



# Travel Resolutions

52 New Ways  
to Experience Planet Earth



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Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014

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VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

## Commit to the experience of a lifetime.

Go to the gym more. Quit smoking. Be kinder to strangers. These are all admirable resolutions, but doesn't paragliding in South Africa sound more fun? How about rock climbing China's karst peaks or sleeping in a tree-house bubble on Canada's Vancouver Island?

With the world as your playground, choosing travel vows can be challenging. Are you a foodie? Take a cooking course in Jordan. Love flowers? Learn the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging in Kyoto. Want to improve your swimming stroke? Do so on a self-propelled tour of the Greek Islands. Club hopper? Berlin. Enough said.

These are just a few of our 52 amazing travel resolutions. Consider adding one or many to your list of promises to yourself - or let them inspire you to dream up your own.

# Travel Resolutions

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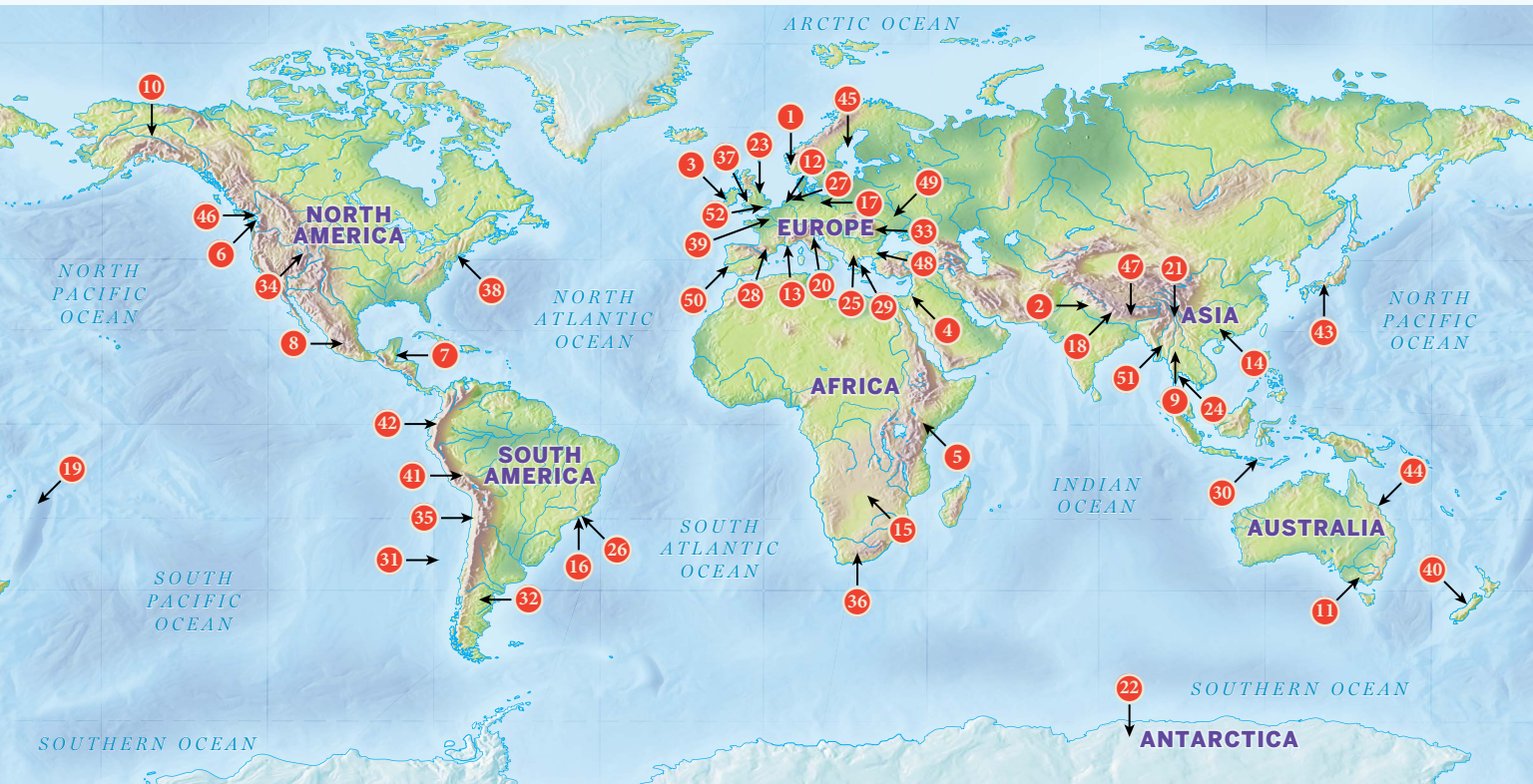
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## Challenge your fear of heights

**Location:** Pulpit Rock, Norway

While glass doors and skyscrapers can be impressive, in Norway it's a mighty lump of stone that offers the best outlook. Pulpit Rock, with astonishingly uniform cliffs on three sides plunging 604m to the fjord below, is a freak of nature. While looking down can be a bit daunting, you won't regret the magical view. It's quite simply a remarkable place, a vantage point unrivaled anywhere in the world. Although there are no safety barriers, local authorities claim there have been no reports of anyone accidentally falling off (even the French daredevil who balanced on the edge atop three chairs!).

From *Lonely Planet Norway*, 5th edition

PULPIT ROCK, NORWAY

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YOGA PRACTITIONER, INDIA

2

## Stretch yourself in India's yoga capital

**Location:** Rishikesh, India

Get some balance in your life by visiting the country where yoga was born. Spiritual types will relish the inner workouts as much as the outer, and rational types might be in for a revelation. Social butterflies will enjoy yoga in Rishikesh – there are plenty of like-minded souls ready to swap aching-limbs stories over an ayurvedic tea. Virtually every hotel offers one-hour yoga sessions, but ashram stays are the best way to truly immerse yourself in the spiritual vibe.

From *Lonely Planet India*, 15th edition

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## Find love (or just dance)

**Location:** County Clare, Ireland

Lisdoonvarna, in Ireland's County Clare, was once a centre for *basa-dóiri* (matchmakers) who, for a fee, would fix up a person with a spouse. Today the tradition continues at the much-hyped and ever-expanding Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival, held in early autumn. Irish and even foreign singles (plus those who just enjoy a jolly good time) revel in daftness, drinking, merrymaking, music and much, much dancing.

From *Lonely Planet Ireland*, 10th edition

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FALAFEL FEAST, WADI MUSA, JORDAN

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## Learn to cook the Jordanian way

**Location:** Wadi Musa, Jordan

Petra Kitchen, in downtown Wadi Musa, is a novel idea. Instead of going out for supper, you pay a little extra to cook your own mezze, soup and main course. The local experts who teach you how to cook Jordanian food give you valuable tips throughout the evening. The experience of cooking in the company of strangers makes you realize that cooking in Jordan, just like dining, isn't about the locally grown ingredients or the handed-down recipes – it's about being sociable.

*From Lonely Planet Jordan, 8th edition*

## Go on safari to contemplate 'the circle of life'

**Location:** Kenya

'Safari' has to be one of the most evocative words ever to infiltrate the English language. In Kiswahili, 'safari' means 'journey,' though to eager visitors flocking to Kenya's national parks, it means so much more. From inspiring visions of wildebeests fording raging rivers and lions stalking their heedless prey through the savannah grass, to iridescent flamingos lining a salty shore at sunset, a safari into the wild is untamed Africa at its finest.

*From Lonely Planet Kenya, 8th edition, and Lonely Planet's Beautiful World*

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## Step back in time

**Location:** San Juan Islands, USA

Leafy hedgerows, soporific settlements and winding lanes jammed with more cyclists than cars. Where the heck are you? Not in continental America, surely. Well, you are and you're not. The San Juan Islands, a nebulous archipelago of approximately 172 landfalls, islets and eagle perches that lie splayed between the mouth of Puget Sound and Vancouver Island, conjure up images of a sleepy American throwback where the clock last chimed in the 1970s, '60s or even '50s, depending on where you dock. Don't come for the Starbucks and casinos (there aren't any); come instead for the fishing, whale-watching, beachcombing, hiking, cycling, paddling, crabbing, clamming, philosophizing and memorable, psychedelic sunsets.

*From Lonely Planet Washington, Oregon & the Pacific Northwest, 5th edition*

SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASHINGTON STATE, USA



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SCUBA DIVING, POMPION CAYE, BELIZE

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LONELY PLANET STAFF RESOLUTION:

## See a whole new world

**Location:** Belize

Lou LaGrange, Lonely Planet staff and traveller to 110 countries

If you've never been scuba diving, you're missing out on what goes on beneath the surface ... of 70% of the planet! The feeling of weightlessness is magical, and the joy from close encounters with aquatic wildlife cannot be underestimated. Great dive spots can be found in almost every region of the world, and courses and schools populate many beach areas. One of my preferred diving hotspots is the reefs off the coast of Belize. It's high time to either overcome your fears or simply make a point of giving this popular activity a try.

Start your own journey with *Lonely Planet Belize*, 4th edition

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## Walk through a living dreamscape

**Location:** Monarch Butterfly Reserve, Mexico

Canopies of golden-orange butterflies cover the forests and hillsides in one of the planet's most astonishing yearly natural phenomena. It's the kind of annual event to plan your trip around – between November and March, hundreds of millions of migrant monarchs cover every surface, weighing down tree branches and changing the landscape into a permanent sunset.

From *Lonely Planet Mexico*, 13th edition

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## Earn a jumbo education

**Location:** Chiang Mai, Thailand

Adopt an elephant for the day and learn what it takes to care for, command and ride these priceless pachyderms. There are several good elephant parks in Chiang Mai, one of Thailand's most famous destinations for elephant encounters. Patara Elephant Farm is one of the best, with a focus on conservation and offering visitors a very hands-on experience. Take your elephant for a bath in the river and it may return the kindness with a ride through the forest to a waterfall or a local temple.

From *Lonely Planet Thailand*, 14th edition

ELEPHANTS IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND







THE NORTHERN LIGHTS, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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## See things in a new light

**Location:** The Northern Lights, Alaska, USA (and other northern regions)

Natural spectacles don't get much better than this surreal solar-powered jig. And while a good glossy photo can do the hues of the aurora justice, it simply can't capture the magic of a live performance. Starting in late August, Fairbanks is the undisputed capital, with 200 shows a year. Whistle when the aurora is out, some locals say, and you can influence its movements.

From *Lonely Planet Alaska*, 10th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Beautiful World*

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## Test your driving skills

**Location:** Victoria, Australia

The Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's most famous road-touring routes. It takes travellers past world-class surfing breaks, through pockets of rainforest and calm seaside towns, and under koala-filled tree canopies. It showcases heathlands, dairy farms and sheer limestone cliffs, and gets you up close and personal with dangerous crashing surf.

From *Lonely Planet Australia*, 17th edition

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## Go on the perfect bike ride

**Location:** Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Bicycles are more common than cars in Amsterdam, and to roll like a local you'll need a two-wheeler. Rent a bike and take a spin alongside Amsterdam's canals, then head out into the countryside: wend between Friesland's interconnected lakes, investigate the polders and old-school fishing villages of North Holland or pedal through the forests and sheep fields of the Drenthe region, where *hunebedden* (ancient stone graves) lay scattered by the paths. To get away from it all (not easy in this densely populated nation) steer towards the Veluwe: villages are scarce, trees plentiful, and wild boar and deer your cycle mates.

From *Lonely Planet Amsterdam*, 8th edition

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS





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## Create your own scent on the Riviera

**Location:** The Riviera, France

It can take months, sometimes years, for a ‘nose’ (perfumers who, after 10 years’ training, can identify up to 3000 smells) to create a perfume. And you’ll understand why once you sit down in front of a mind-boggling array of essences: the number of combinations is dizzying. Perfume workshops won’t turn you into a perfumer overnight, but the olfactory education they offer is fascinating and great fun. Molinard runs a fantastic 90-minute workshop in its Grasse factory where you can create your own perfume. Perfumer Céline will quiz you about the scents you like and dislike, talk you through the structure of the perfume, explain the rules of perfume etiquette and help you through the more subtle blends of your creations. ‘Graduates’ leave with a stylish bottle of their own perfume.

From *Lonely Planet France*, 10th edition

PARFUMERIE MOLINARD, FRANCE



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KARST PEAKS ALONG THE YULONG RIVER, YANGSHUO, CHINA

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## Climb every mountain

**Location:** Yangshuo, China

This picturesque former fishing village has been dubbed ‘the adventure capital of China’ thanks in part to its accessibility, but mostly due to the rock-climbing opportunities afforded by its many limestone karst peaks. A buzzing scene of local and international climbers enjoys arguably the best concentration of climbs in Asia, most of which are reachable by a short bike or bus ride from downtown. Many routes are well bolted, though the more intrepid climber can still find fresh routes to conquer.

From *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*, or book a tour on [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com)

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## Chase waterfalls

**Location:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe & Zambia

Victoria Falls has many faces. Get full-frontal panoramas from the trailheads opposite the falls, allowing you to take in the sheer force while framing the falls beautifully for that quintessential photo. But to fully grasp its greatness, you need to head up into the skies on a scenic chopper ride over the drama. Trumping it all is the truly life-changing experience of Devil’s Pool. Here on Livingstone Island, Zambia, you’ll find yourself in the eye of the storm as you soak in nature’s ultimate infinity pool, perched right on the lip of the falls, allowing you to peek directly over the raging water.

From *Lonely Planet Zambia, Mozambique & Malawi*, 2nd edition

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## Detox in luxury

**Location:** Ilha Grande, Brazil

There's more to this island than hammocks and caipirinhas. It's also home to a seven-day program designed to detox and de-stress through rainforest hiking, kayaking, yoga and meditation. In a casual atmosphere guests get personal attention and gentle encouragement, rather than drill-sergeant discipline. The founders created the Island Experience after a seven-day hike around Ilha Grande that left them wanting to share the experience with others – not just physical challenges but also learning to face one's limits, manage fears and open up to other cultures.

From *Lonely Planet Brazil*, 9th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

## Dance the night away

**Location:** Berlin, Germany

The sun may not be shining, the weather may not be sweet, but if you just want to move those dancing feet, Berlin is all you could ever want or need. The city's vast party spectrum caters to every budget and age group. Taste is no barrier to enjoyment either: whether you're into hardcore techno, high-speed drum 'n' bass, kick-ass punk, sweet Britpop, fist-pumping hip-hop, or even swing and tango, you can find a place to party any night of the week. With so many top electro DJs living in Berlin – and others happy to visit – the city is a virtual musical testing lab.

From *Lonely Planet Berlin*, 8th edition

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LONELY PLANET AUTHOR RESOLUTION:

## Walk the world's highest peaks

**Location:** The Himalaya, Nepal

Joe Bindloss, *Lonely Planet* author of over 40 guidebooks, from India to Iceland

Just climbing the Himalaya is so old hat. My top travel resolution is to walk *along* the Himalaya, courtesy of the 150-day, 1700km Great Himalayan Trail. This epic trekking route traverses the length of Nepal, climbing over 6200m passes and dropping to the bottom of deep glacial valleys. En route, it passes through some of Nepal's most dramatic landscapes in the shadow of such mighty mountain peaks as Everest (Sagarmatha; 8848m), Lhotse (8516m) and Kanchenjunga (8586m). But in case that sounds too much like hard work, you can split the trail into 10 smaller treks lasting two to three weeks, linked together in a daisy-chain across the world's highest mountain range.

Start your own journey with *Lonely Planet Nepal*, 9th edition

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THE HIMALAYA, NEPAL

NIGHTLIFE IN BERLIN, GERMANY

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## Make new friends

**Location:** Ha'apai, Tonga

There's nothing quite like swimming alongside a mother humpback whale and her calf, especially when the newborn is just as inquisitive about you as you are about it! Tonga is one of the few places in the world where you can swim with whales. Humpbacks come to Ha'apai's waters in June to birth and raise their young before heading back to the southern oceans in October; during this five-month period you're in for a truly amazing experience. Not only can you eyeball a calf from only a couple of swim-strokes away, but you can observe acrobatic displays and hear the humpbacks 'singing' in elaborate mating rituals. If swimming next to them isn't your thing, watch from a boat or kayak close by – or, if you're lucky, view them breaching from the beach.

*From Lonely Planet Rarotonga, Samoa & Tonga, 7th edition, and Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

HUMPBACK WHALE CALF, TONGA



© MARCO DI LAURO / GETTY IMAGES



FESTIVAL OF THE REDEEMER, VENICE, ITALY

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## Celebrate romance

**Location:** Venice, Italy

The reflection of fireworks in the water between illuminated gondolas and behind the city's famous spires, domes and bell towers – sublime. Considering the Festival of the Redeemer celebrates the salvation of the city by Christ during a dreadful 16th-century plague, you might not expect all of the *amore* that occurs during the Festival of the Redeemer. For one week-end in July, the world's most romantic city becomes even more so. Book a private gondola and join the massive floating picnic along the Zattere, and experience what is the average Venetian's best-loved festival.

*From Lonely Planet Venice & the Veneto, 7th edition*

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## Learn from a master

**Location:** Shangri-La, China

*Thangka* is a form of Tibetan painting that plays an important role in Buddhist teaching and meditation. At the Thangka Academy in Shangri-La, thangka master Lobsang Khudup trains young monks in painting and Buddhist philosophy. The academy was originally founded to help local Tibetans learn more about their rich culture, but now it offers classes for travellers at a very reasonable cost, which includes room and board.

*From Lonely Planet China, 13th edition*

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GENTOO PENGUIN, ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

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## Retrace Shackleton's steps

**Location:** Antarctica

Visiting Antarctica is a chance to take on life and follow in the path of intrepid explorers – but with cushier amenities. Reaching the ends of the earth has never been easier, but it's not a trip for the weak of heart or stomach: the Drake Passage is a notorious churner. Antarctica and its surrounding islands offer the wildest, most remote spots on earth. Immerse yourself in the isolation, the vast expanses of ice and ocean, and the sheer majesty of being a dot in a powerful landscape. Spot minke whales breaching by your ship, spy on Adélie penguins breeding in massive rookeries and listen for glaciers shearing into the sea.

*From Lonely Planet Antarctica, 5th edition, and Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

## Go ghost-busting

**Location:** York, England

York is considered England's most haunted city, and there is a plethora of tours available for budding ghost-busters. According to Andy Dextrous, a ghost tour guide, you'll find York's spookiest spots in haunted pubs like the Old White Swan, plus the Antiques Centre on Stonegate. In the streets around the Minster you're always within a breath of a ghost tale.

*From Lonely Planet Great Britain, 10th edition*

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## Get fit, Thai style

**Location:** Chiva-Som, Hua Hin, Thailand

The name means 'Haven of Life,' but for guests who sign on for this destination spa's fitness retreats, life is anything but restful. There are classes nearly 12 hours a day, from Muay Thai boxing to Ashtanga yoga to a cardio session called Mountain Trek, plus private fitness assessments and an array of personal training sessions, both indoors and out. Highly trained international specialists oversee the fitness and the Eastern and Western wellness services (reflexology, Thai massage, deep-tissue bodywork) that soothe sore muscles after classes are done. The healthy Thai food is delicious.

*From Lonely Planet Thailand, 14th edition, and Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

TRADITIONAL THAI MASSAGE, THAILAND







OHRID, MACEDONIA

© ROBERT ATANASOVSKI / GETTY IMAGES

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## Find a new adrenaline rush

**Location:** Macedonia

For the adventurous traveller, Macedonia's mix of history and uncharted outdoors offers a uniquely cultured kind of adrenaline rush. Although there's a ski resort with plenty of powder at Popova Šapka, off-piste skiing (at 2500m) is available with a local guide and a day's use of a lumbering snowcat to get to the farthest reaches. In warmer months, action seekers can try paragliding from Mt Galičica over vast Lake Ohrid in the southwest. Ohrid is a summer hotspot, a sprawling old town with structures ranging from classical amphitheatres and Byzantine churches to traditional wood-beamed mansions overlooking the lake. And if you're up for a 30km swim, try competing in the summer swimming marathon here.

From *Lonely Planet Eastern Europe*, 12th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

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## Bust capoeira moves

**Location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Variouly described as a martial art, a dance form and a secret form of communication among African slaves in Brazil, capoeira is history in action. In Rio you can see musicians and spectators arranged in the *roda de capoeira* (capoeira circle) at the weekly Feira Nordestina in São Cristóvão. Look for courses all over Brazil – the range of movements required will develop your flexibility, balance and coordination.

From *Lonely Planet Brazil*, 9th edition

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## Take an exercise in minimalism

**Location:** Groningen City, The Netherlands

When the tide retreats across the Unesco-listed mudflats off the north coast of the Waddenzee, locals and visitors alike attack it with abandon, marching and inevitably sinking into the sloppy mess. Known as *wadlopen* (mudflat walking), it's an exercise in minimalism, forcing you to focus on the little things while you trudge toward the featureless horizon. Proponents say that it is strenuous but enlivening; the unchanging vista of mud and sky has an almost meditative quality. The call of birds and the chance to focus on the details, such as the small crabs and cockles underfoot, puts one in touch with nature's finer points. The main base for *wadlopen* is the north coast of Groningen, in the Netherlands.

From *Lonely Planet The Netherlands*, 5th edition

HIKING MUD FLATS, GRONINGEN CITY, THE NETHERLANDS



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THE PYRÉNÉES, FRANCE

© GARETH MCCORMACK / GETTY IMAGES

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## Get fit in France's great outdoors

**Location:** The Pyrénées, France

The French Pyrénées offer plenty of opportunity for downhill skiing and snowboarding, as well as cross-country skiing and, increasingly, snowshoeing. The Pyrénées usually receive much less snow than the Alps, and falls tend to be moister and heavier, making them perfect for learners and intermediates. The French side of the mountain range has over 20 downhill ski stations and more than 10 cross-country areas, the major ones being Ax Trois Domaines, Barèges-La Mongie, Cauterets, Superbagnères and Val d'Azun.

From *Lonely Planet France*, 10th edition

## Hone your swimming skills

**Location:** Sporades Islands, Greece

This tour of a super quiet stretch of the Aegean Sea takes you Greek island-hopping stroke by stroke without the bother of carrying your kit, which follows behind in the support boat. You'll be sharing the craggy coastlines of the Sporades archipelago and its protected turquoise waters with dolphins, seals and scientists, as the area is part of Europe's largest natural marine park. Video analysis is on offer to help hone your stroke technique.

From *Lonely Planet Greek Islands*, 7th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

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## Go dragon-spotting

**Location:** Komodo National Park, Indonesia

Recently declared one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature, Indonesia's best national park comprises several islands and some of the country's richest waters. Hike through Komodo, the largest of these islands, to see the world's largest lizard – the Komodo dragon. A little 'grandstand' overlooks the river bed where the dragons gather. When you do encounter one, keep a safe distance and move slowly and calmly. As menacing as these 2.5m-long lizards look, their disposition is worse. Most visitors stay one night at Komodo and do only the short hike to Banu Nggulung for a view of the lizards – but the longer you hike, the more spectacular the scenery. Steep hillsides, jade in the short wet season and frazzled by the sun and winds to a deep rusty red for most of the year, are spectacular and well worth exploration.

From *Lonely Planet Indonesia*, 10th edition

KOMODO DRAGON, KOMODO NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA





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## Dive into the abyss

**Location:** Robinson Crusoe Island, Chile

In 1704, Alexander Selkirk was put ashore on this remote island in the Archipiélago Juan Fernández, 414 miles off the coast of mainland Chile. He lived here for four years, becoming the role model for Daniel Defoe's fictional *Robinson Crusoe*. Today the archipelago is a national park (save for San Juan Bautista, a sleepy fishing village of 600 people) and receives few visitors. The area was devastated by the tsunami that followed a massive earthquake in 2010, but the islands are rebuilding, with new accommodations now open and regular flights from Santiago resumed. Robinson Crusoe Island is also Chile's scuba-dive spot. With crystal-clear waters, enormous schools of fish and the playful Juan Fernández fur seal, it's the perfect place to lose yourself in a new world.

From *Lonely Planet Chile & Easter Island*, 9th edition

## Think globally, learn to speak locally

**Location:** Patagonia, Argentina

The small town of Bariloche, surrounded by glacial lakes, forests and the valleys and mountains of the Andes, is so inspiring you'll probably learn more Spanish here in a month than you might elsewhere in a whole year. Sometimes called 'the Switzerland of South America,' Bariloche is the base for most Patagonian language schools, so there's always a good mix of international students should you wish to slack off from speaking Spanish.

From *Lonely Planet Argentina*, 8th edition, or try our new Fast Talk Phrasebook mobile app, featuring five languages for on-the-go language assistance

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## Follow the trail of Dracula

**Location:** Transylvania, Romania

Love it or loathe it, visit Romania and you can't ignore the omnipresence of Dracula, from mugs and T-shirts to bat- and blood-themed menus and vampire-costumed waiters. But what's really chilling is that a blueprint for the pale, shape-shifting count we were reared on in horror films actually existed – though not in a black cape and cloud of fog. Rather, Vlad Țepeș (later known as Vlad the Impaler) was a Wallachian warrior king with a predilection for extreme cruelty. In equal measure to a face of fangs staring back at you at every turn, you'll also see Vlad's mustached visage around the region.

To catch the tail of the real Dracula, head to the remote Poenari Citadel, on the Transylvania-Wallachia border, where the impaler's wife committed suicide. Not far from the wonderfully preserved medieval town of Brașov – where Vlad also had people impaled – is Bran Castle, where allegedly Țepeș was briefly imprisoned. The pretty Saxon citadel of Sighișoara may look to be straight out of a fairy tale, but it's also the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler.

From *Lonely Planet Romania & Bulgaria*, 6th edition

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BRAN CASTLE (AKA DRACULA'S CASTLE), TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA



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## Fulfil your Olympic dreams

**Location:** Park City, Utah, USA

It's the Winter Olympics at its most mentally chilling: Lycra-clad figures in oversize skis hurtling down jumps, launching off at 55mph, dangling midair, then landing safely (hopefully) on the slope below. These must be the bravest athletes at the party. So join them! Utah's Olympic Park, near Salt Lake City, hosted the 2002 games. The paraphernalia's still there, with expert coaches to guide squeaky-bummed beginners off 2m-high jumps – or higher, if you dare. If not, the Extreme Zipline starts at the top of the K120 ski jump, so amateurs can experience the thrill (and terror) of making the leap.

From *Lonely Planet Western USA*, 1st edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

## Take time to gaze at the stars

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**Location:** Atacama Desert, Chile

Sure, you can be dwarfed by mountains and deserts, but that's nothing compared to being dwarfed by the universe itself. There are few better places for guaranteed stargazing of truly cosmic proportions than the arid Atacama Desert. There are powerful telescopes here if you want to zoom in, but for an overview of awesome, simply lie back and blink up at the fathomless yonder. A crisscross of constellations, planets and who-knows-what-else will blink right back.

From *Lonely Planet Chile*, 9th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

ATACAMA DESERT, CHILE

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PARAGLIDING ABOVE CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

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## Take to the sky

**Location:** South Africa

Agreeable weather conditions year-round and an abundance of high-points make South Africa one of the world's top paragliding destinations. Good facilities and instruction mean that most activities are accessible to anyone, whatever their experience level. Your own transport is essential to escape the strong winds in Cape Town and reach the best sites in Porterville and Hermanus, and at Sit Lowry's Pass. Soaring along the Twelve Apostles as the tablecloth cloud forms around you is a near-biblical experience.

From *Lonely Planet South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland*, 9th edition

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## Take part in a bog snorkelling festival

**Location:** Llanwrtyd Wells, Wales

While mulling over how to encourage tourism in Llanwrtyd Wells (the UK's smallest town, according to the *Guinness Book of Records*) in the dark winter months, some citizens started an inspired roll call of unconventionality. The most famous event is the World Bog Snorkelling Championships held in July. Competitors are allowed wetsuits, snorkels and flippers to traverse a trench cut out of peat bog, using no identifiable swimming stroke and surfacing only to navigate. Spin-off events include Mountain Bike Bog Snorkelling ('like trying to ride through treacle') and the Bog Snorkelling Triathlon.

From *Lonely Planet Great Britain*, 10th edition

WORLD BOG SNORKELLING CHAMPIONSHIPS, LLANWRTYD WELLS, WALES



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## Bring the farm to your table

**Location:** New York City

Don't let the concrete streets fool you – NYC has a thriving greens scene. At the top of your list should be the New Amsterdam Market – a seasonal Sunday food market near South St Seaport. It's here that you'll find the best artisanal meats, cheeses, pasta and bread from around the region. Also worth a look is the Union Square Greenmarket, open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday year-round. Brought to the public by Grow NYC, it could be considered the flagship venue of their market movement.

From *Lonely Planet Pocket New York*, 4th edition

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## Refine your wine-tasting palette

**Location:** Paris, France

Sorting the good from the inferior when it comes to serious wine-tasting in Paris is no mean feat. Luckily dozens of courses and options exist to help you become a true sommelier. Try the one-day course at the highly esteemed Centre de Dégustation Jacques Vivet or aim for a Saturday tasting held in Paris' oldest wine shop, Les Caves Augé, in business since 1850. For an updated and comprehensive monthly calendar of wine tasting in the city, there's no better source than Paris by Mouth.

From *Lonely Planet Paris*, 9th edition

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OUTDOOR GREENMARKET, NEW YORK CITY





GLACIER TREKKING, FOX GLACIER, NEW ZEALAND

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## Take a walk on the wild side

**Location:** West Coast, New Zealand

Here's your chance to venture into untamed territory that might be well beyond your limits, such as the icy faces of Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers, or beyond them into the midst of the Southern Alps on a scenic flight. Raft down the wild white waters of the Buller River, or kayak across New Zealand's largest natural lagoon and up into narrow channels overhung with strange plants and enriched with birdlife. Such close encounters with Mother Nature are sure to recalibrate your outlook.

*From Lonely Planet New Zealand, 16th edition, and Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

## Make the pilgrimage of a lifetime

**Location:** The Inca Trail, Peru

South America's most famous pedestrian roadway, the Inca Trail, snakes 43km up millennia-old stone steps and through thick forest mists. A true pilgrimage, the four- to five-day trek ends at the famous Intipunku – or Sun Gate – where trekkers get their first glimpse of the extravagant ruins at Machu Picchu. While there are countless ancient roads all over Peru, the Inca Trail, with its mix of majestic views, staggering mountain passes and clusters of ruins, is a traveller's rite of passage.

*From Lonely Planet Discover Peru, 2nd edition*

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## Learn to live off the land

**Location:** Village Home, Otavalo, Ecuador

There's no rest for guests in the Ecuadorean Highlands – not when there's corn to be picked or sandals to be stitched. Around the traditional town of Otavalo, known for its vibrantly dressed indigenous people and (fairly touristy) handicraft market, a scatter of homesteads welcomes travellers and encourages them to get their hands dirty. Rise with the cock's crow – it's worth it to watch the sunrise over the nearby volcanoes – then spend the day helping out, feeding the guinea pigs, planting cabbage or learning Andean embroidery. Efforts will be repaid by generous meals (remember those guinea pigs?) and a more authentic Otavaleño encounter.

*From Lonely Planet Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands, 9th edition, and Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

OTAVALO, ECUADOR





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## Take time to stop and place the roses

**Location:** Kyoto, Japan

Ikebana, the ancient art of flower arranging, was developed in the 15th century. There are thousands of modern schools, each sharing one aim: to arrange flowers to represent heaven, earth and humanity. The resultant art form is evident all over Japan, beautifying everything from hotel lobbies to traditional restaurants. [KyotoCulture.org](http://KyotoCulture.org) can set up introductory classes.

From *Lonely Planet Kyoto*, 5th edition

## Sail through a tropical paradise

**Location:** The Whitsunday Islands, Australia

The 74 islands that make up this stunning archipelago are really the tips of mountains jutting out from the Coral Sea, and from their sandy fringes the ocean spreads towards the horizon in beautiful shades of crystal, aqua, blue and indigo. Lounging beside the pool in a luxury island resort or playing castaway on a secluded beach, there are so many ways to enjoy the beautiful Whitsundays. One of the best is from the deck of a sailing boat, basking in the warm sunshine and balmy sea air, relishing the dramatic tropical sunsets and star-studded night skies. Sailing through this island paradise brings the romance of the sea to life.

From *Lonely Planet Australia*, 17th edition

SAILING THE WHITSUNDAY ISLANDS, AUSTRALIA

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## Go dogsledding

**Location:** Gulf of Bothnia, Finland

Fizzing over the snow behind a team of huskies under the low winter sun is a tough experience to beat. Short jaunts are great, but overnight safaris give you time to feed and bond with your lovable dogs and try out a wood-fired sauna in the middle of the winter wilderness. It's no fairy-tale ride though; expect to eat some snow before you learn to control your team. If you're more of a cat person, you can enjoy similar trips on a snowmobile or behind reindeer.

From *Lonely Planet Finland*, 7th edition

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## Live (or just sleep) in a bubble

**Location:** Vancouver, Canada

For something completely different and a little bit magical, why not spend a night in a bubble on Vancouver Island? Literally. The truly unique adult tree houses at Free Spirit Spheres near Qualicum Bay are a ferry ride and a few hours' drive away from downtown Vancouver. Three handcrafted spheres containing a bed and cozy bare essentials are suspended from the forest canopy by an ingenious web of ropes. Guests speak of heightened awareness, reawakened creativity and connection with nature upon emerging from an evening spent bobbing gently above the forest floor.

From *Lonely Planet Vancouver*, 6th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

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HUSKIES PULLING A SLED, GULF OF BOTHNIA, FINLAND

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## Go green

**Location:** Sikkim, India

Picking up national accolades for being India's cleanest state with the most innovative tourism project, Sikkim has set new benchmarks for responsible travel in the country. Checkbox sightseeing has rapidly made way for sustainable community-based tourism in less developed areas, while ecofriendly policies have breathed new life into the virginal Himalayan wilderness that drapes the region's mountains.

From *Lonely Planet India*, 15th edition, and *Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2014*

## Try a new (old) sport

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**Location:** Edirne, Turkey

Now one of the world's oldest and most bizarre sporting events – in which muscular men, naked except for a pair of heavy leather trousers, coat themselves in olive oil and throw each other around – takes place annually in late June/early July in northern Edirne. It's called the *Tarıhi Kırkpınar Yağlı Güreş Festivali* (Historic Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival) and proves to be one of the most curious uses of olive oil since the early Ottoman Empire.

From *Lonely Planet Turkey*, 13th edition

OIL WRESTLING FESTIVAL, ERDINE, TURKEY



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ARCHITECTURE OF KIEV, UKRAINE

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LONELY PLANET READER RESOLUTION:

## Explore your heritage

**Location:** Ukraine

Bernadette Jedlinski, *Lonely Planet* reader and traveller to over 100 countries and counting

My nana grew up in a town called Konotop in Ukraine and was forced to leave at the age of 16; she never returned. I want to learn about Ukraine's history, customs, food and people, and I can't think of a better way to do it than to go there! I'll explore the Black Sea coast, walk the cobblestone streets in historical Lviv, learn from the art and history museums in Kiev, and be shocked by the sights of the world's biggest nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. My journey will end in Konotop after visiting the churches, schools, parks and squares of my nana's childhood, with many stories (and photos!) to share with my family for generations.

Start your own journey with *Lonely Planet Ukraine*, 3rd edition

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## Listen to Fado

**Location:** Portugal

Born in a working-class part of Lisbon, the melancholic music of Fado has been around for centuries. Despite its years, Fado remains a living art, heard in tiny mom-and-pop restaurants and elegant music halls alike. A lone, powerful voice coupled with the 12-string Portuguese *guitarra* are all the tools needed to bring some listeners to tears, as songs recall broken hearts, unfulfilled dreams and lost days of youth. In Fado, raw emotion often conveys more than mere lyrics can; even non-Portuguese speakers find themselves moved by great *fadistas*.

Start your adventure with *Lonely Planet Portugal*, 8th edition

FADO PERFORMANCE, LISBON, PORTUGAL



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WATER FESTIVAL, MYANMAR (BURMA)

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## Have a water fight

**Location:** Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar in April is so hot that you'll enjoy getting soaked at Thingyan (Water Festival), which marks the start of the country's new-year celebration. The festival involves lots of drinking, dancing, singing and theatre, with the emphasis on satire – even making (careful!) fun of the government. Cultural taboos are lifted temporarily, so women can 'kidnap' young men, blacken the men's faces with soot or oil, bind their hands and dunk their heads in buckets of water until they surrender, and perform a hilarious monkey dance.

From *Lonely Planet Myanmar (Burma)*, 11th edition

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## Go back to school

**Location:** London, England

If you'd like to learn a new skill, brush up on an old one, or attend a fascinating lecture, the world-famous British Museum, Tate Modern and National History Museum are excellent places to deepen your knowledge. Beyond the big-hitters, don't overlook some of the lesser-known collections dotted throughout the city. Whether you've a penchant for fans, toys, design, cartoons, transport or ancient surgical techniques, you'll find a gallery or museum to satisfy your intellectual cravings.

From *Lonely Planet Discover London*, 2nd edition, or *Lonely Planet Pocket London*, 3rd edition

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