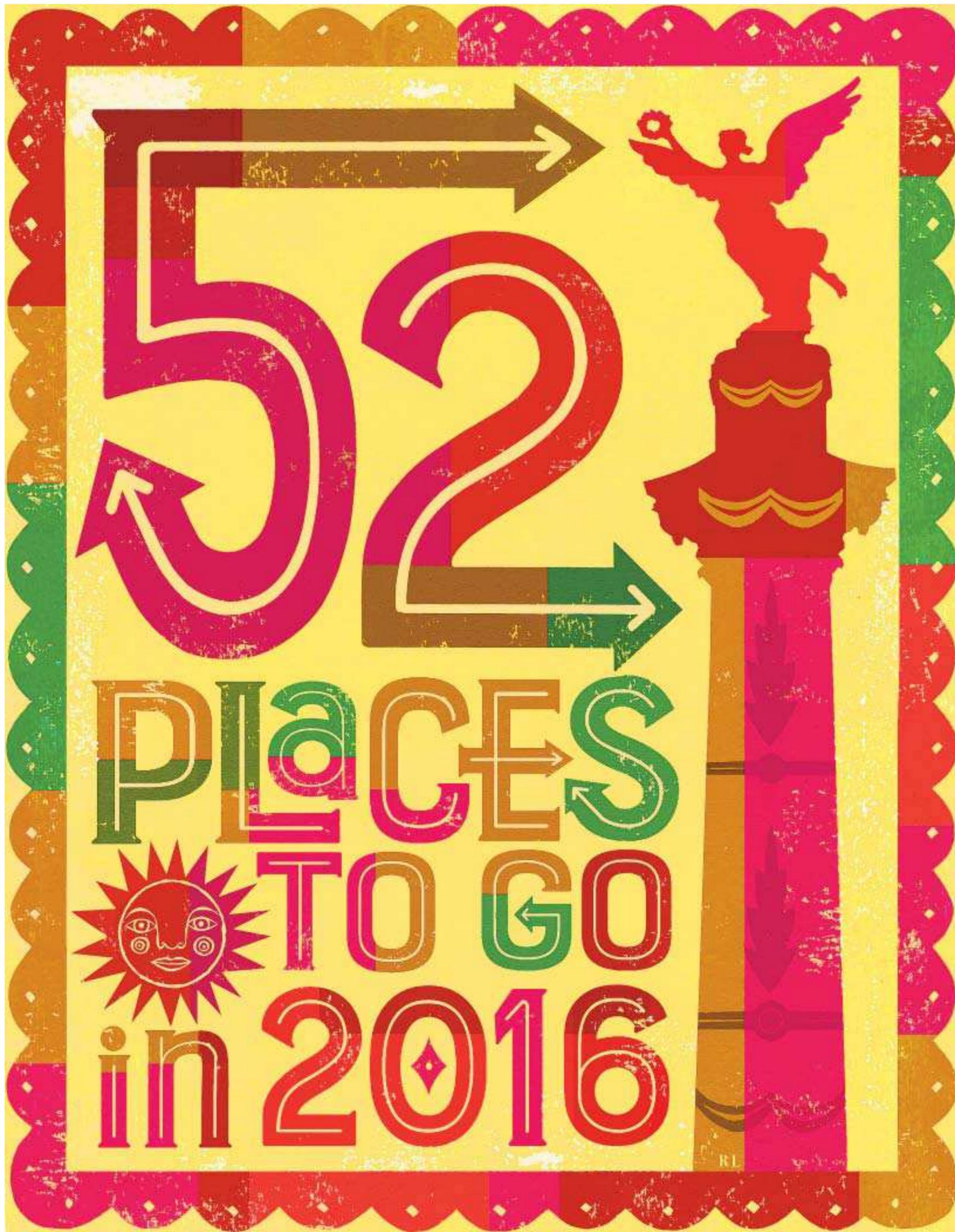


Travel

The New York Times



RAFAEL LOPEZ

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How to Save Money in the Year Ahead

Things to think about way ahead, and ways to remember what it was you planned.

EACH OF THE last three Januaries, I've compiled tips on how to save money on travel in the year ahead. Much of that advice is still valid today, which is good, since most readers undoubtedly forgot about it by the time they began planning their vacations months later. This year, though, no excuses: Each of the eight items below is something you can do today.

Cross-reference destinations. Make a list of everywhere you might want to go this year. Then run a few tests to rank them by where you might get the most for your money. Start at the site Numbeo (numbeo.com/travel-prices), which ranks countries by cost of living, restaurant costs, and cities by travel cost (and, friendlier to this columnist, "backpacker travel cost"). Then log onto a site like Fareness (fareness.com) to compare how much you might have to pay on the approximate dates you're planning to go (this will work only up to four months out). Finally, score extra points for the destination where your friends or relatives or friends' relatives live and might provide money-saving advice, a free meal or even a spare bedroom.

Schedule your airfare purchases. You probably already have a few specific dates you need to be somewhere in 2016 — Thanksgiving at the in-laws, a friend's wedding and, of course, you'll be surprising your mom on her birthday. (Mine paid me to say that.) Tickets through the end of November are already on sale for most airlines, so you could buy them right now and lock in a decent price, a good move for the disorganized. But now might not get you the best price — so mark your calendar with a reminder for the ideal time to buy. To find out when, try Kayak's Travel Hacker global pages, which will give you the best database-guess. Also set an airfare alert (on Airfare Watchdog, for example) in case really cheap tickets come up in the meantime.

The Hopper app (or hopper.com/research) offers more granular information. I recently checked on flights from New York to Paris for Memorial Day weekend. Hopper told me they were almost \$900 at the time, but might drop as low as \$650 between now and April 22, when they are likely to rise again. And the Hopper app will also watch the prices for you. (Note that American Airlines does not share data with Hopper, so you'll have to check those yourself.)



TIM ROBINSON

Airfare purchases postscript. Speaking of not sharing data, you may know that Southwest Airlines flights cannot be booked on any site except the company's own. But if you're like me, you forget that every time you book a domestic flight. So join me putting a Post-it on our computers right now to remind ourselves Southwest exists. Other countries have "hidden" airlines as well — Air Panama, for example. You can find lists of all commercial airlines serving most countries on Wikipedia if you want to expand that Post-it.

Unhappy holidays. It's happened countless times: I buy a plane ticket to a foreign country and then discover I've scheduled my trip during a national holiday, or the first week of school vacation or some other time where hotels may be overbooked, local flights pricey, restaurants closed, streets deserted. So take that destination wish list and search online right now for a calendar

of national or local holidays as well as major festivals. Otherwise, you might end up like me, in Sumatra during Ramadan or Seoul during the Korean New Year.

Apply for a credit card. I wish airlines and credit card companies would abandon the bloated, convoluted, pro-business, anti-tourist points-and-miles system and plow those resources into lower fees and fares across the board. But that won't be happening. The easiest way for occasional fliers to get in on the game is to sign up for credit cards that offer a huge bonus and one year without an annual fee. I recently got the Citi AAdvantage card that is currently offering 50,000 miles on American Airlines if you spend \$3,000 in the first three months — that's worth a free trip from Washington to London or from Chicago to Buenos Aires if your dates are flexible. Before that I got 40,000 points from a Capital One Venture Card, which meant \$400 back on any travel

expenditures. Both waived the annual fee for the first year.

Were these the absolute best cards to get? Probably not. But I'm unwilling to slog through the obsessive blog posts that spell out in detail why one card is slightly better than the other. Instead I took 10 minutes to do some research at creditcards.com/airline-miles.php. And then I programmed a reminder into my phone for 11 months ahead, giving me plenty of time to cancel my card before the first annual fee kicks in.

Crack the codes. Have you ever been ready to type in your credit card number when you spot a "Discount Code" box on the screen, and feel bad because you know there might be a discount code out there? Install the Honey browser extension, which works on several prominent travel sites, like Hotels.com, Priceline.com and Trivago.com (as well as many other non-travel retailers). Once it's in there, it will alert you to any discount codes as you are making a purchase, and will even test them all automatically with one click.

Switch your cellphone plan. If you want to use your cellphone abroad, switch today to T-Mobile, which offers free text messaging and data (and cheap phone calls) in well over 100 countries, versus Sprint's 50 or so. Data is slow — 2G or 3G, depending — but it's enough for email and messaging services and, if you're patient, Google Maps and social media apps.

It's not ideal. I've used it on five continents, and though it has never failed, it has always exasperated, forcing me to restart my phone or switch airplane mode on and off before it finally latches onto a local carrier. Occasionally I've even had to go into my phone's settings and manually test each individual carrier until I figure out which one works best. (A T-Mobile technical support person taught me this workaround, so obviously I'm not alone.)

Depledge allegiance. What's your favorite car rental agency? Wrong! Prices vary so widely and unpredictably across companies, locations and dates that it is insane for occasional travelers to pay extra so they can collect points or save a few minutes or get a free upgrade. Instead, just search your favorite online travel agency and pick the cheapest rate from a company you've heard of — including Ace and Fox, which you've now officially heard of. Do some companies have nicer cars? It's possible, but plenty of hotels have nicer beds, and I don't pay extra to stay in them. And here's a final thing you can do right now: Find out what your credit card and personal car insurance covers so you can vehemently decline what you don't need at the checkout counter.

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52 Places to Go

From the temples of Malta to the crystalline waters of the Yucatán, a world of options to explore.

1. Mexico City

A metropolis that has it all.

When Pope Francis visits Mexico City in the spring, he will draw the faithful from around the country. The Mexican capital, though, is attracting pilgrims of another kind: travelers seeking some of the world's best cuisine, museums and forward-thinking design. With young people from around Latin America and Spain streaming into the city, and the Mexican peso hitting record lows against the dollar, the city — daunting and endless as it is — radiates energy.

Certainly, there is no more exciting place to eat. Enrique Olvera, who reinvented Mexican cuisine at Pujol, has inspired a generation of restaurants in his wake, including Fonda Fina in La Roma and Fonda Mayora in nearby Condesa.

Design fans can work up an appetite shopping for products by studios like David Pompa and Lagos del Mundo or for designs by Carla Fernández. Photography lovers have two new destinations: the FotoMuseo Cuatro Caminos and the newly renovated Centro de la Imagen.

But getting to know the city means diving into its zonas. In the shadow of Paseo de la Reforma, the city's grand boulevard, the Colonia Cuauhtémoc, beckons business travelers and tourists alike, with the new design-conscious Carlota hotel and an increasing number of restaurants. Many other areas demand a more intimate explo-



Top, Mexico City with the Torre Latinoamericana in the background and the Palacio de Bellas Artes in the foreground. Above, Coral Bay, on the United States Virgin Island of St. John, has a local feel.

ration. You can stroll by the French-style 19th-century mansions of La Roma or take a turn around Parque México in Condesa.

Of course, there are places you should not wander, but the city is far safer than it was in the 1990s, and taxi services like Uber and Yaxi make getting around a lot more comfortable. It's also easier to get to: in the summer, AeroMéxico, JetBlue and American Airlines have boosted flights.

And if you're overwhelmed, you can visit Futura CDMX, a scale model of the Federal District due to open soon — the latest flourish of pride in a city that's ever coming back.

VICTORIA BURNETT

2. Bordeaux

A famed wine region gets a stunning update.

Next year will see the opening of the Bordeaux Wine and Trade Museum, an ambitious institution along the coast of the river Garonne dedicated to the history of French viticulture. The undulating wooden structure, designed by XTU Architects, is part of a huge greening and revitalization effort along Bordeaux's waterways, which also includes the 2013 opening of the Pont Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Europe's largest lift bridge, and the transformation of 700,000 square miles of former docklands into more than 5,000 new apartments and public waterside attractions. In 2007, half of the restored neo-Classical city was Unesco-listed,

making it the largest urban World Heritage site. And all the effort has been paying off: A 2013 survey ranked Bordeaux France's second-favorite city, after Paris. More recently, a restaurant boom has welcomed enticing openings by the likes of Joël Robuchon, whose namesake restaurant opened at the end of 2014 within the city's palatial Grande Maison hotel. Gordon Ramsay recently took the helm at Le Pressoir d'Argent, the restaurant within the Grand Hôtel de Bordeaux & Spa, while the French celebrity chef Philippe Etchebest has taken over the Café Opera in Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre. Other appetizing new entries include the Franco-Chinese restaurant Dan, high-end minimalist Garopailles and locavore Belle Campagne, in a rustic-chic townhouse in Bordeaux's picturesque Old Town.

CHARLY WILDER

3. Malta

The Mediterranean on a dime.

Malta is an affordable Mediterranean playground with a superb climate, sublime beaches, megalithic temples and a distinctive crossroads culture. English is one of two official languages, but few Americans have discovered Malta's charms. There are three inhabited islands to explore — Malta, home to buzzing Valletta, a Unesco World Heritage city of stunning limestone buildings; Gozo, more tranquil and with a dramatic coastline filled with great spots for diving; and idyllic, car-free Comino, which

has one hotel and few residents. As Valletta celebrates its 450th anniversary this year, the old city has gotten some fresh touches, including a new city gate, a restored opera house and a new parliament building, all designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano. And in Malta, you can follow in the footsteps of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, who spent their honeymoon shooting their latest film, "By the Sea," in Gozo, which served as a more economical, but equally romantic, stand-in for the South of France.

DAVE SEMINARA

4. Coral Bay, St. John

Visit the U.S. Virgin Island's quiet corner before big development.

The beaches are less crowded, the emphasis is on local over commercial, and the people share a friendly sense of neighborhood pride. Among the town's attractions: monthly full-moon parties at Miss Lucy's, and a Thanksgiving "Thankspigging" pot luck pig roast hosted by the community at Skinny Legs, where the eating often swells into a singalong. But this quiet community may soon change. Visit before a proposed outlet mall and megamarina, expected to engulf the bay, transforms the laid-back atmosphere of this little corner of the United States Virgin Islands.

ASHLEY WINCHESTER

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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When Weather Upends Your Plans

A canceled flight prompts thoughts on steps to take to make the best of it.

I flew out of New York City during Christmas week, when the temperature was in the 70s. I landed in southern New Mexico, hours before a giant snowstorm.

The governor, Susana Martinez, declared a state of emergency. My flight back to New York was canceled. Even if it hadn't been, I was snowed in. At the same time, nearly a dozen tornadoes slammed the Dallas area in Texas, the deadliest to sweep through since 1927, according to the National Weather Service. Meanwhile, in the Midwest, there was deadly flooding in Missouri and Illinois.

Severe weather events such as floods, storms and heat waves appear to be happening with greater frequency. There have been an average of 335 weather-related disasters each year between 2005 and 2014, up 14 percent from the previous decade, and nearly double the level of the decade before that, according to a November report issued by the United Nations.

Travel in an age of uncertain climate means that at some point, your plans are likely to be upended by weather. Still, with a bit of preparation and the right attitude, it doesn't have to proverbially rain on your vacation. Below are some tips on how to be ready for whatever comes your way.

Be among the first to learn your flight's been canceled. Every minute of lead-time counts when trying to rebook. To that end, you should set up flight alerts before leaving for the airport, no matter what the weather (flights can be delayed or canceled for any number of reasons). The websites of major airlines allow passengers to sign up for information about trip changes, be it through texts, emails or notifications from their smartphone app. However, it's not unusual for third-party apps to relay such information faster than the airlines themselves. For that reason, I have TripIt Pro, an app (\$49 a year) that has pinged me about gate and flight changes before the airline itself. In a pinch, you can just Google your flight number (for example, "AA 1621") to see the latest status.

Know what your airline will (ahem, not) give you. To save time and eliminate confusion if your flight is canceled, know this: In all but the most extreme circumstances, you're not getting anything from the airline. United States carriers typically do not provide passengers with amenities such as hotel rooms or food vouchers if a flight is canceled because of weather, although they may sometimes help you get a discounted rate at a nearby hotel (you still foot the bill).



STEPHANIE ROSENBLOOM/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Each airline has a "contract of carriage" or "conditions of carriage" that lays out what, if anything, you'll receive if your flight is canceled. Delta, American and United all have contracts that say they have no liability if a flight is canceled owing to weather.

When that happens, airlines usually just rebook you on the next flight with available seats, or give you a refund for the unused portion of your flight. For the fine print about cancellations and delays, Google your airline's name and "contract of carriage."

Air passenger rights are stronger in the European Union, where you're generally entitled to more amenities when things go wrong, but there's no compensation for cancellations for bad weather.

Decide if you want to be rebooked or refunded. Whether you want to be rebooked or receive a refund depends on various per-

sonal factors, but one consideration should be how much money you'll get back for the leg of the trip that was canceled (just ask the airline). If there's another flight leaving soon, it probably makes sense to have the airline put you on it. (Keep in mind that it's easier to get on a flight at the very last minute if you're not checking bags.) Another option is to pocket the refund and, if you can, buy a cheaper one-way flight on another airline. Or use the refund money toward some other form of transportation to get where you're going. It helps if before your trip you figure out if your destination has a nearby train or bus station, or a car rental office. No available flights for a day or two? An often-forgotten possibility is simply not to sweat it: Stay put and enjoy your mandatory timeout.

Note: If you're standing in line at an airport counter hoping to be rebooked, call the

airline while you wait. You may reach someone on the phone faster. Check out GetHuman.com now to find the best numbers for the airlines you fly, and keep them handy in your phone or address book.

If delayed on the tarmac, know your rights. The Department of Transportation's rules state that within two hours of the flight being delayed, United States airlines must provide passengers on the tarmac with food, water and access to bathrooms. Airlines cannot allow tarmac delays longer than three hours on domestic flights without giving passengers an opportunity to leave the plane.

Have the tools to book a room on the fly. Keeping hotel apps — Priceline.com, Booking.com, Hotel Tonight — on your smartphone makes it easy to book in a pinch. That said, don't assume that inventory is always up-to-date online. I once wanted to book a room in a hotel that appeared to be sold out online, but when I called, it turned out it had availability. Rates too high? If you belong to a hotel rewards program, consider using points to get a free or less costly night.

Work the lounge. If you don't need a night's sleep but want to clean up, have a snack, charge your devices and get some work done, consider purchasing airport lounge access if you don't already have it. One-time passes for major United States carriers are around \$50. That's cheaper than a hotel room.

Layer up. I keep finding myself in places where it's warm when it's usually cool, and cool when it's usually warm. Layers are the new normal. I didn't think there would be a foot of snow outside the door in New Mexico, but I'm increasingly treating each trip as an all-season adventure. I had prepared for chilly desert nights with fleece jackets, gloves, a winter hat and scarf, and, boy, am I glad. When the snow began to fall, I wasn't stuck indoors longing for warm weather. I could go with the flow and watch snowball fights amid the cactuses.

Pack for a longer trip. One reason people feel stressed when they're stranded is they don't have their personal essentials. Bring what you need to be able to work remotely (laptop, chargers, documents). Have extra days of your prescription medications, along with additional cash, underwear and socks (or laundry soap sheets so you can wash and rewear clothes). And bring a few "comfort" items, like noise-canceling headphones and an iPad.

So, yes, there were icicles on the palm fronds in New Mexico. Flights were canceled. I had a lot of work to do. But I was safe. I had a laptop. And to paraphrase a friend, you never know what will work out for the best. I saw a historic snowfall, spent a little more time with loved ones and polished off a few more homemade enchiladas.

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ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, ABOVE; JANIE OSBORNE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

5. Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota

A century of protecting America's magnificence.

The National Park Service turns 100 years old in August thanks to President Woodrow Wilson, who signed the Organic Act of 1916, but few presidents have done as much for conservation as Teddy Roosevelt. Fly into Dickinson in western North Dakota to visit the park named after him, where rolling grasslands dotted with bison collapse into the spectacular red, white and gold badlands of tumbling mud coulees. Lonely dirt roads bring you to one of the park's less-visited attractions, Elkhorn Ranch, about 35 miles north of Medora, where Roosevelt arrived in 1884 as a young New Yorker ready to raise cattle and heal from the deaths of his wife and mother. Transformed and inspired, the 26th president eventually set aside more than 230 million acres of federal land to help preserve the wonder of places like Crater Lake, Mesa Verde and the Grand Canyon.

TIM NEVILLE

6. Mozambique

New island lodges and beach breaks — and more tolerance.

Mozambique is a forward-thinking African leader that offers a terrific mix of safari and beach. In July, it became one of the few African nations to decriminalize homosexuality (and abortion), a major step toward creating a more open-minded African destination for L.G.B.T. travelers. The bustling capital, Maputo, is experiencing a budding tolerance, while advocacy groups like Lambda Moz continue to help destigmatize homosexuality countrywide. Mozambique's tranquil coast continues to

draw travelers of all kinds in search of post-safari snorkel and surfing options. In 2016, Intrepid Travel starts a four-day Mozambique Beach Break to Barra Beach and the historic Inhambane settlement. In 2015, Cox & Kings began a new tour to Benguerra Island, where andBeyond, a company known for its conservation and luxury camps, reopened its stylish island lodge in June 2015, after a \$5.5 million refurbishment.

ADAM H. GRAHAM

7. Toronto

Canada's largest city is ready for its close-up.

Toronto is remaking itself as Canada's premier city, quietly slipping out of the shadow of Montreal and Vancouver. Last year, the Queens Quay on Lake Ontario reopened, part of the largest continuing urban revitalization project in North America. It now has bike and pedestrian paths and new streetcars that link green spaces and prom-



Top, the coast near Torekov, in rural Skane, Sweden, where creative types have come to farm and to cook. Above, bison at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. Below, the Abu Dhabi skyline.

enades that will be full of public art. The Junction, a former industrial area, has emerged as Toronto's most stylish neighborhood for its bars, live music and coffee shops. And the city is becoming easier to visit: A train now whisks travelers downtown from the airport in 25 minutes, and Air Canada offers extended stopovers for connecting passengers. Toronto has long been known for its cultural diversity and continues to draw major artistic and sporting events, including the Toronto International Film Festival each September, and the 2016 N.B.A. All-Star game, held outside the United States for the first time.

DAVID SHAFTEL

8. Abu Dhabi

New museums and hotels and a greening desert.

Enlightenment takes time. Ten years in the case of Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi's starchitect-saturated natural island whose name means "place of enlightenment." After much controversy and multiple delays, Jean Nouvel's Louvre Abu Dhabi, known for a lacework dome that lets in what the architect calls a "rain of light," is expected to open in mid- to late 2016. Forthcoming projects include a Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Zaha Hadid's Performing Arts Center and Foster & Partner's Zayed National Museum. This year also sees a batch of upmarket hotel openings elsewhere in the city, including the 200-room Four Seasons in the new Central Business District and the 244-room Edition Hotel on the Abu Dhabi Marina. Most surprising and important is the Emirati capital's earnest step toward nature conservation. In January 2015, Abu Dhabi's Environment Agency completed phase one of the Al Wathba Wetland eco-reserve project, one of the Middle East's first wildlife reserves and home to 232 species. It also introduced strict fishing quotas and serving

regulations at restaurants, and expanded Plan Abu Dhabi 2030, a master urban scheme that includes the Mangrove National Park, the first of five national parks and home to Anantara's Eastern Mangroves Hotel and a biodiversity hot spot occupying 75 percent of the United Arab Emirates' mangrove forest. Even Saadiyat's beach dunes, home to nesting hawksbill turtles, have been protected, promising visitors an enlightened experience that goes far beyond art and architecture.

ADAM H. GRAHAM

9. Skane, Sweden

Nordic cuisine's next big thing.

Some of the Nordic region's most interesting food is being cooked not in Copenhagen but across the Oresund Bridge, in the Swedish region of Skane. The capital, Malmö, is home to a handful of terrific casual places, like Bastard and Bord 13. But the real action is outside the city. Almost mythologically Swedish — all unadulterated coastline, mushroom-filled forests and red wooden houses — rural Skane has been attracting lots of creative types who come to farm (organically, of course), cook and even grow tobacco to make their own snus. In summer, Horte Brygga serves fresh, simply prepared seafood right on the shore, while Tallungen, a lovely country hotel and restaurant overseen by two young chefs who fled Stockholm, makes beautiful use of its on-site garden and bakery. But the real stunner is the 25-seat Daniel Berlin Krog. The namesake young chef hunts most of the game he serves and grows many of the vegetables; but his sophisticated, deeply layered cooking is more world-class than rustic. Though winter weather conditions have been rough, with flooding and icy roads, it's still a place to watch in 2016.

LISA ABEND
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

10. Viñales, Cuba

Looking for the real Cuba? You've found it.

The increasing accessibility of Cuba for American travelers goes well beyond Havana. Less than three hours' drive west of the bustling capital is Viñales, a lush valley of deep-red earth and tobacco fields and mogotes, stunning limestone outcrops that are often shrouded by morning mist. Explore the valley — a Unesco World Heritage site — from the village of Viñales, where every other pastel house is a bed-and-breakfast. Escape the tour buses by hiring a bike (or even a horse) and a guide and follow the tracks that cross the valley. Stop at a tobacco farm and learn what goes into making some of the world's finest cigars, or, if you're a keen climber, get a guide to show you where the best mogote climbing is. At farms, like Finca de la Confianza, you can learn about local, low-tech organic farming. Back in town, there's a beautiful, family-run botanical garden with lovely orchids and plenty of options for a good plate of beans and succulent roast pork. And now that the United States and Cuba have agreed to restore commercial flights, it's all that much easier to get to.

VICTORIA BURNETT

11. Guadeloupe

Easier access to wild beauty and a new look at a complicated legacy.

Finally, there's easier access to the French Caribbean, thanks to the low-cost carrier Norwegian Air's new direct flights to Guadeloupe and Martinique from Boston, New York and Baltimore. And it's just in time for Memorial ACTe in Guadeloupe, one of the world's largest centers dedicated to the memory and history of the slave trade, which opened last July in Pointe-à-Pitre. On the site of the former Darboussier sugar factory, the soaring silver, lattice-clad space — which some have called the Pompidou Center of the Caribbean — is part of Un-

esco's Slave Route Project and houses an interactive permanent exhibit that intertwines the history of slavery with contemporary art, covering themes of the African diaspora, plus public genealogy and research libraries, contemporary art and photography spaces and, of course, a bistro overlooking the ocean for that taste of France. And it's all in the midst of the islands' verdant, dramatic landscapes and sandy beaches.

CEIL MILLER BOUCHET

12. Park City, Utah

Always fun, now bigger — a lot bigger.

The big news in North American skiing this winter is that Park City Mountain Resort and adjacent Canyons Resort have merged to become the nation's largest ski resort. A bitter legal battle over an expired land lease ended in fall 2014 when Vail Resorts, which operates Canyons, purchased Park City. Last summer Vail spent a record \$50 million to solidify the union (and, one thinks, to show it will be a good steward after so much acrimony), and to pay for a new eight-person gondola to link the two resorts. The combined 7,300-acre ski resort, now simply called Park City, is skiable with one lift pass.

CHRISTOPHER SOLOMON

13. Aarhus, Denmark

Thriving Danish culture beyond well-trodden Copenhagen.

Denmark's second city is often eclipsed by Copenhagen, its cousin across the Kattegat sea. But this big city with a college-town vibe has a thriving art, culture and food scene that is set to expand through 2016. New development along its industrial coastline — including Dokk1, a cultural center and the largest public library in Scandinavia — as well as a light rail expected to open by late summer, is transforming Aarhus into a more accessible cultural capital. Other highlights are ARoS, the gallery known for its "Your Rainbow Panorama"

The Pain de Sucre beach in Les Saintes in Guadeloupe, now easier to get to with new direct flights from Boston, New York and Baltimore.

floor with a kaleidoscopic view of the city; the Moesgaard Museum, dedicated to cultural history; a concert hall, home to the Danish National Opera; the "Iceberg," a striking residential building on the water; and three Michelin-starred restaurants. Gastromé, a short walk from Aarhus's old city center and canal, highlights new Nordic cuisine sourced from the Vilhelmsborg Forest and surrounding countryside.

ASHLEY WINCHESTER

14. Cesme Peninsula, Turkey

An Aegean region grows a food scene.

Dotted with olive and mastic groves, artichoke fields and vineyards, Cesme is coming into its own as a culinary hot spot thanks to the acclaimed, Noma-inspired Alancha and newer restaurants opened by arrivals from Istanbul and Izmir. In the old Greek village of Alacati, Tas Otel organizes autumn olive harvest outings, and Asma Yapragi, Babushka Alacati, Roka Bahce and Fava cook to the season with produce sourced from local growers. To the east, the boutique hotel and vineyard Urla Bagevi arranges tastings at nearby wineries including Urlice and Usca. Events celebrating local food and drink — wild greens, wine, bread, the peninsula's unique date olive, fish — run spring through autumn. In Izmir, at the peninsula's base, the food tour outfit Culinary Backstreets recently began offering walking tours.

ROBYN ECKHARDT

15. Road of the Seven Lakes, Argentina

A newly paved road to beautiful vistas.

It's no longer necessary to rent a four-wheel-drive vehicle to explore the Patagonian Lake District. With the long-delayed paving of the Road of the Seven Lakes completed last summer, it is now possible to drive, cycle or motorbike (new rental companies like Seven Lakes Rides are already setting up shop) down this 66-mile route that takes in some of Argentina's most compelling scenery. Connecting San Martín de Los Andes to the mountain village of Villa La Angostura, an hour's drive from the skiing and snowboarding mecca of Bariloche, the route is stunningly scenic, winding its way through forested valleys and around the eponymous azure lakes, taking in national parks, snow-capped mountains and abundant waterfalls along the way. The trip can now be completed in a few hours, although it's worth stretching out the journey to take advantage of the campgrounds (or boutique hotels) and excellent restaurants along the way.

NELL MCSHANE WULFHART

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

How We Chose Our List

Each January, the editors of the Travel section publish our Places to Go issue. And each year after we do, readers wonder why their favorite destination was overlooked or why their least favorite made the top 10. To add some clarity to the process, we've decided to answer some frequently asked questions about how we chose our 52 Places to Go in 2016.

How do you start the process?

First we contact dozens of contributing writers, many of them based overseas, for suggestions. We receive a few hundred ideas, and start with those.

What are you looking for in those ideas?

We aim for a selection of places that we expect to be particularly compelling in the coming year; reasons might include a museum opening, a new transportation option or a historical anniversary. So even though cities like Paris, Rome and Tokyo are always exciting, they didn't make the cut.

How do you narrow it down to the final list?

We discuss the merits and drawbacks of each suggested destination in a marathon-length meeting (or two) before cutting down the list. Our main goal is to have a variety of regions and interests, with some surprises mixed in. We also try for a mix of scale, including cities, regions and even entire countries.

What made Mexico City the top choice?

The No. 1 has to hit a sort of sweet spot: a major destination that is a particularly strong choice to visit this year. We think Mexico City is just that. From restaurants to museums to shopping, it has it all — and there's nowhere in the world quite like it. It's also a famously sprawling metropolis, but need not be intimidating — neighborhoods like La Roma and San Ángel are like little cities unto themselves. (It is also easier to get to, with more flights from more United States airports than ever before.) From Milan (2015) to Cape Town (2014) to Rio (2013), the places that land at No. 1 are chosen because at this moment there is a defining reason to go.

What did you do differently this year?

For the last few years, in our online presentation of the list, we've featured what we call cinemagraphs — basically short videos that take the place of still images in the desktop version. We'll be doing a bunch of those again. But we've also added a special video at the top of the page, which includes footage of Mexico City shot with a drone. "We filmed at sunrise and sunset," said Josh Haner, a staff photographer who was part of a small team that went down to shoot the footage, "and looked for locations that we thought captured the feeling of old and new in Mexico City."

My favorite destination didn't make the list. Why not?

Though we stick to 52 places, of course there is an almost endless number of great destinations. Our selection is just that — a selection — and by no means comprehensive. We'd love to hear your suggestions. All year, we'll be featuring your picks in a new feature; use the #52places hashtag on Instagram to suggest yours.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

16. Hangzhou, China

State-of-the-art museums and more in an ancient city.

Hangzhou used to be known for its ancient poets and painters; now, the city is home to the booming e-commerce company Alibaba, and will take a step on the global stage in 2016 as the first Chinese city to host the G20 summit. To get ready, the city is opening a batch of new hotels, including a 417-room Shangri-La, the brand's second in Hangzhou, as well as the Kengo Kuma-designed Folk Art Museum, built on a former tea plantation with thousands of traditional-style roof tiles. Also, with tourists in mind, the city has developed an English-language travel app to help foreigners find hotels, restaurants and other attractions with ease.

JUSTIN BERGMAN

17. Korcula Island, Croatia

Experience authentic life on the Dalmatian Coast.

Beyoncé and Jay Z called this one. The

couple's 2011 visit to Hvar Island seemed to open the tourist floodgates to Croatia's Dalmatian Coast. Korcula is Hvar's more modest neighbor. Much of the island is still untouched, dotted with blue-collar fishing villages and little pebble beaches. Instead of sticking to the Old Town, which claims to be the birthplace of Marco Polo, rent a moped and head west. Travel through olive groves and thick woodlands, and drive off-road to sample Korcula's signature white wine, Grk, at any number of hopelessly charming family wineries. It's bitter and earthy — and true to the region's less fashionable days.

KATIE ENGELHART

18. San Sebastián, Spain

A culinary capital expands its repertory.

San Sebastián is known as a culinary paradise, but its packed cultural calendar this year will prove it has much more to offer. As the Basque beauty celebrates its reign as a 2016 European Capital of Culture, large-scale artworks will populate public spaces, the San Telmo museum will present a powerful joint project with Madrid's Reina Sofía



An unspoiled Croatian island with little pebble beaches, olive groves and fishing villages.

museum, the modern Kursaal auditorium and other area theaters will screen films as part of its annual film festival, and the historic Hotel Maria Cristina will impress with its refurbished belle époque interiors. Meanwhile, locals will be pouring their energy into grass-roots events, from traditional Basque festivals to street theater and artisan markets.

INGRID K. WILLIAMS

19. Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo

Newly accessible, gorillas and a volcano in idyllic surroundings.

One of the most breathtaking spots on earth, Virunga National Park, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, has for decades also been one of the most dangerous. Since late 2013, when the Congolese army routed the M23 rebels with the help of United Nations peacekeepers, intrepid sightseers have begun to trickle back in for the verdant vistas and up-close encounters with rare mountain gorillas. (Getting there requires a flight to Kigali, Rwanda, and a three-hour taxi ride.) Over the past year the park, featured in last year's Oscar-nominated documentary "Virunga," has opened or reopened its accommodations, like the individual luxury bungalows at Mikeno Lodge, where visitors can see baboons and even chimpanzees, or the Tchegera Island Camp off the shore of Lake Kivu, populated with eagles and herons. There are even summit shelters near the rim of Mount Nyiragongo volcano, in the warm, red glow of the world's largest lava lake. While a park spokeswoman said there have been no reports of unfriendly encounters between rebels and tourists, the eastern D.R.C. remains an unpredictable area that calls for sensible precautions.

NICHOLAS KULISH

20. Grand Rapids, Mich.

A furniture-making city champions urban renewal and art.

The early 20th-century furniture companies Herman Miller and Steelcase established a creative community in central Michigan's Grand Rapids, one now flourishing thanks to a confluence of urban revival and arts funding. The 138,000-square-foot

food hall Grand Rapids Downtown Market, built using repurposed materials from the dilapidated buildings it replaced, earned LEED-gold certification in 2014, and enticed a branch of Detroit-famed Slows Bar-B-Q to open last summer alongside bakers and other food-focused start-ups. For three weeks each fall, the city's contemporary art competition ArtPrize attracts more than 1,500 works and awards \$500,000 in prizes. Artists from Auguste Rodin to Ai Weiwei stake the 158-acre Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, which recently added a Japanese garden with works by Anish Kapoor and Jenny Holzer. Don't leave thirsty; over 40 craft breweries line the city's ale trail.

ELAINE GLUSAC

21. Garzón, Uruguay

A new wine region blooms near celebrated beaches.

In 2008, Alejandro Bulgheroni, who owns wineries from Napa to Tuscany, began growing grapes in a ranching region of Uruguay near the dusty town of Garzón, about 20 miles inland from the beach village of José Ignacio. Last month, the resulting boutique vineyard, Bodega Garzón, added a 161,000-square-foot winery angling for LEED certification and a restaurant with an open-flame-cooking focus overseen by the celebrated Argentine chef Francis Mallmann. It's on an approximately 10,000-acre property that includes olive and almond orchards. An inn is planned next year. Spanning nearby Lake Garzón, the new ring-shaped Laguna Garzón Bridge designed by the Uruguayan architect Rafael Viñoly is poised to be both an architectural attraction and a gateway to the rustic countryside.

ELAINE GLUSAC

22. Dublin

A city spruces up to celebrate a centenary.

Dublin commemorates the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising against British rule with a series of ribbon cuttings this spring. Richmond Barracks, where the Rising leaders were court-martialed, will open an exhibition center. Nearby Kilmmainham Gaol, the dramatic-looking prison where most of the leaders were executed, will unveil its restored Regency-style courthouse. The National Concert Hall will turn three rooms, site of the historic Treaty De-



ANDREAS MEICHSNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



PORAS CHAUDHARY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, ABOVE; DAMON WINTER/ THE NEW YORK TIMES, BELOW LEFT



LAURYN ISHAK

bates, into a 130-seat performance space. And later in the year, the National Gallery of Ireland is expected to reveal the most extensive refurbishment in its 150-plus-year history, with the opening of a new atrium and upgrades to two wings.

23. Todos Santos, Mexico

A Pacific Coast retreat grows a new green community.

Nearly 50 miles north of Cabo San Lucas, tranquil Todos Santos has long been a surfer's retreat and a day-trip destination for Cabo travelers keen to visit art galleries. In summer, the new Tres Santos development may tempt longer visits via Hotel San Cristobal, a new 32-room beachfront hotel from Bunkhouse, owners of Hotel San Jose in Austin. A new 3.5-mile hiking and biking path will link the beach to town to encourage sustainable commutes. Tres Santos, which bills itself as a "mindful living community" and includes vacation homes, also plans to open a farm and a village with shops, restaurants and a farmers' market

this year.

ELAINE GLUSAC

24. Tamil Nadu, India

New gateways to India's cultural core.

North India, with its famous Moghul-era palaces and forts, might be the country's most popular tourist destination, but Tamil Nadu in the south has an equally rich and undiscovered history. The state is where India's major temple cultural complexes are, and some are so large that they're considered minicities. There's Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, a sprawling complex dedicated to a powerful female deity, Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, built by the ancient Cholas, one of India's greatest dynasties, and several hundred other temples dotting the countryside and brimming with art carvings dating back as far as the ninth century. But temples aren't the only cultural hit: the region of Chettinad has more than 50 villages filled with 18th-century mansions of carved Burma teak. It also offers cuisine that is among the spiciest and most aromatic in the country and often served on banana leaves. Limited infra-

Clockwise from top left: Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, in the south of India, where the country's major temple cultural complexes are. The Folk Art Museum at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, the National Concert Hall, Dublin. Lake Geneva in Vaud, Switzerland. A surfer at the Mayan Village Resort south of Todos Santos, on the Baja peninsula. And Bar, Ktery Neexistuje ("The Bar Which Doesn't Exist") in Brno, the Czech Republic's second city.



EICHI KANO



ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

structure in Tamil Nadu made accessibility a challenge for travelers, but the recent burst of boutique hotels is changing that. Over a dozen properties recently opened or on their way to making their debut include Chidambara Vilas and the Bangala in Chettinad, Heritage Madurai in Madurai and Ideal River Vira Resort in Thanjavur.

SHIVANI VORA

25. Vaud, Switzerland

The Lake Geneva region attracts new and renewed museums.

Vaud, Switzerland's gracious canton that hugs Lake Geneva, has been known to attract famous people seeking quiet lives, Audrey Hepburn and Charlie Chaplin among them. This spring, the long-awaited Chaplin's World will open on 35 wooded acres at his former estate in Vevey, with an artifact-filled Modern Times Museum, contemporary art gallery, outdoor festival site and film center. The nearby Modern Times Hotel, opening in February, will offer shuttles to the museum. On the lakefront, Alimentarium, the food museum run by Nestlé, will reopen in June after a nine-month remodel to better relate "the story of food" through interactive exhibits. In fall, the new 65,000-square-foot Aquatis Swiss Aquarium and Water Museum will open near Lausanne, the canton's capital.

ELAINE GLUSAC

26. Washington, D.C.

Developments raise the bar downtown.

The National Mall, studded with landmarks and museums, will soon have one more jewel in its cultural crown: the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, scheduled to open late this year. Expect exhibits presenting a nuanced perspective of the African-American experience through cultural artifacts, artwork and personal-history stories. Adding to the appeal of downtown is nearby CityCenterDC, an ambitious 10-acre development project filled with apartments, condos, shops and restaurants, including Momofuku CCDC (the first United States location outside New York of the celebrated restaurant brand), which opened there late last year.

INGRID K. WILLIAMS

27. Brno, Czech Republic

Unexpected cuisine and night life in an architectural mecca.

Known mostly for its minimalist architecture, the Czech Republic's second city is finally starting to earn praise for its food and drink, with last year's new bars Super Panda Circus and Lucky Bastard Beerhouse joining the revered three-year-old Bar, Ktery Neexistuje (The Bar Which Doesn't Exist). Stylish new restaurants like Simplé, Pavillon, Il Mercato and Koishi offer pitch-perfect takes on French, American, Japanese and regional Italian cooking, among others, while third-wave coffeehouses Coffee Fusion and Cafe Mitte make it easy for overnight guests from nearby Prague and Vienna to shake off the excess of the previous evening on their way to the remarkable Villa Tugendhat.

EVAN RAIL

28. Saint Helena

An isolated wonderland opens to air travel.

Remote is an understatement. A speck of volcanic rock in the South Atlantic some 1,200 miles west of the African coast, this British Overseas Territory is reachable by a five-day ship journey. (No wonder the

British exiled Napoleon there.) But Saint Helena (population barely 4,000) is constructing its first airport and next year will welcome commercial flights on Comair from Johannesburg. The island, with dramatic landscapes and waters full of whale sharks, dolphins and tuna, offers a unique getaway for hikers, divers, fishing enthusiasts and hermits. All activities are best fueled by local coffee, an internationally prized specimen.

SETH SHERWOOD

29. Barcelona, Spain

Celebrating a beloved architect all year.

This year, Barcelona prepares for an influx of architecture aficionados as it marks the 90th anniversary of the death of Antoni Gaudí, whose work famously peppers the city. The Gaudí Exhibition Center at the Museu Diocesà de Barcelona will continue to offer an interactive deep dive with its "Walking With Gaudí" exhibition — a perfect primer for what is poised to be an important decade in Gaudian history: By year's end, the Unesco World Heritage site Casa Vicens — Gaudí's first major work — will open as a public museum, and the completion of the Sagrada Família cathedral, his most ambitious work, is finally scheduled for 2026. Guests of the nearby Majestic Hotel & Spa will be offered private tours of both structures once they open.

LINDSEY TRAMUTA

30. Dalat, Vietnam

A cool alternative to the usual steamy Vietnamese destination.

Pine forests, locally grown avocados and artichoke tea aren't commonplace in Vietnam, but they are in Dalat. The south-central-highlands town, a former French-colonial hill station with eternal spring weather, is an agricultural El Dorado, growing asparagus, strawberries, coffee, artichokes, roses and more. Dalat has built a reputation for outdoor activities, like golf (the new Dàlat at 1200 country club opened a course in November that will be featured on the 2016 Asian Tour), white-water rafting, mountain biking, canyoning and splashing under the roaring Elephant Falls or terraced Pongour Falls. And the number of overseas visitors has grown — debut charter flights from China, South Korea, and Thailand arrived in 2015, with direct Singapore flights under discussion — drawn by the promise of a refreshingly different Vietnam experience.

SANJAY SURANA

31. Turin, Italy

Renewal in a former industrial capital.

A reopened Egyptian Museum isn't the only draw in Turin, where projects like the warehouse district Docks Dora, home to galleries, ateliers and underground clubs; the street art initiative Arte in Barriera; and Lavazza's new headquarters in Aurora near Porta Palazzo, Europe's largest open-air market, are softening an industrial face. Fresh exhibition spaces and museums (CAMERA - Italian Center for Photography and Museo Ettore Fico) complement Contemporary Art Week, comprising Artissima, Paratissima and Luci d'Artista. The concurrent Club to Club is one of many music festivals (Torino Jazz, Kappa Futur, TODAYs, Movement Torino). The city, which is home to Slow Food's annual Salone del Gusto, is also a jumping-off point for the Unesco world heritage-designated wine regions Langhe-Roero and Monferrato.

ROBYN ECKHARDT

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

ROUNDUP | TRANSIT, MUSIC AND SPORTS

How to Get There

So many places to go, right? But also so many ways to get to them. Here are a few to look out for this year.

TRAIN

The Venice-Simplon Orient Express, that legendary long-distance passenger train service immortalized by Agatha Christie, Bram Stoker and countless others, is reinstating its historic route between London, Paris and Berlin in restored 1920s Art Deco carriages. The two-day overnight journey, which starts at \$3,359 per person and includes meal service, a bar car with live piano music and afternoon tea service, makes its inaugural departure from London to Berlin via Paris on June 2.

After 17 years of boring through the Swiss Alps, the Gotthard Base rail tunnel — among the world's longest and deepest tunnels — will open this year, ahead of schedule. The 35-mile-long mega-tunnel



connects Switzerland's Swiss-German-speaking Canton Uri to Italian-speaking Ticino before continuing to Lake Como and Milan. New high-speed trains, introduced in 2014, will begin to run through the tunnel, reducing Zurich to Milan transit from

four hours to just under three hours; another tunnel opening in 2020 will shave off another 30 minutes. The old tracks will still function as local lines, some becoming new scenic routes for tourists.

A new bullet train is finally connecting Japan's main island of Honshu to its northernmost island, Hokkaido. The line from Shin-Aomori to Shin-Hakodate will begin service in March and include new premier H5 "green class" carriages with white leather seats and an ice-themed décor.

PLANE

Meanwhile, Hokkaido's capital, Sapporo, and the popular ski area Niseko are also more accessible thanks to the revamped New Chitose Airport. Several international carriers and domestic carriers have added routes to it in the last year and are scheduled to continue expansion in 2016.

BOAT

In 2016 the Galápagos Islands will welcome two new small-ship cruises. In February, Ecoventura will launch the 20-passenger Origin, and Un-Cruise will begin service on the 48-guest La Pinta. They join the 90-passenger Santa Cruz II from Metropolitan Touring, which started in October 2015.

CAR

Up north, in the Scottish Highlands, the new North Coast 500 highway promises landscapes of lush mountains, looming castles and lovely seaside villages. The 500-mile circular course starts in the northern city of Inverness, then snakes along the rugged coastline, weaving along the west coast and some of the most northerly coastal points before heading south again through Dingwall.

CHARLY WILDER, ELAINE GLUSAC, ADAM H. GRAHAM AND DANIEL SCHEFFLER

Sounds of Music From Around the World

What does the rhythm of life sound like in 2016? Drums are keeping traditions alive in Basque Country and Burkina Faso; California is calling on the voices of strong women to inspire new music; and in Montreal, jazz lovers are preparing for what is sure to be the classiest Battle of the Bands in history.

Pack your earplugs and head to San Sebastián, Spain, for **La Tamborrada** (Jan. 20), one of the oddest and, surely, most annoying musical traditions in the world. Every year on the feast of St. Sebastián, more than 100 local drum regiments parade through the city's Plaza de la Constitución, beating buckets and drums for 24 hours, a custom thought to have begun during the Peninsular War, when villagers filling their buckets with water from the plaza's well began to mock Napoleon's soldiers, who were occupying the city.

Drummers are most often dressed in peasant costumes, as soldiers or as chefs, a practice with varied explanations, none of which ring quite true. It may have something to do with the large dinners hosted by local food clubs the night before, a big bonus in a city already well known for its culinary expertise.

Rooted in age-old West African traditions, **Festima** (Feb. 27 to March 5), held every other year in Dédougou, Burkina Faso, is a different kind of cacophony, mixing drumming with dance and, most important, mask-making. Musicians with hand drums, whistles and balafons, xylophone-like instruments made with gourds, pound out rhythms while dancers, masked to look like animals and bush spirits, perform and



MARIAH TAUGER FOR OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL.

interact with spectators. Storytelling competitions and presentations on the history of regional mask-making and culture are also part of the festivities, which began in 1996 with a group of students hoping to preserve these traditions. Arrive well rested, as impromptu dance sessions often keep visitors up till the wee hours.

In March, two freshman fests, the **Okeechobee Music & Arts Festival** (March 4 to

6) in Florida and **Paradise Lost** (March 10 to 12), Jamaica's first electronic dance music festival, make their debuts with impressive lineups.

Mumford & Sons, Robert Plant, Ween, Big Boi and others are to headline Okeechobee's five stages, which share the vast grounds, nicknamed Sunshine Grove, with camping facilities, a yoga center and an art studio. In Ocho Rios, **Paradise Lost** is to have Bassnec-

Steven Schick leads **ICE in Varese's "Integrals"** at **Libbey Bowl** during the 2015 **Ojai Music Festival** in California.

Calling All Sports Fans

Whether your game is golf, soccer, snow biking or Ping-Pong, 2016 is shaping up to be a flag-waving year among fans.

Any Olympic year is a great one for sports spectators, and this summer's **Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro** (Aug. 5 to 21) offers quadrennial opportunities for indulging in low-profile events like archery, equestrian jumping, table tennis and badminton in addition to the big-ticket competitions including gymnastics, swimming and track and field in one of the world's most stunning cities. Rio's bid for the 2016 Games included a vow to clean up the city's surrounding waters, which remain filthy according to a recent Associated Press test. Still, organizers are soldiering on, recently unveiling their centerpiece Barra Olympic Park with an exhibition in its new Olympic Tennis Center and a new golf course where medals will be awarded in Olympic golf for the first time since 1904.

Rio's games aren't the only international contest on the 2016 calendar. The biennial **Arctic Winter Games** (March 6 to 11) will draw biathlon snowshoers, hockey players, skiers and general fans of snow play to Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. The meet,



BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Super Bowl 50 will be played in Levi's Stadium near San Francisco.

designed for youth athletes from Arctic regions, includes competition in Arctic sports, Inuit games such as the two-foot-high kick in which competitors jump to reach a dangling target with their feet; and Dene games, from the aboriginal inhabitants of northern Canada, including the pole push, a sort of tug of war with a pole rather than a rope.

Golf uniquely pivots from an individual sport to a team one every other year with the **Ryder Cup**. Team USA has won only two of the last 10 meets against Team Europe. Captain Davis Love III and vice captains including, for the first time, Tiger Woods, will seek revenge next fall at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis (Sept. 27 to Oct. 2).

Despite domestic scandals, Deflategate charges of cheating and concussions on the field and on the movie screen, pro football remains the nation's most popular sport. Having scrapped its Roman numerals on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the N.F.L. will take **Super Bowl 50** (Feb. 7) to the San Francisco 49ers' new Levi's Stadium in suburban Santa Clara. A fan village with games and entertainment will open Jan. 30. For a fan-friendly preview of the league's future, the N.F.L. Draft will return to Chicago (April 28 to 30) in a festival-like setting in Grant Park downtown, only the second time the event has been held outside New York.

The growing legions of soccer fans drawn by last summer's Women's World Cup win by the United States women's

national team will find an international import to cheer next summer. Featuring 16 national men's teams from the Americas and the Caribbean, the **Copa America Centenario** will be staged stateside for the first time (June 3 to 26). Ten American cities will host Group Stage matches, including Orlando, Fla.; Pasadena, Calif.; Philadelphia; and Seattle, with semifinals in Chicago and Houston, and the finals at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

Snow biking has been cranking up at ski resorts — and even urban areas — for the past several years. In 2016, the sport will get its first major international meet in the **Fat Bike World Championships** in Crested Butte, Colo. (Jan. 27 to 31), featuring elite races and others open to amateurs.

Also inviting amateurs, but in polar-opposite climes, **PADI Women's Dive Day**, sponsored by the scuba dive industry's Professional Association of Diving Instructors, will be reprised July 16 with hundreds of dive events in 65 countries. Last year's inaugural event featured participants in mermaid fins in New Zealand and Mary Poppins attire in France.

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GETTY, ABOVE; BARBARA LEE, BELOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

32. Isla Holbox, Mexico

In Yucatán, an ecotourism gem emerges.

The brief ferry ride to Isla Holbox, a 26-mile-long sliver of mostly mangrove and beach in the vast Yum Balam biosphere reserve, is only about a two-and-a-half-hour drive northwest of Cancún thanks to a route that opened last summer. The car-free island is a tranquil, unpretentious hideaway for visitors to the Yucatán, a place to swim with gentle whale sharks, to kiteboard above its crystalline waters and to enjoy some culture at the annual International Public Art Festival, when artists indeed paint the town. In early 2016, LeBazaar, a new art gallery/cafe/boutique with rooms for several artists-in-residence will open next to one of the island's original eco-friendly beachfront boutique hotels, the stylish Casa las Tortugas.

CEIL MILLER BOUCHET

33. Providence, R.I.

The East Coast's answer to Portland, Ore.?

This cobblestone-lined capital has the sort of bearded liberalness and ever-rising food scene — including the new restaurant Oberlin, from the duo behind the James Beard nominee Birch — that might feel familiar to residents of Portland, Ore. The sculpture-studded Creative Mile is part of a 40-acre redevelopment of the old I-95 that will also include an eight-acre riverfront park linking east and west by a footbridge. An hour away, well-heeled weekenders flock to Watch Hill on Little Narragansett Bay, where a new culinary center at the oceanside Ocean House offers “competitive-style” cooking classes.

RACHEL LEVIN

34. Mosel wine country, Germany

Biodiversity, new hiking trails and a castle stay.

The Mosel is shedding its uptight oenophile image and embracing its wild side, which is attracting wine-minded outdoor types to its steep, riesling-lined



A Bond film location and Swarovski crystal wonderland in the Tyrolean Alps.

From top, fall foliage at Daigoji temple in Kyoto, in the Kansai region of Japan; the Holbox pier in car-free Isla Holbox, Mexico; and a church in Mosel wine country in Germany.

riverbanks. Canoe and kayak outfitters are popping up along the undeveloped stretch of river — a rarity in Germany — home to rebounding populations of otters and kingfishers. Hikers can embark on the new 365-kilometer-long Moselsteig trail stretching from the French border to Koblenz, join Slow Mosel's new 2016 tour to Luxembourg or join one of the biodiversity projects at Bauern und Winzerverbandes Rheinland-Nassau (a winemaker organization) that are protecting the riverbank's stone walls, critical habitat for rare plants and endangered lizards. Travelers seeking a sip of old-school Mosel can stay at Schloss Lieser, a private castle-turned-five-star hotel on a 27-acre riesling vineyard that opened in late 2015.

ADAM H. GRAHAM

35. Pyeongchang, South Korea

Ski South Korea before the Olympics get there.

South Korea will burst onto the global radar as a ski-and-snowboard destination when the world arrives for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. For now, travelers can enjoy well-groomed runs, friendly service and comfortable slopeside rooms without the Olympic-sized traffic jams. Of several ski resorts in the area, Yongpyong is widely considered the best, with 13 lifts plus a gondola. It will host Alpine ski events during the Games, but is also welcoming for nonprofessionals: 12 of its 28 runs are rated beginner or intermediate. The Dragon Valley Hotel, nestled at the base, is a short walk to Korean, Chinese and Japanese restaurants, as well as pizza and burger joints.

ELISABETH EAVES

36. Tyrol, Austria

Bond, Swarovski crystal, new ski lifts and hotels.

The edelweiss-spiked Alps are abloom with developments. Tyrol got its close-up as a filming location in the Bond film “Spectre,” released in late 2015 and shot in the futuristic Ice-Q restaurant in the Ötztal Valley, and

the glacial ski area of Sölden. The region will have more affordable hotels like the recently opened Almfamilie Scherer and the new Adeo hotel in St. Johann in Tyrol from Hermann Maier and Rainer Schoenfelder, Austrian former ski racers; 13 new Tyrolean Schnapps Routes highlighting 41 distilleries; and Europe's highest solar farm at the 3,000-meter-high Pitztal Glacier ski resort. New gondolas include the Tirol-S connecting the ski resorts of Fieberbrunn and Saalbach Hinterglemm, and the Kirchenkar high-speed lift to the new \$32 million, modernist Top Mountain Cross Point, a mile-high museum and restaurant complex. But what would a Bond destination be without a bit of crystal-encrusted luxury? To celebrate its 120th birthday in 2015, the Tyrolean crystal maker Swarovski spent \$38 million revamping its Kristallwelten (Crystal Worlds), which include a glassy four-story “playtower” from the Norwegian architecture firm Snohetta, new art exhibits, like Crystal Cloud, a suspended cumulus-shaped net studded with 800,000 crystals, and a subterranean retail space dripping in crystal — a luxurious lair worthy of any villain.

ADAM H. GRAHAM

37. Colmar, France

A revival fueled by modern art and architecture.

The Alsatian town of Colmar has mostly been known for its Old World charms: canals lined with half-timbered buildings, and an art museum, housed in a 13th-century former convent, noted for Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece. Now that museum, the Unterlinden, is leading Colmar's transformation into France's latest destination for modern art and architecture, thanks to a three-year, 44 million-euro renovation and expansion by the Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron. Unveiled in December, the expansion includes a converted public baths building with soaring ceilings, an underground gallery and a three-story copper-roofed extension that houses the museum's new modern and contemporary art wing for displaying artists like Picasso, Monet and Léger. And Colmar's famed wa-

terways? No short shrift there: Herzog & de Meuron also reopened the Sinn Canal, which cuts through the new Unterlinden Square, lining it with sandstone steps.

RATHA TEP

38. Kansai, Japan

An ancient region with new resorts and G7 ahead.

The ancient Kansai region of Japan has always lured travelers, but this year promises a few new reasons to revisit. Last summer, Japan Railways introduced a new five-day Ise-Kumano Area Tourist Pass. Next summer the city of Takarazuka, between Osaka and Kobe, will begin issuing certificates to recognize same-sex unions, the first city outside Tokyo to do so and a signal of change for gay travelers. The Michelin Guide to Kansai had so many starred restaurants (the most worldwide) it was divided into three separate guidebooks for 2016 and offers 19 new starred restaurants. Kansai's superb ryokan (traditional Japanese guesthouses) are seeing upgrades as hotels move into their turf. In late 2016, the 124-room Four Seasons Kyoto opens in the city's historic Higashiyama-ku district, adjacent to the Toyokuni Shrine, while the new 24-suite Amanemu — the brand's first hot spring resort — opens in Ise Shima National Park in Mie Prefecture, known for its pearl divers. The prefecture will also host the G7 summit this year, and its attendees are sure to make good use of the new luxury facilities.

ADAM H. GRAHAM

39. East Bay, California

Urban wineries and a soon-to-be-transformed waterfront.

While the Bay Area's identity is dominated by beautiful, booming San Francisco, its soul increasingly seems to reside in the East Bay, where the population is growing faster than any other corner of this fast-growing region. The elegant new Bay Bridge has been a costly engineering failure, but its graceful white lines lead to Alameda County's glorious inland climate, thriving arts scene and a vibrant culinary culture with roots in Berkeley's Chez Panisse. In Oakland alone, some 300 new restaurants, including Bib Gourmand winners like the Provençal-style French brasserie Michel Bistro and the Autological Ramen Shop, and a dozen urban wineries have opened in recent years. Ten minutes away, in the island town of Alameda, a collection of former Naval Air Station hangars now houses breweries, distilleries and wineries in what has been dubbed “Spirits Alley.” This year will see groundbreaking on the first public park associated with Brooklyn Basin, an enormous (and controversial) mixed-use development that will transform the Oakland Estuary's waterfront.

FREDA MOON

40. Île de Ré, France

Who needs the French Riviera?

Île de Ré is an idyllic haven on the Atlantic Coast for foodies, beachcombers and cyclists in search of an extraordinary beach holiday. The island has more than 60 miles of dedicated bike paths, with more set to open this year, and a free shuttle bus, so visitors don't need a car. There are 10 villages on the island, each with its own market, where visitors can buy fresh oysters, locally made sea-salt caramels and other treats. With its unspoiled golden sand beaches and popularity among French celebrities, Île de Ré draws comparisons to the Hamptons, but it's also popular with budget travelers. Île de Ré is easy to reach — it's connected to La Rochelle by a bridge and 13 European cities now have direct flights to La Rochelle-Île de Ré Airport — but very hard to leave.

DAVE SEMINARA

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

36 Hours

HAVANA

This confounding capital, a mix of past and present, freedom and restriction, has come alive with new energy and ingenuity.

By DAMIEN CAVE

Havana is no longer frozen in time, at least not completely. With Cuba's guarded openness to private enterprise grabbing hold, classic American cars and salsa singers now share the cityscape with new and inventive offerings in food, culture, night life and hospitality. No other city in Latin America, or perhaps the world, can claim to be having just the kind of moment that Havana is experiencing now after so many decades gasping for change. For visitors, the capital is a mash-up of past and present, freedom and restriction. It's a city of architectural decay, but also creativity, where artists have turned a defunct cooking-oil factory into a performance space, bar and music venue that on any given night makes Brooklyn look as cool as a suburban Ikea. It's a city where finding ingredients for a stellar menu requires feats of Promethean ingenuity; where opera is subversive, and kitschy too; where the Internet is just arriving, fully formed and censored; and where young Cubans without money are fleeing, while those with connections and ideas await great success. Officially, some limits for Americans remain in place. Despite restored relations with Cuba, tourism is still banned by the embargo. But for those who reach Havana under the 12 categories of legal travel, or without permission, and for the rest of the world, the city is ready to entertain and confound.

Friday

1 4 P.M. > VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN

Start with what makes Cuba unlike any other Caribbean island: its record of unshakable resistance to the United States. The Museum of the Revolution is a shrine to Cuban sovereignty, housed in the old presidential palace, complete with bullet holes from the Revolution and dozens of glass cases documenting Fidel Castro's triumphs — from his days as a guerrilla, to the Bay of Pigs and beyond. It's all a bit musty now, and best experienced quickly, but it's vital. This is the Cuba of a proud and former era that continues to hold on, like an anchor buried deep at sea.

2 6 P.M. > THE NEW COOL

Climb the spiral staircase to the roof of the restaurant named El Cocinero (look for the soaring brick chimney) and settle into a hip new Havana. Chill on the banquettes with some empanadas de queso, or start with a trago or two of aged rum on the rocks. Then order more. The menu changes based on availability, but small plates rule, from a phenomenal hot crab dip to lobster and sides like boniato (Cuban sweet potato). Expect to pay about 60 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos), about \$61, per couple; the bartenders and servers are gems of efficiency and charm.

3 9 P.M. > CULTURE FACTORY

Next to El Cocinero, sharing an expanse of the same century-old cooking-oil factory, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano feels like a mix of CBGB, Art Basel Miami, a community center, a coffee shop, a bar (or two or three) and a bomb shelter. Arrive for folk dancing, and you may end up lost, in a good way, listening to reggaeton or staring at sculpture, huge canvases of colorful paintings, or black-and-white photography. "It's an urban experiment," said Inti Herrera, a member of the artists' collective that runs La Fábrica with permission from the government, which owns the building.

4 MIDNIGHT > THROW AWAY THE PAST

Finish your night with mojitos at Siá Kará, a centrally located bar and restaurant of just the right size (small) and style (are those old '50s-era ties?). Grab a seat in a far corner from the piano and the singer to allow for maximum listening and diving into late-night conversation about the meaning of socialism, capitalism and life itself. No trip to Cuba is complete without intense discussion of existential quandaries; Siá Kará — an Afro-Cuban expression meaning "to wash away the past" — is an ideal salon, flush with good taste and liquor.

Saturday

5 10 A.M. > FRAPPUCCINO CUBANO

Head to Café Maimainé in Vedado for Havana's version of the Starbucks frappuccino. It's icy. It's strong. It's sweet, flavored with a touch of cinnamon. And as you sit on the porch at Café Maimainé, in an old colonial mansion, it goes great with a ham and cheese omelet, or with a full American breakfast of fruit, toast, butter, jelly, more coffee, eggs and sausage. A hearty feast can be had for 10 CUC.

6 11 A.M. > ART AND ENTREPRENEURS

Call for an appointment at the 331 Art Space. The renovated 1941 mansion, spare and modern now, is the work and display space for three young artists — Frank Mujica, Alex Hernández and Adrián Fernández — whose styles range from intimate drawings to large-scale prints and mixed media. Prices are roughly \$500 to \$10,000, a reflection of what Mr. Hernández describes as his generation's grand, global ambition to create art that reflects Cuba but "looks to a wider audience, an international audience."

7 2 P.M. > A VIEW OF THE SEA

Rest and replenish at Café Laurent, which offers breezes, views of the sea just beyond the newly christened American Embassy — and some rich culinary options. Start with the octopus carpaccio and a bottle of wine (a



Left, the grand Capitolio, seat of the Cuban Congress until the Revolution in 1959. Far left, from top, outdoor dining at El Cocinero, and the scene at Siá Kará Café.

8 7 P.M. > REVIVAL AND RENEWAL

Río Mar has become a favorite of Cuba's emerging elite, for its waterfront location on the edge of lush Miramar, its design-school vibe and its good food. Try the seafood pasta for a break from Cuban fare, or go deep into the past with pan de boniato and the ropa vieja — a shredded-meat classic made from lamb at Río Mar, in an effort to revive a dish that largely disappeared after the Revolution. Then order flan or rum and linger a little longer as the waves knock into the shore. Dinner should cost around 75 CUC for two.

9 10 P.M. > GET YOUR GROOVE ON

Los Van Van, Celia Cruz and others may have to compete with reggaeton and hip-hop these days, but La Casa de la Música in Miramar is still a reliable nightclub for live music and dancing to salsa and merengue. The crowd size varies, and some locals may be looking for more than just a dance partner, but with the right band on the right night, you can lose yourself here for hours of visceral joy.

10 1 A.M. > SMARTPHONE AND CHILL

Make your way to the Malecón, "a free place with a nice view and lots of possibilities" — that's how young Cubans often describe Havana's famous sea wall. Especially late at night, it's a flytrap for youth and uninhibited performance. Couples kiss to music buzzing from old iPhones; friends and musicians dance, shout and flirt with tiny cups of rum in hand, as taxis honk their way through a dawn-seeking crowd overseen by the police who whisper but rarely intervene.

Sunday

11 10 A.M. > TO THE BEACH!

Tourists go to Varadero. Habaneros go to Guanabo, a beach town a half-hour east of Havana, and they go together. To do the same, grab a shared taxi at the small park with the old train at the corner of Agramonte and Misión. The cars tend to be old and slow — all the better for a leisurely trip along the coast, which is still shockingly undeveloped. The beach itself is a ribbon, flush with life at its most crowded spot with no more than a few dozen Cubans swimming and enjoying what has always made Cuba the Pearl of the Antilles: its pristine shores.

12 2 P.M. > A HEMINGWAY DEPARTURE

Finish your trip with a daiquiri or two at La Terraza de Cojimar, a watering hole on the way back to Havana that was a favorite of Ernest Hemingway. It butts up against a bay, on a bumpy road through a small town that hasn't changed much since Papa was around; it's still a gorgeous spot, if old and faded, and the house drink, the Don Gregorio, is still strong. Here at least, on a lucky afternoon, time is frozen. But as with all of Havana, the moment to go is now; in the world of Cuba that caters to visitors, change is here and accelerating.

ONLINE: MAP AND VIDEO

▶ Tour Havana in a 36 Hours video and check out our interactive map at nytimes.com/travel.



IF YOU GO

- 1 Museum of the Revolution, Refugio No. 1;** www.cuba-museums-guide.com/cuba_museums/museum_revolution.htm.
- 2 El Cocinero,** Calle 26 (corner of Calle 11), 53-7-832-2355.
- 3 La Fábrica de Arte Cubano,** Calle 26; fac.cu.
- 4 Siá Kará Café,** Calle Industria No. 502 (corner of Barcelona); siakaracafe.com.
- 5 Café Maimainé,** Calle L No. 206, 53-7-832-8328; https://artempocuba.com/cafe-maimaine-havana/11520.
- 6 331 Art Space,** Calle 31 No. 3401, 53-5-254-1334.
- 7 Café Laurent,** Penthouse, 257 Calle M, 53-7-831-2090; https://www.facebook.com/RestaurantePaladarCafe-LaurentHabana.
- 8 Fábrica de Tabaco Partagas,** Calle Industria No. 520, 53-7-338060.
- 9 Río Mar,** San Lázaro 319; restaurantecasa-abel.com.
- 10 La Casa de la Música,** Avenida 35, at the corner of 20, Miramar, 53-7-2040447.
- 11 Malecón.**
- 12 Guanabo.**
- 13 La Terraza de Cojimar,** Calle Real No. 161 (corner of Candelaria), in Cojimar, 53-7-766-5151.

rarity in all but a few places just a few years ago), then ask about specials. Go for the black ink seafood risotto if it's available: love it or hate it, you'll remember it. Expect to pay about 45 CUC per couple for lunch.

8 4 P.M. > PUROS CUBANOS

Cuban cigars have become a bit of a cliché, but here's how you do it with a measure of authenticity: First, visit the Partagas fac-

tory in Havana if it is allowing tours (sometimes, yes, sometimes no); then head to Casa Abel, a new bar, restaurant and cigar lounge run by Jose Abel Espósito Díaz, who spent 19 years working for Partagas. Abel, as everyone knows him, is a charming repository of tobacco lore and explanation. He often hosts events for cigar aficionados from all over the world. His humidor holds many fine offerings that are worth discussing and smoking.

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HUNTER MCRAE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, ABOVE; ANDREA WYNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, BELOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

41. East Coast, Sri Lanka

Remote stillness — and world-class diving — beckon.

Cut off for the last 30 years because of civil unrest, the east coast of Sri Lanka offers a collection of new hotels like the eco-conscious treehouse-inspired Jungle Bay resort, the barefoot-casual Maalu Maalu and private villas from the local brand Anilana. Wildland Adventures offers back road cycling and leopard-spotting land safaris, and Abercrombie & Kent now extends access to forgotten Hindu temples in newly revived Trinco as well as the region's main draw, unexplored diving sites: the world-class wreck MV Cordiality and the 1922 British Sergeant, a marine oasis leaning on its side. Add on snorkeling with blue whales off Pigeon Island National Park, plus remote surfing, and the boxes are all ticked. SHIVANI VORA

42. Rosine, Ky.

Make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of bluegrass.

The heart of tiny Rosine, Ky., population 113, is an old barn, which is a national landmark that plays host to a weekly Friday night bluegrass jam (mid-March through mid-December) that nods to Bill Monroe, Rosine's most famous son and the musician credited with inventing bluegrass music. Musicians are never paid and admission is always free. Visitors can also visit Monroe's grave and tour his childhood home up the street at Jerusalem Ridge, the site of a big annual bluegrass festival. And a Monroe museum is scheduled to open its doors in the center of town later this year. But the Rosine Barn jam and the endearing locals who enjoy sharing their stage are the town's star attractions. DAVE SEMINARA

43. Málaga, Spain

Beauty, but now a cultural capital, too.

As home to touristy seaside cities like Marbella, the province of Málaga, part of the Andalusia region, is a popular beach destination. The eponymous capital city, however, is now a center of culture. The birthplace of Picasso and home to a namesake museum full of works donated by his family, Málaga has recently seen three major museums open. The most significant is a five-year pop-up of the Centre Pompidou, costing upward of \$8 million, housed in a futuristic building on the waterfront and displaying a changing selection of 20th- and 21st-century paintings by artists like Frida Kahlo and Marc Chagall. There's also a new branch of the St. Petersburg State Russian Museum with a collection of works by some of Russia's most notable artists and the Carmen Thyssen Museum, featuring around 250 works from Baroness Thyssen-Bornemisza's collection of past and present art world masters, including Jeff Koons. Getting to Málaga to explore this new side of the city is easier than ever: Delta now has seasonal flights into the local airport from New York City, and there are new high-speed train routes linking it to Madrid and Barcelona. SHIVANI VORA

44. Guizhou, China

Authentic Chinese hill tribes without mass tourism — yet.

Guizhou province has long been one of China's least accessible regions. As a result, its ethnic minority Miao and Dong mountain villages retain an unhurried pace and authentic feel compared with Lijiang, China's famous minority center, which draws 20 million visitors a year. At least for now. Now Guizhou, too, is starting to open more widely to tourism. The trip from Guangzhou was shortened from more than 20 hours to

four after the opening of a \$20 billion high-speed railway at the end of 2014. And in 2015, Bike Aways, a Hong Kong tour operator, added several Guizhou itineraries, including a Miao Shaman festival hiking trip in January. High-end hotels are also opening in the region, including the Anantara Guiyang Resort early this year. JUSTIN BERGMAN

45. Phnom Penh, Cambodia

A design renaissance in Cambodia's capital.

Siem Reap gets the lion's share of Cambodia's tourism, but Phnom Penh, the capital, is seeing several design-minded developments. The Sleuk Rith Museum, an archive for Khmer Rouge history and a center for Asian genocide studies, was to open this year but is stalled while it raises funds for its new home designed by Zaha Hadid. The modernist Khmer architecture of Vann Molyvann, a Cambodian architect and student of Le Corbusier, is getting overdue attention, including his 1960s brutalist National Sports Complex, which was added to the 2016 World Monuments Fund Watch List. Khmer Architecture Tours provides student-led tuk-tuk tours of it, and in late 2015 reintroduced its tour of Front du Bassac, another major Molyvann site. This year also sees the opening of the 148-room Rosewood Hotel on the top 14 floors of the Vaticanac Capital Tower with views of the Mekong River. ADAM H. GRAHAM

46. St. Louis

A blues tribute near a more accessible arch.

On a national stage, the St. Louis area has struggled with race relations recently — and, more recently, flooding has hit the region hard — but more positive circumstances for celebrating the city's rich African-American heritage will surface this year. The National Blues Museum, opening in April, will focus not only on the music's cultural history but also its place as the foundation of American music — especially as a genre that transcended boundaries of race and background. Nearby, visitors will also have easier access to the city's landmark arch, as the CityArchRiver project progresses, creating rejuvenated parks, promenades and new underground plazas. INGRID K. WILLIAMS



ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, Waterfront Park overlooking the Beaufort River in Beaufort, S.C. Below, a pastry at Estrella, in Salonika, Greece, and macaques at the Sacred Monkey Forest in Ubud, Indonesia.



Friday night bluegrass jams are the draw in a tiny Kentucky hamlet.

47. Salonika, Greece

Greece's second-largest city is first in food.

The young professionals of this northern Greek city have faced the country's high levels of unemployment in an unusual way: They opened restaurants that put a modern twist on traditional Greek, Slavic and Ottoman flavors. Among them is Sebrico, run by a collective of amateur chefs who focus on local ingredients served at bargain prices. The team at Roots experiments joyfully with vegetarian cuisine — unusual in meat-loving Greece. Estrella, one of the city's many stylish new cafes, reinvents traditional pastries, filling croissants with orange-scented cream. Encouraged by a vibrant student population and a visionary mayor, Greece's second-largest city has become a capital of cheap eats. ANN MAH

48. Marfa, Tex.

An offbeat cultural hub with a new hotel to shelter the curious.

This small town in West Texas has become a destination for those attracted to the funky and low-key vibe that endures despite the high wattage work on view — largely that of the late artist Donald Judd, who moved to the dusty town in the 1970s and opened the Chinati Foundation to showcase large installations by contemporary artists. This year, a new 10,000-square-foot installation by Robert Irwin will be unveiled. Annual music and film festivals fill out the cultural calendar. And the Hotel Saint George, originally opened in 1886, will reopen its doors this spring after a year-and-a-half renovation, reconceived as a 55-room boutique hotel highlighting work from local artists. ONDINE COHANE

49. Ubud, Indonesia

A spiritual destination reinvents itself.

Filled with stone temples and surrounded by emerald rice paddies, Ubud has long attracted backpackers and burned-out careerists looking to recalibrate. But the artsy central Balinese town (often overwhelmed by tourists) is emerging as a more sophisticated destination. A slew of luxe resorts opened in late 2015, including Kayon, Goya Boutique and Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve; the Westin is scheduled to de-

but in June, with Aloft, Solis Ubud and Waldorf Astoria Bali Ubud to follow. The dining scene is evolving, too, with stylish newcomers like Spice by Chris Salans, Watercress and the haute bakery Monsieur Spoon. As notable is the second edition of the Ubud Food Festival, in May, showcasing the diversity of Indonesian cuisine through cooking demonstrations, workshops, classes and panel discussions, and further enriching Ubud's culinary landscape. SANJAY SURANA

50. The Southern Gulf Islands, British Columbia

Near Vancouver, islands with simpler charms.

Always blessed with natural beauty, Vancouver has successfully recast itself in recent years as a luxury destination. But as the Canadian city goes upscale, travelers and locals seeking simpler Pacific Northwest charms are increasingly venturing just offshore, to the Southern Gulf Islands. A short ferry ride (as little as an hour) leads to a maze of Pacific islands dotted with small seaside villages, where summers can feel almost Mediterranean. Rocky coast and pebble beaches give way to rolling pastures and forested peaks. Winding roads lead from farms and wineries to cheeseries, breweries and artists' studios. Each of the nearly dozen major islands has its own character and contrarian island culture, but all offer secluded coves and trails to explore, and abundant wildlife, from eagles to orcas. Restaurants — including tiny Pilgrimage, cited as one of Canada's best — punch well above their weight, while one-off accommodations range from renovated Airstreams to Airbnb finds and small, family-run lodges. REMY SCALZA

51. Sydney

Embracing nature in two urban reclamation projects.

Home to beaches and national parks, Sydney is a city outdoor lovers can embrace. Expanding that appeal, two new developments have turned industrial plots into beauty spots. Opened in September, the new Barangaroo Reserve reclaimed 14 acres once piled with shipping containers on the harbor. Inspired by the precolonial landscape, the newly contoured headland edged in sandstone features a shoreline promenade and, temporarily, the Copenhagen restaurant Noma, which will take up residency this month for 10 weeks. The Goods Line, a new elevated walkway, opened in August, repurposing a defunct train line. More reclamation: the new Old Clare Hotel joining a 19th-century pub and brewery offices. More convenience: American Airlines launched daily Sydney-to-Los Angeles flights in December. ELAINE GLUSAC

52. Beaufort, S.C.

A peaceful Low Country town with a stylish new inn.

Petite Beaufort has the appeal of a much larger city (restaurants, festivals and art galleries) without giving up its small-town Low Country charms (bike lanes, walking paths and romantic park benches overlooking the water). And there is an old-new spot from which to enjoy it: the Anchorage 1770, a 250-year-old historic house with generous porches and views of Waterfront Park, which reopened in July. In the 19th century, it was home to the Ribaut Club, a literary crew who met for drinking, gambling and dancing — a tradition to be resurrected by the inn. DANIEL SCHEFFLER

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FEATURED EXPERT



Marlise Simons,
Times Foreign Correspondent

a Dutch-born foreign correspondent based in Paris since 1989. She reports on European economics, politics, diplomacy, the environment and cultural matters and writes frequently about her homeland, in particular the work of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

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Roger Cohen,
Times Op-Ed Columnist

working first as a foreign correspondent and later foreign editor, Cohen joined The New York Times in 1990. He has been a columnist since 2004 and is the author of "Hearts Grown Brutal: Sagas of Sarajevo," an account of the wars of Yugoslavia's destruction.



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FEATURED EXPERT



Ruth Ellen Gruber,
Jewish Heritage Expert and Author

she has chronicled Jewish developments in Europe for more than 25 years, writing for U.P.I., The New York Times and many other publications. She was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit in 2011, one of Poland's highest honors granted to foreigners. She joins both departures.



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FEATURED EXPERT



Laurie Goodstein,
Times Journalist

Laurie Goodstein is the national religion correspondent for The New York Times. She joined The Times in 1997 after working as a correspondent at The Washington Post. She has received many awards including from the Religion Newswriters Association. She joins our June departure.

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