



THE FALL ISSUE

Explore every day

Our favorite  
all-inclusive  
American resorts

Ecuador:  
from Andes  
to Galápagos

4 Mini Guides: LA,  
Toronto, London  
& Barcelona

# Redefine Adventure

**EXPLORE**  
THE  
SECRETS OF  
LONG LIFE  
IN OKINAWA

**DISCOVER**  
ZAMBIA  
ON A  
SELF-DRIVE  
SAFARI

**MEET**  
NORTHERN  
IRELAND'S  
FOOD  
PIONEERS





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Fall 2017 / Volume 3 / Number 3

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// Ursa Minor  
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All prices correct at press time. Prices for hotel rooms are for double, en suite rooms in low season, unless otherwise stated. Flight prices are for the least expensive round-trip ticket.



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A folding kayak!





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# Editor's Note



@peter\_grunert

@petervg73

The research trip for this issue's Great Escape to Ecuador allowed me to embrace adventure in the most active, traditional sense – one that courses through Lonely Planet's 44-year heritage. It asked for me to pull on rain boots and trek through vivid jungles. It carried me aboard a local train that snaked around – and sometimes right through – extinct Andean volcanoes. It coaxed me off an expedition ship, into Pacific waters that whirled with rays, turtles, pelicans, flightless cormorants and tropical penguins (p. 85).

In the true spirit of adventure, there were surprises along the way. I had my first taste of guinea pig (deep fried, so if I closed my eyes I could have imagined it emerging from a KFC family bucket). I learned that when I came too close, marine iguanas like to violently sneeze out the salt they absorb after diving to feast on seaweed. And I confirmed that playing a tune on the panpipes is nowhere near as simple as it seems.

Adventure can just as easily arrive through boundaries pushed or perceptions challenged – and whether near or far from home. Elsewhere in the pages of this issue, adventure in all its forms arrives as we taste a relic of Soviet culture frozen in time in Portland, Oregon (p. 22), and hit a road less traveled between Nashville, Tennessee, and Natchez, Mississippi (p. 32, and also see below). We head beyond the crumbling facades of Havana, Cuba's capital, to hear a diverse group of locals share their love of a city still open to American visitors, though in more restricted circumstances (p. 74). And we meet a new generation of food pioneers reshaping the reputation of Northern Ireland, where some of the world's best produce emerges from a fertile hinterland and pristine shores (p. 62).

Our exploration of the definition of adventure includes attending a folk festival in the fairy-tale forests of Bulgaria (p. 97); hopping between the Japanese islands of Okinawa that shelter the secrets to a long and happy life (p. 36); and renting a 4x4 for a self-driven camping trip in the countryside – albeit one that plays host to Africa's top predators: lions, leopards and crocodiles (p. 48).

*Peter Grunert, Group Editor*

Lonely Planet's unique logo was hand drawn by our founder Tony Wheeler 44 years ago. Check out its updated style on the cover of this issue.

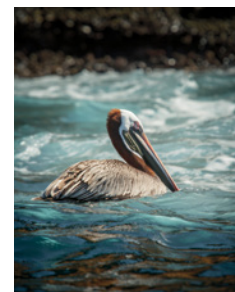


### About the Cover:

Trekking through the jungle in Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park on Okinawa's Iriomote Island. With untouched jungles, mangrove swamps, coral-fringed beaches and clear turquoise waters, the Okinawa archipelago is a subtropical paradise.

**Photo:**

Ippei + Janine Naoi  
**Lettering:**  
Joseph Ernst



A brown pelican paddles past shores of lava on the Galápagos Islands, Ecuador.

# Contributors



**Philip Lee Harvey**

Photographer

"Take a Drive on the Wild Side"

p. 48

"Backstage Havana"

p. 74

Ecuador Great Escape

p. 85

Photographing three features in this issue led to some memorable encounters, from meeting Olympic-standard boxers in Havana to leopards in Zambia. A particular honor for me was to benefit from the knowledge of guide José Napa in the cloud forests of Ecuador. Napa has built up an incredible knowledge of the wildlife of this fragile environment. With his help I was able to capture a pair of emerald-green hummingbirds performing their courtship display.



**Trisha Ping**

Destination Editor

"Nashville to Natchez"

p. 32

As the Lonely Planet Destination Editor for the eastern U.S., I am always eager to spread the word about the incredible places in my region. The Natchez Trace is especially close to my heart because it starts in my adopted hometown of Nashville. The history, culture and jaw-dropping scenery along this winding two-lane highway make it one of my favorite road trips of all time, and fall is the best season to experience it. Enjoy the ride.



# Globetrotter

A WORLD OF TRAVEL TRENDS & DISCOVERIES

Explore the  
Brazilian metropolis  
of São Paulo, seen here  
in a view from atop  
the towering  
Banespa Building

p. 26



## SELFIES AS BOARDING PASSES?



### Step 1



Customer steps up to camera; photo is captured

### Step 2



Photo is transmitted to U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP)

### Step 3



CBP matches image to passport photo in database

### Step 4



Customer gets the go-ahead to board the plane

Put on some lipstick and strike a pose: soon you could be using a selfie as a boarding pass. In a move designed to cut passenger wait times, JetBlue was set to begin trying selfie self-boarding over the summer on flights from Boston's Logan airport to Aruba's Queen Beatrix airport.



The first waterpark for people of all abilities opened over the summer in San Antonio, Texas. Morgan's Inspiration Island, part of Morgan's Wonderland theme park, has five fully accessible play areas and a boat ride. // Waterpark admission from \$12; [morganswonderland.com](http://morganswonderland.com)



Leaving behind the soap in your hotel could help save lives.

Orlando, Florida-based Clean the World has been working since 2009 to help recycle hotel soap bars and redistribute them to impoverished people around the world in an effort to combat hygiene-related illnesses. The company partners with more than 4,000 North American hotels toward the effort. // [cleantheworld.org](http://cleantheworld.org)

## FINALLY!

## A CURE FOR VAN ENVY

Social media is full of people who have ditched the standard 9 to 5 to live the #vanlife. If you're feeling the call of the road, Native Campervans, of Denver, Colorado, makes it simple for you to test out your fantasy. The company rents stylish converted two-person vans in two sizes – perfect for traveling to the region's national parks. Bedding and cookware are included. Ready to hit the road? Campervan rental companies are available from coast to coast. Check out one of these:

### Native Campervans



**Location:** Denver, Colorado  
**Cost:** From \$85 daily  
**Good to Know:** three-day minimum rental period  
[nativecampervans.com](http://nativecampervans.com)

### Vintage Surfari Wagons



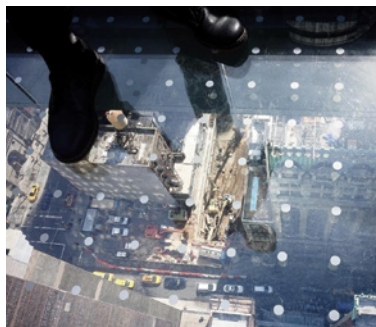
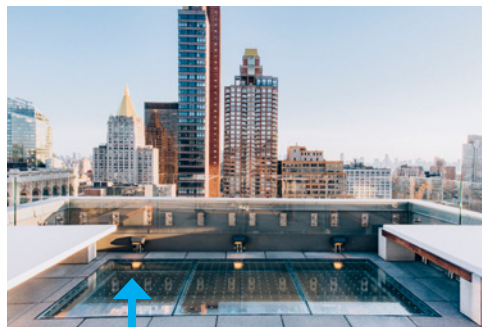
**Location:** Costa Mesa, California  
**Cost:** From \$129 daily  
**Good to Know:** also offers camping tours in California  
[vwsurfari.com](http://vwsurfari.com)

### Trailer made



**Locations:** Various cities  
**Cost:** From \$80  
**Good to Know:** Airbnb-style service rents campers and private campsites  
[trailer made.co](http://trailer made.co)





### DON'T LOOK DOWN! (BUT, REALLY, DO)

Situated atop NYC's Arlo NoMad Hotel, a new rooftop bar, aptly named The Heights, offers a spectacular view of Manhattan, including the Empire State Building. The bar's transparent glass floor allows you to have a bird's-eye look at the city from 31 stories high. Between the see-through floor and the entirely glass railings that enclose the area, the space feels as if it is suspended among the madness of Midtown. // Cocktails from \$14; [theheightsarlonomad.com](http://theheightsarlonomad.com)

### America's dream destinations ranked

Travel Leaders Group conducted a nationwide survey and found that Australia remains the top dream destination for Americans. Here are the 2017 survey's top 5 results:



- #1 Australia
- #2 Italy
- #3 Bora Bora
- #4 Ireland
- #5 New Zealand



**SEOUL'S FLOATING PARK** Built on an old highway, the recently opened Seoul Skygarden extends for over a half-mile, connecting the city's central train station, Namdaemun Market, and the neighborhoods of Malli-dong, Jungnim-dong and Cheongpa-don. Destined for demolition, the 1970s highway was salvaged as part of a plan to make the city more pedestrian-friendly. It will have no less than 24,000 different trees, shrubs and flowers, many of which will grow to maturity in the years to come.

# POP

Trips and happenings inspired by the songs and shows we love

# TOURISM



**An exhibition honoring and inspired by songwriting giant Leonard Cohen (1934–2016)** is set to open November 9 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, Cohen's hometown. The exhibit will include installations by 40 artists from 10 countries. // Admission \$12; [macm.org](http://macm.org)

**Travel company Black Tomato has created a set of tours** based on the TV series *Game of Thrones*, *The Crown*, *Westworld*, *The Young Pope* and *Twin Peaks*. Excursions include private tours of film sets and visits to area sites, such as Iceland's Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon on the *Thrones* tour. // From \$4,219; [blacktomato.com/us](http://blacktomato.com/us)

**The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is hosting an exhibit celebrating Rolling Stone magazine's 50th anniversary.** Audio interviews, famous magazine covers and letters to the editor from celebrities are among the items on display at the Cleveland, Ohio, museum through November. // Admission \$23.50; [rockhall.com](http://rockhall.com)



**São Paulo, Brazil, can be an overwhelming experience, even for seasoned travelers. The large and diverse South American city is filled with cultural offerings, fascinating architecture and culinary hot spots. Here are some ideas on how to make the most of a visit to this pulsing metropolis.**

**1**

Go beyond traditional caipirinhas (Brazil's national cocktail) to cutting-edge concoctions at the alluring speakeasy SubAstor, a bar that focuses on inventive takes on classic cocktails as well as boundary-pushing libations. // [subastor.com.br](http://subastor.com.br)



**2**

See some of Brazil's best art in the Pinacoteca do Estado, a museum dedicated to the country's most notable artworks from the 19th century to the present. The neoclassical building itself is lovely and worth a look, too. // [pinacoteca.org.br](http://pinacoteca.org.br)

**3**

New York City has the Empire State Building and São Paulo has the Banespa, a 528-foot-tall skyscraper with one of the most impressive views of the city. Bonus: there's no cost to ride the elevator to the top-floor observation deck. // Rua João Bricola 24



**4**

See the Mosteiro São Bento, one of the city's oldest churches, in a whole new light by having a top-flight brunch with the monks. Book well in advance to partake in this unique feast, offered every other Sunday. // [mosteiro.org.br](http://mosteiro.org.br)

**5**

One of the best ways to get a sense of a place is to eat where the locals do. There is no better spot to do this than the Mercado Municipal, a belle époque-style covered market filled with gastronomic delights from the region. // [oportaldomercadado.com.br](http://oportaldomercadado.com.br)

**6**

Walk through the city's nearly 500 years of history on a free tour and learn about historical buildings, street art and more. Stops along the way offer discounts on any purchases that you make. // [spfreetour.com](http://spfreetour.com)

**7**

This temple to high-end plastic footwear offers bold and unique designs by an international potpourri of creative folks, like Vivienne Westwood and Jeremy Scott. Each new shoe line brings a different storefront. // [melissa.com.br](http://melissa.com.br)







## Q&A

with **Bonnie Morales** of **Kachka**

**Chef Bonnie Morales has started a Russian food revolution with Kachka, her lauded Portland, Oregon, restaurant. This fall, she's preparing for the opening of a second location in the city and the November release of her cookbook, *Kachka: A Return to Russian Cooking*.**

As told to Cindy Guier | Photographs by Rush Jago

**Q** *How did Kachka come to be?*

**A** When my husband, Israel, and I were dating, he absolutely fell in love with the food my mom would make at home. We'd stay up nights talking about opening a restaurant serving that kind of food, and eventually we pulled the trigger. The concept is all about honoring the cuisines of the former Soviet Union and the dishes served around my family table. The aesthetic of the dining room is mid-20th century Soviet Union. I wanted it to feel like a freeze frame from before my



**From far left:** Chef Bonnie Morales at Kachka; the restaurant's iconic "herring under a fur coat" (bottom plate) is a layered salad of pickled herring, potatoes, onions, carrots, beets, mayonnaise and eggs; tvorog vareniki (top) are scallion-topped dumplings filled with farmer's cheese.

parents emigrated from the USSR. It's interesting because my parents' understanding of what it means to be "Russian" or "Soviet" stopped in 1979. So everything I understand about our culture is based on 1979 and earlier. I wanted the restaurant to express that.

**Q** *Describe the experience of dining at Kachka.*

**A** We want people to have fun! We have a thing on the menu about "How to eat like a Russian," which is meant to get people to think about food and drink as two parts of a whole. We encourage toasting and clinking glasses and eating, and repeating that over and over. That gets guests to relax and not be so serious about dining. We keep the music upbeat and distinctly Russian. The whole thing makes for a very memorable night.

**Q** *Is there a specific travel moment or memory that influences the way you approach food?*

**A** No matter where in the world you go, I find that the best meals are always at someone's home. So I think about that a lot when designing a dish. I want to make food for people that they crave and that feels real, but with the execution of a trained cook. I try to not let ego get involved. Kachka is here to feed people, not for accolades.

**Q** *What dish (one of yours or someone else's) sums up the city for you?*

**A** For me it's not really a dish as much as an ingredient: Hood strawberries, u-picked in the warm sun on Sauvie Island. It is the reason we moved to Portland. Not an exaggeration.



**IT'S NOT  
WHAT  
YOU THINK**

Morales says Americans have “tons of misconceptions” about Russian food. “People assume it is heavy, that there are no vegetables, that everything is drab and limp. I think that couldn’t be further from the truth. Even Siberia has summers!”

**CHEF  
MORALES'S  
TOP PICKS**



“At **FIFTY LICKS**, I recommend either the vanilla or the coconut lemon saffron sorbet. I don’t typically go for vanilla, but theirs has such an intensity that it will haunt you – and they put a drop of raspberry jam at the bottom of the cone.”

“**BETSY & IYA** is my favorite jewelry store. They sell their own pieces as well as a nicely curated selection from other local jewelry designers. They also sell really great bath products and some clothing.”



Hazelnut and cocoa nib granola with cherries, anise hyssop and yogurt at Coquine, a neighborhood café serving French-inspired farm-to-table fare. **At left:** a view from Portland’s Mount Tabor Park

“I love everything at **COQUINE**, but my favorite time to go there is for breakfast mid-week. It’s a refuge. And absolutely everything is executed just perfectly. Take a walk in **MOUNT TABOR PARK** after eating here to get a great westward view of Portland.”



**"THE JAPANESE GARDEN  
JUST WENT THROUGH A  
MAJOR EXPANSION AND  
THOUGH IT WAS BEAUTIFUL  
BEFORE, IT IS AN ABSOLUTE  
MUST-VISIT NOW.  
JUST GORGEOUS."**





**SIDE TRIPS**



“Walk across **ST. JOHN’S BRIDGE** and grab a pint of beer at **OCCIDENTAL BREWING**. This is the most beautiful bridge in Portland and it just happens that one of my favorite breweries is at the base of the bridge. Two birds, one stone.”



*“The owner, Joel, is a chemisty wiz and has applied his smarts to engineering the perfect canelé.”*

“We have such great coffee in Portland, and **COURIER COFFEE** is an absolutely fantastic small coffee roaster. Getting outstanding coffee is already victory enough in my book, but they happen to also make the best canelé around.”

**These three destinations are less than an hour’s drive from downtown Portland.**

1 “Though it is a pretty popular hike, and therefore can get a little crowded, I think a hike to **Angel’s Rest** is an absolute must. It’s a quick drive from the city for a gorge hike with expansive views. If you’re not into hiking or are strapped for time, stop by the **Portland Women’s Forum** [State Scenic Viewpoint] or **Vista House** instead for similar views.”

>> [oregonstateparks.org](http://oregonstateparks.org)  
>> [vistahouse.com](http://vistahouse.com)

2 “**Sauvie Island** is an agricultural enclave within city limits. There are some lovely u-pick farms for berries in the summer and fun pumpkin patches in the fall. After a good rain, I’ve seen some of the best rainbows here.”

>> [sauvieisland.org](http://sauvieisland.org)

3 “Drive down to Oregon wine country for some wine tasting. There’s more to wine country than wine, if that’s not your thing. **Wolves & People Farmhouse Brewery** makes delicious beer. Stop by their tasting room in an old barn on their property. Visit the **Kookoolan Farm Store** for some of the best chicken and fresh milk. Mosey around the town of Dundee while you’re at it.”

>> [oregonwinecountry.org](http://oregonwinecountry.org)  
>> [wolvesandpeople.com](http://wolvesandpeople.com)  
>> [kookoolanfarms.com](http://kookoolanfarms.com)  
>> [traveldundeeoregon.com](http://traveldundeeoregon.com)





**Cotopaxi Teca jacket:** This eye-catching windbreaker, made using remnant fabric, is a great just-in-case layer for hikers and campers. Ultra lightweight and packable, it's built to block wind and light precipitation. From \$80, [cotopaxi.com](http://cotopaxi.com)

**The Tech**  
Highly porous ceramic removes 99% of lead and arsenic, and 97% of chlorine and fluoride



**GoPure Pod:** This ingenious device purifies water on the go. Just drop it in your bottle or glass and let it work its magic. One pod will last for six months and purify 264 gallons of water. From \$25, [gopurepod.com](http://gopurepod.com)

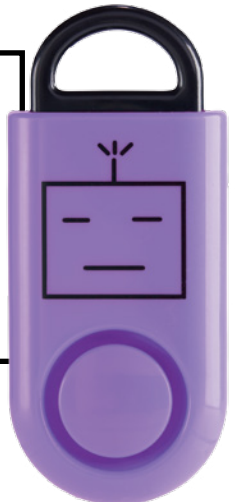
**Ungrip** This nifty strap attaches to the back of any smartphone to make it more secure in your hand – and less likely to drop down that ravine when you're snapping #outdoors selfies. From \$12, [ungripyourphone.com](http://ungripyourphone.com)



**The Voyage pillow** Wear this microbead travel pillow over your eyes, around your head or hand, or any other way that helps you get your beauty sleep. It's 50% smaller than traditional travel pillows, so you'll save precious packing space, too. From \$28, [sondretravel.com](http://sondretravel.com)



**Basu eAlarm:** Yank the plug free from the device to set off a 120-decibel siren that will deter bears, or sound the alarm if you need rescuing – in the wilderness or the city. From \$15.99, [basu.com](http://basu.com)



**Oru Kayak:** This brand draws inspiration from Japanese origami to build fold-up kayaks. It takes just minutes to convert one from box to boat. From \$1,299, [orukayak.com](http://orukayak.com)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF JESSE COSS; JOSE ROMERO; ORU KAYAK; UNGRIP, INC.; BASU.COM; SONDRE TRAVEL





## How to Build a Road-Ready Camera Kit



MaSovaida Morgan,  
Lonely Planet destination editor

**If you want to level up your Instagram game with quality images beyond the typical smartphone snap, follow our tips for packing a travel photography kit.**

**Camera bodies** // Digital single-lens reflex cameras by big brands like Canon and Nikon have long been the go-to choices for serious shooters, but lighter and smaller mirrorless options are gaining traction with hobbyist and professional photographers alike. Mirrorless systems such as the Fujifilm X Series ([fujifilm-x.com](http://fujifilm-x.com)) or Sony Alpha ([alphauniverse.com](http://alphauniverse.com)) have the advantage of being compact and many models host interchangeable lenses for an image quality that's superior to point-and-shoot cameras.

**Lenses** // In general, opt for wide-angle lenses (35mm and lower) for landscapes and telephoto lengths (70mm or higher) for shooting faraway subjects. A versatile zoom lens that shoots from wide angle to telephoto can capture a variety of travel scenes and situations. On the other hand, prime (fixed focal length) lenses often are more compact and an overall better choice for their faster optics and broader aperture settings. Select primes that cover a range of bases: 50mm offers a field of view that closely resembles the human eye; 35mm is a good wide length for landscapes, street scenes and architecture; and 85mm is a solid choice for portraiture. When shooting wildlife, pick primes between 300mm and 600mm.

**Filters** // Thanks to digital editing, the use of filters on camera lenses to modify an image isn't as necessary as it used to be, but there still are a couple of useful ones. UV filters cut atmospheric haze and protect your lens. Circular polarizer filters are good for landscapes; they can boost color saturation, reduce glare and cut reflections.

**Flash** // A flash can be beneficial when there isn't enough indoor ambient light or when you're trying to capture quickly moving subjects outdoors at night. Compact hot shoe-mount flash units pack with ease.

**Travel tripods** // Tripods are necessary if you plan to do any kind of long exposures. Choose a compact model to minimize weight and bulk. Some feature flexible, rubberized segments and can be set up like a traditional tripod or wrapped around available structures like trees or light poles.

**Memory cards and storage** // Bring at least two or three memory cards (in case one gets corrupted) and a card reader to regularly transfer images off your camera. If you can't bring a laptop with you, offload images onto an external hard drive using a portable memory backup device.

### Other supplies

- » Pack a squeeze-bulb blower, a retractable brush (never touch the bristles), and a microfiber lens cloth to keep your camera clean.
- » A remote shutter release controller is great for setting up self-portraits and minimizing vibrations caused by physically pressing the camera's shutter release during long exposures.
- » Pack plenty of batteries, especially if you're shooting in situations where it will be tough to find a power source and recharge.

### TRAVEL HACKS

## What to Tip

Tipping customs vary the world over. Get up to speed with the tipping etiquette of these popular destinations.


For more tipping customs and other expert travel advice, see *Best Ever Travel Tips* (\$9.99), by Lonely Planet Editorial Director Tom Hall.

DESTINATION	RESTAURANTS	BARS	TAXI DRIVERS
Australia	5-10%	Change	Change
Canada	15%	10-15%	10-15%
France	15% service charge by law, 5% optional	Rare	10%
Ireland	10%	Uncommon	10%
Japan	Not customary	Not customary	Not customary
U.K.	10-15%	Uncommon	10% or round up to nearest pound



# *Easy Trips*

QUICK ESCAPES FOR FALL



*A splendid fall  
sunrise along the  
Natchez Trace Parkway,  
just outside Nashville*

«  
—  
*Take a scenic  
drive on  
the historic route*

*p. 32*



## NASHVILLE TO NATCHEZ ON THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

Stretching from the rolling hills of Tennessee to the bluffs of the Mississippi, the Natchez Trace Parkway is one of America's most scenic and historic drives. It's also one of the most tranquil: semi trucks are banned from all 444 miles of the two-lane parkway. Today's Trace was built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration along a well-trod route that carried wildlife, Native Americans and European settlers for centuries. With the blaze of summer behind us and autumn's blazing foliage ahead, it's the perfect season to discover the fascinating history, music and culture along this storied route.



**Clockwise from top left:** A meal at the Loveless Cafe in Nashville; biscuits at the Loveless; the Natchez Trace Parkway Bridge, near the parkway's northern terminus

**444 miles  
from Nashville  
to Natchez**



1

**Music City is as hot as its famous chicken these days.** If you're wondering what Nashville was like before the tourism boom, hit up Bobby's Idle Hour ([bobbysidlehour.com](http://bobbysidlehour.com)). This no-frills dive has live music, a menu featuring pot pies and Vienna sausages, and a craft-free beer list that starts with Budweiser and ends with PBR. Another iconic favorite: The Station Inn ([stationinn.com](http://stationinn.com)). This famous bluegrass venue stands its ground amid towering high-rises in the middle of the city's stylish Gulch neighborhood.

2

**You'll join the Trace in west Nashville, where it meets up with state Route 100.** Before setting off, fill up on satisfying Southern fare at The Loveless Cafe ([lovelesscafe.com](http://lovelesscafe.com)), a classic diner that's been fueling hungry travelers since 1951. The fried chicken is a beautiful thing, but don't miss the famous biscuits and peach preserves.

3

**The Trace's northern section offers some truly glorious scenic overlooks.** But there's one place where the view is equally impressive from below: the double-arched bridge, at mile marker 438. The arches of the 1,500-foot bridge, which won a Presidential Award for Design Excellence in 1995, rise 155 feet over Birdsong Hollow. At the bridge's north end, there's a shoulder where you can take photos from above. After driving across, take the state Route 96 exit to admire the soaring concrete arches from below.

4

**The Trace offers several chances to see Native American archaeological sites, but one of the best and biggest is Pharr Mounds, at mile marker 286.7 about 30 miles northeast of Tupelo, Mississippi.** Dispersed over 90 acres are eight sloping burial mounds. Nearly 2,000 years ago, nomadic tribes returned here to cremate or bury their dead. Copper from as far away as the Great Lakes has been found in these mounds, proof that the tribes were part of a complex trading network.

**For More:** See *Lonely Planet's Epic Bike Rides of the World* (\$35.00) or download the "Americas" chapter at [shop.lonelyplanet.com](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com) (\$4.95).



**Clockwise from top left: Elvis Presley at home with his parents; the Neon Pig; a selection from the Neon Pig butcher shop; cypress swamp; the home of Medgar Evers**



**STAY**

**Historic Oak Hill Inn,** Natchez, Mississippi  
This B&B in a restored 1835 mansion features antiques in the rooms and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Your stay also will include a dose of Southern charm: visitors are greeted with homemade iced tea (from \$160; [historicoakhill.com](http://historicoakhill.com)).

5

**Take a break in Tupelo to tour Elvis Presley's tiny, two-room birthplace ([elvispresleybirthplace.com](http://elvispresleybirthplace.com)) or the Tupelo National Battlefield ([nps.gov/tupe](http://nps.gov/tupe)), where Union forces won a decisive victory in July 1864.** Stay for a leg-stretching stroll through downtown Tupelo and some farm-to-table fare from Kermit's Outlaw Kitchen ([kermitsoutlawkitchen.com](http://kermitsoutlawkitchen.com)). Before hitting the Trace again, pick up some picnic supplies and local beer at The Neon Pig ([eatneonpig.com](http://eatneonpig.com)).

6

**As you continue south toward Jackson, Mississippi, stop in French Camp Historic Village, at mile marker 180.7, to discover what life was like on the Trace for settlers in the mid-19th century.** A handful of original cabins remain to be toured, and if you're lucky, you might see the sorghum mill at work. Five miles down the road, Cole Creek offers a chance to explore one of the Trace's most singular landscapes. A short boardwalk trail takes you through a bald cypress and water tupelo swamp.

7

**Mississippi's capital, Jackson, has a blend of energy and history that might surprise you.** Don't miss the home of assassinated civil rights leader Medgar Evers, now a museum ([visitmississippi.org](http://visitmississippi.org)). Wander the Fondren District, one of the city's hippest, and savor a vegetarian meal at High Noon Café ([rainbowcoop.org](http://rainbowcoop.org)), inside the organic produce and Rainbow Co-op grocery store, where you can pick up healthy road snacks.

8

**No trip on the Natchez Trace would be complete without walking part of the "sunken trace," the original trail blazed by Native Americans, European settlers and buffalo.** Mile marker 41.5 near Port Gibson, Mississippi, is a good place to stride in the footsteps of history.

9

**Your trip ends in Natchez, on the bluffs of the Mississippi.** This small city was one of the wealthiest in the world before the Civil War. In late September and early October, the annual Fall Pilgrimage ([natchezpilgrimage.com](http://natchezpilgrimage.com)) gives visitors the opportunity to tour some of the city's finest antebellum homes. End your trip with a meal in King's Tavern ([kingstavernnatchez.com](http://kingstavernnatchez.com)), the oldest standing building in Mississippi (built in 1789).

– **Trisha Ping**



# ARUBA

Perched just north of the Venezuelan coast, Aruba is a beautiful Caribbean one-stop shop: a desert island ringed with stunning marine life, this little jewel serves as an ideal destination for divers, beach bums, adventurers and history buffs alike. Why visit in the fall? Aruba is located outside of the main hurricane belt, so while you may see a few showers in the rainy season, big storms are unlikely.

Volcanic rocks at the edge of Aruba's Natural Pool, an area accessible only by 4x4, foot or horseback

1

**The crystalline waters surrounding Aruba offer Technicolor undersea views, and many sites are easily accessed by casual snorkelers.** Marvel at the mangroves and peruse the vibrant reef at Mangel Halto, a small sandy beach with clear waters, or pop into the calm waters of Malmok Beach.

2

**Foodies looking for a taste of Aruban fare will be greatly rewarded when they make the trip to Zeerover, a fishing cooperative near Savaneta (Savaneta 270A).** This place isn't fancy and the menu is short, but you're guaranteed the freshest catch on the island. Settle in at a waterside picnic table, dive into your meal, and watch the sunset turn the sky tangerine.

3

**Small and sweet, Aruba's capital, Oranjestad, is home to several colorful Dutch colonial buildings, hip boutique hotels, and several top-notch restaurants.** The city is a popular stopover for cruise tourists. For a bit of the area's history, check out the Archaeological Museum of Aruba downtown, which has a collection of more than 10,000 Amerindian artifacts dating to 4000 BC (free admission; [namaruba.org](http://namaruba.org)).

4

**Aruba's paradisiacal sands keep beach bums coming back year after year, and for good reason.** Soak up southern Caribbean rays at pearly tourist darlings like Eagle Beach or find solitude on the golden sands of Andicuri Beach on the east coast. If you're keen to get your heart pumping, head to breezy Boca Grandi, the best place to hop on a kiteboard and flit across the waves.

5

**While Aruba may be home to pretty-as-a-picture resorts, its eastern and northern coasts are as wild as they come.** Arikok National Wildlife Park ([arubanationalpark.org](http://arubanationalpark.org)), an arid, cactus-filled desert along the craggy shoreline, contrasts sharply with the surrounding sapphire water.

## STAY

Relax at **Beach House Aruba**, a collection of eight beach hut apartments (from \$130; [beachhousearuba.com](http://beachhousearuba.com)) perched on the island's northwestern shore, just south of Malmok Beach.

— Bailey Freeman

**For More:** See *Lonely Planet's Discover Caribbean Islands* guidebook (\$29.99) or download the book's "Southern Caribbean" chapter at [shop.lonelyplanet.com](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com) (\$4.95).



## THE SEDONA LOOP

Featuring landscapes straight out of a Hollywood Western, communities where New Agers revel in spiritual vortexes, and the Southwest's most unexpected wine region, the Sedona area has a way of capturing the imagination. This easy, 76-mile loop takes in the best sights of the region.



1

**Nestled in the red sandstone and conifer landscapes of Coconino National Forest, Sedona nurtures a community of artists, outdoor enthusiasts and spiritual seekers.** Stock up on gifts and souvenirs at the Tlaquepaque Arts and Crafts Village ([tlaq.com](http://tlaq.com)). For dinner, swing by Elote Cafe ([elotecafe.com](http://elotecafe.com)) for some of the most authentic Mexican food this side of the Rio Grande.

2

**Tucked between two massive red-rock boulders 4 miles south of Sedona, the Chapel of the Holy Cross beckons both the spiritual and the agnostic** (free; [chapeloftheholycross.com](http://chapeloftheholycross.com)). Designed by local sculptor Marguerite Brunswig Staude in the 1950s, the chapel's modern architecture contrasts with the surroundings. Inside, floor-to-ceiling windows offer an arresting perspective on the landscape.

**Top: Coconino National Forest Bottom: Chapel of the Holy Cross, a church built into the Sedona area's red rocks**



3

**Nearby, Cathedral Rock's sunset-red spires rise sharply out of the evergreen forests of the Coconino National Forest.** Among many of Sedona's purported vortexes, where people say the earth's energy can be felt, Cathedral Rock is said to be one of the strongest. Take the short trail up to the plateau between the middle and northern spires, or head to Crescent Moon Recreation Area for excellent views of Cathedral Rock from a distance.

4

**The well-preserved Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwelling at Montezuma Castle National Monument dates to AD 1100.** Built by the Sinagua people, the structure is tucked into a recess in a white limestone cliff, thereby protecting it from rain and erosion. The main dwelling can be seen from a short, easy trail. Although entry to the castle is prohibited, a museum displays the history of the Sinagua people ([nps.gov/moca](http://nps.gov/moca)).

5

**Central Arizona might not be the first region to come to mind as wine country, but over the last decade the lush Verde Valley has had a boom in wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms.** Stop by Page Springs Cellars for a winery tour and tasting (\$34; Friday through Sunday only; [pagespringscellars.com](http://pagespringscellars.com)). Hang out in the tasting room and peruse the menu of appetizer-style foods.

6

**Circling back toward Sedona, head north to check out Slide Rock State Park's central attraction: an 80-foot natural waterslide worn into the sandstone banks of Oak Creek.** Afterward, dry off with a stroll through the recreation area past a historic homestead, an apple orchard and spectacular views of Oak Creek Canyon ([azstateparks.com/slide-rock](http://azstateparks.com/slide-rock)).

### STAY

Base yourself in **El Portal**, a luxury, 12-room adobe inn (from \$230; [elportalsedona.com](http://elportalsedona.com)) located in the heart of Sedona's art district.

—Alexander Howard

**For More:** See *Lonely Planet's Southwest USA* and *Grand Canyon National Park* guidebooks (\$29.99 each) at [shop.lonelyplanet.com](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com).



# OKINAWA'S SECRETS

for a Long & Happy Life

Japan's sunny southern islands see a remarkable number of 100th birthdays. In fact, residents of Okinawa are among the longest-lived people on Earth, and they stay healthier longer, too. Why the long lifespan? Scientists say it's partly due to genetics, but diet and lifestyle also have a lot to do with it. We traveled to meet some of Okinawa's healthy centenarians and discover what longevity lessons we can learn from them.

BY RORY GOULDING [@RGOULDINGTRAVEL](#)  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT MUNRO

Tofu chanpuru  
(a stir-fry) at Tofu-  
no-Higa restaurant  
in Ishigaki. Tofu  
is a staple in the  
Okinawan diet.



Mrs. Toyo Kajigu used to get up at 5 a.m. Now that she is 104, she allows herself to sleep in, except for the two days a week when she rises early for the shuttle bus that circuits the small island of Taketomi, bringing together the older members of the community. Japan has the world's highest share of centenarians, but in the southern islands of Okinawa, people live long even by Japanese standards.

Sitting in her spacious tiled-roof house, with carved wooden *angama* masks on the walls, Kajigu offers a tray of sweet-potato cakes and downplays the significance of her age. "In Okinawa, 97 is when we traditionally have a big party," she says. "For my 100th birthday, I just celebrated with my family."

The main island of Okinawa lies 1,000 miles southwest of Tokyo; the Yaeyama group, to which Taketomi belongs, is another 240 miles toward Taiwan. Taketomi is just one corner of this subtropical archipelago, which has health researchers poring over their data. It's clear talking to Kajigu that the key to long life is not a one-size-fits-all approach: "I eat anything," she says. "When I get together with friends, I do karaoke, even though my voice isn't what it used to be."

An island-hopping tour around Okinawa is a chance to pick up small clues about what goes into this famously healthy lifestyle.

## Get some sunshine

Getting enough vitamin D, produced by the body when skin is exposed to sunlight, is rarely a problem in Okinawa. Just one degree north of the tropics, the Yaeyama Islands are especially blessed with sunny days. On the island of Ishigaki, Taketomi's larger neighbor, fields of sugarcane checker the flat land between the jungle-cloaked mountains and the coral-fringed shore. The light has the kind of brilliance that sends painters rushing to their easels. What's good for the banana plants and mango trees also is a charm – when it's taken in moderate doses – for the 49,000 people of Ishigaki: having adequate levels of vitamin D is associated with numerous health benefits, including better bone strength and possibly a lower risk of cancer.

“Japan has the world’s highest share of centenarians, but in the southern islands of Okinawa, people live long even by Japanese standards.”



Mrs. Toyo Kajigu in her house on the island of Taketomi

On the main islands of Japan, custom as much as weather limits the beachgoing season to July and August, but in Okinawa this stretches from April to October, or longer. While their northern compatriots are busy with cherry blossoms or early autumn leaf-peeping, beachgoers here have ample time for summer pursuits such as *suikawari* – a Japanese version of the piñata, in which blindfolded participants wielding baseball bats take turns trying to split a watermelon.

Driving from Ishigaki town, a circuit of the island takes about four hours. This being Japan, there are vending machines for cold drinks even on sleepy back roads, but thirst is not yet an issue at an early-morning stop by the little white lighthouse at Uganzaki. Just off the point is a rock shaped like the kind of slipper you change into when entering a Japanese home. A crackling in the bushes on





the hill to the side announces a party of hunters and their dogs, moving through the thicket in search of wild boar.

Farther east along the coast, two fishermen with cone hats and nets cross the road that leads to Sukuji Beach. This broad sweep of sand curves around a bay of uncanny stillness.

With one solitary hotel nearby, it's usually a peaceful spot. Today the only movement is a woman doing yoga on the sand, the only noise the frenetic chatter of cicadas. On many other beaches around the Yaeyama Islands, finger-sized stubs of whitened coral lie scattered across the sand, left there by the

tide, making a glassy sound when crunched together under walkers' shoes. Locals sometimes use the pieces in garden wind chimes, or as paperweights or chopstick rests.

Nearby Kabira Bay, on the north coast of Ishigaki, offers an easy chance to see living coral. Glass-bottom boats reveal an undersea





Kabira Bay, renowned for its white sands and turquoise waters, forms part of the Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park.

geography of canyons and defiles more intricate than any on land, if on a smaller scale. Beneath the turquoise surface of the bay, clown fish and Moorish idols flit between brain corals and toaster-sized clams, two species for which a hundred years is no great record.

### **Eat to 80% full (and don't skip the seaweed)**

In any region famed for its number of centenarians, diet gets the most excited attention. And in Okinawa, as with other places, not everything in the local cuisine

seems an obvious recipe for good health. Among the best-known dishes here is rafute: cubes of fatty pork belly simmered in a stock that contains several spoonfuls of black sugar.

This kind of food, though, would have been a rare indulgence in times past, when most islanders lived by the saying “eat every bit of the pig except its squeal.” Even now, in more prosperous times, mimigaa (chopped pig’s ears) is a staple dish. Another motto, still repeated here today, is “hara hachi bu” – “eat until you are 80 percent full.”

Traditions matter at Funakura-no-sato, a restaurant in a cluster of old buildings by the sea outside Ishigaki town. It is run by Den Motomura. “Okinawan food had influences from other parts of Asia,” he says. The Yaeyama Islands are closer to the Philippines and even Vietnam than they are to Tokyo. Chanpuru, a kind of stir-fry, takes its name from a similar dish in Indonesia called campur. Chinese cooking inspired tofuyo: cubes of tofu soaked in awamori (rice grain spirit) and fermented, a dish akin to a creamy blue cheese, and a former favorite of Okinawan royalty.

“We eat tofu very often,” Motomura says. “And also a lot of seaweed compared to the rest of Japan. There’s a bigger variety here.” He singles out one kind in particular: “I think mozuku helps us to live longer.” This type of seaweed is farmed in huge beds just offshore from the islands, and is harvested by divers holding what are essentially giant vacuum cleaners.

While mozuku has a goopy texture (vinegar gives it more kick), sea grapes, another local delicacy, have a satisfying pop to them. At Hitoshi restaurant back in Ishigaki town, chef Shimoji Hitoshi serves them alongside sliced raw tuna. “My father fished for tuna and my mother sold it,” he says, standing in front of a photo of his parents. “When I go home, though, I like to have ramen.”





Yusei Taba, 83, has been making carved wooden masks, used in celebratory dances, since he was 27.



## Keep a little bit busy

Yusei Taba sits cross-legged behind his low worktop, and picks a chisel from more than 50 tools lined up on a lazy Susan. He has been a mask-maker for 56 of his 83 years, crafting wooden *angama* worn by dancers in festivals. Most are displayed in pairs, one with a frown and one with a smile.

“The one with a single tooth represents an old man,” Taba says. “The one without teeth is an old woman: people thought that the more children a woman delivered, the more teeth she would lose.” He points at the male mask with a chuckle: “I look like him now. But my upper body is very good at least.”

In his workshop in Ishigaki town, Taba helps to preserve a craft that was nearly abandoned after WWII. “I see fake masks from Taiwan and I’m disappointed,” he says. “I feel a responsibility to keep our traditional ones.” It used to take him three days to make two masks, but now he has it down to one. “I’m getting quicker all the time.”

The mask-maker is a good advertisement for the idea of continuing to hone one’s talents beyond standard retirement age, and many researchers also believe that a habit of sitting on the floor, with all the getting up and down involved, is a lifetime benefit to bones and muscles. In Okinawa, craftspeople gain more respect with each year under their belts, but there’s still room to add a personal touch to an ancient method.

Until the 1870s, these islands were part of the Ryukyu Kingdom, a state that played a nimble diplomatic game between Japan and China. Its people paid their taxes in cloth, and Ishigaki’s variety, called Yaeyama jofu, was prized. Woven from fibers of ramie, a plant related to nettles, this textile made kimonos light enough to be worn in the Okinawan summer. Sachiko Arakaki is one of the few practitioners of the craft today. For more than



Sachiko Arakaki works with Yaeyama jofu, a traditional cloth used for lightweight kimonos worn in summer. **Below:** Ramie fibers, used to make the cloth.

30 years, she has researched historic color patterns to feed through the looms in her workshop on the outskirts of town, but her inspiration is not limited to the past. “The island is so rich in plantlife,” she says. “I wanted to make dyes from what I could find in my garden and in nature.”

Meanwhile, 3 miles up the west coast from Kabira Bay, an even bigger island icon is getting a radical makeover. The shisa, or “lion-dog,” is a guardian spirit statue seen on rooftops and beside gateways across the islands of Okinawa. At his roadside pottery studio, Hisashi Katsuren has turned the shisa’s usual bombastic scowl into a zany grin, with a Technicolor paint job to match.

“The traditional statues are for protection from disease and other misfortune,” he says. “But I think of mine as being like people. That’s why they have a big smile. It’s like I communicate with them as I make them.”







Children at the Tanadui celebration on Taketomi Island

## Practice your moves

The ferry from Ishigaki to Taketomi crosses 4 miles of sea, and seemingly several decades. In the center of Taketomi, wooden-walled houses of an earlier era sit low behind coral-stone walls bursting with flowers. Villagers sweep the sandy streets every morning, but on the eve of Tanadui, the annual seed-planting celebration and the biggest cultural event of the year, preparations are even more diligent. Kajigu has witnessed a century of Tanadui festivities, since the days when she walked to school barefoot. “I still remember some of the dances,” she says. “Now my granddaughter will be up on the stage.”

On the lane outside, one of her neighbors practices her steps in the evening light. Farther on, some two dozen men stand in a semicircle, with paper cutout horse heads fixed to their midribs. Drummers behind them start to play, and the mock horsemen launch into a high-kneed dance, as a 10-year-old boy keeps time with a sharp-pitched chime. Other

rehearsals can be heard from a distance, the sound carrying well over the flat island.

The festivities begin by honoring four residents who have turned 77 (another symbolic age here). What follows may only fully make sense to islanders: a series of costumed performances whose names are written on a flip chart to one side. “Red Horse” is followed by “Quick Talking.” One dance might involve a woman in a yellow kimono and tasseled headdress moving with measured grace; another celebrates the arrival of iron tools on the island.

When the board announces the fortune-bringing Yuhiki dance, the backing curtain tweeks open and a man with a walking stick, strap-on beard and bushy eyebrows is guided onstage by two boys in red robes and mint-green turbans. Then two more men appear, pulling a miniature cart loaded with sheaves of millet. The ritual movements are enacted, ending with the youngsters doing their bit to great acclaim, the crowd throwing money onstage. In spirit, the dance brings together three generations.







Performers in traditional costume for the Red Horse dance, a highlight of the Tanadui festival



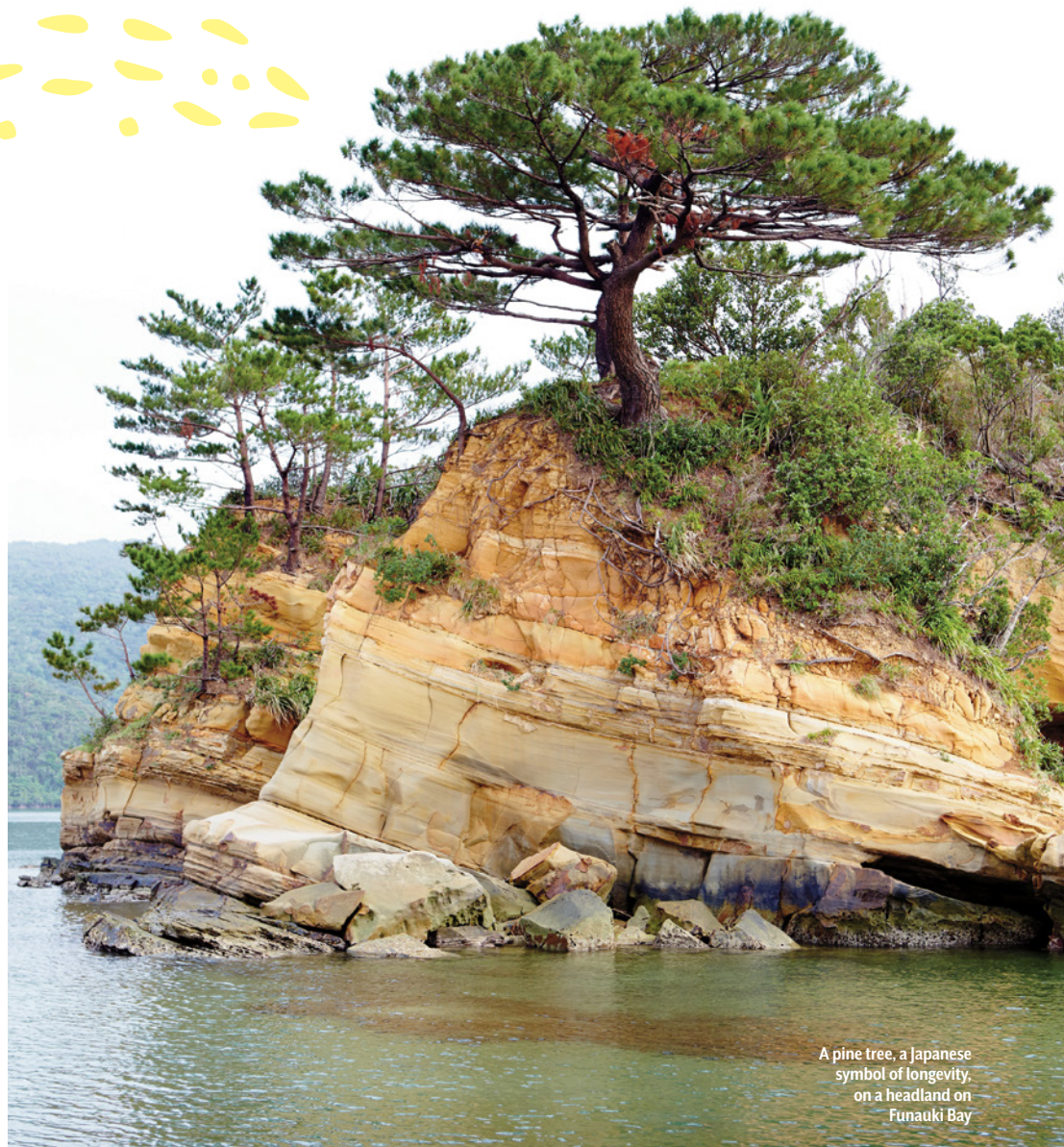
## Explore your wild side

Kai-kun is in his element, and that element is water. His job is to take sightseers across a short, shallow channel to Yubu Island, a botanical garden. The water buffalo uses his 1,500-pound bulk to pull a passenger cart. “He doesn’t need directions. He knows the way,” says the driver, Tsutomu Takamine.

While his bovine autopilot wades on at an unhurried pace, Takamine picks up his *sanshin* – the Okinawan three-string banjo – and begins to play and sing along to the folk song “Asadoya Yunta,” the perky rhythm of the chorus at odds with the slow, rocking motion of Kai-kun’s haunches. The cart reaches the far shore and Takamine calls out “stoppu” to the buffalo. “He knows Japanese and English, and I’m teaching him Mandarin.”

The garden, filled with subtropical plants, lies just off Iriomote, Japan’s jungle frontier. This island is larger than Ishigaki, but has less than 5 percent of its population. Even those few inhabitants are concentrated in a handful of villages along a single coastal road. Stray not far from this tenuous ribbon of civilization, and you’re in the realm of humid forest, mangrove-thick riverbanks and the endangered Iriomote wildcat, unique to this island.

Most of the interior is inaccessible, and for people like Naoya Ojima, this is a good thing. He has worked as a guide for 12 years, sharing his natural knowledge in those parts of Iriomote that humans can just about reach. Today he leads a party of kayakers up one of the creeks through the mangroves, pausing his paddle from time to time to keep the group together. “Mangroves create five to six times more oxygen than a normal tree,” he says. “Fish can hide among the roots, and it holds the mud in place. People used to cut them to make charcoal. Now Japanese firms are paying to plant more of them in Southeast Asia.”



A pine tree, a Japanese symbol of longevity, on a headland on Funauki Bay

Pinaisara Falls can be seen up ahead, white spray plunging nearly 200 feet off a cliff face and disappearing into the forest below. The final half hour is uphill on foot, past trees that are buttressed with giant roots. By the pool at the foot of the cascade, walkers eat packed lunches while resting on giant boulders. The fine mist from the waterfall is suddenly replaced by a near-tropical downpour, and everyone returns from the trek thankful for the raincoats they brought, which steam gently when the sun returns.

Five miles west of the falls, the coast road ends at the tiny port of Shirahama. Beyond lies another settlement, but it must be reached by water. The heavens have opened again, and it seems unlikely that the glass-bottom boat about to cross Funauki Bay will provide much in the way of sights. But soon into the short trip, the water beneath the

rain-pitted surface becomes clear. Coral gardens unfold beyond the viewing window, yellow and bright blue. A sea turtle glides past and the rain subsides.

The boat’s pilot, Mr. Ikeda, guides his craft into the small harbor at Funauki, a village of 50 people and seemingly 500 butterflies. At the wharfside restaurant, also Ikeda’s home, his uncle stops by with a bucket of sardines, and slices one into sashimi. Mrs. Ikeda appears with a warm smile and a tray of soba noodles, papaya salad and rice flavored with fragrant pipachi pepper. She is keen to demonstrate a traditional dance from the village. It’s tempting to linger, but the boat must head back. As Shirahama port draws near, a headland comes into view. Standing atop the golden rock and spreading its branches wide is a pine tree – the Japanese symbol of longevity.





“

Pinaisara Falls  
can be seen up  
ahead, white spray  
plunging nearly  
200 feet off a  
cliff face and  
disappearing into  
the forest below.

”

Pinaisara Falls on Iriomote Island is said to look like a white flowing beard, hence its name: pinai (beard) and sara (hanging down).





## GETTING THERE & AROUND

### FLIGHTS

Ishigaki Painushima Airport is the gateway to the Yaeyama Islands, with connections to Okinawa's main city, Naha; Tokyo; and other Japanese cities, as well as Hong Kong and Taipei. With a layover in Tokyo, flights are 16 or more hours from Los Angeles and 19 or more hours from Chicago. Visitors to Japan can get discounts on internal flights with All Nippon Airways' Discover Japan fare and Japan Airlines' Japan Explorer pass, or by booking a hotel and air package (*hisgo.com*).

### TOUR OPERATORS

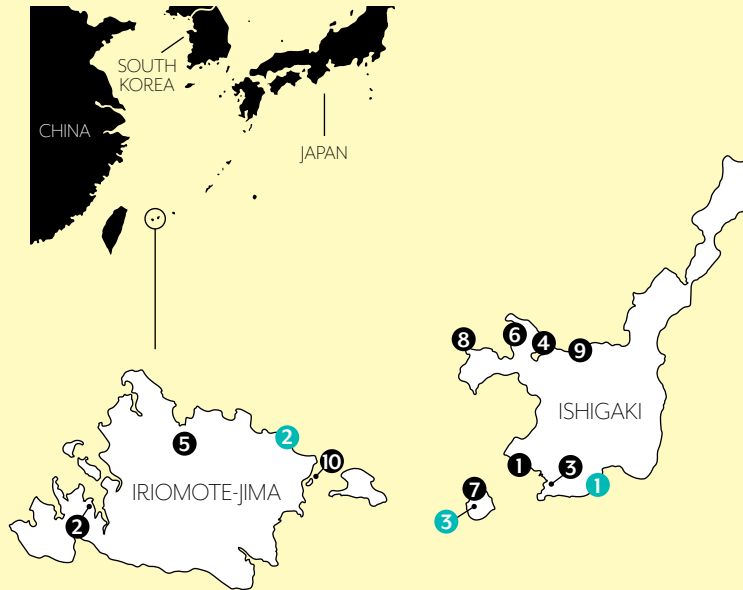
Hirata Tourism specializes in travel around the Yaeyama Islands and has English-speaking guides (*hirata-group.co.jp*). The company offers set tours, such as a snorkeling trip from Ishigaki (about \$55 per person), and also can arrange custom itineraries.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ferries provide inter-island transportation, and prices for the main operators are largely the same (*yaeyama.co.jp*, *ishigaki-dream.co.jp* and *aneikankou.co.jp*). The Ishigaki-Taketomi ferry takes 10 to 15 minutes (from about \$10 round-trip). Iriomote's two ports, Uehara and Ohara, are about 40 minutes from Ishigaki (from about \$25 round-trip). Local car rental companies, such as Yamaneko Rent-a-Car on Iriomote, charge about \$40 per day (an International Driving Permit is needed). Bus routes cover most of Ishigaki island (one-day pass \$9, five-day pass \$18).

## WHEN TO GO

Temperatures reach around 85°F in July and August, and dip into the mid-60s in December and January. Beach season tends to run from April to October, though November still can be hot and usually is the month when the Tanadui festival is held on Taketomi.



### Map Key

- 1 Funakura-no-sato
- 2 Funauki
- 3 Ishigaki town
- 4 Kabira Bay
- 5 Pinaisara Falls
- 6 Sukuji Beach
- 7 Taketomi
- 8 Uganzaki
- 9 Yoneko-yaki
- 10 Yubu Island

### Hotels

- 1 ANA Intercontinental
- 2 Eco Village Iriomote
- 3 Villa Taketomi

## PLAN YOUR ITINERARY

# 1

Start on Ishigaki island with an introduction to Okinawan cuisine at Funakura-no-sato (set meals from \$15; *funakuranosato.com*). In town, Hitoshi specializes in maguro tuna (dishes from about \$3; Okawa 197-1; 81-980-88-5807). Meanwhile, at the cozy Nakamura, the Japanese favorite “kare raisu” is given a twist with island herbs and vegetables (curries from \$8; Ishigaki 215; 81-980-87-5075). Just outside town, the ANA Intercontinental has spacious rooms by its own beach (from about \$215; *anaintercontinental-ishigaki.jp*).

# 2

On a circuit of Ishigaki, check out the shisa figurines at Mr. Katsuren's Yoneko-yaki studio (*yonekoyaki.web.fc2.com*) and fine *angama* masks at Mr. Taba's workshop, Maruta Kogei (Hirae 80-2; 81-980-82-7392). Then it's time to take a ferry ride to Taketomi. Many visit this island as a day trip, but Villa Taketomi, with its individual cottages, is a pleasant place to stay (from \$195; *taketomi-v.com*).

# 3

The autumn festival on Taketomi, called Tanetori in standard Japanese and Tanadui in the local language, usually is held each November over two days that vary according to the old Chinese calendar (the 2017 event, however, is scheduled for October 30–31). The island is picturesque year-round, and its beaches include one that's known for its “hoshizuna” – star-shaped shells the size of sand grains.

# 4

The final island is the wildest of all: Iriomote. Get a feel for the subtropics among the palms and hibiscus in the gardens at 37-acre Yubu Island (access by buffalo cart \$12; *yubujima.com*). Then take a kayak trip into the jungle to reach towering Pinaisara Falls on a guided excursion (half-day tour about \$50; *iriomote-osanpo.com*).



## The Photographer's Story



**Kit Oates**

Kit Oates is a portrait, travel and documentary photographer.

See more of his work at [kitoates.com](http://kitoates.com) and [@kitoates](https://www.instagram.com/kitoates).

# FOLK REVIVAL

“Every August, a folk festival takes place in the forest near Zheravna, an old village of wooden houses in the Balkan Mountains of central Bulgaria. Since the fall of communism, there’s been a real revival of the country’s heritage and folk traditions, and the Zheravna Festival of the National Costume offers a chance to celebrate this nearly lost culture. Bands play folk music, and traditional costume is worn throughout. People bring family heirlooms such as dresses, swords and old muskets, passed down through generations. In addition to a hotly contested costume competition, there are dance performances and wrestling matches, and food is cooked on open fires and accompanied by beer and rakia, a local spirit. Throughout the weekend, people dance in a huge circle in a clearing, reveling in the spiritual ambience of the forest. Bulgarian summers can get very hot, but because of its altitude, the forest stays lush and cool. Revelers come from across the country to enjoy nature in this intimate setting and escape from modern life. The festival harks back to simpler, more innocent times, and modern technology is forbidden; I felt a world away from my busy life. With everyone in traditional costume, it was like traveling back in time, and there was such a celebratory atmosphere. It was a magical, completely unique experience.”

“The village planted the forest about 50 years ago and cultivated it so people could dance around this tree in the middle. At the beginning of the festival, there’s grass growing around it, but by the end, it’s worn away.”







**This page:** “This boy and his friends were running around a field, being teenagers. He wears a sheepskin kalpak hat. People come from different parts of Bulgaria, and adorn their costumes uniquely, so no two are alike.” **Opposite:** “This picture shows a feast of shopska salad (roughly chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and feta cheese), and freshly baked bread, which you’d have before a main course, accompanied by beer. The loaf includes the name of a woman, Romanya, whose birthday is likely being celebrated.”





## The Photographer's Story



"There's a field behind the forest, and I noticed people would sneak off with a friend or lover to find a quiet spot to enjoy the landscape and have a bit of time out in nature."

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**MAKE IT HAPPEN:** The 2017 festival runs August 18–20 (three-day pass \$14; [nosia.bg](http://nosia.bg)). Anyone who wants to attend must wear traditional dress, which can be rented on arrival. Guests can camp, or stay at historic



“Around the clock at the festival, people dance the Daychavo Horo, a circle dance.”



guesthouses in the village (from \$23; [jeravna.com](http://jeravna.com)). Zheravna is about 2½ hours by car from Burgas, Plovdiv and Varna, and about 3½ hours from Sofia. Bulgaria has good air links with numerous European cities.





Modernista opulence at the Palau de la Música Catalana

## MINI GUIDE

# Design in Barcelona

Ever since Gaudí's era, the capital of Spain's Catalonia region has been a hotbed for creative free thinkers. Its independent stores, fabled architecture and museums are fantasies for design lovers.

## Museums

### 4 MUSEU DEL DISSENY DE BARCELONA

Barcelona's design museum lies inside a new monolithic building with geometric facades and a brutalist appearance that has earned it the local nickname la *grapadora* (the stapler). It houses a dazzling collection of ceramics, decorative arts and textiles ([museudeldisseny.cat](http://museudeldisseny.cat); Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes 37–38; 10am–8pm Tue–Sun; from \$5).

### 5 FUNDACIÓ JOAN MIRÓ

Joan Miró, Barcelona's best-known 20th-century artistic progeny, bequeathed this art foundation to his hometown in 1971. Its light-filled buildings are crammed with seminal works and are considered to be among the world's most outstanding museum facilities ([fmirobcn.org](http://fmirobcn.org); Parc de Montjuïc; 10am–6pm Tue–Wed and Fri Nov–Mar, 10am–8pm Apr–Oct, 10am–9pm Thu, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun; from \$7.50).



The *Hope of a Condemned Man* series at the Fundació Joan Miró

### 6 CAIXAFORUM

This art gallery is housed in an outstanding modernista former factory designed by Gaudí contemporary Puig i Cadafalch. The building now belongs to Caixa building society, which prides itself on its involvement in art, in particular all that is contemporary. The key draws here are major international exhibitions ([fundacio.lacaixa.es](http://fundacio.lacaixa.es); Avinguda de Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia 6–8; 10am–8pm; \$4.50).

Fold 2

## Shopping

### 1 CUSTO BARCELONA

The psychedelic decor and casual atmosphere lend this avant-garde Barcelona fashion store a youthful edge. Custo presents daring new women's and men's collections each year, from dinner jackets to hot pants, with dazzling colors and cuts for the uninhibited. Our pick of its four Barcelona stores is the one in La Ribera ([custo.com](http://custo.com); Plaça de les Olles 7; 11am–8:30pm).

### 2 DRAP-ART

A nonprofit arts organization runs this small store and gallery space in the labyrinthine streets of the Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter). It exhibits wild designs from artists near and far who create with discarded items. Works on display change regularly, but you might find sculptures, jewelry and handbags made from recycled products, as well as mixed-media installations ([drapart.org](http://drapart.org); Carrer d'En Groc 1; 11am–2pm and 5pm–8pm Tue–Fri).



Textile specialist Teranyina has been in the old town for 30 years.

### 3 TERANYINA

Artist Teresa Rosa Aguayo runs this textile workshop in the heart of the artsy bit of El Raval. You can join courses at the loom, admire some of the rugs and other works that Aguayo has created, and, of course, buy a piece to take home. The wood-beamed shop is beautifully presented, and the textiles available are tasteful and unique ([textilteranyina.com](http://textilteranyina.com); Carrer del Notariat 10; 11am–3pm and 5pm–8pm Mon–Fri).

## Architecture

### 7 LA PEDRERA

This undulating UNESCO-listed beast is one of Gaudí's most madcap masterpieces. Erected between 1906 and 1912, it now houses a museum that features a modest Gaudí exhibition. The roof is the most extraordinary element, with its giant chimney pots looking like medieval knights ([lapedrera.com](http://lapedrera.com); Passeig de Gràcia 92; 9am–8:30pm and 9pm–11pm Mon–Sun; from \$23).



Walkways loop around the fantastical rooftop of La Pedrera.

### 8 PALAU DE LA MÚSICA CATALANA

This concert hall is a symphony in tile, brick, sculpted stone and stained glass. It was conceived as a temple for the Renaixença (Catalan Cultural Renaissance), and built by Domènech i Montaner between 1905 and 1908 ([palaumusica.cat](http://palaumusica.cat); Carrer de Palau de la Música 4–6; tours 10am–3:30pm, 10am–6pm Easter and Jul, 9am–6pm Aug; guided tour \$19).

### 9 CASA DE LES PUNXES

Puig i Cadafalch's Casa Terrades, completed in 1905, is better known as the Casa de les Punxes (House of Spikes) because of its pointed turrets. Once a private apartment block, in 2016 it opened to the public for the first time; check out its stained-glass bay windows, handsome iron staircase, and tiled rooftops ([casadespunxes.com](http://casadespunxes.com); Avinguda Diagonal 420; 9am–8pm; from \$13).

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS

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# MINI GUIDE

## Design in Barcelona

🛍 Shopping 🗺 Sights 🛏 Sleeping



## Essentials

### 📍 GETTING THERE & AROUND

Most travelers enter Barcelona through El Prat airport, 8 miles southwest of the city center. Some budget airlines use Girona-Costa Brava or Reus airports. Flights from the East Coast typically take 10 to 13 hours, including a stopover; from the West Coast count on 13 or more hours, including a stopover. The quickest way into town from El Prat is via half-hourly trains (single \$5; [renfe.com](http://renfe.com)), which take 25 minutes to reach Passeig de Gràcia. Barcelona's metro is the best way to get around; singles cost \$2.50 but the Targeta T-10 card offers better value (10-ride pass \$11).

### 🛏 WHERE TO STAY

1 **Casa Gràcia** has raised the bar in Barcelona for budget stays, with dorms and doubles in crisp white. It features a terrace, a library nook, a lounge, a restaurant and a bar ([casagraciabcn.com](http://casagraciabcn.com); Passeig de Gràcia 116; from \$65).



Hotel Brummell is a modern space behind the 1870 facade.

2 **Hotel Brummell** is a thoughtfully designed hotel with a creative soul. The 20 rooms exude cheerful, minimalist design; the best have terraces with outdoor soaking tubs. Weekend brunch at on-site Box Social is very popular ([hotelbrummell.com](http://hotelbrummell.com); Carrer Nou de la Rambla 174; from \$137).

3 Overlooking its eponymous plaza, Hotel DO: **Plaça Reial** has handsomely designed rooms and extensive facilities, including a great restaurant, roof terrace, dip pool and spa ([hoteldoreial.com](http://hoteldoreial.com); Plaça Reial 1; from \$320).

## The Know-How

### GOTHIC WONDERS

**La Catedral de Barcelona** Laced with gargoyles and stone intricacies (Plaça del a Seu).  
**Basilica Santa Maria del Mar** A 14th-century church famous for its architectural harmony (Plaça de Santa Maria).  
**Saló del Tinell** A parade of tall arches holds up the roof of this banqueting hall, inside a former royal palace (Plaça del Rei).

### CONTEMPORARY LUMINARIES

**Torre Agbar** Jean Nouvel's cucumber-shaped tower (Avinguda Diagonal).  
**Teatre Nacional de Catalunya** Ricardo Bofill's neoclassical modern theater takes the form of a glassed-in Greek temple (Plaça de les Arts).  
**Mercat de Santa Caterina** A wavy, multicolored ceramic roof covers this La Ribera market (Avinguda de Francesc Cambó).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lonely Planet publishes four guides to the city: the in-depth *Barcelona city guide* (\$21.99), quick-trip *Pocket Barcelona* (\$13.99), photo-rich *Best of Barcelona* (\$21.99) and itinerary-led *Make My Day: Barcelona* (\$9.99). Barcelona also is featured in Lonely Planet's free *Guides* app, available at iTunes and Google Play. Robert Hughes's historical study, *Barcelona* (\$22; Vintage) has excellent coverage of the city's influential artists and architects. Look out for *BCN Més*, a trilingual monthly magazine that covers art, food and more ([bcnmes.com](http://bcnmes.com)).



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