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EXTRAORDINARY  
ORLANDO



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SHOPPING  
BRISBANE

APRIL 2016

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## MAGICAL MATAMATA

THE COUNTRYSIDE GETAWAY



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TATESHINA HIGHLAND

**TOP 10**  
MOST COLOURFUL BEACHES

**INCANDESCENTLY BEAUTIFUL**  
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The picturesque countryside  
brought to life in Matamata,  
New Zealand

SPRING  
2016

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Hobbiton, Matamata New Zealand

Check out [endlessvacation.com](http://endlessvacation.com)

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Please note: Walk in appointments for members are no longer available at our Bundall office.

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## Welcome

Being an RCI member doesn't just mean you travel in style and comfort, it means you embark on your journey fully informed on the best opportunities that the world has to offer.

Take a breath of fresh air in this issue of Endless Vacation® magazine as we show you some stunning vacation spots immersed in nature. The guide to shopping in fast-paced Brisbane has you covered if you're looking for something a little less laidback. Regardless of how rigorous your vacation activities might be, flip to page 19 for a spiced-up cucumber salad recipe sure to leave you replenished and refreshed.

Our feature article transports you to the lush serenity of New Zealand's Matamata, a quiet town made famous by the renowned Lord of the Rings trilogy. We also explore the lesser known but equally breathtaking green highlands of Tateshina in Chino, Japan. For beach inspired getaways, dip your toes in the most strikingly vibrant beaches explored on page 20.

On page 29, find our latest addition to the RCI Platinum® Program benefits. Platinum® members can now look forward to a 10% discount on all non-RCI Platinum® member-exclusive Holiday Rentals and Bonus Weekend Getaway offers, inclusive of those already on sale.

Thank you for continuing to make new memories with RCI. Travel safe, and savour each exciting new adventure.

Deirdre Bourke  
Director of Member Services  
RCI Asia Pacific

FIJI

## Direct Flight to Paradise

Fiji Airways will operate a non-stop flight service between Fiji and Singapore



SINGAPORE



Here's yet another reason to soak in the sun. From 5 April 2016, Fiji Airways will operate a non-stop flight service between Fiji and Singapore, twice a week. Fly on Fiji Airways' brand new 273-seat, two-class Airbus A330 aircraft. This is Singapore's first direct link to the South Pacific Islands.

The 10-hour voyage to Nadi, Fiji shaves off at least 3 hours from the current flight options requiring a transfer stopover in Australia or New Zealand. This also means that while European and Asian travellers enjoy easier access to the tropical trove of 300 islands, Pacific Islands residents can visit Singapore or hop on connecting flights to more than 70 key cities from Changi Airport. Escape into Fiji's glistening sandy beaches and sapphire blue water, or explore exotic Asian cities on the double! Book a flight at [www.fijiairways.com](http://www.fijiairways.com)

ready,  
set,  
go

AUSTRALIA

### Condé Nast Traveler names Australia as Destination of the Year 2016

Australia effortlessly charms with its vibrant laidback vibes, influential food scene and world-class outdoor experience. It is no wonder Condé Nast Traveler applauds the country's offerings by presenting Australia as Destination of the Year 2016. Featured in the magazine's January 2016 'Gold List' issue are favourite regions such as Sydney, Melbourne, Byron Bay and Tasmania.

Fly in with an empty stomach — one main attraction is Australia's food scene offering fresh, global concepts that are easygoing yet sophisticated, unmistakably Australian. International dining concepts from around the world are sprouting up all over Australia as well. Between January and April, Noma by Danish chef Rene Redzepi will open for 10 weeks in Sydney.





THAILAND

## New App 'Thai Culture' unveils Thailand's best cultural spots

Exploring Thailand just got easier. 'Thai Culture', Thailand's newest cultural and tourism mobile app is a deep pool of key information on the country's best destinations. Listing more than 70,000 features including historical parks, museums, ancient markets and craft villages, the app is available in English, Mandarin and Thai, and operates on two key features. Be guided to tourist hotspots within a 10-kilometre range with the 'Near Me' feature. Or use the 'Search' feature to learn more about your preferred places of interest. 'Thai Culture' provides navigation directions to the site, its hours of operation, admission fee, contact number as well as history and the site's top 10 highlights.

Compatible with both iOS and Android devices. Download the free App from the App store or Play Store. Also available for download on [www.thaiculture.go.th](http://www.thaiculture.go.th)



KOREA

### New 'Art Village' in Jeju Island

Jeju, an island of villages in South Korea, has a new attraction. Southeast of Jeju, a sleepy village Shincheon wakes up from its slumber in an artistic fashion. This quiet, unassuming town is recently transformed into an 'Art Village' dotted with 43 pop art murals and sculptures. It started in 2014, when filmmakers of the movie 'Sunshine' picked Shincheon as a shooting location. A few murals were painted on walls for the shoot. Upon the filmmakers' departure, local artists, young movie makers and the villagers picked up from what was left to transform Shincheon into an 'Art Village'. Art celebrating Jeju's life and culture appeared on buildings and unexpected spaces, breathing fresh air into the area, exciting locals and travellers.

NEW ZEALAND

### Art Meets Sports

Paralympics New Zealand presents the Spirit of Gold Collection, a set of 12 beautiful portraits created by Kiwi artist Amber Gabrielle Stephens. Featuring some of New Zealand's distinguished summer and winter Paralympians and Para-athletes, the collection includes London 2012 Paralympic Games medallists, Sophie Pascoe, Michael Johnson, Cameron Leslie and Mary Fisher, Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games medallist, Corey Peters, and World Champion Para-Cyclists Emma Foy and Laura Thompson. The portraits will be exhibited around New Zealand from January to mid June 2016. More than 10 local events are planned nationwide, ahead of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Catch a glimpse of the portraits and learn more about para-sports while you're on the road.



TRAVEL GEAR

By Tom Samiljan

Photography By Pamela Ashley Pasco

## Staying Charged On the Road

Keep your smartphone ready to go with these portable batteries, adapters and chargers.



- 1 **TYLT ENERGI 5K+** Leave the USB cables at home: This superslim charger has built-in Lightning and micro-USB cables that fold into the side of the device when you aren't using them. [tylt.com](http://tylt.com); AU\$125
- 2 **TUMI T-TECH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL USB POWER ADAPTER** This all-in-one adapter's four built-in retractable plugs let you power your gadgets in more than 150 countries, and the USB plug simultaneously charges cell phones, headsets and more. [bestbuy.com](http://bestbuy.com); AU\$42
- 3 **VICTORINOX TRAVEL POWER STRIP** Make the most of that single plug in the airport lounge with Victorinox's portable strip. No bigger than a candy bar, it offers a trio of three-pronged AC outlets, and a USB port, to power everything from a Bluetooth® headset to a laptop. [rei.com](http://rei.com); AU\$42
- 4 **MONSTER MOBILE POWERCARD™ V2** Slim enough to slide into most wallets, pockets and handbags, Monster's credit-card-size battery provides smartphones with five hours of extra juice. [monsterproducts.com](http://monsterproducts.com); AU\$55
- 5 **VENTEV DASHPORT Q1200** Rushing to the airport in your rental car with an empty smartphone battery? The turbo car charger gives smartphones six hours of extra life in as little as 15 minutes. [ventev.com](http://ventev.com); AU\$48
- 6 **SOLPRO HELIOS SMART™** This charger unfolds into a triptych. Exposing it to just 90 minutes of sunlight, on a table or hanging from your backpack, is enough to charge a smartphone. [solpro.com](http://solpro.com); AU\$165
- 7 **HYPERJUICE PLUG 18,000 mAh** This 18,000 mAh portable battery is a powerhouse: Not only does it add 26 hours of life to a tablet, it also juices up your smartphone 11 times on a single charge. [hypershop.com](http://hypershop.com); AU\$152
- 8 **FLUXMOB BOLT** A charger and battery in one, this device lightens your load. The battery, which revives a smartphone on a single charge, plugs right into the wall. [hypershop.com](http://hypershop.com); AU\$69



# More Than Just Thrills

NICKNAMED 'THEME PARK CAPITAL OF THE WORLD', ORLANDO IS HOME TO SEVEN OF THE TEN MOST VISITED THEME PARKS IN NORTH AMERICA – UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FLORIDA, SEAWORLD AND GATORLAND, TO NAME A FEW. FOR THE ADVENTURE SEEKERS, ORLANDO HAS A PLETHORA OF LANDMARKS WITH RICH CULTURAL BACKGROUND STORIES. DEDICATE A DAY OR TWO TO EXPLORE ORLANDO IN DEPTH.



Bonus Orlando's Landmark Feature:

## WALT DISNEY WORLD

Dreams come true at Walt Disney World, the world's biggest and most loved theme park destination. While this amusement park is not exactly within the city of Orlando, its proximity of 34 kilometres to downtown Orlando has it crowned as an iconic landmark of Orlando.

Bustling with squeals of delight and laughter, Walt Disney World is a gigantic magical land with 4 theme parks, 2 water parks, 4 golf course, 1 nine-hole walking golf course, 2 themed miniature golf course, a shopping district, and a generous sprinkle of other entertainment hotspots. Magic Kingdom is the first of Walt Disney theme parks, and no doubt the most popular of all.

With endless exciting rides and attractions, animals, world-class shopping and dining experiences to offer, Walt Disney World creates unforgettable moments for friends and family alike. All theme parks open daily at 9am, with a range of ticket packages to select from. Visit [disneyworld.disney.go.com/tickets](http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/tickets) for more details.

### LAKE EOLA PARK

Perfect for a quick getaway from the adrenaline-high crowd, Lake Eola Park (512 East Washington Street) offers tranquility in nature. Take a leisure stroll along the lake's walking paths as swan boats and real-life swans grace by.

In Lake Eola sits the Linton E. Allen Memorial Fountain, more commonly referred to as 'Centennial Fountain' and 'Lake Eola Fountain'. This unofficial icon of Orlando city was built in 1957, and named after its creator. Every night at approximately 8pm, the fountain comes to life in a synchronised water and musical light show. Entertain the little ones with concerts and plays at the Walt Disney Amphitheatre and playgrounds. Pick up seasonal fresh produce, admire handmade crafts and enjoy live entertainment at The Orlando Farmers Market, every Sunday, from 10am to 4pm. Visit [www.orlandofarmersmarket.com](http://www.orlandofarmersmarket.com) for updates on upcoming events.

### ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1924, Orlando Museum of Art ([www.omart.org](http://www.omart.org)) has been the heart of Florida's art scene for close to 90 years. The museum is committed to the collection and preservation of great works, exhibiting art pieces of a wide variety from around the globe.

From budding artists to art enthusiasts, grown-ups to the little ones — Orlando Museum of Art offers a wide variety of creative activities to inspire and engage diverse individuals. Unlimited gallery tours, world-class enrichment programmes, art camps, lectures and studio classes are available throughout the year. The museum is open daily except on Mondays

and major holidays. Tuesdays to Fridays, 10am to 4pm. Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 4pm. Admission prices: Children and college students at AU\$4.70/NZ\$5, adults at AU\$9.35/NZ\$10.

### WELLS' BUILT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The museum is an ode to Orlando's African American heritage, located in the heart of Orlando's historic Parramore district (511 West South Street). Originally known as Wells' Built Hotel, the 1929 building served its purpose of hosting African American performers during the Segregation era. It took on its new identity as a museum only in June 2009. Exhibits include the African American community's memorabilia, artifacts from local collectors, and galleries on the Civil Rights movement in Orlando. The building was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places on the 4th of February, year 2000.

### BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE

With the opening of Walt Disney World Resort and many other attractions in the 1970s, the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary was built at 8300 Vineland Avenue ([maryqueenoftheuniverse.org](http://maryqueenoftheuniverse.org)) to service its booming Catholic tourists.

This humble yet majestic Latin Rite basilica has a 2000-seat church, Rosary Garden, Mother & Child Outdoor Chapel, Blessed Sacrament Chapel and the Museum of Christian Art. It is now a tourist attraction of Orlando. Welcoming visitors

from all lands, the shrine of Virgin Mary holds choir performances, guest lectures, exhibitions and cultural activities for people of every age group.

### CHURCH STREET STATION

The historic Church Street Station was constructed in 1889 by South Florida Railroad. Also known as Old Orlando Railway Depot, it has served several railroads in its heyday until passenger services were transferred to Orlando Health/Amtrak station in 1926. Located at the heart of Church Street District (127 West Church Street), the station was gradually transformed into an epicentre of restaurants, cafes and retail shops. The opening of the bustling sports and entertainment hub Amway Center ([www.amwaycenter.com](http://www.amwaycenter.com)) breathed new life into Church Street. More hip locals and tourists congregate at the station's bars for nights of revelry to be had.

### ORLANDO EYE

One of the latest attractions creating buzz in Orlando is the Orlando Eye. As the tallest structure on South International Drive, Orlando Eye offers a refreshing way to experience the city. The 30-capsule wheel literally brings your perspective of Orlando's beauty to new heights as the biggest observatory wheel on the east coast of the USA. Aptly nicknamed 'The City Beautiful', Orlando viewed from above takes your breath away with its gorgeous skyline of theme parks, lakes and landscapes. Ticket prices start as low as AU\$18.70/NZ\$20 for general admission, to AU\$92.70/NZ\$99 for a combination of Orlando's top 4 attractions.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN ORLANDO INCLUDE:

#### Vacation Village at Parkway #4940

A stone's throw away from Orlando's famous theme parks and its cultural landmarks, Vacation Village at Parkway is in a prime location for a balance of fun and relaxation. The resort is extravagant in pampering guests with 6 swimming pools, a picnic area and even a tot lot for its little visitors.

7 nights from AU\$739/ NZ\$809 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$849/ NZ\$919 2brm

#### Holiday Inn Club Vacations at Orange Lake Resort – West Village #0670

Spanning 1,450 acres of lush greenery, Holiday Inn Vacations at Orange Lake Resort provides a myriad of amenities, services and activities to impress. The facilities available include a 12-acre Waterpark with a lazy river, 7 pools, 7 restaurants, an 80-acre lake with beach and water sports, 4 golf courses and 2 mini golf courses. At West Village, a clubhouse overlooks the glistening lake. There are cabanas, arcade, retail shops and a themed restaurant with its own patio bar.

7 nights from AU\$699/ NZ\$769 Studio  
7 nights from AU\$979/ NZ\$1069 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$1119/ NZ\$1219 2brm  
7 nights from AU\$1189/ NZ\$1299 3brm

#### Sheraton Vistana Resort #0450

More than just a place to sleep, the Sheraton Vistana Resort offers a wide variety of facilities and services for every waking hour. There are 13 tennis courts, 7 swimming pools, 7 hot tubs, 6 recreation centres, a children's playground and a 16-hole miniature golf course, catered for the enjoyment of both adults and kids. Rest and relax at its full-service restaurant, 2 snack bars or book a massage. After all, comfort, luxury and style form the hallmark of Sheraton Vistana Resort.

7 nights from AU\$899/ NZ\$979 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$1099/ NZ\$1069 2brm





FOOD  
RECIPES FOR  
RESORT MADE MEALS

# The Art of Eating an Oyster

Throwing back a half dozen oysters is easy; actually appreciating them takes a little know-how.

Adapted from US Endless Vacation Magazine, Autumn 2015.

By **Zach Patton**

As true oyster lovers know, there's an art to tasting the bivalve's complex flavours. Oyster tasting is a fine art, much like wine. That means appreciating the nuances of an oyster's 'merrior'—the marine counterpart of terroir, all those environmental aspects that shape the taste of wine.

Autumn is a particularly good time to brush up on your oyster-tasting skills. While modern refrigeration and cultivation mean that you can eat oysters all year long—not just in months with an r in their names—oysters develop a deeper, richer flavour in the autumn and winter. East coast oysters build up glycogen to survive through colder months, which makes them taste sweeter and fattier; think of it as marbling in a steak.



Here's how to savour that oyster you're eating, in six sensory stages.

**1. THE BOUQUET.** Just as you do with a glass of wine, begin by inhaling the aroma of the oyster. That olfactory hit is your introduction to the flavours that make the oyster unique.

**2. THE LIQUEUR.** Sipping the 'juice' in which the oyster sits can tell you a lot about where it's from. In fact, this is where you get your first hits of salinity, minerality and earthiness. Oysters from rocky coastal areas, for instance, have a more mineral flavour.

**3. THE FRONT.** With the oyster in your mouth, focus on the taste with the tip of your tongue. This introduces you to the initial flavour, which may then change as you eat it.

**4. THE BODY.** As you chew the actual oyster itself, concentrate on the texture as well as the flavour. Is it rich and buttery? Salty and snappy? Chewing also brings out an oyster's sweetness.

**5. THE FINISH.** Oysters linger on the palate longer than a lot of foods. The finish is often when you taste the oyster's umami, that undercurrent of savoury flavour.

**6. THE PAIRING.** An oyster matched with the right wine or beer is like a perfect marriage. Stick with a light-bodied dry white, such as steel-aged pinot grigio or a Loire Valley muscadet (which many have called the perfect wine for oysters). For beer, think a saison ale, a session beer, a very light IPA or another low-alcohol brew that won't overpower.

Oh, and it's probably best to put away that cocktail sauce. The sweetness and strong horseradish flavour of cocktail sauce obliterate the taste of raw oysters. Rather, try a mignonette, a thin sauce typically made from shallots, cracked black pepper and champagne vinegar. With oysters, you want to accentuate, not overpower their freshness.

NOTE: Information may have changed since publication. Please confirm key details before planning your trip.  
Published: August 2015

Australia



If you're in South Australia, be sure to take time out to try the freshly shucked Coffin Bay oysters, straight from the sea.

(1802 Oyster Bar & Bistro, 61 Esplanade, Coffin Bay; +61 8 86854626; 1802oysterbar.com.au)

New Zealand



Bluff oysters in New Zealand are said to be the most flavoursome, because they are grown in the cold, clean waters of Foveaux Strait till they are plump and juicy. Pick them fresh in season at the Four Square Supermarket in Gore Street.

(Four Square, 54 Gore Street, Bluff 9814, 03 212 8179, foursquare.co.nz)

Japan



Nobody serves more oysters on Miyajima island than the stylish Kaki-ya. Each oyster is inspected carefully after it comes off the flames by the grill master. Ask for the 'Kaki-ya teishoku' set meal that isn't on the menu.

(Kaki-ya, 539 Miyajima-ch?, Hatsuka-ichi, Hiroshima-ken, +81 829-44-2747, kaki-ya.jp)



1



LANDMARKS  
THE WORLD

# Top 10

## Art Museums to Visit

Take in some world-class works of art at these cultural institutions, from New York to Tokyo and beyond.

Adapted from US Endless Vacation Magazine, Autumn 2015.  
by **Bree Sposato**

NOTE: Information may have changed since publication. Please confirm key details before planning your trip.

### 1 Musée d'Orsay

Paris

Degas's ballerinas, van Gogh's *Starry Night* Over the Rhone, Cézanne's still lifes—all are on display at the premier museum of Impressionism in France if not the world. It's located in the Beaux-Arts former Orsay railway station, across the Seine from the Tuileries Garden, and retains the station's original soaring glass ceiling and great hall. [musee-orsay.fr](http://musee-orsay.fr)

### 2 Getty Center

Los Angeles

Clad in Italian travertine, this Richard Meier-designed complex in the hills of Los Angeles affords views stretching to the Pacific Ocean. To get here, either walk or take a tram up the steep slope from the parking lot. Within its airy pavilions you'll find Impressionist paintings by the likes of Édouard Manet and, scattered around the

estate, sculptures by such greats as Joan Miró and Isamu Noguchi. [getty.edu](http://getty.edu)

### 3 Metropolitan Museum of Art

New York City

The Met is the largest museum in the western hemisphere, having a collection of more than 2 million items spanning antiquity to the present. More than 6 million people annually pass through its galleries. Its Egyptian collection showcases the Temple of Dendur (c. 23–c. 10 B.C.), while European paintings include works by Degas, Rembrandt and Vermeer. [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)

### 4 The National Gallery

London

Paintings from the mid-13th century to the early 20th hang on the walls of this Trafalgar Square landmark. The west wing turns the spotlight on the High Renaissance (Michelangelo, Titian and Raphael). In

the east wing 18th- and 19th-century British artists, such as Gainsborough, Constable and Turner, take centre stage. [nationalgallery.org.uk](http://nationalgallery.org.uk)

### 5 Tokyo National Museum

Tokyo

If you have time for only one museum in Tokyo, make it this one. The oldest and largest art museum in Japan holds the world's largest collection of Japanese art and archeological artifacts. Explore the three-storied, newly renovated Tōyōkan (Gallery of Eastern Antiquities), with its collection of Buddhist sculptures and Chinese ceramics from Asia. [momat.go.jp](http://momat.go.jp)

### 6 Art Institute of Chicago

Chicago

Home to such paintings as Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, the Art Institute of Chicago is itself a masterpiece. The 1893

Beaux-Arts building is connected to a Renzo Piano-designed wing by a gallery set over railroad tracks. Inside is a collection of Impressionist and post-Impressionist art; 20th- and 21st-century works, including Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*; and Marc Chagall's stained-glass windows. [artice.edu](http://artice.edu)

### 7 Hagia Sophia

Istanbul

One of the seven wonders of the medieval world and the greatest surviving example of Byzantine architecture, the Hagia Sophia dominates the Istanbul skyline. The emperor Justinian ordered the structure built in A.D. 532 in a bid for eternal glory. To call it grand would be an understatement: The dome is 184 feet high and 102 feet wide. To put that in perspective, the Statue of Liberty without its base could fit underneath with room to spare. Head to the upstairs galleries

to view the most intricate mosaics. [ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr](http://ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr)

### 8 National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art

Seoul

Seoul's only national art museum sits just across the streets from Gyeongbokgung, and showcases over 7,000 modern artworks. You don't have to be an art aficionado to enjoy the large, playful pieces on display. Enjoy free admission to all exhibits every fourth Saturday of the month. [mmca.go.kr](http://mmca.go.kr)

### 9 Whitney Museum of American Art

New York City

This museum began in the 1930s in Greenwich Village with a collection from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. It would later move to West 54th Street and then to Madison Avenue. This year it found a 200,000-square-

foot home near the High Line. Among the 18,000 pieces are works by Andy Warhol and Georgia O'Keeffe. [whitney.org](http://whitney.org)

### 10 Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors

near Xi'an, China

You could easily spend two days or more exploring the archeological wonder near China's ancient capital, Xi'an, two hours by air from Beijing. Thousands of life-size clay warriors, part of the funerary complex of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, stand here to protect him in the afterlife. Historians believe that some 700,000 workers toiled on the mausoleum for more than three decades. Fun fact: Though the soldiers were crafted using molds, each has distinct facial features that were added after assembly. [whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)

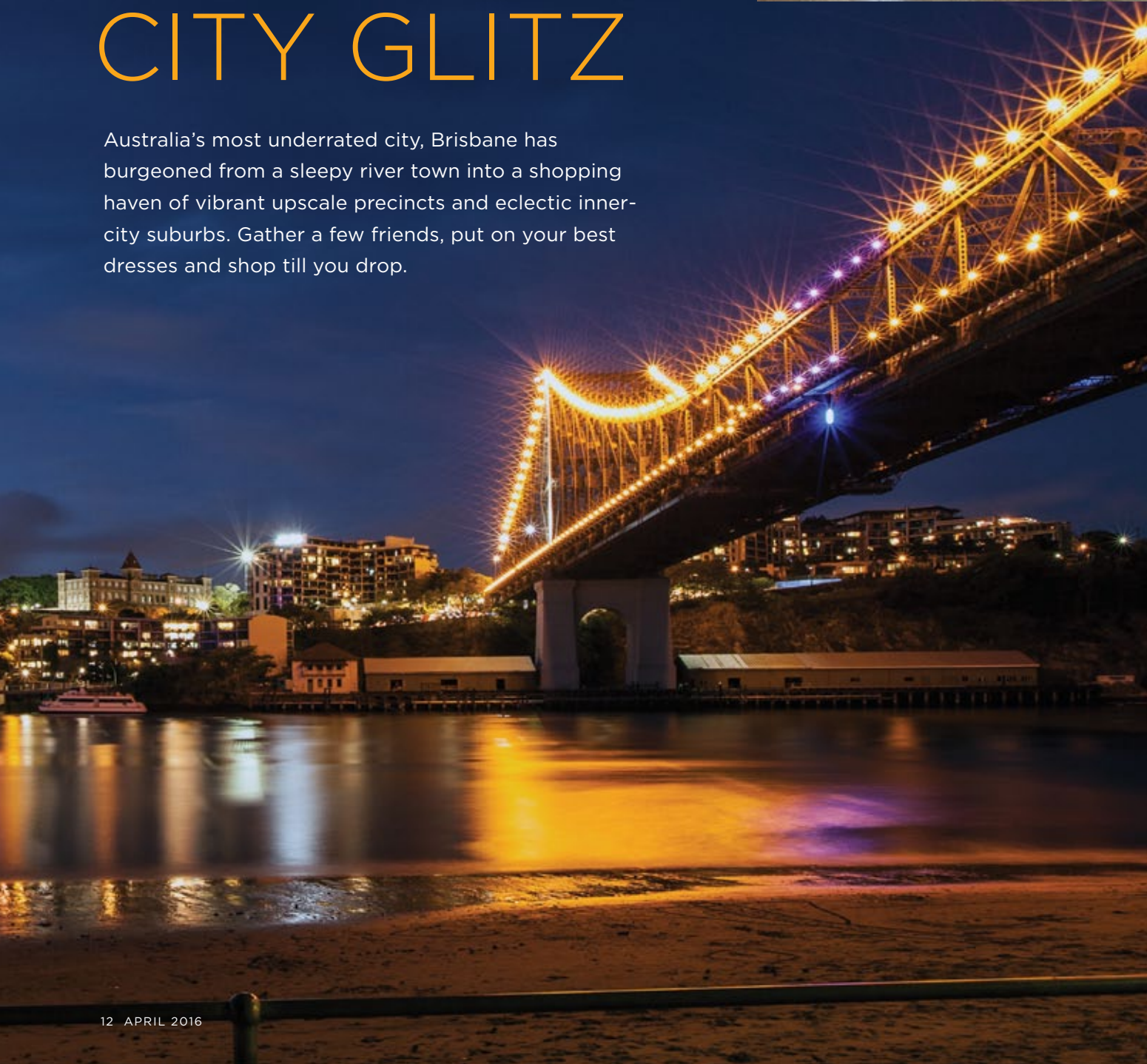




SHOPPING  
BRISBANE AUSTRALIA

# RIVER CITY GLITZ

Australia's most underrated city, Brisbane has burgeoned from a sleepy river town into a shopping haven of vibrant upscale precincts and eclectic inner-city suburbs. Gather a few friends, put on your best dresses and shop till you drop.



## Glittering Glamour

In the heart of Brisbane is Australia's largest open-air pedestrian mall, Queen Street Mall (Queen Street, QLD 4000). This half-kilometre stretch of bustling shopping centres boasts over 700 specialty stores inaccessible by cars, an exclusive privilege for shoppers to move from mall to mall without having to dodge traffic. Luxury boutiques with the likes of Tiffany & Co. and Louis Vuitton lavishly occupy the exquisite Queens Plaza (262 Queen Street). Shop up a storm at David Jones, Queensland's largest one-location departmental store located at Lower Ground, Ground and Level 1. Wintergarden (171-209 Queen Street) is a stone's throw away, and its nature-inspired façade holds Queensland's only Coach store and upmarket Australian brands such as Sambag and Mecca Maxima. Home to Queensland's biggest Myer departmental store with over 180 specialty shops, The Myer Centre (91 Queen Street) is your six-storey, one-stop shopping destination. Done with shopping? Sit back and enjoy a good blockbuster movie at the eight-screen cinema at level 3.

## Indie Buzz

Affectionately called 'The Valley' by Brisbane locals, Fortitude Valley (Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006) is a bustling inner-city suburb buzzing with life. The Valley is lined with eclectic eateries and a sprinkle of art galleries, offering some of the best indie shopping to be had in Brisbane. Take a walk down the quaint narrow streets of The Valley to unveil Brisbane's favourite designers like Gail Sorronda, Easton Pearson and Pistols at Dawn. Set foot in Brunswick Street, and spot the hidden chamber shop, Fallow for a well-curated collection of fashion buys that you won't find elsewhere in Australia. Well-loved

local designers' labels are gems to find in shops such as Ultra Suite and Blonde Venus dotting the alleys of Ann Street. A detour into Winn Street brings you into The Valley's quirky laneway featuring Tym Guitars for guitar fans, The Outpost for independent brands from around the globe, and Kunstler for small print publications. Be sure to drop by Chinatown Mall (33 Duncan Street) for exotic Chinese products, or simply slow down and luxuriate at chic bars with live bands and the occasional street theatre acts.

## Vintage Hunt

With rolling lush green hills, quaint cottages and pockets of picturesque streets, Paddington (Paddington, QLD 4064) is indisputably one of Brisbane locals' favourite hangouts. Gently scratch the surface of this historical inner city to unveil a treasure trove of quirky keepsakes, retro goods, vintage fashion and antique treasures. Paddington Antique Centre (167 Latrobe Terrace) occupies an old theatre on Latrobe Terrace, attracting over 50 antique dealers locally and internationally to gather under one roof. Latrobe Terrace is also home to Green Tangerine, a proud supporter of locally designed products and Sheets on the Line, Australia's favourite organic bed liner designer. Take a walk down the hilly paths of Given Terrace and be flanked by charming neighbourhood boutiques like Paddington's retro-veteran Retro Metro and the eclectic Ra Ra Superstar for a collection of vintage pieces. Exploring like a local can take you off the beaten track and into the edgy Rosalie Village, tucked behind Paddington. Here, locals' favourite Yesterday's Thrift Shop sits in a bright red cottage, welcoming vintage hunters into its labyrinth of rooms packed with pre-loved bargains.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED  
STAYS IN BRISBANE  
INCLUDE:

### TRYP Fortitude Valley

Set in a red brick building and painted over with psychedelic murals, this art-themed boutique hotel oozes street funk and creative grooves. Bold graffiti decorate the walls of its all-day dining restaurant, while artfully restored pieces add charm to the trendy rooftop bar with a city view. TRYP Fortitude Valley is a 4-minute walk from the train station.

#RD52 - 3 nights from  
AU\$479/ NZ\$529 Hotel

#RD53 - 4 nights from  
AU\$609/ NZ\$669 Hotel

### ULTIQA Rothbury Hotel

Ultiqa Rothbury Hotel is a historic, landmark hotel that combines the city's 1930s grandeur with modern sophistication. Situated within walking distance to South Bank, Queen Street Mall, other major attractions and the Central Railway Station, Rothbury Hotel is in a stellar location for exploring Brisbane city by foot and by train. Or simply stay in to enjoy the hotel's rooftop garden, spa, sauna, gym and BBQ stations.

#RC86 - 7 nights from  
AU\$1039/ NZ\$1129 1brm

For additional resort listings, visit  
RCI.com or call 1300 368 800 AU or  
0800 368 800 NZ





AT A GLANCE  
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# Perth Western Australia

is the laidback holiday destination tourists go to for a change of pace. You can slow down and bask in the warmth of its sandy beaches, or glimpse its rich wildlife, both on land and underwater.



## SUNNY WITH A CHANCE OF RAIN

Perth is mostly warm year-round, except for the brief mid-year rainy season. September to May see sunny temperatures of up to 30°C, while the downpours from June to August can bring temperatures down to below 12°C at night.

## SURF THE SAND

Pinnacle Desert is a hot spot for adrenaline junkies with its sandboarding and cruising opportunities.

## ROTTNEST ISLAND

A spectacle of natural sights, sounds and activities, Rottnest Island is a place not to be missed when you stop by at Perth.

## HOME OF THE QUOKKA

Get free guided walks and snap a pic of the ‘world’s happiest animal’ right on Rottnest Island.

## POPULATION

Mingle with the 2.02 million residents in Australia’s fourth-most populated city.

## FREEMANTLE MARKETS

For Aussie Culture 101, step into the Fremantle markets on the weekends. It’s a place where locally-grown organic food and indigenous crafts are sold and a venue home-grown artists frequent to display their talent.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED  
RESORTS IN PERTH  
INCLUDE:



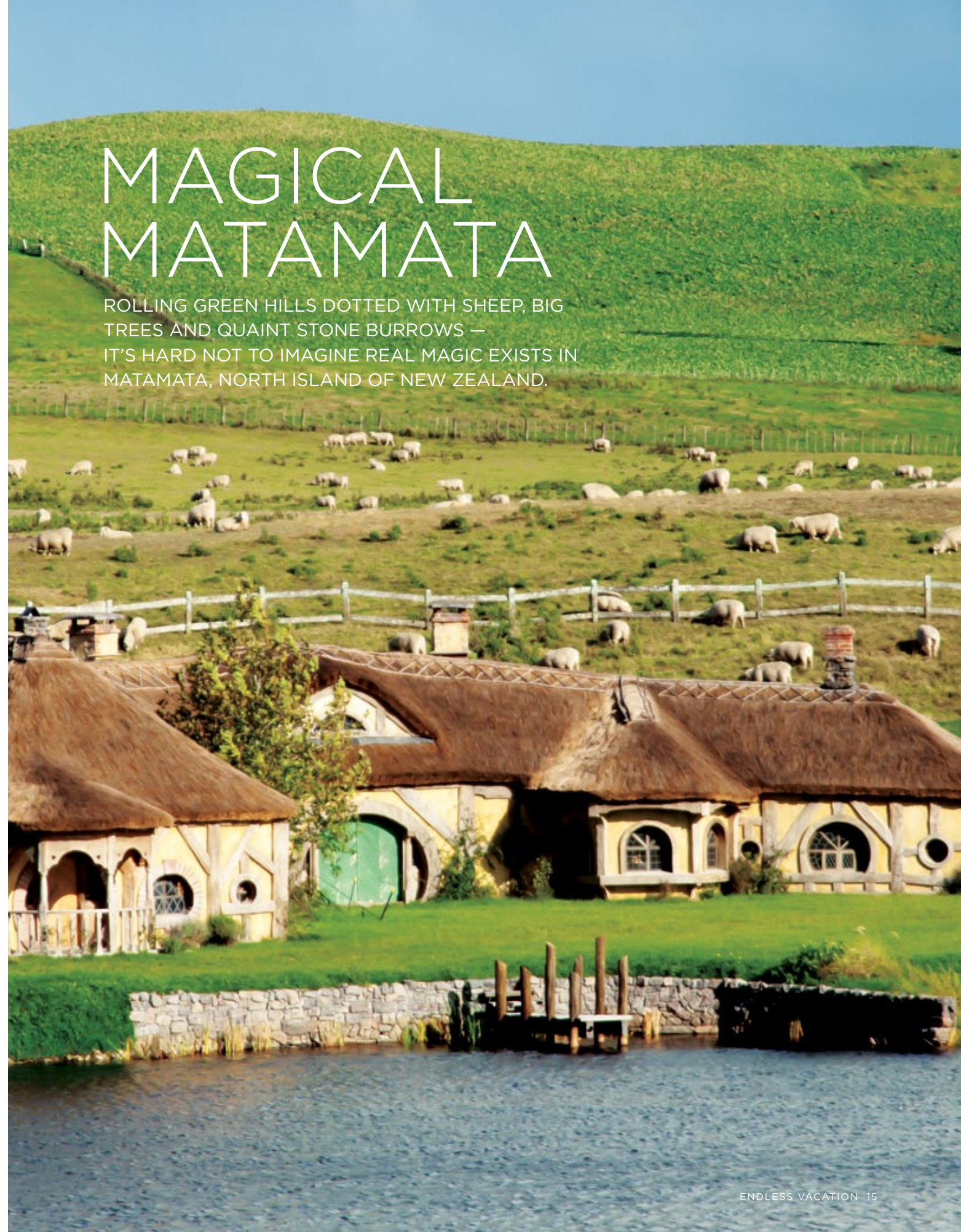
### Rottnest Lodge (C840)

7 nights from AU\$679/ NZ\$729

Converted from colonial barracks more than 150 years ago, Rottnest Lodge is now one of the Island’s most lavish stays. The premier lodge hosts an Asian-inspired spa, an on-site Italian eatery, and a vast sky-blue pool among its numerous amenities.

# MAGICAL MATAMATA

ROLLING GREEN HILLS DOTTED WITH SHEEP, BIG TREES AND QUAIN STONE BURROWS — IT’S HARD NOT TO IMAGINE REAL MAGIC EXISTS IN MATAMATA, NORTH ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND.







# HOME OF THE HOBBITS

Originally a quiet country town, Matamata was just another pleasant landscape to drive by in the Hamilton-Waikato region of New Zealand. But magic happened. During an aerial search for a location to film Sir Peter Jackson’s multi-award winning The Lord of the Rings trilogy, Matamata was discovered.

Here, Alexander Farm owns 1,250-acre of green pastures, huge trees and a small darling lake, drawing the attention of location scout Dave Comer. That afternoon in the year of 1998, Dave negotiated with the farmer and his family, won over their hearts and began his legacy of building the Hobbiton Movie Set.

Stone buildings with quaint doors were tucked into rolling green hills, overgrown with native grasses and wildflowers. There are now 44 Hobbit holes since The Shire’s rebuilding in 2010. Hobbiton resembles an idyllic 17th century English country of barberry hedges, trees with hanging apples

and pears, lichen-covered fences and rugged paths.

Step into the world of J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings trilogy and The Hobbit, with a fascinating narration by the Movie Set Tour. The popular tour operates every half hour in the summer season. Set off from The Shires Rest Cafe, meandering through The Shire and its Hobbit holes, vegetable gardens, before going round the lake to the Party Tree and The Mill. After, enjoy a local custom-brewed beer at The Green Dragon Inn.

Opened in December 2012, The Green Dragon Inn is Hobbiton’s newest addition. There are little pockets of bar areas where you can kick back with a beer in hand. Sample traditional Hobbit fare on The Green Dragon Menu – the beer and ale pie is highly recommended.

For a magical evening of revelry, explore Hobbiton at dusk and dig into a banquet dinner fit for a Hobbit. The Evening Dinner

Tour includes a stroll through Hobbiton Movie Set, with one complimentary beverage from the Hobbit Southfarthing range to be had in front of open fires. Next, be led into The Green Dragon Inn dining room for a table full of traditional Hobbit fare. The evening ends surrealistically with a moonlit walk back into the wandering paths of The Shire, illuminated along the way by pathlights and authentic handheld lanterns.

# CONQUER THE FALLS

While fans of Tolkien and Sir Jackson flock to Matamata for Hobbiton, the Hamilton-Waikato region around Matamata has more to offer than meets the eye. Take a 10-minute drive from Matamata to Wairere Falls, the highest waterfall of North Island.

The Wairere Falls Track paves the way to the lower viewing platform located at the base of the falls. Leave your vehicle behind at the carpark on Goodwin Road (off Old Te Aroha Road) and begin your

hike from there. A return journey will take approximately an hour and a half.

Voyage through native forest, cross quaint wooden bridges, and take in the views of gentler, smaller cascades. Be amazed by the 153 metres, 2-stage drop Wairere Falls from the viewing platform. Cascading water breaks into little streams, flowing through mossy green rocks and ferns. Laze around on park benches or dip your toes into the refreshing cool waters.

For an even more breathtaking view, climb the rugged stairs leading to the top of Wairere Falls. Feel the world at your feet with a magnificent view overlooking the Waikato plains. The journey between the lower platform and the waterfall’s peak will take an extra 2 hours.

# LOOKING BACK

Built in 1882 by Auckland businessman Josiah Clifton Firth, The Firth Tower

was one of the first reinforced concrete buildings in New Zealand. In its heyday, this 16-metre structure served its purpose as a lookout point over the countryside, as an estate office and a men’s sleeping quarter.

Today, the tower offers more than just an extensive view. Visit The Firth Tower and its neighbouring buildings for an array of museum displays by Matamata Historical Society. Around the tower are 10 other historic landmarks, including a church, schoolroom and jail. Outside, gardens are welcoming for leisure strolls. Huge oak trees emerge from sprawling lawns, providing cool shade for an afternoon picnic in the tranquil historic nature. [www.firhttower.co.nz](http://www.firhttower.co.nz)

# GONE FLYING

Spread your wings and explore the skies. Matamata is a world-renowned site for gliding, blessed with updrafts from the Kaimai Ranges. It has the ideal conditions

# Did you know?

The oak tree overlooking Bag End (where Bilbo and his nephew Frodo Baggins lived) is almost ‘manmade’. Weighing 26 tonnes, the chosen tree was cut down, each branch numbered and chopped, then bolted together on top of Bag End.







that draw gilders, young and old, new and experienced. Gliding is an air sport where unpowered aircrafts, also known as gliders and sailplanes, take flight and remain airborne using natural currents of rising air.

At Piako Gliding Club on Matamata Airfield (State Highway 27), anyone can fly. If you are sitting in a glider for the first time, Piako Gliding Club's pilot training will first take you through a trial flight, followed by the learn-to-fly course and an advanced training course. Experienced solo pilots wishing to take a gilder on a cross-country flight can pick up skills and knowledge from the panel of professional instructors. [www.glidingmatamata.co.nz](http://www.glidingmatamata.co.nz)

#### RACE & GALLOP

Situated in the heart of New Zealand's highest racehorse and breeding population, Matamata is naturally a place to watch horses race. Each morning at approximately 5am, the Matamata Racing Club gallops into life with over 500 horses out on training. The Matamata Racing Club's racecourse comprises 158 acres of grass, plough, sand and all-weather tracks, as well as an equine pool. Visitors are welcome to watch the horses in training. View majestic horses kicking up dust in the morning sunlight, with the Kaimai Ranges as backdrop — not hitting the snooze button will be worth it. Call Matamata

Racing Club at +66 7-888 8898 to ask for training schedules before visiting.

#### HOLE IN ONE

Golfers will relish teeing off on the rolling green Matamata pastures set against the backdrop of the gorgeous Kaimai Ranges. Matamata Golf Club ([matamatagolf.co.nz](http://matamatagolf.co.nz)) and Walton Golf Club ([walgolf.co.nz](http://walgolf.co.nz)) are two of Matamata's best courses offering the best view and facilities.

Matamata golf course offers free draining soil, which means the course is playable within minutes of even the heaviest downpour. Its variety of challenges will delight golfers of all levels. Corporate and social occasions are welcomed. The Walton Golf Club is slightly off the beaten path, meeting halfway of Matamata and Morrinsville. The club has been applauded worldwide for its wonderful hospitality and spacious clubhouse.

Both golf clubs will transform your golfing experience with their manicured fairways, fully irrigated greens and rows of lush trees.

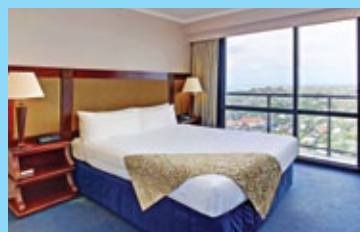
#### GETTING THERE BY ROAD

Matamata is a 2-hour drive from Auckland. From Hamilton, the drive will take 45 minutes. Expect a 1-hour drive if you are departing from Rotorua.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED  
RESORTS IN NEW  
ZEALAND INCLUDE:



#### Spencer On Byron

Discover the modern architecture of Auckland's newest business class hotel. The Spencer on Byron Hotel stands tall on the North Shore in Takapuna, with unsurpassed views. Kick back with a beer at the bar, or take in the views of the sunrise behind Rangitoto, with sails charting the Americas Cup course on the Hauraki Gulf. Wake to breathtaking silhouettes of Auckland's skyline lighting up the harbour. At Spencer on Byron, you can expect comfortable business class suites, elegant banquet rooms, state-of-the-art conference facilities and anticipatory service anytime.

#7452 3 nights from  
AU\$549/NZ\$589 1brm  
#8407 4 nights from  
AU\$559/NZ\$599 1brm



DINING IN  
RECIPES FOR  
RESORT MADE MEALS



## Cool as a Cucumber

IN HUNGARY, A REFRESHING SALAD  
GETS A DASH OF PAPRIKA.

BY CHEF DAVID LAPHAM

Hungarian cucumber salad, called uborkasaláta, typically goes right alongside the main meal. The salad's bright, acidic flavours contrast perfectly with the richness of the country's traditional stews and heavily sauced dishes. The salad can be dressed up with the addition of sour cream or even a small amount of mayonnaise (especially good with fish).

What makes the dish uniquely Hungarian is the country's beloved spice, paprika. Depending on your taste, you can use sweet or hot paprika (or a combination). The good news is that the salad combines peeled cucumbers with simple ingredients, most of which are probably in your pantry.

### HUNGARIAN CUCUMBER SALAD

- 2 medium cucumbers
- 1 pinch salt, plus 1 tsp
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pinch sugar
- 1/4 cup white or apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika (or more to taste, using a combination of sweet and hot paprikas)
- 1 tbsp sour cream (optional)

Peel the cucumbers and slice very thin with a sharp knife or mandoline. Sprinkle with the pinch of salt, mix and place in a strainer over a bowl 30 to 45 minutes to remove excess water and concentrate cucumber flavour. In a separate bowl, whisk together the remaining salt and the pepper, sugar and vinegar. Add the cucumbers and mix well. Marinate two hours or more. To serve, place the cucumbers on a plate and sprinkle the paprika on top.

Serves 4 to 6.

## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN HUNGARY INCLUDE:

#### Club Abbázia 2833

A centrally located resort. 23 Erzsébet Királyné Útca, Keszthely

#### Club Dobogómajor 4193

The 312 apartments are a stone's throw from Lake Hévíz. 1 Hévíz Útca, Csereszgtomaj

\*Price has been converted to AUD dollars.



# 10

## World's Most Colourful Beaches

Not all beaches are created equal. The next time you daydream about sunning yourself near the ocean, imagine digging your toes into these truly stunning shores of many colours.

By **Jessen O'Brien**

**NOTE:** Information may have changed since publication. Please confirm key details before planning your trip.

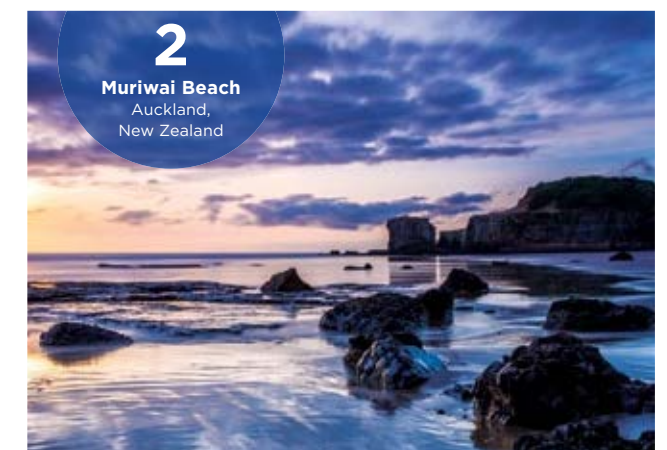
**Published:** Winter 2015



### Hyams Beach

Hyams Beach, Australia

Hyams Beach is said to have the whitest sand in the world. The sand is also fine and soft, ideal for sunbathing. If your vacation style is more active, the clear waters and colourful marine life provide first-rate snorkeling. The beach faces east, offering a spectacular tableau if you can get there in time for sunrise.



### Muriwai Beach

Auckland, New Zealand

Pitch-black volcanic sand defines Muriwai Beach, only a 40-minute drive from Auckland. It's a favourite among white seabirds called gannets, whose cliff-top colony polka-dots the landscape. Muriwai's rolling waves make it just as popular among surfers. To join them, you can rent equipment or schedule a lesson at the nearby Muriwai Surf School.



**Pink Beach**

Komodo, Indonesia

One of the few pink beaches in the world is found on the island of Komodo. Green hills and turquoise water border the rosy shore. In some areas the ocean is so clear, you can make out the coral reef below. While you're there, keep an eye out for oversized Komodo dragons, lizards that take their name from the island.

**Pink Sands Beach**

Harbour Island, Bahamas

For a blush-tinted beach, head to the Bahamas. Although smaller, Harbour Island is much more laid-back than the casino-laden Nassau, Paradise Island or Cable Beach. Winter, when the temperature settles at about 75 degrees, is an ideal time to visit. Spend your days swimming in the gentle waters and your nights feasting on conch, the local specialty.

**Red Beach**

Santorini, Greece

Santorini may be known for whitewashed cliff-top towns, like Fira and Oia, but its red sand beach is truly breathtaking. This natural wonder is located minutes from a man-made one, the Minoan ruins of Akrotiri. Admire the red shore from above, or walk down to experience it up close.

**Ramla Bay**

Gozo, Malta

Legend has it that Calypso's cave in Homer's Odyssey is one that overlooks the orange shore of Ramla Bay, on the Maltese island of Gozo. Although the cave itself isn't much to look at, the climb up to it is worth it for the panoramic view of the curved coastline it offers. The orange sand stretches long and wide, so you can find plenty of space on this popular beach to lie out in.



**Papakolea Beach**

Naalehu, Hawaii

Olivine lava crystals give this beach its distinctive hue. Getting there's a bit of a hike, but at the end you're rewarded with one of four green shores in the world (the others are in the Galápagos Islands, Guam and Norway). The surrounding cliffs that help isolate and protect this beach are the remains of a cinder cone that is thought to have formed 50,000 years ago.

**Pfeiffer Beach**

Big Sur, California

Most people head to the central California region of Big Sur for stunning views of the Santa Lucia Mountains rising from the Pacific Ocean. Pfeiffer Beach doesn't make as many travel lists, but its psychedelic purple-streaked shore is just as photo-worthy. Winter storms erode the garnet cliffs that line the cove, causing the rare colour and making the cold season a preferable time to go for the full effect.

**Bioluminescent Beaches**

Maldives

Beaches in the Maldives sometimes glow in the dark. Certain species of plankton light up like fireflies to scare off predators, resulting in tiny blue lights that cover the shore. Although this bioluminescence has been spotted throughout the Maldives, your best bet is traveling to one of the northern islands: Mudhdhoo or Vaadhoo. If you can, go during a new moon, as the darker the sky, the more impressive the illumination.

**Rainbow Beach**

Rainbow Beach, Australia

You can find more than 70 hues of colour in the sands of Rainbow Beach. The Kabi Kabi people, who originally lived there, believed that Yiningie, a spirit symbolised by the rainbow, fell into the surrounding cliffs during a battle, causing the patchwork dunes. The town of Rainbow Beach lies just south of Fraser Island, a World Heritage site covered in rain forests, eucalyptus trees, mangrove woodland and more.



TATESHINA, CHINO

# GREEN GEM OF JAPAN

If waking up to a view of mountainous terrains is your idea of pleasure, Tateshina, Chino in Nagano prefecture of Japan could just be your heaven on earth.

Tateshina Highland, or ‘Tateshina kogen’ in Japanese, is located at northwestern slope of Yatsugatake mountains. A potpourri of sweeping panorama, lavish comforts and natural adventure, this little town is a green gem yet to be fully discovered by the outside world. Locals travel in from all over Japan to escape into the heart of nature — waking up to crisp fresh air, taking in the majestic beauty of mountains and lakes, and admiring cherry blossoms and local arts. Unveil one of Japan’s best-kept secrets of lush greens and languid luxury.

## PEAK BEAUTY

Rising majestically at 2899 metres is Mount Akadake, the main peak of Yatsugatake. Legend has it that the Yatsugatake Mountains were once higher than Mount Fuji. Jealousy urged Konohanasakuya-hime, the Goddess of Mount Fuji to tear down Yatsugatake into a collection of volcanic mountains. With the magnificent Mount Akadake and the Southern Alps’ curving smoothly across

blue skies, Yatsugatake is breathtaking in the beautiful morning light. Hop on the Kita Yatsugatake Rope Way to soak in the mountainous view while travelling up the summit station at 2237 metres. When night falls, gaze out at the busy skies, lit by twinkling stars.

## NATURE VENTURE

For the adventurous at heart, deepen your breathtaking experience by ascending

the mountains by foot. Various hiking paths are available for casual hikers to professional alpinists. A popular route is from Minotoguchi stop, taking 4-5 hours for hiking to the peak of Akadake. Northern Yatsugatake is a gentle route perfect for first-timers, with thicker forests blocking out winds and numerous trekking guides available.

## LANGUID STROLLS

If conquering mountains is not up your alley, you have the option of breathing in the mesmerising charm of Lake Shirakaba in Yatsugatake-Chushin Kogen Quasi-National Park. Take a leisure stroll to where Mount Tateshina meets Mount Kirigamine. There are pedal boats for cruising on the gleaming lake surface reflecting blue skies, white clouds and rolling mountains. Adding to Tateshina’s allure are two other spectacular water bodies, Lake Tateshina and Lake Megami. Cycle by the scenic lakesides or ice-skate in a nearby rink to feel cool winds breeze through your hair.

## SAKURA BLOOM

Head further north of Lake Tateshina to discover Shokoji, a Buddhist temple built in the 1970s. History and culture aside,

Shokoji temple is remarkably popular for the full riotous bloom of hundreds of cherry blossoms. The cherry blossom, otherwise known as Sakura, is Japan’s unofficial national flower. This spectacular beauty only lasts a few weeks, so make sure to bring your best dress and camera if you’re visiting Tateshina between late April to early May.

## ART ALLURE

Museums not to be missed are the Ito Modern Art Museum, Rene Lalique Museum and Tateshina Teddy Bear Museum — exhibiting over 5,000 teddy bears from all over the world. The latter attracts a surprising number of adults everyday. While Tateshina is sprinkled with distinguished exhibitions and galleries, pay special attention to the Yatsugatake Art Museum. This 1980s odd-shaped building is hidden in a densely forested slope of the mountains, near Haramura village. With an intention to seamlessly introduce a man-made building into a natural environment, Architect Togo Murano designed the space using 25 identical domes. The museum exhibits works by famed sculptor Takashi Shimizu, and Kakusen Tsugane; both artists of Haramura. It also

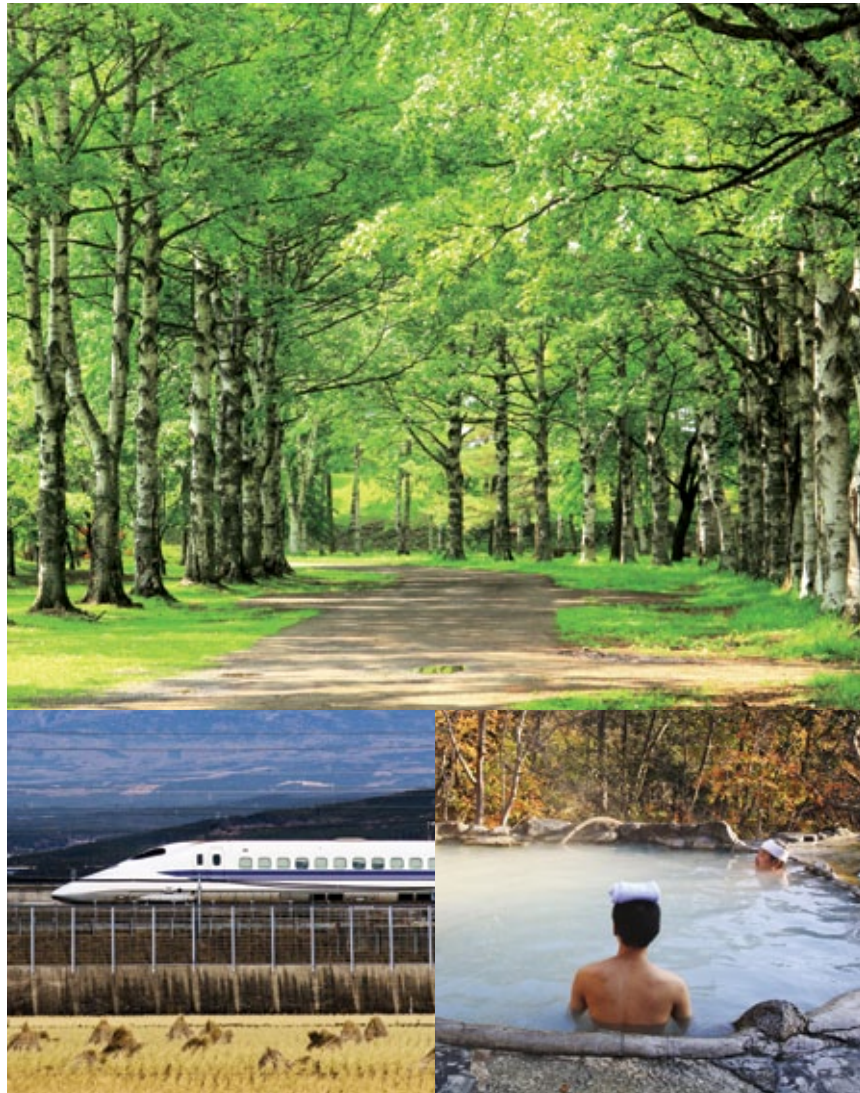
showcases Yatsugatake craftsmen at work, such as quilt making, dyeing, weaving, sakiori weaving and earthenware.

## MANICURED LANDS

Horticulture lovers will lose track of time in Barakura English Garden, the first authentic English Garden to open in Japan in the summer of 1990. Founded by Mr. Hohei Yamada, the garden is thriving with 5,000 variants of plants. The most stunning exhibition is that of 180 varieties of old roses displayed gracefully round the year. Catch the annual world-renowned Barakura Flower Show and rub shoulders with renowned horticulturalists, garden designers, musicians and artists from around the globe. Barakura English Garden is accessible with a 20-minute ride on the bus from Chino Station or driving via Suwa Interchange.

**TIP:** Climbing experts advise beginners to plan for summertime hikes because the temperature at higher altitudes tend to drop significantly as night falls. Remember to pack your warm clothing, waterproof gear, a topographic map and plenty of drinks for hydration.





**STAY**  
RCI AFFILIATED  
RESORTS IN  
TATESHINA INCLUDE:

## Big Week Tateshina



Overlooking the rolling mountains of Yatsugatake, Big Week Tateshina is a tranquil resort surrounded by the lush greenery of Japanese larch trees. Enjoy easy access to a golf course, tennis courts, ski grounds and hot springs. All rooms are designed as suites with 2 bedrooms, a living room, dining room and a well-equipped kitchen.

**#RD40 – 3 nights from  
AU\$999/ NZ\$1079 2brm**

**#RD41 – 4 nights from  
AU\$1329/ NZ\$1439 2brm**



**Tateshina Travel Tip:** Get around with Tateshina Kogen Round Bus. The public transport brings passengers to popular sites such as Lake Tateshina, Pilatus Tateshina Ropeway, Lake Shirakaba and Kuruyama Kogen Plateau.

## GETTING THERE

### BY CAR

A journey from Tokyo begins at Takaido Interchange on Chuo Highway. Continue on Suwa Interchange and drive to Tateshina Kogen. This route requires only 2 hours.

Driving from Nagoya will take 2.5 hours. Starting at Nagoya Interchange on Tomei Highway, travel onto Komaki Junction on Chuo Highway leading to Suwa Interchange, then Tateshina Kogen.

If you're big on road trips, travel from Osaka taking the Toyonaka Interchange on Meishin Highway to Komaki Junction, then continue on the above suggested route departing from Nagoya. Turn on the radio and enjoy a scenic drive for approximately 4 hours and 15 minutes.

### BY TRAIN

All train routes should bring you to Chino Station as the final destination. Hop on the Chuoh Tosen Express at Shinjuku Station for an approximate 2-hour direct trip.

If you're starting your journey from Nagoya Station, take the Chuo Saisen Express and change trains at Shiojiri Station towards Chino Station. This journey requires approximately 2.5 hours of travel.

Departing from Osaka will take 3.5 hours. Board the Tokaido Shinkansen (Super Express) at Shin Osaka Station, head to Nagoya Station and continue the journey from Nagoya as described.

# CANDID DAYS CANDIDASA

Waves crash and curl along the coasts of Candidasa, a hilly seaside town east of Bali, Indonesia. The former fishing village once had the most natural golden shores, attracting droves of sun seekers. Yet with the boom of tourism, beaches were gradually eroded by construction and reef mining activities. Surrealistically, Candidasa took only a few years to rejuvenate its identity as the ultimate holiday relaxation pad. Favoured for the soothing sound of crashing waves, saltwater breeze and quiet peaceful nights, this seaside town has transformed into a coastal retreat for couples and families. On more adventurous days, head out to explore East Bali's exotic and diverse list of cultural, aquatic and mountainous activities.

### THINGS TO DO

Beaches located in town are less idyllic, but various breathtaking alternatives surround Candidasa. Hop on a motorbike or hire a driver to head 4.5km east of Candidasa. There, discover one of Bali's most pristine beaches — the White Sand Beach, otherwise known to locals as Pasir Putih Beach.

Cradled between two hills and surrounded by palm trees, the nicely concealed beach exudes tranquil ocean vibes. Laze around for sunbathing, or break into the aquamarine blue water to swim and snorkel. For a literal taste of the ocean, tuck into locally grilled fresh catch. The clandestine nature of this hidden gem makes it an alluring discovery for the adventurous.

If the depth of the ocean intrigues you, Candidasa is where you will want to start your underwater journey. Along the front coast of Candidasa are the islands of Biaha, where experienced divers will enjoy shark cave diving. Tepekong boasts popular dive spot, Canyon, while Mimpang is brimming with coral gardens and busy underwater life.

The eastern side of Bali is home to globally renowned dive sites. Just an hour from Candidasa, world famous USAT Liberty shipwreck sits at the bottom of the sea in Tulamben. Make a short trip to Suraya for muck diving, Amed for reef wall diving, and Padang Bai where white-tipped sharks and blue-spotted rays are common







sightings. Lucky divers have reported close encounters with the elusive Mola Molas too.

Wandering into the hinterland by foot is another great way to explore Candidasa. There are many trekking trails to take you through the padi fields and mountainous terrains of Candidasa, even across a traditional bamboo bridge. Most trekking routes pass through sites of historical and cultural significance such as water palaces, coastal temples and villages. If you are one to value authentic insights, hire a local trekking guide and be fully assimilated into the beauty of Bali. Those seeking greater challenges may opt to hike up the island's highest peak, Mount Agung.

### THINGS TO SEE

The road to Candidasa is peppered with sacred temples. Stop by Pura Besakih, Bali's largest temple perched on Mount Agung, the holiest mountain in Bali. It dedicates 3 main temples to the Hindu Gods and is surrounded by 18 separate sanctuaries. On the west of Candidasa sits Hindu temple Goa Lawah, also known as Bat Cave. The walls of Goa Lawah are covered with thousands of bats, a jaw-dropping experience not to be missed.

Closer to home is Pura Candidasa, the locals' holy ground with twin temples overlooking the lagoon.

For an authentic village life experience, navigate 4.5 kilometres northwest of Candidasa and step into the ancient world of Tenganan Village (Tenganan Pegringsingan). It is one of the oldest traditional Balinese villages, and has preserved the pre-Majapahit Balinese culture and customs of the Bali Aga community. Many of the temple festivals attract visitors, with most people planning their itinerary around witnessing the annual ceremonial fight Perang Pandan (pandanus leaf war). Male villagers will put on traditional clothes and battle each other using thorny pandan leaves to celebrate Indra, the God of War.

Tenganan village is also famed for Geringsing, Bali's magic cloth. Using the double ikat (double tie) technique exclusive to the Tenganan community in Indonesia, a single piece of this rare textile takes up to 3 years to weave. Naturally, Geringsing is the traditional textile of Tenganan. The locals believe wearing the Geringsing on one's shoulders during ceremonies brings them protection.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN CANDIDASA INCLUDE:



### Regent Holidays at Rama Candidasa #6920

Tucked away from the crowd, Regent Holidays at Rama Candidasa is seated on a picturesque, private beach on Bali's eastern coast. The swimming pool stretches between lush gardens and the deep blue sea. Indonesian-style massage and other healing treatments are available at the hotel, all with an ocean view. Dine at the hotel's in-house restaurant for delicious Mediterranean, Italian and exotic Balinese dishes.

7 nights from AU\$449/NZ\$479 Hotel



### Royal Bali Beach Club at Candidasa #3968

Being situated on the outskirts of Candidasa has its advantages. Royal Bali Beach Club is set on Balina Beach, sandwiched between coral-rich seas and volcanoes — a prime location for diving, snorkeling and fishing. The resort offers glass-bottom boat rides for viewing the sea life and mountain hiking service. Its pool and outdoor Jacuzzi lead directly onto the hushed Balina beach.

7 nights from AU\$679/NZ\$739 1brm

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- India
- Europe
- Galapagos & Peru
- Australia & New Zealand
- Tanzania Safari

Platinum Cruise Discounts

Set sail on the open sea and enjoy spectacular savings on cruise holidays with RCI Platinum® membership. Choose from thousands of cruise itineraries and book up to eight cabins with one deposit.

NEW Member Rewards°

Get Member Reward Dollars on Guest Certificate instead of a rebate when booking Holiday Rentals.

Receive Member Reward Dollars on everyday RCI transactions and direct it straight into your RCI account for future transactions. Weeks members will also receive Member Reward Dollars for Combine deposit or Deposit credits.

• Points members

Earn Member Rewards with:  
– Purchase of an RCI Guest Certificate AU\$30 / NZ\$30 reward

• Weeks members

Earn Member Rewards with:  
– Purchase of an RCI Guest Certificate AU\$30 / NZ\$30 reward  
– Combine Deposits or Deposit Credits AU\$25 / NZ\$30 reward

NEW Free Points Transfers

For Points members only.

Transfer your points to another eligible RCI Points member’s account with no extra charges or limit.

UPGRADES & CHANGES

NEW Complimentary Upgrades

Receive complimentary unit and resort upgrades within 2 weeks of check-in. No additional fees or Deposit Trading Power is required. Just let us know your choice of a unit upgrade or resort change when booking your trip. For a resort change, specify up to 5 preferred resorts. Within 2 weeks of check-in, if one of the chosen resorts or a bigger unit at your confirmed resort is available, your reservation will automatically be changed. You will be notified of the update with all essential details.+

Points Extension

For Points members only!

Extend your Points for 2 Use-Years, at the price of a one-year extension.

RCI® Deposit RestoreSM

For Weeks members only!

Automatically receive full Deposit Trading Power for Weeks deposited up to 6 months (180 days) prior to the start date of such Week, without paying an additional fee.

Deposit a Week less than 6 months (180 days) before the start date of such Week (but at least 15 days prior to the stated date of such week) and receive the full Deposit Trading Power by paying the RCI Deposit Restore fee at the time of deposit.



CONTACT

For **Points members**, please dial:  
1300 369 476 (Australia) or  
0800 569 476 (New Zealand)

For **Weeks members**, please dial:  
1300 368 800 (Australia) or  
0800 368 800 (New Zealand)

Email: [pacific.member@rci.com](mailto:pacific.member@rci.com)

To find out more, visit  
[www.rci.com/platinum\\_pac](http://www.rci.com/platinum_pac)

\* These holidays are limited. Destinations and travel times are subject to availability and confirmed on a first come, first served basis. Offer includes only accommodation and specifically excludes travel costs and other expenses that may be incurred. Taxes, additional fees and charges may apply. All-inclusive resorts may charge a mandatory all-inclusive fee. Other restrictions may apply.

^ Certain benefits of the RCI Platinum membership are provided by third parties. RCI does not warrant the suitability or security of such benefits or the providers of such benefits. Information about such benefits is based on information obtained from the applicable providers. RCI is not responsible for, and shall have no liability for any inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information regarding products or services that are not provided directly by RCI. Additional terms, conditions and restrictions may apply to any such benefit, as determined solely by the applicable provider, and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the provider.

° Formerly known as Platinum Rebates.

+ Additional housekeeping or other resort-specific fees may apply based on the increased unit size. These holidays are limited. Destinations and travel times are subject to availability and confirmed on a first come, first served basis. Offer includes only accommodations and specifically excludes travel costs and other expenses that may be incurred. Taxes, additional fees and charges may apply. All-inclusive resorts may charge a mandatory all-inclusive fee. Other restrictions may apply.



# Maximizing your Deposit Trading Power!

In order to make sure you get 100% of your available Deposit Trading Power, you must deposit **at least 9 months before** the check-in date of your ownership week. The **Deposit Trading Power Adjustment Schedule** below shows how your trading power changes based on when you deposit:

## Deposit Trading Power Adjustment Schedule

2 years to 9 months (276 days or more) from check-in	<b>100%</b> of Trading Power Retained
6 to 9 months (181 to 275 days) from check-in	<b>95%</b> of Trading Power Retained
3 to 6 months (91 to 180 days) from check-in	<b>90%</b> of Trading Power Retained
1 to 3 months (31 to 90 days) from check-in	<b>80%</b> of Trading Power Retained
15 to 30 days from check-in	<b>60%</b> of Trading Power Retained
Less than 14 days from check-in	<b>45%</b> of Trading Power Retained

For example, you own a week with a check-in date of 7 May, 2015 and you deposit it by 5 August, 2014 (276 days or more from check-in), your maximum Deposit Trading Power is 20.

But, if you wait to deposit until 9 February, 2015 to 6 April, 2015 (90 days to 31 days from check-in), your Deposit Trading Power is 16.

### Need to know

You can see a personalised view of your current maximum Deposit Trading Power by checking out the Deposit Calculator on RCI.com. Just go to the Manage Your Deposits tab and click on the Deposit Tools and Resources section on the right.

1. Deposit early - 2 years to 9 months in advance of your ownership week's start date to get 100% of your Deposit Trading Power to use for exchange.
2. Once you deposit your week(s), your Deposit Trading Power will not decrease.
3. Depositing is free!
4. You don't need to know where you want to go to deposit.



# New Affiliated Resorts

With more than 4,300 RCI® affiliated resorts around the world, you might think we'd stop there. Yet new properties are added to our portfolio of over 100 countries each month. At RCI®, we are fully committed to the simple promise of delivering more options and greater flexibility. Discover new opportunities for travel with these recently added RCI® affiliated resorts today.





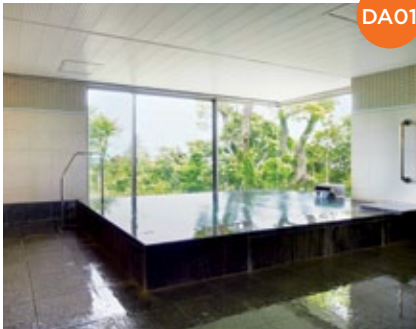
DA04

**Big Week Tateshina (RD40/ RD41)**  
Overlooking rolling mountains of Yatsugatake, Big Week Tateshina is a tranquil resort surrounded by the lush greenery of Japanese larch trees. Enjoy easy access to a golf course, tennis courts, ski grounds and hot springs. All rooms are designed as suites with 2 bedrooms, a living room, dining room and a well-equipped kitchen.



DA00

**Big Week Hakone Gora (RD31/ RD32)**  
Located in the heart of Hakone, a famous hot spring town, Big Week Hakone Gora is naturally surrounded by hot springs and beautiful gardens. Modern Japanese units with fully equipped kitchens and in-room amenities make this a home away from home for couples, friends and family. The resort has its very own natural hot spring, exclusively for guests only.



DA01

**Big Week Izukogen (RD33/ RD34)**  
Surrounded by mountains and sea, Big Week Izukogen is located at the hilly Izu peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture. Enjoy leisure activities such as dipping in hot springs, available all-year round. Larger groups will feel comfortable in the two-bedroom units with fully furnished kitchens and spacious living rooms.



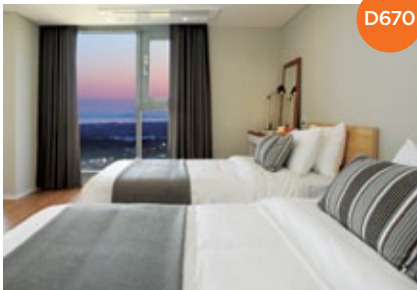
DA02

**Big Week Karuizawa (RD36/ RD37)**  
Escape from the bustling city at Karuizawa, a picturesque resort town in Nagano prefecture. Big Week Karuizawa is a popular luxury mountain resort set at the foot of Mount Asama. Explore the town's rich culture and stunning natural landscape in close proximity. All 30 units come with two bedrooms and well-furnished kitchens to comfortably accommodate families and groups.



DA03

**Big Week Kyoto (RD38/ RD39)**  
Big Week Kyoto offers a glimpse into the rich Japanese culture and history with Kyoto's ancient temples and elusive geishas. Located next to a stream at a tranquil spot, it offers great little eateries and shrines just a leisurely stroll away. The spacious two-bedroom units come with authentic tatami rooms, luxurious kitchens, washing machines, dryers and other in-room amenities for a comfortable stay.



D670

**Vistacay Hotel Worldcup (RD96/RD97)**  
Convenience meets comfort at Vistacay Hotel Worldcup. Combining wood and glass features, the hotel's design concept exudes classic, modern vibes. Guests are treated to a rooftop pool and in-house restaurant. The hotel is located close to Jeju World Cup Stadium in Seogwipo-si and other famed attractions. Take a short stroll to the local convenience store and supermarket, and immerse in local cultures at the nearby traditional market.



DB18

**Suiton by Paxton Qionghai Bay Xichang**  
Almost every corner of Suiton by Paxton Qionghai Bay Xichang has a view to impress. Gaze out of the window to find an elegant countryside view of winding trails, shallow hills and a lakeside recreation zone. The hotel and suites offer dual attributes — comforts of home, with a refined taste in furnishing, bedding and kitchen appliances. Be pampered by the quality services of cleaning, laundry, room service and much more.



DA16

**Wyndham Sea Pearl Resort Phuket (RD43/ RD44)**  
Set within 16 verdant acres of hilltop beauty, Sea Pearl Resort features spectacular views of Patong Bay and the Andaman Sea. Luxurious en-suite bedrooms and suites are individually designed to combine comfortable convenience with sophisticated refinement. One of Asia's popular beaches is just a short distance away.



DA13

**ETC at Bo'ao Yudaiwan Hotel**  
Nestled at the verge of South China Sea, the 180-acre Bo'ao Yudaiwan Hotel occupies more than 400 metres of private coast. The hotel boasts more than 300 deluxe rooms, 80% of which offers guests a sea view. For the busy professionals, conference rooms of varying sizes are available for working in comfort and luxury. An affiliation agreement between RCI and ETC in September 2015 presents Bo'ao Yudaiwan Hotel as part of the prestigious ETC Vacation Club.



DB19

**Paxton Park Hotel Chengdu**  
In the north of Chengdu, Paxton Park Hotel is a five-star hotel with easy access to the capital's landmarks and main attractions. Fitted with elegant French windows, all 161 rooms of the hotel are designed to be contemporary and luxurious. Pick from a Chinese restaurant, a Western restaurant and the two teahouses to relax in style.



D939

**Interlux Club Royal**  
Tucked away from the city buzz, Interlux Club Royal is located in the elite area of northern Pattaya. All apartments are designed with European comfort and elegance. Many local attractions are within walking distance from the hotel. Lie back for a Thai massage spa therapy, or tuck into high-quality international cuisine at the hotel's in-house restaurants. Explore other coasts by taking a boat out from Bali Hai pier to the famous Koh Larn Island, Thien Beach and Nual Beach, to name a few.



DB17

**Paxton Vacances Resort Qionghai Bay Xichang**  
Embraced by the banks of Qionghai and the scenic Lushan, the waterfront view at Paxton Vacances Resort Qionghai Bay Xichang resembles a beautiful painting of sea and mountains. The hotel offers a U-shaped structure that unveils breathtaking scenery at every turn. From dining at restaurants, socialising at bars and partying at ballrooms, to working fervently at meeting rooms, all guests will get to enjoy the splendor of picturesque Qionghai.



DB20

**Paxton Vacances Resort Jiuzhaigou**  
Spanning 22,000 square metres, Paxton Vacances Resort Jiuzhaigou is located on the five A-class tourist scenic spots in China. Words such as 'paradise' and 'fairytale world' have been used to describe Jiuzhaigou. One can only imagine the view from the hotel rooms to be breathtakingly gorgeous.







**WYNDHAM RESORT & SPA DUNSBOROUGH**  
Dunsborough, WA Australia

Wyndham Resort & Spa Dunsborough is a luxurious resort featuring extensive facilities and amenities, including a beauty and day spa, a cosy fireside wine bar, and even a wedding chapel. Gourmet dining is available at Toby's Restaurant & Bar, which serves the finest wines the region has to offer. Laundry facilities are conveniently located on-site for guest use.

**(A789) 7 NTS from AU\$519/ NZ\$549 Studio**



**MANDSFIELD COUNTRY RESORT**  
Mansfield, VIC Australia

Mansfield Country Resort promises a thrilling, fully recreational getaway. Have a friendly match at on-site squash and tennis courts while your kids explore the playground. For more family fun, enjoy a round of miniature golf and activities in the games room. As the day winds down, stroll by the lakeshore, grill your favourite bites at the barbecue pit and relax in the whirlpool tub. For all your daily needs, head to the convenience store on-site.

**(0827) 7 NTS from AU\$619/ NZ\$669 2brms**



**LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB**  
Numurkah, VIC Australia

Spanning 65 acres, Lakeside Country Club, Numurkah is set in the idyllic semi-rural outskirts of the township north of Melbourne. It houses 48 single story villas, indoor and outdoor pools, a spa and sauna complex, tennis and squash courts as well as a mini golf course. Adults can unwind in the exclusive lounge, while the younger ones trek through the kids' room, playground and fairy garden. To top it off, the country club also boasts a BMX bike track (BYO bikes), basketball ring, beach volley ball court and golf driving range (BYO clubs & balls).

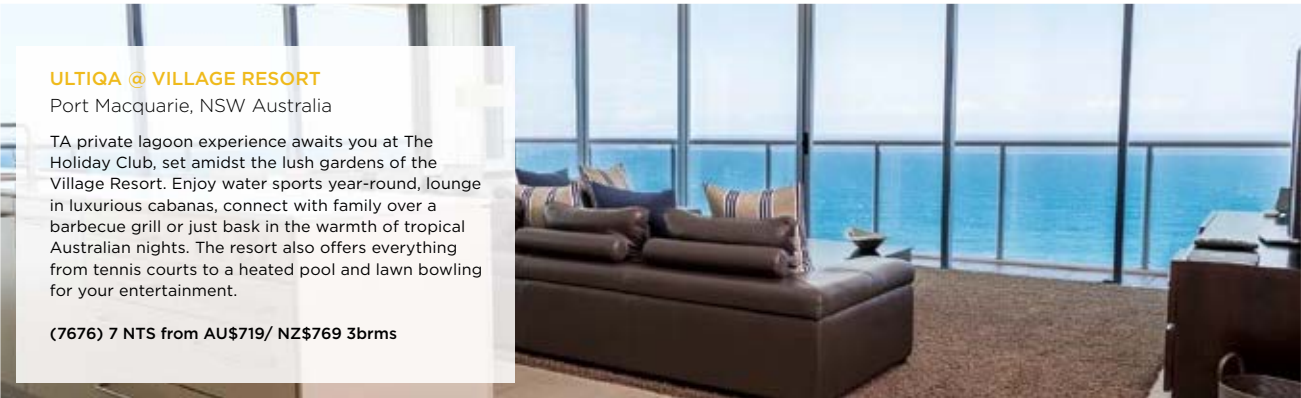
**(1172) 7 NTS from AU\$639/ NZ\$679 1brm**



**KYNETON BUSHLAND RESORT**  
Kyneton, VIC Australia

Go back to basics in 125 acres of natural bushland with Kyneton Bushland Resort on the fringes of Kyneton. Each villa is nestled in a unique bush setting, ensuring complete privacy. Rest, relax and savour the wonders of the Australian bushlands and its exotic wildlife. Take a dip in the resort's pool or unwind in the sauna and spa. To get even closer to nature, canoe, fish or swim in the five-acre lake. For more rigorous activities, try bike riding, tennis, volleyball, mini-golf or table tennis.

**(0830) 7 NTS from AU\$729/ NZ\$789 2brms**



**ULTIQA @ VILLAGE RESORT**  
Port Macquarie, NSW Australia

TA private lagoon experience awaits you at The Holiday Club, set amidst the lush gardens of the Village Resort. Enjoy water sports year-round, lounge in luxurious cabanas, connect with family over a barbecue grill or just bask in the warmth of tropical Australian nights. The resort also offers everything from tennis courts to a heated pool and lawn bowling for your entertainment.

**(7676) 7 NTS from AU\$719/ NZ\$769 3brms**



**WYNDHAM COFFS HARBOUR - TREETOPS**  
Coffs Harbour, NSW Australia

Soak up the sun on the beachside within walking distance of Wyndham Vacation Resorts Coffs Harbour. If you don't fancy the walk, dive into the heated and spa pools available on-site. The resort is also a stone's throw away from facilities like a 9-hole golf course, tennis courts, games room as well as a restaurant and bar.

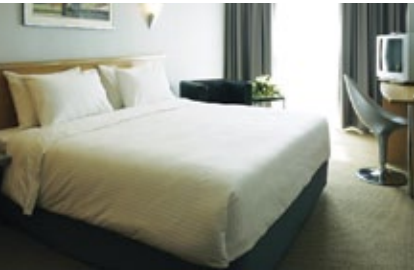
**(C012) 7 NTS from AU\$599/ NZ\$649 1brm**



**VILLAGE RESORT**  
Port Macquarie, NSW Australia

Set in tranquil gardens close by the Hastings River Broadwater is the Village Resort. In your private lagoon, experience swimming and water sports of all kinds. While on the shores, the stylish bungalows are perfect for relaxing, barbecues, and enjoying warm tropical nights. To keep you busy, try out the all-weather tennis courts or the recreational clubhouse with indoor heated pool, sauna, spa and gym. Be sure to mingle with your fellow vacationers at the resort-hosted Meet & Greet on Monday evening!

**(1486) 7 NTS from AU\$829 / NZ\$699 3brms**



**BAYVIEW HOTEL**  
Singapore

Admire the stunning Singapore Skyline and shop till you drop at Orchard Road, all within reach of City Bayview Hotel. Get a taste of Singapore culture with the Art Museum and the National Museum at your doorstep. A 24-hour food court touting delicious local fare is also in close proximity to satisfy your midnight cravings. Another must visit is the well-known Sentosa Island, which is only a 45 minutes bus ride away.

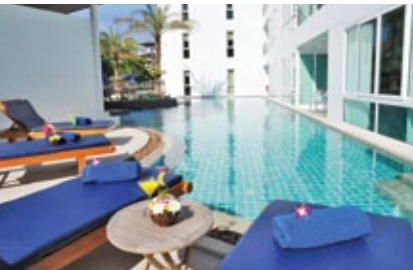
**(R007) 3 NTS from AU\$429/ NZ\$459 Hotel**  
**(R008) 4 NTS from AU\$569/ NZ\$609 Hotel**



**METROPARK HOTEL KOWLOON**  
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Situated at the heart of Kowloon, the 485-room Metropark Hotel Kowloon is located close to the bustling commercial areas and main transportation network, yet is slightly beyond reach of the busy city. Free shuttle bus services to and from Mongkok subway station and Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront, as well as to and from the Hong Kong International Airport are provided for your convenience.

**(R850) 3 NTS from AU\$529/ NZ\$549 Hotel**  
**(R851) 4 NTS from AU\$709/ NZ\$729 Hotel**



**THE PALMS RESORT**  
Phuket, Thailand

Head to the Palms Resort for a getaway only 30 metres from the long stretch of the unspoiled white sands of the breathtaking Kamala Beach. The modern all-apartment Family Resort is also surrounded by countless shopping and dining options. Guests can cool off in the swimming pools, or work up a sweat in the fitness centre that is fitted with top quality training equipment including the 3-Stage Multi Gym. If you're in the hankering for food, the resort restaurant offers a delectable fusion of various international cuisines at affordable prices.

**(RA63) 3 NTS from AU\$519/ NZ\$559 2brms**  
**(RA64) 4 NTS from AU\$689/ NZ\$739 2brms**



**SABOEY RESORT AND VILLAS**  
Surat Thani, Thailand

Nestled in the North-Eastern part of the Bagrak Beach island is the Saboei Resort and Villas, a beautiful, secluded resort designed to maximise serenity, space and privacy. Drink in the beauty of an endless expanse of white sand and azure waters, or travel to the laidback Fisherman's and Bophut villages five minutes away to immerse yourself in local culture. For a more bustling scene, head to the busy tourist centre of Chawen only 10-15 minutes away. Conveniently located close to the airport the Saboei Resort and Villas is the ideal destination for a tranquil beach vacation.

**(R844) 3 NTS from AU\$349/ NZ\$369 Studio**  
**(R845) 4 NTS from AU\$459 /NZ\$499 Studio**





SAVE  
AU\$2450\*  
per couple



DC19TPKY

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES,  
AZAMARA JOURNEY

**Journey in Asia**  
13 Night

From Hong Kong to Singapore  
Selected departure in December 2016  
Club Oceanview (08) Twin Share

**Now from \$3499\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**



SAVE  
AU\$1500\*  
per couple



DCZB7HO

PRINCESS CRUISES  
DAWN PRINCESS

**Transpacific Cruise**  
35 Night

Round trip from Sydney  
Selected departure in September 2016  
Oceanview (OF) Twin Share

**Now from \$6449\* AUD PP  
Twin Share RCI Exchange**



SAVE  
AU\$700\*  
per couple



DC1JUUGG

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES,  
CARNIVAL SPIRIT

**South Pacific Island Cruise**  
11 Night

Round trip from Sydney  
Selected departure in July 2016  
Balcony (8F) Twin Share

**Now from \$1609\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**



SAVE  
AU\$1200\*  
per couple



DCLKFMA

HOLLAND AMERICA LINE, NOORDAM

**Amends to Holland America Alaska  
Cruise-Tour**  
13 Night

From Seward to Vancouver  
Selected departure in September 2016  
Balcony (VF) Twin Share

**Now from \$3656\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**



SAVE  
AU\$2000\*  
per couple



DC10N58E

AVALON WATERWAYS, AVALON PASSION

**European Splendour River Cruise**  
13 Night

From Amsterdam to Vienna  
Selected departure in October 2016  
Panorama Suite (P) Twin Share

**Now from \$6990\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**



SAVE  
AU\$1700\*  
per couple



FLY-CRUISE PACKAGES

DC11QLMV

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES,  
AZAMARA JOURNEY

**Dalmatian Coast and  
Amalfi Fly Cruise Package**  
10 Night

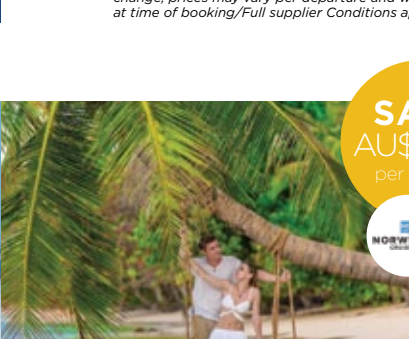
**From Venice to Rome**  
Based on departure from Australia 30 July 2016  
**Ports of Call:** Venice, Sibenik, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Corfu, Taormina, Sorrento, Rome

**Package Includes:**

- One way airfare from Sydney to Venice
- 2 Nights' Accommodation in Venice
- 7 Night Dalmatian Coast Cruise aboard the Azamara Journey in a Oceanview Cabin
- One way flight from Rome to Sydney
- Port Charges Fees and Airport Taxes

**Now from \$5103\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**

*\* Terms and conditions apply.*



SAVE  
AU\$650\*  
per couple



DC13EHV8

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE,  
NORWEGIAN JEWEL

**Mexican Baja and Riviera  
Fly Cruise Package**  
11 Night

**Round trip from Los Angeles (San Pedro)**  
Based on departure from Australia 24 November 2016  
**Ports of Call:** Los Angeles, Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan, Cabo San Lucas

**Package Includes:**

- Return Airfares from Sydney to Los Angeles
- 2 Nights accommodation in Los Angeles
- 7 Night Mexican Baja Cruise aboard the Norwegian Jewel in a Balcony Cabin
- Port Charges, Fees, Air Port Taxes and Gratuities

**Now from \$3219\* AUD PP  
Twin Share Exchange**

*\* Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change, prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Full supplier Conditions apply*



SAVE  
AU\$800\*  
per couple

DT1FSNGA

**The Ireland Connection Tour**  
14 Days

**Departures in 2016**

**Highlights:** Dublin, Cork, Killarney, Galway, Belfast  
Get an immersive look at Ireland's history and culture with leisurely sightseeing tours through the Temple Bar in Dublin, the Aran Islands and the ancient Megalithic tombs. Witness firsthand the legendary Titanic Experience in Belfast and take an informative look back at the mass emigration of the Irish to Australia.

**Now from \$5286\* AUD PP Tour Exchange**

*\*Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change, prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Full supplier Conditions apply*



SAVE  
AU\$1502\*  
per couple

DTP7KZL

**Northern Rockies at Leisure with  
Alaskan Cruise (2016)**  
18 Days

**Departures in 2016**

**Highlights:** Get an up close view of the awe-inspiring Rocky mountains in style with the Rocky Mountaineer's luxurious GoldLeaf train service. Spend your 7 night Glacier Bay Inside Passage Cruise in the comfort of a top class Verandah Stateroom with delicious meals provided daily. A longer trip of 10 nights includes hotel accommodation, hotel-cruise terminal transfers and a National Park Pass.

For an all-encompassing aerial view of the stunning glaciers and peaks take a ride on the 12-minute helicopter tour or climb aboard the Banff Gondola to the summit of Sulphur Mountain.

**Now from \$8346\* AUD PP Tour Exchange**

*\*Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Price based on departures in April 2016/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change/ Cabin categories and service types are based on lead in categories with prepaid government fees and port taxes or unless otherwise state/Prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Full supplier Conditions apply*



SAVE  
AU\$1352\*  
per couple

DT1LDGBV

**Japan Highlights (2016/17)**  
12 Days

**Various departures available**

**Highlights:** A journey that showcases the highlights of Japan, providing a cross section of her ancient history, tradition and religious beliefs. Experience these side by side with the industrial might and unique cultural quirks that characterise modern Japan. Highlights: Tokyo, Five Lakes, Kyoto, Nara, Hiroshima, Miyajima Island, Osaka

**Now from \$10419\* AUD PP Tour Exchange**

*\*Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change, prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Full supplier Conditions apply*



SAVE  
AU\$1500\*  
per couple

DTFX8YC

**Italian Treasures & European Gems  
River Cruise (2017)**  
25 Days

**Departures in 2017**

**Highlights:** Rome, Vatican City, Capri, Sorrento, Pompeii, San Gimignano, Florence, Verona, Venice, Zagreb, Budapest, Vienna, Dürnstein, Melk, Linz, Passau, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Würzburg, Wertheim, Rudesheim, Rhine Gorge, Cologne, Augustusburg Castle, Amsterdam

Embark on a tour that takes you through the iconic landmarks of Europe. Commence your journey on a luxury coach as you explore the breathtaking landscapes of Rome, Florence and Tuscany. Then climb aboard the European Gems deluxe river cruise and sail in comfort from Budapest to Amsterdam.

**Now from \$10139\* AUD PP Tour Exchange  
Fly Business Class from \$1995\* PP**

*\*Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change/ Cabin categories and service types are based on lead in categories with prepaid government fees and port taxes or unless otherwise state/Prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Book by 31 May 2016 or until sold out. Full supplier Conditions apply*



SAVE  
AU\$1200\*  
per couple

DTB817K

**Kenya & Tanzania: The Safari Experience**  
15 Days

**Departures in 2016**

**Highlights:** Africa—a land rich in scenery, majestic wildlife, and character. Experience a one of a kind vacation out in the savanna as you journey through the numerous National Parks and Conservancies Kenya and Tanzania have to offer.

**Now from \$7195\* AUD PP Tour Exchange**

*Prices are to be used as a guide only and based on per person, twin share/ Prices and itineraries are subject to change, prices may vary per departure and will be confirmed at time of booking/Full supplier Conditions apply*

FOR MORE OFFERS VISIT  
[rcicruiseholidays.com](http://rcicruiseholidays.com) or call 1300 724 263 AU | 0800 724 263 NZ

*\* Based on per person twin share. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.*



# weekenders



## Phuket The Pearl

<< PHUKET, THAILAND



Phuket Old Town



Traditional Longtail Boats

THAILAND'S LARGEST AND MOST POPULAR ISLAND TRULY LIVES UP TO ITS MONIKER AS 'PEARL OF THE ANDAMAN SEA'. SAND, SEA, CULTURE, ADVENTURE — THE SUNNY ISLAND OF PHUKET HAS IT ALL.

Located in Southern Thailand, Phuket lies off the west coast of the Andaman Sea and is approximately 862 kilometres south of Bangkok. The main island spans 4 kilometres in length and 21 kilometres in width, buzzing coast to coast with all kinds of activities imaginable. Take a boat out to the 32 smaller surrounding islands for exploring uncharted lands and sea.

A chronicle of Phuket dating back to AD 1025 hints at the origin of the island's name as a combination of two Thai words, 'phu' (mountain) and 'ket' (jewel). Others believe it is the derivative of the Malay word 'bukit' ('hill') as the island resembles one from afar. Regardless, Phuket is now a household name recognised as one of Asia's best travel destinations. Pronounce Phuket as 'pu-ket' with a silent 'h'. Fans of culture, rejoice. Buddhist relics loom in every space, expected in a country where 95% of the local population is Buddhist. There are 29 'Wats' (Buddhist temples) in Phuket such as Wat Chalong, Wat Phra Thong and Wat Khao Rang. Visible from half of the island is the 45-metre tall Big Buddha, accompanied by a medley of tinkling bells and flags dancing in the wind. The island once blossomed on a tin mining industry. Made prosperous by its prime location along a major maritime trade route between India and China, Phuket was a busy port of call for Thai, Indian, Chinese and European vessels. Today, tourism and rubber plantations are the new pillars of Phuket's economy, but the island still retains foreign influences from its olden days. Being home to a plethora of Thai, Thai-Chinese, ethnic-Malays and even the sea-gypsies, there is a vibrant melting pot of cultures in Phuket. In Old Phuket Town, many architectures have been designed with Sino-Portuguese elements. Western influence is apparent in lively events islandwide such as the annual Phuket Bike Week attracting visitors from 30 countries, with some

10,000 motorcycles on parade. At night, the Patong nightlife unveils flashy party streets featuring beer bars, 'Go-go' shows, nightclubs and pubs. As one of Asia's most popular beach getaways, Phuket is a welcoming tropical island with temperature hovering around 30 degree celsius throughout the year. The hottest season typically lasts from April to May. November to March brings cool sunny days, drawing in the highest flow of tourists. Take the road less travelled for less-crowded sunny shores of Surin beach, Mai Khao beach and Layan beach. Freedom beach is accessible only with a longtail boat during high season, but its soft powdery

sand and untouched nature will make all planning worthwhile. There is really not much downtime in Phuket except for the monsoon season from September to October. Even during less favourable climates, Phuket's west coast remains dotted with surfers catching the swelling waves. Kata beach, Karon beach, Bang Tao beach and Surin beach are most popular with surfers. Keep an eye out for any red flag on the shores, as they are a signal of dangerous sea conditions. While Phuket offers more than sufficient activities to entertain, smaller surrounding islands have even more to give. Take a short island-hopping voyage

to the east to Phang Nga Bay for limestone karsts rising out of emerald green water. Koh Phi Phi offers thrilling activities set against beautiful landscapes for the adventurous, such as rock-climbing and scuba diving. World-class dive sites are located further up northeast, in the pristine waters of Andaman Sea at Similan and Surin islands. Book a liveaboard dive cruise to get closer to leopard sharks, octopus and colourful fishes. Phuket is accessible by bus, car, train and air. Many international airports now operate direct flights into Phuket, making air travel the most convenient choice of transport.

## weekenders PHUKET, THAILAND

### EAT

**Kan Eang @ Pier**  
T: +66 7638 1212  
44/1 Moo 5, Viset Road, T.Rawai A.Muang, Phuket Thailand  
Kan Eang means 'at ease'. For close to 40 years, the restaurant serves up live seafood caught fresh by local fishermen every morning. Catches include fish, lobsters, tiger prawns, cuttlefish and blue crabs, slow-grilled on coconut husks to bring out their juicy flavours.

**Baan Rim Pa**  
T: +66 7634 0789  
223 Prabaramee Road, Patong Beach, Kathu, Phuket Thailand  
Baan Rim Pa literally translates into 'house next to the cliff'. Overlooking Patong Bay, this open-air diner is set in a 2-storey teak house with waves crashing onto the rocks below. For more than 20 years, the restaurant has been serving up sensational Royal Thai cuisine in a spectacular atmosphere, perfected by live jazz and blues in the piano bar.

**Raya House**  
T: +66 7621 8155  
48 Dibuk Road, Phuket Town, Phuket Thailand  
Raya is housed in a Sino-Thai old mansion. Unpretentious yet effortlessly classy, Raya serves original Phuket-style Thai food from the heart. Ingredients are picked fresh from the market by the owner, who cooks using her family's recipes. Many wealthy and famous personalities from around Thailand patronise Raya for its curry crab dish with coconut milk.

### RELAX

**Oasis Turquoise Cove Spa**  
T: +66 7633 7777  
71/10 Moo 5 (Soi Fantasea), Kamala Beach, Kathu, Phuket Thailand  
Oasis Turquoise Cove Spa is the newest opening by the award-winning Oasis Spa group. It is tucked away in the serene outskirt of Kamala Beach, close to the ocean. Oasis Spa combines traditional Thai therapy with contemporary wellness techniques for a unique Lanna-style spa of grace and attention.

**Cher Aim Spa Village**  
T: +66 7624 9670  
16 Wichitsongkram Road, Muang, Phuket Thailand  
Be charmed by its surroundings of tranquil ponds, palm trees and lush tropical gardens. Cher Aim Spa Village is set in Thai-style teak pavilions for a restful, lavish experience. Besides having an alluring atmosphere, the spa offers signature treatments that incorporate native ingredients such as tropical fruits with ancient Thai healing practices.

### EXPLORE

**Big Buddha**  
Yot Sane 1, Karon, Phuket Thailand  
Visible from half of Phuket island, the 45-metre Big Buddha sits at 400 metres above sea level. This most revered landmark of Phuket brings a sense of peace, surrounded by tinkling bells and fluttering yellow Buddhist flags. Avoid beachwear and short skirts during visits as a gesture of respect.

**Phuket Old Town**  
Phuket Town, Phuket Thailand  
Discover unique culinary delights and be intrigued by its heritage at the old quarter of Phuket town. Museums, temples and Sino-Portuguese mansions are everywhere for an authentic immersion of culture. The town is a web of 5 roads and several 'sois' (small streets), with rows of interesting shops, cafes and diners.

**The Little Yoga Room**  
T: +66 84 442 4634  
Soi Palai (Phuket Zoo Road), Chalong, Phuket Town, Phuket Thailand  
Set in a humble bamboo shala, The Little Yoga Room is a peaceful spot for mindful yoga practices. Owner and yoga instructor, Becky teaches Ashtanga yoga in a safe and welcoming environment. Suitable for beginners to advanced practitioners.

**Siam Dive n Sail**  
T: +66 81 892 0474  
E: dive@siamdivers.com  
85/15 Sai Yuan, Soi 9 Mu 7, Rawai, Phuket Thailand  
Siam Dive n Sail has been providing professional liveaboard and scuba diving services in South East Asia since 1996. Co-owner John Williams and Bent Posejpal will personally plan your dive itinerary for exploring the underwater beauty of Andaman Sea to its fullest.

## STAY

### RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN PHUKET INCLUDE:



**LHC@Allamanda Laguna Phuket #4973**  
Resplendent in scenery, the Laguna Holiday Club at Allamanda Laguna Phuket faces tranquil lagoons and is a short walk to the beach. The interiors are casually elegant with a refreshing Mediterranean feel. There are 3 swimming pools, a fully equipped Marine Centre and a Kid's Club. Other activities offered by the resort include fishing, scuba diving, horseback riding and water skiing.

**Laguna Holiday Club Phuket Resort #8715**  
Laguna Holiday Club Phuket Resort offers the luxurious services of a resort with the comforts of a home. Guests can enjoy a multitude of activities ranging from riding majestic elephants, relaxing at renowned spas, teeing off at an award winning 18-hole golf course, or simply unwinding at the picturesque Bangtao beach.

For additional resort listings, visit [RCI.com](http://RCI.com)





Muriwai Regional Park,  
West Coast North Island



Colony of Cliff-Top Gannets

CRASHING WAVES, WINDSWEPT BLACK VOLCANIC SAND AND A MASSIVE COLONY OF CLIFF-TOP GANNETS CAPTURE THE WILD NATURE OF MURIWAI, NEW ZEALAND.

Muriwai is an unbroken 50-kilometre stretch of stunning, untamed beach on the west coast of Auckland, New Zealand. It is situated at approximately 17 kilometres west of Kumeu and 42 kilometres northwest of Auckland. Home to the famed gannet colony, with ferocious waves on its black sandy shores and forestry treks, Muriwai is definitely a nature lover’s playground.

<< MURIWAI, NEW ZEALAND



The rustic rawness of Muriwai’s landscapes starkly contrasts against Auckland’s urban metropolis vibes. This coastal community is just 40 minutes west from the city centre — a perfect getaway for city dwellers and nature-loving tourists. Driving in from Auckland, take the North Western Motorway, continue onto State Highway 16 and turn off at Waimauku onto Muriwai Road.

Upon arriving at Muriwai, slip off your shoes and dig your toes into the volcanic black sand. The gorgeous stretch of black sediments came from ancient volcanoes in the vicinity, one of which is the majestic Kaipara Volcano that erupted millions of years ago. Today, the entire west coast in North Island of New Zealand is draped in a natural cape of dark sand beauty.

Stretch out and relax by the sea, or stroll hand in hand with your loved ones to soak up the majestic view of crashing waves. The gushing Tasman Sea brings with it a robust, steady stream of sea breeze. Languid walks by the beach are usually accompanied by wind in the hair, and some gentle scarf tugging.

Surfers from around the globe travel to Muriwai for the thunderous curls the Tasman Sea brings. A favoured surfing spot is at the southern end, where Muriwai Beach meets Maukatia (Maori Bay). Most

spend their days at Muriwai catching good waves, There are surfboards, wetsuits and blokarts for rent, and surf lessons to be had at the Muriwai Surf School.

Alternatively, experience the nature of Muriwai while riding a horse. Muriwai Beach Horse Treks take you on a breathtaking journey along the beach, sand dunes and the forestry of Woodhill. If speed is your game, hop on a mountain bike and blaze through the forest treks. Woodhill Forest has more than 50 trails and 150 kilometres of single track, making it one of the Auckland region’s favourite mountain biking areas.

Slow down and explore Muriwai at your own pace by foot, surrounded by

lush green foliage, rushing streams and breathtaking waterfalls. Famous bush-walking routes such as the Hillary Trail, Goldie Bush Walkway and Mokoroa Falls Track bring trekkers to cross streams and traverse coastal cliffs. Boardwalks are in place for easier trekking, but pay extra caution when climbing slippery steps after periods of rain.

A trip to Muriwai would be incomplete without witnessing the magnificent gannet colony, one of the only three mainland gannet colonies of New Zealand. Head south of the beach to Otakamiro Point, in between Maukatia Bay and Muriwai Beach. Here, more than 1,200 pairs of gannets (takapu) breed on the

rocky cliffs from August to March each year, with nests just centimetres apart. These marine birds sometimes swoop high above the cliffs, diving down to nest. There are two viewing platforms that make great vantage points for close up bird watching, amidst a splendid landscape of rocky cliffs and crashing waves.

Getting around Muriwai is easy on a 4-wheel drive (4WD) or motorcycle. These vehicles have been granted permission to drive on the hard sand of Muriwai Beach and Te Oneone Rangatira Beach. Stick to the speed limitations, drive with headlights on, and steer clear of tidal surges and soft sands for a safe, enjoyable journey.

weekenders  
MESMERISING MURIWAI

EAT

**Sand Dunz Beach Cafe**  
T: +64 9-411 8558  
455 Motutara Road, Muriwai Beach, New Zealand  
Situating within walking distance to the beach, Sand Dunz Beach Club is a prime spot for a quick coffee and homemade cakes before a day of activities. The cafe closes at 5pm with few alternatives nearby, so do arrive early to avoid disappointment.

**Muriwai Golf Club Restaurant and Bar**  
T: +64 9-411 8454  
Coast Road, Muriwai 0881, New Zealand  
Take in the beautiful view of rolling green golf fields while enjoying a cocktail and a delicious meal. The restaurant and bar opens daily to serve golf players and their company.

EXPLORE

**Muriwai Beach Horse Treks**  
T: +66 9-411 8948  
Horse Park, Coast Road, Muriwai, New Zealand  
Voted by The New Zealand Herald as one of the ‘Top 5 Best Horse Treks in New Zealand’, Muriwai Beach Horse Treks is a safe and fun way to explore the beaches and landscapes of Muriwai. The company offers different treks to match each rider’s ability, from novice to the veteran rider.

**Aboutriding.co.nz**  
T: +66 9-411 8875  
Coast Road, Muriwai Beach, New Zealand  
Aboutriding.co.nz is adept at hosting horse-riding birthday parties, school holiday trips and team-building sessions. Be in the safe hands of local guide, Nette, a NZPCA qualified horse trainer, coach and experienced trek guide. Horses are also available for hire in wedding photoshoots.

**Muriwai Regional Park**  
458 Moutara Road, Muriwai Beach, New Zealand  
The park is open 24 hours for pedestrian access. The available electric BBQ pits, picnic tables and drinking water make for an enjoyable picnic set in nature. The park has a selection of mountain bike treks and bush-walking trails for the more adventurous.

**Muriwai Surf School**  
T: +66 2-147 8734  
458 Motutara Road, Muriwai 0881, New Zealand  
A family owned business, the Muriwai Surf School takes pride in offering top service and professional instructors. Good quality surfboards are on rent. Beginners, intermediate and advanced lessons are available as well.



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS  
IN MURIWAI INCLUDE:



**Spencer On Byron**  
Discover the modern architecture of Auckland’s newest business class hotel. The Spencer on Byron Hotel stands tall on the North Shore in Takapuna, with unsurpassed views. Kick back with a beer at the bar, or take in the views of the sunrise behind Rangitoto, with sails charting the Americas Cup course on the Hauraki Gulf. Wake to breathtaking silhouettes of Auckland’s skyline lighting up the harbour. At Spencer on Byron, you can expect comfortable business class suites, elegant banquet rooms, state-of-the-art conference facilities and anticipatory service anytime.

#7452 3 nights from  
AU\$549/NZ\$589 1brm  
#8407 4 nights from  
AU\$559/NZ\$599 1brm





# The Two Tales of India

YVES KANGLEON AND OLIVIA DE VERA EXPERIENCE THE FAMED WONDERS OF COLOURFUL INDIA, AND SHARE FIRSTHAND JUST WHAT THE COUNTRY HAS TO OFFER – FROM ITS NATURAL BEAUTY TO THE INCREDIBLE CULTURE.

**Written by RCI Associate:**  
**Yves Kangleon**  
Manager, Revenue Management

I was in India during the Diwali festivities in November 2015. I have long intended to visit, but travelling solo requires intense logistics planning. So when some friends started planning for a trip to India, I unabashedly invited myself along. We travelled from Singapore to Kolkata, and to Bodh Gaya. Then we were at Varanasi, travelling to Delhi, to Agra, and back to Singapore.

India is a very interesting destination. The trip was, for me, a sensory overload of colours, noises and aromas. It was also a unification of co-existing contrasts. Bodh Gaya and Varanasi are great examples. Both are epicentres of the world's two major religions, Buddhism and Hinduism respectively; yet trade and scams take place just within a kilometer radius from the sacred spaces. While some areas of the country are very dense and packed with its people, other areas boast sprawling lawns sprinkled with beautifully symbolic tombs.

Poverty is everywhere — invisible, if you spend your entire stay in India luxuriating amidst your first class accommodation. But head out, and you will be pleasantly welcomed by warm, huge smiles despite the less-than-ideal living conditions of most of its citizens.

As one blogger so succinctly puts it, “you don't visit India, you experience it.” I highly recommend a trip down to India for an experience of a lifetime.



## GO GOA

*“You don't visit India, you experience it.”*

India is a spectacular burst of colours, spices and traditions. From sacred temples to dazzling landscapes, beautiful people to the majestic wildlife, India unceasingly surprises with unique experiences. Hugging the country's western coastline and bounded by the Arabian Sea is a glorious slice of India, Goa. Nowhere else in India will you experience the soothing serenity of Goan midday languor. In place of bustling cityscapes are clear skies, sand and sea. Goa may be the smallest state of India, but you will discover brilliant beaches, spice plantations, gentle rivers, ancient cathedrals and even spot a dolphin or two in this pocket-sized charmer.



## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED  
RESORTS IN INDIA  
INCLUDE:



### Royal Goan Beach Club - Royal Palms #3594

The Royal Goan Beach Club at Royal Palms is an elegant colonial-style building tucked in a sanctuary of pools, palm trees, sidewalk and flowers. There are various apartments and villas to choose from. Plan excursions with the help of the receptionist, or simply enjoy the resort's gym, beauty parlour, massages, games room and restaurant.

7 nights from AU\$309/NZ\$329 Studio  
7 nights from AU\$379/NZ\$409 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$429/NZ\$459 2brm



### Royal Goan Beach Club At Monterio #3820

Not far from the Royal Goan Beach Club is the Arpora River, flowing serenely to the sea. Take a 10-minute walk to Baga Beach for one of the most picturesque beaches in Goa. For a relaxing day in, the resort offers facilities including 2 swimming pools, a restaurant, a workout room, a game room and a convenience store.

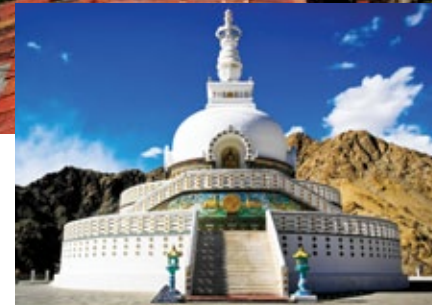
7 nights from AU\$209/NZ\$229 Studio  
7 nights from AU\$239/NZ\$259 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$269/NZ\$289 2brm



### Royal Goan Beach Club - Haathi Mahal #4129

Blending Indian and Goan atmosphere with modern Western amenities, this Royal Goan Beach Club features a 3-tier swimming pool with sunken bar, surrounded by landscaped gardens and waterfalls. Have fun at water slides, jacuzzi and children's pool, or relax at the sauna, steam rooms and spa at the health and fitness centre. There is also a gym, a squash court and a handful of dining establishments.

7 nights from AU\$239/NZ\$259 1brm  
7 nights from AU\$269/NZ\$289 2brm



**Written by RCI Associate:**  
**Olivia de Vera**  
Call Centre Team Leader,  
Member Services

Lush greenery, clear blue skies, crisp morning air and endless mountain folds are just some of the things I imagined North India to be. When I arrived, it was exactly that and more. This was my second trip to India and people are still asking “why India?” in bewilderment. But my reasons for loving this destination just kept multiplying.

Before my first visit to this wonderful country, I read that India is a feast for all your senses. Its colours, sounds, smell, tastes and texture do not timidly greet its visitors — everything rushes in when one least expects it. And that is one of the charms of India. You'd be surprised, shaken, amazed, and wondering why you put off the trip in the first place.

But North India is somewhat different. We felt it when our domestic flight landed in Chandigarh, when the cold mountain air touched our faces. We felt it upon arriving at Kalka and boarding the Toy Train, skirting around the mountain and going through 102 tunnels, 800 bridges and 900 curves. We felt it the minute we reached Shimla town.

North India is as colourful and interesting as the main cities, and yet more laid back – as if allowing its visitors time and peace to admire the beautiful nature it is blessed with.

I stayed in one of the RCI resorts called Toshali Royal View in Shimla, on one of the many hill stations in the Himachal Pradesh. The property lies outside the Shimla town and its backyard is a lush pine tree forest, with endless mountain ranges as backdrop. During January to February when the winter season is at its peak, the whole place is covered with a blanket white, with pine trees dusted in snow — it is easy to imagine stumbling into Narnia. Each unit in the resort has a balcony with a breathtaking view of the pine forest and mountains. The resort offers hiking tours that brought us down an enchanting path through the pine forest, the apple orchard, and some small villages.

Travelling to Shimla town is an adventure on its own, for we had to drive along very scenic winding roads with the occasional sightings of yaks. Shimla town is very clean and it was relaxing to walk around The Mall, stopping every so often for a comforting cup of masala chai. Get lost in the trinkets on display at The Mall, with its local shop

houses, tea stalls, restaurants and cafes. The prices are only a fraction of what you get in big cities. I couldn't resist the many beautiful colours and patterns of pashmina scarves, and packed home over a dozen!

Overall, it was a very tranquil vacation — just the perfect cap after our adventures in New Delhi-Agra.

## STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS  
IN INDIA INCLUDE:



### Toshali Royal View #3823

The Himalaya Mountains offer a stunning backdrop to this mountainous retreat, surrounded by rich pine, deodar, oak and rhododendron forests. Situated only 15 miles from Shimla, Toshali Royal View has easy accessibility to Chail, Kufri, Naldehra and other points of interest. This resort features a movie theatre, children's recreation centre, sauna, conference facilities and a multi-cuisine restaurant.

7 nights from AU\$199/ NZ\$229 Studio  
7 nights from AU\$249/NZ\$279 2brm



*Because your holiday means the world to us®*

**RCI®**

Committed to a lifetime of  
**holiday memories**

