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DESTINATIONS

The Best Places to Go in 2026

For quiet coastal paradises, contemporary design cities, and new ways to travel far, far away.

BY ARATI MENON AND MEGAN SPURRELL

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Crafting a list of the best places to go in the world, in any given year, is a reminder of travel's most beautiful paradox: that our planet can feel both intimately small and incredibly vast at the same time. Brimming with more wonders than you can fit into one **lifetime**—yet increasingly connected—the places to travel to in the world are endless. Which is exactly what makes curating this list not only a great joy but also a challenge.

Our Best Places to Go in 2026 are underpinned with that very sense of magnitude. There are places that already feel familiar and yet are being imbued with fresh life, like **Hong Kong**, which has an exciting new cultural center of gravity, and the 16th-century lake city of Udaipur, where a flurry of luxury-hotel openings is ushering in a new era. There are also under-the-radar gems that are stepping into the spotlight, like Canada's Prince Edward County, where a wave of indie wineries, new restaurants, and boutique hotels is redefining the weekend escape, and Fès, Marrakech's understated sibling, which is set to shine with the historic reopening of its medina following a remarkable 15-year restoration.

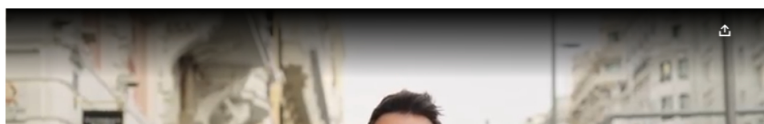
Inspire



Candidly, even after 12 years of pinning down the destinations we're most excited about for this annual list, we're just as wide-eyed as you when we stumble onto something totally unexpected. In Bolivia, great expanses of shimmering salt pans have long been a draw, but zoom out on the region of Potosí and you'll find a geological bonanza of lagoons, hot springs, and snowcapped volcanoes. And if Rwanda's primates have captured your imagination, what about Gabon, where new eco-lodges are opening up access to untouched forests that are home to western lowland gorillas and sweeping savannas? But perhaps few places on earth evoke life's vastness quite like Uluru, the massive sandstone monolith that rises from the heart of the Australian Outback. As the region marks the 40th anniversary of a historic hand-back program, a new chapter of purpose-driven tourism is evolving. In 2026, visitors, guided by Anangu storytellers, can journey along a 33-mile trail, then spend the night in luxurious glamping camps, where the desert sky unfurls like an ancient manuscript—perfect for reflecting on our place in the ever-unfolding story of the universe.

WATCH THIS

The Internet's Madrid Travel Tips Are All Wrong





This list is for travelers and dreamers alike. Use it—[along with the companion lists for six continents](#)—to jump-start your travel plans or simply indulge your sense of wonder. In the year ahead, our global team of editors will be exploring many of these places, and we can't wait to share the stories we discover on the ground and, perhaps, even cross paths with some of you along the way. —*Arati Menon*

This is part of our global guide to the Best Places to Go in 2026—find more travel inspiration [here](#).

Arusha, Tanzania

Go for: *a beloved icon's opening in the city, and a new camp's take on safari in the forest*



Sitting at the edge of a vast swath of jungle, the city of Arusha is embracing its surrounding nature with a slate of new forest hotels and a primatology center dedicated to the late Dr. Jane Goodall.

Entara's Koroi Forest Camp

Rumors of the late primatologist Jane Goodall's new museum in the city of [Arusha](#) have circulated for months—and now, finally, they're confirmed. [Dr. Jane's Dream: The Goodall Centre for Hope](#) will open in late October 2026, next to the centrally located Arusha Cultural Heritage Center. Created by a team of designers who include an alumnus of [Disney's Animal Kingdom](#), the space will consist of six interactive exhibit areas—including a theater and a Garden of Commitment—focusing on conservation education for future generations.

While the city received media attention recently in light of 2025 election demonstrations, Arusha is abuzz with other goings-on, too, courtesy of local entrepreneurs, from Afro-minimalist [Makao Collective](#), which curates gorgeous handcrafted furniture and home decor, to Opuk Lounge, which makes delicious boxed-picnic lunches for conservation-focused safari outings with [The Wild Source](#). Sports enthusiasts, take note: The 30,000-seat Samia Suluhu Hassan soccer stadium in Arusha's Olomoti region will open in the summer of 2026, primed to host the 2027 [Africa Cup of Nations](#) final.

Looking beyond the city, the much-anticipated [Koroi Forest Camp](#) from [Entara](#), a community-focused operator, opened this summer in Arusha National Park. This eight-chalet property in the Momella Forest, on the lower slopes of Mount Meru, gives a distinct alternative to the classic game viewing of Tanzania's plains; instead, here, you might see elephants, shy duikers, and the black-and-white colobus monkeys that give the camp its name. Another newcomer to the safari scene is the [Laba Mama Simba](#), which opened this spring in the 1,730-acre North Dolly wildlife estate. —[Samantha Falewéé](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT KOROI FOREST CAMP](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Africa in 2026](#).

East Coast, Barbados

Go for: a new (unspoiled) slice of island life—and more access than ever



Barbados' wilder East Coast makes for a more rugged, windswept version of the Caribbean getaway—and with new flight and cruise options, there are now even more ways to access this surfer's paradise.

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With new direct flight routes and luxe cruise itineraries, the Caribbean's [easternmost island](#) is becoming more accessible than ever in 2026. [Delta](#) and [KLM](#) recently launched nonstop routes from their hubs in Atlanta and Amsterdam, respectively, and the port of Bridgetown completed a \$2 million upgrade in 2023. The island is also developing the port of Speightstown on the north end of the island, which now offers new moorings for smaller luxury vessels like the [Emerald Sakara](#), from Emerald Cruises, which docks here on a number of itineraries during its 2026 winter season.

All of this will invariably mean more visitors. But that doesn't mean you can't easily escape the crowds should you choose. While Barbados's most popular luxury resorts lie along the tranquil western shores on the Caribbean Sea, adventure-minded travelers can drive just a half hour northeast from Grantley Adams International Airport or the busy Bridgetown cruise ports to reach the island's more rugged Atlantic coastline, where dramatic scenery, world-class [surfing](#), and colorful fishing villages preserve the island's unspoiled character. Start in Bathsheba, where powerful waves have long drawn surfers to the Soup Bowl, a reef break revered by international pros. There's plenty of outdoor activities for nonsurfers too, with a [national park](#) and [wildlife reserve](#) protecting the majority of the east coast from commercial development. Hike from Bath Beach to Bathsheba on a scenic six-mile path that follows the former route of the island's coastal railway. Then round out the day in the nearby village of Martin's Bay on Thursdays, when the Bay Tavern Fish Fry brings together neighbors and visitors alike for fresh-off-the-boat red snapper, baked mac and cheese, and rum-fueled karaoke sessions.

The conflicts and triumphs of traveling the world alone with a toddler.

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In the past, the majority of east-coast accommodations have consisted of [family-owned inns](#) and seaside cottages. This September hotelier Paul Doyle, who owns the island's oldest operating hotel, [The Crane Resort](#), finished the three-year construction on a new all-villa property called [East Resort](#)—bringing upscale yet intimate lodging to what they call Barbados's best-kept secret. —[Mariette Williams](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT THE CRANE RESORT](#)

[BROWSE MORE HOTELS IN BARBADOS](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in North America & the Caribbean in 2026](#).

Brussels, Belgium

Go for: creative inspiration and cultural revival



Brussels has long been known for its opulent Baroque buildings and timeless architecture, but new openings in 2026 it will cement its status as a hub of modern art and design.

Getty

This often-overlooked European capital is having a cultural moment, signaling a shift from a bureaucratic hub to a creative powerhouse. The opening of [Kanal—Centre Pompidou](#) in November 2026 transforms a long-dormant factory into a contemporary center for modern arts. One of Europe's highly anticipated arrivals, it will feature expansive exhibition spaces curated with [Paris's Centre Pompidou](#), alongside a dynamic program of live performances, music, film, workshops, a library, and—five floors up—a [restaurant](#) overlooking the vast showroom, capped by a rooftop bar with panoramic city views. Just steps away is newly opened [The Standard](#), with a rooftop bar, greenhouse-style lounge, and bold design that mirrors the city's creative energy.

Brussels' cultural revival is visible everywhere, from the refreshed façades of [Place de la Bourse](#) to the [Dome Project](#), a restoration of Belgium's first department store with modern flair. Nearby, the [Gare Maritime](#), a former freight station, seamlessly blends sustainable architecture with design fairs and chef-led food stalls. Plan a spring visit, when [Art Brussels](#) draws galleries and collectors from around the world for a vibrant international fair, and the biannual [Zinneke Parade](#)

transforms the city's streets into a stage of theatre and imagination. For those seeking more adrenaline, base yourself in the city for the Belgian Grand Prix to marvel at the sporting spectacle. — *Adriana Falisova*

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Europe in 2026](#).

Chiriquí Province, Panama

Go for: castaway vibes, marine reserves, eco-resorts



Lush forests and the endless idyllic beaches of Panama's Pacific coast make Chiriqui province feel like a world of its own—yet thanks to new laid-back yet luxurious eco-lodges, escaping from the world here doesn't require sacrificing comfort.

Mike Dell/Isla Palenque

The Chiriqui Province, roughly 300 miles southwest of [Panama City](#) and hugging the Pacific, has emerged over the past decade as a castaway-style escape. The area includes [La Amistad International Park](#), an over 400,000-hectare UNESCO World Heritage Site and Central America's largest nature reserve, as well as the [Gulf of Chiriqui National Marine Park](#), home to howler monkeys, armadillos, and, from July to October, migrating humpback whales. Luxury tour company [Black Tomato](#) will expand Chiriqui coverage for 2026, offering snorkeling within the marine park, naturalist-guided cloud forest hikes, and bespoke whale watches that are paired with lunch on a deserted island. Hoteliers, too, have taken note, slowly rolling out stays that capture the spirit of this getaway with top-tier amenities: The Cayuga Collection's [Isla Palenque](#), a 10-key luxury eco-resort, will introduce three two-bedroom villas in 2026 and 2027, all with a funicular and private pools. In February 2025, Hyatt opened the 70-key art and wellness house, [Hotel La Compañía del Valle](#), just 20 miles from the coast; it'll add the 18,000-square-foot Elysium Spa in fall 2025. In late 2026, travelers can expect the 186-key [Viceroy Bocas del Toro](#), catering to the luxury clientele who prefer a more traditional resort experience. Getting to Chiriqui is also about to get easier. President José Raúl Mulino announced the forthcoming [Panamá-David Railway](#), a 475-kilometer high-speed rail, connecting Panama City with Chiriqui in under three hours and bypassing the need for small flights or long drives when it opens. — *Hannah Selinger*

[BOOK NOW AT ISLA PALENQUE](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT HOTEL LA COMPAÑÍA DEL VALLE](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Central and South America in 2026](#).

Deer Valley, Utah

Go for: one last (Sun)dance; double the skiable terrain



The year 2026 will be the last time Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival calls Deer Valley home, but the legendary Utah ski destination is already looking beyond the bittersweet farewell with new hotel openings, a historic expansion of their beloved ski area, and even a champagne yurt.

Getty

For decades Deer Valley has been synonymous with groomed slopes, polished service, and the starry energy of the [Sundance Film Festival](#). In January 2026, that story will come full circle. After over four decades in [Park City](#), Sundance will mark its final year in Utah, culminating with what organizers call “a celebration full of gratitude and joy” to honor founder Robert Redford and the cultural milestone this moment represents. As Sundance bows out, Deer Valley enters a new era with the largest ski-resort expansion in North American history: The [Expanded Excellence initiative](#) more than doubles skiable terrain to 4,300 acres, with nearly 100 new runs and 31 lifts. This winter also brings seven new chairlifts, including the East Village Express gondola, alongside the continued rollout of [East Village](#), which offers streamlined mountain access and more than 70 shops and restaurants. Upon completion, East Village will also feature eight hotels, including the [Grand Hyatt Deer Valley](#), which opened in late 2024, the forthcoming [Canopy by Hilton](#) (Hilton's first ski-destination property, set to debut in summer 2026), and further out, a [Four Seasons resort and residences](#) slated to open in 2028. Add in the swanky [Chute Eleven Champagne yurt](#), returning for its second year, plus 300 inches of annual snowfall backed by a state-of-the-art snowmaking system, and Deer Valley stands ready to show travelers what its next chapter looks like. —[Lauren Dana Ellman](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT GRAND HYATT DEER VALLEY](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in North America](#) & [the Caribbean](#) in 2026.

Fès, Morocco

***Go for:** a slate of ambitious restoration projects breathing new life into the historic city*





A banner year for Fès's design-lovers, as much-anticipated architectural renovations and reopenings in the ancient medina grace this ancient Moroccan city.

Getty

Fès is Morocco's cultural capital and intellectual center, but it still flies beneath the radar. That looks set to change in 2026 with the long-awaited reopening of **Palais Jamaï**—Fès's iconic heritage hotel built in 1879 by a grand vizier to the sultan—after a decade-long renovation. A sister property to Marrakech's landmark **La Mamounia**, Palais Jamaï is one of only a handful of centenarian **North African hotels** and retains its opulent architectural form, plus an atmosphere thick with history.

The gilded reopening is the cherry on the cake of a decades-long renovation of the world's largest, most intact medieval medina that has reinforced several thousand rammed-earth structures as well as restored many of the city's most significant monuments. First among these is the ninth-century Qarawiyyin Library in the world's oldest university, while **Place Lalla Yeddouna**—a riverside neighborhood rehabilitated by architects **Michel Mossessian** and **Yassir Khalil**—was shortlisted for the **2025 Aga Khan Award for Architecture**. Then there are the beautiful 14th- and 15th-century fonduks (trading houses) of Chemmaine, Sbitryine, and Barka, restored as gorgeous artisan workshops focused on high-quality local crafts. Fonduk Kaat Smen will join them before the end of 2026, reopening its doors to a unique historic honey market. The Al Batha Museum of Islamic Arts, now Morocco's finest museum, also quietly reopened recently; it offers a well-curated overview of the country's dynastic history by using exquisite artifacts and illuminated manuscripts that place Fès in the context of a wide web of Mediterranean and African relationships. Those connections are evident at the **Fès Festival of World Sacred Music**, which takes place annually in May and June and celebrates Fès's role as a center of Sufi mysticism, Islamic scholarship, and **Andalusian** musical heritage. Also on deck for 2026: The city kicks off the year hosting Africa Cup of Nations matches, and awaits a near-total solar eclipse in August. —*Paula Hardy*

[BOOK A STAY AT PALAIS JAMAÏ](#)

[BROWSE MORE HOTELS IN FES](#)

*Read our complete guide to the **Best Places to Go in Africa** in 2026.*

Gabon

Go for: pristine African rainforest meeting the sea; an immersive, active alternative to game-drive safaris; the wonder of isolation





Surfing hippos, gorillas, and humpback whales are just a few of the incredible species one may encounter in Gabon's incredible and often overlooked national parks.
Cyril Ruoso/Loango Savannah Camp

Gabon's tourism industry might still be in its infancy, but 2026 will see it emerge as Africa's (and arguably the world's) most exhilarating [rainforest destination](#) with the January opening of [Loango Savannah Camp](#). Located on the iconic Iguela Lagoon—where forest elephants splash en route to a coastline made famous by Gabon's surfing hippos—this new tented camp is one of three properties in the northern part of Loango National Park. Dubbed Africa's Last Eden, Loango—a wonderland of pristine forest, savannah, and lagoons pouring into the wild Atlantic—offers, among other things, what some insiders are calling the best [gorilla trekking](#) experience in Africa.



If three lodges are two too many, head south to [Moukalaba-DouDou National Park](#), where [Nyanga Lodge](#), which opened in early 2025, enjoys sweet isolation as the sole luxury safari property in what locals refer to as the “great apes national park.” Nyanga's offerings for 2026 include outdoor dining experiences from a new treetop terrace to beach dinners, all the better to spy one of the park's many primate species or marine spectacles like migrating humpback whales and nesting sea turtles. With its surrounding waters also rich in game fish like tarpon, Nyanga will additionally launch the first full season of its exclusive international catch-and-release [sport fishery](#) in 2026.

For those seeking an even wilder experience, the early 2026 opening of [Sette Cama Eco Camp](#) at the remote southern end of Loango National Park promises to be a game changer. The first property in [Machaba Safaris' Machaba Wild portfolio](#), this comfortable base camp will focus on adventures that favor immersion over indulgence. With activities like jungle treks (tracking chimpanzees, western lowland gorillas, forest elephants, and red river hogs), longer coastal trails (the best way to see the same jungle creatures on the beach as well as surfing hippos), and boat cruises and kayaking trips (ideal for spotting dwarf crocodiles, incredible bird life, and the shy West African manatees), it's all about active engagement with Gabon's extraordinary environments. Perhaps the ultimate and most intimate version of jungle immersion, [Lowveld Trails Co.](#) will launch its first full-season of multiday primitive walking trails in mid-late summer 2026, using Sette Cama Eco Camp as its base.

While Gabon's wonders are both unique and abundant, tourism infrastructure remains rudimentary at best, and great wildlife sightings are not always easy. With [Anderson Expeditions](#), a pioneer in conservation-forward tourism in Gabon, resuming its tailored itineraries in 2026, private guides will help guests navigate the primeval forests and crystalline streams.
—[Lee Middleton](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT LOANGO SAVANNAH CAMP](#)

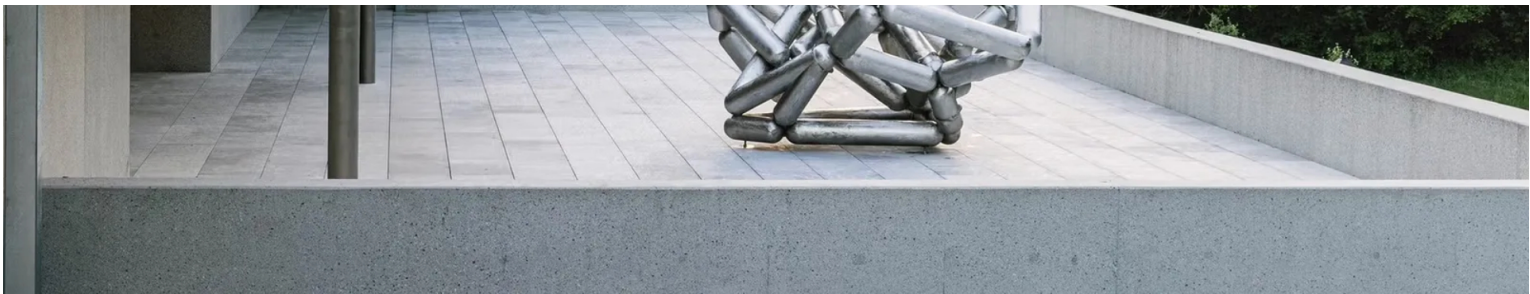
[BOOK A STAY AT NYANGA LODGE](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Africa in 2026](#).

Upper Carniola (Gorenjska), Slovenia

Go for fairy-tale villages and breathtaking lakes





Slovenia is known as a more relaxed yet equally gorgeous alternative to its alpine neighbors—with a new digital nomad visa program coming this year, it's the perfect time to take advantage of its incredible adventure opportunities and uniquely Central European culture.

Jošt Gantar/Muzej Lah

Tucked between [Austria](#) and [northern Italy](#), Slovenia's Upper Carniola region (also known as Gorenjska, meaning "highlands") is a gem hiding in plain sight. About a tenth of the size of Tuscany, this northwest corner packs a stunning lineup: Julian Alps, Lake Bled, Triglav National Park, and a sprinkling of villages plucked straight from a fairy tale.

While neighboring Italy braces for shoulder-to-shoulder crowds at the Milano Cortina Olympic Winter Games, Upper Carniola's appeal is its breathing room. Don't expect complete silence though: 2026 is shaping up to be its breakout year. A new [digital nomad visa](#) is being rolled out, perfectly timed with a wave of cultural and hospitality openings—a cue that the country is ready for its close-up.

Summer 2026 will see Upper Carniola emerge as a destination for contemporary art lovers with the grand opening of [Muzej Lah](#)—showcasing over 800 European works lovingly collected over three decades by Igor and Mojca Lah—on the scenic slopes of Bled Castle. For wellness seekers, [Kneipp NaturHotel Snovik](#), after a 22 million euro (\$25.5 million) investment, will debut in June 2026 on the region's outskirts, becoming Slovenia's highest-altitude thermal spa hotel. Wellness here is rooted in tradition (see Sebastian Kneipp's five pillars of holistic living), but with a contemporary twist.

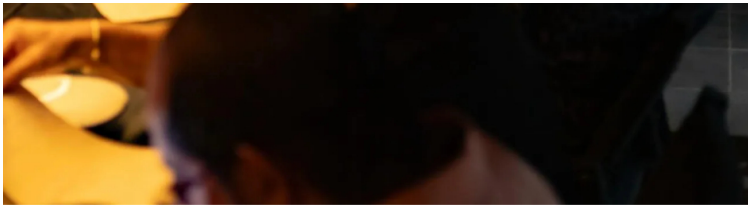
Intimate, guesthouse-style hotels are quietly flourishing in the Julian Alps, such as five-suite [Chalet Sofija](#), where warm hospitality, sweeping views and serious culinary chops converge. It's no surprise, then, that nine Slovenian restaurants earned Michelin stars in 2025. Regional staple [Hiša Franko](#) retained its coveted three stars and Green Star for sustainability, cementing Ana Roš as one of two female chefs worldwide with that distinction. Meanwhile, history buffs shouldn't miss the return of the Unesco-listed Passion Play to Škofja Loka's cobblestone streets after a six-year pause, with 900 locals reviving one of Europe's oldest Baroque-era plays. —[Laura Zhang](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Europe in 2026](#).

Guadalajara, Mexico

***Go for:** world-renowned festivals; FIFA World Cup games; vibrant female-fronted industries*





The women of Mexico's third-largest city and the home of tequila are showcasing its vibrant culture through arts, crafts, and new fine-dining ventures like Xokol (above). [Xokol](#)



Guadalajara's most exciting new restaurants are paying homage to indigenous traditions and ingredients while experimenting boldly. [Xokol](#)

As the epicenter of traditions synonymous with Mexican culture—mariachi, ceramics, tortas ahogadas, and of course, tequila—[Guadalajara](#) has been ready for the spotlight. In 2026 the third-largest city in Mexico will also showcase its cultural achievements as host of several world-class events. The [Guadalajara International Film Festival](#) returns in April, [FIFA World Cup](#) brings four matches in June, and November marks the 40th edition of the weeklong [Guadalajara International Book Fair](#). But it's the tapatías (women from Guadalajara) who are blossoming all over La Ciudad de las Rosas. Guadalajara's first female mayor, Verónica Delgadillo García, is a sign of progress, as are gender-sensitive bike-share programs and women-fronted mariachi and cumbia bands who serenade the public. Guadalajara's artisanal heritage intersects with art and food. Touring [Cerámica Suro](#), a ceramics factory in Colón Industrial, you'll paint your own piece with guidance from Juliana Suro and her father, José Noé Suro, who host a residency program with local women artists and sister art gallery [Plataforma](#) and their rotating artists in residence. This feminine spirit touches modern gastronomy too. At Santa Teresita's [Xokol](#), chef Xrysw Ruelas is a storyteller of ancestral Mexican ingredients and matriarchs. Juana Segundo Alcántar, abuela to [Xokol](#) chef Oscar Segundo (Ruelas's husband), is depicted in a lifelike mural overlooking the dining room's communal tables, where guests are treated to tortillas freshly pressed with multicolored circles. Matriarchal culture is also a family affair at well-known Jalisco distilleries like La Alteña—2026 marks Jenny Camarena's first full year as CEO of [El Tesoro](#) de Don Felipe Tequila. While Guadalajara has long been a gem of a destination, evolving quietly while neighboring cities get more attention, the spotlight is shining a bit brighter. —[Alisba Miranda](#)

[BROWSE MORE HOTELS IN GUADALAJARA](#)

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Hong Kong

Go for: [enhanced green spaces and panoramic views](#)



A huge airport expansion is making the endlessly vibrant and multicultural city of Hong Kong easier to access for visitors in 2026. [Getty](#)

Forever forward-facing, [Hong Kong](#) is further enhancing its tourism credentials in 2026. Both on and off the island, the cultural scene is flourishing. At the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula, within the Foster + Partners'-designed [West Kowloon Cultural District](#), the WestK Performing Arts Centre will open three world-class dance and theatre stages in 2026, with seating for some 2,300 people. And, in the heart of Central, French chef [Daniel Boulud](#) will debut Terrace Boulud, on the 25th floor of Landmark Prince's, which connects to the [Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong](#) via a walkway. The opening is part of the flagship hotel's sweeping renovation, which is costing more than \$100 million, includes the addition of longer-stay apartments, and is anticipated to wrap by late 2026.

With ambitions to handle up to 120 million air passengers by 2027, Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) will unveil further improvements under its \$18 billion, three-runway expansion program. Upgrades to Terminal 2 are key, with a newly opened coach hall and self-service check-in facilities due by the summer of 2026.

If you plan to head outdoors to appreciate Hong Kong's green spaces, you'll find improved hiking trail facilities, such as waymarks and visitor information panels, at four of Hong Kong's peaks: The Peak, Lantau Peak, Tai Mo Shan, and Sai Kung Hoi. And for the best view of all? Head to the [sky100 Observation Deck](#) for panoramic vistas of the city's skyscraper skyline and undulating hills when it reopens with new visitor experiences mid-year. —*Caroline Marques*

[BOOK A STAY AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Asia in 2026](#).

Margaret River, Australia

Go for: vineyard bopping and food festivals



Wine takes center-stage in Margaret River, but with some of Western Australia's best coastline at your fingertips, you won't know whether to spend your time swimming or sipping. Thanks to new seaside wine festivals like Pair'd, you can do both.

Tourism Western Australia

Margaret River is a name that conjures visions of rugged [coastal landscapes](#), big swells, and rolling [vineyards](#). Here in Wadandi country, home to the "saltwater people" for over 40,000 years, you choose your own adventure: Hike the 84-mile Cape to Cape Track between Cape Naturaliste in the north and Cape Leeuwin in the south, dive into immersive cultural experiences, or engage with a food and wine scene that has deep roots.

The international surf spotlight shines on the [WSL Margaret River Pro 2026](#) (April 17–27), which will be the second stop of the World Surf League's Championship Tour, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Then a local roster of food and wine talent lights up winter with the 10th edition of the [Cabin Fever](#) festival (July 17–26) before [Pair'd](#), a wine and food celebration, returns in November 2026 for its third year in a row (in 2025, headliners included Francis Mallmann, David Pynt, and Josh Niland, and 2026 is likely to build on its impressive beginnings).

Opening in early 2026, the team behind Margaret River's storied winery [Vasse Felix](#) will debut two new experiences. First, there will be a sleek tasting salon for [Idée Fixe](#), the winery's sparkling offshoot dedicated to Blanc de Blancs, a style made entirely from Chardonnay, in the traditional Champagne method. While Idée Fixe, just south of Margaret River town, has quietly been producing for several years, this will be its first stand-alone space, where it will offer immersive tastings and a behind-the-scenes look into the craft of *méthode traditionnelle* winemaking. It's a natural evolution in a region widely considered Australia's top Chardonnay producer. Second, a coastal-inspired bistro will open with sweeping views of the vineyard.

Late in 2026, Dunsborough, in the region's north, will welcome South West House, a boutique hotel that will bring a new layer of smart Australian luxury to the region. Throughout the 54 guest rooms and adjoining wellness and hospitality amenities, there's a blend of raw industrialism and natural materials. Meanwhile, a transformative restoration of [The Margaret River Hotel](#), a 90-year-old icon, sees Arts and Crafts-era style put to work over 27 designer rooms and will open in mid-2026, as will the bar and dining room (much to the relief of locals), whose hyperlocal menu now champions Western Australian produce with a wine cellar to match. —*Max Brearley*

Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific in 2026.

Medellín, Colombia

Go for: a buzzy dining scene, nonstop nightlife, and innovative city planning



Mamba Negra is one of many bars in Medellín proving that this city's eating and drinking scenes are only getting better. *Mamba Negra*



The gastronomic energy of Medellín is set to crest in 2026—call this one of the best food cities in South America, with nightlife to match. *Mamba Negra*

Few places in Latin America embody reinvention quite like [Medellín](#). Colombia's second-largest city has, in less than two decades, gone from cartel capital to a model of urban ingenuity. Cable cars and a modern metro stitch hillside barrios like Comuna 13—once considered unsafe for visitors and now a symbol of artistic resilience and a top destination—with tree-lined avenues that spill into the Aburrá Valley.

That energy crests in 2026 with [Wake](#), a \$100-million development uniting a wellness hotel, residences, and more than a dozen restaurants and bars—Medellin’s most ambitious culinary venture yet. Its centerpiece is Boro bistro from Jaime David Rodríguez of [Cartagena’s](#) acclaimed [Celele](#). At Boro, Rodríguez will translate Colombia’s bounty into plates spanning the Amazon, Andes, Caribbean, Pacific, and Orinoquía. [Test Kitchen Lab](#), the intimate chef’s table by chef Adolfo Cavalié and bartender Daniela Alvarado, rooted in 100% Colombian sourcing, will also move to a bigger location at Wake, expanding with research and fermentation labs that deepen Medellin’s reputation for gastronomic innovation. Other highlights include Wake BioHotel, built around the concept of “wellness meets science,” with 109 rooms and a longevity center, in a first for the continent. The larger complex also brings in heavy-hitters like [Osso](#), Peru’s cult butcher-restaurant, alongside spots such as [Chez Migü](#), [Somos Masa](#), and [Krudo Viches y Vinilos](#)—underscoring the project’s ambition to become a culinary city within the city. The exact opening date has yet to be confirmed, with timelines that range from March to April 2026. But when Wake does open, it’ll be hard to miss. Chefs here are proving Colombian food can be as inventive and layered as the country itself.

Call it one of the most exciting food cities in South America right now, with the nightlife to match. —*Allie Lazar*

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Central and South America in 2026](#).

Minas Gerais, Brazil

Go for: modern art, rich culinary traditions, and a capital city on the rise



The Central Brazilian state of Minas Gerais has been flying under the radar but is home to some of the best contemporary architecture on Earth—not to mention its hip capital Belo Horizonte which is welcoming new hotels and restaurants to rival Rio.

Inhotim Museum

Brazil is almost a continent in itself, with regions as diverse as the palm-fringed beaches of the northeast, vineyards tucked into the lush valleys of the south, and the vast, wildlife-rich wetlands of the [Pantanal](#). Yet with its deep culinary traditions, echoes of colonial architecture, and famously warm hospitality, Minas Gerais, one of Brazil’s largest states, is among its most overlooked treasures—at least to an international audience.

The capital city of Belo Horizonte has been quietly transforming into a top destination, fueled by its vibrant boteco culture centered around the no-frills, often anonymous bars serving great food and always-ice-cold beer. Much like the bistronomie movement in Paris, young chefs are reimagining regional classics in modern spots such as [Bar Pirex](#), from Caio Soter, and [A Porca Voadora](#), from Bruna Resende, while the city’s art scene continues to flourish. The architectural team behind [Mercado Novo](#)—the cultural and gastronomic hub that helped reshape the city’s urban fabric over the past decade—is now launching

2020 — The cultural and gastronomic hub that helped reshape the city's urban fabric over the past decade — is now launching Galeria Ficus, on a charming square in the Carlos Prates neighborhood. Housed in a restored manor house, this hybrid project will feature seven shops and a cocktail bar, aiming to bring new life into the historic space.

In the lively Savassi district, newly relaunched **Albuquerque Contemporânea** is quickly establishing itself as a key player in Brazil's contemporary art scene. By highlighting rising local artists like **Mateus Moreira** (who will open an exhibition in March 2026) while also representing internationally recognized Brazilian names such as Ana Maria Tavares, the gallery is helping place the city on par with cultural hubs like São Paulo and **Rio de Janeiro**. Accor is getting in on the creative action and opened its first **Tribe hotel** in Brazil here in September 2025.

Just outside the city (1.5 hours by car), **Inhotim**, Latin America's largest open-air art museum, home to 800 works by more than 50 artists from 18 countries, will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2026, with new exhibitions in April and October. The on-site hotel, the **Clara Arte Resort**, inspired by Japan's Benesse House, is also expanding, with 30 additional rooms planned to open by August 2026 along with a spa set in the middle of the forest. The hotel also offers intimate guided experiences just for hotel guests on Mondays and Tuesdays, when the museum is closed to the public. —*Rafael Tonon*

[BOOK A STAY AT THE TRIBE HOTEL](#)

[BOOK A STAY AT CLARA ARTE RESORT](#)

Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in Central and South America in 2026.

Naoshima, Japan

Go for: the chance to visit before the crowds



Naoshima's evolution from collection of quiet fishing villages to global art hub enters a new era with the opening of the Naoshima New Museum of Art.

Getty Images

Tucked into Setouchi, off Japan's southwest coast, **Naoshima** has evolved from a few traditional fishing villages into an island-wide art gallery, where contemporary works spill from museums into repurposed bathhouses and abandoned schools, and line hillside trails. The **Naoshima New Museum of Art**, a minimalist, partially underground structure designed by renowned architect Tadao Ando opened in May 2025, with a mandate to collect art from Asia as well as Japan. The museum, the first in a residential suburb in Naoshima town, features works by Takashi Murakami and Cai Guo-Qiang, exploring themes of Asian futurism and Japanese cosmology. It's Ando's 10th major effort for Benesse Art Site Naoshima, the revolutionary art project conceived to drive rural regeneration on Naoshima and its neighbors, which grabbed world attention when a Kusama *Pumpkin* sculpture was swept out to sea in a typhoon in 2021.

As Naoshima and its neighboring islands attract greater numbers of culture seekers, travel companies are taking note. Luxury tour operator **Tauck** is expanding its small-ship cruises in Japan with a new Seoul to **Tokyo** itinerary for 2026, which includes an exploration of the Seto Inland Sea, and a guided excursion to explore Naoshima's contemporary arts legacy. The

luxury hotel group, Mandarin Oriental, is set to open three boutique properties in Setouchi from 2027 to 2030, including a ryokan-style hotel in Naoshima—so go now, before the crowds arrive. —*Paris Wilson*

Read our complete guide to the *Best Places to Go in Asia in 2026*.

Northern Chilean Patagonia

Go for: a storied backcountry lodge and wellness experiences in “Green Patagonia”



As if Patagonia weren't already remote and rugged enough, a slate of new adventure lodges and boutique properties are making the region's isolated north one of the most exciting outdoor destinations of the year.

Tawa Refugio del Puelo/NBG Photo

The skyscraping spires of [Torres del Paine National Park](#), at the southern tip of South America, carry legendary status among global adventurers, but for those seeking less-trodden trails, the greener wildlands of Northern Patagonia in Chile remain blessedly unexplored. The newest reason to visit? [Reñihue](#), a vast fjord-side sanctuary set amid turquoise rivers, craggy peaks, and misty rainforest trampled by kodkods (the continent's tiniest wildcats) and pudus (the world's smallest deer). American conservationists Doug and Kris Tompkins started their pioneering work—which resulted in the creation and expansion of 15 national parks across Chile and Argentina—with a 1,750-acre land purchase in this valley. Fellow American Charlie Clark later acquired the property, launched the Reñihue Nature Conservancy Foundation, and, over the past year, turned the wood-shingled Tompkins home into a bookable four-room lodge overlooking the glaciated Michinmahuida Volcano.

The Reñihue opening arrives amid a flurry of regional conservation wins since 2024, when local activists saved the so-called Yosemite of South America from property developers, protecting its granite domes (beloved by rock climbers) in the new Cochamó Valley Nature Sanctuary. The nearby Puelo and Futaleufú Rivers are set to become the first two protected waterways in Patagonia in early 2026, which will safeguard these milky-teal icons (revered by whitewater rafters) from energy exploitation. Meanwhile, thrill-seekers can rest their weary bones at the Ritual Patagónico Spa opening this austral summer at the lush [Termas del Sol](#) hot springs complex; it's right by the Puelo River and near the striking eight-room adventure lodge [Tawa Refugio del Puelo](#), which opened in 2023. —*Mark Jobanson*

[BOOK A STAY AT TAWA REFUGIO DEL PUELO](#)

Read our complete guide to the *Best Places to Go in Central and South America in 2026*.

Northern Namibia

Go for: baute-design newcomers and a rumored influx of rhinos



Nkasa Linyanti is a six-room camp in the heart of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. Nkasa Linyanti



At Hoanib Elephant Camp, visitors can look for elephants in the Kaokoland desert. Hoanib Elephant Camp

The strikingly hued Sossusvlei salt pans of the [Namib Desert](#) have long captured travelers' attention, but the northern reaches of Namibia will entrance design devotees in 2026. [Vestige Collection](#), known for its carefully appointed boutique hotels and private estates in [Spain](#), is launching four lodges, one in the summer of 2026 and the remaining by the end of the year, in destinations ranging from Damaraland, where desert-adapted lions and red hartebeest roam, to the little-visited Khaudum National Park—all accompanied by a heightened sense of style. Elusive black rhinos can be spotted in places like the Grootberg mountains, but hopes are high that travelers will begin seeing white rhinos in such places as Etosha National Park, another site of a Vestige Collection lodge, as African Parks develops plans to distribute the mighty animals from its [Rhino Rewild](#) project.

Two properties from [Natural Selection](#) are also debuting in May 2026. One is [Hoanib Elephant Camp](#), a solar-energy-powered camp of 10 rooms, where visitors can look for elephants in the Kaokoland desert, and the other is [Nkasa Linyanti](#), a six-room camp on Nkasa Island in the heart of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. In early 2026, keep an eye out, too, for [Thitaka Lodge](#), the first Namibia property from the [Cape Town](#)-based Newmark Hotels & Reserves group, in Bwabwata National Park. O&L Leisure's [Mokuti Etosha](#), on the edge of Etosha National Park, has just launched SkyBoma, an open-air dining venue some 26 feet off the ground that will offer Namibian cuisine paired with stargazing. It's a remarkable wave of high-style properties coming to Namibia—and heralds a new chapter for the country's future of safari. —[Samantha Falewée](#)

BOOK A STAY AT MOKUTI ETOSHA

Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in Africa in 2026.

Oulu, Finland

Go for: Arctic culture, art trails, and year-round cultural programming





Travelers willing to brave the bitter cold of Oulu will be met with Europe's cleanest air and a wealth of festivals, exhibitions, and installations celebrating Finnish and Sami culture.
Nallikari

Located just south of the Arctic Circle in [Finland](#), Oulu has a lot to offer: its remote location, the purest air in Europe, a low-impact Arctic food culture, and almost 600 miles of walking and cycling paths make it a reliable eco-friendly destination. But in 2026, the city will become one of the northernmost European Capitals of Culture. Under the theme of Cultural Climate Change, a series of events will focus on [creative solutions](#) to the challenges facing Europe and beyond in one of the world's fastest-changing regions.

In winter, northern traditions are on display at [Frozen People](#), an electronic music festival on the icy Gulf of Bothnia, and at [Oulu Art Museum's](#) Sami contemporary art exhibit, which showcases the resilience of Europe's only Indigenous people (on view until May 2026). [Climate Clock](#) is a new permanent art trail opening in June with thought-provoking work by renowned artists such as the UK's Rana Begum, set amid Oulu's forests, and along its rivers and seashores. From May to August, the [Solstice Festival](#) will celebrate summer at a 500-meter Arctic fell with views of pine woods and lakes, while the Summer Night's Dinner will highlight northern ingredients at a communal table stretched along one of Oulu's main streets.

As Finland's tech and science centre, Oulu will also play host to several innovative digital art projects throughout the year. These include the year-long Peace Machine—a multidisciplinary installation by the Finnish [Ekho Collective](#) that uses AI to brainstorm conflict solutions—and a first-of-its-kind 86,000-square-foot museum and science center opening in autumn 2026, just in time for [aurora borealis viewing](#) in its Deep Space theater.

Travelers can take a break from culture by leaning into Oulu's strong [sauna culture](#) (choose from wood-smoke saunas, floating river saunas, or luxury saunas). At the summer sauna festival, traditional sauna healers will offer treatments rooted in Finnish folk heritage such as birch-leaf bathing and sauna chants. Newly renovated [Lapland Hotels Oulu](#) will be welcoming guests with design-forward rooms and must-try breakfasts starting in January, and a new Scandic Go hotel will open in late 2026. —[Yulia Denisyuk](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Europe in 2026](#).

The Peloponnese, Greece

Go for: movie set locations, Homeric history, and biking trails





Travelers impatient for the release of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* can see the real-life filming locations, along with relics of the ancient history that inspired it, on Greece's historic Peloponnese peninsula.

Getty

In July 2026, Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey* will take viewers on a voyage to Greece's myth-drenched Peloponnese peninsula. The Oscar-winning director shot scenes on the cinematic southwest coast of Messinia, where Homer's epics are anchored in ancient history. Sustainability-focused Costa Navarino, home to four luxury resorts and a recent influx of restaurants run by Michelin-starred chefs, makes an ideal base for exploring the film locations. Hike to oceanside Nestor's Cave to see where Matt Damon's Odysseus outwits the Cyclops. Swim in Poseidon's realm at omega-shaped Voidokilia Beach and photograph flamingos at Gialova Lagoon. Meander Methoni Castle and the nearby town of Pylos, where Odysseus's son seeks wisdom from Trojan War hero King Nestor.

Homer's mythical characters were inspired by the Mycenaeans, who flourished in the Peloponnese during the Bronze Age. At Nestor's Palace near Pylos, learn about this civilization and overlook the spot where archaeologists unearthed a treasure-filled Mycenaean warrior's tomb in 2015. This discovery rewrote our understanding of the ways Mycenaean and Minoan cultures blended to give rise to Western civilization. The tomb's trove is on international loan for the Kingdom of Pylos exhibition in Los Angeles before returning to Athens for six months; and in late 2026, most of the artifacts will join other groundbreaking Peloponnesian finds and permanently reside in Messinia's newly revamped Archaeological Museum of Chora.

When it's completed in spring 2026, the 1,075-mile Peloponnese Trails network will enhance this mountainous country's standing as a destination for outdoor fitness. Along restored mule paths, hikers can taste Messinia's famed olive oil and visit UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Mystras near Euphoria Retreat, which will host a Wellbeing Festival in June 2026 rooted in the philosophy of ancient Greek wellness. —*Keridwen Cornelius*

BOOK A STAY AT EUPHORIA RETREAT

Read our complete guide to the *Best Places to Go in Europe in 2026*.

Potosí, Bolivia

Go for: a big-deal lodge opening, luxe experiences amid otherworldly landscapes





High in the Bolivian Andes lies the province of Potosí, home to landscapes unlike anything else on Earth. As luxury tour operators and new lodges arrive to the region, travelers can visit its red lagoons, expansive salt flats, and towering peaks in style.

Getty

Bolivia's star attraction has long been the otherworldly [Salar de Uyuni](#), 4,000 square miles of glistening crust left behind when prehistoric lakes evaporated that make up what is, today, the largest salt flat in the world. There's a magnetism to this blinding-white expanse perched 12,000 feet high in the Andes. But in greater Potosí, the municipality that encompasses the flats, this is far from the only surreal landscape. [Eduardo Avaroa National Reserve](#) stuns with its sculptural Valle de las Rocas; the blood-red waters of Laguna Colorada, a small 85°F hot-spring pool called Termas de Polques; and the emerald Laguna Verde shimmering beneath the snow-capped Licancabur volcano. Here, deserts are pocked by geysers and steaming geothermal fields with bubbling silver pools. Multiday jeep tours have long bumped along the roads, transporting travelers to see these alien-like landscapes, while offering front-row views of vicuñas grazing and flamingos taking flight.

But now new hotel projects and better infrastructure are transforming the region, making it more appealing to travelers seeking comfort—and helping it shed the long-held backpacker-only reputation. Local outfitter [Hidalgo Tours](#) now offers new, high-comfort excursions through Potosí, with 4x4s and a custom luxury van featuring business-class-style seats, onboard champagne and snacks, and even a proper bathroom—plus the option of a meal upon an *aphapi* (a traditional Andean communal table) right in the middle of the flats. [Crillon Tours](#), meanwhile, offers a three-day itinerary from the small village of Coquesa to the Green Lagoon with deluxe accommodations in a silver Airstream camper. For the adventurous the [Ultra Bolivia Race](#), a 220-kilometer foot race across salt flats, desert plains, and high-altitude lagoons, returns in September 2026. Around Uyuni in particular, a wave of design-forward stays is redefining what it means to sleep amid the stark beauty of the desert. [Explora](#) runs three minimalist mountain lodges in Ramaditas, Chituca, and Jirira—striking, sustainable properties surrounded by ethereal landscapes. In Jirira, the tiny town celebrated as the birthplace of Bolivia's prized gold quinoa, the biggest opening of all is forthcoming, thanks to [Casa Gastón](#). Come March 2026, the museum-hotel hybrid is set to open its doors in the foothills of Tunupa volcano. Designed by the late artist Gastón Ugalde, considered the father of contemporary Bolivian art, the property will blend ancient building techniques with contemporary design across 10 suites, while offering immersive experiences rooted in sustainable tourism. —[Rafael Tonon](#)

Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in Central and South America in 2026.

Prince Edward County, Canada

Go for: a newer wine region with an old soul





Prince Edward County is establishing itself as Canada's premier wine destination, and restauranteurs and hoteliers are capitalizing on the buzz this year with a stacked calendar of openings.
 Graydon Herriott/The Royal

Prince Edward County—or PEC—is already a favorite long-weekend destination for many Canadians, especially those from Toronto and Montreal (it's only a few hours drive from each). The region has been coming into its own for the past decade as a hot spot for boutique hotels, small family-run wineries, and world-class restaurants, but there's plenty more to come. The region is eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new hotel, The Claramount Club, which will have two new restaurants as well. Meanwhile, the stylish lakeside escape Wander the Resort expanded its experiences focused on local food and outdoor recreation and opened a lakefront Nordic spa. Happy Sailing started to offer sailing lessons along PEC's curving shoreline, and Charlie, a playful neighborhood bistro in Consecon, is already pulling in the crowds.

A lot of what's new is centered in the quaint town of Picton, which has been transformed over the last few years by hotels including The Royal. It's become a community hub of sorts, drawing locals and travelers alike, and has been joined by excellent dining establishments like farm-to-table wine bar Theia and Spanish restaurant Bocado. But don't be afraid to venture out of town to explore the county's food scene—PEC is now a mecca for exciting young chefs who are opening their own spots with a local focus. Top tables include Darlings, Stella's Eatery, and La Condesa, all of which rival anything you'll find in major tourist centers. If wine tourism is of interest, be sure to explore vineyards like Traynor, Closson Chase and Hinterland Wine Company. PEC may be one of Canada's youngest wine regions, but you'll find elegant reds, crisp whites, and sparkling pet-nats thanks to its unique terroir and crisp, cool climate.

When it comes to Prince Edward County, 2026 is when the world will catch up on what Canadians have known for years. —
 Kyle Beechey

BOOK A STAY AT THE WELLINGTON GENERAL	BOOK A STAY AT WANDER THE RESORT	BOOK A STAY AT THE ROYAL
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Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in North America & the Caribbean in 2026.

Route 66, USA

Go for 100 years of the Mother Road





Route 66 turns 100 this year, and from California to Chicago its famous roadside shops and attractions will be celebrating in style. *Watson's B-B-Q/Rachel Wright*



The road's iconic motel and drive-in signs are a testament to its Americana history—thanks to historic preservation efforts, they're looking better than ever at 100. *Blue Swallow Motel/Rachel Wright*

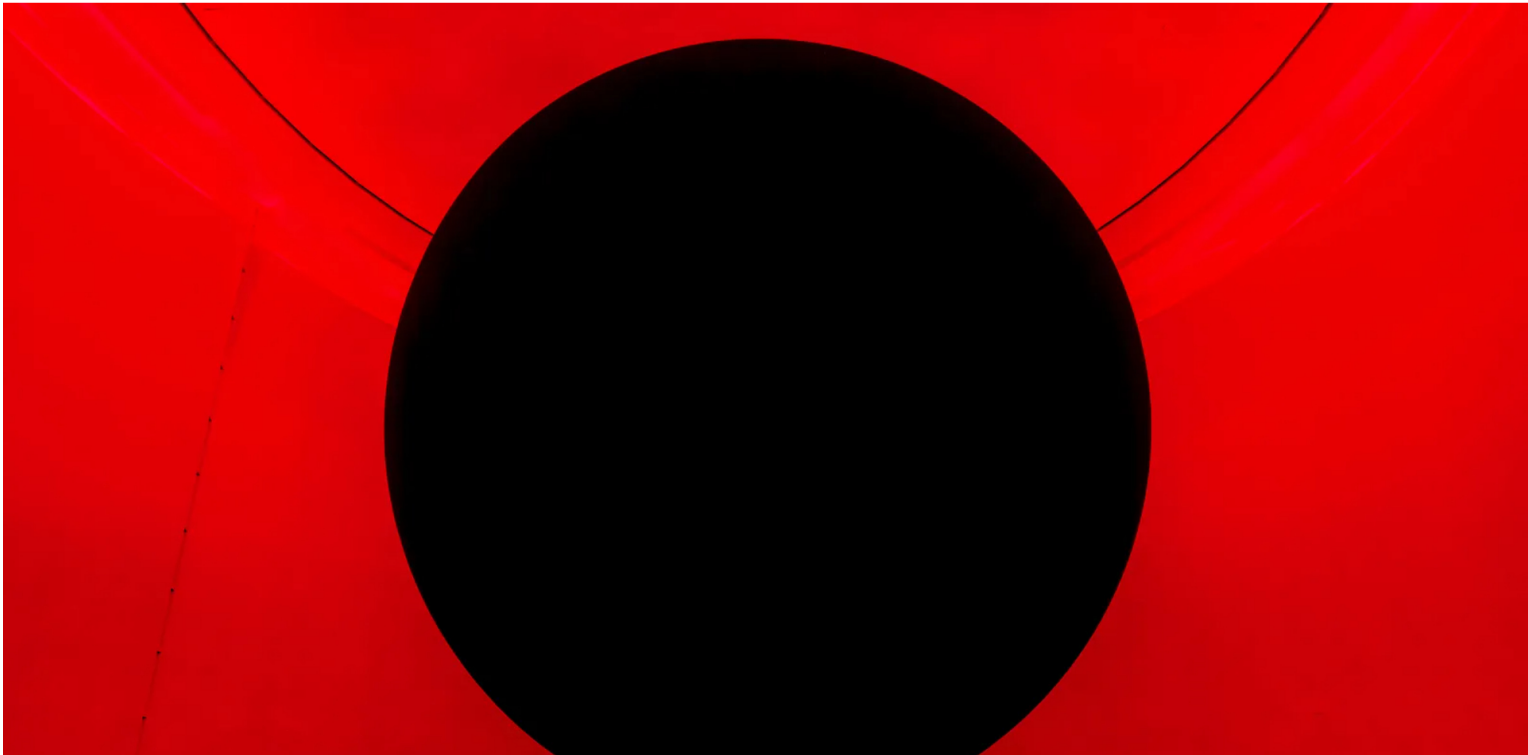
Neon lights are burning a little brighter along Route 66, the iconic US highway that stretched between [Chicago](#) and [Santa Monica](#), as it celebrates its centennial in 2026. While the contiguous highway was decommissioned in 1985, sections of it have been preserved for historic interest. Along these, vintage motel and diner signs have been restored to their midcentury brilliance, including more than a dozen along Albuquerque's 18-mile (the country's longest) urban stretch. In St. Robert, Missouri, long-abandoned neon signs have been polished and collected in the just-opened [Route 66 Neon Park](#). Celebrations are planned along the 2,448-mile route, from Springfield, Missouri, host of the [Route 66 Centennial National Kick-Off](#) in April, to Tulsa's [Capital Cruise](#) in May, a world-record attempt for the largest-ever classic-car parade, and Amarillo's 10-day-long [Texas Route 66 Festival](#) in June.

A trip along the Mother Road invites nostalgia for the past but also consideration of how history has been told. Historically, over 25 [tribal nations](#) lived along the route, but for years their diverse cultures were largely represented through reductive stereotypes, with concrete tipi storefronts and signage adorned with Hollywood-style depictions of Native peoples. Now travelers can get a more realistic view at Indigenous-run institutions including Albuquerque's [Indian Pueblo Cultural Center](#), operated by the 19 Pueblos of [New Mexico](#), which celebrates its 50th year in 2026, and at the [First Americans Museum](#), which opened in Oklahoma City in 2021 to tell the stories of Oklahoma's 39 nations. — *Karen Gardiner*

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in North America](#) & the Caribbean in 2026.

Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

Go for: world-class cultural institutions





A stacked calendar of museum openings this year on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island is solidifying the city's reputation as the fine arts capital of the Middle East.

teamLab Phenomena

Abu Dhabi might not always get the same share of global attention as its glitzier neighbor, Dubai, but the UAE capital has just as much, if not more, to shout about right now—much of which is taking place on Saadiyat Island, where a cultural renaissance is underway. Saadiyat Cultural District has been home to Louvre Abu Dhabi since 2018, and, come November 22, 2025, it will be joined by Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, before the long-awaited Zayed National Museum opens its doors a week later. Named after the UAE's Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed, the museum will take visitors through the history of the UAE, while looking to the country's future. Designed by renowned architect Lord Norman Foster, the building has taken dramatic shape on the capital's skyline in recent years, featuring striking narrow glass atriums inspired by a falcon's wingtips.

Then, in 2026, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is due to be completed, shaping this mile-square patch of island, surrounded by the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf, into a museum district to rival that of London or New York. Add to this line-up the new teamLab Phenomena and existing Abrahamic Family House—an interfaith complex and one of the world's most unique representations of tolerance—plus the string of luxury resorts that line Saadiyat Beach, the UAE's most beautiful stretch of coast, next door, and you've got more than enough reasons to add Saadiyat Island to your 2026 travel wishlist. —Sophie Prideaux

Read our complete guide to the Best Places to Go in Asia in 2026.

Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, France

Go for: sustainable train travel and sweeping Haute-Savoie views



Amid a changing climate, Saint-Gervais-les-Bains is leading the charge for a new era of sustainable tourism in the Alps—a new energy efficient train and the opening of a glacier and climate center are conscious efforts toward positive change in a region whose way of life hangs in the balance.

In 2026, Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, in Haute-Savoie, is taking a big step towards rewriting what [Alpine tourism](#) can look like. The [Mont Blanc Express](#), the century-old railway that winds between Saint-Gervais-les-Bains' Le Fayet and Martigny, will unveil a new fleet of energy-efficient trains in the summer. For a line first electrified in 1908, it's a symbolic upgrade: proof that sustainable travel is no longer a side story in the Alps, but the way forward. The new trains will double capacity, cut emissions, and ease car traffic in the valleys, while strengthening the cross-border links that have always defined this region. From 2026, the Léman Express from [Geneva](#) will also expand services, making it easier than ever to arrive in the Mont Blanc foothills entirely by rail.

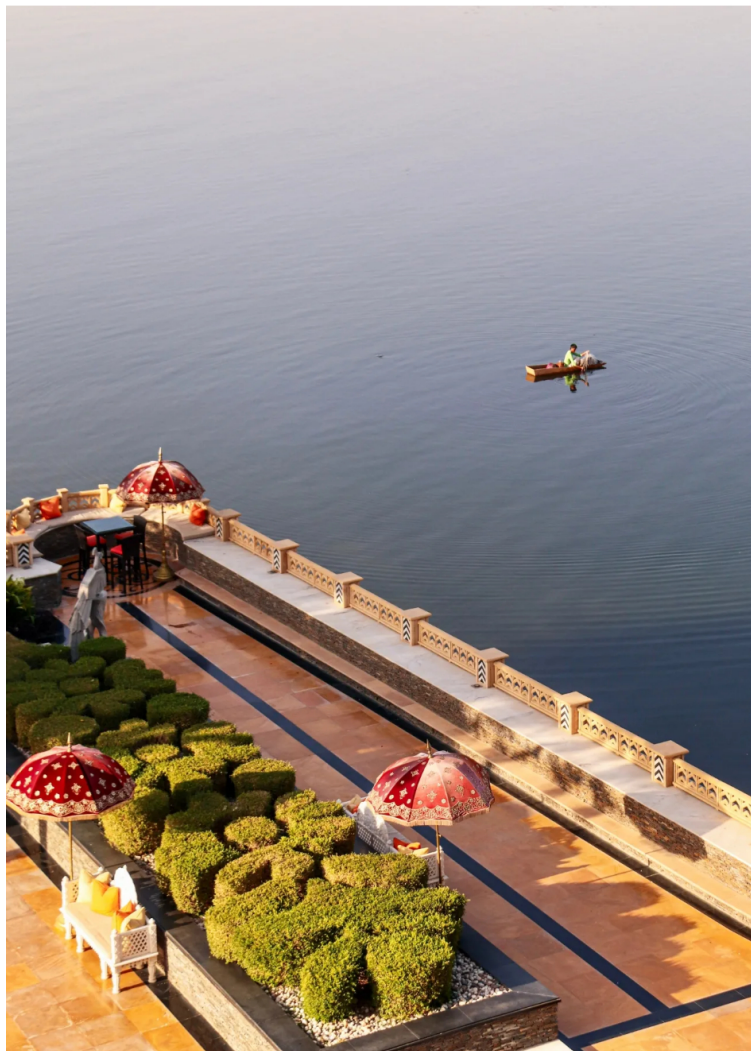
In the Belle Époque spa town, innovation is already reshaping daily life. Launched in 2024, Le Valléen gondola is the first in [France](#) to connect a mainline SNCF station directly with a mountain resort centre. In five minutes, it whisks passengers from Saint-Gervais Le Fayet station to the town center with sweeping views over the Bonnant gorge, cutting traffic and linking directly to ski lifts. From the same station, the Mont Blanc Express runs up the valley to [Chamonix](#).

The famous Alpine town adds to the story in 2026 with the opening of the [Glaciorium](#), a glacier and climate center at Montvers—a timely reminder of why these greener choices matter. Together with Saint-Gervais, this corner of Haute-Savoie feels less like a nostalgic ski destination and more like a region reimagining its future—proving the Alps can still thrill, while treading more lightly on the mountain. —[Katilena Darford](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Europe in 2026](#).

Udaipur, India

Go for: [new luxury hotels and a sense of urban renewal](#)



Udaipur is synonymous with opulence, and its legendary hotels like the Leela Palace (above) are expanding and renovating as more tourists flock to the historic city. —[Leela Palace](#)



The city is welcoming a new class of modern hotels to its lineup of old-world classics, like the Fairmont Udaipur (above) which is moving into the lush forest surrounding the city. —[Fairmont Udaipur](#)

In a valley within the ancient Aravalli mountains, Rajasthan's 16th-century "lake city" has always drawn glamorous travelers to its Rajput palaces and stately havelis. Now, a flurry of luxury hotel openings is bringing a welcome sense of renewal. Alongside icons of Indian hospitality like the Taj, Oberoi, and Leela groups, major international players have entered the fray. Tucked into the forest surrounding the 19th-century Monsoon Palace—the former hunting retreat of Maharana Sajjan Singh — [Fairmont Udaipur Palace](#) is a colossal 397-room hotel filled with Dholpuri art, intricate chattris, and nods to Rajput art and design.

Fairmont Udaipur Palace is a palatial 226-key hotel filled with hand-carved intricate carvings, and rooms to support its design.

If you're inspired by its sumptuous design details, visit [The House of Things](#), Udaipur's new address for Indian design, where more than 200 homegrown brands, including Jaipur Rugs and Aadyam Handwoven, come together under one roof in a collection curated by locals Astha and Manan Khetan. The 226-key [Marriott](#) has also debuted on the northern edge of Fateh Sagar, encircled by hills, and filled with sweeping marble terraces and stone-carved jharokas. Meanwhile, in the heart of Udaipur, on the fringes of Lake Pichola, longtime favorite [The Leela Palace Udaipur](#) is channeling its signature modern Indian aesthetic into its new private villa offering, Arq at Pichola, with private butler service, mixologists on call, and waterfront daybeds at three exclusive villas.

Boutique Indian brand [Minimalist Hotels](#) is due to bring its signature design-forward style to the banks of Lake Pichola in the coming months, with an intimate 20-key property, while the Hilton is set to arrive in early 2026. From February 20th to 22nd, vintage automobiles will rumble through the grounds of [The Oberoi Udaivilas](#) as the Oberoi Concourse d'Elegance returns for its second edition. Sir Jackie Stewart, Jacky Ickx, and Giacomo Agostini are among the expert panel that will judge the showcase of European and American classics, heritage Indian cars and automobiles of erstwhile maharajas. —[Malavika Bhattacharya](#)

BOOK A STAY AT FAIRMONT UDAIPUR PALACE	BOOK A STAY AT UDAIPUR MARRIOTT HOTEL
BOOK A STAY AT THE LEELA PALACE UDAIPUR	BOOK A STAY AT THE OBEROI UDAIVILAS

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Asia in 2026](#).

Uluru, Australia

***Go for:** spiritual connection, epic trekking, and a desert that lights up after dark*



The monolithic rock of Uluru rises like an alien fortress from Australia's outback—a new program of walking tours, celebrations, and festivals honoring the site's indigenous significance are adding more and more reasons to visit this stunning landscape.

Wingji Wiru

The raw beauty of the Australian [outback](#) is magnified at Uluru. More than just a geological wonder, the rock formation has been shaped by thousands of years of Anangu law, story, and ceremony, and bears a spiritual and cultural weight greater than the red dust settling at its feet. October 2025 marked the 40th anniversary of the historic hand-back of the title deeds for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to its traditional owners, the Anangu—a milestone that set the tone for the region's next chapter. Launching in April 2026, the [Uluru-Kata Tjuta Signature Walk](#) will link the red domes of Kata Tjuta with the crimson monolith of Uluru and offer a deeper, slower way to connect with the culture embedded in these twin sacred sites. The luxury four-night guided trek spans 33.5 miles and includes stays at purpose-built [glamping](#) camps and a new ecolodge, with

Abangu storytellers walking alongside guests to share their deep knowledge of Country. It's the latest in a string of innovative Red Centre experiences: from Uluru's high-tech light-and-sound shows—[Sunrise Journeys](#) and [Wintjiri Wiru](#)—to the launch of the [Ghan's](#) new luxury train suites, [Australis](#) and [Aurora](#), in April 2026. Meanwhile, Bruce Munro's [Field of Light](#) now shines brighter than ever after a 2025 refurbishment ahead of its 10th anniversary in 2026. Up the Stuart Highway in Alice Springs, Intrepid Travel's new Indigenous-guided [Larapinta Trail](#) trek, which opened in May 2025, offers another route into the stories and landscapes that define the heart of the country. —[Sarah Reid](#)

Read our complete guide to the [Best Places to Go in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific in 2026](#).

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Go for: a slew of new hotels offering fresh vantage points to experience the iconic falls and Africa's adventure capital



Victoria Falls are among the world's largest and most exhilarating to witness—so much so that you might forget about the incredible array of luxury hotels that surround them. But rest assured, thanks to a packed schedule of openings this year, there are more than ever.

Samanzi/James Salim

Long celebrated for the Mosi-oa-Tunya—“the smoke that thunders”—the city of [Victoria Falls](#) is reinventing itself as one of southern Africa's most exciting destinations in 2026. Travelers come not just to behold the falls but for the adventure, culture, and conservation experiences. And a spate of new hotels have arrived to meet the demand, including Anantara's first Zimbabwean property, the plush [Stanley & Livingstone Victoria Falls](#), which debuted last December; adventure operator [Wild Horizons' Waterfalls Lodge](#), which followed in July; and [Samanzi Luxury Cabanas](#), a boutique retreat that opened in August with intimate cabanas and tranquil pools. This past June the [Palm River Hotel](#) unveiled a stunning new riverside deck that overlooks the Zambezi, offering scenic dining experiences and a beautifully curated high tea. Looking ahead, [Bupenyu Lodge](#) by Newmark Hotels & Reserves (opening at the end of 2025) and the [House of Chinhara-Vignette Collection](#) (opening in January 2026) promise ultra-luxury options that will transform the region from a stopover to a destination in its own right. In addition, the new [Mpala Jena Private Villas](#), set on the sandy banks of the Zambezi, offers a secluded and fully powered three-suite sanctuary with private pools, riverfront suites, personalized butler and guide services, and easy access to the falls by road or boat. Infrastructure is also keeping pace with this growth as the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls highway is under rehabilitation. Fastjet has just launched the new Bulawayo-Victoria Falls route, and the construction of the Mosi-oa-Tunya International Cricket Stadium, poised to host the 2026 ICC under-19 World Cup, is underway. —[Harriet Akinyi](#)

Looking for more inspiration? Read last year's list of the [Best Places to Go in 2025](#).



Arati Menon is the Global Digital Director at *Condé Nast Traveler*. Her experience as an editor and writer spans the areas of design, fashion, food, and business—and across print, digital, and documentary video—and her current role happily sits at the intersection of it all. She has previously worked at *GQ*. ... [Read More](#)

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Megan Spurrell is the Associate Director of Articles at *Condé Nast Traveler*, where she writes and edits travel features on trends, emerging destinations, and experiences worth traveling for—from free-diving in Hawaii, to trekking through archaeological sites in Peru's cloud forest, to salsa-ing through Mexico's oldest dance halls. Originally from Los ... [Read More](#)

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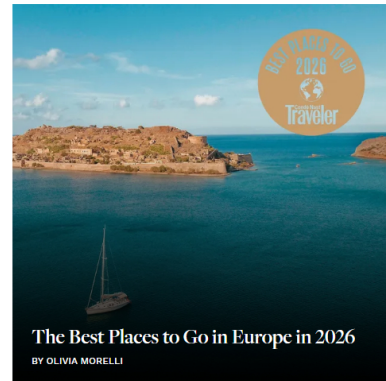
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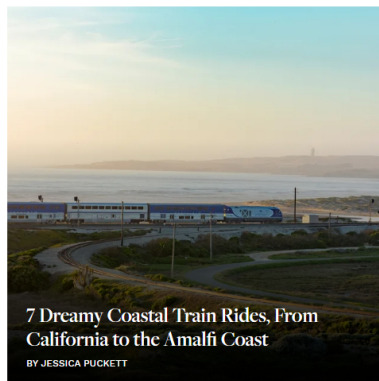
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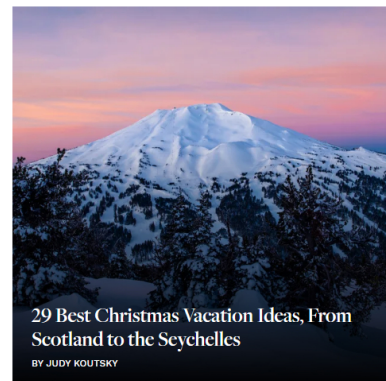
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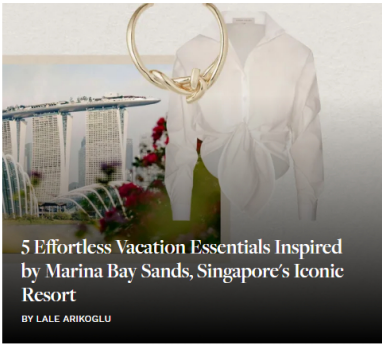
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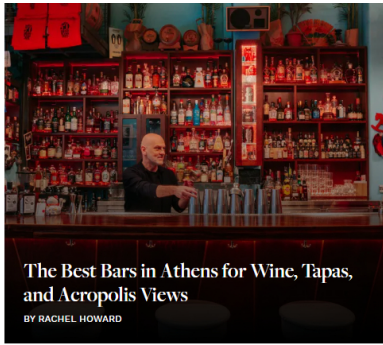
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