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Monet

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Be aware of health and other
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Giverny is all about Monet

Feature by
Debbie Stone

*Visitors can experience the home
and gardens that inspired the father
of Impressionism.*

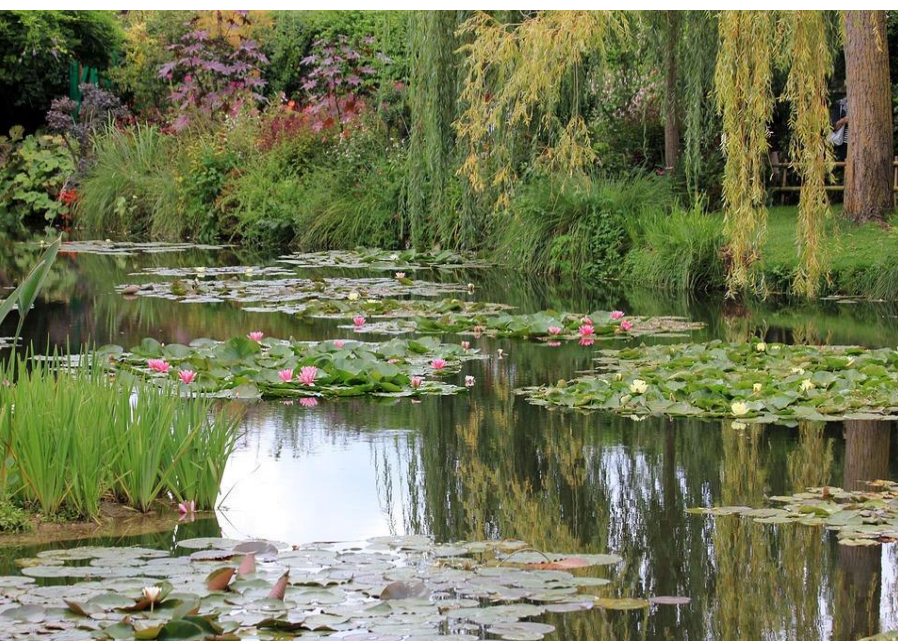


It wasn't enough for me to stare in awe and drink in the beauty of Claude Monet's ravishing paintings of water lilies in Paris' wonderful Musee de l'Orangerie - which by the way, is a must visit attraction for art lovers in the City of Lights. I needed to make the trip to Giverny, where the renowned Impressionist had lived and worked, and created over 250 paintings of said water lilies in his garden.

Widely regarded as the poster boy for Impressionism, Monet strived to capture the sensory elements of a scene, using loose

brushwork and a lighter palette. He, as did his contemporaries, aimed to capture the effects of light at different times of day, often





painting outside in “plein air.”

Monet left the urban hustle- bustle of Paris in 1883 and moved to rural Giverny, located a little over an hour from the capital city. There, in the

French-Norman countryside, he constructed an exquisite Japanese inspired water garden. The centerpiece is a man-made, water lily-covered pond, surrounded by flowers and adorned with a Japanese bridge. This sublime setting became a major inspiration for the artist.

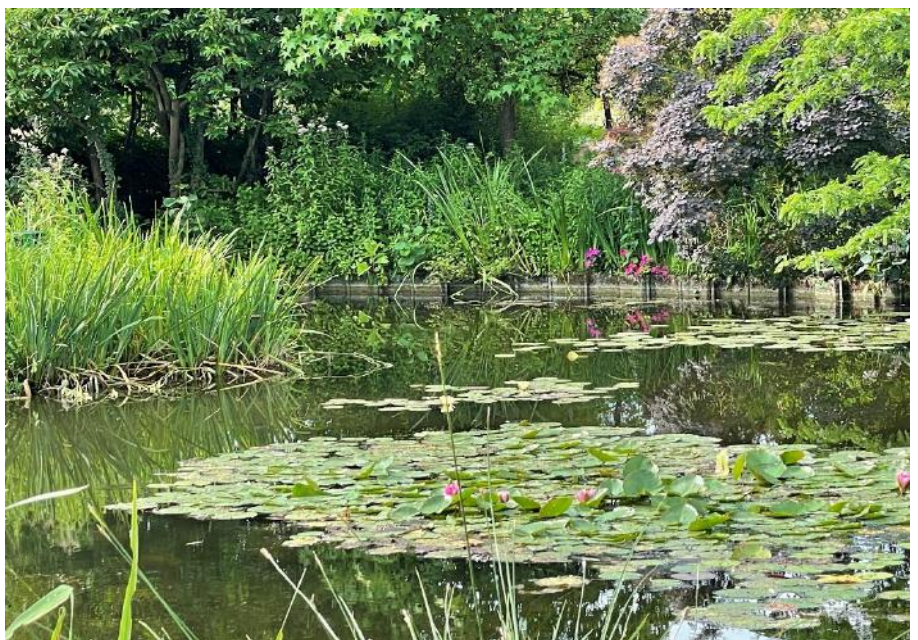
In Giverny, you’ll discover Monet’s Garden actually has two distinct parts that contrast and complement one another: a lush flower garden called Clos Normand in front of the house and the above noted Japanese paradise on the other side of the road.

The Clos Normand is all about colors and textures. It’s divided into beds with groups of flowers of

different heights for volume. Monet liked to mix simple flowers like daises and poppies with rare varieties. There are fruit trees and ornamental trees, long stemmed hollyhocks and multi-hued annuals. The central path is covered by iron arches on which climbing roses grow. Other rose bushes cover the railings on the property.

It's obvious that Monet was not a fan of organized gardens, as the flowers are left to grow freely and uncontained. This Edenesque landscape is a veritable feast for the senses and oh, the sweet fragrances!

The water garden was inspired by the Japanese gardens that Monet knew from the many prints he collected on this subject. You'll find the iconic green Japanese bridge, along with other smaller bridges, weeping willows, wisterias, the famed water lilies and a bamboo forest.





Monet was very proud of this garden and spent hours contemplating it. He also enjoyed receiving his guests there. It's truly an enchanting place and easy to see how it captivated the artist.

Monet lived in his home at Giverny from 1883 to 1926 and made it his own, enlarging it with the addition of two wings. He chose all the colors in the house. He also designed a large kitchen for his family of ten plus all the frequent

guests that he hosted and created his first studio in the barn next to the house, with an apartment above, where he could work and sleep.

Over the kitchen, Monet's four step-daughters had their bedrooms, while his two sons and two step-sons slept in the attic.

The self-guided tour of the house begins in the blue sitting room, where the dominant color is – you guessed it – blue! Japanese woodblocks collected by the artist are featured. He owned 231 of them and used them as inspiration in his own work.

Nearby is the pantry where food was stored. Visitors note the two boxes hanging on the wall. They were used to store eggs, which





were from the hens in the chicken yard. And if you wonder how popular eggs were in the Monet household, know that these boxes could store over 100 eggs at a time. I was curious about the buffet, as it had keys on each of the drawers. When I inquired, the docent told me that food was expensive and thus locked down.

The studio, which later became Monet's smoking room, was also where the artist welcomed his visitors and business associates. On the walls are reproductions of the painter's works, though back then, they were the real thing. Check out the bust of the artist by Paul Paulin, which is testament to the fact that Monet became famous during his lifetime, unlike many other noted artists who achieved recognition

posthumously.

Take the staircase from the pantry to the upper floor, where you'll find Monet's bedroom. The simple bed was his and it's where he died on December 5, 1926 at the age of 86. There are breathtaking views of the garden from the windows and paintings

by artists of Giverny and reproductions of work by some of



Monet's friends hang on the walls.

Monet's wife Alice had her own bedroom, as was typical in the middle upper class of the time. It's also decorated with Japanese woodblocks featuring female characters.

My favorite room of the house is the dining room. I loved the yellow toned paint colors and the furniture, also painted yellow. In



the cabinets are sets of blue earthenware crockery.

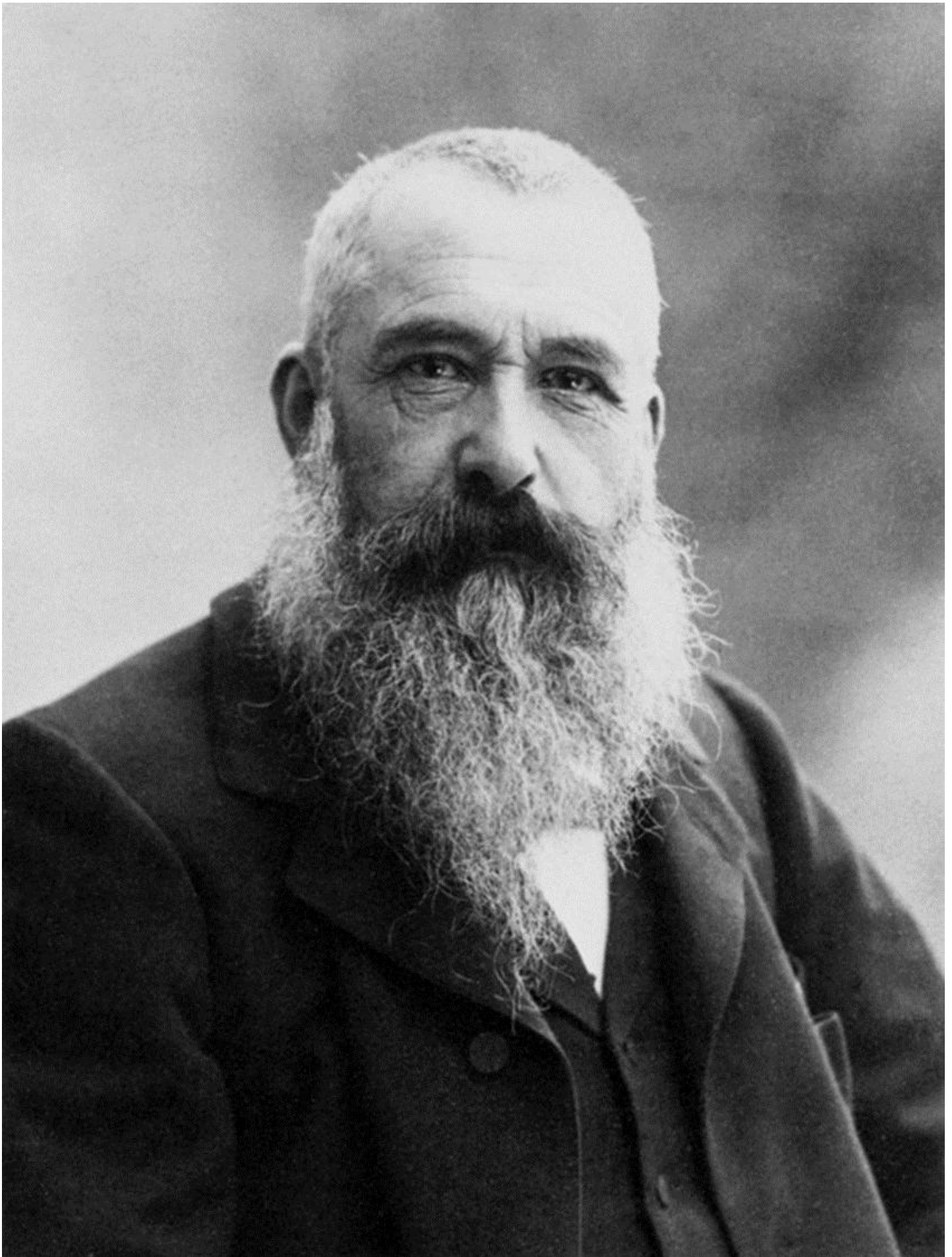
In the kitchen, blue Rouen tiles decorate the walls, copper pots gleam and a large coal and wood

stove

occupies a prominent spot in the room.

Everything seems to be waiting for the artist and his family to return.







Lifting Seattle's Boats Ballard Locks

Feature by
Paul Pence



*Experiencing an
engineering marvel up close is just
part of the reason Ballard Lock is
Seattle's top tourist attraction.*



Of all of the tourist attractions that come to mind when you think of Seattle – the Sky Needle, Pike Place Market, the original Starbucks, the Seattle underground, the multitude of museums – perhaps the best tourist attraction might surprise you.

Over a million visitors a year discover the absolutely free, easy to access, uncrowded, educational, constantly active, and amazing things to behold at the Ballard Locks.

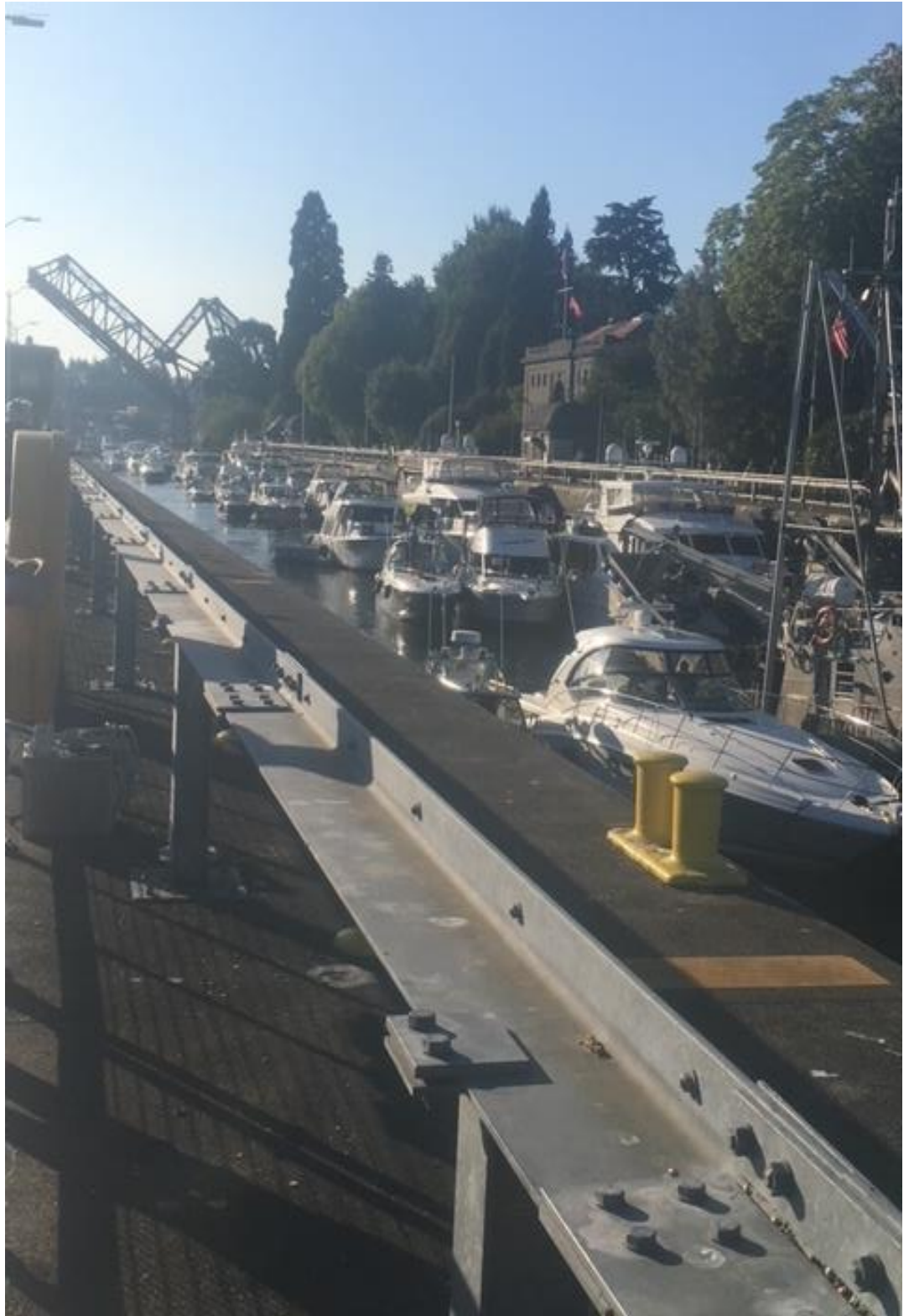
Locks? The incredibly simple yet ingenious constructions that lift

and lower ships along canals without the use of cranes or pumps or anything more complex than a dam, some watertight doors, and a set of valves to allow water to flow in and out.

The Ballard Locks, officially named the Hiram M. Chittenden

Locks after their chief engineer, let you stand right on the edge of the locks and watch the boats file in from the salt water of the Puget Sound and pack tightly in the 700x79-foot larger chamber (or the smaller 100x26-foot small chamber). Even without the operation of the docks, just being that close to so many different boats is a great experience, where you can watch fishing boats returning from the Bering Sea sitting an arm's length away from yachts and kayaks and whatever else wants to go up to their docks on Lake Washington.

Once the boats large and small are packed in, the outer doors are closed and huge valves are opened



to let in the fresh water from upstream, filling the space where the boats are, lifting the 20 feet to the level of the freshwater lakes beyond. The lake-level doors are opened and the boats sail out.



Engineer, using the same basic concepts developed in China over 2000 years ago. Locks were used in Europe since the Middle Ages and they are key to making boat travel on canals and rivers easier whenever there is an altitude change.

The raising and lowering process takes about 15 minutes, then the boats going in the opposite direction are given their chance to enter the locks, be sealed in, let the water drain out, and then sail on into Puget Sound and their destinations beyond.

The dam and locks were built in 1917 by the US Army Corp of

The project involved more than the locks, it also included digging canals and lowering the upstream lakes, which drained swamps reduced flooding and created more land for the expansion of Seattle.

The work-site for the construction of the dam and locks was then turned into an amazing botanical garden: a favorite outdoor wedding venue, a place for picnics, concerts, and just relaxing among beautiful flowers and trees.

The free summer concert series is held on weekends from June to Labor Day, generally featuring



The walk from the parking area to the locks takes you through the 7-acre English estate styled garden and past the administration building and the visitor center / gift shop.

The visitor center has exhibits and videos showing the construction and operation of the locks along with educational materials about the various salmon species that swim upstream to Lake Washington.

Some of those salmon squeeze in with the boats, but since the 1970's salmon have used a fish ladder go get upstream to spawn during the summer. The fish ladder, on the far side of the dam from the gardens, is a set of pools, each one foot higher than the previous, that makes the 20-foot climb just a set of little hops from one pool to the next.

While it is great to watch from above the fish ladder as the sockeye, chinook, and



coho salmon hop and sometimes leap, there is an underwater theater of sorts where visitors can watch the salmon swimming at their own level. Huge plastic windows let visitors relax as they look into the underwater world of the fish.



By Joe Mabel, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2776591>



The number of salmon change due to weather, tides, and seasons, but in general, the best viewing is mid-June to mid-July when 20,000 to 100,000 sockeye salmon swim upstream through the fish ladder.

Also in the “fish theater” (the Salmon Education Center) are interactive video screens that teach you about the lifecycle of the salmon, where they hatch in the lakes, head out to the sea where they grow big, and return to the same lakes and streams where they were born.

The locks offer seasonal guided

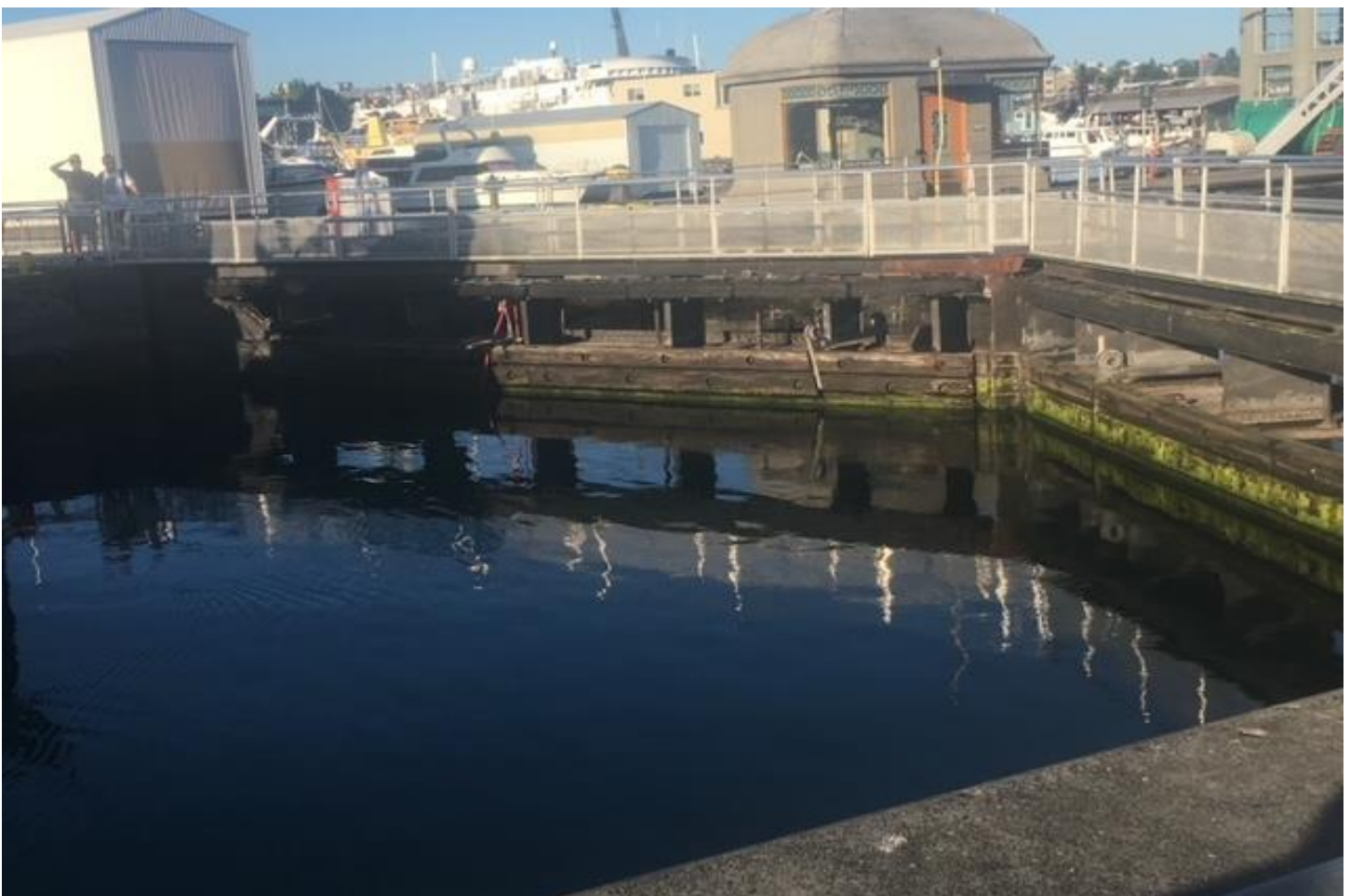
tours to the public with an expert guide, but there’s also a chance to experience the locks from inside, either by kayak or tour boat.

After visiting the complex, there are convenient cafes and diners nearby for a meal and time to talk about the amazing sights at Ballard Locks.

For More Information

- www.ballardlocks.org
- <https://www.argosycruises.com>
- <https://www.ballardkayak.com>


J





A Safari to Save the Cheetah

Article by
Julie Graham

A photograph of two cheetahs in a savanna landscape. One cheetah is in the foreground, looking towards the right, while another is partially visible behind it on the left. The background shows a hazy, sunlit savanna with low-lying vegetation and distant hills under a bright sky.

*“The fastest land mammal on Earth
is running the ultimate race - the
race for survival.” - Samara Karoo
Reserve, South Africa*



Effortlessly elegant, even when kicking up the dirt at top speeds, the cheetah is one of Africa's most extraordinary cats and plays an important role in the ecosystem. A close encounter with the fastest creature on earth is truly something special – and one few travelers will have the privilege to experience unless the excellent conservation work currently being done to protect the species is supported and continues.

Committed to responsible travel, Ker & Downey® Africa's 13-day Cheetah Conservation LuxVenture itinerary is the latest in their series

of conservation safaris. Designed for those seeking a more meaningful experience, these pioneering tours place travelers in

the heart of the action, inviting them to actively participate in conservation initiatives and leave a positive legacy in Africa.

“Highly endangered cheetah populations are decreasing due to habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict and the illegal exotic pet trade,” says Sarah Morris, General Manager, Private Clients. “South Africa is the only country in the world with a significantly increasing population of wild cheetahs. This itinerary aims to bring awareness to the incredible work being done to support this endangered species, while directly supporting the sanctuaries and



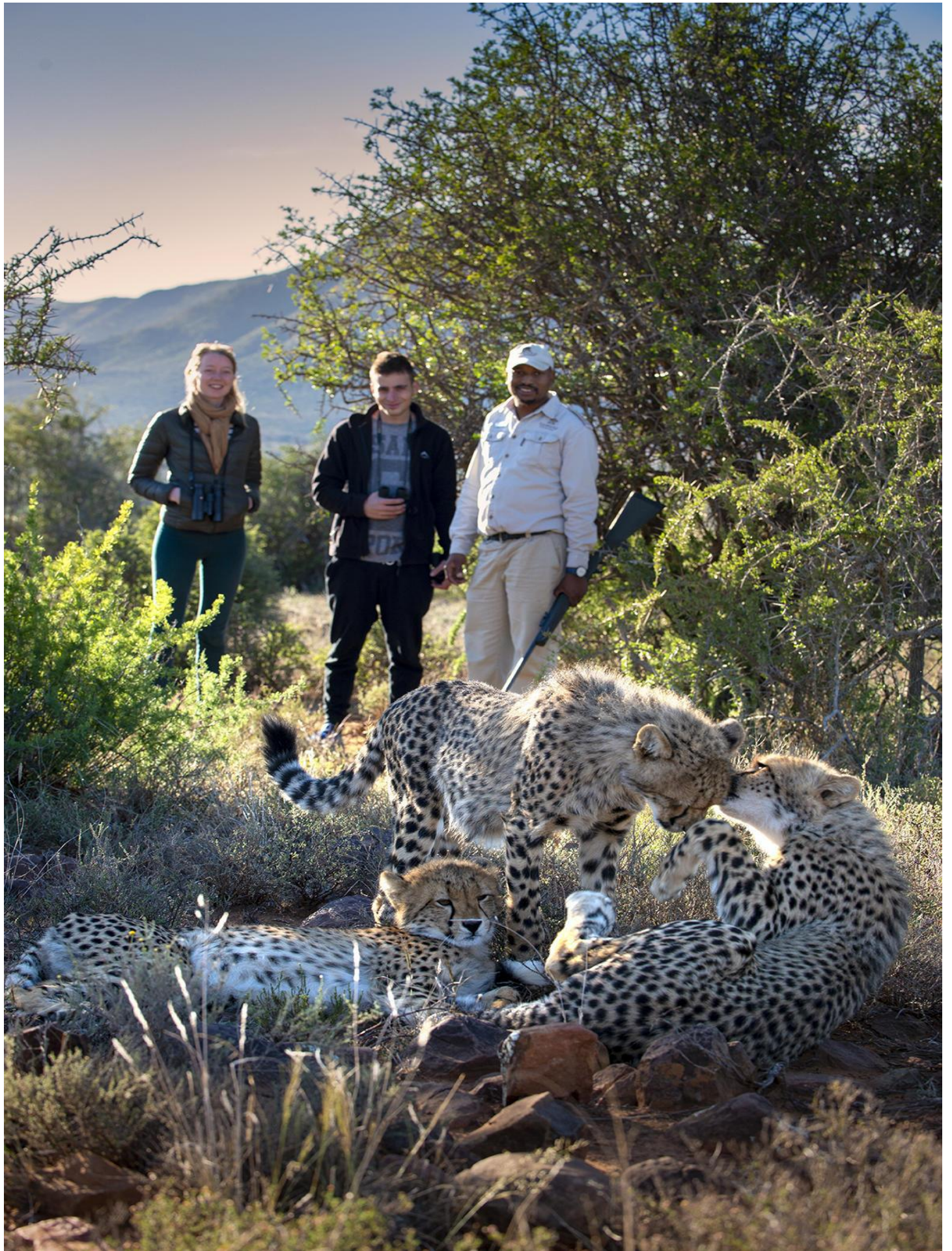
conservation initiatives included in the trip.”

The adventure begins in Cape Town, where travelers stay at the historic Cape Grace hotel for 3 nights. In between exploring the iconic Mother City and Cape Winelands, they visit the world-class Ashia Cheetah Center in Paarl. Here, guests learn about the

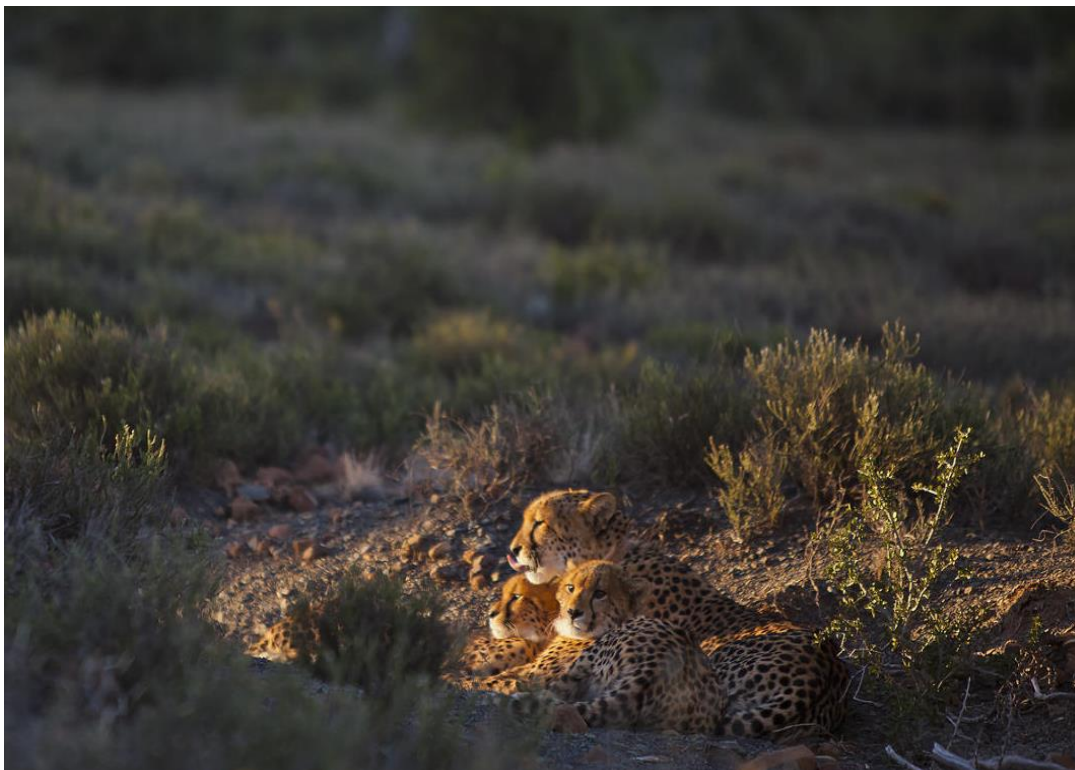
sanctuary's mission to reintroduce cheetahs to reserves and national parks in southern Africa, as well as witness the world's fastest land mammal in full flight as part of their daily exercise schedule.

The conservation safari continues at





Samara Karoo Reserve in the Great Karoo – an award-winning reserve and, undoubtedly, the highlight of this eye-opening conservation itinerary. During their stay, guests have the unique opportunity to track wild cheetah on foot, and hear the story of the



world famous Sibella – one of the most celebrated cats in conservation history and the first cheetah to be reintroduced to the Great Karoo in 130 years. Her story is a truly triumphant one and since her release in 2004, Sibella went on to raise an astonishing 19 cubs in the wild.

Next up, guests fly to Johannesburg where they will spend an afternoon at the Ann Van Dyk Cheetah Center – a non-profit conservation and research

organization committed to the conservation and survival of the species.

The safari adventure then comes to a close with a few unforgettable

nights at the luxurious Chitwa Chitwa in the game-rich Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve.

This highly acclaimed eco-lodge boasts some of the best opportunities to meet Africa's Big 5, as well as other animals like the elusive wild dog and, of course, cheetah.

Pricing for this one-of-a-kind 13-day Cheetah Conservation Safari in South Africa starts from \$6,632 per person sharing and is available year-round.

For More Information

- ker-downeyafrica.com







Seek Inspiration at
**Wonderous
Antelope Canyon**

Feature by
Debbie Stone

*A mesmerizing slot canyon, where
the sculpted rocks wind through the
Navajo nation's sandstone bedrock.*



Antelope Canyon is the most-visited and most-photographed slot canyon in the Southwest. This natural masterpiece, which got its name from local Navajo stories regarding the herds of pronghorns that used to wander in the area, is located near Page, Arizona. It's a sacred monument of the Navajo people and a Navajo Tribal Park, which means you can only see it with an authorized Navajo tour guide.

The canyon had been on my bucket list for a while and I finally got the opportunity to visit it during a road trip through northern AZ.

Though the countless photos and Instagram pics of this gem, as well as the Windows 7 screensaver that rocketed it into the fame

stratosphere, are alluring, I can attest they don't have the same mesmerizing effect as seeing it in person.

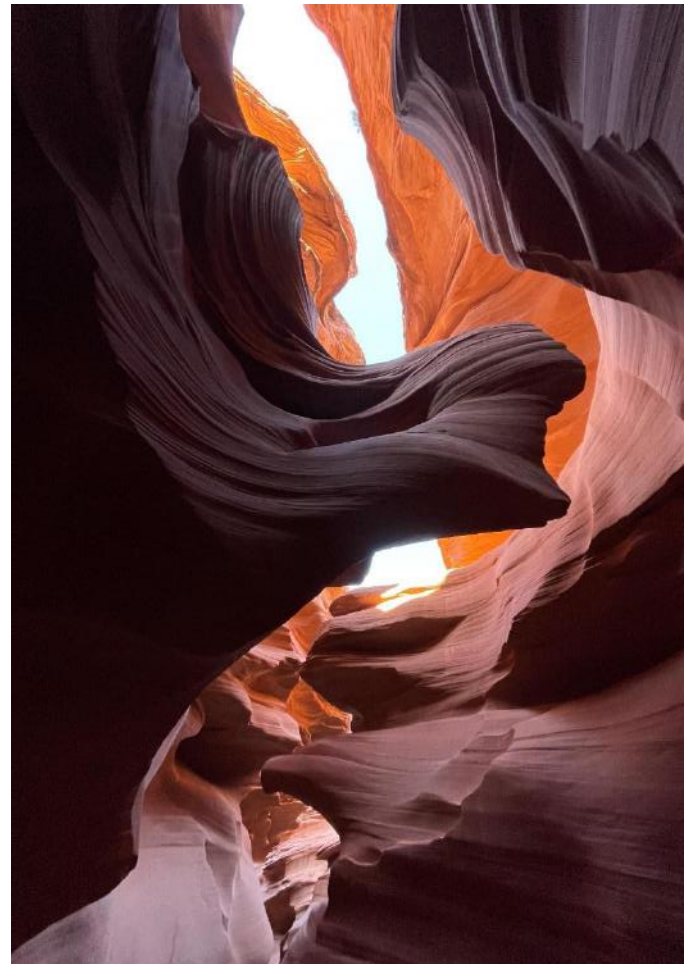
Known by the Navajo as “The place where water runs through the rocks,” Antelope Canyon is comprised of two separate canyons – Upper and Lower – and you can tour one or the other or both, as I did. Upper Antelope is known as “The Crack” because it's shaped like an A, narrow at the top and wider at the bottom. This design is what creates the striking light beams that occur when the sun is being projected onto the canyon



floor, an occurrence that is best viewed in the summer months during midday. Its these iconic light beams that have made Upper Antelope legendary worldwide.

Lower Antelope, known as “The Corkscrew,” is the opposite. It has a V shape, wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. Though it doesn't have the eerie light beam effect, in my opinion, it's equally as breathtaking as its sibling.

This stunning, colorful sandstone formation was created by layers of rain, wind and erosion, a process that took millions of years. Its walls stand up to 120 feet



above the streambed, while the canyon itself is situated about 3,700 feet above sea level. It gets its varying shades of vivid orange and red hues from the iron oxide deposits that were mixed in with the windblown sands.

Sue Tsosie discovered the canyon while herding sheep as a young Diné girl back in 1931. I can only imagine her surprise and amazement upon stumbling across it, and how she proceeded to describe it to her family. Words simply don't do it justice. Fittingly, today, Sue's daughter Caroline operates tours of the canyon.

The majority of people visit Upper Canyon if they only have time to see one of the canyons, due to its massive popularity. You'll start your tour at the tour company's office, where you'll board a vehicle for the ride to the entrance of the canyon. Then your driver/guide escorts you through the canyon for a quarter of a mile walk, as he explains about its geology and give tips on taking the best photos. He or she will also gladly take pics of you and your group amid this wondrous environment. The canyon bottom is wide and sandy and easy to

navigate. You'll spend less than an hour in the canyon and at the end, you'll exit and walk down a series of stairs and ramps to return to the vehicle.

A few things to note about Upper Canyon: Since it's more popular, it's more expensive than the Lower, and more crowded as you can expect. Tours can get backed up and you might feel like you're being herded around with not much time to fully enjoy the sights. Another point to consider is that if you're not visiting during peak times, you probably won't get to see the light beams.

I was in the canyon in late October and although I didn't get to experience this phenomenon, I still was dazzled by the dramatic colors and textures and couldn't stop taking pictures of this surreal and unique formation. I couldn't get over how the walls seemed to undulate as I walked through the labyrinth of corridors.

If you're looking for an adventure with more rugged terrain, head to Lower Canyon. Due to its V-shape, you'll have to squeeze through narrow passages, climb over rocks and go up and down several ladders. The





take your time as you explore this otherworldly milieu. And to top it off, tours cost about half of those of Upper Canyon, so lighter on the wallet.

I'm glad I did both Upper and Lower, as they each offer different experiences, but both guarantee you'll see incredible rock formations in a kaleidoscope of colors.

If you go, reserve your tour in advance, especially if you're doing Upper Canyon, as they get booked up quickly.

For Upper Canyon tours:

- **Adventurous Antelope Canyon Tours:**
www.adventurousantelopecanyon.com
- **Antelope Slot Canyon Tours:**
www.antelopeslotcanyon.com
- **Antelope Canyon Tours:**
www.antelopecanyon.com
- **Antelope Canyon Navajo Tours:**
www.navajotours.com

For Lower Canyon tours:

- **Dixie's Lower Antelope Canyon Tours:**
www.antelopelowercanyon.com
- **Ken's Tours:**
www.lowerantelope.com

experience is more of a hike with some fun obstacles and you might just feel like you're in a scene from an Indiana Jones film. Additionally, the canyon is brighter and when the sun hits the walls, it creates its own special light effects on the wave-like sandstone forms.

Tours last about 1.5 hours, same as those of Upper Canyon, but you'll get to spend more time in the canyon itself since the tour starts only steps away from where you park your car at the company's office. The pace is slower due to less people, so you'll be able to





February Sun On Yucatán's Beaches

Article by
Gustavo Rivas-Solis

*Find warm weather and spectacular
beaches this winter in Mexico!*





Photo courtesy of Yucatan Ministry of Tourism

Looking to escape extreme weather this winter? With an average temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit, the state of Yucatán offers the ideal climate for holiday season seaside vacations. Yucatán’s pristine beaches have been awarded “Platinum Beach” by the Mexican Institute for Standardization and Certification, joining the select list of the best strands in the country.

The state’s almost 250 miles of beaches are not only ideal getaways but also stunning gateways to unique settings like jungle environments, picturesque

towns, natural reserves, and colorful bodies of water in shades of emerald green and turquoise blue that envelop visitors in a mystical ambiance.

If you're still thinking about where to spend the upcoming holidays, here's the list of some of the most beautiful beaches in Yucatán on which to enjoy a warm winter weekend in one of the top-trending destinations:

Telchac

One hour away from the capital city Mérida lies the port of Telchac, an ideal option for all those who seek peace and quiet during their vacations. Its peaceful waters are perfect for swimming in complete tranquility. Here, you can also visit the Museum of the Sea, the only

such attraction in the area, which maintains an exhibition of various species of marine fossils, snails, shells and more.

Xtampú & X'Cambó

Not far from Telchac is the beautiful Laguna Rosada, with its singular pink color. It comprises part of Xtampú's lagoon, where — in addition to taking spectacular photos — you can learn about the process of salt extraction. While in the area, you can also learn more about the ancient Mayan culture by visiting the archaeological zone of X'Cambó, one of the few ruins



Photo courtesy of Yucatan Ministry of Tourism

close to the coast, which is believed to have been an ancient fishing port that supplied the main Mayan cities with food.

San Felipe

Half an hour away from Cancun lies the small fishing and tourist port of San Felipe, where you'll find rustic wooden houses in a mix of cheerful colors. Enjoy a day at the town beach, where white sands, turquoise waters and peaceful tranquility are just part of a normal day. Today, San Felipe has become one of the most popular spots in Yucatán for

nature lovers, thanks to the unique beauty of its surroundings.

Río Lagartos

A small traditional fishing port that today is one of the best kept “secrets” in the Yucatán Peninsula, the town lies right at the entrance to the well-known Ría Lagartos Reserve Natural Park, where you can explore a fascinating environment that's home to crocodiles, sea turtles and hundreds of species of birds, including flamingos and pelicans.



Celestún

Without a doubt, a natural and eco-tourism paradise, Celestún is home to exceptional landscapes where extensive beaches rife with abundant coconut palms and mangroves are an ideal setting for lovers of outdoor activities. This area is part of the World Heritage Special Reserve of the Ría Celestún biosphere, which is home to approximately 400 species of migratory birds that arrive in the entity from December to March, making for an incomparable natural spectacle of flora and fauna.

Cancunito

Located in Ríó Lagartos — just three hours' drive from the capital and very close to Las Coloradas, famous for its large pink pools — Cancunito stands out as one of Yucatán's most spectacular virgin beaches. Tantalizing those who visit with a fantastic natural setting, this tropical paradise has abundant mangroves as well as coastal dunes that, thanks to vegetation, form an extraordinary ecosystem where species such as Hawksbill, White, and Loggerhead sea turtles arrive to spawn.



El Cuyo:

At the northeastern tip of Yucatán, El Cuyo is one of the most unique corners of the state, lying right at the end of the Costa Esmeralda. Its main claim to fame is being the place where the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea meet; the mix of currents and winds make the area ideal for sports such as sailing and kitesurfing.

Undoubtedly, the beaches of Yucatán have become the vacation spot of choice for all of those who value the natural beauty of semi-

virgin stretches of sand and the tranquility of spending a vacation free of stress. In addition to being the safest state in Mexico, this magical destination offers 18 archaeological zones open to the public, around 100 cenotes, four historical “Magical Towns” and a cosmopolitan capital city that stands out as the cultural and gastronomic hub of the country’s entire southeast.

For More Information

- yucatan.travel/en/





Photo courtesy of Yucatan Ministry of Tourism





The Black Forest Highlands is a Sporty Winter Wonderland

Article by
Victoria Larson

*Skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing,
relaxing spas in the Black Forest
Highlands holiday region create
serious fun for great value.*



In the winter months, situated at an altitude of approximately 2,700 to almost 5,000 feet, the Black Forest Highlands holiday region offers visitors many winter attractions.

The skiing area in the vicinity of the Feldberg mountain promises winter sports enthusiasts guaranteed snow. On the region's sunny peaks, it is possible to enjoy unique views of the Alps and the Rhine valley as the region is so close to France and Switzerland.

With 74 ski lifts, skiers and snowboarders can take to more than 50 miles of slopes. The "highest peak" in Baden-

Wuerttemberg, the Feldberg, offers superbly prepared runs at every difficulty level from the challenging FIS World Cup *piste* and the more straightforward family slope on the Seebuck.

For cross-country skiers, the Black Forest Highlands are home to 150 cross-country trails totaling 560 miles. At an altitude of over 3,000 feet, the Thurnerspur trail at St. Märgen offers optimal

conditions for ambitious sports enthusiasts and beginners alike: Suitable for both the classic and skating technique, two cross-country trails, almost 10 miles long, wend their way over snowy expanses and woodland, while the 1.5 mile night trail offers floodlit skiing several times a week.

The Thurnerspur trail is also part of the Schonach-Belchen long-distance skiing trail which is just over 60 miles long, and approximately half of it makes its way through the Black Forest Highlands, passing Waldau at Titisee-Neustadt and on to

Notschrei. The Nordic Center Notschrei, with cross-country trails of 2 miles to 12 miles in length, are suitable for both the classic and freestyle techniques. Cross-country skiing courses are on offer and equipment is available to hire at the Ski Nordisch sports base, which features biathlon facilities and evening floodlit opening.

The 466 miles of winter hiking trails on the sunny uplands of the Black Forest Highlands provide unique views of the Alps and the Rhine valley. Several premium winter hiking trails are specially signposted and are checked and





maintained on a daily basis. They have been designed so that they offer especially attractive views and are easy to walk along. The entire network of trails, which has been created in collaboration with the Southern Black Forest Nature Park, provides for both a safe and eco-friendly winter hiking experience.

Along the 13 signposted snowshoe trails, those who love the great outdoors can enjoy the free and authentic landscape. The trails are signposted especially and reserved for snowshoe walkers. A variety of different difficulty levels and offers promise varied experiences – whether it

is a short tour of the peaks, around Hinterzarten, or a guided walk on the Feldberg as the sun sets.

The Black Forest Highlands are also famous for their excellent toboggan runs. The longest downhill toboggan runs are the Hasenhorn (2 miles), the Todtnauer

Hüttenweg (2 miles), and the toboggan run from Saig to Titisee (just under one mile). Several of the runs are floodlit and open in the evening.

After an action-packed day in the snow, the spas and swimming pools in the Black Forest Highlands, not to mention several



Photo courtesy of Hochschwarzwald Tourismus GmbH

hotels with day spa facilities, are a great place to relax and stock up on energy. Seven hotels in the holiday region have the *Wellness Stars Germany* seal of approval, which guarantees the independently verified quality in the area of wellness.

With the brand new digital Red Inclusive Card, guests can take advantage of more than 70 basic leisure offerings in the region every day, free of charge, including for example, free entrance to in-and outdoor swimming pools, museums, and free rental of cross-

country equipment. In addition, the Red Inclusive Card offers many attractions a discount of at least 20%. The Red Inclusive Card is available as a free added benefit at approximately 500 hotels for guests staying for at least two nights.

For more information

- www.hochschwarzwald.de/Card
- www.tourism-bw.com
- www.blackforesthIGHLANDS.info



MAKE THE FOREST PART OF YOUR STORY

Remember the last time your family visited the forest? It's a place of wonder and imagination for the whole family—where stories come to life. And it's closer than you think. Sounds like it's time to plan your next visit. Make the forest part of your story today at a local park near you or find one at [DiscoverTheForest.org](https://www.DiscoverTheForest.org).

DISCOVERthe**FOREST**.org



From Shreveport With Love



Shreveport-Bossier City's new offerings for 2023.

From a new destination brand to enhanced attractions and hotel renovations, Shreveport-Bossier City, LA is looking forward to an exciting year with expanded offerings for visitors and residents alike.

Here's a sampling of what's new:

New Shreveport Mural

The new From Shreveport with Love Mural is bringing a corner of downtown alive with its colorful postcard montage of things that make Shreveport-Bossier a place to

love to live. This "Instagrammable" art encourages viewers to spot iconic city spots.

Sci-port's Goodman IMAX® Dome

Shreveport's Sci-Port Discovery Center just added an IMAX® Dome. The 4K laser projection

system immerses guests into the movie experience with incredible sound and color. This immersive cinematic experience features blockbusters, documentaries, and family favorites. Find out what’s playing HERE. In Summer 2023, Game-Port returns to Sci-Port, featuring an interactive science playground of gaming.

Gators & Friends Zip Lines

Gators & Friends in Greenwood, LA, will expand its zip line options at the popular exotic petting zoo and adventure park to make the “ultimate adventure with a Zipline

Course” over alligators even more thrilling.

East Bank District

Bossier City’s East Bank District has been in a constant state of expanding, even giving new experiences to those familiar with the area. Highlights include the “East Bank Mafia” vibe in Hurricane Alley, the open-air eating, drinking, greeting, game playing and music-listening space behind BeauxJax Crafthouse, Bayou Axe Throwing Co., Frozen Pirogue (pronounced “PEA-row”) and the new Chef’s Table. It’s one



spot where walking with an open container is also an option. There's a new Streetcar Station featuring New Orleans-style "Snoballs." (We hear they're getting boozy ones.) Then just down the way are unique sweets and treats from Sugar Sheaux and the ALL-NEW Red River Brewpub at the Garage.

Louisiana Downs

Guests can watch, wager and whet their appetites at Louisiana Downs in Bossier City. The Inside Rail Sportsbook Bar & Grill just opened with a new. From Boudin Egg Rolls and the Touchdown Platter to the Inside Rail Grand Slam burger, it was designed to be a comfy spot to catch sports and place bets. The Downs will be the site of the 2023 Balloon Rally in summer.

Shreveport Common Expansion

The Shreveport Common project, with 50 partners and \$56 million in long term improvements to transform a blighted area of Shreveport into a cultural "hub." Caddo Common Park's new Outdoor Pavilion just debuted, and the park already has 30 out of 52 weekends booked. FREE exercise,

fitness and wellness activities are available every week along with a diverse offering of arts programming.

Shreveport Aquarium

The Shreveport Aquarium is bringing back the Paddlefish Festival in March 2023. A Party for the Planet is planned in April, along with the chance to have breakfast with a mermaid. Guests can view over 300 species and 1,000 animals while hand-feeding stingrays and touching jellyfish. The Fossil Mining Experience allows for dirt digging as guests search for buried treasure such as gemstones, fossils, and shark teeth.

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Park in Blanchard, LA, is nearly 160-acres of forest filled with nature trails and wildlife. It will close in February 2023 to begin its metamorphosis into a new, high-tech, state-of-the-art science park.

For More Information

- www.sbfunguide.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR PAUL PENCE

Paul 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.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR DEBBIE STONE

Debbie 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.



A vibrant garden scene featuring a gravel path leading through lush green foliage and colorful flowers. In the background, a trellis archway is visible, supported by a tall, dark tree. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

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