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GREEN SIDE**



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MALAYSIA**

OCTOBER 2014

ENDLESS VACATION

PLAY | EAT | SHOP | RELAX | EXPLORE

Exotic China

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

NEW YEAR
COUNTDOWN

SHOPPING GENTING
KUALA LUMPUR

FAMILY THEME PARKS
GOLD COAST AUSTRALIA

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Visit the Jade Dragon
in Lijiang China

OCTOBER
2014

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Lijiang, China.

Check out endlessvacation.com

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Welcome

If you haven't started already, now is an ideal time to start planning your next dream vacation or weekend getaway. In this edition of our RCI Endless Vacation magazine we entice you to explore exotic China (pg11). With an expanding network of high-speed trains (traveling at speeds up to 190 miles per hour), and a spider web of domestic flights, access can be gained to almost every town in China. We also share some top spots for you to celebrate and welcome in the New Year (pg6).

Food and the occasional drink are an integral part of traveling for me. Lucky for me our story on the wonderful wine, beer and food trail offered in regional Victoria, Australia gave me the inside knowledge of where to go next time I'm visiting "down under" (page 22). Whether you're a foodie or not, nothing connects you to a place like eating and the local wines.

Check out our Travel Health feature on the importance of Vitamin D (pg31) and kick start your day with some great detox juice recipes (pg10).

Discover which roller coaster ride is waiting for you at the Gold Coast's world class theme parks (pg37) and don't forget to fasten your seatbelt!

Top it all off with a weekend getaway to remember at the beautiful Tioman Island, one of Malaysia's jewels of the sea or the spectacular Palawan Island in the Philippines known for its tropical beaches and wildlife sanctuaries. Palawan is also home to the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park recently listed as one of new 7 Wonders of Nature.

Don't forget to check out our members stories and find out who was the winner of the "Treasure Hunt, Find the 40s and win an IPAD" competition (pg40) from our previous edition of the Endless Vacation Magazine.

As always thanks for your continued support and loyalty to RCI. Have a great time planning your next holiday and travel safely.

Di Mitchell
Director, Member Services

Life begins at 40

Forty Years on RCI's Still Going Strong

ready,
set,
go



This year marks RCI's 40th anniversary and RCI is celebrating this significant milestone with its members and global business partners.

RCI first pioneered the concept of Vacation Exchange in 1974, offering members increased flexibility and versatility with their timeshare vacation ownership experience.

"We're honoured to have spent the past 40 years helping millions of our subscribing members create extraordinary memories and we are looking forward to being part of all the countless vacations still to come." said Andrew Heslehurst, RCI Pacific Director

Today RCI is a worldwide leader in vacation exchange with over 4,500 affiliated resorts in approximately 100 countries. As part of Wyndham Exchange & Rentals and the Wyndham Worldwide family of brands, RCI now provides flexible vacation options to 3.7 million RCI subscribing members each year. "Looking back over the past 40 years there have been major technical innovations that have shaped our world but with greater technology also comes higher expectations in the variety and quality of accommodation RCI members would like to experience. Never the less the fun and

excitement of taking a well earned vacation will always stay the same." "As a global leader in vacation exchange we have always welcomed new technology that can improve the way we do business with our global partners and RCI members. Currently we have some exciting high tech developments underway including the recent relaunch of our new website rci.com."

"RCI is proud to define and challenge the status quo. It's our flexibility and record of success that gives us that point of difference, allowing us to move forward with confidence for the next 40 years," said Mr Heslehurst.



THE RCI PACIFIC TEAM:
Recently attended the
ATHOC Industry Awards



CHINA

Skyscanner unveils vision for stress-free airports

Airports of the future will allow people to relax in rooftop pools, yoga retreats and 3D cinemas, while holographic staff take care of passengers' needs, a new report has predicted.

In its 'Future of Travel 2024' report, Skyscanner has predicted that in 10 years' time airports will become places to unwind and relax while waiting for flights, as new technology takes the stress out of the travel experience.

According to Skyscanner, entirely automated airports will eliminate check-in desks and queues, with passengers able to "check in and drop off their bags at Starbucks", before using their smartphones

to monitor the queue times at security and choose the best route to get to their gate.

Digital luggage tags will include all flight details and destination information, allowing travellers to track their bags, while biometric data cards will replace passports, reducing immigration queues.

"Emerging technologies mean that by 2024 the travel journey from our home to holiday destination has the potential to be a stress-free and enjoyable experience – full of fun distractions for everyone," said Filip Filipov, Skyscanner's head of B2B.

"Airports and flights will no longer be the price we pay to travel but instead will signify

the start of our holidays where travellers can relax and create the perfect space to suit their needs whether they're flying for business or leisure."

Skyscanner also predicts the rise of the "Airsides Aeroville", with possible guest amenities ranging from art galleries and gardens to rooftop pools, 3D cinemas and yoga retreats. Skype-style hologram systems will also be available, allowing passengers to hold 3D conversations with virtual staff.

Skyscanner's 'Future of Travel 2024' report has been produced in association with The Future Laboratory and gathered the input of 56 experts and futurologists.

INDONESIA

Garuda European Gateway

Garuda Indonesia, the airline of Indonesia, further extended its presence in Europe by launching the new service from Jakarta to London via Amsterdam on the 8 September 2014, as part of the airline's transformation program "The Quantum Leap 2011-2015". London serves as the airline's second gateway in the region after Amsterdam. By launching the five times weekly service to London, Garuda Indonesia is now able to provide the first direct link between Indonesia and the United Kingdom.

Executive Vice President Marketing and Sales of Garuda Indonesia Mr. Erik Meijer

commented, "We are very pleased to be able to add London to our extensive global network. There are strong business, educational and cultural ties between Indonesia and The United Kingdom, and we believe this new service will further boost those activities amongst two countries, whilst offering easier access for travelers from UK to Indonesia, which now is one of the fastest economic growth center in the world."

The new service will be operated by the state-of-the-art Boeing 777-300ER aircraft capable of carrying 314 passengers and equipped with "Inflight Connectivity" facilities.

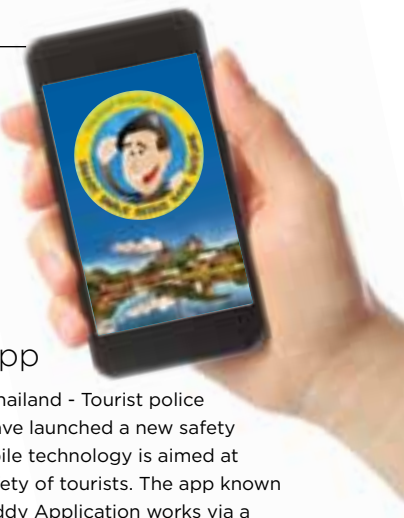


THAILAND

Thai safety app

BANGKOK, Thailand - Tourist police in Thailand have launched a new safety app. The mobile technology is aimed at improving safety of tourists. The app known as Tourist Buddy Application works via a smart-phone and offers safety tips as well as travel information. Tourists can also get in touch with any emergency call center and also police station within the country. The 1155 hotline number is accessible 24/7. Authorities will also be able to trace where the call is originating from. Just like your buddy, the app will help you find a location.

The app is also expected to come handy in providing tourists with up-to-date information around the clock. In so doing, it would play an important role in promoting traditions, tourism, festivals and culture in the country.



TRAVEL HEALTH

Feet First

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TRAVEL TOOL—YOUR OWN TWO FEET—IN GOOD SHAPE ON YOUR NEXT TRIP.

BY HANNAH WALLACE



Vacations can be tough on your feet. Besides all that sightseeing, often on uneven ground, you tend to engage in activities you don't typically do at home, like hiking, running on trails and playing tennis. We interviewed podiatrist Martin G. Ellman at the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, Minnesota, for his tips on how to help prevent and treat minor foot ailments such as blisters, corns, calluses and warts—and keep your feet in tip top shape.

Wear the right shoes. This may seem obvious, but many injuries occur when people wear inappropriate footwear such as sandals on a hike. Hiking shoes offer great ankle support, court shoes have more side-to-side support while running shoes have excellent shock absorption. "Try to use shoes for the activity you're doing," Ellman says.

Break in new shoes. Don't wear a new pair of hiking boots for the first time on the day of a hike. "You always want to break in a pair of shoes weeks before you go on a trip," Ellman says. This way if you do get blisters or corns, you can treat them at home and they won't mar your holiday.

Socks matter. If your feet tend to sweat during physical activity, invest in moisture absorbing socks. "Cotton socks are okay, but they stay damp. A damp environment on skin causes friction, which can lead to blisters," says Ellman. You can find moisture absorbing socks made of merino wool, synthetics or PLA (a corn-based fiber that's more eco-friendly than polyester) at most sporting goods stores.

Be prepared. Be sure to pack band aids and antibiotic ointment

in your toiletry bag. If you get a blister that's smaller than 5mm, apply ointment and a band aid and leave it alone. But if it's bigger than 5mm, Ellman advises draining it with a sterilised needle leaving the "roof" of the blister there to offer some protection. Then apply antibiotic ointment and a band aid to the area.

See a podiatrist. Corns and calluses are thick, hardened layers of skin caused by friction or pressure. The only difference is their location. Corns appear on or between your toes and calluses occur on your heel or the ball of your foot. Ellman says you can generally keep both in check by using a pumice stone or a skin file and applying lotion to your feet at night. (Do not do this if you're diabetic or have nerve problems in your foot—unless you've been instructed to do so by a medical professional.) If you have a corn or callus that's causing you pain, however, Ellman suggests seeing a podiatrist. If it's the result of a foot abnormality, such as a bunion or hammer toe, the solution is often as easy as getting your shoes stretched at a shoe repair store.

Warts and all. "Warts are viruses, and they're very unpredictable as to how they respond to treatment," Ellman says. For this reason you'll want to start treatment at least a month, before your trip. Usually over the counter or prescription medication will do the trick, but sometimes your doctor will recommend freezing the wart off with liquid nitrogen or using a laser. Also, whether or not you have a wart, Ellman suggests wearing shoes or sandals by the pool or in the locker room—it just may keep you from getting one. 📌

Counting down to NEW YEAR'S EVE

BY GARY MACNAMARA

CELEBRATE 2015 NEW YEAR IN STYLE - SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOME OF OUR MOST POPULAR DESTINATIONS. THEY MIGHT BE THE PERFECT PLACE FOR YOU TO WELCOME IN THE NEW YEAR.

Everyone knows that New Year's Eve or NYE is a worldwide celebration where we can have some great fun, joy and dancing. Check out some of these excellent destinations in Asia to experience one of the best parties of the year.

Bangkok is one of the more desirable destinations for this NYE celebration. The dynamic capital city of Thailand is popular for its amazing weather, variety of shopping, entertainment venues, parties, river cruises and restaurants.

While the city has many popular nightspots, a major focus for this year's celebrations will be the Central World Shopping Plaza. It is one of the biggest shopping malls in Thailand and the biggest countdown event of Bangkok occurs in front of the Central World Square. Thousands of people will gather at the Square to welcome the New Year with a spectacular fireworks show.

If you're not into crowds then why not take in a romantic dinner with your favorite person at the riverside. At the stroke of midnight you will be able to get enjoy the fireworks in the sky while romancing in that special moment with your loved one.

If you're looking to celebrate the NYE in **Singapore**, check out the celebrations at the Padang at City Hall facing Marina Bay, Esplanade Bridge and Merlion Park.

At the Siloso Beach Party there will be up to 12 hours of nonstop music to accompany your swim in the waters of Siloso Beach's huge foam pool. Thought to be the tallest ferris wheel in the world, the Singapore Flyer is not only the center of the celebrations, it is also close to hotels and restaurants.

If you want to party on all night then Labrador Park is the place to go, where the parties start at 10pm and go through until 6:30am on New Year's Day. However, the biggest party will be at the Marina Bay Area. Get here early as the crowds of people will make getting in or out of the area difficult as the New Years Eve countdown begins.

You'll be surprised by the wide range of parties that will be available to you on NYE 2015 in **Beijing**. In the 798 Factory District the Yen celebration always draws a lot of party goer's thanks to its awesome atmosphere and legendary DJ's. Another option is the Beijing's Club China Doll which transforms itself into a huge



casino complete with card dealers, gambling tables and DJ's to entertain guests. Further celebrations are expected to be held by Acupuncture Records who take over the Superior Shopping Mall and transform the massive space into a thrilling dance party.

As the capital of Malaysia with 7 million people, **Kuala Lumpur** is a cultural melting pot and home to many 5 star hotels, great shopping malls and fantastic restaurants and bars.

Like most New Year's celebrations, Kuala Lumpur will celebrate with a fireworks display over KLCC Park and the Petronas Towers. Popular shopping areas for New Year include Sunway Pyramid, Damansara Mutiara, Bukit Bintang, and Dataran Merdeka. Most of the hotels in Kuala Lumpur also organize exclusive NYE celebrations with live music and countdown parties.

In **Hong Kong**, the NYE fireworks display light up over Victoria Harbor, in between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui. The must see night parade travels along the streets of Tsim Sha Tsui and features colorful, illuminated floats with the whole area becoming one huge party for locals and visitors. The best vantage points are along Haiphong Road, Canton Road outside Harbour City, or at the junction of Nathan and Peking Roads.

Situated on River Han, the magnificent city of **Seoul** will feature an incredible fireworks show for the 2015 NYE celebrations. Many locals like to go the islands of Khoje-do or Ganghwa-do to witness

the breathtaking beauty of the sunset and then spend the entire night on these islands to see in the first sunrise. They then have breakfast of Ttoekkuk (rice cake noodles) believing that this tradition will bring them good luck in the New Year.

Seoul's Times Square will be also be showcasing its own 2015 NYE celebrations with a large range of entertainment venues and restaurants. The massive performance center and the world's biggest movie screen make Seoul the ideal place to mingle in the open air with excited New Year's revelers.

What would NYE be without an impressive fireworks show when midnight hits? Well **Taipei** 101 New Year's Fireworks display is considered to be one of the best around the world.

Taipei 101 formerly known as the Taipei World Financial Center, is a landmark skyscraper and large crowds are expected to gather by Taipei 101 and the shopping centers in the Xinyi District.

With each number of the final countdown, one of the layers of Taipei 101 building lights up with fireworks shooting out from the top of each layer in different directions creating a spectacular visual effect not to be missed.

Apart from Taipei 101, Taipei offers many musical concerts where you'll be able to dance to the rhythm of the popular bands and have that special night to remember.



SHOPPING
Genting Highlands Malaysia

High Rollin' in Genting Highlands

BY ANNISA DHARMA

06photo / Shutterstock.com



LOOK BACK WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE: (clockwise from below) You won't miss First World Plaza, just take the cable car and look for the huge rainbow painted building. The dynamic visuals don't end at the doorway, Genting Highland gives Las Vegas a run for it's money in the visual overload stakes. Hours of shopping requires a full stomach. The cable car entry lets you know this is no ordinary shopping experience. Shop on a mountain top, in a forest just one hour from Kuala Lumpur... crazy.

Perched 5700 feet above sea level in Malaysia's Titiwangsa Mountains, Genting Highlands is a glitzy playground where scenic beauty fuses with stupendous architecture and nonstop entertainment. Did we mention that it's accessible via a breathtaking ride on the world's fastest cable car? So strap on your seatbelts and make ample room in your suitcase. Let's get some retail therapy and relax, eat and play.

Relax and play

To call First World Plaza a shopping mall would be a huge understatement. As the largest shopping area in Genting Highlands, it's also a Mecca for all things fun. Here, you'll find an indoor theme park, a Cineplex, an indoor waterpark for children, a skydiving simulator, a bowling centre, a haunted house and even a Ripley's Believe It or Not! museum. And that's not even the half of it. Starworld Casino – a smaller version of the resort's 200,000 square feet Casino de Genting – also decks the halls of this mega complex. Shopping with a side of blackjack, anyone? Or maybe it should be the other way around? If you like to mix shopping with exhilarating amusement, this is the place for you.

The aptly named Cultural Village is an area within the First World Plaza that is rich in culture. Comprised of a handful of shops, you'll find culturally unique trinkets and souvenirs from

Malaysia, China, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, India, Japan, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

No holiday would feel right without bagging barrels of gifts for your loved ones back home. Make it easier for yourself by heading to Gift Castle – a small souvenir shop in Genting Highlands, which sells a wide range of gift items.

Taste

Shopping and chocolate. Need we say more? The Cocoa Boutique at Genting Highlands is part of the Cocoa Boutique and Chocolate Gallery chain – the largest chocolate conglomerate in Malaysia. Find a literal smorgasbord of chocolate variations at this sweet shop from your run-of-the-mill dark chocolate to durian and chilli chocolate for the more adventurous.



STAY RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN MALASIA INCLUDE:

Genting View Resort 1703

Within easy reach of the cable car station, Genting View Resort is only a stone's throw away from Malaysia's only casino and many sporting and entertaining activities.

Awana Genting Highlands Golf and Country Resort 4919

Family friendly resort with heated swimming pool and Jacuzzi, indoor badminton and free shuttle short with travelling time to KL.

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com



FOOD
Juice

Juicy Fruit

KICK START YOUR SUMMER WITH THESE
THREE GREAT DETOX JUICE RECIPES

The best way to make juice is to have a good juicer in your kitchen so you can create tasty juice blends.

- Always wash the vegetables thoroughly
- Cut the vegetables into small parts
- Turn on the juicer and push the vegetables pieces one at a time until you have the amount of juice you desire.

Ultimate Green Juice

This is a delicious and refreshing juice to drink daily and with good reason. It's full of antioxidants and super foods. The base is celery, which is a little known nutritional powerhouse. It's loaded with potassium, folic acid, magnesium, calcium, iron, phosphorus and essential amino acids. On top of all that, it's one of the most alkalizing things you can put in your body. To the celery add kale which is an outstanding antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. Also add green apple, parsley, lime, lemon and ginger and you've got an extremely potent, detoxifying cocktail.

INGREDIENTS:

Stir in and blend
4 sticks of celery in the juicer
4-5 kale leaves
1 green apple cut in quarters
1 handful of flat leaf parsley leaves
1 slice of lime
1 one slice of lemon
1/2 inch of fresh ginger
one tablespoon of coconut oil for additional health benefits

Tropical Paradise Juice

This delightful juice is the perfect way to brighten up your morning. It is easy on the digestive system and gently loosens any build up that may have occurred while the body was at rest.

INGREDIENTS:

Stir in and blend
1 medium ripe papaya, peeled, seeded, sliced to the juicer
1 small pineapple, peeled, cored, sliced
1 piece peeled fresh ginger
1 medium kiwi, peeled
1.2 cups of fresh young coconut water after juicing

This juice was discovered at a roadside juice stand on the beautiful Hawaiian island of Kauai. Although the juice stand is no longer in business, we are happy to share this recipe and keep this best selling juice alive. It is simply delicious and a great energy booster.

Beet Apple and Blackberry Juice

Beet juice is a powerful cleanser of the blood and highly nutritious. It's full of folate, manganese potassium, iron and vitamin C. To the beets, add apples, blackberries and ginger, creating a deep red and delicious elixir.

INGREDIENTS:

Add 2 small beetroots including the leaves to the juicer
Blend in 2-3 apples cut in quarters
Add about 7 ounces of blackberries
Add 1/2 inch of fresh ginger

Our bodies naturally detoxify everyday as part of a normal body process and detoxifying is one of the body's most basic automatic functions for eliminating toxins through the colon, liver and kidneys.

Unfortunately in this day and age, with the pollution found in the air, water and food we eat, our bodies have a hard time keeping up. Our chemicalised diet often has too much animal protein and saturated fats. Caffeine and alcohol can also radically alter the internal body process.

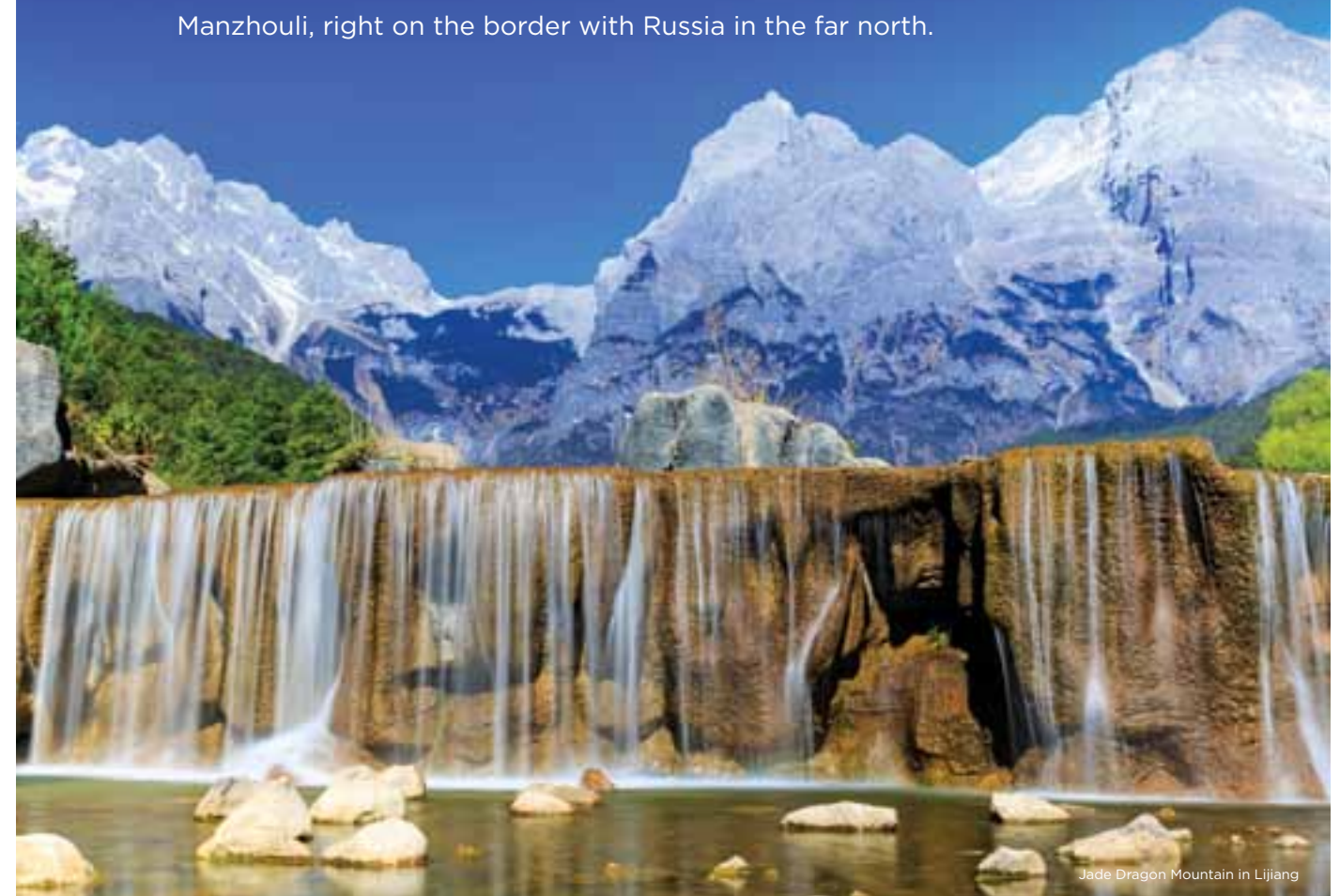
Whether cleanses are your thing or you just prefer to consume an abundance of fruits and veggies by juicing each day, these healthy juicing recipes will aid in nourishing and ridding your body of harmful toxins.

Exotic China

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

BY ANNISA DHARMA

China occupies a huge swathe of real estate in the center of the Earth's largest land mass, hence why it's also known as the Middle Kingdom. The country's largeness also accounts for its diversity: on the same day in January, it could be a balmy 29 degrees Celsius on its southern end in Hainan, but snowing in Manzhouli, right on the border with Russia in the far north.



Jade Dragon Mountain in Lijiang

While Beijing and Shanghai might be the most well-known and visited cities in China, the country does have a host of other places well worth visiting. These days, an expanding network of high-speed trains (traveling at speeds up to 300 kilometers per hour), and a spider web of domestic flights allow travelers access to almost every town in China. Buses step in where planes and trains fear to tread. **There’s really no reason to not get out and explore some of China’s exotic locales.**



YANTAI

The coastal town of Yantai is located in the Shandong province along its eastern seaboard. Yantai literally translates as ‘Smoke Platform’, as fires were lit on the headlands during the Ming dynasty to signal the presence of any Japanese invaders. Later, the Qing dynasty (the last imperial dynasty) surrendered Yantai to the British who then used it for years as a treaty port for foreign trade. Today, breezy Yantai has a booming export industry as well as a cluster of concession architecture.

Visit the Yantai Hill Park and wander past concession-era buildings erected by a host of foreign powers. The former American, British and Japanese consulates, the lighthouse, and the Yantai Union Church are all stellar examples built alongside stone paths leading to the hilltop.

Another must-visit in the province is the Penglai Pavilion, 75km northwest of Yantai. The pavilion – poised on a bluff overlooking the sea – dates back to the Song dynasty. Here, the Taoist legend of the ‘Eight Immortals crossing the sea’ is celebrated via inscriptions and carvings. On occasion, locals claim to have seen a shimmering mirage on the horizon. Don’t forget to check out the ancient military installation and temples en route to the pavilion.

Yantai Laishan Airport (<http://www.ytairport.net/index.php>) is located 15km south of the city. An airport shuttle takes you into town. A newer airport, the Yantai Penglai International Airport is scheduled to open in 2014/2015 and will be 43km away from the city. To get to Penglai Pavilion, take a minibus from the bus station at the corner of Beima Road and Qingnian Road.

The trip takes one and a half hours. When you get to Penglai, taxi drivers will take you to the pavilion for about SGD2.

HANGZHOU

The prosperous Zhejiang province is your typical modern Chinese economic powerhouse and its newly rich citizens have taken up residence in the capital city of Hangzhou. It’s not uncommon to see Ferraris and Lamborghinis cruising the streets alongside the UNESCO World Heritage listed West Lake.

Located in Hangzhou city is Alibaba group(NSY:BABA), one of the New York stock market’s biggest IPO’s in recent times. Many will also be interested to explore this amazing city for it’s long history and beautiful scenic spots.

Smack-dab in the middle of the city, the freshwater lake is surrounded by classical Chinese gardens and rolling hills. It has inspired a legion of poets, painters and scholars. One of the artists, the Song dynasty poet Su Dongpo, conceived a causeway that joins the north and south end of the lake. Hiring a public bicycle (you’ll need to register at one of the kiosks for a rental card; rentals cost about 25 cents per hour) is a great and cheap way to explore the lake. When you get tired of peddling, board one of the many boats that do lake cruises (from SGD11).

Find time to visit the interesting Zhejiang Art Museum (http://www.zjam.org.cn/Site_En/news/2013/002/00742.shtml, 138 Nanshan Road) for some compelling Chinese contemporary art. Come night time, catch the Impression West Lake (<http://www.hzyxxh.com/en/>) –

a live performance on the lake conceived by acclaimed Chinese director Zhang Yimou (of Raise the Red Lantern fame). Tickets start at around SGD15.

The Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport (<http://www.hzairport.com/>), 30km east of the city, has flights throughout most of China as well as international flights from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Tokyo, Osaka, Taipei and Bangkok. A taxi into town will cost SGD29.

HAINAN

The tropical island of Hainan is China’s southernmost spot and a popular getaway for locals who come for the sun, soft sand, surf and a round or three of golf. With fantastic amenities, great food and a pleasant vibe, you could easily while away weeks kicking back on Hainan.

The capital Haikou, on the northernmost tip of the island, is a good base and a transport hub from which to explore the rest of the island. From here, you can easily strike out by bus or train to the rest of Hainan.

The Xinglong area, on the south-eastern end of the island, is an idyllic place with beaches, hot springs and relaxing attractions, including Shimei Bay, a popular spot for surfing, with several excellent breaks for all surfing ability levels.

Another popular beach area is Sanya, on the southwest of the island. The 40km stretch of development is popular for its resorts and seafood. The beachfront has plenty of bars and restaurants serving up fresh seafood.

Hainan’s capital airport is the Haikou Meilan International Airport (www.mlairport.com) in Haikou. Here, there are

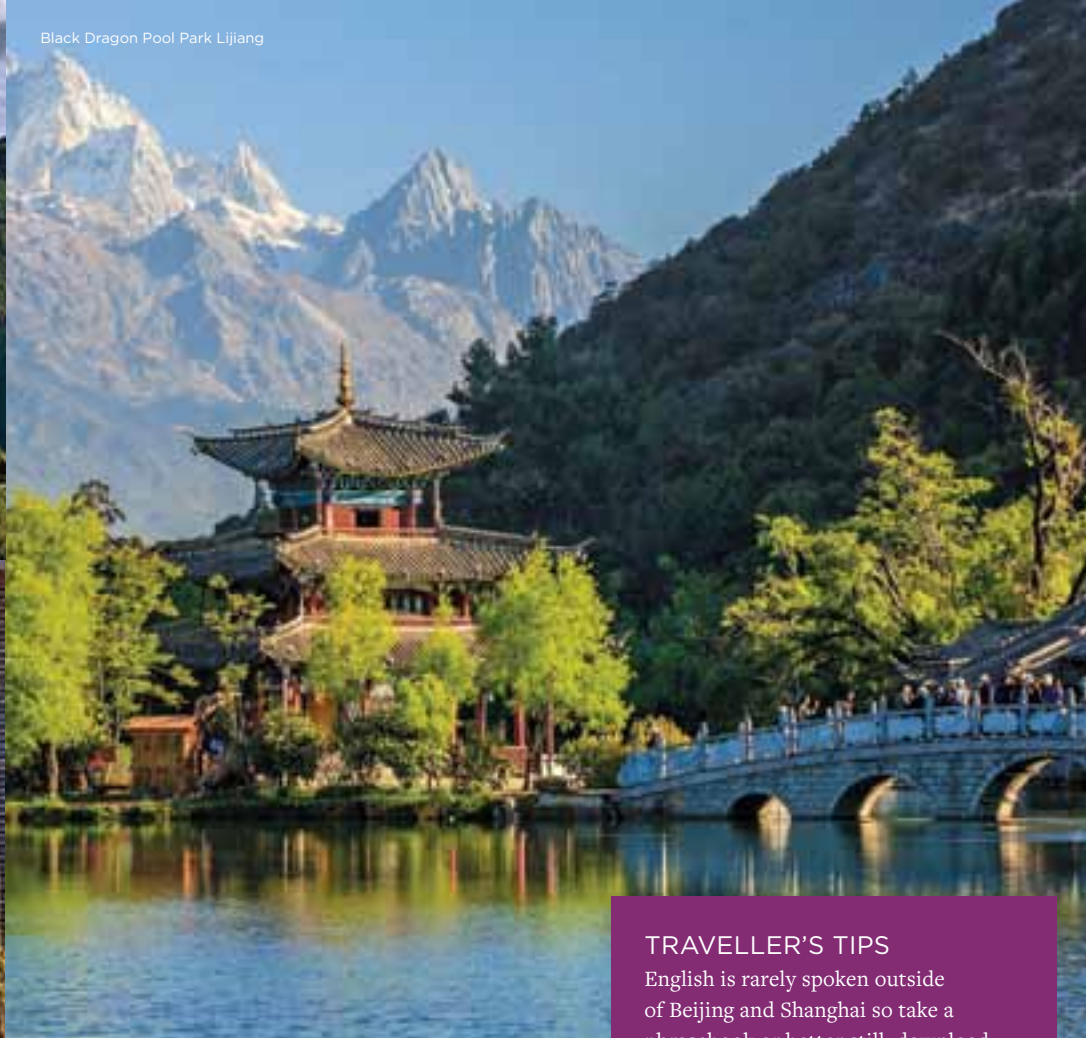


VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE: (clockwise from below) Hangzhou show's its quiet side. Two views of Hainan from the beach and from the mountains. Hangzhou's flip side, a bustling modern metropolis. The very popular West Lake in Hangzhou. Penglai Pavillion, just a short drive from Yantai is a must see.





Enchanting Lugu Lake



Black Dragon Pool Park Lijiang



Tiger Leaping Gorge Lijiang



Dayan Town Lijiang

Meiqianbao / Shutterstock.com

domestic and international connections to Singapore, Bangkok, Taipei and Kuala Lumpur. There’s also the Sanya Phoenix International Airport (www.sanyairport.com) in Sanya with domestic and international connections.

LIJIANG AND LUGU LAKE, YUNNAN

Located in Yunnan in Southwest China, Lijiang, like the rest of the province, is famed for its ethnic minority population. The Naxi people call this area home – home being the UNESCO heritage listed old town. Each year, more than five million tourists descend on this charming maze of rustic wooden buildings set in narrow, cobblestone alleys.

The picturesque town might seem crowded at times, so it’s worth starting your day early. Wander the streets and poke around souvenir shops and when you get hungry, make a beeline for the Sakura Good Food Square (Qiyi Street), an open-air food market where you can sample

Naxi cuisine such as potato pancakes and stuffed rice balls.

When it gets crowded, pick up a map and hire a bicycle (from SGD7 per day) to explore the neighboring countryside. There are a few monasteries and temples within 10km of the old town: Puji Monastery is the easiest to access. The Shuhe Old Town, four kilometers north of Lijiang, is a mini, lesser visited version of Lijiang’s old town and worth spending a day or two looking around.

Also in Yunnan is the remote alpine Lugu Lake (Lugu Hu in Chinese) right on the border with the Sichuan province and 200km north of Lijiang. Located almost three kilometers above sea level, this lake is an enchanting 50-square-kilometer body of water set against a backdrop of lush forest.

Buses will drop you at Luoshui where you can find further transport to villages around the lake’s circumference. Lige – nine kilometers from Luoshui – is a one of the more popular towns. The Tibetans, Li and Moso people make their home here

and can take you out on canoe tours of the lake. The unspoilt scenery and fresh air make Lugu Lake a good spot for respite from the pollution that plagues most Chinese cities.

Lijiang is accessed by its eponymous airport (www.lijiang-airport.com), 25km south of the Old Town. It has domestic flights to major cities in China. Airport buses (SGD6) take you to and from the airport and old town. To get to Lugu Lake, take a direct bus from the Lijiang bus station (fares costs approximately SGD20 each and the journey takes seven hours, departing at 9am and 10am daily – although these times are subject to change).

These sights are just the tip of the proverbial ‘Exotic China’ iceberg: there are literally thousands of towns, temples, villages, mountains and lakes well worth exploring. China is truly a country of diverse sights so start packing your bags and learning how to say Ni Hao (hello) and Xie Xie (thank you).

TRAVELLER’S TIPS

English is rarely spoken outside of Beijing and Shanghai so take a phrasebook or better still, download a language translation/diction app on your smartphone. A good one is Pleco (<https://www.pleco.com/>), available for iOS and Android. Locals appreciate foreigners making an effort at speaking their language – it helps break the ice.

ATMs in China are plentiful though not all work with foreign cards. Even those that do accept foreign cards might not work. When this happens, just look for another machine. If you plan on making ATM withdrawals in China, make sure your ATM card is enabled for use on the Plus or Cirrus networks.

While Wi-Fi is now fairly ubiquitous in China, getting a mobile SIM card for an internet connection is cheap and easy. Doing this gives you access to useful apps such as maps and emails while you are on the road. China Unicom offers good plans and there are counters (with English-speaking staff) at Beijing and Shanghai airports. Just make sure your device is GSM compatible and not locked to a network. Plans are currently roughly SGD17 for 300mb of data.



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN CHINA INCLUDE:



HNA Resort Yunqi Hangzhou D522

Situated in the Hangzhou Zhijiang national tourist and holiday resort area and just a short drive from the city center, the resort is conveniently located close to several scenic spots and local landmarks such as the Nine Creeks by Misty Trees (Jiuxi Yanshu). With a beautiful fountain garden at its entrance, the resort also features several restaurants specializing in Chinese and Western cuisine.



HIVC@Yangshuo No 1 Yard C943

Built in the Suzhou Garden tradition and integrating the styles of Old Shanghai villas and Jiangnan art the resort boasts a panoramic views of Yangshuo County. Yangshuo is home to the famous West Street, known for its great local handicrafts and variety of restaurants. Units feature balconies or small courtyards with scenic views.



HNA@Kangle Garden 8586

The hotel is the biggest 5-star hot spring and golf resort in Asia and is located in the famous Xinglong Hot Spring Traveling City. It’s just a one hour drive from Sanya Phoenix International Airport and a two and a half hour drive from Meilan International Airport. Boasting 575 luxurious guest rooms the resort features a 54 hole professional golf course, outdoor spas and luxury swimming pools.



Noble Yacht Club, Hainan 7481

Located in the Qiongzhou Straits Tourism Zone of the Haikou Hainan Province the resort is about 15 minutes from the main town. It is surrounded by beautiful beaches, green gardens and artistically designed buildings. The club offers a variety of water sports, barbecue amenities and live entertainment on the weekends.



FVC@Jinma International Hotel Hangzhou A312

Located in the heart of the business district of Hangzhou, this fully serviced hotel offers comfort and convenience. The hotel offers plentiful dining choices including authentic Fujian and Hangzhou-style dishes. Other choices include the Chaoshan seafood restaurant as well as Japanese and Italian restaurants. Other amenities include a fitness center, indoor pool and sauna.



Lijiang Sina Hotel A517

The hotel is located in the famous “World Cultural Heritage” inside the old town of Lijiang City. The hotel has a rich architectural heritage and access is via the South Gate. There’s a gift shop within the hotel and a restaurant located in an open courtyard provides Chinese as well as international cuisines.



FVC@Lijiang Nan Yuan E Jia A536

Just 19 miles from the Lijiang Sanyi Airport this four star hotel offers exceptional service and understated elegance. Rooms have balconies to enjoy the gorgeous views of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. You can enjoy Chinese or western meals without leaving the grounds at the in house restaurant or pamper yourself in the spa. You can also take time out playing strategic games of chess or poker.



HIVC@Lugu Lake Holiday Hotel A533

The resort is located right on the water’s edge of the banks of the Lugu Lake and built in a Mosuo architectural style that is unique to this region. On site activities include boating or fishing on Lugu Lake, golfing against a mountain backdrop, or just relaxing at the health club in the health club sauna. There’s also an onsite restaurant offering a variety of local and international dishes.



SRC@Ramada Plaza Hotel Yantai A525

Located just 10 minutes from Yantai International Airport the hotel is also less than nine miles to Yantai’s many attractions including Binhai Road with its scenic shores and the Changyu Wine Museum. The resort features an indoor swimming pool, fitness center and tennis court. You can also enjoy a spa complete with sauna and steam rooms. There’s an on site restaurant offering an extensive selection of Asian and Western cuisines.

ORLANDO'S GREEN SIDE

*Think a lush theme-park zoo is as green as Orlando gets? Not a chance.
Eco-adventures abound just beyond the city's borders.*

BY RONA GINDIN

This city's numerous theme parks capture the imaginations of millions of visitors every year. But as exciting as these parks can be, there are other, equally satisfying destinations that lie quietly outside town. These places resonate in a different way. They are an answer and an antidote to the sugar rush of amusement park rides.

Central Florida is a naturalist's haven. Woods, lakes, trails and animal encounters are just waiting to be explored. Venture to the vast untouched lands beyond the headline attractions for activities you'll rarely find in a guidebook.



Explore Florida's green side by horseback



Ubiquitous Spanish Moss at home in Florida's green spaces

Eco-Safaris

It may take a while to get to **Forever Florida's** parking lot, since a horseback rider or peacock may be blocking the road. But once inside you're in a complex that's at once a working ranch, an eco-park with guided tours and an adventure facility with ziplining.

Created by the Broussard family in memory of their naturalist son, Allen, who died young, Forever Florida aims to preserve Florida's fragile eco-systems and educate the public about conservation.

Guided eco-safaris run through parts of the 4,700-acre property in covered coaches. These vehicles, commonly known in Florida as swamp buggies because of their oversized wheels, easily traverse the terrain. Your journey may reveal baby alligators or 11.5-footers, white-tailed deer or wild hogs, turtles or spiders the size of your palm. Each tour is different, but the banter is always educational. The guides are knowledgeable about the trees, the duckweed over the water and all the creatures that live among them.

And if you're interested in the ziplining but don't want to miss the nature tour? No worries—you can get a mini eco-tour en route to the zipline area. foreverflorida.com; *tour packages from \$32*

Canoeing on the Wekiva

Head north to **Wekiwa Springs State Park** for sublime canoeing and kayaking along the Wekiva River (both the park and the river, spelled differently, are pronounced wuh-KIVE-uh). That locals gather here en masse on weekends is testimony to its appeal as a respite from Orlando's bustling scene.

If the term Old Florida is appropriate anywhere, this is the spot. One can picture Timucuan or Creek lounging by the water beneath the oak trees in what is now a wonderland of 7,800 acres, or traversing the 15-mile water trail by canoe.

After paying the six-dollar state-park entrance fee, drive to the very last parking lot. Past the playground and the shaded picnic tables with barbecue grills is a short trail that leads straight to the river. There you can rent a boat and lose sight of civilization for a couple of hours. [1800 Wekiwa Circle, Apopka; canoe@wekiwa.com; 407-884-4311](http://1800WekiwaCircle.com); *rentals from \$18*

Into the Wild at the Disney Wilderness Preserve

Disney generously donated land to the Nature Conservancy to create the **Disney Wilderness Preserve** and paid for the site's restoration. Far off a side road south of its namesake theme park, this 11,500-acre site is essentially a wilderness trail through former ranchland that has been returned to its natural state. It has two hiking options, of one and 2.15 miles, respectively. Both trails are wide, flat and well marked.

Birds abound here. You may hear them calling Woo hoo! Woo hoo hoo hoo! from high in the trees while you stroll past pines and saw palmetto. Experienced birders may spot red-cockaded woodpeckers, wood storks and sandhill cranes. On land, animals such as Sherman's fox squirrels and gopher tortoises make their homes amid the swampy confines.

Be sure to spend a few minutes at the picnic tables overlooking Lake Russell, where cypress trees (and their "knees") form an otherworldly landscape. [2700 Scrub Jay Trail, Kissimmee; 407-935-0002](http://2700ScrubJayTrail.com); nature.org; *free*

Visit an Egg Farm

As you close in on the chicken and duck farm known as **Lake Meadow Naturals**, on busy Highway 429, you may doubt there could be an eco-spot within even 10 miles. Yet mere minutes from the exit you'll enter a serene complex containing a working farm, a country store, gardens and, on Fridays and Saturdays, a spot where visitors can pick their own eggs from chickens' nests.

Children delight in the enclosed area where during hatching season they can pet the chicks. Visitors can stroll around the shaded grounds while the chickens and ducks meander through their pens and barn, clucking (or quacking) happily. All are heritage breeds—including hens that lay eggs with a greenish hue. [10000 Mark Adam Rd., Ocoee; 407-399-7670](http://10000MarkAdamRd.com); lakemeadownaturals.com

GREEN WITH ENVY: (clockwise from right) There is no shortage of greenery in and around Orlando's lakes and canals. Select your own eggs at Lake Meadow Naturals. Stick your neck out and visit the Giraffe Ranch in Dade City. Do some bird watching on a boat tour or at Disney Wilderness Preserve. It's hard to believe that all of Orlando's green spaces are only a short trip from downtown. Enjoy a day canoeing (leisurely) on the Wekiva River.

Florida by Boat

“This is the real Florida, folks,” says the **Premier Boat Tours** captain as he guides a pontoon boat across Lake Dora, part of the Harris Chain of Lakes, on the way to the Dora Canal. After crossing the lake, he steers the vessel along the narrow waterway, which is shaded by cypress trees. One of them is estimated to be 2,250 years old—dead for more than 300 yet still standing.

The Dora Canal is protected by local, state and federal agencies. Consequently, the verdant foliage is the backdrop for fauna of all kinds. You may see a great blue heron, a tricolored heron and an anhinga lounging near a baby turtle shaded by Spanish moss. On this ride you'll even glide past an alligator breeding ground. *Departure points vary; 352-434-8040; doracanaltour.com; tours from \$17 per adult*

A Slice of Africa

After visiting Africa 30 times to lead safaris and participate in international zoo conferences, Lex Salisbury created the **Giraffe Ranch**—a 47-acre swath of land adjoining an 875-acre wilderness area. Hundreds of live oak trees shade the zebras and giraffes, which guests are invited to feed from the coach that takes them around the savannah.

Animals live well here, each breed penned in an expansive area with species friendly to it. Over the course of a 60- to 90-minute exploration, you'll probably encounter ostriches, Sicilian donkeys, blackbuck antelopes, llamas, axis deer, warthogs and pygmy hippos. For an extra fee you can feed two Indian rhinos, which gobble up whole apples and wedges of cabbage and pumpkin. *38650 Mickler Rd., Dade City; 813-482-3400; girafferanch.com; adults \$70*

Finding Your Path

If time is limited or you'd be satisfied with a sliver of eco, plan an outing to the **West Orange Trail**, a growing 22-mile stretch adjacent to the neighboring county's nine-mile South Lake Trail. Hop on at any point, such as the Oakland Nature Preserve or the Killarney Station, a remote outpost that has a bike and skate rental shop (bonus: bikes built for two). Then walk, jog, ride, glide or skateboard your way past pretty town centers, playgrounds, residential neighborhoods and undeveloped areas.

You'll find locals along the path whenever the weather is nice, walking their dogs or heading to Winter Garden's quaint historic district. About 55,000 people a month find their way to this scenic stretch of Florida along the West Orange Trail. *Winter Garden; orangecountycl.net; free*

Get on Your High Horse

Located within a 14,000-acre reserve, **Rock Springs Run Trail Rides** is an operator that takes guests 6 and older through hammocks, pine forests and open meadows to spot wild turkeys, deer and bald eagles.

The facility's 21 horses are all on their second careers. Owner Debra Jamie Zito buys them once they're done with their more demanding jobs and trains them to take riders of all levels around the property. One is an American Thoroughbred that worked as a polo horse in Argentina. Another is a great-grandson of Secretariat, the legendary Triple Crown winner.

You can even camp in the reserve, by booking a spot near the stables or reserving the Indian Mound or Buffalo Tram site, both reachable only by canoe or kayak. *31700 County Rd. 433, Sorrento; 352-266-9326; rockspringsruntrailrides.com; one-hour rides, \$45 per person* 🐾



EAT

The Tasting Room

End your West Orange Trail adventure with dinner at this dimly lit tapas restaurant that also offers Cajun and Creole dishes. *The Edgewater Hotel, 99 W. Plant St., Winter Garden; 407-230-4837; chefstableattheedgewater.com; dinner for two, \$65**

Pearl in the Grove

This homey farm-to-table restaurant near Giraffe Ranch serves creative cuisine with global flavors, plus a family-style Sunday supper. *31936 St. Joe Rd., Dade City; 352-588-0008; pearlinthegrove.com; dinner for two, \$75*

The Garden Gate Tea Room

Lace and floral fabrics abound at this sweet Mount Dora spot, which serves light lunches and afternoon tea with snacks. *142 E. Fourth Ave., Mount Dora; 352-735-2158; thegardengatetearoom.com; lunch for two, \$35*

**Estimated meal prices do not include drinks, tax or tip.*



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS
IN AND NEAR ORLANDO INCLUDE:



Sheraton Vistana Resort 0450

Orlando's theme parks, golf courses and world-famous beaches are within easy driving distance. 8800 Vistana Centre Dr., Orlando

MEMBER REVIEW: "We felt like we were on an island resort in the Caribbean." "Everything was at our fingertips." "The staff addressed us by name anytime we called."



Holiday Inn Club Vacations at Orange Lake Resort—West Village 0670

1,450 acres of family fun next to Walt Disney World® Resort and Disney's Animal Kingdom® Theme Park. Rte. 192W, 8505 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Hwy., Kissimmee

MEMBER REVIEW: "Beautiful, well-maintained, and easy access to the Orlando attractions!" "Lots of amenities on-site."



Wyndham Cypress Palms 3995

A conveniently located complex with two heated swimming pools, arcade games and a children's playground. 5324 Fairfield Lake Dr., Kissimmee

MEMBER REVIEW: "This made my list of Orlando resorts to go back to." "This resort met our needs and had all the comforts of home."



Vacation Village at Parkway 4940

2,168 guest rooms surrounded by six pools, hot tubs, barbecue grills and a fully staffed activities center. 2949 Arabian Nights Blvd., Kissimmee

MEMBER REVIEW: "The resort was clean, the rooms well-appointed and quiet." "The staff was excellent and very helpful with our questions concerning nearby attractions, purchasing tickets and offering specials for restaurants."



The Fountains 7605

This 54-acre retreat is home to a large waterpark and an on-site lake. 12400 S. International Dr., Orlando

MEMBER REVIEW: "It's a great resort for families!" "Close to everything, but an oasis away from the crowds." "The staff responded quickly to questions and requests."



Summer Bay Resort 3175

A spacious sanctuary with complimentary shuttle service to a range of theme parks. 17805 U.S. Hwy. 192, Clermont

MEMBER REVIEW: "Accommodations are excellent; pools are clean; loads of amenities for kids and adults." "Everything worked as it should, nothing was a hassle."



Legacy Vacation Club Orlando—Spas 8615

Suites at this centrally situated resort can sleep 10 guests. 2800 N. Poinciana Blvd., Kissimmee

MEMBER REVIEW: "Loved the cleanliness of rooms and activities they have going on at night and during the day." "There was more than enough space."



Silver Lake Resort 2610

The resort offers a spectacular heated outdoor pool, video arcade, movie theatre, tennis and basketball court and children's playground. The resort shares its backyard with Walt Disney's Animal Kingdom and is conveniently situated just two miles west of the Walt Disney World Resort's main entrance.



Grand Lake Resort 4300

Located in Kissimmee on Lake Wilson, Grand Lake Resort is only a mile and a half from Walt Disney World. The resort has a swimming pool, a large lake with a sandy beach, tennis court, volleyball, shuffleboard, pedal boats and children's play area. Other attractions include Universal Studios and SeaWorld.



Westgate Vacation Villas 0899

The resort offers many activities for children and adults alike. Swim in one of the 14 swimming pools or relax in the hot tub. Head to the lake for fishing or boating or try the spectacular 18-hole miniature golf course or the fitness center.

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EAT & DRINK

BY ROWENA RYAN

A VINE ROMANCE: (from left) Early morning on one of the Yarra Valley's many vineyards. With so many cellar doors in regional Victoria you will need to prepare yourself for some serious wine tasting. Keep a clear head and take in the landscape on an early morning balloon flight. Or get high with your feet on the ground, the view from Mt Buller to Mansfield. The perfect foil to all of the wine is cheese, sample the myriad options available from local producers.

VICTORIA

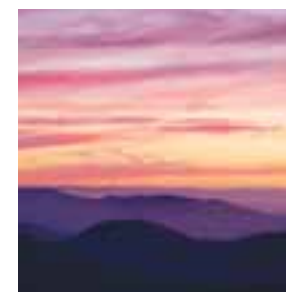
There is no better place to experience Australia's love affair with food, wine and boutique beer than regional Victoria.

With more than 850 wineries spread across the state, the only trouble you'll have is choosing where to go and who to take with you.

From the original vineyards of the Yarra Valley to the spectacular coast of the Mornington Peninsula, it offers a unique blend of cool-climate wines and influences of European heritage.

But with great wine comes beautiful fresh produce that is a mix of local and international cuisine. From spicy Asian and classic European to progressive Latin American, this state is bursting with flavour.

Tie this in with the increasingly popular craft breweries and you'll wonder why it's taken you this long to hop around the incredibly beautiful Victoria.



WINE COUNTRY

The best part about visiting Victoria's wine regions are their proximity to Melbourne. Just one hour's drive south of the capital city is the picturesque Mornington Peninsula. A favorite weekend getaway for Melburnians, it is a mix of lush green hinterland and

spectacular coastline and is home to more than 50 boutique cellar doors.

Renowned for its pinot noir, the area has also experimented with some newer varietals, including pinot grigio, pinot gris and shiraz. The region is made up of microclimates that influence the character of the soil and therefore the

flavours of the wine. From Red Hill to Main Ridge and Dromana, this is wine country you cannot miss.

Stop at the well-known and incredibly popular T'Gallant Winery to taste their signature pinot gris. Oozing Italian influences, its restaurant has become an institution in the area.

For something a little grander, the Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove will impress with its Chef’s Hat-rated restaurant and cellar door. Famous for its chardonnay and pinot noir, it also has an olive grove that produces excellent cold-pressed extra virgin olive oils.

Other notable wineries in the area include Port Phillip Estate, Ten Minutes By Tractor and Red Hill Estate.

WHERE TO STAY
The Nepean Country Club and Day Spa (Property ID: 1169) sits in the heart of the Mornington Peninsula on 35 acres of landscaped gardens. If you’re after a day off from visiting cellar doors you can visit the club and enjoy a game of tennis or go canoeing or swimming.

YARRA VALLEY
As the birthplace of Victoria’s wine industry, the Yarra Valley is a blend of old and new, influenced by a strong history and tradition.

Winemaking in the region dates back to 1838 and generations of vigneronns have worked hard to produce world class wines that showcase the region’s cool-climate grapes.

Less than an hour’s drive east of Melbourne, the Yarra Valley offers breathtaking vistas with every turn. Stop at the popular TarraWarra Estate and sample its pinot noir and chardonnay. The estate sits on 400 hectares of prime Yarra Valley farmland.

One of the biggest wineries in the area is Yering Station. Established in 1838 as Victoria’s first vineyard, it features perfectly manicured gardens and a regional farmer’s market every third Sunday of the month.

MANSFIELD AND MOUNT BULLER
About two-and-a-half hour’s drive from Melbourne are the High Country towns of Mansfield and Mt Buller. The region’s rugged countryside and alpine landscape is best known as an adventure sports playground, but it is also home to craft breweries, artisan food producers and

wineries, including Delatite Wines and Ros Ritchie Wines.

WHERE TO STAY
The Mansfield Country Resort (Property ID: 0827) is a great option for families, with units that accommodate up to four people. On the shore of Lake Eildon guests can play tennis, squash or mini golf.

MACEDON RANGES
Less than an hour’s drive from Melbourne is the Macedon Ranges where you will find some of Australia’s best boutique wineries. Here you will discover hidden vineyards and have the chance to sample limited edition wines. This area is about small-scale, family-owned wineries that produce elegant chardonnays, pinot noirs and shirazes. Pull in at the Granite Hills Winery, home to Australia’s benchmark riesling and enjoy a classic peppery shiraz.

WHERE TO STAY
Kyneton Bushland Resort (Property ID: 0830) provides self-contained villas and apartments nestled among the Australian bushland. Play a round of golf or spot some of the native wildlife, including kangaroos and echidnas.

GEELONG
In the 1800s, Geelong was once the largest grape growing region in Victoria and is now being rediscovered as wine growers once again take to its rich soils and ideal climate.

Producers showcase wines with a European influence – bold flavors that match its climate, which is halfway between temperatures in France’s Bordeaux and Burgundy regions. Expect to try beautiful chardonnays and shirazes from its cellar doors.

Scotchmans Hill situated in the heart of the Bellarine Peninsula offers all its wines for tasting, including its exclusive single vineyard and Cornelius wines. Sit in their sunlit courtyard and enjoy the magnificent views over Port Phillip Bay.



MOVEABLE FEAST: (clockwise from above) Pinot Grigio, Pinot Gris, Shiraz... try one, try them all; pair your favorite tippie with wood fired pizza topped with the best local ingredients; plan your entire trip around vineyard hopping; hearty pub fare, just the ticket to end a long day eating and drinking; pick your own at Tuckerberry Hill and Gentle Annie Berry Gardens; As well as wineries there is a craft beer trail that could prove a worthy distraction; Point Nepean on Port Phillip Bay the perfect place to grab some fresh mussels; Mansfield, gateway to the high country; The jaw dropping Great Ocean Road.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD
Hand in hand with excellent wine comes fabulous regional food. From the Great Ocean Road to the High Country, Victoria’s local produce is diverse and incredibly fresh.

THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD
Stretching hundreds of miles through fertile farm country, the Great Ocean Road is a foodie’s paradise. Fresh seafood is caught from the bordering Bass Strait and Southern Ocean and local produce is offered at farm gates and providores.

Stop at Cheese World and try the region’s gourmet cheeses, including Apostle Whey, Timboon and Meredith cheeses.

Pick your own blueberries, strawberries and raspberries from Tuckerberry Hill and Gentle Annie Berry Gardens and don’t



THE MURRAY

Known as Victoria’s food bowl, the rich soils, sunny climate and irrigated water means there is a seemingly endless supply of fruit and vegetables, gourmet cheeses and freshwater fish in this area.

The Echuca Moama Food and Wine Trail has more than 40 wineries, restaurants and pubs to satisfy your appetite. Throw a line into the river and snag a freshwater fish for dinner, including the famous Murray cod.

Roadside stalls and farmers markets sell olives, nuts, jams, fresh fruit and vegetables. The Hume Murray Farmers Market in Wodonga is a favorite as is the fortnightly Sunraysia Farmers Market in Mildura.

Jim McDougall in Stefano’s Cellar in Mildura has been a destination for foodies for more than 20 years and is committed to local produce with a rustic touch.

Further south in the Murray is Swan Hill, home to Australia’s stone fruit industry. Its farms offer nectarines, peaches, pistachios and almonds.

WHERE TO STAY

The Murray Valley Resort (Property ID: 0953) is the perfect spot for exploring the region’s boutique producers and restaurants. With pools, tennis courts and mini-golf, this is where you can wind down after a day of feasting.

THE GOLDFIELDS

A blend of quaint townships and rolling countryside, the Goldfields area boasts fresh regional produce, excellent dining and some of the best wine in the state.

Savor the bull-boar sausages, locally pressed olive oil and creamy goat cheese. The Taste of Gold Trail is perfect for exploring the area’s fresh produce and wineries.

THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Not just a coastline of wineries, the Mornington Peninsula offers hidden eateries, local markets, olive groves and roadside stalls. Melburnians love the local providores, including Merricks and Somers.

The famous Red Hill and Montalto farmers market are the place to stock up on free-range eggs and organic vegetables.



COAST TO COUNTRY: (from above) Hire a paddle boat on Lake Daylesford; take in the sea breeze and some fresh seafood at Apollo Bay; try homemade delights from a farmers market or gourmet fair in Kyneton.

YARRA VALLEY

Generations of immigrants brought a distinct flavour to the region’s food, which includes pasta, cheese, chilli, capsicum, smoked fish and salmon.

The monthly Yarra Valley farmers markets are bursting with fresh produce. Why not pick your own berries from the berry farms and finish the day with a sweet indulgence from the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie.

CRAFT BREWERIES

Regional Victoria is now home to more than 30 independently owned craft breweries that produce up to 15,000 litres of beer each week. With a focus on ales that range from red and brown to cloudy wheat styles, porters and stouts, they have quickly become mandatory stops on the food and wine trail.

The Mornington Peninsula Brewery is recognised as one of Australia’s leading craft breweries with six award-winning beers on tap as well as daily specialties.

The Yarra Valley has a rich history of beer due to the farming of hops in the early 1800s and it remains part of its gastronomic identity. Here you will find the popular Coldstream Brewery, which opened its doors in 2007. Watch the microbrewery in action from its adjoining



restaurant and see the Coldstream beers being brewed in small, carefully made batches.

The Yarra Valley is also known for its ciders, including Kellybrook’s cider, which has been in the area for 50 years.

Never one to be left behind, the Murray also dabbles in craft beer with the Mildura Brewery which produces six naturally brewed beers, as well as seasonal brews.

WHERE TO STAY

Sunraysia Resort (Property ID: 1179) in the Murray is great for family vacations. Tennis, mini-golf and swimming pools will keep the kids entertained as you enjoy the resort’s bar and bistro.

With so much to choose from, you’ll never cover Victoria’s entire food and wine trail in one weekend. Whether you choose the wild and spectacular coastline of the Great Ocean Road or head up to the Macedon Ranges for Australia’s best sparkling, you can be sure this region will lure you back more than once. 🍷

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CROSSWATERS ECOLODGE & SPA D772

Guangdong Province

Set amid the tropical forest and bamboo groves of the Nankunshan Nature Reserve in Guangdong Province, Crosswaters Ecolodge & Spa is the epitome of harmony with nature, marrying the beauty of bamboo and fengshui practices. The dramatic and magnificent bamboo bridge at the entrance of the lodge will take you back in time to ancient China.

The 62 luxurious villas are built in traditional Hakka style to celebrate the local heritage. There are various theme gardens throughout the lodge that showcase China's rich garden history as well as Chinese poetry.

Just a one and half hour drive from Guangzhou or a two and half hour drive from Hong Kong, the lodge also features a conference centre, wellness centre, infinity pool, nature activity centre, a traditional teahouse and on-site restaurants. All the vegetables and herbs used in the restaurants are sourced locally and the local dishes are sure to delight.

Constructed using predominantly bamboo and other environmentally friendly materials, the lodge was conceptualized by five internationally known architects including well known American EDSA Hitesh. The lodge is cocooned within a natural forest, flowing waters and breathtaking scenery and was named a top 50 eco-lodge by National Geographic.





**SRC@ BEST WESTERN SEA VIEW
GRAND HOTEL HAIYANG D673**

With panoramic views of Haiyang's golden beaches, this grand hotel provides a tranquil spot to relax and unwind. Featuring warm and elegant décor, the hotel offers guests a home away from home atmosphere with blue water surroundings. Guests can enjoy a range of amenities including a pool with separate children's swimming area, fitness center, tennis courts and onsite dining. The hotel offers fine cuisine to cater for all tastes including Chinese, Cantonese, Southeast Asian and Korean. Guests can also indulge in an international seafood buffet or opt for Korean barbeque or Japanese sashimi, enjoying the luxury of choice while on vacation.



**SRC@ PLATINUM VACATION RESIDENCES
LIJIANG D671**

Located near the Old Town, this guest house offers modern comfort and convenience in one of China's top cultural destinations. Featuring warm and elegant décor, the hotel offers a private garden where you can relax with family and friends and take in the spectacular panoramic views of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. There's a wide range of onsite dining options, including Chinese, Sichuan and Huaiyang cuisine as well as an international breakfast buffet.



CHONGQING ALEXANDER HOTEL D773
Chongqing, China

Located in Chongqing, China, this 4 star riverside hotel offers European style decor with beautifully decorated rooms. The hotel is a short walk from major attractions such as the Liberation Monument, Chongqing International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hung Yadong District, New Orient lady's Square, Nabinlu landscape diet center, Center of Popularizing Science & Technology in Chongqing and the bridge over Yangtze River.

THE ASTORIA PALAWAN C948

Philippines

The Astoria Palawan provides a relaxing and pampered vacation experience while upholding the strong sustainability standards that are prevalent in the Palawan culture. The resort incorporates a rustic, modern design utilizing raw concrete, local stones and sustainable building materials. Guests can enjoy some fun in the sun along the resort's beach, cool off at the child friendly water park or just take in lunch at the outdoor grill and bar.



ASTORIA BORACAY D674

Boracay Island, Philippines

This relaxing beachfront hotel is located on Boracay Island in the Philippines and is within walking distance of the island's shopping center, major restaurants and popular bars. The island is consistently rated one of the world's best vacation islands. Astoria Boracay offers room service, laundry service and free clothes drying for swimsuits and towels. Guests can cool off at the white sandy beach or in the hotel's private outdoor pool. The friendly hotel staff can also help you with bookings for golf, water sports and mountain bikes.



RED MANSION D675

Shanghai, China

Red Mansion, formerly known as the General Building, was built in 1933 and is one of Shanghai's famous historical buildings. Red Mansion is only a short trip to wonderful attractions such as the Chinese Art Museum, the Moon Ship and Shanghai Expo Memorial. You can also take in the beautiful and historic buildings at Wu Kang Road, Fenyang Road and Changle Road as well as explore the many great shops, restaurants and art galleries in the Xintiandi and Tian Zi Fang car-free districts.

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Let the Sun Shine In

STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SUN PROTECTION AND VITAMIN D

BY HANNAH WALLACE



GET SOME D: (left to right) If you live somewhere that does not see too much sun you can supplement your daily intake with cod liver oil capsules, eggs, salmon, milk and cereals.

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). Though 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 depends on our skin color, 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 re-evaluated 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 vacations, 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. Sunblock can be an effective source of protection. Consider trying a broad spectrum sunblock, like Neutrogena’s Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch, 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 within reach.





PARK TAIPEI HOTEL (R847/R848)
Taipei, Taiwan

Situated at the center of Taipei city's financial, cultural and commercial districts and is only minutes away from the Taiwan International Convention Centre, Taiwan World Trade Centre and Taipei 101.

3 nights from SGD\$615 Hotel Unit	4 nights from SGD\$820 Hotel Unit
---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------



RAMADA SINGAPORE ZHONGSHAN PARK (RB98/RB99)
Singapore

The only four star international chain hotel in Novena, featuring a restaurant offering authentic Chinese cuisine coupled with international and western favorites. Facilities include a swimming pool, gym and business center.

3 nights from SGD\$630 Hotel Unit	4 nights from SGD\$840 Hotel Unit
---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------

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THE SEGARA CONDHOTEL (R499/R500)
Bali, Indonesia

This resort offers the ambience of a residence and the amenities and services of an upscale hotel. Conveniently located in the south point of Bali, right on Tanjung Benoa Beach and next to the Nusa Dua complex.

3 nights from SGD\$350 1brm	4 nights from SGD\$470 1brm
---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------



HOTEL ISTANA (R745/R746)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The hotel is within 10 minutes walking distance of the Bintang Walk shopping center, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and iconic landmarks such as the Petronas TwinTowers and the Kuala Lumpur Tower.

3 nights from SGD\$405 Hotel Unit	4 nights from SGD\$540 Hotel Unit
---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------



ASTORIA PLAZA SUITES
SE67 3 night / SD67 4 Night
Pasig City, Philippines

The Astoria Plaza Suites are the epitome of luxury in an urban setting and incredible views from the towers. It is your gateway to the hip, fast-paced style of Pasig City, and has easy access to other cities, the beaches and all the attractions Luzon Island has to offer.



LAGUNA HOLIDAY CLUB PHUKET RESORT
SE05 3NIGHT / SD05 4NIGHT
Phuket, Thailand

Discover a world of luxurious vacation in this exclusive resort within easy reach of the Andaman Sea. Enjoy a multitude of activities: riding atop majestic elephants, relaxing at renowned spas, teeing off at an award winning 18-hole golf course, or simply unwinding beneath a swaying palm tree.



AVANI SEPANG GOLDCOAST RESORT
SE58 3 night / SD58 4 night
Sepang, Malaysia

Golden Palm Tree over water villa resort stretches out from the Sepang coastline, over half a mile into the sheltered waters of the Straits of Malacca with 392 luxuriously appointed sea villas that shape a palm tree. Features a pool, fitness center, a variety of dining venues and bars, boutiques, and a spa. Ideally situated for water sports.



SABOEY RESORT AND VILLAS (R844/R845)
Surat Thani, Thailand

A beautiful secluded resort is designed to maximize serenity, space and privacy. Situated on the white sand and clear waters of Bangrak Beach and conveniently located close to the airport and Fisherman's Village/Bophut.

3 nights from SGD\$415 Studio Unit	4 nights from SGD\$555 Studio Unit
----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------



METROPARK HOTEL KOWLOON (R850/R851)
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Located in the heart of Kowloon close to the bustling shopping and commercial areas and main transportation network. The hotel provides direct hourly shuttle bus services to and from the Hong Kong International Airport.

3 nights from SGD\$515 Hotel Unit	4 nights from SGD\$685 Hotel Unit
---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------



PALACE OF THE GOLDEN HORSES
SE09 3 night / SD09 4 night
Selangor Malaysia

Tagged as Asia's Most Extraordinary Hotel, this world-class award winning luxury hotel has a dedicated conference center and state-of-the-art facilities. With a distinctive Moorish-Malaysian architecture and equestrian theme, the Palace of the Golden Horses hotel offers an outstanding variety of dining and entertainment, fitness and relaxation options.



HNA @ INTERNATIONAL ASIA-PACIFIC CONVENTION CENTRE
SE39 3 night / SD39 4 night
Sanya, Hainan China

Luxurious five-star hotel located about 10 minutes drive from Sanya Phoenix Airport. The resort boasts 473 luxurious guest rooms and various modern facilities and is near to the most famous attractions such as the West Island Marine Amusement World, Nanshan Cultural Tourism Zone, the End of the Earth, Sanya International Golf Club.



FVC @ JINMA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL HANGZHOU
SE20 3 night / SD20 4 night
Hangzhou, Zhejiang China

Located in the heart of the business district of Hangzhou, this full service hotel is designed for your enjoyment, comfort and convenience. Enjoy fitness center, indoor pool, and complete your wellness regimen with some time at the sauna or steam room. Plentiful dining choices include the authentic Fujian and Hangzhou-style dishes served at the 28th-floor restaurant.



SAVE
US \$1150
per couple



PRINCESS CRUISES

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Circumnavigate Australia on this luxurious cruise onboard the Diamond Princess. Take in all that our beautiful backyard has to offer from historic Hobart and cosmopolitan Melbourne to the rugged remoteness of Darwin and north-east Queensland.

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Suites and Oceanview also available.



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US\$2200
per couple



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Scenic Space Ship

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CELEBRITY CRUISES

Celebrity Eclipse

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Departure In March 2015

Balcony (2D) Twin Share

Now from US\$2293pp



SAVE
US\$700
per couple



CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

Carnival Spirit

15 night - Explore Singapore Cruise

From Sydney to Singapore

Ports of Call: Brisbane, Airlie Beach, Darwin, Lombok, Benoa Bali

Departure In August 2015

Balcony(8F) Twin Share

Now from US\$1650pp

Suites, Oceanview also available



SAVE
US\$1550
per couple



AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES

Azamara Journey

12 night - South America

From Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro

Ports of call: Buenos Aires (overnight); Montevideo; Punta del Este (overnight); Ilhabela; Parati (overnight); Buzios; Rio de Janeiro (overnight)

Selected departure in December 2014

Oceanview (07) Twin Share

Now from US\$4880pp



SAVE
US\$600
per couple



SILVERSEA

Silver Shadow

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Departure in May 2015

Suite (Veranda Suite - B1) Twin Share

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THRILL RIDE

Queensland's Gold Coast is arguably the best family vacation destination in Australia. Here's a guide to the fun-filled theme parks.



Make sure you book enough time to take advantage of all the theme park options – you'll need it. No matter what age, your kids will love exploring all the rides, shows and attractions available.

It's worth noting that Sea World, Warner Bros. Movie World and Wet'n'Wild Water World are affiliated parks, so you can purchase a multi-day ticket and attend all three – it's great value for money. Look out for special deals and offers before you go as well. You only need one ticket for Dreamworld and WhiteWater World as well and both parks are conveniently situated next to each other.

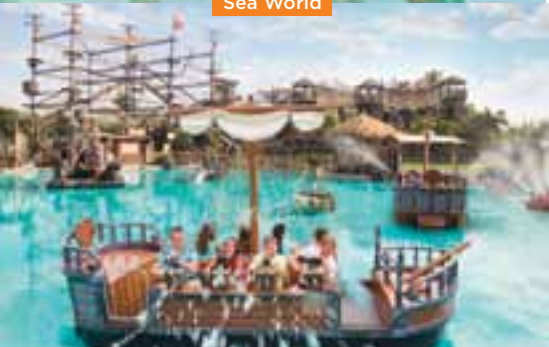
PRE-LUNCH FUN:
Dreamworld's Claw is best appreciated on an empty stomach.



Movie World



Sea World



Wet'n'Wild



Sea World

There is so much to do at Sea World, so it helps to have a look at the website and put together a family itinerary for the day. After all, you don't want to miss out on anything. Children (and adults) of all ages will be inspired by the incredible animals.

Watch the majestic polar bears play and dive gracefully into the water. Get up close to seals and dolphins at Seal Harbour and Dolphin Cove, and step into Antarctica for the Penguin Encounter. Brave the sharks, stingrays and a host of other marine life at Shark Bay while viewing them in the water from above or below.

Thrill-seekers will love the heart-thumping Jet Rescue and Sea Viper Roller Coaster rides, while those who prefer a more sedate experience can glide down water slides or take in the view of the Broadwater on the monorail.

Sea World Drive, Main Beach, Queensland 4217
Ph: +61 7 5588 2222
www.seaworld.com.au

Warner Bros. Movie World

Warner Bros. Movie World transports your kids to a fantasyland. If it's thrills that you're after, Movie World won't disappoint. Grab your laser blaster and join the Justice League to save the world from an alien invasion. Adrenaline junkies can't miss the Green Lantern Coaster and Superman Escape rollercoaster. If you're

up for the fright of your life, head to Arkham Asylum or the Scooby Doo Spooky Coaster. Younger kids will enjoy meeting all their favourite Warner Bros characters, including Bugs Bunny and Tweety. Aspiring stunt drivers will revel in going behind the scenes at Hollywood Stunt Driver 2 and Pit Pass (will open soon).

Pacific Motorway, Oxenford Queensland 4210
Ph: +61 7 5573 3999
www.movieworld.com.au

Wet'n'Wild

If you're into water sports, you can't miss Wet'n'Wild. Dare devils can shoot down the terrifying tunnel on the Tornado or glide through the darkness in the Black Hole. On the Kamikaze you'll experience the thrill of zero-gravity as you plunge down a 70-degree drop – not for the faint-hearted. Prefer something a little more cruisy? Head to the Buccaneer Bay or Calypso Beach waterslides.

Pacific Motorway, Oxenford Queensland 4210
Ph: +61 7 5556 1660
www.wetnwild.com.au

Dreamworld

Dreamworld is one of Australia's biggest theme parks, so make sure you have an itinerary before you get there. With the Big 8 Thrill Rides, Family Rides and Kids Rides



WhiteWater World

to choose from there's plenty for each member of the family to enjoy. The kids will also have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the worlds of some of their favourite films, including Shrek, Kung Fu Panda and Madagascar. Make sure you experience the wildlife and the interactive Dreamworld Corroboree.

Dreamworld Parkway, Coomera Queensland 4209
Ph: +61 7 5588 1111
www.dreamworld.com.au

WhiteWater World

Still on the water theme (this is Queensland, of course) is WhiteWater World. Feeling game? Choose a ride according to how brave you are and slide to your heart's content. The Pipeline Plunge is a huge aqua play area the kids will delight in and younger children won't believe their luck when they visit Wiggle Bay. Learn to surf at the surf school or dive in the Cave of Waves at the wave pool.

Dreamworld Parkway, Coomera Queensland 4209
Ph: +61 7 5588 1111
www.whitewaterworld.com.au

With so much family fun to be had on a theme park vacation, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. With a bit of planning, and looking out for special deals on tickets, you'll have a holiday the kids will remember forever.



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS ON THE GOLD COAST INCLUDE:



Cedar Lake Country Resort 0168
Advancetown, Qld

This resort is packed with activities to suit the whole family. Enjoy indulging in barbecues, biking, bushwalking, tennis and swimming. As well there's beautiful outdoor pools, spa pools, canoeing, paddleboats, horseback riding, mini-golf and table tennis.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Beautiful location. The unit was very clean. Staff friendly and helpful."



Tiki Village International 0952
Surfers Paradise, Qld

In the heart of Surfers Paradise, The Tiki Village International Resort offers very spacious, fully self-contained spa apartments. A leisurely stroll away is superb shopping, dazzling nightlife, restaurants, attractions and world famous theme parks. Amenities include boating, fishing, a game room, sauna and a large pool.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Best location for Surfers Paradise. Family friendly"



Mariner Shores Resort 1726
Miami, Qld

Beautifully positioned just opposite Burleigh Beach, the Burleigh Heads National Park and a multitude of restaurants and surf clubs are all very accessible and within walking distance. The whole family will enjoy free movies in the air-conditioned cinema, as well as an 18-hole mini-golf course. There's a supermarket, chemist and several food outlets nearby.
MEMBER REVIEW: "Great location, spacious units and good amenities"



Tamarind Sands 5716
Bogangar, NSW

Whether you're playing a round or two of tennis, sunning and splashing by the pool, or strolling through the beautiful garden areas, Tamarind Sands is an ideal place to escape to relax and rejuvenate. Children will enjoy the playground area, the games room, table tennis and the 9 hole mini golf course.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Beaches, beaches, beaches... We had the miles of beaches to ourselves"

RENTAL RESORTS:

The Emerald
7 nights from SGD\$1808 2 brm

Australis Sovereign
7 nights from SGD\$1080 1 brm

Swell Resort
7 nights from SGD\$975 1 brm

Aruba Surf
7 nights from SGD\$770 1 brm

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com



And the winner is... Eve Koh **WON** an iPad.

“ Our very first accommodation booked through RCI was on the Gold Coast and we loved it.

Ideally located at the center of the Gold Coast in Surfers Paradise, we stayed at Wyndham Surfers Paradise Resort which is only a five minute walk from the beach. The Sky Point, located just opposite, is also in walking distance too. Just beside the resort there was a good Chinese restaurant as well as a grocery shop and a café to indulge in my favorite ice cream. I would also highly recommend a meal at the Alfresco Italian Restaurant.

Our one bedroom self-contained apartment came with a spacious balcony was big enough for four persons with a queen bed in one

room and fold out sofa bed for two in the living area. We were easily able to prepare our own breakfast and dinners at the resort.

During our stay we visited many attractions including taking a trip on the Tweed Endeavour Cruise. We were able to catch yabbies as well as crabs and fish. Our lunch was served with the fresh seafood cooked on board.

While on the Gold Coast we saw koalas and kangaroos and many other animals at the Currumbin Wildlife Park while my two sons also enjoyed themselves on the giant flying fox.

We visited Brisbane for a day trip and on another day drove to Byron



Bay for the Sunday markets. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch at the Fish Heads Restaurant which is famous for its fish and chips. We also visited Byron Bay Beach and the world famous lighthouse.

After arriving back in Surfers we went up the Sky Point tower which offered spectacular views of Gold Coast. Further days were spent at Sea World, Movie World and Dream World which were heaps of fun.

Such an amazing trip and more importantly the resort was excellent. ”

- Eve Koh

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Hawaiian Dreaming

“ My family and I enjoyed a week with RCI White Sands, Honolulu, Hawaii. Vacationing in Hawaii was a dream come true. The atmosphere was excellent, the scenery simply beautiful and the locals very friendly. The resort was centrally located and within walking distance of restaurants and souvenir shops and only a mere 10 minutes walk to Waikiki Beach.

I have also had the pleasure of staying in San Diego, California as well as Lake Tahoe further up north in America using RCI accommodation. We took day trips to Hollywood, Universal Studios and Disneyland and have many great photos to remember our fantastic vacation in America.

After many years of enjoying our vacations in Malaysia (e.g. Cameron Highlands, Langkawi, Penang, Genting Highlands, Kuala Lumpur, Port Dickson, Johor Bahru), we have recently booked at RCI Grand Bali

and Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia. This time however, I am married with an active four year old daughter and one year old son.

From the excellent photos and information from the RCI website, it is very easy to choose the perfect location. RCI has many choices of resorts, hotels and condominiums which makes it perfect for singles, couples and families with young children. I am looking forward to experiencing many more RCI vacations and enjoying the priceless memories. ”

- Marisa Thong Su Ling



A Shopper's Delight

“ My favorite RCI vacation is Singapore. While the country is small as to compared to others it is still one of the great shopping capitals of the world. During the major sales you are able to get signature clothes, cosmetics, bags and electronic gadgets all marked down from 20-70% which is fantastic for shoppers like me.

I also love Singapore for its mixture of modern and traditional architecture. Every building has its

unique design and representing a range of influences and styles from different places and periods. For a photo enthusiast like me there are plenty of opportunities to take great photos. You can get hundreds of good shots from just being in one place.

After a long day you must try Singaporean food dishes from the Hawker Centre which is the name given to open air complexes. Bak Kut Teh, chili crabs, hainanese

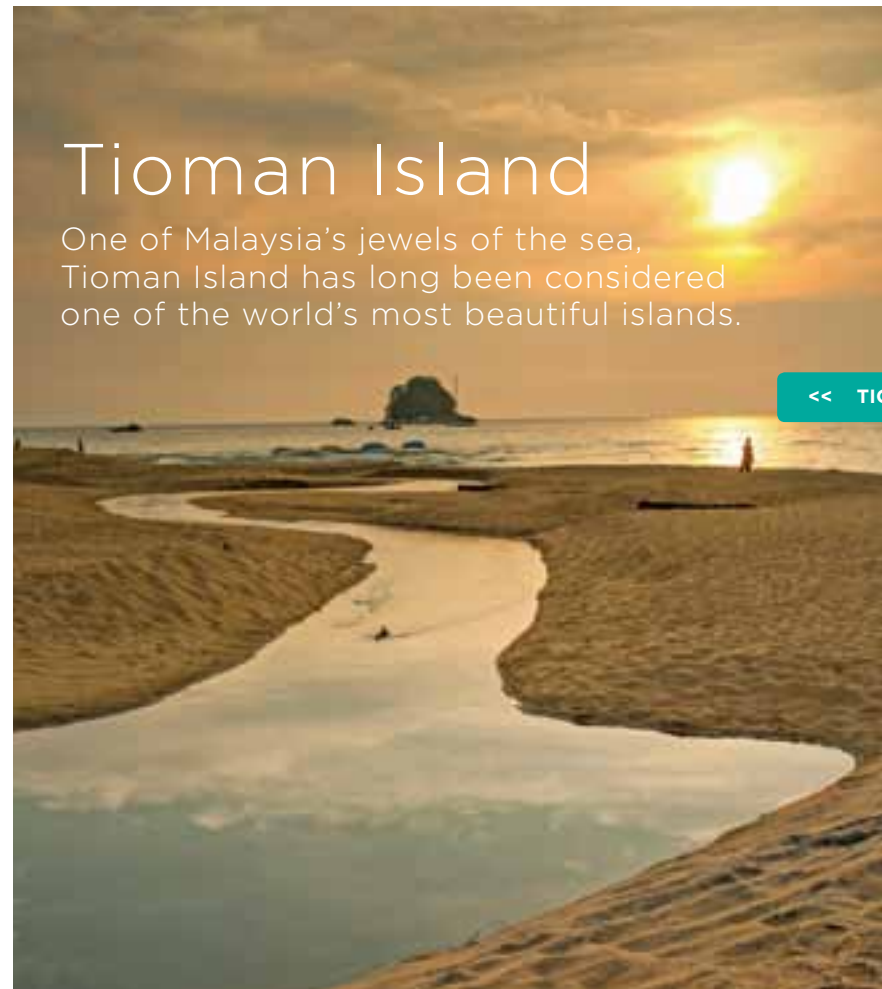
chicken rice, laksa and nasi lemak, are my favorite dishes from the locals restaurants. After having a enjoyable meal you can wash it down with a cup of teh tarik (“pulled tea”) or a cream milk tea or sugarcane juice.

And at the end your day you can indulge in the popular desserts such as one dollar ice cream and Singapore waffles. ”

- Franklin Zapata



weekenders



Tioman Island

One of Malaysia's jewels of the sea, Tioman Island has long been considered one of the world's most beautiful islands.

<< TIOMAN ISLAND, MALAYSIA



Tioman Island is famous for crystal clear water, and white sand beaches

Located 20 miles off the east coast of Malaysia in the state of Pahang it's fairly tiny in size measuring just 24 miles in length and 8 miles wide. With eight main villages, including the popular Kampung Tekek in the north, the island is covered by dense forest and surrounded by numerous coral reefs, making it a popular haven for diving and snorkeling enthusiasts. There are numerous dive schools on the island and usually you pay around RM90 (SGD\$36) for each dive (this includes use of equipment).

You can learn more about the island by paying a visit to the marine park centre at Kampung Tekek. Stroll along the island's many beaches and take a swim in the secluded bays, including the famous beach immortalized as Bali Hai in the 1958 movie, South Pacific.

The good news also is that Tioman is a duty free island, which means some items (especially alcohol) are much cheaper as compared to the mainland (a beer or cocktail will only set you back a few ringgits). Around the villages of Tekek and Salang you will be able to find numerous bars which have an active nightlife.

There are almost no roads on Tioman, just a few quite jungle tracks. These are perfect for light

WELCOME TO THE BEAUTIFUL TIOMAN ISLAND (PULAU TIOMAN IN THE MALAY LANGUAGE). ACCORDING TO A LOCAL FOLKLORE, TIOMAN IS THE RESTING PLACE OF A FABLED DRAGON PRINCESS. WHILST FLYING TO VISIT HER PRINCE IN SINGAPORE, THIS BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN STOPPED TO SEEK SOLACE IN THE CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. ENRAPTURED BY THE ISLAND'S CHARMS, SHE DECIDED TO STAY. TAKING THE FORM OF AN ISLAND, SHE PLEDGED TO OFFER SHELTER AND COMFORT TO ALL PASSING TRAVELERS.

Today the first thing visitors will notice about Tioman Island is how blessed it is with miles of soft white sand, swaying palms, cool waterfalls and wild flowers growing in vivid profusion. It's the perfect paradise if you enjoy a quite retreat, sea sports, trekking or just lazing in the sun.

weekenders TIOMAN ISLAND, MALAYSIA

trekking. There are popular treks from Tekek to Juara or you can test yourself by hiking from Tekek all the way to Monkey Bay. If you want to hop from one village to the other the best way is to use the Mersing/Tioman Bluewater Express ferry service. They charge around RM15 (SGD\$6) per trip making it an easy and reliable way to explore the island by boat.

Tioman has many beautiful cascading waterfalls and one of the most popular is the Mukut Waterfall where many local families hang out on the weekends. Tioman's biggest waterfall is the Asah Waterfall and its natural beauty provides a welcomed change from the beach and is well suited for a picnic lunch.

Tioman is accessible by boat from Mersing in Johor. The Bluewater Express ferry service tickets cost RM85/Adult (SGD\$35.50) and RM75/Child (SGD\$30) for return transfer. There's



also a plane service by Berjaya Air from Changi Aiport in Singapore and the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, Selangor. ●

COOL WATERS: Take a break by one of Tioman's many waterfalls in the cooler hinterland, the perfect location for a picnic.

weekenders TIOMAN ISLAND, MALAYSIA

EAT

Tioman Cabana Beach Bar

T: +60 9 4191045
Tekek Village Tioman Island, Pulau Tioman
26800, Malaysia

A great Beach Bistro and Watersport Centre the bar is a typical little wooden shack on the beach with a good choice of beers, relaxed laid back music and a bohemian atmosphere. If you like reggae music, the sand between your toes and beautiful views then this is the place for you.

www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review

Mandi-Mandi Restaurant, Japamala

T: 0149895812
12 lanamfaj 1321 Safh, Pulau Tioman 52148,
Malaysia

The restaurant is s built on stilts and hovers the sea some 100 metres away from the beach front. Serves global cuisine with an Italian emphasis. Barbecued lobster, king prawns, Laotian Papaya Salad and Caramelised chicken are some of the local favorites. Open for lunch and dinner only. Celebrate under the stars with nightly BBQs.

www.japamalaresorts.com

Salang Pusaka Restaurant

T: +60 9 419 5317
Kampung Lalang, Pulau Tioman, Malaysia

The restaurant offers a wide range of western food and exceptional Malay dishes including a lovely Tioman Bee Hoon.

www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review

RELAX

Tioman Island Golf Club

T: 60 9 4191000
Kg Salang, Pulau Tioman 26800, Malaysia

The course offers panoramic breathtaking views of the South China Sea. As the island's only golf course, it boasts spectacular scenery of lush rainforests on one side and a magnificent sea view on the other. Very low green fees.

EXPLORE

Dive Asia Tioman

T: +60 9-419 5017
Kg Salang, Pulau Tioman 26800, Malaysia

Adventure dive trips to the surrounding uninhabited islands leave the dive centre daily at 9.30am and return at 2.30pm. All dives are led by DiveAsia's team of professionals. Two dives cost RM180 including full set of equipment or RM160 if you have your own equipment.

www.diveasia.com

Juara Turtle Project Centre

T: +60 17 704 8911
Kampung Juara, 26800 Pulau Tioman,
Pahang, Malaysia

Located in Kampung Juara, the centre provides a tour and conservation information about sea turtles and is open for visitors from 10-5pm. There is a turtle gift shop and contribution of RM10 per person to visit the centre.

www.juaraturtleproject.com

STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS ON TIOMAN ISLAND INCLUDE:



Tioman Island Resort 4166

A perfect vacation paradise, the resort is set within walking distance from the water's edge. Visitors can enjoy swimming, snorkeling, scuba-diving or fishing. There are four restaurants nearby including a Chinese, Indian/Thai, a la carte, steamboat (fondue) and a different menu each night for the all you can eat buffet. A great place to lie back, relax and enjoy the views.

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com



KNOWN FOR ITS TROPICAL BEACHES AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES, PALAWAN ISLAND IN THE PHILIPPINES IS ALSO HOME TO THE PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRANEAN RIVER NATIONAL PARK WHICH WAS RECENTLY LISTED AS ONE OF NEW 7 WONDERS OF NATURE.

With seascapes the equal of any in Southeast Asia and amazing aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, nothing defines Palawan Island more than one of its favorite tourist destinations. Palawan is a long narrow island with hundreds of smaller islands that surround it. These islands stretch across the South China Sea and the Sulu Sea from Mondoro to Borneo.



THREE VIEWS OF PARADISE: From every angle Palawan is an area of immense natural beauty that will take the breath away of even the most jaded traveler.

Centrally located Puerto Princesa City is Palawan's capital and primary gateway to the nearby beaches and major tourist attractions. The city also has a host of shopping and dining options and is known as one of the cleanest and greenest cities in the world.

A stay in Puerto Princesa City wouldn't be complete without a visit to the World Heritage Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park. This breathtaking wonder features a 5.5 mile navigable underground river, reputed to be the world's longest. The river winds its way through a spectacular cave before emptying out in to the South China Sea.

The river flows through a deep cavern where you'll get to take in rugged limestone and marble cliffs while enjoying the beautiful crystalline waters of the underground lagoon. As you wind through the tunnel aboard a paddle boat you will be enthralled at every turn with stalactite pillars, rock formations, and domed amphitheatres.

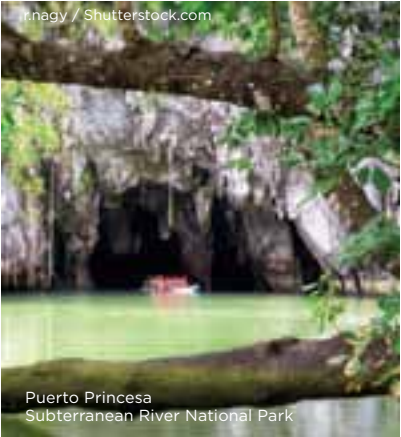
The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park is located in Bahile and is about 50 miles from the city. You can reach the river by going through Barangay Cabayugan to Sabang, from where you catch a pump

boat ride to the river, or hike through a monkey trail. An alternative way is to hire a pump boat ride from Bahile wharf. Travel time through Barangay Cabayugan is about one and a half hours.

While in Puerto Princesa also check out Honda Bay. The bay consists of several islands with shallow reefs bordering fabulous beaches which have become the favorite swimming, snorkeling, and diving destinations for international tourists. These islands including the Cannon Island, Bat Island, Lu-Ii Island, Meara Marina and Starfish Island are known

for their fine white sand and clear water teeming with varieties of starfish. Pump boats can be hired to take tourists to Honda Bay, which is located in Lourdes, about 8 miles east of Puerto Princesa.

Palawan Island is accessible by air and boat from Manila, Iloilo and Cebu. It is approximately 55 minutes by air from Manila and 1 hour 15 minutes from Cebu. Public transport within Palawan consist of buses, vans and tricycles and there is a big well organized transport terminal at Puerto Princesa, where travelers can access flights to other parts of Palawan. 📍



Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park

weekenders PALAWAN ISLAND, PHILIPPINES

EAT

KaLui's
T: + 63 928 753 9621
369 Rizal Avenue Puerto Princesa, 5300 Philippines

Kalui's is the most famous restaurant in Puerto Princesa and is a must visit place among travelers. The restaurant is made of native wooden timbers and footwear should be left before entering the restaurant. Small lockers are provided. A wide variety of meals are offered including seafood, sashimi, tempura, shellfish soup, sinigang, baked mussel and many more.

www.kaluirestaurant.com

Kinabuchs Grill & Bar
T: +63 48 434 5194
369, Rizal Ave, Lungsod ng Puerto Princesa, 5300 Philippines

A large open air bar with several billiard tables, big-screen TVs and an extensive menu, most visitors come for the lively atmosphere. The place is also filled with motorbikes and Harley Davidson memorabilia. Adventurous eaters can try the tamilok, basically a woodworm that's said to taste like an oyster. Open 5pm to 2am.

www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review



RELAX

Ugong Rock
Ugong Rock is a limestone rock formation located at Baranggay Tagabinet, about an hour from Puerto Princesa. It is also on the way to the Underground River (UR) so it's advisable to do the climb in the morning while waiting for your UR tour in the afternoon. The Rock stands about 75 feet high and you can climb through caves and crevices. It's advisable to wear proper hiking gear. Cost is P200 (SGD\$5.75)/person.
www.tripadvisor.com.au

Palawan Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Center
T: +63 949 946 5472
National Highway, San Juan bldg, Puerto Princesa, 5300, Philippines

This wildlife reserve houses hundreds of crocodiles, from newly hatched to scary behemoths. Guided tours leave every 30 minutes. The Philippine Crocodile is currently included in the endangered species list and the conservation center is looking at ways to increase the crocodile numbers. The center takes care of other animals including ostriches, cockatoos and bearcats. Admission P40(SGD\$1.15). Open 8.30-11.30am & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Sat.
Open 8.30am – 5pm. Adults \$15, Children \$5
www.facebook.com/pwrcc2014

EXPLORE

Palawan Special Battalion WW2 Memorial Museum
T: +63 9996 562471
Rizal Avenue Extension | Barangay Banaco-Banco, Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island 5300, Philippines

This privately owned World War II themed museum details the important events from the first American colonists who set up a government in Palawan to fight the Japanese invasion during World War II. The displays feature many vintage weapons and equipment. It's just a quick trike ride from the airport.

www.tripadvisor.com.au

Palawan Heritage Center
T: +63 9996 562471
Rizal Avenue Extension | Barangay Banaco-Banco, Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island 5300, Philippines

Experience a half day wilderness jet boating adventure beneath spectacular views of Mount Aspiring and her glaciers. Ride on purpose built jet boats as you wind your way past towering mountains, waterfalls and Lord of The Rings film locations. A highlight is the remote guided walk into an ancient beech forest. Departs 11am, allow four hours.

www.tripadvisor.com.au

STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS ON PALAWAN ISLAND INCLUDE:



Astoria Palawan C948
Located in San Rafael, the Astoria Palawan provides a relaxing and pampered vacation experience while upholding a strong eco-friendly environment. Guests can enjoy the outdoor grill and bar or cool off at the water park. The resort incorporates a rustic, modern design that utilises raw concrete, local stones and sustainable building materials. San Rafael is just a short drive from Puerto Princesa City, where visitors can find a host of shopping and dining options in one of the cleanest and greenest cities in the world.

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com

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