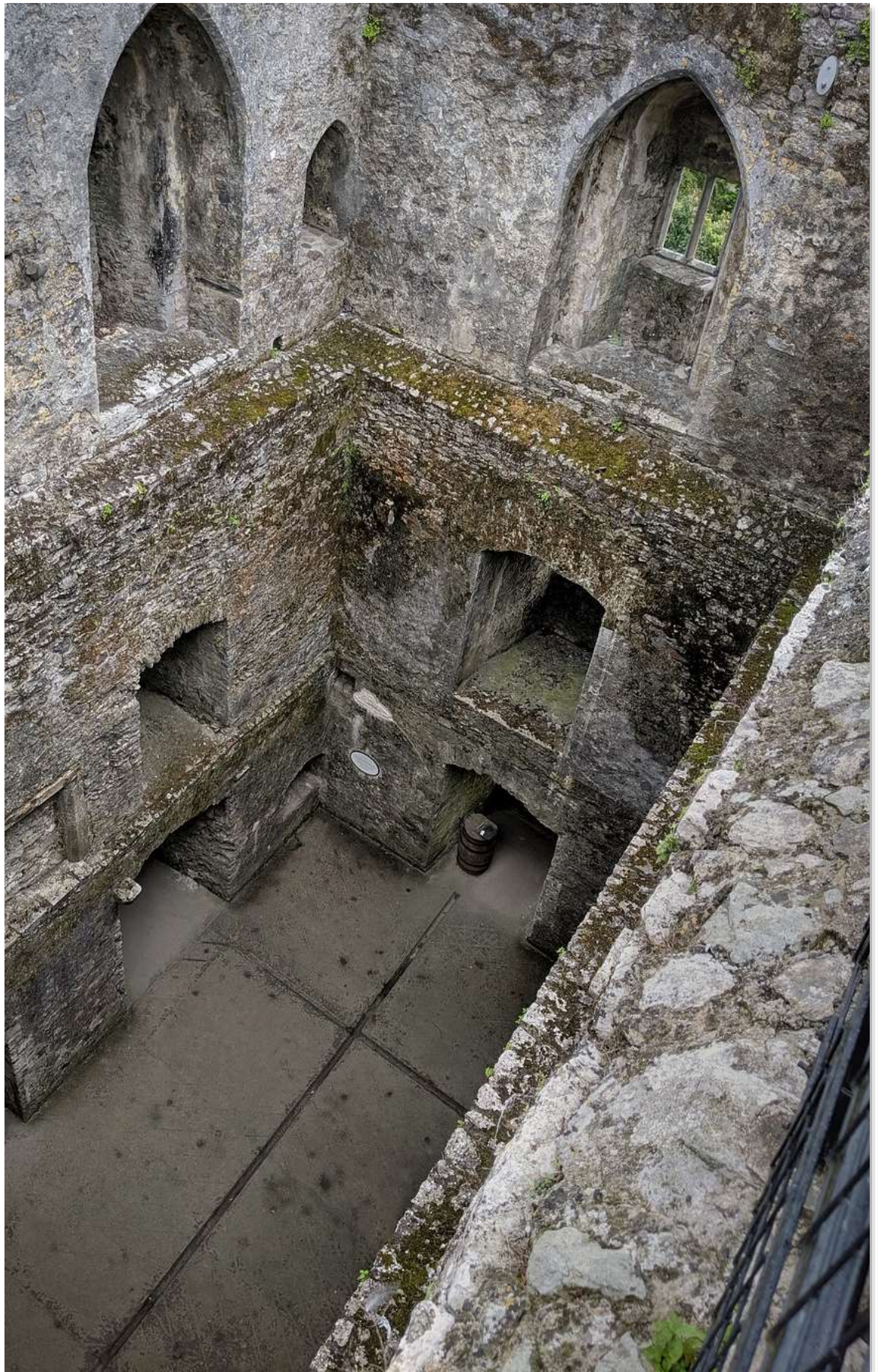
Blarney Castle is more properly an Irish “tower house”, built on a rocky outcropping in the Cork countryside, providing the McCarthy clan a place to rule over the region. Like the other Irish tower houses, it is square, flat-sided, and lacks the enclosed areas and external fortifications that medieval castles are known for. But that doesn’t keep it from being impressive.

Not just a place to kiss the Blarney Stone, you can experience the history of the castle and enjoy the beautiful grounds.



The tower is largely exposed limestone, though in its heyday it would have been plastered and painted white to make it stand out even more. It’s a ruin, and oddly it is a ruin on purpose. In order to enforce its power over Ireland, the Tudor dynasty implemented







polices and taxes that forced the castles to be un-roofed and fall into disrepair.

As it sits now, its interior woodwork is gone. No floors, no paneling, no roof. But the strong foundations dating from the 1400's and the limestone walls with their crenelations remain. The staircases up and back down still provide access and vantage points to see the now open interior, with fireplaces and notches in the walls showing where wooden floors would have been suspended. Banquet halls, living quarters, and the chapel are now empty space, but visitors can still visit "the dungeon" which is in reality a cistern and the castle's bathroom called a "garderobe", which is basically just



Just the strong stonework of the castle remains.



a small room with a hole that dumped waste down the side of the castle walls.

Entry is up a narrow earthen ramp with a sharp bend to expose an attacker's unshielded side to defenders' arrows. Then through a small antechamber with stout doors on both the entrance to the antechamber and out again. Directly above the space is the "murder hole" allowing defenders to shoot down arrows or pour burning oil down onto the bunched up attackers. A few steps inside and up some stairs, you can look down the hole and ponder massacre in defense of the castle.

Climbing the narrow, winding stairs brought us past





The stone steps lead up and modern railings protect you once you ascend.



arrow slits peeking out from higher and higher vantage points. Until at last we emerged at the top of the castle. A slate-covered roof, gone now, would have spanned the open inside of the castle. Instead, a railing on our left had been added to keep tourists from wandering in and... down down down. To the right was the crenulated outer wall of the wall. We could peek out between the crenels, notches, and see the Irish countryside. Surprisingly, the Lord's quarters were on the lowest level where there would be the least climbing involved rather than on the topmost level where he could have a commanding view.

Between the space where we could walk and the outer wall were openings looking straight downward,







The Blarney Stone is the large flat stone at the bottom of this segment of wall.

large enough that stones or arrows could be used against attackers who stood right against the castle wall. Called “machicolations” these openings had a special role in our adventure. We were going to go down into on.

While the rest of the castle walls were several feet thick, that topmost piece of wall is only one layer thick. Lord Blarney’s magical rock that was dangerously far down the side of the castle could be accessed much easier from the inside. Well, much easier if you consider laying on your back, slithering backwards head first into the hole, and going so far that you hope that the local man assisting the process doesn’t let go, is easier than being dangled by your ankles.



So we dropped a couple euros into the pot and took our places. I doubt very many people rejected the local man's assistance knowing that they will be staring straight down at rocks and jagged tree branches. There were a pair of iron bars to grip on and a grid to keep you from falling, but it was still unnerving.

Pucker up, smooch, and slither back out.

My wife and I had joined the ranks of Mick Jagger, John Kennedy, Queen Elizabeth II, and Mark Twain along with centuries-long line of tourists.

Descending from the castle via a different set of stairs, we explored the grounds. Ancient and beautiful with gnarled trees, summer flowers, and stones with





Local men help tourists in their quest for the gift of gab.

fanciful names like “Witches, Kitchen” gave us a pleasant and soothing ending to our adventure.

So should you do the same? Should you spend a little time joining in a bit of tourist silliness, inspired by a whimsical yarn spun by a smooth-talking liar who was so audacious as to look right to the face of a Tudor queen and so skillful at it that not only did he not get beheaded, his name itself is synonymous with flattery and balderdash.

Why not? If you do, maybe you’ll be blessed with the gift of gab too.

**For more information:**

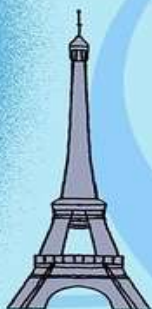
- [blarneycastle.ie](http://blarneycastle.ie)





"A very fun read with a great message. Anyone reading will certainly get in touch with their adventurous side and be inspired to see the world for themselves!"

—Dr. Evan Antin, author of *World Wild Vet* and host of Animal Planet's *Evan Goes Wild*



# TRAVEL MANIA

## STORIES OF WANDERLUST



KAREN GERSHOWITZ



• Domestic Travel

# Closer to Home

Article by

**Karen Gershowitz**

*There's so much to see here in the US, so there's no reason to hold off on those travel plans.*





**A**

fter being cooped up for over a year, there's a lot of pent-up demand for travel. But there's also concern about how safe travel is.

A few months ago, I decided that in the interest of safety 2021 would be a year to explore North America, rather than flying to more exotic destinations. How, you ask, can staying here be as exciting as a trip to Paris, Tokyo or a safari in Tanzania? And how do I avoid the crowds that are likely to converge on major tourist destinations?





Start by thinking of activities you love. That can be jazz, antiquing, cooking, soccer, woodworking or just about anything. I'm drawn to crafts, especially artists' studios. I'm a sucker for gardens, puppets and anything that hints at bizarre. Plan a trip around your passion. Look for festivals, out-of-the way museums, contests, workshops or anything else that will connect you with equally enthralled people.

When you arrive, talk with locals who share your interests. A smile and genuine interest gets people to open up. Asking for tips can lead to amazing finds.

While traveling near Knoxville with a friend who's mad for fiddle music, I visited the Museum of Appalachia. In one small cabin a guitar player sprawled on a hand-carved wooden chair as his sausage-like fingers flew. The fiddle player broke into a jig, playing all the while. A tall, stately woman played banjo and sang with a soft twang. Although there were only two of us in their audience, they played as if they were at the

The Museum of Appalachia offers a look into the history of the region.

## Grand Ole Opry.

At the end of each song, we applauded enthusiastically. My friend asked about their instruments and songs. The fiddle player tipped his hat in appreciation and said, “You gals should go over to the Lake View Inn tonight.” He went on, “Every Monday they have a pickin’ session. It’s great fun.” That’s how we ended up at a free, impromptu concert, in a motel dining room filled with devoted locals. On stage (in front of the salad bar) amateur and professional musicians played for hours to this exuberant audience. It was as wonderful and exotic an experience as any I’ve encountered.

National Parks will most likely be over-crowded this summer. But if you love nature and want to avoid





throng of people, head to the lesser-known state and provincial parks or other government owned land. At Anzo-Borrego state park in California there is some of the best stargazing on the planet. One August night I must have seen a hundred shooting stars. If you like wild, uncluttered beaches and outstanding beach combing try Ecola state park in Oregon. Letchworth state park in New York has endless waterfalls, well-maintained hiking trails and cabins for rent. In the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia I had close-up encounters with alligators and marveled at the cypress knees, dense vegetation and shimmering water. Every state has dozens of parks, from wild to tame, with a wide variety of amenities. I vividly remember going to a remote park in Ontario when I was a small child; today's kids will retain equally wonderful memories.



National  
Parks a a  
great place  
to explore  
when you  
travel  
domestically



The United States is a country of immigrants and each group brings their cultural heritage and cuisine with them. If you're a foodie, you don't have to cross an ocean to taste the best the world offers. Some of the best Vietnamese food I've ever eaten, including in Viet Nam, was in Minneapolis. Go on a food tour in New Orleans and take a cooking class while you're there. In Miami sample authentic Cuban food. Charleston has great seafood—go for crab, bouillabaisse, oysters and grouper at a riverfront restaurant. In San Francisco or New York to eat specialties from across China. The list is endless and the possibilities delicious.

Plan a trip around North America's lesser-known cities and towns. Some of my favorites include Hyde Park, NY, Lafayette, LA and Taos, NM. They're filled with





weck, an unforgettable pretzel-bun sandwich. I also saw prized vintage automobiles, talked with local craftspeople and watched kids compete in hilarious competitions. **Was it Rome? No, but it was unforgettable, and I had a fabulous time.**

Think you can't see world class attractions outside of major cities? Think again. Columbus, Indiana has dozens of buildings designed by some of the world's finest architects. It's a small city that The American Institute of Architects has ranked as sixth in the United States for architectural innovation and design. Take a tour, I guarantee you'll be impressed.

Most people are aware of wine tours in California. But do you know about the Tennessee whiskey trail? The distilleries are as hospitable and beautiful as any







winery I've ever visited. And the whiskey is world class.

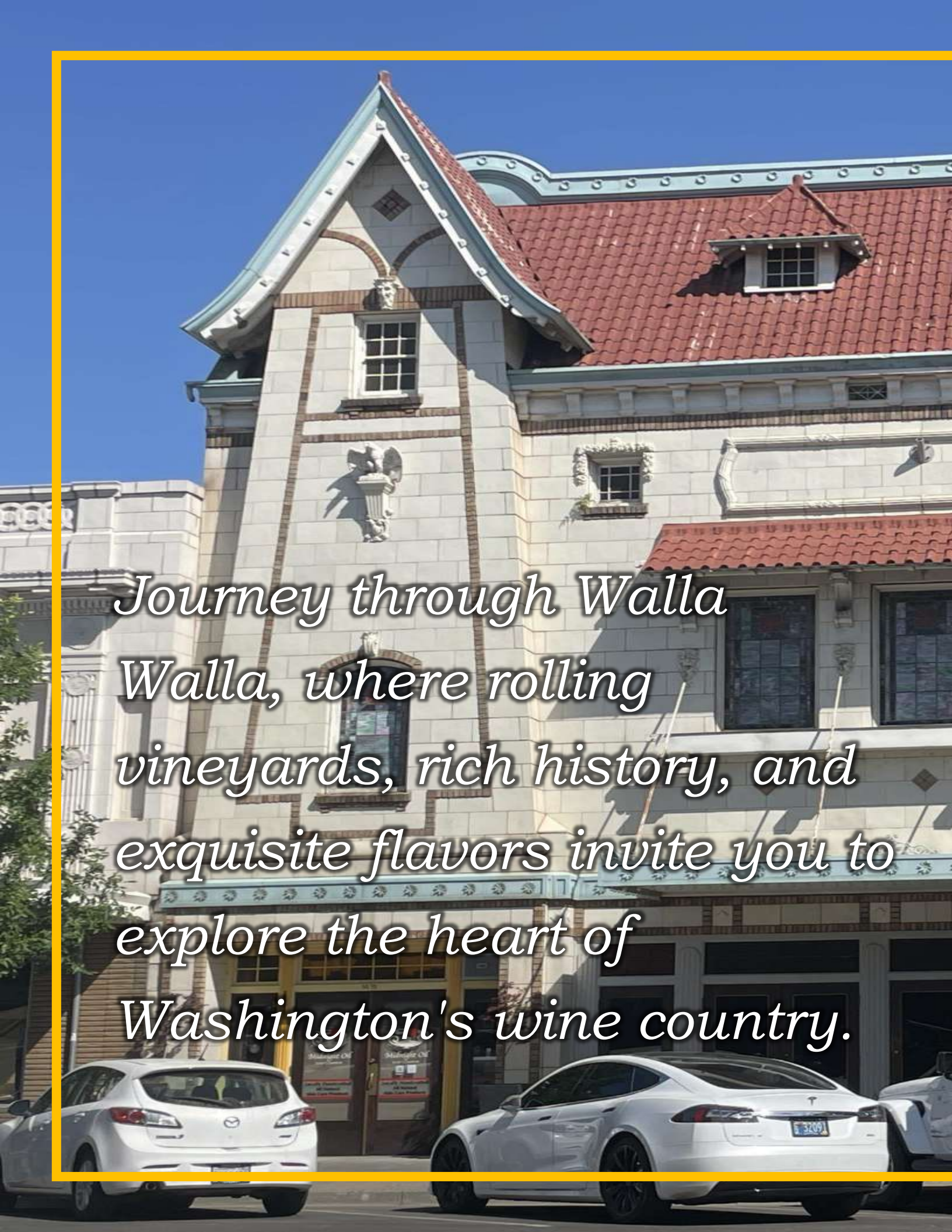
The Vail Dance Festival brings together top dance companies from around the world; you'll have the chance to see the NY City Ballet with the Rocky Mountains as a backdrop.

For art lovers, head to Marfa, Texas or Silver City, New Mexico or Berea, Kentucky. All three (and many other towns) are brimming with galleries filled with work by emerging and established artists.

I celebrated my fortieth birthday by taking an extended road trip around the USA. Even with months of travel, I never ran out of places that delighted and intrigued me. Search around, go down the rabbit hole on your browser, you'll be astounded at the top-notch possibilities you've never even heard of. Then go out and explore.

Memories  
can come in  
the shape of  
dance  
festivals,  
wineries,  
art, or just  
hitting the  
open road.





*Journey through Walla  
Walla, where rolling  
vineyards, rich history, and  
exquisite flavors invite you to  
explore the heart of  
Washington's wine country.*





**Wine, History, and Art  
It's All In  
Walla Walla**

Feature by  
**Debbie Stone**





**M**

Most people go to Walla Walla for the wine. After all, the town is a viniculture mecca. Located in the southeast corner of Washington State, within highly regarded Washington Wine Country, the Walla Walla Valley features more than 130 wineries and nearly 3,000 acres of grapes.

Here's where you can sip award-winning, robust flavors straight from the source, like Cab Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and more.

Credit the region's prehistoric volcanic history and





Walla Walla  
abounds  
with public  
art.

the catastrophic glacial Missoula floods for the Valley's elevation, soil and climate, all key factors affecting a grape's flavor and the resulting color, aroma and structure of the wine.

In the town's charming and historic downtown, there are over thirty wine tasting rooms alone within walking distance of top-rated restaurants, eclectic shops and unique accommodations.

Once you leave the central hub, there are four other wine districts to explore nearby: Eastside, Southside, Westside and Airport, each with its own distinct characteristics. And another, the Rocks district of Milton-Freewater, is right across the border in Oregon. If you don't know by now, wine is always in reach wherever you are in Walla Walla!

One of the most memorable wine experiences I had during my visit to Walla Walla was at Abeja. Located in the foothills of the Blue Mountains on a lovingly restored, century-old farmstead, surrounded by golden wheat fields, this beautiful 39-acre site is home to

celebrated Abeja Winery and The Inn at Abeja.

Abeja is Spanish for a bee. The winery's founders, Ken and Ginger Harrison, chose the name to remind us of the honey bee's significance in caring for the environment and to honor the value placed on working cooperatively as a community.

The winery is picturesque with vineyards, creeks, gardens, lavender fields and views as far as the eye can see. It's a serene setting, ideal for wine tasting, weddings and romantic getaways.

For wine tasting sessions (by appointment only), visitors can choose from two experiences: the Traditional Abeja Tasting or the Abeja Estate





Experience (the latter is offered April – October). The first includes a seated tasting in the historic, handsome barn, where you'll enjoy a selection of current release wines from the Beekeeper and Columbia Valley collections, along with a brief overview of Abeja.

The Abeja Estate Experience starts with a tour of the property and an overview of the history behind the 1900s farmstead. Then you're led into the barn for a tasting flight of a selection of limited-release estate and library wines, each paired with a small bite prepared by Abeja's Executive Chef Jake Crenshaw.

The latter experience, which I did, was perfect in every way and provided a thorough introduction to the site, its owners and winemakers, and the gorgeous



Wine tasting  
at Abeja can  
be an  
experience  
to  
remember.

wines. I tasted a crisp, light bodied 2019 Washington State Chardonnay, which was just what I needed on the hot summer day. It filled my palate with essences of peach, lime and tart apple and led to a long and rewarding finish. Next up was a 2021 Washington State Beekeeper's Blend that was mostly comprised of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. It was fruit forward and contained notes of berries and plum.

The third tasting was a 2020 Columbia Valley Merlot that had notes of dark fruit, herbs and chocolate. It wasn't overly acidic or too bold, which I liked. And the final wine was a 2019 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. It was very sophisticated with essences of cherries, pepper, walnuts and spice, and had a lengthy finish.

**While meandering around Walla Walla and experiencing its vino-centric vibes, many folks discover this small town is full of big surprises.**

From fascinating historical sites and vibrant cultural attractions to the glorious nature and great outdoors, you'll find the area is resplendent with options.

If you're a history buff, head to Fort Walla Walla Museum, where you'll journey into the region's rich heritage. Exhibits delve into military and living history, as well as horse-era agriculture. There are displays of turn-of-the-century quilts, period clothing and military uniforms, antique toys, fur trade and gold rush artifacts, a diorama depicting the Lewis & Clark expedition that camped in the valley, and a section devoted to the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry, who were stationed at the fort in the early 1900s.



The museum's collection also includes various vehicles of yore – buggies, wagons and sleighs, as well as agricultural equipment and train cars. Among them are the Abbot-Downing Company stagecoach, or “mud wagon,” dating back to 1903; the Blue Mountain, Washington's oldest existing locomotive, acquired in 1877; a combine with an impressive set of models of the 33 mules that pulled it and a horse-drawn steam pumper for the fire department from the early 1900s.

There's also a model of a cookhouse, where you can imagine preparing meals in the heat and dust for the throngs of hard-working farmhands.



Exhibits at the Fort Walla Walla Museum take you into the history of the 1800's.

And don't miss the replicas of bucket cells (a mere 6 ft. by 7 ft. in size) used in the WA State Penitentiary in the late 1800s. You can actually sit in one and close the door to get a feel of the claustrophobic, cramped accommodations.

Head outside to the Pioneer Village below the museum to continue your informative walk into the past, as you explore seventeen original structures, including a general store, barbershop, doctor's office, jail, one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop and more.

Then make your way to the Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Start at the visitor center to peruse the exhibits and see the film about the Whitmans, which provides ample background regarding the couple, their work and untimely deaths.

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman traveled from New York to Washington in 1836, journeying over 3,000 miles, to open a Christian mission among the Cayuse tribe. They were among the first American settlers in the





West, and played an important role in opening the Oregon Trail. Their goal was to Christianize and “civilize” the Cayuse and other indigenous populations, who called, and still call this area their homeland.



By the early 1840s, it was clear that the Whitmans had been unsuccessful in their goals. Meanwhile, the mission was being used as a stopover on the Oregon Trail, providing new immigrants with food, medicine and in some cases a place to stay in the winter. Marcus, who was a practicing physician treated those in need, both the new immigrants as well as the Cayuse, believing that ministering to the physical health was an important com-

plement to his ministry of spiritual health.

Problems began to arise when the new settlers brought diseases with them and they came to a head when an epidemic of measles killed half the Cayuse population. A small group of the tribe met on the

Find more  
history at  
the  
Whitman  
Mission  
National  
Historic Site.

evening of Nov. 28, 1847 to discuss options to stop the spread of death, coming to the conclusion that Whitman was the problem. They believed he failed to cure them as an intentional way to acquire their land and make way for new settlers.

The next day, though Whitman had been warned of plans to kill him, he did nothing. By evening, he and Narcissa were dead and within days, eleven more people were killed. Plus 47 others, including children, were held hostage until December 24th.

Several months later, settlers organized a militia to seek revenge for the killings and waged what is known as the Cayuse War. Eventually, the Cayuse gave up five of their men for the murders at the Mission. The men were convicted despite any evidence and were subsequently hanged.

The murders of the Whitmans set off a series of devastating events that ultimately forced the area Indigenous populations onto reservations.





To view the site, take the Whitman Mission NHS Mission Trail, which takes you past the Whitman's two homes, a re-created millpond and the other buildings of the mission. The buildings, however are no longer standing, but the foundations are outlined by



cinderblocks along the trail.

Continue your exploration by walking up the Gravesite and Hill Trail, leading past the Great Grave and other gravesites to the top of the peak, where a memorial obelisk was placed in 1897.

Art abounds in Walla Walla, with galleries, outdoor

The story of the Whitmans in Walla Walla form a big part of the town's history.

sculptures and murals dotting the downtown area. Many of the pieces are bronze, casted by the world-class Walla Walla Foundry. Some of my favorites are “The Thinker, a bronze frog by Ralph Tretheway, which offers a whimsical twist to Auguste Rodin’s famous sculpture; “A Delicate Balance,” by Wayne Chabre and Jeanne McMenemy, featuring a playful balancing act posing the age-old question of whether the chicken or the egg came first; and Brad Rude’s “Thoughts Discovered,” which portrays a dog carefully balancing objects on his nose.

It's hard to miss “Windows on the Past,” a full scale, colorful public art installation in Heritage Park, right off Main Street. It’s comprised of historic and





contemporary photos from various groups who lived in the Walla Walla Valley from 1850-1950. The photos have been reproduced in porcelain enamel on steel panels and inlaid on the facade of Henry Osterman's 1902 Odd Fellows' Temple.

Images range from a Chinook salmon and pictures of local Native American tribal members to a picture of two local Whitman College students, one being William O. Douglas – yes, the same Douglas, who became a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. Opposite this mural is a large painting of historic storefront facades that stretches across the side of a building.



And then there are the murals in the parking lot of the Walla Walla Public Library. On one wall are fictional children's book characters like Harry Potter and Clifford the Big Red Dog. On the other side of the lot is the "Wall of Words," with quotes from such authors as J.K. Rowling, Harper Lee, William Shakespeare and more, painted on larger-than-life book spines. Rowling's words, "When in doubt, go to the library," made me smile.

Art, art,  
art.... Look  
for  
installations  
and  
sculpture  
everywhere  
in Walla  
Walla.



For more outdoor art installations, walk over to nearby Whitman College, where you can take a self-guided tour of the twenty plus sculptures adorning the lush campus grounds, many of which were commissioned by graduated classes or created by alumni. The college has a long history, as it was established in 1847 in the Whitmans' honor, first as a seminary and later as a four-year, degree-granting institution.

Several pieces stood out for me: Jim Dine's "Carnival," a Pop Art style statue of Venus carved from one tree using a chain saw, then cast in bronze; "Styx," by Deborah Butterfield, who is known for her equine imagery pieces constructed from found objects or



natural elements; Frank Munns' "American Satyr" and "The Mistress of the Wild Beasts," a pair of impish figures – the male was cast from the artist's own body; "Three Stories" by Walla Walla artist Squire Broel, which is said to have been informed by Broel's strolls through Hong Kong fish markets; and "Topophilia Gates," a stunning set of fused glass panels set amid a shady stretch of stream, by Keiko Hara. I loved how the water from the stream flowed through the arches.



More art on  
the campus  
of Whitman  
College.

If you haven't gotten your fill of culture yet, take in a production at the historic Gesa Power House Theatre, where you can see live dance and theatrical performances, comedy shows, musical concerts and films. The 120-year-old building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was once the Walla Walla Gas Plant, constructed to produce coal gas to light the town. In 2011, it was transformed into a state-of-the-art, 300-seat venue with an interior design inspired by Shakespeare's own Blackfriars Theatre in London.

Active visitors will appreciate Walla Walla Valley's scenic beauty and the endless opportunities to hike and bike its many trails. Right in town is Pioneer Park, with





its ponds, walking paths, picnic areas and even an aviary. Just five miles out of town is Bennington Lake, where there are miles of trails to hike, a lake to paddle in and vistas of the Blue Mountains. About an hour away is 94-acre Palouse Falls State Park, home of the Palouse Falls, Washington's own state waterfall, where the water plunges 200 feet down into a whirling pool.

If you happen to visit in June or the first half of July, put Blue Mountain Lavender Farm on your list. This agro-tourism operation is a must-see. It's owned by the Grimaud family, who following the decision to cultivate a rural lifestyle, moved from France to the U.S. in 2000. They eventually landed in the Walla Walla Valley on ten acres of rolling hills, where they proceeded



Love lavender? You'll find it at the Blue Mountain Lavender Farm.

to grow three types of lavender, France's quintessential crop.



Anywhere there's good wine, there's sure to be good food. And Walla Walla doesn't disappoint in this arena. Cafes, bistros and restaurants abound, with plenty of options galore. Start your day at Bacon & Eggs for a hearty breakfast of shrimp and grits, omelets, Benedicts, biscuits and gravy or stuffed brioche French toast. And if you're in the mood, accompany your meal with one of the all-day cocktails, like The Morning Paper, a meld of gin, St. Germain and grapefruit juice



with a prosecco float.

Come lunchtime, take a seat at TMACS and enjoy an array of seasonal creations. The menu includes such dishes as wild salmon cakes, ahi tuna BLTA, Wagyu burger, salads, pastas and more. On the libations side, the bar offers crafted extracts and mixers, smoke infusions and rare ingredients. You'll definitely want to return later for happy hour.

Craving a taste of Paris in Walla Walla? Brasserie Four has you covered. This charming café specializes in classic French flavors with the traditional dishes you know and love, like mussels and frites, steak frites,

French onion soup, vichyssoise and beef bourguignon. If the weather cooperates, dine on the patio for streetside ambiance and people watching opps.



Homebase during my stay was at the Marcus Whitman Hotel. This 133-room, historic property,





which opened in 1928, is Walla Walla's Grand Dame. It's been the site of many conventions and meetings, and over the years, presidents, dignitaries and celebrities have graced its doors. Classic elegance and style of the period, combined with cutting-edge technology and a convenient downtown location, make it the hotel of choice for many visitors and business people coming to Walla Walla.

Rooms are well-appointed in the Renaissance style, featuring Italian crafted furnishings, comfy beds with plush linens, Gilchrist & Soames bath products, complimentary high-speed Internet and other amenities.

For that special, farm-to-table dinner in an Old



The  
Whitman  
Hotel makes  
a great  
home base  
for  
exploring  
Walla Walla.



World atmosphere, dine at The Marc, the hotel's top-rated restaurant. Gourmet dishes are created with an eye to using local ingredients, as well as veggies and herbs from the restaurant's rooftop garden. Start with the Cosmic Crisp Salad or crab cakes, before diving into delectable Pacific salmon, half

chicken or slow-braised pork shank entrees. Finish with wild berry cobbler, a la mode, of course! Service is friendly and attentive in the handsome dining room.

Those looking for a more casual atmosphere, head to the hotel's Vineyard Lounge with its tapas-style menu, local wines and specialty cocktails. In the summer, sit on the patio for an al fresco experience.

A new investment group purchased the Marcus Whitman in Dec. 2022 and some exciting renovation plans are in the works as the hotel celebrates its 95th year in operation. It sounds like the Grand Dame of Walla Walla will become even grander!

**For more information:**

- [www.visitwallawalla.com](http://www.visitwallawalla.com)
- [www.marcuswhitmanhotel.com](http://www.marcuswhitmanhotel.com)





A man in traditional Mexican attire, including a white long-sleeved shirt, a patterned sombrero, and a decorative belt, is captured in a dynamic dance pose. He is holding a large sombrero above his head with one hand and a yellow lasso in the other. The background shows a street scene with palm trees, a police officer, and a construction barrier. The entire image is framed by a thick yellow border.

Mexican Independence Day

# *In East LA*

*A symphony of colors, sounds, and flavors as East Los Angeles comes alive each in the longest-running Mexican heritage parade in the U.S.*





E

very September, on the vibrant streets of East Los Angeles, a colorful and spirited celebration takes place that captures the essence of Mexican culture and heritage. The Mexican Independence Day Parade and Festival is a joyous occasion that brings together locals and visitors alike to commemorate a significant moment in history and revel in the rich tapestry of traditions that define this remarkable community.





As the sun begins its ascent in the sky, the streets of East Los Angeles come alive with anticipation. Vibrant banners flutter in the breeze, emblazoned with the iconic colors of Mexico - green, white, and red - a testament to the pride and unity of the Mexican people.

Families decked out in traditional attire line the sidewalks, excitement palpable in the air as they await the commencement of the parade.

The parade kicks off with a jubilant fanfare of mariachi bands, their spirited melodies weaving through the crowd and setting the tone for the festivities ahead.

Elaborate floats adorned with intricate floral designs, symbolic representations of Mexican history, roll down the avenue, captivating the onlookers. Children's faces light up with awe as they catch glimpses of folkloric dancers twirling and whirling in a riot of colors, their intricate costumes reflecting the

Mexican Independence day is celebrated in East LA with a parade and festival.



diversity and artistry of Mexican regions.

**The heartbeat of the celebration is the sound of traditional music, echoing through the streets as various cultural groups and organizations proudly showcase their roots.** The aroma of sizzling street food wafts through the air, tantalizing the senses and inviting attendees to indulge in authentic Mexican cuisine. From tacos to tamales, the gastronomic offerings reflect the richness of Mexican culinary traditions, leaving taste buds dancing in delight.





The event is all about heritage and history.

The festival that follows the parade is a sensory feast, a marketplace of crafts, artwork, and artisanal goods that pay homage to Mexico's heritage. Booths and stalls overflow with handcrafted jewelry, intricate pottery, and intricate textiles, each item telling a story of generations past. Families meander through the festival, engaging in conversations with local artists and creators, forging connections that bridge cultures.

As the sun begins its descent, the energy of the celebration remains unyielding. The main stage becomes a focal point for live performances, where talented musicians and dancers captivate the audience



with their skill and passion. The rhythmic beats of cumbia and salsa music prompt spontaneous dances, as people of all ages and backgrounds come together to revel in the shared joy of the moment.

The Parade and Festival is more than just a cultural event; it is a testament to the resilience and unity of a community. It showcases the beauty of diversity and the power of coming together to honor one's roots while embracing the future. As the final notes of the closing performance echo through the streets, the sense of connection and camaraderie lingers, a reminder of the enduring spirit that defines





The celebration has been ongoing for 77 years in East LA.

this extraordinary celebration.

The beloved Parade will return on Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023, from 10am to 1pm. Now in its 77th year, it is the longest-running and largest Mexican heritage parade in the country. As grand marshal, notable actor, producer, and “Live with Kelly and Mark” co-host Mark Consuelos will lead this year’s festivities which will include live music, cultural entertainment, attractions, food, and fun for the entire family.

The parade route will travel east on Cesar E. Chavez, starting from Mednik and culminating at Record. The festivities will continue at the Grand



Festival on Mednik Avenue, between East César E. Chávez Avenue and First Street, from 11am to 5pm

The parade and festival not only celebrate a historic milestone but also serve as a testament to the enduring spirit of a community that takes immense pride in its heritage. As the sun sets over the bustling streets of East Los Angeles, the festivities continue, weaving together generations and cultures in a tapestry of celebration that echoes the heartbeat of Mexico itself.

**For more information**




- [www.eastla-parade.com](http://www.eastla-parade.com)



Sydney Zoo's Cuddly Cuisine

# Breakfast with the Koalas

A koala is shown sleeping peacefully on a tree branch. The koala is grey and fluffy, with its eyes closed and a relaxed posture. It is clinging to the branch with its characteristic grip. The background is a dense thicket of green leaves and branches, creating a natural, forest-like setting.

*What's better than  
breakfast? Breakfast  
with the Koalas, of  
course.*



I

Imagine waking up to the gentle rustling of eucalyptus leaves and the endearing calls of koalas in the distance. As the morning sun bathes the iconic **WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo** in a warm glow, you find yourself amidst a delightful company of charming koalas.

Welcome to the enchanting world of the Koala Breakfast, a captivating event that

promises an intimate encounter with these cuddly marsupials.





After a three-year hiatus due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo has brought back its iconic Koala Breakfast event, offering an enchanting experience that combines a guided tour with a delectable

buffet-style breakfast in the company of adorable koalas.

Guests attending the Koala Breakfast will embark on a captivating guided tour through WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo, where they will have the opportunity to encounter a variety of Australia's most iconic animals. From Princess the cassowary to the playful Tasmanian devils, and the bouncing kangaroos and wallabies, the zoo's diverse residents showcase the country's unique biodiversity. Additionally, visitors will have the chance to explore the mesmerizing world of snakes, lizards, and even three freshwater crocodiles.

Following the tour, the highlight of

What's  
cuter than a  
koala?



insights into the lives and behaviors of these endearing marsupials. Afterward, guests will have the unforgettable

the event awaits on the revamped Koala Rooftop, where a sumptuous hot buffet-style breakfast will be served.

But the real stars of the Koala Breakfast are, of course, the charming resident koalas. Animal lovers will have the privilege of attending an informative koala keeper talk, gaining



oppor-tunity to get up close and personal with the koalas for a take-home photographic moment.

Koalas, often referred to as "koala



bears," though not actually bears, are celebrated for their adorable appearance, gentle nature, and endearing personalities. In the Koala Sanctuary, guests can witness these enchanting animals in their natural habitat, lounging lazily on branches, munching on eucalyptus leaves, and occasionally

engaging in playful antics.

Sidney Zoo's commitment to the well-being of koalas is evident in the sanctuary's spacious and carefully designed enclosures. The dedicated team of animal care experts ensures that the koalas have access to a variety of eucalyptus trees, their primary

The breakfast is a great way to support the zoo's programs while having a unique experience.





food source, to cater to their specific dietary needs.

The sanctuary also plays a vital role in koala conservation, as these marsupials face significant threats in the wild, including habitat loss and climate change. By providing a safe and nurturing environment, Sidney Zoo contributes to

efforts aimed at increasing koala populations and raising awareness about their conservation status.

For visitors eager to learn more about koalas, the sanctuary offers interactive educational boards and scheduled presentations by knowledgeable zookeepers. These



sessions shed light on the fascinating aspects of koala biology, behavior, and the conservation challenges they encounter in their natural habitats.

The Sidney Zoo, founded in 1978, sprawls across a vast area of 50 acres, making it one of the largest and most impressive zoological parks in Australia.

Visitors can look forward to a range of immersive exhibits and themed areas that mirror the varied landscapes of Australia. From the arid Outback Trail to

the lush Rainforest Pavilion, each section of the zoo offers a distinct experience, showcasing the incredible biodiversity found across the continent.

In addition to its fascinating animal exhibits, Sidney Zoo hosts an array of engaging activities and events throughout the year. The annual Wildlife Wonders Festival, in particular, stands as a highlight, providing visitors with an unparalleled opportunity to connect with wildlife experts, participate in interactive workshops,

The zoo offers other exhibits on Australian native wildlife.





and learn about ongoing conservation efforts.

Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of this enchanting event, where you can

embrace the wonder of Australian wildlife and create unforgettable memories in the company of some of Australia's most beloved creatures.

The Koala Breakfast experience is priced at \$90 for adults (16+) and \$80 for children aged 3 to 15, with a maximum group size of 40 guests. To secure your spot, advance bookings can be made through the official website: [www.wildlifesydney.com.au](http://www.wildlifesydney.com.au)





Jaunting Across the World

# September 2023

*Rounding up some of the  
best events across the  
world to fill your travel  
calendar.*







S

eptember is a month of jubilant celebrations, showcasing the world's rich diversity through an array of festivals and gatherings that are as diverse as they are enthralling.

Whether you're a music enthusiast, a foodie with a taste for the extraordinary, or a cultural connoisseur seeking immersive experiences, we have handpicked a selection of the globe's most iconic September events.





**ArtPrize (Grand Rapids, Michigan)**

September 14 to October 1, 2023

ArtPrize is an annual, international art festival and competition in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A

celebration of creative ideas, conversations, experimentation and inclusiveness, ArtPrize is free and open to the public, welcoming visual and experiential artists and venues eager to host these works. For 18 days, art is exhibited in galleries, storefronts, parks, museums, speakeasies and in public spaces and at venues of all kinds. The City of Grand Rapids, Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. (DGRI), and Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University (KCAD) came together to elevate ArtPrize – whose roots reach back to 2009 — with new inspiration for 2023 and beyond. Through a new public/private partnership, this remarkable event for

the community is now  
a remarkable event of  
the community.  
[www.artprize.org](http://www.artprize.org)

**Toronto International  
Film Festival (Toronto,  
Canada)**

September 7-17, 2023

(Photo by Shane Parent)

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) is a prestigious event that draws filmmakers, actors, and film enthusiasts from around the world. Showcasing an impressive lineup of both international and Canadian films, TIFF provides a platform for captivating stories, innovative filmmaking, and thought-provoking documentaries.

Whether you're a cinephile or simply love exploring the magic of



the silver screen, TIFF promises an unforgettable cinematic experience.  
[www.tiff.net](http://www.tiff.net)

**Monterey Jazz  
Festival (California,  
USA)**

September 22-24,  
2023

As the longest-running jazz festival in the world, the Monterey Jazz Festival has been captivating audiences since 1958. Nestled along California's beautiful central coast, this three-day extravaganza celebrates the best of jazz, showcasing legendary





performers and emerging talents. Lose yourself in the smooth melodies and electrifying rhythms of jazz, surrounded by the serene beauty of Monterey.

[montereyjazzfestival.org](http://montereyjazzfestival.org)  
[www.aclfestival.com](http://www.aclfestival.com)

**Festivity of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Sucre, Bolivia)**

September 16, 2023



Join in a captivating spiritual journey in the vibrant Festivity of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Sucre, Bolivia. This cherished religious celebration brings together the city's faithful and visitors alike in a harmonious display of devotion and cultural richness. Witness the stunning processions adorned with colorful floats carrying the revered image of the Virgin, while locals dressed in traditional attire offer heartfelt prayers, flowers, and candles. Delight in the lively atmosphere filled with folkloric dances, melodious music, and delectable local cuisine, as we celebrate both faith and culture in this enchanting Andean city. Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of this joyous

festivity that epitomizes Bolivia's profound spiritual heritage.

[whc.unesco.org/en/list/566](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/566)



## **Niagara Country Peach Festival**

September 7, 2023

Take in the beauty of the historic Village of Lewiston, NY while enjoying live entertainment, carnival rides and games, food and vendors. Academy Park is a hub of



activity, with Center Street serving as the location for the annual Niagara County Peach Festival Parade. This slice of Americana is best savored with a piece of peach shortcake.

[niagaracountypeachfestival.org](http://niagaracountypeachfestival.org)

## **Fiesta di Cunucu (Aruba)**

September 29, 2023

Embark on a

captivating journey into Aruba's rich rural heritage at the vibrant Fiesta di Cunucu. This cultural extravaganza brings to life the traditional Cunucu houses, where folkloric dance and music echo the island's vibrant past. Immerse yourself in the enchanting ambiance of a beautifully preserved Cunucu house, adorned with timeless antiques from the



Community Museum, offering visitors an authentic glimpse into the lives of Arubans of yesteryears. Stroll through a bustling local farmers' market, teeming with an array of fresh, locally produced delicacies that showcase the island's agricultural abundance. Delight in the rhythmic beats of traditional Aruban music and be captivated by the colorful swirls of folkloric dances, immersing yourself in the heart of Aruba's cultural tapestry. The Fiesta di Cunucu is a celebration of traditions, a voyage through time, and an unforgettable encounter with the essence of Aruba's rural charm. <https://www.aruba.com/us/calendar/fiesta-di-cunucu>



### **Bocas del Toro Sea Fair (Bocas del Toro, Panama)**

First half of September  
2023

Discover the allure of the International Sea Fair of Bocas del Toro, an annual extravaganza held amidst the enchanting charms of September—the driest and sunniest month of the year. Celebrated for an impressive 57 years, this vibrant festival unfolds along the picturesque Istmito Beach, running parallel to the captivating coastline of Colón Island. Immerse yourself in the heart of



Bocatoreño culture as the fair beautifully showcases the essence of their daily lives through delectable local cuisine, soulful music, and exquisite handicrafts.

Experience the genuine warmth and camaraderie of the locals as they come together to share their traditions and happiness that grace every home. Step into the heart of this lively celebration, embracing the spirit of Bocas del Toro and the sea that connects it all.

[www.bocas.com/ingles/bocascom-attractions-seafair-ing.html](http://www.bocas.com/ingles/bocascom-attractions-seafair-ing.html)

### **Oktoberfest (Munich, Germany)**

September 17 -  
October 3, 2023

Prepare for the



world's largest folk festival as Munich hosts Oktoberfest, a jubilant celebration of Bavarian culture and traditions. With beer tents, traditional music, colorful parades, and delectable cuisine, Oktoberfest promises an exhilarating experience for all. Raise a stein with locals and visitors alike as you partake in this iconic festival's 200-year-old history. [www.oktoberfest.de](http://www.oktoberfest.de)

### **Venice International Film Festival (Venice, Italy)**



August 30 – September 9, 2023

Set against the enchanting backdrop of Venice, the Venice International Film Festival stands as one of the film industry's most prestigious events. Celebrating cinematic excellence, the festival premieres a diverse array of international films, drawing renowned filmmakers and celebrities from around the world. Immerse yourself in the magic of cinema while exploring the captivating streets of Venice.  
[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

## **La Mercè Festival (Barcelona, Spain)**

September 22 – 25, 2023

Barcelona comes alive with boundless energy during La Mercè Festival, the city's largest street party. This vibrant event pays tribute to the patron saint of Barcelona, La Mercè, with an eclectic mix of parades, concerts, firework displays, and traditional performances. Join the





locals in revelry as the city's streets transform into an explosion of color, music, and Catalan culture. [www.barcelona.cat/merce/en](http://www.barcelona.cat/merce/en)



## Fête de l'Humanité (Paris, France)

September 15 – 17, 2023

Held in the outskirts of Paris, Fête de l'Humanité is a vibrant festival celebrating music, arts, and social activism. Organized by the French newspaper

L'Humanité, the event features live performances from renowned artists, engaging debates, and opportunities to engage with various social and political causes. Join the festivities and embrace the spirit of solidarity and creativity. [fete.humanite.fr](http://fete.humanite.fr)

## Ganesh Chaturthi (India)

September 18, 2023

Ganesh Chaturthi, a vibrant festival in India, honors the beloved elephant-headed god, Lord Ganesha. With grand processions, elaborately crafted idols, and spirited chants, the festival exudes joy and devotion. Witness the immersion of Ganesha idols into rivers and seas, marking the



conclusion of the festivities with a spectacle of color and music.

[www.utsav.gov.in/view-event/ganesh-chaturthi-festival-1](http://www.utsav.gov.in/view-event/ganesh-chaturthi-festival-1)

cherished traditions. Families and friends gather under the full moon to celebrate unity and abundance. Delight in mooncakes, colorful lantern displays, and cultural

## **Mid-Autumn Festival (China)**

September 29, 2023

The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival, is one of China's most





performances that showcase the richness of Chinese heritage. Lantern-lit streets and a sense of togetherness make this festival truly magical.

[www.travelchina.org.cn/en/](http://www.travelchina.org.cn/en/)

### **Magnetic Island Race Week (Queensland, Australia)**

August 31 – September 6, 2023

Description: Sail into the tropical paradise of Magnetic Island for the Magnetic Island Race Week, a prestigious yachting regatta that attracts sailors from around the world. Set against the stunning backdrop of the Great Barrier Reef, this event offers competitive racing, social gatherings, and a lively island atmosphere. Enjoy the



thrill of racing and explore the natural beauty of this captivating island destination.

[www.magneticislandraceweek.com.au](http://www.magneticislandraceweek.com.au)



### **Royal Adelaide Show (Adelaide, Australia)**

September 2-10, 2023

Experience the magic of Australia's most celebrated agricultural show, the Royal Adelaide Show. Held at the Adelaide Showground, this annual event offers an extravaganza of entertainment, agricultural displays, thrilling rides, live performances, and mouthwatering food offerings. Delight in the rural charm and modern excitement as the entire city comes together for this iconic show. [theshow.com.au](http://theshow.com.au)

### **Floriade (Canberra, Australia)**

September 16 – October 15, 2023

Welcome the arrival of spring in Australia's capital city with Floriade, a stunning floral festival that transforms Canberra into a breathtaking garden wonderland. Stroll through vibrant flowerbeds, admire artistic floral displays, and attend horticultural workshops and performances. Floriade is a delightful celebration of nature's beauty and creativity, making it a must-visit event for flower



enthusiasts.  
floriadeaustralia.com

## **Desert Song Festival (Alice Springs, Australia)**

September 8 – 17,  
2023

Immerse yourself in the enchanting rhythms and melodies of the Australian outback at the Desert Song Festival in Alice Springs. Celebrating the rich cultural tapestry of the region, this vibrant event brings together diverse musical traditions, captivating perfor-

mances, and awe-inspiring land-scapes. Set against the backdrop of the majestic MacDonnell Ranges, the festival offers a unique opportunity to witness the harmonious fusion of indigenous, folk, and contemporary music, creating a mesmerizing experience that resonates with the heart and soul of the desert. Join us for a captivating journey of sound and spirit at the Desert Song Festival in the heart of Australia.  
[www.desertsong.com.au](http://www.desertsong.com.au)

September 2023 promises to be a month of unforgettable moments and cherished memories, so don your wanderlust, set your course, and let these extraordinary events guide you on a journey of discovery, celebration, and connection with the heart of humanity. Bon voyage, and may the world's vibrant spectacles leave you in awe and fill your soul with wonder!



## 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.



**Karen Gershowitz, author of Travel Mania: Stories of Wanderlust, has been traveling since age 17 when she boarded a plane to Europe and stayed there for three years.**

She has since traveled to more than 90 countries, experiencing countless bold, once-in-a-lifetime adventures: climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, trekking atop an elephant in Thailand, hiking in the blistering heat of the Moroccan desert—and much more. While studying ceramics as an undergraduate at the Kansas City Art Studio, Karen proposed and received a grant to photograph ceramics studios, potters and their work throughout Japan. She later built a career as a marketing strategist and researcher with companies who sent her around the globe to conduct focus groups, interviews and meetings. She lives in New York City, but is a citizen of the world.



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