



6
GOOD FOOD
PENANG



10
SHOPPING
HONG KONG

OCTOBER 2015

ENDLESS VACATION

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KYUSHU

OLD MEETS NEW



10 TOP SPOTS FOR SUMMER
ESSENTIAL CANARY ISLANDS
MUST HAVE CAMERA APPS

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Santa Cruz de La Palma
colonial street house
facades in Canary Islands

OCTOBER 2015

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ON THE COVER

Tenerife, **Canary Islands.**

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Endless Vacation Pacific magazine is produced in part by
Total Marketing Management.

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Welcome

As an RCI member, you understand the benefits that vacation ownership can bring to you and your family. Your membership gives you access to great accommodation, fantastic value and the opportunity to experience new destinations year after year. With summer on the way, why not start planning your next vacation today.

There's a good reason why thousands of visitors flock to Penang each year to check out the culinary delights (pages 6-7). It's a place rich in culture with a multitude of choices to enjoy a gastronomic journey.

We travel the globe to ten of the top botanical gardens where you can soak up the culture. Featuring gardens from Japan, Hawaii, North Colorado, Cape Town and our very own Singapore Botanical Gardens now on the UNESCO's World Heritage List (pages 8-9).

Come shopping in Hong Kong (pages 10-11) plus check out the top 10 summer vacation spots in Asia (pages 13-17). We also give you some great tips for making the most out of a vacation at Canary Islands (pages 19-23). Come check out the latest offers on cruise vacations (pages 36-37). There are also some great adventures to explore on Japan's Kyushu Island where the ancient world meets modern metropolises (pages 24-28). For a short getaway, go experience the wonders of Ko Samui (pages 38-39) or discover the diverse range of cultural and vacation activities in Selangor (pages 40-41).

It is often said that travel can change the world, so next time if you are staying in one of our wonderful resorts, take the time to venture beyond the resort, and learn about the people and places that give each destination its distinct features.

Travel safe and create great memories.

Deirdre Bourke
Director of Member Services
RCI Asia Pacific

JAPAN

Peace Project

Hiroshima
war museum
more popular
than ever.

ready,
set,
go

Seven decades after the devastation of an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, the site remains one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. Recently it appears to be getting more popular. According to local media, visits to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum by foreign tourists hit a record high of 234,360 in 2014. That's more than a 100% increase from just three years ago.

Visitors come to bear witness to preserved burnt wreckage, painful survivor testimonies and human shadows left permanently visible after the atomic bomb explosion's incandescent destruction. Some describe Hiroshima as a gripping, educational and emotional example of "dark tourism," "grief tourism" or "battlefield tourism," similar to Nazi concentration camps in Europe,

Cambodia's torture prison and killing fields, West African slave ports, as well as the Nagasaki Peace Park and Atomic Bomb Museum.

The latter site memorializes the events and devastation surrounding the second atomic bomb dropped on that Japanese city three days after the Hiroshima bombing.

The Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome (also known as Genbaku Dome) was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. The iconic structure, designed in 1915 by a Czech architect, was the city's Industrial Promotion Hall. When the United States dropped the bomb on August 6, 1945, it exploded just above the building, but didn't totally destroy it because the immediate blast and heat buffered the air at ground zero.

35 new 'peace projects' planned for 2015

In addition to the Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima officials are actively promoting the city's peace-centric identity. Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui has designated 2015 as a time to "share Hiroshima's desire for peace," launching a series of 35 projects to be completed in the coming months.

The projects, estimated to cost roughly 107 million yen (about \$1.2million), focus on preserving the memories of the bomb's survivors and enhancing the city's ability to attract and accommodate tourists.

In honor of this month's 70th anniversary, the mayor has allocated funding to create and improve smartphone applications that supply information about peace tourism.

CHINA

A new airport opened in northwest China's Xinjiang

Koktokay Airport received its first flight from the regional capital Urumqi on 1st, Aug. The airport is located at Fuyun County, Altay Prefecture of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The travel time from Urumqi to Fuyun has been shortened to 50 minutes from around seven hours. China Southern Airlines opened a new route linking Urumqi with Koktokay. The CZ6693/4 flight with more than 180 seats will fly to the town every day.

Koktokay, around 400km from Urumqi, has abundant mineral and tourist resources. The new airport will bring Koktokay closer to the outside world, which officials hope will attract more tourists.

Koktokay National Geopark, or Koktokay Scenic Spot, northeast of Fuyun County in Xinjiang, is an ideal place for sightseeing, hiking, and photographing.

SINGAPORE

Singapore's First UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Singapore Botanic Gardens has been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Singapore Botanic Gardens is the first and only tropical botanic garden on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. It is the first in Asia and the third botanic gardens inscribed in the world following Orto botanico di Padova and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. www.sbg.org.sg/unesco/ refer to Botanical Gardens page 8-9



CRUISING

Making a splash

Launching this season, the 4180 passenger Anthem of the Seas (from \$1,299), from Royal Caribbean, has a glass viewing capsule that swings on a mechanical arm for 360-degree views of the sea, plus a skydiving simulator. Pontant's 122 cabin Le Lyrial (from \$2,690) is a more subtle affair, the luminous palette of blues inspired by polar ice and constellations. And the 4,200 passenger Norwegian Escape (from \$1,099) has a three story ropes course complete with skywalks and planks.

- LISA CHENG

Prices are in USD, per person and based on double occupancy.





TRAVEL GEAR

Best in Tow

NO MATTER YOUR DESTINATION,
THESE BAGS WILL HELP YOU GO
THE DISTANCE.

BASED ON ARTICLE BY COURTNEY KENEFICK (US SPRING 2015, ENDLESS VACATION)



● The Double Deck travel bag from **Burton** (burton.com \$398) fits everything you need (and then some) for gear-centric trips and long getaways, thanks to two large compartments and stretch zippers.

● **Dakine's** first four-wheeled suitcase (dakine.com \$233) is lightweight and chock-full of pockets. Plus, the design makes it easy to spot on the luggage conveyor: Good-bye, ribbon trick.

● The ball wheels on **American Tourister's** spacious carry-on (americantourister.com \$165) are built for speed in case you have to hustle at the airport, and the bag's easy-to-access laptop compartment helps you zip through security.



● Don't be fooled by the vintage-inspired aesthetic of **Bric's** leather-trimmed spinner (bricstore.com \$720). Flexible and durable polycarbonate, double rubber wheels and a water-repelling zipper make it as practical as it is stylish.

● **L.L. Bean's** quick load upright rolling duffel (llbean.com \$218) is a great carry-on or weekender: The canvas is lightweight and sturdy, and the flannel lining and wide top opening make packing (slightly) more enjoyable. 🐾





GOOD FOOD
PENANG

Food Haven

A GASTRONOMIC GUIDE TO THE BEST FOOD PLACES IN GEORGE TOWN, PENANG

BY GARY MACNAMARA

Known for its awesome food and dining experience, George Town is a haven for the best street food in Asia.

Voted by Lonely Planet as the top culinary place for 2014, there is no other place in the world where a mix of cultures have contributed so much culinary influence, but Penang's capital George Town.

A chat with Malaysians will inevitably bring the conversation to the variety of delicious food they offer. From fried kway teow to hokkien mee, chee cheong fun, assam laksa to rojak, there's just so much to taste and savor in the food capital of Malaysia.

Foodies embarking on a gastronomical journey will find a multitude of choices for eating in Chinatown, Little India, hawker

stalls and food courts across the city. The streets of Chinatown are a great place to see at night with carts selling noodles, dumplings and treats on skewers. Head to Lebuhraya and Lebuhraya Chulia, you will find stuffed dumplings, lok-lok, and other local favorites from English-speaking hawkers.

Situated in the center of Penang Heritage Zone, Little India is famous for Malaysian



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS
IN PENANG INCLUDE:



Penang Times Square-Birch The Plaza C440

This 20-storey apartment complex is perfectly situated for the food lover. There's a supermarket and restaurants at the lower level, and the Asian street food vendors all very close by.

Leisure Cove 3957

Located at Tanjung Bungah, the resort has friendly staff, spacious rooms and roof top pool with a great view. Good public transport to the city (30 mins) and beach (15 mins).

**For additional resort
listings, visit RCI.com
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toll free number
(refer to back cover)**

EAT STREETS: (this page) Heaven on a stick, George Town street food is varied and delicious. No trip to George Town would be complete without sampling the spicy noodle goodness of Laksa. Color, vitality and taste in a bowl; Prawn Mee. Rojak Buah - traditional Asian fruits mixed salad with ketchup, peanuts and sesame seeds.



Indian cuisine and has many similarities to the market streets in Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi. An abundance of healthy food served on banana leaves can be found in the restaurants around here. Head to Lebuh Pasar, Lebuh Queen and Lebuh Penang; when you hear blaring Bollywood music from speakers, you know you are in the right place.

Located in the northwest of the city at the junction of Burma Road and Swatow Lane, the New World Park is one of George Town's best food courts. Here you'll find scores of Penang specialties such as mee rebus and hokkien mee all under one giant roof at inexpensive street prices.

Although more busy than the New World Park, the Red Garden is conveniently located on Jalan Penang and is an excellent place to find lok-lok, assam laksa, rojak, and other classics such as Thai and Filipino food.

Southeast of the city center, the Cebil Market Food Court is a classic food court located on Lebuh Cecil. The market here is a good place to try laksa, char kway teow and roast duck and is open from 8am-5pm.

Gurney Drive on the coastal esplanade just north of George Town is also one of the most famous areas for street food in Southeast Asia. While it has become known for the large cluster of carts proudly serving up great street food,

there are also plenty of wonderful seafood and "steamboat" restaurants as well as steakhouses so you won't have to worry about leaving hungry.

While at Gurney Drive, some local Penang favorites such as lok-lok should not to be missed. Much healthier than the typical deep fried stick snacks, lok-lok is boiled in water rather than oil. You'll find everything from meat and seafood to vegetables, Chinese dumplings and quail eggs on the skewers along with a choice of sweet, peanut, or spicy sauce. Three skewers can be bought for around \$1.

A famous Malaysian Indian food, pasembur is another great choice. It consists of a salad with shredded cucumber, potatoes, fried bean curd, prawn fritters and egg topped with a special sweet and spicy nut sauce. You can choose to mix and match the ingredients or order one with everything.

Who would think that mixing fruit, chili seasoning and a fish taste would be a good idea? A favorite dessert in Penang, Rojak, features chunks of fresh fruit smothered in a sticky sweet tamarind sauce with a fishy aftertaste. Peanuts are added which gives a nice texture to the salad.

While in George Town a must see is the Chendol Stall at the junction of Lebuh Keng Kwee and Lebuh Penang. Chendol is a very popular dessert made from coconut

milk, thin green pandan flavored noodles and palm sugar. Red beans, rice and grass jelly are added on top as additional toppings. The stall has been there since 1936 and reportedly has the best chendol in Penang.

One thing to remember while dining out in Penang, pork is often used as an ingredient even in meals marked "vegetarian". Noodles and dumplings are made with lard to hold them together, and the only way to be sure of avoiding pork is to eat only from the many Muslim carts which are marked with an Arabic symbol that reads 'halal' underneath.

First time visitors to George Town may find approaching busy hawker carts on the streets a little intimidating, but the fact is these owners are actually friendly.



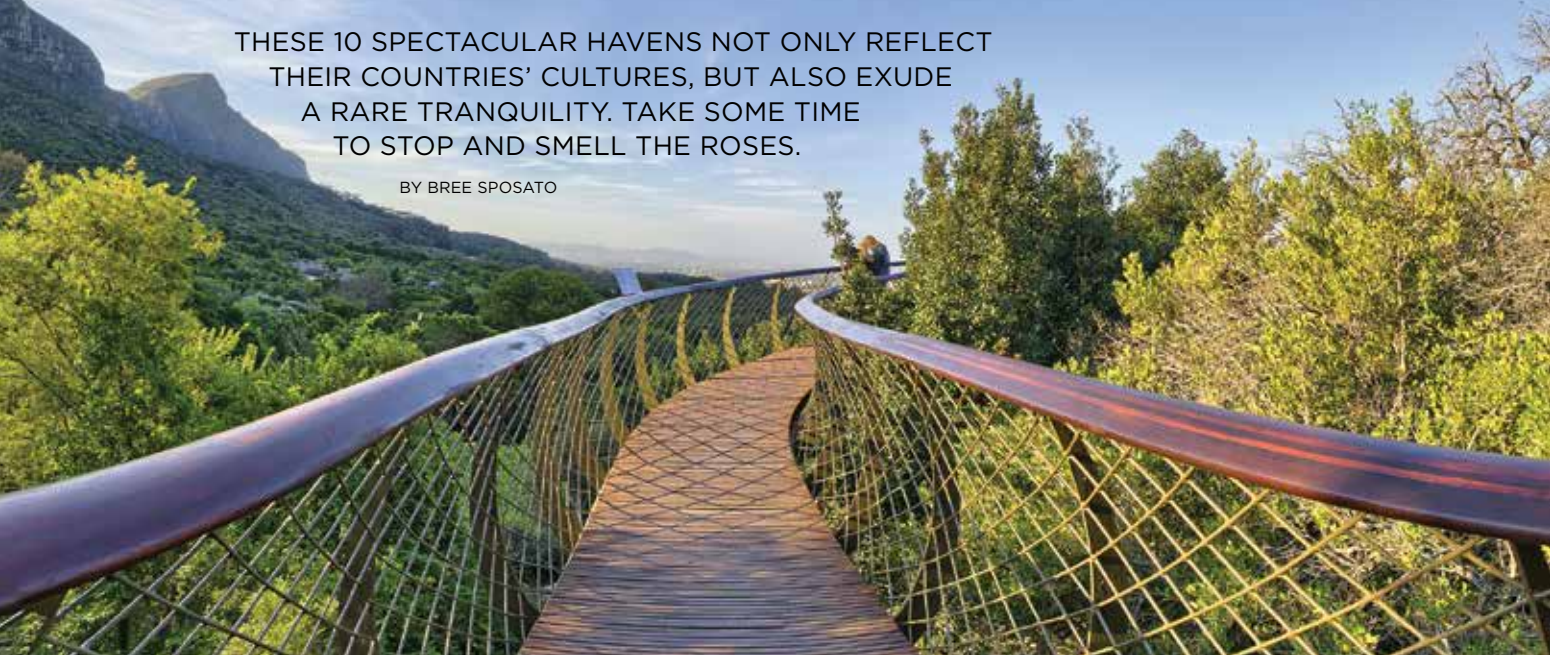


LANDMARKS
THE WORLD

Gardens of eden

THESE 10 SPECTACULAR HAVENS NOT ONLY REFLECT THEIR COUNTRIES' CULTURES, BUT ALSO EXUDE A RARE TRANQUILITY. TAKE SOME TIME TO STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES.

BY BREE SPOSATO



Singapore Botanical Garden Singapore

Nestled in the heart of Singapore, these are the only English-style gardens in the tropics and are the only tropical botanic garden now on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Spanning 74-hectares and including the National Orchid Garden which has over 1,000 orchard species and 2,000 hybrids on display. On weekends, friends and families enjoy a stroll at the Gardens, or watch musical performances at the Symphony Lake - a long-standing tradition that dates back to 1861.
sbg.org.sg



Koishikawa Korakuen Gardens Tokyo, Japan

Amid the chaos and color of Tokyo city you will find this elegant expanse of serenity and greenery - laid out in 1629 by a feudal lord - it is surprisingly quiet. Today, the garden is home to a grove of ginkgo trees, three ponds, crumbling ruins, the Tokujin-do temple and small rice fields. Plum and weeping cherry trees make spring, the blossom season an especially lovely time to visit this living work of art.
tokyo-park.or.jp



Na 'Aina Kai Botanical Garden Kauai, Hawaii

Abundant sunshine and warm showers make this 240-acre manicured garden on Kauai's north shore a lush paradise. You'll find nutmeg trees, hibiscus and the neon pointed blooms of birds-of-paradise. Wander through the on-site sculpture park (containing 160 pieces by 60 artists, it's one of the largest bronze-sculpture collections in the country), and explore the plantation of 60,000 hardwoods. There's also a great children's play area. naainakai.org



Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Richmond, Surrey, England

Greenhouses are the draw at this 326-acre oasis, which earned a spot on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites thanks to its terrific collection; there are 2,000 varieties of plants, some specimens dating from the 18th century. In February and March consider a visit for the orchids alone. kew.org



Jardim Botânico Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Brazilian beauties, such as orchids and bromeliads, dot the 345-acre enclave, around which its namesake neighborhood grew. Visit the three themed sections: the Cactário, the Japanese Garden and the Sensory Garden. Don't miss the greenhouse, which contains insectivorous species, such as Venus fly traps. jbrj.gov.br



Fondation Claude Monet, Giverny Normandy, France

Art lovers will delight in the legendary painter's former home, spread over nearly five acres in Giverny. Divided into two parts: The Clos Normand is like a living en plein air painting, complete with thousands of tulips, peonies and irises. At the Water Garden, meanwhile, a Japanese-style bridge stretches over a lily pond. fondation-monet.com



Biltmore Asheville, North Carolina

This 8,000-acre estate is home to six formal gardens designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Arranged around the 250-room Biltmore House, built by George Vanderbilt in the late 1800s and the country's largest house in continuous private ownership. Don't miss the four-acre Walled Garden, designed in a formal English style, where thousands of daffodils and tulips bloom in the spring. biltmore.com



Denver Botanic Gardens Colorado

Colorado's dry climate is on spectacular display at the Denver Botanic Gardens, which are split between three locations: the main, 24-acre York Street enclosure; the larger Chatfield meadow and historic homestead; and the Mount Goliath alpine-wildflower garden. botanicgardens.org



Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden Cape Town, South Africa

Set on 90 acres along the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, the garden grows flowers from all over southern Africa, like the spiky king protea, and was the first in the world to be included within a Natural World Heritage site. Get panoramic mountain views as you walk along Kirstenbosch's new, 130 meter long steel-and-wood canopy walkway. sanbi.org



Brooklyn Botanic Garden New York

This spring, Brooklyn's beloved 52-acre sanctuary debuts a Discovery Garden where kids can explore a meadow, a woodland and a marsh and experience a hands-on-gardening area. Open Tuesday–Friday: 8am - 6pm, Saturday & Sunday: 10am - 6pm. Closed on Mondays. Adults \$12, Children \$6 and under 12 free. bbg.org



SHOPPING
HONG KONG

TOPSHOP

Hong Kong is one of the world's great shopping cities. Here's our guide to Hong Kong's best shopping malls and the best of the city's shopping hotspots.

BY GARY MACNAMARA

If you don't already know it, Hong Kong has some of the biggest and best shopping malls in the world. It's a city that is filled with great shopping steals especially for those who love good bargains. From high class fashion to computers and contemporary Chinese art, there is an astounding array of shopping options to choose from, available in luxury malls and even down to basement markets.

As Hong Kong's premier shopping area, Causeway Bay is a mass of malls, shops and neon advertising signs. The area is best known for its hip, independent fashion retailers, centered on the Fashion Walk area. You'll also find SOGO, Hong Kong's biggest and best department store and the iconic Times Square which offers a mainstream mix of European, American

and Japanese stores along with some amazing restaurants. Check out the fashionable boutiques that make up the Island Beverly Centre and bargains galore at the Jardine's Crescent Street Market. In between all this are more shops specializing in shoes, electronics, computers, skin care and home accessories. Best of all, the shops are open until after 10pm, buzzing with locals and tourists hunting for the best bargains.

Hong Kong's Central District is where you'll discover most of the city's exclusive malls, shops and boutiques nestled in amongst the skyscrapers. Many of New York and London's finest designers have a shop here, such as Louis Vuitton, Harvey Nichols and Lane Crawford department store. Also in the area is possibly Hong

Kong's most famous store, Shanghai Tang, a Hong Kong fashion label that offers contemporary Chinese designs.

Another place worth visiting is Mongkok. Though it is not as flashy as Causeway Bay, it is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. There's a host of markets selling almost everything - from inexpensive fashion accessories such as watches, handbags to even pets and flowers. You can also visit the Mongkok Computer Center to pick up inexpensive computer gear.

Exotic and fascinating, the old neighborhood of Sheung Wan offers a diverse blend of shopping dominated by traditional Chinese businesses. The historic Western Market has an array of



SERIOUS RETAIL: (clockwise from left)

Pack good shoes, you will need them; start your marathon in Causeway Bay. Give your feet a rest and take the double deck tram. Get your bearings above the city on the Observation Wheel.

TIP

Remember before you to travel to Hong Kong, always check the price of the item you want to buy in your home country or province first. You can't start bargaining until you know how much you should be paying, and you should always look to negotiate the price at the markets and smaller shops.

unusual handicraft shops nestled inside an Edwardian-style mall. To the east of the market, you can browse antique shops and bric-a-brac on Cat Street. End your day at the colonial yet fashionable Gough Street where you will find designer household accessories and hip restaurants.

Running between the Central and Sheung Wan, Hollywood Road is best known for its Chinese contemporary art with some of China's most renowned artworks hanging from the walls in the many galleries. Hollywood Road is also known as one of the world's greatest centers for Chinese antiques, stocking fine furniture, ceramics and art up to 1000 years old.

Perhaps the forgotten area of Hong Kong shopping, Sham Shui Po doesn't have the

glitz and glamour of Hong Kong Island, but there are still plenty of bargains to be found. Try the wholesale stores which offer cut-price fabrics and clothing. Also worth a visit is the Golden Shopping Arcade where you can pick up great bargains on gaming equipment.

Historic Wan Chai may be Hong Kong's party district but it's also an enjoyable place to do some relaxed shopping. There are some excellent furniture shops along Queen's Road East and techies will be happy getting lost in the Wanchai Computer Center which is jam-packed with hardware, software and other computer gadgets. If you're traveling with your kids, they would love Tai Yuen Street where the entire strip is devoted to new and classic toys.



STAY

**RCI AFFILIATED
RESORTS IN
HONG KONG:**



Metropark Hotel Kowloon

Situated at the heart of Kowloon, the 485-room hotel is situated in close proximity of the bustling shopping and transport network, but away from the clamor of the city.
3 nights from \$520 R850
4 nights from \$695 R851

**For additional resort listings,
visit RCI.com or call your country's
toll free number (refer to back cover)**



AT A GLANCE
BROOME
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2,240 KILOMETERS
The distance Broome is north
of Perth. Fly direct to Broome from
Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane & Darwin.

Broome Western Australia

Broome is a delightful coastal tourist town in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Tropical and spectacularly beautiful, Broome is synonymous with pearls, turquoise seas, red cliffs, white sand and brilliant sunsets. With a flamboyant history, sun seekers and tourists from all over the world flock to this balmy paradise.

GATEWAY TO THE KIMBERLEY

The Kimberley region is one of the world's last true wilderness areas with rugged ranges, white sandy beaches, pockets of lush rainforest and thousands of years of Aboriginal history. It is also where you'll find the Bungle Bungle Range in World Heritage listed Purnululu National Park.

2 SEASONS

The number of Broome's seasons. There is winter season from May - October with daytime temperatures between mid 20s and low 30s. Summer is from November - April and has temperatures above the 30s with spectacular sunsets.

130,000,000 YEARS

The age of the dinosaur footprints at Gantheaume Point. The footprints from the early Cretaceous period are 30 meters out to sea and can only be seen during very low tide. Plant fossils are also preserved in the sandstone at Gantheaume Point.

POPULATION

Broome has 14,000 permanent residents growing to over 45,000 per month during the tourist season.

WORLD'S OLDEST OUTDOOR PICTURE THEATRE

The main town centre of Broome is known as Chinatown and has Broome's Sun Pictures - the world's oldest operating outdoor picture theatre.

CABLE BEACH

In 1889, a telegraph undersea cable was laid from Broome to Singapore. The name Cable Beach was given to the landfill site. The beach is 7km from Broome and sunset camel rides operate daily along the beach.



STAY RCI AFFILIATED RESORT IN BROOME INCLUDE:

Oaks Broome Hotel

3 nights from \$530 Hotel R592
3 nights from \$780 2brm R592
4 nights from \$730 Hotel R593
4 nights from \$1030 2brm R593

**For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com
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10

TOP SPOTS FOR SUMMER

WE HAVE SEARCHED ASIA
FOR 10 EXCITING PLACES
THAT CELEBRATE SUMMER
WITH ACTIVITIES FROM
FUN-FILLED WATER PARKS,
HISTORICAL TEMPLES,
IDYLIC MARKETS AND
SPECTACULAR SCENERY

BY GARY MACNAMARA

1

MIYAZAKI-KEN, Japan

Miyazaki city is a seaside town located on the south-eastern side of Kyushu and has the warmest climates and sunniest days on the mainland of Japan. The city is well known for its summer festivals and fireworks. Take a trip to Takachiho, a town located in the northern most part of Miyazaki. There, an impressive 17meter high Minainotaki waterfall awaits you. Take the riverside path along the banks of river towards the Takachiho Shrine or hire a rowing boat for closer viewing (\$5.50pp; www.japanvisitor.com). Miyazaki Science Center focuses on space exploration, astronomy, energy and physics with lots of hands-on exhibits, popular with children.

The Planetarium is one of the largest in Japan and offers three shows on weekdays and four on weekends and national holidays. Opening hours: 9am-4.30pm. Closed on Monday. (Adults \$6, Children \$2.30; with Planetarium: Adults \$8, Children \$3.50; ph 0985 23 2700; www.japanvisitor.com)

Takachiho waterfalls

BALI, Indonesia

A favorite destination for locals and thousands of international tourists, Bali has magnificent beaches, breathtaking scenery and a rich culture. It is known for its beautiful mountains and temples, and is a place where you can enjoy diving, sailing, rafting and above all surfing. It is where the ultimate luxuries of life - fine dining, spas with wonderful massages have reached the peak of perfection. Check out Karsa Spa's signature deep tissue massage (\$16 for 60 minute massage; ph 0361 8493518; www.karsaspa.com). With a choice of dining outlets and a swim-up tropical bar, Waterbom Park is a must-do while you are in Bali. Voted the No.1 water park in Asia by TripAdvisor in 2015. (Open: 9am-6pm, Adults \$0.50, Children under 11 \$0.30; ph +62 361 755 676; www.waterbom-bali.com). The Mayong Village Tracking Experience is a great three hour tour if you would like to experience the daily life of the local Balinese people. (Adults \$23; ph +62 823 4071 9179; www.mayongtrackingexperience.com).

BANGKOK, Thailand

As the capital of Thailand, Bangkok is a city known for its high-rise buildings, historic charm and vibrant nightlife. It is one of Asia's most cosmopolitan cities with exotic temples, exquisite canals and busy markets. Besides its famous floating market, Bangkok has endless bars, shows, restaurants, cafes and high-end shopping to enjoy. A trip to Bangkok would not be complete without visiting the Temple of the Reclining Buddha (Wat Pho). It is the largest and oldest temple in Bangkok and is home to the enormous reclining Buddha. (Open: 8am-5pm, Adults \$4; ph 0 2226 0335; www.watpho.com). For the best shopping, Chatuchak Weekend Market is one of Bangkok's best attractions. It is the largest market in Thailand with over 5000 stalls selling everything from clothing to pets, antiques, plants, jewelry and food. (Open: Saturday and Sunday, 6am-6pm; www.chatuchak.org). One of Bangkok's oldest attractions, the Dusit Zoo has animals from all over the world including African attractions like tigers, lions, giraffes and hippos. (Open: 8am-6pm, Adults \$4, Children \$.80; ph 0 2282 7111; www.zoothailand.org).

PHUKET, Thailand

As Thailand's largest and most popular island, Phuket is famous for its sandy beaches, clear waters and vibrant nightlife. Whether you relish the frantic pace of Patong or the quieter Karon Beach, it's a great place for families and people wanting to swim, snorkel or surf. Phuket's rich and fertile tropical interior is home to elephants, colorful birds and tranquil ponds. Don't miss the Gibbon Rehabilitation Center. The center adopts gibbons that have been kept in captivity in anticipation they'll be reintroduced to the wild. (Open: 9am-4pm, 40 cents per person; ph 6676260492; www.gibbonproject.org). Heroines Monument is one of Phuket's most visited landmarks. It tells the story of how sisters Lady Chan and Lady Mook led the people into



SUMMER ROMANCE: (top to bottom)

After a lazy day on one of Bali's beaches, its mountains offer a cool change and beautiful views. Bangkok's water ways offer a stunning view of the Royal Palace at dusk. Phuket is famous for its beaches, friendly people, nightlife and its ubiquitous longtail boats.



battle against Burmese intruders. Open all year round and located at Tha Rua Junction in Thalang, about 12km north of Phuket City. (www.phuket.com). For dinner in Phuket, we recommend Raya Thai Cuisine on Dibuk Road for their Keng Kati Sai Poo (crab curry with coconut milk) at \$70 for two. (ph 6676 218 155; www.phuket.com/magazine/raya-restaurant)

PATTAYA, Thailand

About 150km east of Bangkok lies Pattaya which has great wildlife, amusement parks and historical museums. Just 15 minutes south of Pattaya Bay is Jomtien Beach, a popular destination for jet skiing, parasailing and scuba diving. The elephant ride and jungle trek tour from Pattaya is a fun one-hour elephant trek, followed by a 30-minute rural jungle walk. Catch your breath before enjoying a relaxing and tranquil lake rafting or take up an exciting ox-cart ride. Half-day tours start 10am and 3.30pm. (Adults \$70, Children \$60; www.tourbylocals.com/Pattaya-Tours). If you want to see all of Thailand's highlights in miniature, visit Mini Siam where there are over 100 carefully crafted models on show. See replicas of important historical sites at a scale of 1 to 25. Thai buildings such as the Phra Sri Rattanasasadarm Temple, the Victory Monument, the Bridge over the River Kwae, and the Phimai Stone Sanctuary are displayed. (Open: 7am-10pm, Adults \$10, Children \$4.70; ph 03872 7333; www.minisiam.com). On the border of South Pattaya, you will find the Phratumnak Hill, which offers one of the best viewpoints overlooking Pattaya.

SEPANG GOLD COAST, Malaysia

The district of Sepang is located in the southern part of the state of Selangor, and is best known for its Sepang International Circuit. Home of the Malaysian Grand Prix Formula One - Malaysian leg and the Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix, visitors can take a behind-the-scenes circuit tour by foot. (Adults \$50, Students \$25; ph 603-8778 2200; www.sepangcircuit.com). Don't miss the National Automobile Museum where you can view classic cars and hear stories from the many motoring events. Opens 9am to 6pm daily. Entry is free. (www.jmm.gov.my/en/national-automobile-museum-sepang). The Sepang Gold Coast offers a slice of paradise blending tropical relaxation and real adventure. It's also a great place to see rural villages, river life, elephants, as well as cultural sites. Discover the wealth of flora and fauna dotting the Sepang River as you mosey along this mighty waterway in a wooden boat. Once you've finished spotting monkeys, otters and water birds, refuel your appetite on ikan bakar, a grilled fish specialty offered at the local seafood restaurants along the shoreline.

HAINAN, China

Hainan Island is a great family holiday destination that's often overlooked by everyone but the Chinese. It is often called the "Hawaii" of South East Asia thanks to the distinct tropical climate and abundance of fresh cuisine. The capital Haikou sits on the northern coast while the popular tourist destination of Sanya reels in visitors on the south coast. See Hainan's famous

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UKRID / Shutterstock.com



GET WET (top to bottom)

Splashing around Pattaya style, guaranteed to please kids of all ages. Feel the need for speed in Sepang by taking a behind the scenes tour of the Grand Prix circuit. City beach; Hainan has great beaches as well as a full sized city and all of the conveniences that go with it, like shopping, restaurants and pretty much everything else you could need.

6



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beaches at Dadonghai, Tianya and Haijiao. For a spiritual retreat, head to Nanshan Culture Tourism Zone, 40kms southwest of Sanya City and see the beauty of Nanshan Mountain. The area has a profound Buddhist influence on its surrounding culture and is made of three theme parks: Hainan Custom Culture Park, Blessing and Longevity Park and the Buddhism Culture Park. (Open: 8am-6pm, \$33pp covers all three park; bookings available through your accommodation). It is also home to Nanshan Temple and the statue of the South China Sea Kwan-yin Bodhisattva. The giant sea-side statue of Kwan-yin stands 108 meters and is constructed out of gold, diamonds and jade. Hainan has an abundance of food and their culinary delights draw worldwide acclaim. Seafood is plentiful so expect to see lots of prawns, oysters and fish on street food stands and in restaurants.

SHANDONG, China

Shandong Province is located in the eastern part of China on the lower reaches of the Yellow River. It is known for its beautiful landscapes such as Mount Tai, Mount Laoshan and the beaches on the Jiaodong Peninsula. Mount Tai is claimed to be the number one among the sacred Five Great Mountains of China and is listed as a Cultural and Natural World Heritage Site. Vast quantities of poetry and stone inscriptions have been left here by emperors, poets and scholars of every era. Confucius Temple in Qufu City, is a group of temples built to commemorate the great educator of ancient China, Confucius. As the capital of Shandong, Jinan is one of China's most famous historical cities and has numerous natural springs. Shandong is also the birthplace of China's pottery, porcelain and silk. Here you can find traditional items like the clocks and watches of Yantai, the porcelain of Zibo and the kites of Weifang. A must-see is the Weishan Terracotta Warriors in the Weishan Scenic Area. It is the third largest collection of terracotta warriors in China, displaying over 8,000 life-size pottery models of soldiers and servants and other artifacts from the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD). (Open: 8am-5pm, \$33 pp; www.chinahighlights.com).

MANILA, Philippines

As the capital of the Philippines, Manila is a densely populated bay-side city on the island of Luzon situated on Manila Bay in the South China Sea. The city is on the Pasig River and mixes Spanish colonial architecture with modern skyscrapers. Intramuros, a walled colonial city is the heart of Old Manila. It's home to the baroque 16th century San Agustin Church as well as Fort Santiago, a fortress and military prison. Fort Santiago is the main tourist attraction in Intramuros. (Open 8am-6pm, Adults \$2.25, Children \$1.50; ph 63 2 527 1572; www.tourism.gov). As the oldest church in the Philippines, San Agustin Church has many richly decorated shrines. Make sure you visit the Ayala Center in the Makati Central Business District, it is now the premier shopping and cultural district in the metropolis because of its wide array of shopping, entertainment and cultural offerings. Take a trip down to the Ayala Museum where it has exciting offerings in store for its guests. Their displays of gold and Filipino art are worth seeing alone, but the star attractions are the 60 dioramas

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SUMMER TREATS: (counter clockwise from above)

A temple with a million dollar view on Mount Tai Shan in Shandong. Manila; big city small volcano. Taal Volcano is the smallest volcano in the world. Boracay Island is the template for every tropical beach escape daydream; white sand, aquamarine water and verdant green hinterland.

9



9



that tell the story of the country's turbulent history. (Open Tuesday to Sunday, 9am-6pm; \$10.50pp; ph 632 759 8288; www.ayalamuseum.org).

BORACAY ISLAND, Philippines

Located approximately 315km south of Manila, Boracay Island is a paradise for beach and sun-worshippers. The island's most famous and popular beach is the 4km long White Beach, which has been named as one of the best beaches in the world. Here you'll find D'Mall, a collection of 100 small tourist shops and restaurants where most of the island's tourists gravitate. Try your hand at windsurfing or kite boarding at Bulabog Beach on the eastern side of the island. It is just a 5 minute walk from D'Mall. Experience the natural beauty of the Philippines by taking a 5 hour day trip to Ariel's Point. Enjoy swimming, snorkeling, kayaking and canoeing in a friendly relaxed setting. If you're looking for something more adventurous, try one of the five cliff diving platforms. (Daily departures 11:15am; \$36pp; includes hire of snorkeling equipment). Also worth a try is reef walking and helmet diving. It's safe and easy and a great alternative if you aren't quite ready to go scuba diving. Feed the fish as you walk underwater with your air helmet. (\$45pp for 30min dive). Enjoy a Paraw Sailboat Sunset Cruise and watch the sun go down on the crystal clear waters of this world famous beach. A Paraw is a traditional Filipino sailboat with two outriggers. (\$30pp for one hour tour with Red Pirates; ph 63 36 288 5767; www.boracay.travel/boracay-tours).



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS NEAR SOME OF THE FEATURED DESTINATIONS INCLUDE:

JAPAN

Miyazaki-Ke J's Nichinan Resort D867

Combining traditional Japanese style with simple western comforts, this is an ideal place to experience Nichinan. There is an onsite restaurant, pool, outdoor spa with aromatherapy treatments and an 18-hole golf course.

INDONESIA

Bali Royal Bali Beach Club at Jimbaran Bay 5254

The one-bedroom apartments are air-conditioned, each with their own private balconies or courtyards. The resort is inviting, featuring beautiful gardens and a breathtaking pool area to enjoy and relax in.

Royal Bali Beach Club at Candidasa 3968

Located at Balina Beach on the outskirts of Candidasa, it is surrounded by coral-filled seas and still-active volcanoes. Great for snorkeling and fishing.

THAILAND

Kanchanaburi MTC at the Legacy River Kwai 5456

Located 25km from Kanchanaburi town, the resort is surrounded by nature providing a secluded haven of mountain ranges, rivers and green forests. Shuttle service available.

Bankok

Grand Tower Inn 6305

Away from the hustle and bustle but close enough to walk to most places. This 24-storey newer urban

property is a good home base to explore lively Bangkok, known locally as Krung Thep, or "The City of Angels."

Phuket

The Palms Resort

Situated only 30 meters from the unspoiled white sands of the fabulous Kamala Beach, it is in the middle of all the shopping and dining. Comes with designed swimming pools, fitness center and restaurant offering a fusion of international cuisines.
3 nights from \$525 RA63
4 nights from \$700 RA64

Pattaya

Chateau Dale Beach Resort 5719

A 5-minute drive from Pattaya's shopping and entertainment district. It features swimming pool, spa and free private parking.

MALAYSIA

Selangor Palace of the Golden Horses A521

With an equestrian theme, this resort has distinctive Moorish-Malaysian architecture, claiming an outstanding variety of dining and entertainment options.

Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort A540

Perfectly located for diving, water sports, excursions, snorkeling and many other recreational activities. The over water villa resort stretches out from the Sepang coastline, almost a kilometer into the sheltered waters of the Straits of Malacca.

CHINA

Hainan

Noble Yacht Club, Hainan 7481

Surrounded by beautiful beaches, green gardens and artistically designed buildings, the hotel offers water sports, barbecue of all kinds of seafood and live entertainment on the weekends.

HNA@Kangle Garden Hainan 8586

Located in the famous Xinglong Hot Spring District, southeast of Hainan, the 5-star resort boasts a 54-hole professional golf course, outdoor spas and swimming pools.

Shandong China

SRC@BEST WESTERN Sea View Grand Hotel Haiyang D673

Features panoramic views of Haiyang golden beaches, pool with a separate children swimming area, fitness centre, tennis courts, and onsite fine cuisine.

SRC@Ramada Plaza Hotel Yantai A525

Take a dip in the indoor pool, workout in the fitness center, or have a hit of tennis or even (indoor simulated) golf! Unwind and enjoy the spa with sauna and steam rooms, or pamper yourself with a massage.

PHILIPPINES

Manila

Astoria Plaza Suites 7773

State-of-the-art gym, pool, spa and massage center plus incredible views. Your gateway to the hip, fast-paced style of Pasig City. It provides easy access to other cities, beaches and all the attractions Luzon Island has to offer.

Boracay Island

Laguna de Boracay Resort 3502

A great place to relax and unwind. It is very private and like your own private back-to-nature village, get to experience life in tranquility.

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or or call your country's toll free number (refer to back cover)



DINING IN
RECIPES FOR
RESORT MADE MEALS

Taste of the Philippines

A MELTING POT OF FLAVORS MAKES A DELICIOUS BRAISED CHICKEN.

RECIPE BY CHEF DAVID LAPHAM

Our photo editor Pamela Pasco's mom, Evangeline, a great home cook, was born in the Philippines and raised her family on classic dishes, like chicken afritada. She provided the recipe below and taught us how to make it.

Although the Spanish roots of the word *afritada* indicate something fried, in the Philippines it refers to a tomato-based stew with the uniquely Philippine addition of fish sauce.

CHICKEN AFRITADA

900 grams chicken, cut into pieces

2 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

2 tbsp flour

4 tbsp vegetable oil

4 cloves garlic, crushed

1 medium onion, chopped

1 medium tomato, chopped

1 240ml can tomato sauce

2 tbsp fish sauce

1 bay leaf

1 tbsp dried oregano

240ml water

1 green bell pepper, diced

1 red bell pepper, diced

4 medium potatoes,
cut into 2-inch pieces

2 carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces

1 cup frozen peas

Dry chicken parts and dredge in flour seasoned with salt and pepper; shake off any excess flour. Heat two tablespoons of the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and brown chicken parts on both sides, about seven minutes; do this in batches to prevent crowding the pot. Remove chicken and set aside on a plate.

To the same pot, add the remaining two tablespoons oil and the garlic and onion and cook over medium-low heat until translucent, about five minutes. Add the tomato, browned chicken parts, tomato sauce, fish sauce, bay leaf, oregano, water, bell peppers, potatoes and carrots. Simmer 35 minutes, then add the peas and cook three more minutes. Serve with white jasmine rice.

STAY RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN THE PHILIPPINES INCLUDE:



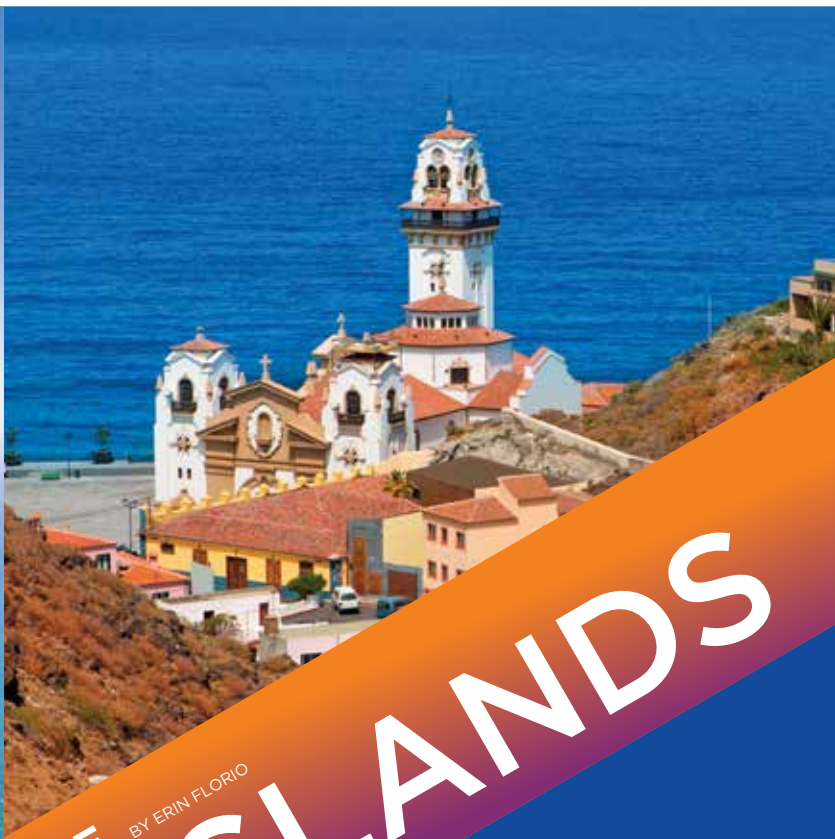
Puerto del Sol Beach Resort and Hotel 7647

Located in Bolinao, the picturesque Eden north of Manila and dubbed Pangasinan's Gateway to the world. It is a beautiful and exclusive resort nestled in the heart of the town.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Friendly staff." "Plenty of things to do."

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's toll free number (refer to back cover)





THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE CANARY ISLANDS

BY ERIN FLORIO



Offering sugar-sand beaches, volcano hikes and some of the world's best windsurfing and weather, the Canary Islands are like Europe's own mini Caribbean.

STRIKING BEAUTY: (clockwise from left)

Vivid orange rock and turquoise waters make the Canary Islands an arresting visual experience. The stunning cliffs of Gran Canaria. One of many churches with a view, Canary Islands Basilica de Candelaria in Tenerife. An idyllic spot to spend a day (or three), El Duque beach Tenerife.

CANARY ISLANDS

TENERIFE

GRAN CANARIA

You probably won't need to pack a raincoat when headed to the Canaries. This Spanish archipelago of seven major (and several minor) volcanic islands 96 kilometers off Morocco's southwest coast is said to have some of the best weather on Earth: 320 sun-flooded days a year and temperatures hovering around 24 degrees. It's little wonder that it has long been the winter playground of sun-starved Europeans. But the islands' collective beauty and climate are worth escaping to any time of year, and each isle has distinctive draws: Fuerteventura is a windsurfing hot spot; UNESCO-protected Gran Canaria offers giant sand dunes and kilometers of pine-shrouded mountain trails; and the coasts of Tenerife teem with marine life. On the following pages we'll show you which island may be best for you.



FUERTEVENTURA

ISLAND HOPPING:

(clockwise from below) Tenerife harbor with its mountainous backdrop. Playa del Ingles beach and Maspalomas Dunes, Gran Canaria. A traditional windmill on Canary Island, Fuerteventura. Sunset hiking on Roque Nublo, Gran Canaria. Water sports mecca Fuerteventura Beach, the place to try windsurfing, sailing and pretty much all other watersports.

FUERTEVENTURA

Life's a Beach

The second-largest Canary (behind Tenerife) is a beach lover's paradise, offering more than 150 golden-sand playas. The showpiece among them is six-mile-long Corralejo Beach, where powder-fine sands line a nature reserve. Farther south, sun worshippers park themselves along the 21km coastline of Jandía, a peninsula popular for windsurfing. Try your hand at the sport with René Egli (Playa Sotavento; 011-34-928-54-74-83; rene-egli.com; courses, from \$100*), which offers courses and rentals from Sotavento beach, where the windsurfing world championships are held every July.

The underwater landscape here is brimming with tropical fish. At Jandía Divers (Hotel Iberostar Palace; 011-34-606-17-42-51; jandiadivers.com; three-hour dives, from \$65), German expat Stephan Reckers leads voyages into underwater volcano craters, home to angel sharks and barracudas. Once back on dry land, the Faro de Jandía lighthouse (Parque Natural Jandía) is just a few kilometers down the coast from here, along untamed dunes.





Tip: Get a four-wheel drive vehicle for the trip; there is little paved road south of town. The 600-year-old former capital of the Canary Islands, Betancuria, is located in a cactus-spiked valley on the west coast. The town is anchored by the white-walled Santa María cathedral (Calle de Alcalde Carmelo Silvera), rebuilt in the 1600s after being razed by Moorish pirates in 1593.

You'll find all sorts of crafts at Casa Santa Maria (1 Plaza Santa Maria de Betancuria; 011-34-928-87-80-36; casasantamaria.net), a 17th-century farmhouse turned craft center where you can watch artisans working the looms and pottery wheels before you select some pieces to bring home with you. The center also has a restaurant of the same name (011-34-928-87-82-82; lunch for two, \$125); chef Dusan Senkerik's specialty is braised local goat. Never mind that post-lunch siesta; you'll want to walk off the meal amid the ancient tools and artifacts of Fuerteventura's native Majo tribes, artfully displayed at the Museo Arqueológico y Etnográfico (12-14 Calle Roberto Roldán; 011-34-928-87-82-41; admission, \$3) a five-minute stroll away.

GRAN CANARIA Natural Playground

In 2005 UNESCO declared 40 percent, roughly 620 square kilometers, of Gran Canaria a protected natural biosphere. It's easy to see why this island is a nature lover's dream, with its Sahara-style sand dunes and volcanic-rock formations. Kick things off in Maspalomas, a tourist town on the southern tip and home to popular Playa de Inglés. Here you'll spot the spectacular Maspalomas Dunes, a desert like 1,000-acre (approx. 404 hectare) nature reserve of sand whipped by the wind into tall, undulating rows. They can be fun but tiring to conquer on foot; luckily herds of camels are saddled up and standing by to help you cross the sand (camellosafari.com; rides, from \$18). Should you build up an appetite, try El Salsete (Calle Secundino Delgado; 011-34-928-77-82-55; elsalsete.com; lunch for two, \$72), in neighboring San Fernando, where lunch will be whichever fish chef Paco Viera picked up fresh from the market that morning.

For more of Gran Canaria's natural highlights, swing north on highway GC-60 from Maspalomas through the island's arid

lunar interior. Forty kilometers (and some steep turns) in, you'll reach Roque Nublo (Tejeda; 011-34-928-66-60-01), a 260-foot-tall volcanic-rock formation and place of worship for Gran Canaria's original, Berber settlers. From the parking area, it's a 35 minute hike to the rock, but well worth it for the sweeping, 360-degree views out across the palm-and salt-cedar-lined ravines and valley. Serious hikers will want to carry on northwest to the Parque Natural de Tamadaba, whose network of paths winds through pine and cactus forests filled with native fauna, like Gallotia lizards and peregrine falcons. If you can peel yourself away from the natural wonders, consider spending a day admiring Gran Canaria's 437-year-old capital, Las Palmas, pinched between two bays in the island's northeast. Past the cobblestoned Plaza Santa Ana, in the Old Town, is the Casa de Colón (1 Calle de Colón; 011-34-928-31-23-73; casadecolon.com; admission, \$10), a petite museum inside a white-walled villa with latticed balconies and green marble doorways. The museum honors Christopher Columbus, who allegedly stayed here while his ship La Pinta was repaired before sailing the ocean



WEATHER

The Canary Islands enjoy year-round sunshine, with temperatures averaging 27 degrees in summer and 18 degrees in winter in winter. Note that mountains can be significantly cooler than the coasts.

GETTING THERE

Major European airlines, including British Airways (britishairways.com) and Iberia (iberia.com), offer direct flights to Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria and Tenerife

from London, Madrid and other cities, while budget carrier Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies to all three from more than 30 European locations. Once there you can hop around with regional carrier Binter (bintercanarias.com), which has several 45-minute flights between the islands throughout the day, or cross over by sea with Fred Olsen (fredolsen.es), a fast ferry that connects the Canaries' major islands. Journeys take up to three hours, and you can drive your rental car onto the ferry.

GETTING AROUND

Though all three of these islands are served by public buses that can get you to major sites, car rentals are available at Cicar (011-34-928-82-29-00; cicar.com; daily rentals, from \$46) which has 39 offices throughout the archipelago.

*Prices have been converted to Singapore dollars.
Estimated meal prices do not include drinks, tax or tip.

blue in 1492. The museum features a replica of a cabin from the Niña and relics documenting the relationship between the Canaries and the Americas. Any day trip to Las Palmas should finish with sunset *tinto de verano* (red wine punch) and the town's signature *papas arrugadas con mojo* (cubed potatoes in a spiced sauce) on the waterfront terrace at El Charcón 41 (41 Calle Nicolás Estévez; 011-34-928-49-03-75; tapas for two, \$13).

TENERIFE

Trails and Whales

This teardrop-shaped Canary annually receives 5 million travellers, most of whom come for its dramatic landscapes and yearly Carnival celebration, said to be second only to those in Rio de Janeiro. It also has centuries-old footpaths pounded out by native Guanche tribes. The most challenging trail is up Mount Teide (Teide National Park; 011-34-922-92-23-71; magrama.gob.es), Spain's highest peak and the third tallest volcano on Earth. Climbers can follow

the main path (La Rambleta) to the 3720 metre summit, crossing lava fields en route; it generally takes six hours. But the cable car (telefericoteide.com; one-way tickets, from \$21) can whisk you up in just eight minutes. Regardless of how you go, you'll need a permit first, obtainable at reservasparquesnacionales.es/. Once you're at the top, it's nothing but open sky and views across the Atlantic to pint-size La Gomera Island, 120 kilometers offshore.

Mount Teide may be majestic, but so is the island's exceptional marine life— especially on its west coast. Spy pods of pilot whales and bottlenose dolphins during a four-hour catamaran cruise with Tenerife Dolphin (Playa de las Americas; 011-34 922-75-00-85; tenerifedolphin.com; day trips, from \$31), which sails through the strait separating Tenerife from La Gomera. For something more intimate, consider suiting up with Los Gigantes Diving Center (Galeria de la Marina; 011-34-922-86-04 31; divingtenerife.co.uk; dives, from \$100) to swim right up to 270-kilo green turtles and six types of stingrays. After your plunge, visit Los

Gigantes cliffs, which drop nearly 610 meters into the Atlantic. Right in the shadow of the monoliths, brothers Juan Carlos and Jonathan Padrón will cook you a plate of Canarian black pork and grilled local lamb at island favourite El Rincón de Juan Carlos (2 Pasaje de Jacaranda; 34-922-86-80-40; elrincondejuancarlos.es; dinner for two, \$129).

Back on the west coast, you'll find the Ritz-Carlton Abama, home to Basque chef Martin Berasategui's M.B. restaurant (Carr. General TF-47, Guía de Isora; 011-34-922-12-60-00; ritzcarlton.com, dinner for two, \$350), the only two-Michelin starred restaurant in the archipelago. If you fancy something more classic, go on a tapas crawl through the Noria dining district in the capital, Santa Cruz. You can feast on cod croquettes and Spanish tortilla at spots like Bulan (35 Calle Antonio Domínguez Alfonso; 011-34-928-27-41-16; bulantenerife.com; tapas for two, \$13), a great way to refuel after admiring the work of homegrown surrealist painter Óscar Domínguez at TEA gallery (10 Avda. de San Sebastián; 011-34-922-84-90-57; teatenerife.es; admission, \$12). Either way you're sure to get a delicious taste of the Canary Islands.



HOT AND COLD: (clockwise from far left) Road tripping Tenerife style, keeping your eyes on the road and off the view may be tough. Plaza de Santa Ana, Gran Canaria. Believe it or not a snow capped mountain on Tenerife, Mt Teide. Another beautiful view of Fuerteventura. Tenerife kicks on when the sun goes down.



STAY

**RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN
THE CANARY ISLANDS INCLUDE:**



Apartamentos Tropical Park 2403

Tenerife

Highlights at this coastal retreat include on-site diving lessons and nightly entertainment.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Plenty going on - yoga, archery, aqua aerobics. Great ocean views."



Callao Garden 2232

Tenerife

Mediterranean-theme accommodations within easy reach of Teide National Park.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Some of the best staff we've come across." "Rooms were very clean."



Dunas Club 2539

Corralejo, Fuerteventura

Walk to Corralejo's lively bars and restaurants from this peaceful complex.

MEMBER REVIEW: "The location was spot-on." "The resort's restaurants, La Luna served superb, reasonably priced food."



Club Marina 2378

Tenerife

A sun-soaked sanctuary near Costa del Silencio's many water sports.

MEMBER REVIEW: "Spotlessly clean." "Loads of storage space." "Staff was exceptional."



Pearly Grey Ocean Club 1786

Tenerife

Recently refurbished cliff-side apartments with uninterrupted sea views.

MEMBER REVIEW: "We could watch the sun set and listen to the waves crashing against the rocks." "Friendly English speaking staff."

**For additional resort listings,
visit RCI.com or call your country's
toll free number (refer to back cover)**



OLD PLUS NEW EQUALS

KYUSHU



From its vibrant heritage and important historic treasures to its stunning natural beauty and exhilarating modern cities, Japan's third largest island, Kyushu, promises a holiday to remember.

BY NEHA KALE

(all shots this page) cawardlion / Shutterstock.com



Clockwise: Fukuoka city. Food is never far from your thoughts in Fukuoka whether it be roadside stall, hand made sweets or Ramen in a cosy restaurant.

Dotted with everything from active volcanoes and postcard-pretty beaches to futuristic cities and Zen temples, Kyushu is Japan in miniature, minus the tourist hordes and frenzied pace. The island is shaped by its status as the spiritual home of shoguns and samurai, its history as an early cradle of Japanese culture and its past as a major trading post for explorers from China and beyond.

Fukuoka

But you don't have to be a history buff to fall for Kyushu's charms. Bustling Fukuoka combines a world-class dining and retail scene with a warmth that's the envy of Tokyo and Kyoto. Famous for green spaces, sleek architecture, offbeat boutiques and shoebox ramen shops, Kyushu's largest metropolis – home to 1.4 million people – blends big-city attractions with friendly, small-town vibes. Retail addicts should head to Tenjin, a shopping precinct lined

with luxury boutiques, such as Gucci and Prada, as well as the flawlessly curated Mitsukoshi department store. From here, hire a bike and cycle to Daimyo – an up-and-coming enclave known for labyrinthine streets, retro clothing stores and hole-in-the-wall sake bars.

Although Fukuoka has long been considered Kyushu's dining capital, it's fast gaining a reputation as Japan's next great food city, featuring everything from Michelin-starred French restaurants to yatai, open-air food stalls that dole out some of the best ramen, yakitori and gyoza in the world. Work up your appetite with a stroll through Ohori Park, a manicured oasis that borders the Fukuoka Art Museum (look for the pumpkin sculpture by cult Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama), before visiting the southwest bank of Nakasu Island for charred-to-perfection chicken skewers and bowls of tonkotsu

ramen – the rich, pork-filled noodle broth that's the city's greatest culinary export.

If you're craving a fuss-free daytrip, head to Hakata Station and take a 25-minute train trip to Dazaifu, a small, former imperial capital punctuated with ornate temples, Shinto shrines, and gardens and plum trees that blossom in spring. Visit the Tenmangu Shrine, which was built in tribute to the Japanese poet Michizane in 905AD. And don't forget to spend some time at the Kyushu National Museum, which pays homage to the region's history with revolving exhibitions and a permanent display that stars ninth-century Buddhist sculptures and 14th-century swords forged by master swordsmiths. Ohori Park is located at 1-7, Ohori Koen, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka. Kyushu National Museum is located 4-7-2 Ishizaka, Dazaifu 818-0118, Fukuoka.



Nagasaki beach



Saga prefecture

Nagasaki

Many may associate Nagasaki with the atomic bomb that had a catastrophic effect on the prefecture during World War II, but this pretty port city, perched on glittering Nagasaki Bay, is so much more than the sum of Kyushu's war time past. Nagasaki has reinvented itself as a sparkling waterside city that sports a laid-back modernity alongside its volatile past. Its landscape features hot-spring towns surrounded by forested valleys, mountains that feel plucked from a Hiroshige woodcut and a subtropical coastline that's home to Japan's best surfing. A visit here means an encounter that caters to nature-loving families, thrill seeking couples and solo adventurers seeking food for the soul.

However, no visit here is complete without a trip to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and the Nagasaki Peace Park - a leafy square flanked by monuments that are moving tributes to the horrors of war and the dream

of worldwide harmony. It's also worth heading down to Doza-machi, a village-like midtown district, to try sardine or iwashi sashimi, a regional specialty, or iwashi no-nanbanzuke, a deep-fried dish pickled in onion and vinegar conceived by the Dutch explorers and Portuguese missionaries that sailed here in the 16th century.

While you're in Nagasaki, make sure you set aside an afternoon to explore Dejima, the fan-shaped island near Nagasaki harbour. Dejima was built at the command of shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu in the 16th century to keep Portuguese Christians from the Japanese mainland. It later served as a trading post for the Dutch. The island was restored in 2006 and offers fascinating insights into the region's mixed-up past. For example, it features elegant, wooden buildings that blend Japanese and European elements, exhibitions that address Japan's relationship with the West and a kimono hire shop, if you fancy an

authentic experience. Nagasaki Peace Park is located at 852-8118 Nagasaki. Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum is located at 7-8 Hiranomachi, Nagasaki.

Saga prefecture

Take a 90-minute train ride from Nagasaki, past hillside scenes and rice fields that feel like stills from a Hayao Miyazaki movie, to reach Saga, a seaside prefecture in Kyushu renowned for pottery traditions that go back hundreds of years. If you're a ceramics enthusiast, spend a couple of days in Arita, a charming town that plays host to galleries, kilns and white-walled merchant's houses, where the discovery of Kaolin clay in 1616 gave rise to generations of potters and artisans. Be sure to stock up on Imari ware - vibrant porcelain etched with brilliant blue-and-white patterns - at Pottery Promenade. Then head to the Kyushu Ceramic Museum, where you can browse masterpieces from the Edo period and Kakiemon-style bowls from

the 16th century. And if you're interested in modern-day pottery, visit nearby Gen-emon, a 260-year-old kiln where you can watch potters throwing clay, glazing ceramics, and sketching and designing contemporary wares.

While you're in the Saga prefecture, Karatsu, a picturesque town near the Higashi Matsuura peninsula, features earthy luxury ceramics, a hilltop castle and cycling trails that take in sweeping views of the Sea of Genkai. Also, if time permits, spend a morning in Yobuko, a sleepy port town famous for its bustling seafood market. Kyushu Ceramics Museum, 3100-1 Otsu Toshaku, Nishimatsura-gun, Arita-cho. Gen-emon Kiln 2726, Maruohei, Arita-cho Nishimatsuura-gun, Saga-ken.

Kurokawa Onsen

In Japan, unwinding in an onsen – a natural hot spring or bathhouse that draws on thermal water resulting from the country's high level of volcanic activity – is a national art. And there's no better place to experience this than Oita, a rural

prefecture in northwest Kyushu. Oita is considered Japan's hot-spring capital, due to its secluded mountain landscapes and proximity to active volcano belts, such as the Kirishima mountain range.

Although Oita is home to several hot-spring towns, Kurokawa – an otherworldly onsen surrounded by a striking gorge and forest-covered valleys – offers a soul-affirming encounter that's difficult to beat. Try Yamamizuki, an outdoor bath that borders the woods alongside a tranquil mountain river (daytime admission is ¥500 or \$5.25); Kurokawaso, a sprawling, gender-divided outdoor bath that looks on to a cliff face (¥500 or \$5.50); or Sato no Yu Waraku (¥500 or \$5.50), a hot spring tucked away in a natural cave.

Kurogawa is home to dozens of traditional guesthouses or ryokans, but it's also easy for daytrippers to engage in its fabled Rotenburo Meguri ('tour of outdoor baths') and luxuriate in its many restorative thrills. Simply stop by the information

centre to purchase a wooden day pass that guarantees admission to three bathhouses for ¥1,300 yen (\$14.40). Kurokawa Onsen is located at 869-2402 Kumamoto Prefecture, Aso District.

Kumamoto Castle

Complete with vast stone walls, soaring turrets and 13 separate buildings, Kumamoto Castle is a Kyushu icon and one of the grandest castles in Japan. The impressive fortress, which was constructed in 1601 by Katō Kiyomasa, a daimyo, or feudal ruler, was the backdrop for the battle of the last samurai. During this legendary 1877 siege, rebels of the new imperial order held out before the main tower was burnt to the ground (it was reconstructed in 1960). These days, the main tower houses an extensive collection of weapons and samurai armour, as well as furniture and artefacts from the Edo era. English-language walking tours take place every half hour. It's also well worth strolling around the surrounding castle town to swing by the homes of Japanese writers such as Soseki



Okinawa



Kurokawa Onsen



Kumamoto Castle



cowardlion / Shutterstock.com

Shinkansen



Okinawa lighthouse

Natsume, a much-loved novelist who worked in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Stop for a break on the banks of the Shirakawa River. Kumamoto Castle is located at 1-1 Honmaru, Chūō-ku, Kumamoto-shi, Kumamoto Prefecture. Soseki Natsume Uchitsuboi Old House is located at 4-22 Uchitsuboi-machi, Kumamoto.

Okinawa Islands

The Okinawa Islands, a cluster of 160 subtropical islands south of Kyushu, have all the makings of a celestial Kyushu side-trip if you have the time. The islands, which are easily accessible by ferry from the mainland, boast everything from white-sand surf beaches to World Heritage sites, such as the 700-year-old Nakijin

Castle. In spring, it's also one of the first places in Japan where you can see the cherry trees blossom.

Getting around

Operated by national rail provider JR Rail, the Kyushu Rail Pass is a reliable and highly effective way to travel around Kyushu. It allows foreign visitors to board limited express trains and Shinkansen (excluding Sanyo Shinkansen) for a five-day period for \$193 or ¥17,490. Alternatively, travel company Inside Japan offers an excellent 13-day Kyushu Elements tour that spans the island's sights and natural landmarks, and covers transfers, rail pass, breakfast and accommodation, from approximately \$5273. 🌐



STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN KYUSHA - JAPAN INCLUDE:



J's Nichinan Resort D867 **Miyazaki-Ken, Japan**

Combining traditional Japanese style with simple Western comforts, J's Nichinan Resort offers guests an ideal place to experience Nichinan. With many different attractions within 15 minutes to an hour of the resort, guests can explore the destination and return to the resort's amenities, which include

an onsite restaurant, pool, outdoor spa with aromatherapy treatments, 18-hole golf course with gorgeous views, Korean-style granite steam sauna, and entertainment options like karaoke. For added convenience, guests can also take advantage of the resort's concierge services during their stay.



J's Kobayashi Golf & Resort D866 **Miyazaki-Ken, Japan**

The resort's prime location in one of the most vibrant areas of Kyushu offers many exciting activities for vacationers. Families and couples can enjoy the resort onsite hiking trails for daytime adventure, as well as take a walk around the pristine greens for a round of golf. Work up a sweat at the

fitness center and then pamper yourself with a massage at the spa. Enjoy a bite to eat at the resort restaurant or make your own delicious dish on the outdoor grills.

For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's toll free number (refer to back cover)

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Members Education

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New Affiliate Resorts

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RCI Cruises



Stay the Course

DON'T SKIP OUT ON YOUR DAILY JOG. THESE TIPS HELP YOU KEEP IN SHAPE WHILE YOU'RE ON VACATION

BASED ON ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 2015 U.S. ENDLESS VACATION MAGAZINE, WRITTEN BY HANNAH WALLACE.

Just a decade ago, runners on vacation had to find new routes on their own, either dodging traffic in unfamiliar cities or asking their resort concierge for an easy 5km loop. These days runners have so many online resources to choose from, the question is, which one to use? We asked Elizabeth Comeau, digital editor at Zelle, Runner's World's new online magazine for women, for the best ways to find great runs when you travel.

Crowdsource your run

So-called map apps can be full of information, allowing you to search runs by location and length. Comeau recommends MapMyRun.com, RunKeeper.com and Strava.com. These apps, all of which are free, also have a community aspect: They let you upload your run and share it with other runners. (You can make your profile public or limit your audience to people in your social network.) "If there's a route you do a lot, you can save it and even name it," says Comeau, who had one called "Elizabeth's lunchtime Castle Island Run" when she lived in Boston. All three apps have robust membership internationally as well as domestically, which means that you can find routes in Amsterdam, Munich, Tokyo or New York just as easily as in Singapore or Seoul.

Map it online

Though it's not an app, Runner World (runnersworld.com) has a route finder with a perk. You can search by surface type: grass, asphalt, and trail, track and so on.




Yelp it

Turns out Yelp is not just for restaurant reviews. "When I really have trouble finding a route, I go to Yelp," Comeau says. She enters the city she's about to visit, clicks on the Talk menu (a general Q&A forum) and then fires away. "Yelp has really loyal users-and a segment of them happen to be runners."

Run with a club

Most cities have at least one running club, and it typically offers several daily runs. "A bonus you run with will tell you where the best coffee is," Comeau says. Most running stores know about local clubs, but you can also find a directory at coolrunning.com.

Wear a fitness tracker

Though they don't find you a route, wearable fitness trackers, like Misfit and Fitbit, are more accurate than apps at tacking your distance, pace, calories burned and heart rate. They can also be synced with app apps, and this makes it easy to get the best out of both tools. Comeau wears a Fitbit on her wrist but says Polar and Garmin make good fitness trackers as well. A fitness tracker is also easier to run with than a clunky smartphone. 



Shutterbug Apps

MOST OF US TODAY HAVE A GOOD QUALITY CAMERA IN OUR SMARTPHONE OR TABLET. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TURN YOUR NEXT VACATION HAPPY SNAPS INTO PROFESSIONAL LOOKING IMAGES, THERE'S AN ABUNDANCE OF APPS YOU CAN DOWNLOAD TO GIVE YOUR PHOTOS THAT WOW FACTOR.

BY GARY MACNAMARA

We take a look at six IOS and Android camera apps to help you on your way.

Rookie Cam™ - By JellyBus Inc.* (free)

A filter camera photo editor perfect for beginners and keen photographers. Use Rookie's built-in camera instead of the default camera app. The app comes with exciting camera options and advanced editing tools including real time filters, as well as fonts, badges, stickers and frames.

Snapseed - By Google, Inc.* (free)

Brings to your mobile device the power and control of professional photo-editing software, previously only available on the desktop. With the tap of a finger, you can retouch, adjust perspective and re-edit.

AutoStitch - By Zhang Guangjian* (\$6.70)

Extends the capability of your digital camera by stitching up to 40 overlapping images into stunning panoramas.

Hipstamatic - By Hipstamatic, LLC* (\$2.60)

The hip choice for filtered pics, bringing digital photography back to an analog state of mind. Choose from a number of built-in features, or purchase your favorites in the in-app filter store.

LensLight - By BrainFeverMedia* (\$5.25)

A simple and user-friendly, offering customizable lighting effects. Add multicolored spotlights, glints, light leaks, or bokeh (the way the lens renders out-of-focus points of light) to boost your happy snaps.

Color Splash - By Pocket Pixels Inc.* (\$2)

Takes a step away from photo filters, allowing you to color in or take away the color for selected areas on your image. The effect is a unique perspective on an otherwise run-of-the-mill photo.

To download go to iTunes® App store or for Android Google Play.

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Open an Ongoing Search

Can't find the vacation you are looking for?

New deposits come in every single day, so let us do the work for you!

Open an Ongoing Search

RCI will search for you 24/7 and notify you when a match is found. An Ongoing Search is like putting yourself on a waiting list for your dream vacation. It is the first place newly member deposited weeks are matched against, so members on the list are first in line and get prioritized access to the new deposited weeks before they're available online!





Getting started is simple:

1. Click the Ongoing Search tab on the right-hand side of the search screen and enter your vacation criteria.

You can be as specific as you want, but as with a standard search, being flexible gives you the most options.

2. Begin your search.

RCI will continue to search until a resort match is found.

3. Get a notification to confirm!

RCI will contact you as soon as a resort match is found. You have the option of RCI auto-booking the resort for you as soon as a match comes through or you can wait and confirm it yourself. But remember, once a match is found, you only have 24 hours to confirm before the vacation is released to another member on the waitlist.





CHOOSE CHINA

New resorts to visit

New affiliated resorts are added to the RCI portfolio every month giving you more options to choose from. Here are three more resorts to choose from in China. RCI have more than 4,500 resorts in over 100 countries around the world, so what are you waiting for?

Chengdu, China at traditional Qintai Road district.



SHANGSHANQI DA09

Qingcheng Mountain, Chengdu, Republic of China

Qingcheng Mountain is one of four famous mountains of Taoism in China, and a popular scenic spot in Chengdu. The resort is situated in Qingcheng Mountain tourism area, 800 meters away from the Qingcheng Mountain Scenic spot. It is about an hour drive from the city area, or 40 minutes by high speed rail. There are about 100 villa buildings in Shangshanqi Resort; 25 two bedroom units with full kitchen and a living room will be affiliated with RCI.



TAOYUAN HOTSPRING INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DA07

Dayi Chengdu, Republic of China

Located in the west of Chengdu, about an hour's drive from the airport. There are many scenic attractions around the hotel, such as Xiling Snow Mountain, Leshan, Dujiang Weir etc. It is also located near Qingcheng Mountain, which is regarded as the birthplace of Taoism. The hotel architecture is therefore strongly influenced by Taoism, to celebrate the rich Taoism culture and history of the area. Facilities onsite include hot spring pool, gym, business center, chinese and western restaurants etc.



BOAO HOLLIYARD SEAVIEW HOTEL DA12
Qionghai, East of Hainan Island, Republic of China

Boao Holliyard Seaview Resort is located in the tourism area of Qionghai, east of Hainan Island and 90km from Haikou Airport. The town is famous for the Boao Forum for Asia, a platform for dialogues among Asian government, business leaders and experts to promote economic exchange and corporation. The annual conference is held at Boao every year.

The resort has 384 luxurious seaview rooms spread over 18 floors, offering a scenic view of the nearby mountains and the sea of Boao. Each room is exquisitely furnished with a modern design and all the amenities needed for a comfortable stay, including complimentary wireless internet access. The hotel offers an excellent variety of recreational facilities, such as indoor and outdoor swimming pool, sauna, fitness center and a full-service spa. It is a 15-minute drive from Boao Golf and Country Club and Qionghai Boao Oriental Culture Garden.

For additional resort listings,
visit RCI.com or call your country's
toll free number (refer to back cover)



SAVE
U\$1000
per cabin



**UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE
RIVER CRUISE, GANGES
VOYAGER II**

River Cruise Mighty Ganges

12 Night

From Delhi to Kolkata

Ports of Call: Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Kolkata,
Bandel, Kalna, Matiari, Murshidabad, Mayapur,
Chandranagar, Kolkata.

Selected departure in March 2016

Suite (03) Twin Share

**Now from U\$6750*pp
Twin Share**



SAVE
U\$1100
per cabin



**UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE RIVER
CRUISE, GANGES VOYAGER II**

Cruise River Ganges

12 Night

From Delhi to Kolkata

Ports of Call: Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Kolkata,
Bandel, Kalna, Matiari, Murshidabad, Mayapur,
Chandranagar, Kolkata

Selected departure in February 2016

Outside (03) Twin Share

**Now from U\$6960*pp
Twin Share**



SAVE
U\$600
per cabin



**TRAVELMARVEL, LA
MARGUERITE**

Cruise Majestic Mekong

11 Night

From Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon to Siem Reap

Ports of Call: Ho Chi Minh, Cai Be, Sa Dec, Tan
Chau, Phnom Penh, Chong Koh, Kampong
Chhnang, Siem Reap, Angkor Wat.

Selected departure in February 2016

Outside (C) Twin Share

Now from U\$2935*pp Twin Share



SAVE
U\$600
per cabin



APT, RV AMADARA

River Cruise Majestic Mekong

7 Night

From Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon to Siem Reap

Ports of Call: Ho Chi Minh (Saigon), Cai Be,
Sa Dec, Tan Chau, Phnom Penh, Kampong
Chhnang, Siem Reap.

Selected departure in February 2016

Suite (A) Twin Share

**Now from U\$3155*pp
Twin Share**



SAVE
U\$1000
per cabin



APT, AVALON MYANMAR

Cruise Alluring Irrawaddy

13 Night

Round trip from Whittier

Ports of Call: Yangon (Rangoon), Bhamo, Kyun
Daw, Tigyang, Katha, Kya Hnyat, Kyauk Myaung,
Mandalay, Sagaing, Shwe Pyi Thar, Bagan.

Selected departure in December 2015

Outside (B) Twin Share

**Now from U\$5175*pp
Twin Share**



SAVE
U\$700
per cabin



APT, AMALOTUS

Cruise Majestic Mekong & Tonle Sap

7 Night

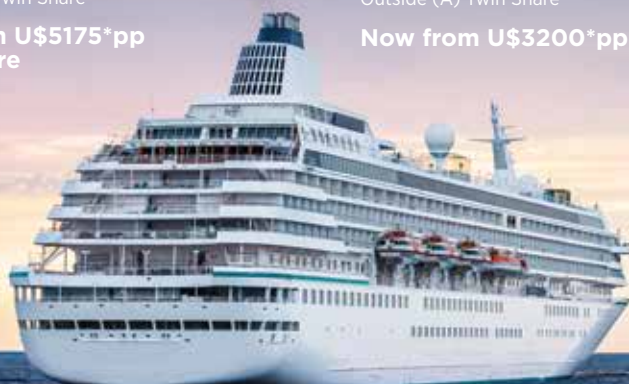
From Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon to Siem Reap

Ports of Call: Ho Chi Minh (Saigon), Cai Be,
Sa Dec, Tan Chau, Phnom Penh, Kampong Chhnang,
Siem Reap (Tonle Sap Lake).

Selected departure in April 2016

Outside (A) Twin Share

Now from U\$3200*pp Twin Share





SAVE
US\$600
per cabin



PRINCESS CRUISES,
DIAMOND PRINCESS

Cruise Far East Asia

18 Night

Round trip from Tokyo (Yokohama)

Ports of Call: Yokohama, Naha Okinawa, Keelung Taipei, Hualien, Kushi, Korsakov, Sakhalin, Russia, Otaru, Hokodate, Aomori.

Selected departure in June 2016

Inside (IC) Twin Share

Now from US\$2720*pp Twin Share



SAVE
AU\$1300
per couple



PRINCESS CRUISES,
SAPPHIRE PRINCESS

Cruise Asia

15 Night

Round trip from Singapore

Ports of Call: Singapore, Bandar Seri Begawan, Nha Trang, Phu My, Sihanouville, Laem Chabang, Ko Samui, Penang, Langkawi, Port Klang.

Selected departure in January 2016

Outside (IE) Twin Share

Now from US\$1250*pp Twin Share



SAVE
AU\$1000
per couple



PRINCESS CRUISES,
SAPPHIRE PRINCESS

Cruise Asia

17 Night

From Singapore to Beijing

Ports of Call: Singapore, Laem Chabang / Bangkok, Phu My/ Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong (overnight), Shanghai, Nagasaki, Busan, Beijing.

Selected departure in March 2016

Balcony (IE) Twin Share

Now from US\$1280*pp Twin Share



BEST BUY



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CELEBRITY MILLENNIUM

Cruise Asia

14 Night

Round trip from Singapore

Ports of Call: Singapore, Ho Chi Minh, Hue, Hong Kong, Manila, Boracay, Kota, Kinabalu.

Selected departure in January 2016

Inside (10) Twin Share

Now from US\$1350*pp Twin Share



BEST BUY



PRINCESS CRUISES,
SAPPHIRE PRINCESS

Asia Cruise

5 Night

Round trip from Singapore

Ports of Call: Singapore, Laem Chabang/ Bangkok, Ko Samui.

Selected Departure in March 2016

Oceanview (OZ Obstructed) Twin Share

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BEST BUY



ROYAL CARIBBEAN
INTERNATIONAL, MARINER
OF THE SEAS

Cruise Far East Asia

9 Night

From Singapore to Shanghai

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Selected Departure in March 2016

Inside (N) Twin Share

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weekenders

Ko Samui...
Where everyone is welcome.

<< KO SAMUI, THAILAND



Bird's eye view of Angthong national marine park.



Big Buddha



Ko Samui cocktail

AS THAILAND'S SECOND LARGEST ISLAND AFTER PHUKET, KOH SAMUI IS A FAVORITE FOR TRAVELERS OF ALL KINDS. WHETHER YOU ARE A BUDGET TRAVELER WHO WANTS TO STAY A MONTH IN A BEACHSIDE BUNGALOW OR A WEALTHY TOURIST DROPPING IN FOR A WEEKEND AT ONE OF THE MANY LUXURY RESORTS, KOH SAMUI'S DISTINCTIVE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

Situated in the lower gulf of Thailand, Koh Samui is a tourist hot spot with white sandy beaches, coral reefs and an abundance of coconut trees.

The most popular and commercialized beaches are Chaweng and Lamai, while the northern beaches and their nearby villages of Mae Nam, Bophut and Bang Rak (Big Buddha) and Choeng Mon provide a quieter and more peaceful alternative.

As one of the prime vacation destinations in southern Thailand, Koh Samui hosts a great choice of nightlife entertainment options with Chaweng being the Samui version of Patong Beach in Phuket. Chaweng has a variety of sophisticated cocktail and dance bars. If you are up for a party then be sure to check out the famous Green Mango nightclub, which is packed with young revellers every night. The club, which can be reached via wooden bridges passing over the Mango River, is famous for its iconic tree house design and huge open air space featuring multiple bars and dance floors.

Away from the hustle and bustle of Chaweng, Lamai is more laid back than its big sister, but there's still plenty of dining, shopping, spas and great attractions to explore. Choeng Mon Beach in the northeast corner of Samui is just 10 minutes from Chaweng. Unlike the latter, it is a perfect place for those just wanting to relax. Bang Rak, also known as "Big Buddha Beach", in northeast Samui, offers visitors good swimming and picturesque views. The area has developed a lot over the past few years and now has plenty of restaurants, shops, and bars.

Samui is well known for its coconuts which can be purchased everywhere. Being an island, seafood is always a good choice for a meal. The larger beaches have a number of

weekenders KO SAMUI, THAILAND

international restaurants as well, with Bophut having a good reputation. Much of the local cuisine has its origins in Malay, Indonesian and Indian food and some popular dishes include Indian-style Muslim curry (Massaman), rice noodles in fish curry sauce (Khanom Jeen) and Chicken Birayani. If you are looking to go on a diving tour, Bophut Beach is a popular starting point.

The famous Big Buddha shrine is Samui's most well known landmark and the 12-meter high golden Buddha can be seen

from several miles away. Surrounding the temple are many different shrines and other smaller ornate Buddhas to view. There is a small market selling a wide range of souvenirs as well as numerous food stalls.

If you are looking for something different, make sure you visit Grandpa and Grandma Rocks (or locally known as Hin Ta and Hin Yai). These natural rock formations at the south end of Lamai Beach bear a striking resemblance to male and female genitalia and have become one

of the island's more amusing attractions. Get closer with nature by taking a day trip to Ang Thong National Marine Park, a pristine archipelago of 42 islands with towering limestone mountains, thick jungle, white sandy beaches, waterfalls and hidden lakes. The park is a protected area and is great for snorkeling, hiking, sea kayaking, diving and sailing.

Bangkok Airways fly to Ko Samui with hourly departures from Bangkok. There are also daily flights from Phuket, Pattaya, Singapore and Hong Kong.

weekenders KO SAMUI, THAILAND

EAT

H Bistro Bophut

T: +66 77 245 511
101/28 Moo1, Bophut Koh Samui,
Thailand 84320

Situated facing the seafront, H Bistro serves French and Mediterranean and also caters for vegetarians. An idyllic place for cocktails with diners able to enjoy great views from the wooden decked terrace. It is just a short walk from Bophut's main shopping area.

www.siamdiningguide.com

9Gems Lounge Restaurant

T: +66 80 6920 520
141/190 Moo6, Bophut Koh Samui,
Thailand 84320

Enjoy 360 degree views of Chaweng Beach and Chaweng Lake at this poolside restaurant and alfresco lounge. The restaurant offers world fusion food, tapas and fine cocktails. Open from 4.30pm to 10pm daily.

www.9gemssamui.com

Otaru Sushi Japanese Restaurant

T: +66 77601 222
Chaweng Beach Road, Chaweng,
Ko Samui, Thailand 84320

Serving authentic Japanese food, the restaurant offers great traditional sushi and sashimi, including some incredible melt-in-your-mouth Otoro (tuna belly). Open daily from 11.30am to 10.30pm.

RELAX

Aquapark Chaweng

T: +66 0 094 582 0313
Chaweng Beach Road, Chaweng,
Koh Samui, Thailand, 84320

Aquapark Chaweng provides fun beach activities for the whole family. Located at Chaweng beach, the aquapark features eight large inflatable floating devices including a five-meter high iceberg wall, a human catapult and trampoline. Prices - \$20 (half day). Open from 10am to 6pm.

www.aquaparkchaweng.com

Samui Football Golf

T: +66 0 087 380 1332
63/240 Moo 5, Bohphut Koh Samui,
Thailand, 84320

Use your foot for golf playing football golf. A new game created in Koh Samui that is great for families and friends. Get to play 18 holes for an hour. Open 9am to 6.30pm. Prices - Adults \$30, Children \$14.

www.samuifootballgolf.com

Magnolia Spa

T: + 66 77 601 133
21 Moo 2, North Chaweng, Bophut,
Ko Samui, Thailand, 84320

This well known day spa offers a range of well being and beauty treatments and services to purify and invigorate on both the outside and inside. A 90-minute traditional Thai massage costs \$35.

www.magnoliakohsamui.com

EXPLORE

Laem Sor Pagoda

Located at the end of Bang Kao Beach, the Pagoda is a place where Buddhists come to worship and pray. Its golden hue makes for a great photo opportunity and the Pagoda's structure and architecture attracts many history buffs. The entrance is guarded by two 'Yak' (giant) warrior statues with immense swords and colorful clothing - Entrance is free.

www.kohsamuiopoint.com

Samui Aquarium & Tiger Show

T: +66 (0)77 424 017-8
33/2 Moo 2, Ban Harn Beach, Koh Samui,
Thailand, 84310

The aquarium features marine life native to the Gulf of Thailand including nurse sharks, leopard sharks, manta rays and many kinds of tropical fish. Visitors can also feed the sea turtles. At the zoo, the main attraction is the Bengal tigers and leopards with daily live shows. Open daily from 9am to 6pm. Prices - Adult \$10, Children \$6.

www.samuiaquariumandtigerzoo.com

100 Degrees East Dive Team

T: + 66 77 245 936
23/5 Moo 4, T Bophut, Ko Samui, Thailand, 84320

Ko Samui's premier marine team offers dive education tours and exclusive snorkeling tours to Koh Tao and Anghong National Marine Park. Try the Anghong National Marine Park Snorkeling Tour. Open 9.30am to 5pm. Maximum 12 guests per tour. Lunch and resort transfers provided.

www.100degreeseast.com

STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN KO SAMUI INCLUDE:



Saboev Resort and Villas

This beautiful, secluded resort is conveniently located in the northeast of the island on Bangrak Beach, a 4km crescent of white sand and azure waters. Designed to maximize serenity, space and privacy.
3 nights from \$500 R844
4 nights from \$535 R845
7 nights from \$700 R846

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Selangor... “The gateway to Malaysia”



Shah Alam Mosque

STRATEGICALLY LOCATED AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL MAJOR TRAVEL ROUTES, THE STATE OF SELANGOR ON THE WEST COAST OF THE PENINSULAR OF MALAYSIA IS KNOWN FOR ITS RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE, EXOTIC CULINARY DELIGHTS, SHOPPING SPLENDORS AND THE MAGNIFICENT SEPANG GOLDCOAST.

Just a 45-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the AVANI Sepang Goldcoast Resort is a tropical paradise and a great place to relax and explore all the best that Selangor has to offer.

Conveniently located in the new golden triangle of Sepang, this eco-friendly resort is the ideal beachfront and over water getaway commanding breathtaking views over the Straits of Malacca. It's the perfect location for diving, snorkeling and many other water sports. If you enjoy shopping, there's a courtesy mini bus from the resort into Kuala Lumpur.

Within a short driving distance from the AVANI Sepang Goldcoast Resort, you can

take the Mangrove River Cruise and meander past dense jungle and lush mangroves while checking out exotic birds, monkeys, eagles and monitor lizards. Less than half an hour away is the Formula 1 Sepang International Circuit, home of the Malaysian Grand Prix. Enjoy a half-day tour and take the drive of your life with this adrenalin rush experience. Or if you are looking for something a little more passive there is a Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary nearby. You can get up close and personal

and meet orphaned wild Asian elephants in their native forest environment.

Selangor has many outdoor activities such as the famous Sunway Lagoon Theme Park, which also features a mini zoo. Experience the thrill of white water rafting, caving, tubing or motor biking at the cascading waterfalls in Ulu Langat and Rawang. Another popular destination for water sports is the Puchong Water Sports Village. The Bukit Cahayain in Shah Alam is a great place for cycling and if you are up for a challenge, there are various obstacle courses to choose from. History lovers can explore Shah Alam's historic sites or its numerous forest reserves, temples and dark caves.

Just 15km north of Kuala Lumpur are the iconic Batu Caves, which attract thousands of pilgrims and tourists during the colorful Hindu Festival, Thaipusam. Rising at a height of almost 100 meters above ground level, the Batu Caves feature temples and Hindu shrines and are also a popular spot for rock climbing enthusiasts, offering more than 169 climbing routes.

A trip to Selangor would not be complete without sampling the wide range of interesting and varied cuisine. Malay cuisine is most prominent along with Chinese, Indian and international fare. Kajang, a town in Selangor, is known for its delicious satay, packed with succulent beef or chicken and barbequed over charcoal. Rojak Klang, Lontong Klang and Mee Bandung Muar are famous cuisines in Klang and Shah Alam while other famous dishes include Mee Jawa, Satay Kajang, Laksa Selangor, Soto Nasi Himpit and Mee Soto, Sambal

Tahun, Ketam Darul Ehsan and Sayur Masak Rebung.

If you enjoy the elegance and refinement of Japanese food, try the Shogun Japanese Buffet, Tenji Japanese Buffet and Tao Japanese Buffet. For the seafood buffs, restaurants such as the Fatty Crab Restaurant and the Damansara Village Steamboat are always popular with tourists.

Selangor is home to many great shopping malls including the One Utama Shopping Mall, The Curve, Ikano Power Center (IPC) and Tropicana City Mall

conveniently located in Petaling Jaya. The One Utama Shopping Mall is known for its wide range of dining, fashion and entertainment options while the Amcorp Mall specializes in second-hand goods and is perfect for all your technology and IT-related shopping.

For something different, the bustling night markets known as “pasar malam” are filled with small shops and hawkers selling almost everything you can possibly imagine at great budget prices.



Foodies paradise.

weekenders SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

EXPLORE

Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque

T: +60-1-300-88-5050
Persiaran Masjid, Shah Alam

Commonly referred to as the 'Blue Mosque', this is one of the most stunning structures and peaceful places in Selangor. Boasting the tallest minarets in the world, along with an awe-inspiring blue dome.

www.tourism.gov.my/en/au

National Elephant Conservation Centre, Kuala Gandah, Pahang

T: +609-2790 391
Situating about 15km from Lanchang town within Temerloh District, Pahang

This is an excellent way to get up close with rescued elephants and learn about elephant conservation efforts in Malaysia. For the brave and adventurous, there are opportunities to take the elephants down to the river and help give them a bath. Visitors are encouraged to participate in the activities which start at 10.30am.

www.wildlife.gov.my

Half Day Batu Caves Tour - Online bookings only

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Start your excursion with the visit of the Malaysian Batik Cottage as well as a short stop at the Royal Selangor Pewter factory. Then proceed to the Batu Caves. Resort pickups, price includes morning tea. Departs daily 9am or 2pm, duration 3.5 hours, Adults \$27, Children \$16.

www.viator.com

PLAY

Sunway Lagoon Theme Park

T: +603-5639 0000
Sunway Lagoon 3, Jalan PJS 11/11, Bandar Sunway, 46150 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Located just 15 minutes from Kuala Lumpur. You'll find five different theme parks in one amazing destination with more than 80 rides and attractions to choose from. Open daily 10am-6pm. Adults \$31.00, Children \$27.70.

www.sunwaylagoon.com

Half-Day Mangrove River Cruise for Two

Enjoy the ride down the Sepang Besar River and cruise past dense jungle and lush mangroves during a scenic river journey. Keep your eyes peeled for monkeys, eagles and monitor lizards, as well as, kingfishers and mudskippers whilst guided by an experienced boat captain. Bookings - Sepang Goldcoast Resort.

www.gha.com/AVANI-Hotels-Resorts/AVANI-Sepang-Goldcoast-Resort

KidZania Kuala Lumpur

T: +603 2203 9666
KidZania, Mutiara Damansara
Curve NX 18 Jalan PJU 7/5, Mutiara Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

KidZania is an indoor family entertainment center that offers an interactive learning and experience for kids in a kid-sized city. Empowering and educating kids through role-play. Open 10am-5pm. Adults \$9, Children \$7.70.

www.kidzania.com.my

STAY

RCI AFFILIATED RESORTS IN SELANGOR INCLUDE:

Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort A540

Golden Palm Tree over water villa resort stretches out from the Sepang coastline, almost a kilometer into the sheltered waters of the Straits of Malacca. The resort features a swimming pool, fitness center, library, TV room, a variety of dining venues and bars, boutiques, and a spa. This five-star property sits in a perfect location to access diving, water sports, excursions and many other recreational activities.



For additional resort listings, visit RCI.com or call your country's toll free number (refer to back cover)

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CALL CENTER OPERATING HOURS

Monday - Friday: 9am - 7pm

Saturday: 9am - 1pm

Sunday: Closed

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