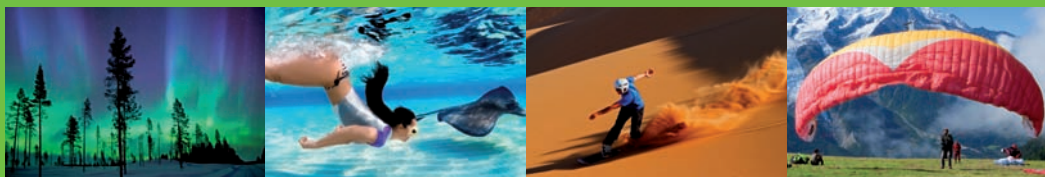




L O N E L Y   P L A N E T ' S

# 1000



# ULTIMATE ADVENTURES

FROM THE WORLD'S LEADING TRAVEL AUTHORITY

L O N E L Y P L A N E T ' S

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# CONTENTS

- 10** **ICONS OF TRAVEL**
- 14** **BEST SPOTS TO CATCH A BIG WAVE**
- 18** **ULTIMATE DESERT DARES**
- 22** **MOUNTAIN QUESTS**
- 26** **BEST STEEP, DEEP BACK-COUNTRY SKIING**
- 30** **WILDEST FLIGHTS**
- 32** **GREATEST AIRBORNE ADVENTURES**
- 36** **MOST ELECTRIFYING TRIBAL ENCOUNTERS**
- 40** **MOST DANGEROUS PLACES TO TRAVEL**
- 42** **COLDEST ADVENTURES**
- 46** **SCARIEST ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS**
- 50** **MOST SPECTACULAR ROCK CLIMBS**
- 54** **MOST STELLAR STAR-LIT ADVENTURES**
- 56** **MOST THRILLING CANYONING ADVENTURES**
- 60** **MOST EXCELLENT EQUINE ESCAPADES**
- 64** **ICONIC ASIAN ADVENTURES**
- 68** **GOTTA BE IN IT TO WIN IT: BEST RACES**
- 70** **BEST TREKS WITH KILLER VIEWS**
- 74** **ROCK STARS: WORLD'S BEST BOULDERING**
- 78** **BEST OFF-SEASON ADVENTURES**
- 82** **MOST SPIRITED HIKING & BIKING**
- 84** **HOTTEST VOLCANIC VENTURES**
- 88** **FOR PROS ONLY – THE MOST DANGEROUS ADVENTURES**
- 92** **BEST HIDDEN HUTS AND SHELTERS**
- 94** **ICONIC AMERICAS ADVENTURES**
- 98** **ULTIMATE TRAIN RIDES**
- 102** **RETRO ACTIVE: OLD-SCHOOL ADVENTURES**
- 104** **WILDEST SWIMS IN THE WORLD**
- 108** **CRAZIEST CAVES**
- 112** **MIND-BLOWING MARATHONS**
- 114** **MOST ACTION-PACKED JUNGLES**
- 118** **DOWNHILL DASHES**
- 122** **BEST ADVENTURE FESTIVALS**
- 124** **EPIC RIDES**
- 128** **BEST URBAN CLIMBING ADVENTURES**
- 132** **HAIR-RAISING ROAD TRIPS**
- 136** **SECOND-HIGHEST (NOT SECOND BEST)**
- 138** **MOUNTAIN BIKING'S MECCAS**
- 142** **GOING TO EXTREMES**
- 146** **MONKEY MAGIC: BEST ADVENTURES IN TREES**
- 150** **WILD AT HEART: BEST ANIMAL ADVENTURES**
- 152** **EPIC SEA-KAYAK PADDLES**
- 156** **EYE-CATCHING ATMOSPHERIC EXTRAVAGANZAS**
- 160** **BEST CITY HIKES**
- 164** **ENDANGERED ENCOUNTERS**
- 166** **SAIL OR BUST**
- 170** **BEST FOUR-LEGGED ADVENTURES**
- 174** **TALL ORDERS! – BEST TOWER-RUNNING RACES**
- 176** **CLASSIC RIDES FOR CASUAL CYCLISTS**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>180</b> ULTIMATE MOTORBIKE ADVENTURES            | <b>248</b> ULTIMATE BORDER CROSSINGS             | <b>308</b> GET YOUR THRILLS INDOORS               |
| <b>184</b> BEST ADVENTURE FILMS                     | <b>250</b> LONGEST TREKS                         | <b>312</b> ROUSING READS FOR ARMCHAIR ADVENTURERS |
| <b>186</b> TOP 10 ADVENTURE NATIONS                 | <b>254</b> BEST POWDER IN THE WORLD              | <b>314</b> THE TWO OF US: ADVENTURES IN TANDEM    |
| <b>190</b> GET ON BOARD!                            | <b>258</b> ESSENTIAL AFRICAN ADVENTURES          | <b>318</b> GREAT MOUNTAIN CYCLES                  |
| <b>194</b> INTREPID TREASURE-HUNTING TRIPS          | <b>262</b> MOST EXCITING MODERN ADVENTURERS      | <b>322</b> BOY'S (AND GIRL'S) OWN ADVENTURES      |
| <b>198</b> BEST POOCH PURSUITS                      | <b>264</b> BEST BIRDING IN HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS | <b>324</b> LEGENDARY ODYSSEYS                     |
| <b>200</b> ICONIC EUROPEAN ADVENTURES               | <b>268</b> BEST MARINE ENCOUNTERS                | <b>328</b> BEST SURF BREAKS FOR BEGINNERS         |
| <b>204</b> BEST WAYS TO BLOW THE KIDS' INHERITANCE  | <b>272</b> SENSATIONAL SNOWSHOE ESCAPADES        | <b>332</b> CLASSIC SOLO SORTIES                   |
| <b>208</b> BEST ULTRA RUNS                          | <b>274</b> SPORTIVES FOR SERIOUS CYCLISTS        | <b>334</b> FAMILY-FRIENDLY ADVENTURES             |
| <b>210</b> ULTIMATE PILGRIMAGES                     | <b>278</b> BEST UNDISCOVERED US PARKS            | <b>338</b> TOP DIVING ADVENTURES                  |
| <b>214</b> WORLD'S HIGHEST TREKS                    | <b>282</b> BEST ADVENTURES IN THE BUFF           | <b>342</b> IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FILM HEROES        |
| <b>218</b> FAMOUS FOOTSTEPS                         | <b>284</b> SWEETEST SNORKEL SPOTS                | <b>344</b> MOST SPECTACULAR HONEYMOON ADVENTURES  |
| <b>220</b> ZIP IT UP: GREATEST ZIP-LINE EXPERIENCES | <b>288</b> BEST HUT-TO-HUT TOURS                 | <b>348</b> ADVENTURE OFF THE PAGE                 |
| <b>224</b> ICONIC MIDDLE EAST ADVENTURES            | <b>292</b> ADVENTURE INSTITUTIONS                | <b>350</b> INDEX                                  |
| <b>228</b> THE PLANET'S FREAKIEST FOOTRACES         | <b>294</b> MOST VERTIGINOUS VENTURES             |   |
| <b>230</b> TRULY WILD WATERWAYS                     | <b>298</b> BEST 'PHOENIX' DESTINATIONS           |   |
| <b>234</b> FAMOUSLY ADVENTUROUS DESTINATIONS        | <b>302</b> TOP ADVENTURE SKILLS                  |   |
| <b>238</b> GIRLS-ONLY ADVENTURES                    | <b>304</b> BEST BEGINNERS' CLIMBS                |   |
| <b>240</b> BEST RAFTING RIVERS                      |  |   |
| <b>244</b> MOST MAGNIFICENT COAST-TO-COAST MISSIONS |  |   |

# FOREWORD

I sweat in the silence. All around me the sands stretch far away. Nothing moves. The crisp curves and shadows of the dunes cut up into the cloudless sky. There is no sign of life, no sign that anyone has ever been here before.

Despite the heat, despite the struggle, I smile. Perhaps I smile *because* of these things? Because adventures are not supposed to be easy, are they?

I'm walking across the Arabian Peninsula's Empty Quarter desert (p21) – the Rub' al Khali – and the responsibility for my progress and safety is entirely in my hands. It is an exhilarating feeling. But I am not the first person here. My quest is to retrace the great journeys Wilfred Thesiger made here seventy years ago.

Reflecting the very different worlds that Thesiger and I pursue our adventures in, the end of my trek will be the peak of Dubai's Burj Khalifa, currently the world's tallest building. Thesiger would have been horrified. But there's no point living in the past. The world has changed enormously since Thesiger set out across these plains. But the thrill of discovering new places remains. I love going to places I've never been, and seeing glorious sights that I first read about in books such as this one.

We live in fortunate times. The world is more accessible than ever before. These days we have opportunities not only to be armchair adventurers, dipping into the delicious photographs and ideas in this book, but to commit to an adventure of our own. We have the

chance to attempt an adventure large or small, and to discover ourselves capable of more than we realised. This book is a brilliant stepping stone to our own adventures either epic or local.

I first began plotting my adventures through stories of the great explorers. They inspired me to dream big. I've been to the beach where Captain Cook was killed and I've followed Marco Polo across the Taklamakan desert (p326). But Burke and Wills' pioneering trek reminds me of a glaring omission on my own travelling CV: I have never adventured in Australia. The world is so big that I will never reach the bottom of my wish list. There's so much to do, as this book makes deliciously plain. All the more reason to get dreaming and planning, and get out there!

My first adventure was cycling the stunning high-altitude Karakoram Highway (p318) from Pakistan to China. I'd been planning on cycling in Tuscany when a friend cajoled me into thinking bigger. Not only was the ride cheaper and more epic than Italy, it was also a catalyst. I was addicted. I haven't looked back.

Don't make the mistake of reading this book without also making the adventures of your choice actually happen. Flicking through these pages I have noted several adventures that fired my imagination, mountain biking the San Juan huts (p291) and paddling the Queen Charlotte Islands (p153) being just two. I'm sure you will do the same. There's a wonderful world out there and this book is a fantastic appetiser. Let's go!

**Alastair Humphreys**  
**Scotland, April 2013**



# ULTIMATE ITINERARIES

## ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

They may not be kings of the jungle, but spying a tiger from the back of an elephant counts as a majestic experience. **p164**

Great white sharks are best viewed from a steel cage in the waters off Port Lincoln, South Australia. **p47**



Sea turtles can live to a ripe old age. Be a witness to their hatching in the Padre Ramos Estuary, Nicaragua. **p54**

It's a dog's life, so why not come along for the ride, racing over an Alaskan glacier on a dog-sled tour. **p172**

How better to experience the vastness of the Mongolian steppes than as Genghis Khan and his horde did: on horseback. **p62**

## ARCHETYPAL AFRICA

Zanzibar, mixing spice plantations, pristine beaches and Swahili culture, hovers like an African jewel in the Indian Ocean. **p236**

The rolling dunes of Namibia are perfect slopes for sandboarding... and soft when you crash. **p19**

An epic bike journey from Cape Town to Cairo puts you in touch with the sights, sounds and scents of this mighty continent. **p10**

Migration on an epic scale: 1.5 million wildebeest and zebra move through the Maasai Mara every year. **p260**



In Ghana's Kakum National Park guides lead night safaris through pristine African tropic rainforest. **p55**



## MOUNTAIN HIGHS

The W Trek across the Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia wows with luminescent glacial lakes and awe-inspiring granite peaks. **p73**

Setting out in Scotland to conquer the Munros take a certain amount of pluck – there are 282 of them, all at above 900m. **p23**

Come at the world's highest mountain, floating face first. You don't necessarily need to climb it, you can skydive over Everest instead. **p296**

Experience the world's most active volcano at close quarters. Lava flows so slowly down Kilauea, in Hawaii's Volcanoes National Park, that it's safe to watch. **p86**



Glacier-topped Mt Kilimanjaro rises majestically out of Tanzania's sun-bleached savannah. It's the highest peak in Africa and siren's call to serious trekkers. **p215**

## NO-SWEAT ADVENTURES

After travelling all the way to Iceland, the warm waters of the Blue Lagoon, near Reykjavík, make for a relaxing and rejuvenating dip. **p345**

Glide like a swan or get your groove on along the boardwalk of Venice Beach, California, the self-proclaimed 'roller-skate capital of the world'. **p102**

Start your day by floating silently over other-worldly landscapes and villages of Cappadocia, Turkey, in a hot-air balloon flight. **p32**



Skimming across the Indian Ocean with dolphins swimming in your wake, a schooner trip between the islands of the Seychelles is an idyll come true. **p168**

Cycling in tandem as part of a bike and barge tour of Amsterdam is the ultimate team-building experience. **p315**

## ACTIVE AMERICAS

In the vastness of Big Bend, Texas, you can raft down the Rio Grande, or hike or horse-ride into the Chisos Mountains. **p280**

Sentinel over Rio de Janeiro, Mt Sugarloaf offers a climbing challenge that is only rivalled by the views of Guanbara Bay. **p128**

Linking Newfoundland with Vancouver Island, the mighty Trans Canada Trail is the world's longest network of walking trails. **p252**

Dashing horsemen, gauchos are the perfect guides to lead you on a horse trek exploring the rugged mountains and lakes of Chilean Patagonia. **p171**



The sandstone outcrops around Moab, Utah, have a reputation for world-class mountain-bike routes. Come here for pedal-powered thrills and spills. **p96**



## INTREPID ANTIPODES

The Blue Mountains are full of geological oddities – waterfalls, gullies, crevices – that can be explored full tilt on a canyoning trip. **p56**

Emerging from the Victorian countryside like a craggy fortress, Mt Arapiles is one of Australia's best rock climbs for beginners. **p306**



The Milford Track is New Zealand's most famous tramping (hiking) route, a four-day odyssey through awesome terrain. **p285**

Surfers and wandering souls make the journey to Byron Bay, in northern New South Wales, for consistent, and consistently great, surf breaks. **p328**

Running 150km near the southern tip of New Zealand, the Central Otago Rail Trail offers spectacular autumn scenery every April. **p176**

## VENTURES BY FOOT

Competitors in the Antarctic Ice Marathon take on sub-zero temperatures and freezing winds, but are rewarded by crossing through pristine wilderness. **p113**

A 4300km journey across rugged mountain ranges, the Pacific Crest Trail crosses three US states and seven national parks. **p252**

Pine trees scent the air along the Greenways web of walking trails in the Czech Republic, and at every wayside village pubs serve up home-brewed beers! **p82**

Traversing Spitsbergen from the Barents to the Greenland sea means spending each star-spangled night in a mountain tent on the ice. **p247**



The Camino de Santiago, converging on the reputed remains of St James in Galicia, must be contemporary Christianity's most famous, and popular, modern pilgrimage. **p211**

## EXHILARATING EUROPE

With more than 1200 islands in the opalescent Adriatic Sea, Croatia offers idylls and challenges aplenty for sea kayakers. **p153**

Follow in the footsteps of the first great literary traveller, Odysseus, around the ports, bays and islands of the Mediterranean. **p324**

Every morning for a week in June, crowds run frantically down cobbled streets in Pamplona pursued by bulls. What could be more fun than that? **p202**

Cast your gaze skyward in Tromsø, Norway, at the Northern Lights. According to legend, it's the reflected glow of the mythic Valkyries' armour. **p158**



The West Highland Way across Scotland traverses diverse and breathtaking scenery, from desolate moor to mirror-like Loch Lomond. **p70**

## AQUATIC ESCAPADES

Floating on your back is never so exciting as it is in the Devil's Pool, on the edge of Victoria Falls. **p107**

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Drift languidly amid 10 million jellyfish as the sun follows overhead at Ongeim'l Tketau, Palau's jellyfish lake. **p271**

.....

Swimming with giant rays in the translucent waters of the Cayman Islands is an electrifying experience. **p339**

.....

After plunging over Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River rushes through basalt-lined Batoka Gorge bringing rafters along for the ride. **p241**



.....

Whale sharks, the gentle giants of the sea at up to 10m long, drift through sun-dappled waters in Ningaloo Marine Park in Western Australia. **p269**

## AWESOME ASIA

Sprinkled across the lush highlands of northern Vietnam, the villages of the hill tribes feature colourful market days. **p37**

.....

The Annapurna Circuit takes in breathtaking highs and the Kali Gandaki, the deepest gorge in the world. **p318**



.....

China's Great Wall stretches over 8000km, with hikeable sections passing through Hebei Province near Beijing. **p65**

.....

The world's highest motorable road, the Leh–Manali Highway, linking Ladakh with Himachal Pradesh, has an average elevation of over 4000m. **p135**

.....

Get a bird's eye – or monkey's eye – view of the rainforest around Chiang Mai on 5km of zip-lines at Flight of the Gibbons. **p221**