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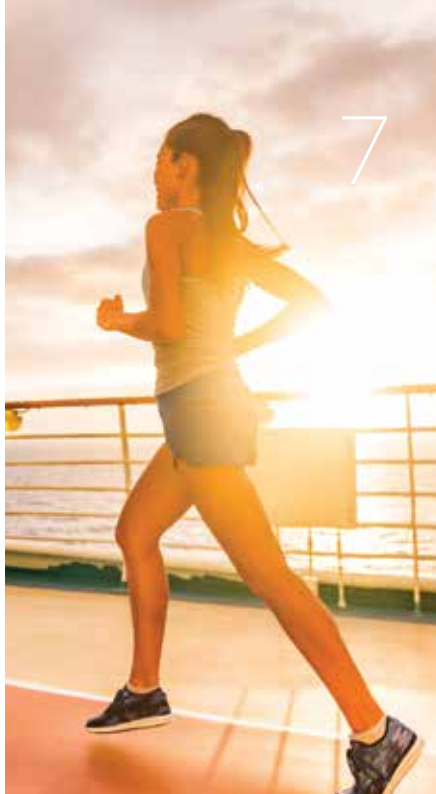
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Jonathan (middle), on a family holiday with his wife and three kids.

Welcome to 2018

In this issue of RCI Asia-Pacific's Endless Vacation magazine we're walking you through your whole holiday planning process as your choice Holiday Exchange provider.

Most of us love a good holiday that involves lots of fun in the sun but safety comes first. Turn to page 4 and read all about the steps you can take to ensure your skin is protected while on holiday.

Selfies are all the rave now and we've scoured the globe and found some of the most picturesque 'selfie spots' for you to check out on your next holiday. Turn to page 18 and start adding all those fantastic destinations to your travel list for 2018.

Indulging in a good feast is inevitable on holiday. If you're headed to Melbourne in Australia or Japan for your next holiday, read all about the mouthwatering bites on pages 8 through 15 to work up your appetite!

We hope you enjoyed the destination features in the last issue of our Endless Vacation magazine. From pages 24 to 39, read about all the fun, exciting and magical things there are to do in Palm Springs, Port Macquarie, Goa, Phuket and Madeira!

Excited yet? Happy holiday planning and thank you for choosing RCI!

Jonathan Mills
Managing Director
RCI Asia-Pacific

SUN AND SAFETY

STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SUN PROTECTION AND VITAMIN D.

BY HANNAH WALLACE



The link between sun exposure and skin cancer is undeniable. Yet research has shown that vitamin D—the “sunshine vitamin” the body makes when sun hits skin—may protect against some cancers. Oncologist Howard Kaufman of Rush University Medical Centre and Walter Willett, chair of the nutrition department at Harvard School of Public Health, advised us on safely getting our vitamin D.

Know Your Risks

There are two classes of skin cancer: melanoma (the more deadly) and non-melanoma (more common but with a 95 percent cure rate). While not all melanomas are caused by sun exposure, sun seems to play a role in some. “Prevention has to be individualized,” Kaufman, a melanoma specialist, says. He tells his patients to limit their exposure if there is a family history of non-melanoma skin cancers, such as basal and squamous cell cancer, or melanoma skin cancer.

Eat Your Vitamins

It's easy to incorporate vitamin D into your diet. Oily fish, like salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines, are high in the vitamin, as are eggs, and fortified cereals and milk. There are limits to relying on

diet for vitamin D, however: Unless you eat fish every day, you won't come close to the 600 IU (international units) a day that the Institute of Medicine recommends.

Vitamin D Supplements

“The amount of vitamin D we get from 20 minutes in the sun is dependent on our skin colour, time of year, location and how much skin is exposed,” Willett says. For this reason—and especially if you live at a northern latitude and work indoors—taking a supplement is a more reliable way of getting vitamin D.* (Not to mention safer if you have a family history of melanoma.) Two years ago the Institute of Medicine reevaluated its recommended daily intake level for vitamin D and tripled it, from 200 IU a day to 600 IU. (It rose to 800 IU a day for those over 70.) Some doctors, including Willett, think most people would benefit from 1,000 to 2,000 IU a day. (No toxicity has been documented at levels of less than 10,000 IU a day.) The jury is still out on which form is better, but Willett prefers the natural form of the vitamin, known as D₃ (or cholecalciferol). Also, taking vitamin D with meals is usually recommended, since the fat-soluble vitamin is absorbed better when consumed with food.

Protect Yourself

It can be hard to avoid the sun on vacation, especially when you're hiking, swimming or snorkelling. Kaufman recommends covering up with a hat and a long-sleeved shirt. “In general I think clothing works better than sunblock,” he says. That noted, sunblock can be an effective source of protection. Consider trying a broad-spectrum type, like one which contains Helioplex, a substance said to block both UVA and UVB rays. Remember to reapply every two hours, no matter how high the SPF. Use a broad-spectrum lip balm, too, and be sure to protect your eyes with 100 percent UVA- and UVB-absorbing sunglasses.

Soak It Up

If you don't have a family history of melanoma and prefer getting your sunshine vitamin from the sun, consider holding off on the sunblock for a short time in the morning. “Sunblock stops the ultraviolet sun rays that activate vitamin D in our skin,” Willett says. Just know that frequent sun exposure causes changes in the skin's basal and squamous cells as well as wrinkling, so there's reason to keep the sunblock (or umbrella) within reach.

*Consult your physician before taking any supplement. Use all supplements as directed.
NOTE: Information may have changed since publication. Please confirm key details before planning your trip.

PLAIN SAILING

STAYING SHIPSHAPE ISN'T THAT HARD.

BY HANNAH WALLACE

Traveling by ship is a great way to see the world, but those all-you-can-eat buffets (not to mention the enclosed spaces) sometimes pose challenges. To help you enjoy your next cruise to the fullest, we asked a travel medicine doctor and two cruise-line medical directors for their tips on staying well on board.

Before You Go

"It's important to check with your doctor a few weeks before a cruise to make sure your vaccines are up-to-date—especially if you're older," says Dr. Art Diskin, vice president and chief medical officer at Royal Caribbean Cruises. That goes for flu shots, too.

Make a List

Write down all your medications and dosages required so that if you get sick, the ship's doctor will know what you're taking. Also bring a summary of your medical records, especially if you have any pre-existing conditions. "If a spouse falls ill, it helps the other spouse in a time of crisis to be able to hand the doctor a list," says Holly Love, director of fleet medical operations for Holland America and Seabourn Cruise Line. Obviously, if you're flying to reach your port of departure, pack meds in a carry-on, not in checked luggage.

Onboard Prevention

The best preventative measure against Norovirus, a highly contagious and common virus that spreads swiftly wherever people pack into enclosed spaces, is simply hand washing, especially before meals, according to Dr. Daniel Caplivski, director of the Travel Medicine Program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. "Norovirus can spread via surfaces like door handles," he cautions. Many ships put hand-sanitiser dispensers at dining room entrances, but while sanitisers are good at zapping bacteria, they may not be as effective against Norovirus, Dr. Diskin says. "Hand sanitisers shouldn't replace hand washing," he advises.

Stay Hydrated

If you do get hit with a gastrointestinal illness, see the ship's doctor and drink plenty of liquids (of course leaving out any alcohol). Dr. Caplivski recommends Gatorade because it contains

salt as well as water. "Sometimes water by itself isn't enough," he says. The good news is symptoms only last between 24 to 48 hours.

Motion Sickness

Because of the stabilizers that steady vessels in turbulent waters, there's less seasickness on cruises these days, according to Dr. Diskin. The exception can be on smaller ships and during ocean crossings. If you're prone to motion sickness, consider packing Meclizine* (the generic version of Dramamine).

Resist Overindulging

"Be careful not to consume too much alcohol, especially if you're out in the sun," Dr. Diskin cautions. Also try to pace yourself on those buffets. It's not uncommon for people to overeat, especially first-time cruisers. "The more you veer from your usual diet, the more minor gastrointestinal distress you may experience," he says.

Exercise, But in Moderation

Inspired by a ship's impressive facilities, many travellers will exercise more than they do at home. Limit injury and soreness by building up your physical activity in the weeks preceding embarkation—and then don't overdo it on board.



10 CARRY-ON PACKING HACKS

WHETHER YOU'RE GOING FOR A WEEKEND OR A WEEK, HERE'S HOW TO GET AWAY WITH JUST ONE BAG.

BY COURTNEY KENEFICK



Preparing for a vacation can be a daunting task—especially when you're trying to avoid the hassle of checking luggage. Contrary to popular belief, being a packing minimalist isn't as hard as it looks. With a little thought, creativity and preparation, you can stick to a carry-on, even for long holidays. Here are 10 tips for fitting it all in that one bag.

1. Stick to a three-colour palette

Plan outfits with a restricted colour scheme. This makes key pieces, such as pants and sweaters, interchangeable. It also limits the number of accessories you'll have to pack—shoes and bags can take up valuable space.

2. Condense and organise small pieces of jewellery into pill organisers

There's no need for a bulky jewellery organiser. Plastic day-of-the-week pill holders are the antidote for tangled chains and lost earrings. Place small jewellery, such as delicate necklaces, rings and studs, in the holder's individual compartments. To protect bigger pieces that won't fit, bundle them in plastic wrap.

3. Take advantage of free duster bags and laundry bags

An organised suitcase is key to smooth travel. Use your own duster bags (the drawstring sacks that typically come with shoes and purses) in lieu of packing cubes—which can take up unnecessary

space—for compartmentalising your clothes. And sorting clean laundry from dirty doesn't require packing anything extra: Check the closet in your room for a plastic laundry bag.

4. Use open spaces wisely

Make sure no corner of your luggage goes unused. Tuck belts and ties into empty spaces, such as the insides of shoes, and do double duty with pieces like clutches or purses (they work great as make-up bags).

5. Fold underwear into bra cups

Travellers tend to toss undergarments into their bags as an afterthought, but carefully packing them will save some space. Fold underwear neatly, place it in one cup of a bra and then fold the other cup over it. It fills an empty space that would otherwise go unused.

6. Make the most of your "one personal item"

In addition to your carry-on suitcase, most airlines allow for one extra bag (the one that goes under the seat in front of you). Pack it thoughtfully: Not only does placing liquids, toiletries and your laptop in there free up space in your suitcase but it also makes them easier to access while going through security and while in flight.

7. Organise cords and headphones

So many cords, so many solutions—right in front of your eyes. It's likely that you have

an abundance of everyday items (including twist ties, toilet-paper rolls, hair ties and glasses cases) that can prevent cords, portable chargers and headphones from getting tangled and clogging up your carry-on or personal item.

8. Lighten up on liquids

Consolidating liquids into smaller containers is a requirement in order to check a bag, but it's also a great space saver. This doesn't mean you have to conform to ready-made travel-size bottles—you can go even smaller. Use what's around you creatively: Contact-lens cases for face topicals and prescription-medicine containers for lotions (or Q-tips and cotton balls, while we're at it).

9. Place heavy items close to the wheels

It can be frustrating when your suitcase keeps toppling over, especially when you're rushing to make a connection. Remedy this by packing items strategically: Heavy pieces, such as shoes, should sit closer to the wheels. A bottom-heavy roll-aboard is less likely to tip.

10. Use shower caps as shoe bags

Protect clean items in your suitcase from the soles of well-trekked shoes by employing shower caps (they're part of the free vanity set in many resort rooms). The elastic bands allow them to wrap around footwear, and they take up less room than your typical shoe bag.

Make room for exercise

KEEP TO YOUR ROUTINE WHILE YOU TRAVEL WITH THESE TIPS.

BY HANNAH WALLACE

We asked Ashleigh Kayser, owner of Portland, Oregon-based fitness centre the Refinery, for her tried-and-true advice on how to build exercise into your next vacation.

Find out if there's a fitness centre. You can squeeze in a workout every day if your resort has a gym. Kayser also checks to see if any classes are offered. Sometimes, she'll hire a personal trainer. "It's expensive, but if he or she is a good trainer, it can be worth it."

Do a little recon.

Another great option: Seek out a nearby studio or fitness centre. Kayser tends to look for spin studios, barre classes or a weight-lifting workout. "Having a class to

go to is another way I can carve out a little time for me," she says. But she's also been known to hunt down a high school track or stairs she can run up and down.

Play with your kids.

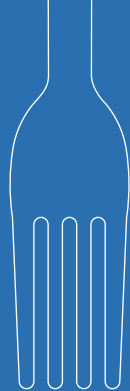
If you're traveling with children, find inventive ways to keep everyone moving. Kayser and her husband play tennis with their two older boys. When they're at the beach, Kayser will show her younger sons a game she used to play as a kid. The participants stand on the shore and try to be the first to jump over 10 waves as they roll in. "The players who don't succeed have to run to the lifeguard

station and back," she explains. "If I'm trying to get a sprint in, then I'll lose on purpose, which my boys love."

Travel with a band.

Consider packing a circular resistance band that you can use to strengthen your glutes, abdominal muscles and knees. "I always travel with one," says Kayser. "It shapes your body much like a barre workout, but also, after tons of walking, it keeps you from getting a sore back and hips." Plus, it's the size of a headband, so it won't take up much space in your carry-on.





A TASTE OF MELBOURNE

THIS AUSTRALIAN CITY IS BECOMING
SYNONYMOUS WITH GREAT FOOD.

BY KENDALL HILL





Roads, streets and lanes of good eating:

From left: Melbourne is the Australian home of street side dining, no space is left unused in this culinary destination. Flinders Lane is one such Mecca boasting a plethora of unique, high quality eateries and bars. From Asian Fusion to Traditional Greek and Italian Melbourne has it all in multiple price ranges and locations.

The residents of Melbourne, Australia, have always suspected they were blessed with a refined sense of taste. Their suspicions were confirmed in 2014 when super chef Heston Blumenthal announced that he would move his globally renowned British restaurant, The Fat Duck, to Melbourne's casino for six months while the original was renovated.

Melbourne? Seriously? Why?

"I'd put Melbourne in the top five cities in the world for food," Blumenthal said afterward. "It has a rich mixture of cultures with a diverse range of foods."

It's true: Melburnians know their tartare from their tom yum, their guanciale from their har gow. The exacting standards of local diners have inspired a gastronomic culture in which much of the food, whether super cheap or ultra expensive, is really good. But it pays to know where to go.

Eating in the CBD

Australians call downtown the central business district, and Melbourne's CBD is an exhilarating place to eat. Flinders Lane is the place for good food. Mod Thai eating house **Chin Chin** (No. 125; chinchinrestaurant.com.au) is still madly busy more than three years after opening, so expect a two-hour wait for a table on the weekend. **Tonka** (20 Duckboard Place; tonkarestaurant.com.au) tackles a complex subject—contemporary Indian cuisine—with terrific results, such

as addictive soft-shell-crab pakoras. The same crew runs **Coda** (141 Flinders Lane; codarestaurant.com.au), where chef Adam D'Sylva prepares deeply satisfying Asian-accented morsels.

Gifted local chef and restaurateur Andrew McConnell owns three popular spots on Flinders Lane: crowded brunch staple **Cumulus** and its upstairs sister, **Cumulus Up** (cumulusinc.com.au), and super chic **Supernormal** (supernormal.net.au), a designer canteen channelling the kitchens of China, Korea and Japan.

Big Nights Out

There's a fat chance you'll get a table at **The Fat Duck** (thefatduckmelbourne.com) after an online ballot last year locked in all 14,000 places. When the Duck's run expires, mid-August, Blumenthal will open a Down Under offshoot of Dinner (crownmelbourne.com.au), his wildly fashionable London diner, which revives historic British dishes, such as buttered crab loaf with purslane and smoked roe. There is far more to Melbourne fine dining

than Blumenthal's pop-up. But you'll find echoes of The Fat Duck's experiential dining at **Mister Jennings** (142 Bridge Rd., Richmond; misterjennings.com.au), where former Blumenthal protégé Ryan Flaherty transforms boudin blanc into corn dogs and prepares a gorgeous kangaroo dish (slices of loin served with Asian pear and raspberry dust).

Celebrity chef and Qantas Airways consultant Neil Perry has three upscale spots in town, all at the casino. **Spice Temple** (Crown Complex, Southbank; rockpool.com) showcases the fiery delights of regional Chinese cuisine; **Rosetta** is an Italian restaurant with marble floors and mahogany walls (011-61-3-8648-1999; rockpool.com; dinner for two, \$135). The Perry flagship is **Rockpool Bar & Grill**, a glam steak house that charges \$95 for a Wagyu rib eye (rockpool.com; dinner for two, \$200).

For Flinders Island lamb with Australian anchovies, head 55 stories above street level to **Vue de Monde** (Level 55/525 Collins St.; vuedemonde.com.au).



This page clockwise: Dining out with friends is an essential part of the Melbourne lifestyle and is taken very seriously. Melbourne is home to a vast and varied Asian food scene with everything from Thai to Japanese on offer. Go native and do as the locals do and get around by iconic Melbourne tram. Every laneway plays host to a variety of exciting eating options. Melbourne has a huge Mediterranean population resulting in some of the best Italian and Greek eating outside of Rome and Athens.

The Hot Strip

Raffish Smith Street is the dividing line between the bohemian hot-spot neighbourhoods of Fitzroy and Collingwood. It is also currently the beating heart of Melbourne dining.

Smith Street's smartest address may be **Saint Crispin** (No. 300, *Collingwood*; saintcrispin.com.au), where chefs Joe Grbac and Scott Pickett season plates with a little molecular gastronomy and lots of good taste. For some of the most popular banh mi (Vietnamese pork-and-pâté sandwiches) in town, head to **N. Lee Bakery** (No. 220, *Collingwood*). And for something sweet, try the Sicilian-accented **Gelato Messina** (No. 237, *Fitzroy* gelatomessina.com). A bonus: You can sample all the flavors you want before buying.

Elsewhere on Smith, **Lee Ho Fook** (No. 92, *Collingwood*; leehofook.com.au) offers mod Chinese plates, including the unforgettable chicken with pig's ear. At nearby **Northern Light** (No. 102, *Collingwood*; northernlightbarandeatery.com), chilli crab in XO sauce is the go-to dish.

Drinks and Nibbles

Small, esoteric bars are one of the signature attractions of Melbourne. One of the city's great pleasures is setting out on a treasure hunt through alleyways and old buildings in search of excitement. Below are just a selected few of the city's dozens of "hidden" venues where patrons can slake their thirst in style.

Melbourne's popular rooftop bar, **Siglo** (161 *Spring St.*; theeuropean.com.au), has an

unmarked entrance opposite Parliament House and a cocktail list to suit those from all walks of life. **Romeo Lane** (1A *Crossley St.*; romeolane.com.au) offers cut-crystal glassware, classic cocktails and sultry soundtracks. The tiled street-front bar at **Doc Martin's** (86 *Collins St.*) is a lively post-work hangout with old-school aperitifs. The elegant **Brooks** (*George Parade*; brooksofmelbourne.com) features a marble topped basement bar with sophisticated booze and French cuisine.

Meals Worth Traveling For

A blowout meal can be had at **Brac** (4285 *Cape Otway Rd.*, *Birregurra*; braerestaurant.com), a landmark regional restaurant at the start of the beautiful coastal drive called the Great Ocean Road. Head chef and owner Dan Hunter handpicks prized



This page clockwise: Melbourne's alleys and laneways have a cosmopolitan, international feel that makes every meal feel like a cosmopolitan adventure. Many public spaces in Melbourne play host to Alfresco dining. Coffee is a big deal in Melbourne and like social dining is akin to a religious experience. The Crown Casino plays host to many world class eateries including no less than three by super chef Neil Perry. Even the humble dishes like Fish and Chips get the gastronomic treatment in this world renowned food lovers destination.

RCI Tip

Did you know that on average, Melbourne is coolest in July and warmest in February? It is not too early to start planning your 2018 vacation! Not yet ready to travel? Visit RCI.com to see all available vacations for the month you want to travel. You can filter by Check-in Date Range and by Check-in Month.**

local ingredients (many of them from his own garden), then transforms them into palate-bending plates.

Enjoy Pam and Kosta Talimanidis's Hellenic hospitality amid the salt air and eucalyptus at **À La Grecque** (60 Great Ocean Rd.; alagrecque.com.au), a laid-back Greek gastro-temple in the resort town of Aireys Inlet.

Or go native with a serving of salty, vinegary fish-and-chips from **The Salty Dog Fish & Chippery** (1/150 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne). Eat it on the beach across the road, like a true Aussie. Just mind the seagulls.



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS NEAR MELBOURNE INCLUDE:



Nepean Country Club & Day Spa 1169

This picturesque Mornington Peninsula destination offers a neighbouring golf course and plenty of on-site facilities. 205 Browns Rd., Boneo, Victoria

Member Reviews: "The location is sublime." "Ample activities for all ages."



Bellbrae Country Club 3958

An hour's drive from Melbourne, this rustic resort offers bush excursions and its own mini farm. 10 Woodacres Rd., Bellbrae, Victoria

Member Reviews: "I love the peace and quiet of the surroundings." "Fantastic amenities."

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's local toll-free number



TAKE A BITE OUT OF JAPAN

BY ADAM H. GRAHAM

Japan is a universe of foods, flavours and customs strewn with Michelin stars—with more three-star restaurants than any other country, in fact. So it's little surprise that most travellers arrive anticipating its seriously delicious sushi and sake. But few know about the diversity of Japan's culinary scene, which encompasses not only the world's most eateries per capita, but also 30 types of restaurants that stretch far beyond sushi and sake. These include smoky yakitori (grilled meat) joints, casual izakaya (pubs), showy teppanyaki steakhouses, elegant ryokan (historic inns) that serve multicourse kaiseki, and formal shojin-ryori (papered screens) halls that prepare a unique vegetarian Zen Buddhist form of edible art made from wheat gluten. This four-city guide will whet your appetite with a collection of tried and true favorites, local gems and a few surprises—plus cultural sites to visit along the way.



Mt. Fuji

Tokyo Tried-and-True:

One of Tokyo's biggest tourist attractions has always been **Tsukiji Fish Market** (5-2-1 *Tsukiji, Chuo*; 1; check website for visitor days), the world's largest wholesale fish market. At press time, the market was scheduled to relocate to the island of Toyosu, about two miles away. The new 100-acre space includes a public viewing section for otoro (tuna belly) auctions. But Tsukiji's popular "outer market" remains in the original location, where visitors can shop for and

dine on fresh seafood. Visitors queue up for the sushi at **Sushi Dai**, but nearby **Daiwa-Sushi** (5-2-1 *Tsukiji, Chuo*) is just as good, offering some of the freshest tuna, salmon, shrimp and sea urchin you'll ever taste.

Many claim the world's greatest sushi is at the three-Michelin-starred restaurant **Sukiyabashi Jiro** (4-2-15 *Ginza, Chuo*), featured in the award-winning 2011 documentary *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* and located in an unadorned Ginza-district

basement. It's a favourite of presidents, prime ministers and royalty (and is priced to match). Afterward, consider visiting the nearby **Imperial Palace** (1-1 Chiyoda, Chiyoda; 011-81-3-3213-1111; closed, only gardens open; free admission), surrounded by moats and manicured gardens. It's a great spot from which to catch a postprandial glimpse of snow-capped Mt. Fuji.



The ever-stylish **New York Grill** (3-7-12 Nishi-Shinjuku, 52nd floor, Shinjuku) was famous for its atmosphere long before its role in the film *Lost in Translation* and is beloved by tourists and locals alike for its rich selection of Japanese whiskeys and marbled Wagyu beef. Consider splurging on a Hibiki Highball at the New York Bar, on the building's 52nd floor, and taking in the mute neon sprawl of the Shinjuku district below you.

Just next to the **Meiji Shrine** (1-1 Yoyogikamizonocho, Shibuya), surrounded by the 175 woodsy acres of Yoyogi Park, is a stack of decorative kazaridaru (sake barrels) that have been offered to the shrine's deities by generations of sake brewers around the country. Visitors interested in buying their own sake can go to the food hall of the Shinjuku district's **Takashimaya** (5-24-2 Sendagaya, Shibuya), one of the largest depato (department stores) in Japan. A depato almost always has a food court in the basement, and the selection of goods at most of them can cause euphoria among food lovers. This branch—with more than 2,700 square feet of food retail space, including

numerous prepared food vendors and 28 restaurants—reigns over them all. Here you can find singing fish- and fruit mongers, Hokkaido melon caramels, white strawberries and dozens of sakes, wines and shochu (distilled spirits made from barley, sweet potato, buckwheat or brown sugar). If you have only 24 hours in the country, be sure to set aside some time for a visit to Takashimaya, as it exemplifies edible Japan in one space.

Where Locals Go:

Uobaka (Toma Building, B1, 2-2-19 Ginza Chuo; 011-8-3-3563-4100; dinner for two, \$120) is not for vegetarians. This wood paneled subterranean restaurant in Ginza specializes in seasonal seafood—squid, mackerel and sea bream—that's so fresh it's sometimes brought to the table squirming on the plate. Can't get (or afford) a table at Jiro's? Then follow locals to **Sushino Midori** (17-6 Daikanyamacho, Shibuya), in the Shibuya Mark City department store. Many say its fresh fish is on par with Jiro's, but it costs a tenth of the price. Lucky diners will be seated at the sushi bar, where they can order cuts of mouth watering scarlet otoro, pearly hotate (scallop), amaebi (sweet shrimp) or gingered shirasu (baby sardines).

Need a break from seafood altogether? **Gyu-kaku** (Tops House, 8th floor, 3-20-8 Shinjuku; gyukaku.ne.jp) is an affordable and cheerful chain of yakiniku, grilled-meat restaurants favoured by students and often hidden on the upper floors of skyscrapers. Here charcoal grills glow atop tables, and guests cook their own slices of high-end cuts, such as Kuroge Wagyu, marbled spareribs and dense slabs of pork. A 90-minute all-you-can-eat deal is popular and fills up on weekends.

You'd Be Surprised:

Most visitors assume all Tokyo neighbourhoods are as bustling as Shinjuku, but this is a myth. Those in need of tranquillity will find no shortage of urban sanctuaries. One quiet stretch in particular is the, lined with cherry trees, independent boutiques and cosy



restaurants. Here you'll find **Hashidaya** (1-15-8 Kamimeguro, Meguro; hashidaya.com, site in Japanese), a two-story wood tavern specializing in nabe, hot pots stuffed with carrots, snap peas, enoki mushrooms and fragrant gingered chicken balls that are cooked at the table. Its upstairs tatami-mat room overlooks the canal. Across the canal is **Izakaya Nakame no Teppen** (3-9-5 Kamimeguro, Meguro), a speakeasy style izakaya. Its hidden entrance is a Lilliputian door; guests must knock first and then duck to enter the cavernous dining room. Here grilled sardines, seared beef, cod roe gratin and charred pumpkin slices are washed down with chu-hai (highballs made with shochu) by locals.



Kyoto Tried-and-True:

Nothing delivers "Old Japan" better than Kyoto's ryokan, where ornate multicourse kaiseki meals are still served privately in-room to overnight guests. **Hiragiya** (Nakahakusancho, Fuyacho Anekoji-agaru) is a standout in Kyoto. The 28-room, sixth-generation inn features dishes such as simmered razor clams with bamboo



The Silver Temple in Kyoto

shoots, yuba (tofu skin) dumplings, cod roe miso and urchin omellets, all served on handcrafted Kiyomizu ceramics and elegant lacquer ware in your tatami-mat room, where shoji and fusuma (sliding doors) transport you to another era. For an equally old-fashioned supper, but with a French twist, make your way to **Misoguigawa** (*Pontocho-dori*), housed in a vintage teahouse along the river. Its Fabergé-like creations include quenelles stuffed with sea urchin, matsutake puff-pastry pie and Wagyu beef with demi-glaze.

Kyoto's hundreds of temples and shrines make for lovely post meal strolls. **Ginkaku-ji, the Silver Temple** (*2 Ginkakujicho, Sakyo*) is a 15th-century masterpiece of Japanese temple architecture and is highly regarded among the Japanese. Farther afield in Arashiyama is **Kyoto's bamboo forest** (*Ogurayama, Saga, Ukyo*), where mighty stalks of jade coloured bamboo enshrine a much-photographed corridor. The UNESCO-inscribed Saiho-ji, also known as the **Kokedera Moss Temple** (*56 Matsuojingatanicho, Nishikyo*), is another veritable spectrum of greens and home to more than 120 types of moss. Reservations must be made by snail mail several weeks in advance.

Kyoto's nightlife has a wild side, but many bars are low-key and quiet. The discreet **Bar Rocking Chair** (*434-2 Tachibanacho,*

Shimogyo; bar-rockingchair.jp, site in Japanese) has three fireplace-perched rocking chairs and a library of whiskeys, while **Touzan Bar** (*644-2 Sanjusangendo-mawari*), inside the Hyatt Regency and decorated with antique wood beams and vintage books, is an especially intimate nook offering an excellent selection of local Kyoto beers, Japanese chardonnays and more than 30 regional sakes.

Where Locals Go:

The Nishiki Market (*Nakagyo; kyoto-nishiki.or.jp, site in Japanese*) is a showcase for Kyoto's prized heirloom vegetables, brightly coloured pickles, dried seafood and street snacks, such as takoyaki (fried octopus balls). Its shops hawk everything from cherry-blossom salt and matcha-dusted chocolates to candied wasabi and custom-made chef's knives sold by revered knife maker **Aritsugu** (*219 Kajiyacho, Nishikikoji-dori, Gokomachi-nishi-iru, Nakagyo*).

You'd Be Surprised:

Kyoto is full of the unexpected. **Kanga-an** (*278 Kuramaguchi-Higahiiru, Karasuma-dori, Kita; kangaan.jp, site in Japanese*) is a Zen temple with a hidden bar where you can sip sparkling sake while overlooking a candlelit Zen garden. The temple's restaurant specializes in shojin ryori cuisine, ornate small bites of food made of wheat gluten in the Zen tradition. A temple of sorts to others is the **Yamazaki Distillery** (*5-2-1*

Yamazaki, Shimamoto, Mishima; English audio tours, free), located just outside Kyoto. It's Japan's first and oldest distillery established in 1923 and offers a smooth whiskey aged in mizunara (Japanese oak).

Unlike international travellers, Japanese travellers know Kyoto for its ramen.

Ramen Koji (*on the 10th floor of Kyoto Station*) is devoted to ramen, serving eight regional styles. But for an "only in Kyoto" treat, head to **Menbakaichidai** (*757-2 Minami Iseyaicho, Kamigyo*), a tiny ramen shop where a searing liquid flame is poured from a cast-iron pot directly into the bowl of ramen in front of you. It's a theatrical beginning to a delicious meal, with a creamy charred flavor you won't find elsewhere.



Dotombori district in Osaka

Osaka Tried-and-True:

After dark, follow the crowds to the lively technicolour Dotombori district, where bars and restaurants spill over the riverbanks and where the iconic **Glico sign** (*an Osaka confectionery company*) lords over the festive crowds. Another famous Osaka display is the giant crab hung at busy **Kanidouraku Dotombori-Honten** (*1-6-18 Dotombori, Chuo*). The restaurant specializes in all things crab—crab sushi and sashimi, crab soup, crab hot pot, crab gratin and more.



Grilled scallops at Ichiba Market

Where Locals Go:

Osaka's ever-vibrant Kuromon **Ichiba Market** (1 Chome Nipponbashi, Chuo) serves up a smorgasbord of street food, including okonomiyaki (savory pancakes), takoyaki, kushikatsu (skewered and fried meat and vegetables) and the city's ubiquitous kitsune udon-noodle soup, with its trademark thick dashi broth and slab of fried tofu.

You'd Be Surprised:

The city's **Shin Osaka Train Station** (Yodogawa) is a veritable mall of flavours, with dozens of restaurants offering everything from all-you-can-eat fugu (puffer fish) banquets and raucous oyster bars to tiny yakisoba (fried noodle) stands and chankonabe houses (the tofu, noodle and meat stew eaten by sumo wrestlers). To try the carb-rich latter, head to **Algo7** (1-15 Kamisicho, 2nd floor, Toyonaka).



Hiroshima Castle

Hiroshima Tried-and-True:

Hiroshima's sights define the city. The **Atomic Bomb Dome** (1-10 Otemachi, Naka), the **Peace Memorial Museum** (1-2 Nakajimacho, Naka) and the looming **Hiroshima Castle** (21-1 Moto-machi), a replica of the 16th-century castle destroyed by the atom bomb, are all especially moving. But the city's culinary heritage, while not as sophisticated or international as Kyoto's or Tokyo's, does have its merits. Hiroshima is famed for its okonomiyaki, a savory pancake made with batter, cabbage and yakisoba noodles and popularized after World War II, when rations were short. **Okonomimura** (5-13 Shintenchi, Naka), near Hiroshima Station, is a cooperation of over 20 okonomiyaki vendors on three floors all cooking variations of the dish. You can sit right at the grill and watch them make it; one vendor, Sonia, on the fourth floor, garnishes its iteration with fresh mint leaves.



Okonomiyaki chef at work

Where Locals Go:

The city's sprawling **Peace Memorial Park** (1-2 Nakajimacho, Naka) marks part of the area destroyed by the atomic bomb. A walk here is a solemn reminder of the cost of war.

You'd Be Surprised:

Unbeknownst to most travellers, Hiroshima is famous for its plump oysters. **Kakifune Kanawa** (1 Otemachi, Naka) is a boat that has been dry-docked on the shores of the Motoyasu River opposite the Peace Park and converted into an elegant restaurant.



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED
RESORTS IN JAPAN
INCLUDE:



Neo Oriental Resort Yatsugatake Kogen DE38

Hot-spring baths and saunas await at this tranquil resort. 8741 Yato, Oizumi-cho, Hokuto-shi, Yamanashi-ken



Hotel Ambient Izukogen Annex DE39

When not lounging in the studio-style units you can lie out on nearby Jogasaki Beach. 8 Ohmuro Kogen, Ito-Shi, Shizuoka-Ken



Big Week Tateshina DA04

Consider taking a walk among the Japanese larch trees that surround the resort. Tokyu Resort Town 4026-1926, Aza Shikayama Kitayama, Chino-shi, Nagano Prefecture



Big Week Izukogen DA01

Floor-to-ceiling windows in each unit afford views of the Izukogen highlands. 614-91 Aza Nakano, Ito-shi, Shizuoka Prefecture

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's local toll-free number

REAL-LIFE STORYBOOK CASTLES

PICTURE YOURSELF HAPPILY EVER AFTER IN THESE FORTIFIED MARVELS.

BY NELL MCSHANE WULFHART

Neuschwanstein Castle Germany

The unassuming village of Hohenschwangau sits below the sheer rock walls, soaring turrets, and elegant spires of this 19th-century castle, dreamed up by Ludwig II as an homage to the operas of Richard Wagner, themselves based on medieval legends. With a backdrop of Bavarian forest, lakes, and the Alpsee Valley, the castle is right out of a fairy tale.

Hohenschwangau,
Allgäu; neuschwanstein.de



Osaka Castle

Japan

Osaka Castle has gone through several iterations over the centuries, as fire or war damaged previous versions. Currently, the gorgeous main building, a stack of pagoda style peaked and tiled roofs, dates to 1931, while the enormous moats and hefty stone walls, along with gates and turrets, remain from the Edo period. Six hundred cherry trees fill the Nishinomaru Garden and draw crowds each spring.

Osaka; osakacastle.net



Château de Chambord

France

Europe's largest enclosed forest park surrounds this magnificent 440-room French Renaissance chateau in the Loire Valley. Tour the ballrooms, check out the hunting museum, or climb the stairs up to the roof, where guests once watched the hunt below.

Chambord, Loir-et-Cher; chambord.org



Edinburgh Castle

Scotland

Dominating the city skyline, Edinburgh Castle rests atop an extinct volcanic crag. Some sections of the castle are almost a millennium old, and it changed hands many times as the English and Scots fought over the territory. Among its treasures? The crown jewels of Scotland.

Castlehill, Edinburgh; edinburghcastle.gov.uk



Hearst Castle

USA

The pet project of media magnate William Randolph Hearst sits halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Designed in the Mediterranean-revival style by Julia Morgan, its 165 rooms were built both to showcase Hearst's museum-quality art collection and to house celebrity guests such as the Marx Brothers and Greta Garbo. With views of the Pacific Ocean, indoor and outdoor pools, and luxurious living spaces, the castle is a tribute to midcentury high society.

San Simeon; hearstcastle.org



Blarney Castle

Ireland

Legend has it that kissing the Blarney Stone, which can be reached by leaning backward over a parapet, will grant you the gift of gab. The stone is housed within the medieval fortifications of Blarney Castle, built almost 600 years ago by chieftain Cormac MacCarthy and rife with superstitions.

Blarney, Cork; blarneycastle.ie



Alnwick Castle

England

The popularity of the 1,000-year-old castle has soared in recent years, as fans of the Harry Potter movies flock to where Hogwarts was shot for the first two films. Parts of the Norman castle are still occupied by the Duke of Northumberland, but much of it is open to the public, including an art collection with pieces by Titian and Van Dyck, and sumptuous staterooms filled with antiques amassed over hundreds of years.

Alnwick, Northumberland; alnwickcastle.com

SEVEN PICTURE-PERFECT SELFIE SPOTS

UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA GAME WITH SOME OF THE
WORLD'S MOST REMARKABLE PHOTO OPS.

BY AARTI VIRANI



Glacier Skywalk, Alberta, Canada

Situated in Jasper National Park in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, this formidable steel-and-glass walkway overlooks three million-year-old Sunwapta Valley—the site of an impressive triple continental divide—and a seemingly endless spread of snowcapped peaks. The cliff-edge walkway's curved structure takes cues from its cantilevered counterpart in the Grand Canyon. Your visit culminates in a glass-floored observation deck 918 feet high, an impressive selfie backdrop if there ever was one.

Jasper National Park; brewster.ca



Pylon Lookout™, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney, Australia

If you're up for a 200-stair climb, consider setting your sights on Pylon Lookout, a scenic perch on the Sydney Harbour Bridge's southeastern side. From there you can enjoy uninterrupted harbour panoramas and views of the legendary Sydney Opera House. You may also spy a crew of especially hardy climbers on a chaperoned hike to the summit of the steel bridge's lofty upper arch—though no personal cameras or phones are allowed on that guided excursion.

*Cahill Expressway, the Rocks;
pylonlookout.com.au*



Hot-Air Balloon Ride, Cappadocia, Turkey

There's something otherworldly about Central Anatolia's conical volcanic-rock formations, larger-than-life valleys and subterranean cities. You can kick up the magic by splurging on a hot-air balloon ride, a popular way to take in the moonscape-like surroundings. You'll have plenty of time to perfect your selfie as you float above a series of limestone dwellings and "fairy chimneys," rock-and-stone columns topped with layers of basalt.



Son Doong Cave, Quang Binh Province, Vietnam

With its very own river, jungle and microclimate, the world's largest cave—its most colossal chambers measure about 500 feet tall and could fit a 747 airplane—is a startling mist-encased marvel that opened to the public only in 2013. Monkeys and hornbills stop by for the occasional cameos, while towering stalagmites and abundant light, which pours in from the cave's expansive openings, help ensure your photograph is one for the books.

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, Son Trach, Bo Trach



Trolltunga, Tyssedal, Norway

This exceedingly photogenic precipice, hovering 2,000 feet above Ringedalsvatnet Lake, is a boon for adrenaline junkies. It's an eight-hour round-trip hike to see the fabled cliff, whose name translates to "troll's tongue" in Norwegian. Intrepid travellers are rewarded with views of pristine waterfalls and dramatic fjords along the way. The grand prize, of course, is the awe inspiring Trolltunga itself—and the selfie of a lifetime.



Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, France

A succession of sparkling chandeliers, intricate ceiling art and 357 mirrors adorns the 17th-century Palace of Versailles's storied passageway, a literal reflection of Louis XIV's signature over-the-top opulence. So make like the Sun King and flash your most dazzling smile as you capture the scene for posterity. Consider posing by one of the hall's 17 intricate windows, which afford views of the elaborate on-site gardens.

Palace of Versailles; en.chateauversailles.fr



Top of the Rock, New York City, USA

You can look out at the Empire State Building, the lush grounds of Central Park and many of Manhattan's other iconic landmarks from the Top of the Rock Observation Deck at Rockefeller Centre. With three observation levels to choose from (one is open air) and no time limits, this urban gem practically begs you to take a self-portrait. For those who are extra snap happy, there's a "Sun & Stars" deal that lets guests visit twice in one day. *30 Rockefeller Plaza; 212-698-2000; "Sun and Stars"*



1.



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A DESERT OASIS LIKE NO OTHER, PALM SPRINGS IN CALIFORNIA'S COACHELLA VALLEY 172KM EAST OF LOS ANGELES HAS ATTRACTED PEOPLE TO ITS HOT SPRINGS FOR AT LEAST 2000 YEARS, WHEN THE CAHUILLA PEOPLE LIVED NEAR THE SPRINGS IN COOLER MONTHS. FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1900S, HEALTH TOURISTS INCLUDING HOLLYWOOD STARS BEGAN TO ARRIVE TO 'TAKE-THE-WATERS' AT EARLY SPA RESORTS. GOLF COURSES AND TENNIS CLUBS FOLLOWED, PLUS HOMES IN PRIVATE ESTATES. TODAY VISITORS ALSO COME FOR MODERN-DAY HOT SPRINGS RESORTS; THE BALMY WEATHER; THE CHANCE TO BE IN MOVIE-STAR TERRITORY BUT IN A MORE LAID-BACK ATMOSPHERE THAN LOS ANGELES; FOR MID-CENTURY MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE; AND TO EXPLORE THE INCREDIBLE NATURAL DESERT LANDSCAPE AND CANYONS.

BY ANNE CHAMBERLAIN

PALM SPRINGS

1. Palm Springs is famed for its mid-century modern architecture. 2. Palm Springs is an oasis in the Coachella Valley 3. Forever Marilyn is a giant statue of Marilyn Monroe designed by Seward Johnson. 4. Joshua Tree national park. 5. Desert flora. 6. Clean energy wind turbines. 7. Palm Springs is known as the golf course capital of the world.

DESIGN & ART

Palm Springs is home to important mid-century modernist architecture, with a preservation program protecting and enhancing many of these classic buildings. A good way to kick off a cultural tour of the valley is a visit to the classic mid-century steel and glass modernist building housing the **Palm Springs Art Museum**. The museum's diverse, rotating collection of modern and contemporary art, photography, glass and sculpture includes a 1964 Brillo Box Dress by Andy Warhol; a natural science collection; and exhibitions on the history of American Indians, the West and California culture. The architecture and design collection includes Frey House II, the historically-significant residence designed by architect Albert Frey for himself in 1963 and bequeathed to the museum. Visits to the house can be organised by prior arrangement (info@themoderntour.com).

Check the museum website for the line-up of shows and performances at the centre's Annenberg Theatre. (www.psmuseum.org)

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

For outdoorsy visitors, the **Indian Canyons** feature hiking and horse trails, ancient palm groves and panoramic vistas. Ancestral home of the Agua Caliente Cahuilla Indians and sacred to today's Cahuilla people, the canyons are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See remnants of their sophisticated way of life in the canyons including house pits, rock art, foundations, ditches, irrigation, dams, reservoirs, and walking trails. Canyons open for exploration and an appreciation of Indian history include **Palm, Murray, Andreas and Tahquitz Canyons**. A large oasis of Californian Fan Palm thrives in 24-km Palm Canyon; **Andreas creek** runs through the canyon of

the same name; **Murray Canyon** is home to endangered animals; and at the end of Tahquitz's 3km path are the 18-metre **Tahquitz Falls** and ancient irrigation systems. Explore on foot or horseback. Visit the **Trading Post** in Palm Canyon for maps, food, drinks, and Indian arts and crafts and to learn about cultural lore. (www.indian-canyons.com)

Another excellent place to learn more about the local Indian culture is the **Agua Caliente Cultural Museum** in Canyon Drive Palm Springs. (www.accmuseum.org) More than 7000 hectares of wilderness, wildlife and trails is protected in the **Coachella Valley Preserve**, full of wildlife, hiking trails, amazing views and special habitats. Established to protect the threatened local fringe-toed lizard and other rare species, entry is free but donations and volunteering are encouraged to assist with the preserve's work. Join



Palm Springs Aerial Tramway



A Rotating Tram Car



Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Centre

a guide and explore some of the plants, animals and geology. The Preserve on the northern side of the Coachella Valley at the foot of the Indio Hills is the Old West just minutes from Palm Springs. The Canyon contains large, rare and fragile desert wetland and palm oases, with water from the San Andreas Fault feeding seeps, creeks and ponds and supporting unusual animal species. Enjoy picnicking, hiking and the rustic Visitors Centre – **the Palm House** where 45km of walking trails begin, leading through a variety of landscapes.

(www.coachellavalleypreserve.org)

Another way to be out in the fabulous landscape is with off-road tour company **Desert Adventures** offering a variety of tours led by experienced guides and drivers in red Jeep Scramblers. A range of in-depth, educational, and fun tours are available to canyon, desert and wilderness areas. They also have a private 325 hectare **Metate Ranch**, with miles of pristine desert for exploring via Jeep, bike, or on foot; a private natural palm oasis with water bubbling out of the underground aquifer year round; and steep-walled canyons thrust up by the San Andreas Fault and carved by erosion.

(www.red-jeep.com.com)

TO DO LIST

An easy way to get a bird's eye view of the amazing surrounds is a ride in a rotating tramcar on the **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** that ascends 4km along the sheer cliffs of **Chino Canyon**, up to the coolness at 2600 metres above sea level (bring a jacket) maybe seeing heavy snow on the peak in winter and expansive views of the **Coachella Valley** and the briny dessert lake **Salton Sea**. At the top, the Mountain Station has restaurants, a

museum and more than 20 km of hiking trails to explore the pristine **Mt San Jacinto State Park**, on foot in summer and in winter on skis or snowshoes.

(www.pstramway.com)

Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley were important in World War II with airfields in the area used as staging areas for Air Corps Ferrying Command, Transport Command; plus the whole region used as **Patton's Desert Training Centre**. History comes alive and visitors can get close to vintage World War II, Korea and Vietnam era aircraft at **Palm Springs Air Museum** with 59 flyable and static planes on display. Different hangars house exhibits from the Pacific War including Pearl Harbour; uniforms and weapons; aircraft used by the US Army in Europe in WWII; the Cold war, Korean and Vietnam. There is an extensive research library; documentaries to watch; computer flight simulators; and a well-stocked gift shop with unusual items related to World War II, the military and aviation. There are flight exhibitions most Saturday afternoons, and a flower drop on Memorial Day. Rides in a vintage Warbird airplane are also available.

(www.palmspringsairmuseum.org)

Learn about renewable energy and see enormous wind turbines up close on a **Palm Springs Windmill Tour** about 10km north of the city. The informative two-hour guided tour in an air conditioned bus includes the history of renewable energy; the trials with early wind power generation in the Coachella Valley; restored exhibits of historic windmills; tour of a working wind farm; the latest technology in wind power generation as well as visits to solar generation, and natural gas power plants. Using air flow

through wind turbines to mechanically power generators for electricity, wind power is shown to be plentiful, renewable, widely distributed, clean, produces no greenhouse gas emissions, consumes no water, and uses little land.

(www.windmilltours.com)

In desert country, an appropriate place to visit is **Moorten Botanical Garden of cacti and other desert plants**. On South Palm Canyon Drive, this historic landmark has been going since 1938, named after desert-plant specialists the Moorten family who decided to convert their property into a living plant museum. The garden is home to more than 3,000 plants arranged by geographic region.

(www.moortenbotanicalgarden.com)

And with Palm Springs a playground for Hollywood celebrities since the 1920s, a fitting tour to undertake is Elvis



Joshua Tree National Park



Indian Canyons Hiking



Coachella Valley and Mountains Summer Sunset

Honeymoon Hideaway – the mid-century modern classic home **Robert Alexander Estate** (also known as The House of Tomorrow). Elvis and Priscilla Presley spent their honeymoon there and lived in the house in 1966-67. Expert guides give daily tours and special events are held every year to celebrate Elvis and Priscilla's marriage and Elvis' birthday and death. You can also rent the house for your own wedding or another special event. (elvishoneymoon.com)

If you are in town on a Thursday, don't miss **Palm Springs Village Fest**, a street fair held every Thursday night on Palm Canyon Drive, featuring three city blocks of arts and crafts makers, antique dealers, writers, food vendors and a variety of entertainers, food, and shopping. Surrounding shops stay open late during the street fair. (www.villagefest.org)



STAY

HERE'S A SAMPLING OF OUR
32 RESORTS IN PALM SPRINGS.



Desert Isle of Palm Springs 0764



Worldmark Palm Springs - Plaza Resort & Spa DD45



Casitas del Monte 1531



Palm Springs Tennis Club 0508



Welk Resorts Palm Springs 2318



Sapphire Resorts @ Palm Springs C116

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's local toll-free number

Port Macquarie

A surprising port of call...

Port Macquarie on the NSW mid-north coast is a surprisingly easy place to experience the best of regional Australia with its stunning coastline; magic hinterland of ancient rivers, mountains and rainforest; connection to our Aboriginal, white settler and penal-colony past; close encounters with koalas; and cafes, restaurants, wineries and craft breweries offering local fresh produce, wines and beers. A natural getaway with activities and destinations to fill every day and satisfy all ages, here's just a small taste.

BY ANNE CHAMBERLAIN



THE COAST

A favourite with locals and nature lovers is Perpendicular Point, with vertical cliffs plummeting 40 metres to the sea below. Take an easy walk in Kattang Nature Reserve and emerge to expansive coastal and mountain views. Atop the sheer cliffs is the premium spot for whale-watching during their May-Oct migration, also for bird watching and dolphin-spotting.

OPEN: Always, unless bad weather or fire danger. To check 02 6588 5555 (9-4.30 Mon-Fri).

A camel ride with Port Macquarie Camel Safaris on beautiful Lighthouse Beach is a great experience for all ages. Book a ride at the camel meeting place on the beach, hop aboard and be entertained by the cameleers with stories, history, and 'dad' jokes about the 'ship of the desert'. From your swaying elevated perch, spot dolphins surfing and passing whales in their migration season.

Families love it: 'My three year old laughed the whole trip; a wonderful time riding these funny animals; the highlight of our trip to Port Macquarie.'

WHEN: Sun to Fri 9.30-1, weather permitting, 9-2 NSW Christmas school-holidays. portmacquariecamels.com.au 0415 752 254 or 0437 672 080

THE PAST

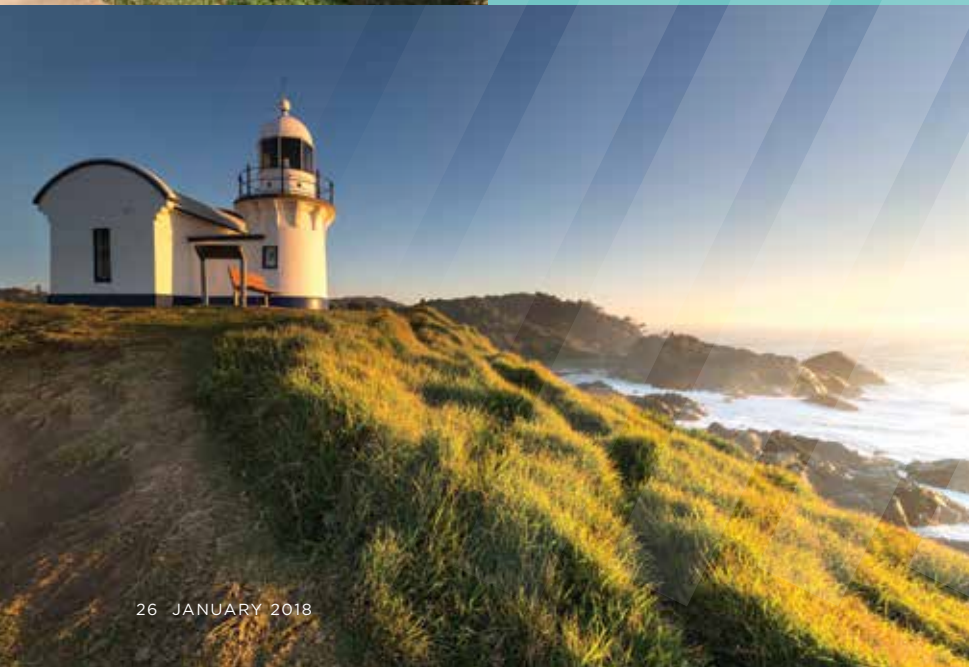
Travel back to a working timber settlement of the late 1800s to early 1900s at Timbertown Heritage Park and immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, smells and activities of an earlier time. Visit the blacksmith who loves a yarn while he works hammer and tongs at the forge. Admire the skills of one of Australia's last bullock drivers working his 12-bullock team; listen to the steam-driven working sawmill – the clang of the steam engine,

the shush-hush of drive belts and the whirl of saw blades; channel your inner cowboy/cowgirl and learn to crack a whip. Tour the village in a wagon drawn by a gentle Clydesdale and take a steam-train journey from Timbertown Station around the 87-acre heritage park, across the southern hemisphere's longest 595mm-gauge trestle bridge. Pan for gold in a stream strewn with 24-carat gold pieces; try your luck and pocket the gold. Reboot your energy at Wallace's store with old-time sweets, ice-creams, Timbertown pies and great coffee. *OPEN: 9.30-4. Closed Tues-Wed. Open public holidays and every day NSW school holidays. timbertown.com.au 02 6586 1940*





Clockwise from top: Port Macquarie Camel Safaris is a fun and unique way to explore lighthouse beach and at the same time be regaled with anecdotes and local history; don't forget your camera. If you love seafood then you are in luck and you must sample the local Sydney Rock Oysters, Port Macquarie is famed for having the best available, buy them fresh shucked and picnic on the beach. If you have seen a picture of Port Macquarie you have probably seen the lighthouse, Lighthouse Beach is the perfect spot for an early morning or afternoon stroll. Historic Roto house is the world's first hospital dedicated to Koalas. A grateful visitor of Roto house on the road to a full recovery.



KOALAS AND OTHER WILDLIFE

In the grounds of the historic Flynn family's Roto house is the Koala Hospital, the world's first hospital dedicated to the care and preservation of koalas, with 200 to 250 koalas admitted every year. The hospital has a treatment room, indoor and outdoor intensive-care units plus outdoor rehabilitation yards before koalas are released back to their home range. Adopt a koala to assist with the hospital's work and receive a certificate with a photo of your adopted koala. Donations also gratefully accepted.

OPEN: 8-4 daily except Christmas Day.

Feeding times 8am, 3pm. Guided tours 3pm.

koalahospital.org.au 02 6584 1522

Get up close to Australian and exotic animals at Billabong Zoo: Koala and Wildlife Park. Pat, feed, hold, hear and see more than 80 species of mammals, reptiles and birds. Attend a free Zoo Talk, hear about their passion as Ambassadors for Wildlife and their koala-breeding program. Enjoy the playground and picnic in the beautiful lush gardens. Food, coffee and drinks are available at the Zoo Café, and cute animal toys, themed gifts and souvenirs at the Zoo Shop.

OPEN: 9-5 daily rain or shine.

billabongzoo.com.au 02 6585 1060

LOCAL PRODUCERS

The Armstrong family has farmed and harvested oysters for more than 40 years in NSW mid-north-coast's pristine estuaries, supplying oysters year-round from 45 hectares of harvest area. Nestled under North Brother Mountain in Laurieton, Armstrong Oysters' consistent, highest quality, unique-flavoured Sydney Rock Oysters are guaranteed to please the fussiest oyster connoisseur. Buy fresh-shucked oysters to enjoy at nearby picnic facilities or take them with you up to North Brother Mountain with a chilled local wine or craft beer, and glorious views of the coast.

OPEN: Daily. armstrongoysters.com.au

02 6559 5527

The Mobbs family's Bago Vineyards & Maze at the foot of Broken Bago Mountain continues a family tradition, producing wines suited to the Hasting River Region. Taste a range of varieties including Verdelho, Chambourcin, Tannat and Merlot at the

cellar door with local cheese plates and a range of café-style food. A family-friendly winery, the kids will have fun exploring the 2-kilometre maze of 2-metre Lillypillys – the largest hedge maze in NSW, with lookout towers, bridges and boardwalks, and hidden items concealed within its tangled pathways. Enjoy Jazz in the Vineyards (11-3) on the second Sunday of the month.

OPEN: Daily 9-5. Closed Christmas Day. Last maze entry 4pm. bago.com.au 02 6585 7099

HINTERLAND NATIONAL PARKS

Not to be missed is the breathtaking panorama from the summit of North Brother Mountain, an ideal spot to picnic with a birds-eye view of the world, plenty of parking, well-kept, clean and sheltered picnic tables, lawns and public toilets. Walk off lunch on rainforest tracks or watch the hang-gliding and parasailing action, particularly in summer's north easterly breezes. Winter is time to tackle the strenuous Laurieton track and to hear lyrebirds in the cool gullies. The local Birpai legend of three brothers killed and

buried in the area, representing the three peaks – North, Middle and South Brother – coincides with Captain Cook's naming of the Three Brothers peaks as he sailed by in 1770.

OPEN: Park may close with poor weather or fire danger. Check on 02 6588 5555 (9-4.30 Mon-Fri).

Walk through the lush World-Heritage-listed rainforest of Willi Willi National Park, with magnificent strangler figs, glossy green palms, bright fungi and delicate orchids lining your path. Picnic by the river and waterfalls or swim in the natural plunge pool. Walks start at Wilson River picnic area with comfy amenities, shelter shed, picnic tables and gas barbeque. One of the most beautiful national parks in New South Wales, this extensive mountain wilderness on a spectacular section of the Great Dividing Range is a landscape of deeply dissected, forest-lined valleys and lush groundcover.

OPEN: Always, unless bad weather or fire danger. Check on 02 6561 6700 (9-4.30 Mon-Fri).



Hand made jewellery or wearable art?

HANDMADE

Shop for local handmade, wearable art, jewellery, one-off designs and clothes or fill in some lazy holiday time learning a new skill at Arthouse Industries in Murray Street. Owned and run by glass artist Skye Petho, watch her create beautiful glass beads from molten glass, using the lampworking technique. Learn this amazing art in a one-on-one mini glass bead-making class with Skye and take home your own hand-made beads. Contact Skye for a suitable time.

*OPEN: 10-5 Mon-Fri; 10-2 Sat.
arthouseindustries.com.au 02 6584 5443 or
0403 515 622 1/1 Murray Street Port Macquarie
(entry via Sunset Parade)*



STAY

HERE ARE OUR 6 RESORTS IN
PORT MACQUARIE.



Port Pacific Resort 1816



Ramada Resort Flynn's Beach 7822



ULTIQA @ Village Resort 7676



Vacation Village 0832



Village Resort 1486



Worldmark Resort Port Macquarie 7823

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GORGEOUS GOA



Experience a unique blend of east meets west in Goa, the sun-soaked western state where Indian culture intertwines with centuries of Portuguese influence. India's smallest state, laid back Goa is loved by the young, the retired, honeymooners and families from across India and around the world for its beaches, lush landscape, temples, churches, fascinating architecture and rich flora and fauna. Tourism is Goa's major industry, but its original charms are intact if you know where to look.

By Anne Chamberlain

LAYERS OF HISTORY:

The streetscapes and architecture hint at Goa's history, but head to a museum for a deeper insight. Traditional Goa is best represented at the private museum Goa Chitra in the coastal village of Benaulim, with more than 4,000 implements, tools and items that evolved over centuries in households, farming and traditional trades. Museum founder Victor Hugo Gomes has collected, saved and salvaged examples of local pottery, farming tools, musical instruments, kitchen utensils, altarpieces, ancient carts and palanquins. Hundreds of tillage implements point to the time when agriculture was Goa's mainstay. The grounds showcase vegetables, herbs, spices, sugarcane, and rice, allowing visitors to comprehend the use of old technology and artefacts on display. Even the complex housing this precious collection has been built from salvaged materials from 300 demolished old Goan houses.

For hours and directions: www.goachitra.com

In contrast, find artefacts from the Portuguese rule of Goa and from pre-historic to late medieval periods in the Archaeological Museum in the convent of the church of St. Francis of Assisi. Set up by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the museum displays portraits of governors and viceroys, wooden sculptures, pillars, architectural pieces and other objects from the Portuguese period, including two very large bronze statues and Portuguese firearms, swords and daggers. Treasures also include sculpture fragments from Hindu temple sites.

asi.nic.in OPEN: 10-5. Closed Friday

For an insight into Goa's Hindu history, visit the only remaining temple of its type that survived demolition by Muslim and Portuguese occupiers – the Hindu Shri Mahadeva Temple at Tambdi Surla, 12km north of Molem. The oldest temple in Goa, this example of 12th-century Kadamba-Yadava architecture has survived in almost perfect condition in its remote jungle setting in the Mollem National Park at the foot of the Western Ghats. In lush green surrounds in a clearing next to a stream, a visit to this small, beautifully carved and perfectly



This page clockwise: Tropical view to the Sweet Lake on Arambol beach at purple sky in Goa. Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Old Goa, India. The only remaining Mahadev temple the XIII century in Tambdi Surla.

Relaxing in outdoor restaurant at chilling ocean beach



HillTribe club in Goa



Delicious Goan fish curry with coconut milk and mangoes

proportioned temple is a must. The carvers' skill is apparent in the superb lotus-flower relief panel in the ceiling and the finely carved pierced-stone screen surrounding the door of the vestibule. Declared a protected historic monument by the Archaeological Survey of India, the temple remains an active place of Hindu worship, with hundreds of devotees from surrounding villages assembling there in February/March to celebrate the festival of Mahashivratri.

GOAN CULTURE

Keeping Konkani music and unique Goan culture alive is the Kala Academy (Academy of the Arts), the cultural centre run by the government of Goa to develop music, dance, drama, fine art, folk art, and literature and to promote the cultural unity of Goa. On the west side of the city in Campal in the heart of Panaji, the centre offers many things to do, to see, to hear and to learn. As well as theatre, classical music, dance and literature there are exhibitions, festivals and workshops. A must for everyone including children, it's a space to walk, to look out over the Mandovi River, and the canteen is a surprisingly good and cheap place to eat Indian and Goan food and to drink good tea. A program of dance, theatre, music and art exhibitions runs throughout the year. Check the website for events during your stay: kalaacademygoa.co.in

NIGHTLIFE

Nightlife in North Goa is legendary. For decades, young holiday makers have flocked to Goa for vibrant clubs, psychedelic beach parties and the live music scene including Goa trance, an electronic music style developed in the 1980s-1990s. The original Club 9 Bar remains at its cliff top location above Vagator Beach, with coveted views of famous Goa sunsets over the Indian Ocean. Its 1,100-square-meter, 3000-person open-air dance floor shuts down at 10pm in accordance with Goan law, but partygoers can move to the club's sound-proof indoor

space to revel till early morning. Originally famous for psy-trance, the 9 Bar also caters to other electronic genres including house, hip-hop, techno, electro and dub. Open year-round, including monsoon season from 5 PM till early morning. Look out for flyers and local advice for what's on.

MARKETS OF COLOUR

For street shoppers who love flea markets, Goa is a dream come true. Anjuna's weekly Wednesday flea market is as much part of the Goan experience as a day on the beach. Started by western hippies more than three decades ago, bartering their belongings to



Goa Night Market

fund their stay, this diverse, lively market now sprawls from beach to paddy fields. It's a big, bustling day out with live music, food and a resplendent array of sarongs, jewellery, spices, tea, coffee, souvenirs and beautiful handicrafts from all over India.

Open November-April.

Sam till after sunset. Best early morning or late afternoon.

FOOD FUSION

The rich legacy of Goan, Portuguese and Hindu traditions is headily mixed in Goan food. One modest eatery in an unassuming corner of Fontainhas in Panjim – where locals and tourists from India and abroad gather for authentic fare – is Viva Panjim in the converted 150-year-old Portuguese ancestral home of Linda and Michael de Sousa. Spilling onto a narrow lane of tables and lively chatter in a mix of Konkani and Portuguese, Viva Panjim is reminiscent of side-street restaurants of old Goa. For reasonable prices, try food not featured in other eateries. Alongside old favourites

Prawn Curry, Fish Balchao, Chicken Cafreal, Caldin, you can try rare Goan specialties like Stuffed Karela, Feijoida, Piexe Portuguese, Torradine, Pork Cabidela and Arroz de Chourico. Ask for the rava-fried catch of the day. And for dessert try the traditional Indo-Portuguese dessert babinca, a rich, egg-based, layered sweet with coconut milk and ghee.

NATURAL HAVENS

With three wildlife sanctuaries, there's more to Goa than beaches. The 240sqkm Mollem National Park and Bhagvan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary is a haven for diverse flora and fauna, and one of the best unexplored places in Goa with numerous hiking and trekking trails. The Mormugao-Londa railway line also passes through the thick jungles of the national park. Visitors may sight leopard, gaur, sloth bear, mouse deer, wild boar, civet, flying squirrel, pangolin and more. Open every day 8-5. But if you only have a short time, you can take a guided jeep tour

through the national park. Picnic and swim at Dudhsagar Falls; visit a spice village to learn about traditional farming of herbs, fruits and spices; and enjoy a Goan buffet lunch - all with hotel pickup and drop-off. For details, enquire at local hotels.

For a peaceful journey through rivers, tributaries and backwaters, kayaking with a local guide is a good option. Weave your way along narrow, gentle waterways for 2 to 3 hours with a Goa Kayaking Excursion of Sal Backwaters; spot and photograph birds and shy otters if you're lucky; glide past lush green vegetation and rice fields; slip through tranquil red and white lotus and water lily ponds; find shade under overhanging mango, cashew, bamboo and mangroves. Goa Kayaking offers daily kayaking trips in several different places in Goa. The tours are popular so book in advance, especially on long weekends and public holidays. Book early in the morning to avoid the heat.

Available November to April www.goakayaking.com



STAY

HERE'S A SAMPLING OF OUR
36 RESORTS IN GOA.



Karma Royal Benaulim 3726



Karma Royal Haathi Mahal 4129



Palmarinha Resort & Suites C908



The Pride Sun Village Resort & Spa-Goa 4891



Club Mahindra Emerald Palms D554



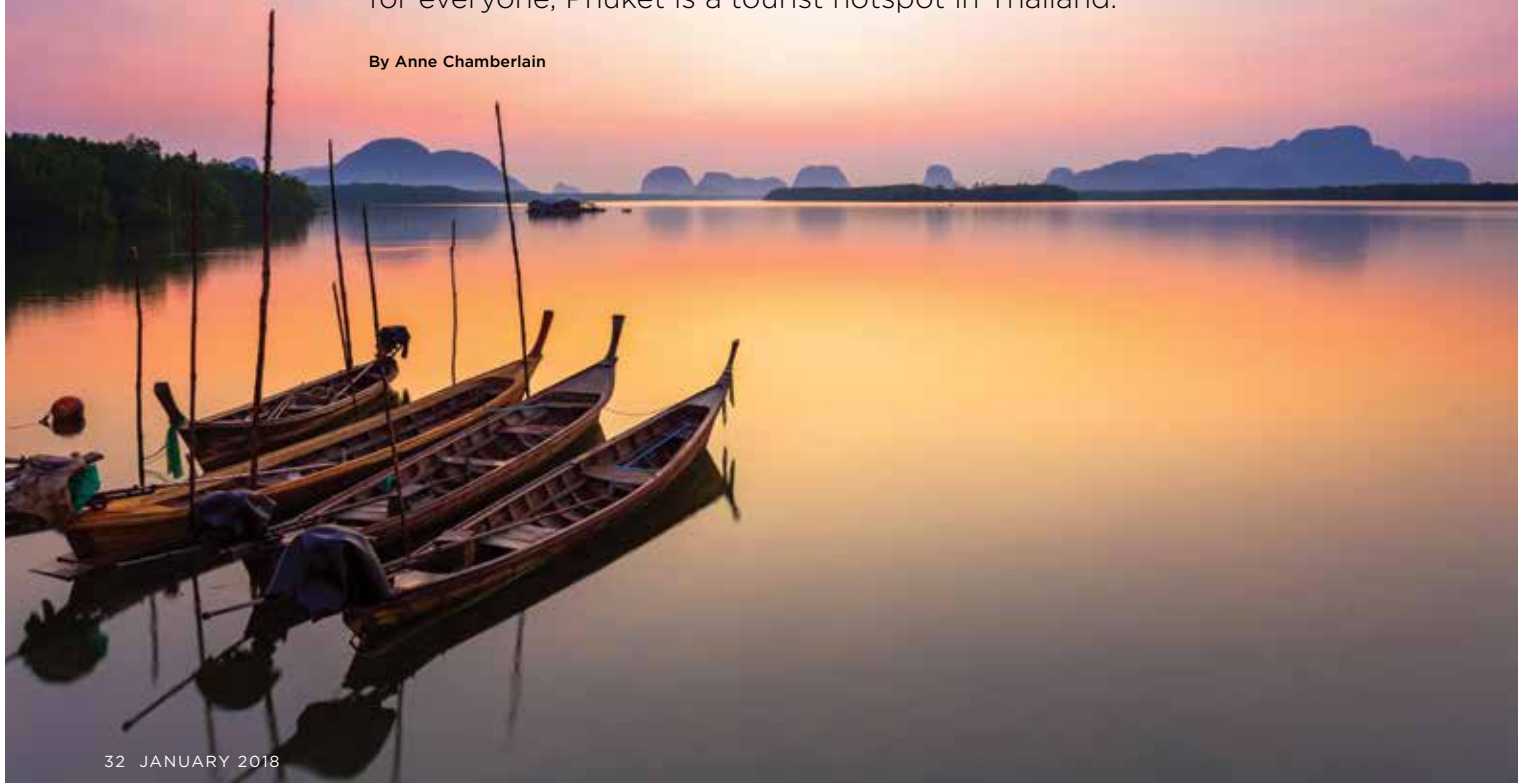
Club Mahindra Varca Beach 4883

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Pearl of the Andaman Phuket

Phuket is blessed with magnificent coves and bays, palm-fringed white beaches, smaller surrounding islands, hospitable people, delightful turn-of-the-century Sino-Portuguese architecture and lush tropical landscape. Situated on southern Thailand's Indian Ocean coastline and the country's biggest island province, Phuket sits in the Andaman Sea, with famous beaches including Patong, Kata, Karon, Kamala and Nai Harn Beach. A strong Chinese influence is evident in its many Chinese shrines and restaurants – there's even an annual Chinese Vegetarian Festival. Many other ethnicities also bring their traditions and festivals from around the world to Phuket. With its very welcoming atmosphere and activities for everyone, Phuket is a tourist hotspot in Thailand.

By Anne Chamberlain





Left to right: Phuket is a bustling tourist destination with all of the trappings one would expect but traditional wooden boats, perfect sunsets and breathtaking scenery are the real reasons to come to this little slice of paradise. Koh Ta-pu or James Bond Island as it is commonly referred to after it's appearance in "The Man with the Golden Gun" is synonymous with Phuket and on every visitors bucket list. World famous Patong beach is the heart of the tourist district day and night but it's still possible to have it almost to yourself at certain times.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Absorbing the incredible scenery should be high on your to-do list in Phuket. In the north, Phang-Na Bay is the place to see distinctive sheer limestone karsts rising vertically out of emerald-green water. Famous spots in the bay include James Bond Island and the village of Koh Panyee. The best way to avoid other tourists and enjoy the spectacular scenery is to become part of it, taking a boat trip from the northern end of Phuket and spending a leisurely day cruising through these dramatic islands, stopping at quiet beaches, and using the mother ship's canoes to explore the caves and rooms within these karsts. Cruising is calm in protected Phang-Nga Bay with many safe places to anchor. Similar to the famous Halong Bay in Vietnam, these landscapes will leave you with unforgettable memories.

One of Phang-Na Bay landmark island karsts, James Bond Island (Koh Ta-pu or Nail Island) put itself on the map by starring in the James Bond movie 'The Man with the Golden Gun'. The remarkable village of Koh Panyee built over the water on stilts is another karst island worth visiting. Avoid lunchtime if you can, when many tourists congregate to eat and shop for handicrafts. Below vertical limestone cliffs, hundreds of huts, shacks, restaurants

and shops, a school, a mosque and a health centre perch above the shallow surrounding sea, held aloft by thousands of timber and concrete poles. This Muslim community once depended on fishing but now relies on tourism.

In the south, for stunning 180-degree ocean and island views go to Laeme (Cape) Promthep viewpoint. A hilltop position away from town lights, the view is especially striking at sunrise with the rays shining between the island karsts. Get there before 5.30-6am depending on the time of year. The spot draws crowds of tourists every evening at sunset.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Old Phuket Town is a great place to admire the region's architectural style, described as Sino-Portuguese with a strongly Mediterranean character. Especially on Dibuk Road, shops have very narrow street frontage but stretch back a long way. The beginning of the tin boom in the 19th Century led to construction of these well-preserved shop houses behind their old Chinese fretwork-carved wooden doors, plus many fine mansions. Other Old Phuket streets with similar structures are Phang-nga, Yaowarat, Thalang, and Krabi. A walking tour of the area is easy, with many small cafes, bakeries and eateries

along the way, perfect for a half day. The best way to get there from Phuket Town is by motorcycle taxi. On Krabi Road, one of the most attractively maintained Sino-Portuguese buildings houses the recently renovated Phuket Thaihua Museum, with displays including a photo exhibition and video media telling the history of the Chinese people in Phuket, mining, local costumes, Sino-Portuguese architecture, local foods, tradition and culture of Phuket. *Daily 9am-5pm.*

North of Phuket City next to the Heroines' Monument is Thalang National Museum honouring Thalang's Two Heroines and serving as a repository for historical, archaeological and cultural heritage of Phuket and preserving the Andaman's cultural heritage. It provides an introduction to the history of Thailand; Phuket Island and early inhabitants of the Andaman; the Battle at Thalang; the Chinese and the development of Phuket; the Phuket people; and a gallery of change. *Daily 9am-4pm.*

BUDDHAS & WATS

Sitting atop Nakkerd Hills between Chalong and Kata is the landmark 45-meter white marble Big Buddha marble statue, sitting serenely in the meditation posture and visible from anywhere in the southern



Sino-Portuguese architecture



Big Buddha statue on the peak of Mount Nagakerd

part of Phuket. With the statue facing east toward Phan Nga Bay and with its back towards the Andaman Sea, the site offers breathtaking 360-degree views over Phuket, the islands and the sea and is easy to reach by a winding 6km road. Respected by the people of Phuket and visitors and open daily from 5:30pm-8:30pm except Tuesdays.

Not far away is 19th Century Wat Chalong (Wat Chaitararam), the largest and one of the most visited Buddhist temples of the 29 spread around Phuket Island. Locals come to pray and visitors come to learn about Buddhism. The temple contains several important statues and the most recent

building dominating the temple, the Grand Pagoda contains a splinter of bone from the Buddha. Its walls and ceilings are decorated with beautiful paintings illustrating the life of Buddha. Take your time and enjoy its breezy, cool location and calm atmosphere.

Visitors welcome daily 7:00 am-5:00 pm

ENTERTAINMENT & NIGHTLIFE

In Phuket Town, enjoy the popular show of Thai traditions and culture Siam Niramit, a 70-minute extravaganza with state of the art technology lighting and sound;

spectacular performances; and special effects such as a flying angel, lightning and rain. You can book a package tour for discounted ticket prices, including dinner and transport to and from your hotel.

Daily except Tuesday.

Another extravaganza in huge grounds at Kamala Beach is the bright and colourful entertainment park Phuket Fantasea, also inspired by Thailand's rich and exotic heritage. The 6oha complex includes a Carnival Village with carnivals, games,



handicrafts and shopping; a 4,000-seat restaurant offering a buffet of Thai and international cuisine; and a Las Vegas style theatrical show using technology and special effects to enhance the story of Thailand's myths, mysteries and magic. This stage performance is the main attraction, performed by Thai actors, dancers and acrobats accompanied by massive elephants.

Daily 5:30- 11:30pm except Thursday.

Simon Cabaret at Patong Beach is another Las Vegas kind of show, but of a totally different nature. The stage is magnificent, the sets and costumes colourful and glittery but what most people come to see are the lady-boy performers. This popular tourist attraction has been wowing audiences for years with its exotic and hilarious transvestite cabaret, with sets and choreography that would do Broadway justice, and gowns dripping with diamantes.

Daily 6:00-11:00 pm with shows at 6pm, 7:45pm and 9:30 pm.

ACTIVITIES

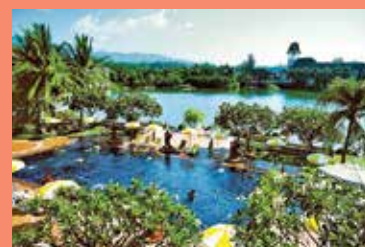
There are a plethora of activities to satisfy every age group and interest. Phuket and its islands are ideal for sailing, diving, snorkelling, golf and other sports. One real Thai experience is a visit to the Phuket Elephant Sanctuary, which is pioneering ethical elephant tourism at Paklok in North East Phuket. The centre provides a retirement home for sick, injured and old Thai elephants that have worked in the logging and tourist industries. Feed, walk and observe the elephants roaming free in the sanctuary, socialising and bathing in the lagoons in beautiful forest bordering the Khao Phra Thaeo National Park. Another enjoyable connection with the beautiful Thai forests is ziplining with Cable Jungle Adventure in Talang district – safe Eco adventuring for everyone, no experience required. Take a thrilling journey soaring through ancient trees, seeing tropical wildlife and breath-taking scenery.

Patong Beach nightlife



STAY

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Patong Bay Hill Resort DA17



Hotel Royal Crown 2861



Patong Tower Condominium 4341

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Magical Madeira

Ever since Atlantic-steamer passengers stepped ashore on Madeira while their vessels loaded coal, travellers have been drawn to its year-round warm, temperate climate; lush parks and gardens; blue seascapes and towering cliffs; friendly locals; legendary wine and fresh food; rugged peaks; and thousands of kilometres of levadas (16th century canals) carrying water and creating a network of walking tracks through the island.

By Anne Chamberlain





Clockwise from above: Panoramic view over Camara de Lobos. The stunning beach at Ribeira Brava town. The rugged, dramatic coastline of Marina da Quinta Grande.

MADEIRAN HISTORY

In a natural amphitheatre facing the blue Atlantic on the south coast of Madeira, capital **Funchal** (named for the fennel – funcho – growing around its sheltered bay), is the main centre of activity. A great place to begin your holiday is **Madeira Story Centre**, opposite the cable-car station in the Old Town. Learn about Madeira's history, culture and development at this interactive museum, taking you chronologically from its volcanic birth 14 million years ago; being claimed by Portugal in the 1400s; through its social development, maritime influence, industries, trade and strategic importance. On the terrace, enjoy views of Old Town via telescope, relax at the café and purchase Madeiran wares at the shop. *Open 10-6 daily except Christmas Day.*

There are many museums with diverse themes including wine, sugarcane and whale industries, contemporary art, sacred art, Christopher Columbus, furniture, porcelain and pottery, natural history, embroidery and traditional costumes. An uphill cobblestone climb from Funchal town centre brings you to great views and the **Quinta das Cruzes (Manor Estate of the Crosses) museum**. The early colonial manor built by second governor Joao

Goncalves da Camara has largely been destroyed, with the current building added after the 1748 earthquake. Acquired by local authorities in 1952 to house antiques left by private collectors Cesar Gomes and Madeiran Czech citizen John Wetzler, the museum showcases old Madeiran social life, the etiquette and customs of noblemen in the 16th-19th centuries. 17th century chests and cabinets crafted from island timbers; 16th century Indo-Portuguese desks; and English and Portuguese furniture from the 17th to 19th century sit alongside early Madeiran clay works, fine Chinese porcelain and Portuguese glazed pottery, silver and filigree. The garden of endemic plants including orchids contains architectural pieces from the site's early manor buildings. *Open Tues-Sat 10-12.30 and 2-5.30. Sun 10-12.30. Closed public holidays.*

Combine your Quinta das Cruzes excursion with nearby **Convento de Santa Clara and Santa Clara Church** founded as a simple chapel in the late 1400s by Madeiran discoverer Joao Goncalves Zaroc, whose tomb is under the wooden floors of the church altar. The 15th century convent was a silent order of Franciscan nuns but is now open to visitors. Reconstruction in the Baroque period is evident in the facade, gothic portal and the tower's tiled Moorish

style cupola. Hispano-Arab Mudejar floor tiles are arranged in beautiful geometric designs and stylised natural motifs; walls in the body of the church are panelled in tiles from the Baroque period; and the Chapel of Santa Domingos contains a pavement of 16th century Flemish tiles. *No set visiting hours. Ring the bell to the right of the entrance.*

For a blend of old and new Madeira, picturesque mustard-yellow waterfront **Fortaleza de São Tiago (Fort Saint James)** built in 1614 to protect the city from pirate attack was repurposed to house the **Museu de Arte Contemporânea (Museum of Contemporary Art)**. Representing important Portuguese and Madeiran artists from the 1960s to today, the collection is rotated in the venue's limited space. Visitors enjoy the ocean-front walk to the fort; exploring warrens of rooms and staircases; sweeping views over Funchal harbour; and its good café. *Open Mon-Sat 10-12.30 and 2-5.45pm. Closed Sunday and public holidays.*

More than a day is needed to explore the historic sections of **old Funchal Zona Velha (Old Town)**, with many buildings surviving from the wealthy sugar era of the 15th and 16th centuries. Most of Madeira's built heritage is in Funchal's three



Madeira, Botanical Garden Monte, Funchal.



Monte Palace Tropical Garden, Funchal.



Downhill fast in Funchal.

historic areas – **Sao Pedro** which gained its importance in the 15th century with noble families building in the area, including first governor Joao Goncalves Zaroc; **Santa Maria** to the east of the urban centre, one of the first areas to be inhabited, with much of its architectural heritage intact; and **Se**, with its 16th century cathedral, government buildings, fortress, bishops palace and Jesuit seminary and college. In **Rua Santa Maria** and nearby roads, see strikingly-painted doors, part of the Arte Portas Abertas (Art Open Doors) project begun in 2011.

PRODUCE MARKETS

Madeira's climate, soils and varied terrain grow an enormous assortment of fruits and vegetables – Mediterranean crops like citrus grapes and figs; temperate fruit trees like chestnuts, apples, cherries and plums in the cooler valleys; and higher up tropical crops such as bananas, custard apple, guava, mango, passion fruit. There is an amazing array of colourful flowers, and a bountiful supply of seafood, including the local specialty espada (scabbard fish). See these all on display in the two-story 1940s art-deco **Mercado dos Lavradores (Workers Market)** in Funchal old town. A feast for the eyes, nose and stomach, be sure to take your camera. Upstairs stalls sell local handcrafted embroidery, willow wickerwork and leather goods. *Open Mon-Fri 7am-8pm and Sat 7-2pm. Closed Sunday and public holidays.*

GARDENS, PARKS & FLORA

Once referred to as the 'floating garden of the Atlantic', and in 2000 earning gold in the European Flowering City awards, the government-run **Jardim Botânico (Botanical Garden)** opened in 1960, draping down the hillside of **Quinta do Bom Sucesso**, private estate of the Reid family. In this exuberant display of more than 2,000 plants in geometric forms and dazzling contrasts of colour, patrons appreciate plants labelled with their common and scientific names and origin. The gardens include sections of indigenous and endemic plants from Madeira and nearby Atlantic islands; a garden of trees from diverse regions of the world; a succulent garden; tropical, cultivated, aromatic and medicinal plants including tropical fruit trees and coffee; and a park of

rare and exotic birds. **The Natural History Museum** is situated near the entrance. *Open daily 9-6 except Christmas Day.*

Connected to these gardens by cable car is the beautiful hilltop oriental-influenced **Jardim Tropical Monte Palace (Monte Palace Tropical Gardens)**. Amongst the tropical vegetation is one of the most important collection of 15th to 20th century tiles, put together by Jose Berardo from churches, chapels, palaces and private homes throughout the Portuguese empire. The oriental gardens include a panel of more than 160 ceramic plates depicting the relationship between Japan and Portugal; sculptures from China and Japan; koi ponds; and birds including white and black swans, ducks and peacocks. The 18th century palace houses a collection of sculptures, minerals and gems from around the world. *Open daily 9.30-6 except Christmas Day.*

Take an easy bus ride from central Funchal to another private garden **Quinta do Palheiro (Palheiro Gardens)** in the cool

hills to the east. Thousands of camellias are at their best in the main flowering season from November to April. Be rewarded by extensive views over Funchal and refreshments at the tea rooms. *Open Mon-Fri 9.30-4.30. Closed Christmas and New Year's Days.* Another easy way to enjoy the flora and natural landscapes of Madeira is to walk the maintenance paths alongside the vast network of levadas (irrigation canals).

A BIT OF SPEED

And a visit to Madeira is incomplete without experiencing the 2km downhill run in a **Monte Toboggan**. Originating as a fast means of transport down to Funchal for Monte residents, you can reach speeds of up to 40km/hr down narrow winding streets in a 2-person wicker sledge on greased wooden runners, powered and steered by white-clad, straw-hatted *carreiros*, using their rubber soled shoes as brakes. The exhilarating run down to Livramento takes about 10-15 minutes. Find Monte Toboggans at the foot of the stairs to Nossa Senhora do Monte Church. *Mon-Sat 9-4.*



Amazing cliff beach panorama on the trek to Sao Lourenco.



STAY

HERE'S A SAMPLING OF OUR
31 RESORTS IN MADEIRA.



Hotel Cais Da Oliveira 3557



Pestana Grand Hotel 6695



Pestana Miramar 5440



Pestana Palms 2829



Quinta Splendida Jardim Botanico 2933



Pestana Village 3725

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8 Night Caribbean, Eastern

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Inside (11) Twin Share

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Voyager of the Seas**

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Skye - Killybegs - Greenock - Belfast
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- Sacred Islands - Nadi - Drawaga
Island - Sawa i Lau Island - Tivua -
Port Denarau

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Avalon Illumination**

7 Night Europe River

Round trip from Amsterdam

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Outside (E) Twin Share

Ports of Call: Amsterdam (overnight)
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Middleburg - Willemsted - Amsterdam

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Oceania Cruises, Oceania Marina

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Balcony (B1) Twin Share

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Estonia - Stockholm - Visby -
Warnemunde /Berlin - Skagen - Oslo
- Amsterdam (debark)

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Ovation of the Seas**

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Oceanview (OZ) Twin Share

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CRUISE CARIBBEAN

**Royal Caribbean International,
Quantum of the Seas**

5 Night Asia

Round trip from Shanghai

Selected departure in September 2018

Balcony (D4) Twin Share

Ports of Call: Shanghai - Sasebo - Shimonoseki - Shanghai

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Twin Share PMR**

Quote DCQI8N6 when speaking to your consultant.





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RCI Platinum members can enjoy a wide range of exclusive benefits such as Priority Access to holidays in highly sought-after destinations, rewards on selected RCI transactions, complimentary unit and resort upgrades and so much more!



Unit Upgrades and Resort Changes

Enjoy more space to relax and unwind when you upgrade – perfect for a special occasion – or just because you can! Simply let us know that you're interested and we'll do the rest!

**Upgrades and or changes are subject to availability*

RCI[®] Deposit Restore

RCI Platinum members can deposit as close as six months prior to the start date of their Week and automatically receive full Deposit Trading Power.

**Only applicable to RCI Weeks members*

Member Rewards

Receive even more value from your RCI Platinum Membership via a “money back” Member Rewards programme in the form of a credit on your account on your RCI transactions.

**Only applicable to selected RCI transactions*

10% off Extra Vacations and Bonus Week Getaways

Enjoy an additional 10% off all non-RCI Platinum member exclusive Extra Vacation and Bonus Week Getaways. You also get to receive one-day priority access to all Extra Vacation sales.

Platinum Cruise Discounts

Set sail on the open seas and save up to 50% of your Deposit Trading Power or Points on cruise vacations with RCI Platinum membership.

City Discovery

Enjoy member-exclusive prices on City Pass and City Sightseeing deals through City Discovery!

**Only applicable to members residing in the Asia region*

Priority Access

Enjoy exclusive access to exchange vacations at selected hotels and resorts even before they are made available to standard members for exchange.

Platinum Previews

Receive access to the latest deals and sales one day earlier than standard members!

Additional Lifestyle Benefits

Gain access to the My Rewards Program which has over 6,000 merchants and offers savings and convenient access to everyday items such as shopping, dining, entertainment, insurance, home loans, auto services, adventures and much more!

**Only applicable to RCI members residing in Australia*

Points Transfers

Know an RCI Points member that could use additional Points? Now you can transfer points from your account to another eligible RCI Points member's account free of charge with no limits!

**Only applicable to RCI Points members*



Points Extensions

As an RCI Platinum member, you can extend the life of your points for two years for the price of a one year extension. This gives you more time to exchange your points for holidays!

**Only applicable to RCI Points members*



Visit [RCI.com](https://www.rci.com) or call your country's local toll-free number

Newly Affiliated RCI Resorts



WUYI HOT SPRING RESORT, CHINA DH05

Wuyi Hot Spring Resort is a boutique resort hotel located in Wuyishan, the south eastern part of China, a popular destination for domestic travellers. Comprising of 25 units, each unit is equipped with en-suite hot spring tubs, in-room sauna and spa facilities. The resort boasts two on-site restaurants, 108 natural hot springs and a swimming pool. The resort is a 50-minute drive from The Wuyi Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site rated for its cultural, scenic, and biodiversity values. All resort rooms are decorated with environmentally-friendly material, reflecting the natural theme of the resort, and giving the space a sense of place.



SUNDANCE RESORT KARUIZAWA, JAPAN DE51

The Sundance Resort Karuizawa is situated in an upmarket mountain resort at the foot of the active volcano Mount Asama in Nagano Prefecture, an area known for outdoor activities such as tennis, hiking, cycling, horseback riding and golfing in summer. Skiing and ice skating in winter can also be enjoyed in Karuizawa. With the Hokuriku Shinkansen, a high-speed train line, it only takes slightly more than an hour to reach Karuizawa from central Tokyo. The resort features studio units with modern furnishings that can accommodate up to three people with a full bathroom and boasts an on-site restaurant, bicycle rentals and more.





SUNDANCE RESORT IZU-KOGEN, JAPAN DE48

Izu-kogen is located in the Izu-kogen Highlands in the city of Ito, known as a summer resort area with plenty of nature to enjoy in the mountains or along the sea. In addition to its beautiful natural surroundings, another charm of the Izu-kogen Highlands is its numerous art and history museums. The resort features traditional Japanese architecture that boasts hot springs on-site in lush, spacious gardens. The resort also has a sauna, barbecuing area, laundry services, kid's room, spaces to play Mahjong and table tennis, and large family-friendly studio units that can accommodate up to three people with a full bathroom.



SUNDANCE RESORT HAKONE GORA, JAPAN DE49

Part of the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, less than one hundred kilometres from Tokyo. Famous for hot springs, nature and scenic views of Lake Ashinoko and nearby Mount Fuji, Hakone is one of the most popular destinations among tourists looking for a break from Tokyo. The resort features studio units that can accommodate up to three people with a full bathroom and boasts a hot spring for guests on-site and is well-appointed with a kid's room, laundry room and massage chairs on property. The resort is situated in a prime location near the Hakone Tozan Railway offering convenient train access and picturesque views from Hakone Yumoto to Gora station.





SUNDANCE RESORT KAWAGUCHIKO, JAPAN DE47

The Sundance Resort Kawaguchiko is situated next to Lake Kawaguchi, the most accessible of the Fuji Five Lakes via train and direct bus connections from Tokyo. A hot spring resort town with various tourist attractions and views of Mount Fuji, the resort is surrounded by stunning mountain scenery and features well-appointed one-bedroom unit that can accommodate up to five people with a full bathroom. The resort also features a kid's room, barbecue area, garden, bicycle rentals, restaurant and an on-site hot spring.



SUNDANCE RESORT ONJUKU, JAPAN DE52

Onjuku is a town located in the Isumi District of Chiba. Nestled along a sweeping bay, Onjuku is a sleepy surfer's town famed for its history in abalone, lobster fishing, breathtaking views, and surfing. The Sundance Resort Onjuku is a beachfront property with arresting scenery, and well-appointed studio units that can accommodate up to four people with a full bathroom. The resort also features a barbecue area, a garden and bicycle rentals for guests' convenience and is also within driving distance to popular theme parks like the Kamogawa Sea World and Mother Farm.



SUNDANCE RESORT YAMANAKAKO, JAPAN DE50

The Sundance Resort Yamanakako is located on Lake Yamanakako at the Yamanashi Prefecture, and is the largest of the Fuji Five Lakes, boasting plenty of outdoor activities including fishing, hiking and water activities. A villa-styled resort that features a barbecue area, a kid's room, laundry facilities and bicycle rentals for guests' convenience, the resort features one-bedroom units that can accommodate up to three people with a full bathroom.



EMERALD TERRACE CONDOMINIUM RESORT, THAILAND DH08

Emerald Terrace Condominium Resort is located on a lush and tranquil hillside on Asia's finest resort islands of Phuket. Situated well above the much sought-after west coast beach community of Patong, you will be just a few minutes away from a plethora of world class amenities, including shopping, fine dining and a world renowned vibrant night life.



weekenders



ALPHA SOVEREIGN HOTEL (RA42/RA43)

Gold Coast, QLD, Australia

Situated close to the endless sandy beaches of the Gold Coast as well as the beautiful hinterland, the Alpha Sovereign Hotel is waiting for your fun, sun filled holiday. The area is full of sensational shopping areas, restaurants, nightlife adventures and non-stop action.



TRAVELODGE MIRAMBEENA DARWIN (RA46/RA47)

Darwin, NT, Australia

Travelodge Mirambeena Resort Darwin is equipped with every facility a traveller would need to enjoy their stay. Cleverly designed around the unique tropical pool, spa and café setting guests quickly discover the relaxed and friendly ambience.



QUALITY HOBART MIDCITY HOTEL (RA39/RA40)

Hobart, TAS, Australia

Hobart's leading inner city accommodation hotel, perfectly situated on the corner of Elizabeth & Bathurst Streets. Offering an opportunity to relax and unwind in the comfort of the splendid property right in the heart of the CBD. Enjoy meals at ESUS Lounge & Restaurant and have a flutter in the Oasis Gaming Room. Or simply relax in the comfort of your room and let Room Service pamper you.



OAKS BROOME (R592/R593)

Broome, WA, Australia

Set in picturesque Roebuck Bay, Oaks Broome is surrounded by extensively landscaped gardens and two sparkling swimming pools. A superb cafe, restaurant and bar overlooking one of the pools adds to the ambience of this tropical paradise.



METROPARK HOTEL KOWLOON (R850/R851)

Kowloon, Hong Kong

Situated at the heart of Kowloon, the 485-room Metropark Hotel Kowloon converts a double character of being in close proximity to the bustling shopping, commercial areas and main transportation network, yet is behind the clamour of the city. Free shuttle bus service to and from Mongkok subway station and Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront is provided for your convenience. The Hotel also provides direct hourly shuttle bus services to and from the Hong Kong International Airport.



WYNDHAM GRAND PLAZA ROYALE ORIENTAL SHANGHAI (RE55/RE56)

Shanghai, China

Wyndham Grand Plaza Royale Oriental Shanghai blends a wealth of upscale amenities with professional, attentive service and exquisite cuisine to create an extraordinary oasis of comfort in this most modern and vibrant of cities. Hotel offer spacious fitness centre featuring the latest in Techno Gym equipment while the magnificent indoor pool offers relaxation and soothing comfort after a long day of travel. Hotel also offers fine dining restaurant including Chinese, Japanese, Cate and Lobby Lounge.

Great resorts available for great value. Perfect for short getaways!*



GRAND PRINCE HOTEL KYOTO (RE19/RE20)

Kyoto, Japan

The Grand Prince Hotel Kyoto was designed by the late Togo Murano, an architect who made a valuable contribution to Japanese architecture. The hotel features spacious guest rooms, elegant banquet halls, restaurants, and a Sukiya-style teahouse in the Japanese garden, for the real Kyoto experience.



RAMADA HOTEL & SUITES NOUMEA (RE40/RE41)

Noumea, New Caledonia

Located in the heart of Anse Vata. It offers modern and spacious rooms and apartments. You can either relax on a sun lounger by the pool amidst the tropical garden, pamper yourself at the Harnn Spa, get active in the fitness room, take your breakfast or follow your favourite sport at the Sports Bar 'Le Rendez-Vous' and enjoy a meal at the restaurant 'L'entrecote au 360' with breathtaking views over the bays of Noumea.



HOTEL EQUATORIAL HO CHI MINH (RE47/RE48)

Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

A 5-star hotel, located where the borders of the city's four main districts intersect, hence in the heart and true centre of Ho Chi Minh City. Tan Son Nhat International Airport can be reached conveniently within a 35-minute drive; while the city's major commercial and entertainment area is only a mere 8-minute drive. The hotel also houses a world class recreational centre with an open-air swimming pool, gym and spa.



OASIA SUITES KUALA LUMPUR (RF42/RF43)

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Oasia Suites' guestrooms come with a fully-equipped kitchenette, living area and Wi-Fi connectivity. The hotel's rooftop garden is an ideal retreat for the afterhours, with a swimming pool set in an idyllic garden environment.



MICROTEL BY WYNDHAM PUERTO PRINCESA (RF59/RF60)

Palawan, Philippines

Part of a successful international chain of hotels, expect comfort and convenience via Microtel by Wyndham in Puerto Princesa City's affordable and tastefully designed guestrooms, excellent facilities, and reliable services. The 50 air-conditioned rooms and suites feature a refreshing colour scheme that invite relaxation and a cooling effect that's perfect for the tropical weather.



MICROTEL BY WYNDHAM DAVAO (RF51/RF52)

Davao City, Philippines

Microtel is located in Damosa Gateway filled with many upscale commercial establishments for every guest to explore. The park is abundant with restaurants, bars, coffee shops and food chains that are open until very late and will keep your group of family or friends occupied throughout the night.

*Terms and Conditions: Resorts displayed are subject to availability and confirmed on a first come, first served basis. RCI Booking fees apply to all confirmations.

RCI Rentals



THE RAROTONGAN BEACH RESORT & SPA

RE44 RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

Situated on the Southwest Coast you will find Aroa Beach home to the Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa. Listen to the sands being lapped by the luminous Aroa Lagoon, the Lagoon of Love. Stroll along the water's edge. Recline in a beach lounge and sip a long cool cocktail. Private and secluded, Aroa Beach enjoys all-day sun and sizzling island sunsets. Wander among the lush gardens abundant with hibiscus, gardenia, frangipani and the coconut trees



HOTEL SOMADEVI ANGKOR BOUTIQUE & RESORT

RE91/RE92 SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

Located in the heart of Siem Reap town, Hotel Somadevi Angkor Boutique & Resort is a luxury boutique hotel built in the mystical land of Angkor. The hotel is just 7 kilometres from the World Heritage site of Angkor Wat and a 15 minute drive from Siem Reap International Airport only. Hotel Somadevi Angkor Boutique & Resort nestles as your home of holiday by offering personal hospitality comfort to please your enthusiasm and enjoyment with the ambience of modern local haven with 5-stars facilities and services in the Siem Reap city centre.



SWELL RESORT

A033 BURLEIGH HEADS, AUSTRALIA

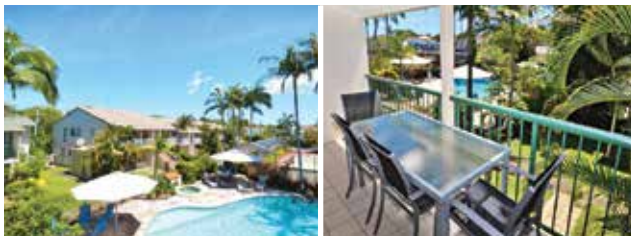
State-of-the-art facilities at Swell Resorts veritably ensure guests' enjoyment! Just a short walk from the patrolled surf beach, Swell Resort offers heated outdoor pool and spa (in season) and poolside BBQ facilities, full-sized, lit tennis courts and a complete gymnasium, and on-site dining options, all in a lovely, landscaped garden environment.



RAMADA REIA BEACH RESORT

RE81 TAIPA, NEW ZEALAND

Located on the beachfront, right in the heart of Doubtless Bay, Ramada Reia Beach Resort is the perfect place to use as a base to explore Northland. A short drive away you can discover Cape Reinga at the top of New Zealand, Paihia and the Bay of Islands home of the 'Hole in the Rock' and dolphin watching. Take advantage of the onsite restaurant and bar for breakfast, lunch or dinner or relax with a drink. After a long day's sightseeing relax in the spa pool, alternatively if you don't feel like leaving the resort enjoy a lazy day with your favourite book by the swimming pool. Additional facilities available to enjoy are the BBQ facilities and tennis court.



NOOSA KEYS RESORT

A045 NOOSAVILLE, AUSTRALIA

Perfect for couples and families, the resort is centrally located alongside the Noosa River, and is surrounded by glorious beaches. Play a few rounds of tennis, soothe yourself in the spa, soak up the sun or relax around the pool, or grill your favourite meal and catch up with friends at the barbecue area. And when it's time to venture out, create customized sight-seeing trips with the destination specialist at the front desk.



CAIRNS BEACH RESORT

7112 CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA

Enjoy the tropical gardens and salt water pool that surround Cairns Beach Resort. Dine at Coolums on the Beach, a beachfront restaurant and bar and relax to the sounds of the waves lapping at the shore. Laze around the pool in reclining lounge chairs or grill on the barbecue and dine al fresco. Internet is provided for a nominal fee. The resort is just a short walk and no more than 10 minutes drive from most area activities.

Need a getaway but don't want to use your week?

Check out some of our Extra Vacation Rental options for a great holiday experience!*



ADINA APARTMENT BONDI BEACH

RD55 BONDI BEACH, AUSTRALIA

Adina Apartment Bondi Beach is situated on Hall Street which you will find is a short walk to one of the most iconic beaches in the world and is surrounded by trendy restaurants, cafes and bars. Adina Apartment Bondi Beach offers stylish, spacious apartments with all the comforts of home.



PALAZZO COLONNADES

RE74 SURFER'S PARADISE, AUSTRALIA

Palazzo Colonnades is an 8 minute stroll from Cavill Mall – the heart of Surfers Paradise. Palazzo Colonnades is a 10 storey building, nestled between the Nerang River and the sandy beaches of the Gold Coast. On offer are an extensive range of facilities for guests to indulge themselves in from an expansive salt water swimming pool – heated in winter, heated spa surrounded by sun terraces and lavish palm-themed landscaping, sauna and gymnasium, games room, recreation room with internet café, tour desk to book tours, theme park tickets, cruises, transfers and attractions and an extensive choice of restaurants within 5 minutes' walk.



COURAN COVE ISLAND RESORT

RC40 SOUTH STRADBROKE ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

The recently refurbished resort offers a truly distinctive style of accommodation, perfect for everyone. One can relax, recharge and rejuvenate with an experience tailored to suit you. Indulge in luxury accommodation, gourmet dining and luxurious day spa treatments. This resort also offers many water sports, rock climbing, ropes course and many more. For families, Ramada Couran Cove Island Resort offers an island sanctuary where children have the freedom to bike safely and wander around through the native rainforest home to many native Australian wildlife. With glorious stretches of golden surf beaches, the raw beauty of Australia's native flora and fauna, this luxury eco resort is the epitome of a perfect escape for everyone.



WYNDHAM SANYA BAY

DA06/SF05/SG05 SANYA, CHINA

Radiating five-star flair, this resort exudes modern beauty through its fantastic décor. Contemporary architectural and landscape designs earned Sanya Lele International Hotel Centre the recent "Best Progress Award" by American Institute of Architects magazine. Sleek resort touches include steel frames, glass walls, modern lighting, and brand-name appliances and furniture. Guests can relax in the swimming pool and sauna, or take up a game of pool or video games in the fully-stocked game room. Outdoor grills, a gym, restaurants and bike rentals add to the resort's vacation ease.



DAYS HOTEL SINGAPORE AT ZHONGSHAN PARK

RA67/RA68 SINGAPORE

Discover the best value under the sun at Days Hotel Singapore at Zhongshan Park. Enjoy a refreshing stay in its vibrantly-decorated rooms, equipped with free Wi-Fi and all the essential amenities for your convenience. Step out and experience the myriad of retail and dining options in Singapore's first hotel-by-the-park development or head to 21 On Rajah (halal-certified) for a sumptuous meal of Mediterranean and local Asian cuisines.



RAMADA SINGAPORE ZHONGSHAN PARK

RB98/RB99 SINGAPORE

The Ramada Singapore offers contemporary amenities, modern event venues and a unique hotel-by-the-park experience. The property exudes international appeal for both business and leisure travellers. From dining to scenic views of the park, you can rest, revive and restore in this charming hotel, minutes away from the city's bustle yet close enough to modern conveniences.



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because your vacation means everything to you and that means the world to us.

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