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Previous page: a local woman in Yúnnán, China. Opposite: by the Zambezi River in Zambia.

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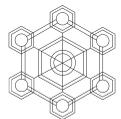
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FOREWORD



We'd set off an hour earlier in sea kayaks for a day of paddling around the Bay of Islands on the northeast coast of New Zealand and then they appeared, barely noticeable beneath us. Three powerful, black-and-white shapes were swimming slowly through the sapphire water – orcas, or killer whales, hunting for food. Two larger whales flanked a small one, which held a ray between its teeth. We were awash with emotions after the encounter: awe at seeing such majestic creatures in their natural habitat; exhilaration at how close they had been to us; and joy at experiencing the unexpected in such a beautiful setting. Such was the powerful effect of those feelings that, years later, the memory remains as clear as ever.

Whether we go for a weekend or a year, most of us travel to see unforgettable sights and enjoy new experiences. But, ultimately, we travel in search of a feeling. That feeling might be a sense of awe or wonder that we don't receive in our daily routines, or it might be a cossetting feeling of calm. We might want to experience an energising sense of exhilaration or to find the mental space for thoughtful reflection or to be inspired.

This book is a little bit different: it's an introduction to almost 250 places around the world based on how they might make you *feel*. Every destination in the following chapters, from the most remote Pacific islands to the

world's greatest cities, is intended to elicit one (or more) of a dozen emotions. Each chapter, beginning with Awe and ending with Reflection, visits 20 places around the world and explains how they might make you feel and the practicalities of getting there.

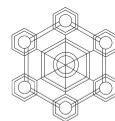
Along the way we will hear from experts who believe that experiencing many of these emotions – which may be in short supply in our busy day-to-day lives – is essential to our mental and physical wellbeing. These feelings can challenge our understanding of the world and of ourselves. They might make us feel small as we witness for the first time a whale breach (see page 12) or view the galaxy revolving overhead at a star party (see page 286), and more connected to the world and the people around us. Similarly, becoming absorbed by the intricate detail of a butterfly's wings or the decorative carving at Jaisalmer in India or the Alhambra in Spain, might cause us to pause for reflection or be enlightened. We don't neglect the spirit of adventure either, from venturing to the tribal heartlands of Papua New Guinea, diving into Bogotá's music scene or visiting New Zealand's Queenstown, the hometown of exhilaration.

However, although these wonderful destinations can be a shortcuts to feelings of joy, inspiration, serenity, passion or more, we also hope that this book inspires you to seek out these emotions close to home.





AWE



In the words of Dr Dacher Keltner, professor of psychology and a co-founder of the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, awe can be defined as 'the experience we have when we encounter things that are vast and... transcend our current understanding of the world'. The emotion has been shown to 'lead people to be more altruistic, less entitled, more humble and aware of the strengths of others, and less stressed by the challenges of daily living'.

The world is full of places that have the potential to inspire awe: the feeling doesn't have to come from big things or expensive trips. As Dr Keltner notes, awe can be felt seeing snow cranes fly over a Buddhist temple in Bhutan or simply by backpacking in your local national park, wherever that may be. What matters is being open and receptive to the experience, finding the time and space to absorb and appreciate it.

Whump ... Whump ... Whump ... Another wave at **① Waimea Bay** in Hawaii detonates on the North Shore. The break is jacked up by an undersea lava shelf 100m beyond the headland. It's one of the largest, heaviest waves in the world, with 6-8m (20-25ft) swells on which pioneers such as Greg 'Da Bull' Noll then Eddie Aikau first tested the possibilities of big-wave surfing. When it's firing, the beach and road behind it fill with crowds

① WAIMEA BAY, HAWAII, USA

Waimea is on O'ahu's North Shore. Hawaii's main island, O'ahu welcomes lots of international flights to its capital Honolulu. You can get around using the island's bus service but you'll have more independence by renting a car. There are various accommodation options, from hostels to private lets and resorts along the North Shore in towns such as Hale'iwa, which is close to Waimea Bay and a 90-minute bus ride from Honolulu. There are also places to stay in Waimea Bay. Winter brings the big waves (and surfers) and summer attracts the sunseekers.

② ICEBERG ALLEY, CANADA

Newfoundland's international airport is in St John's. Carriers arrive from the US, some European cities such as London, and the rest of Canada. It's a two- to three-hour drive down the coast road to the southern tip of the Avalon Peninsula, passing sea-faring settlements, most offering motels, inns and B&Bs. One town that you will pass is Ferryland, which dates back to 1621. It offers incredible views from the lighthouse, though, as always, take care near the ocean edge. Icebergs can be spotted along the whole coast. Check www.newfoundlandlabrador.com for sightings.

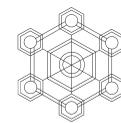


A whale dives in the Gulf of St
Lawrence, Québec, Canada.





EXHILARATION



In a world full of images of exhilaration – action movies, pop videos, car commercials – it's somewhat surprising that real exhilaration is so hard to find. It is possible to go through days, or weeks, or even years without ever feeling the visceral rush of what it means to be alive.

Thank heavens, then, for travel, which serves up thrills and spills to spare in a worldwide buffet of life-affirming experiences. Scientists have shown that exhilaration promotes the release of endorphins, natural hormones that reduce pain and stress and increase happiness – so, not just fun, but good for you too. Before you sign up for a skydive or bungee jump, however, know that there's more to this elusive emotion than action movie antics. Sometimes real exhilaration is a slow and subtle smile that spreads across your face as you realise that right here and now, in this very moment, you are present and alive.

So what are the elements that make an experience exhilarating, rather than simply, well, quite nice? One essential ingredient is anticipation. Think about the last time you really looked forward to something, bubbling with delight and constantly on the verge of bursting out in an ear-to-ear smile.

Setting off on a journey is a great way to tick the anticipation box. The moment when the airplane door closes and you know that the next time you set foot on

① LUKLA, SOLUKHUMBU, NEPAL

Lukla is 140km (87 miles) east of Kathmandu, accessible by a week-long trek from Jiri or a 35-minute flight from Kathmandu. Guides and porters can be arranged in advance in Kathmandu, but Sherpas crowd Lukla's miniature airport offering their services to arrivals. The trek from Lukla to Everest Base Camp is a two-week round trip; teahouse accommodation is available all along the route. The best season for trekking is October to November or March to April; in winter, snow can block passes, and many lodges close during the summer monsoon.

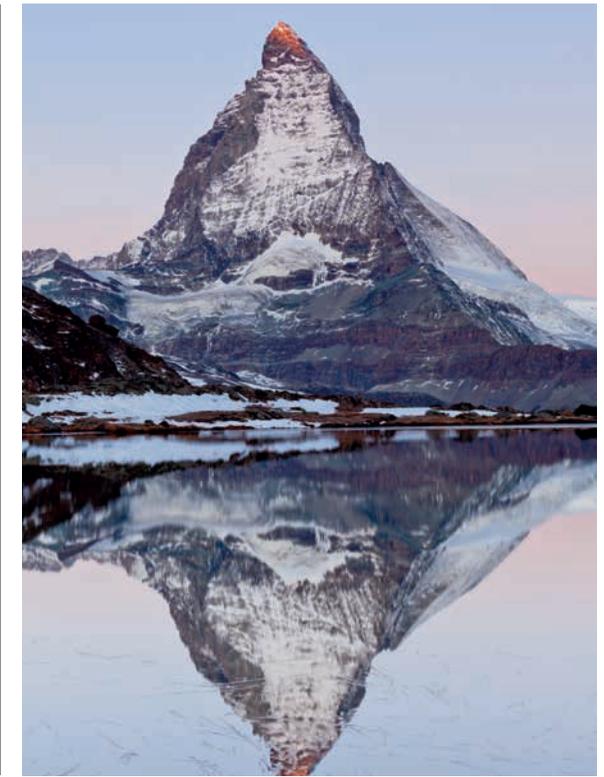
② GEYSIR, ICELAND

Around 100km (62 miles) east of Reykjavik, Geysir is an easy drive, or an easy bus ride during the summer tourist season. Most people visit as part of the 'Golden Circle' loop, dropping in at Geysir, Þingvellir National Park and the thundering waterfall at Gullfoss. You can do the loop in a day, but it's more interesting to stay overnight near Geysir or Þingvellir to beat the crowds. Peak season is May to September, coinciding with the warmest weather; winter is cold and dark, with skeleton public transport, but Strokkur blows its top year-round, come sun, rain or snow.





Left: culinary adventures in San Sebastián, Spain. Right: the profile of the Matterhorn in Switzerland.



1951 book *Annapurna*. 'I kicked another crampon in, and a big slab of rotten snow lurched off from beneath my foot and cart-wheeled away towards the glacier, disintegrating as it went. I hung there, my arms raised above me, watching the snow rumble. A tingling began in my buttocks and then scampered to my groin and my thighs, and soon my whole midriff was encased in a humming, jostling swarm of fear. The space felt vast and malevolently active, as though it were inhaling me; pulling me off into its emptiness.'

The Matterhorn held a magnetic appeal, perhaps because of its singularly toothy shape, for generations. It was first climbed in 1865, although as Macfarlane notes, 'four of the successful summiteers fell to their deaths during the descent'. But mountaineers are a minority among us; adventure in the ²⁰ Zermatt region can more readily involve hiking, mountain biking or skiing and then marvelling at how the peak changes with the light from somewhere serving good rösti and chilled beer.

¹⁷ SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN

There are regional flights to San Sebastián (most from Madrid or Barcelona but also London), but Bilbao receives more international flights. It's an easy bus trip from Bilbao to San Sebastián or you can rent a car for more independence – the drive is roughly 100km (60 miles). Travellers with more time or an adventurous streak can also make the journey by train from Biarritz via Hendaye. Once in San Sebastián, there's a wide range of accommodation options from small hotels and pensions to larger beachfront hotels. Availability is limited in the high season (July, August).

¹⁸ HONG KONG, CHINA

Hong Kong's international Chek Lap Kok Airport on a reclaimed island makes for a particularly spectacular arrival. From the airport, the Airport Express train goes to Kowloon station. There are also taxis and buses. Accommodation in Hong Kong's Central and Kowloon area is expensive, but see www.lonelyplanet.com for the best value options. The MacLehose Trail spans 100km (60 miles) in 10 sections across the New Territories, starting from Pak Tam Chung, about 35km (22 miles) east of Hong Kong. Winter, from November to March, is the least humid time.

¹⁹ BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Several airlines, including the national carrier Avianca, offer flights to El Dorado Airport in Colombia's capital. From there it's easy to take a taxi to your hotel (there are also airport buses if you're sure where you're going). Taxis are also an efficient way of getting around. Most people stay in the centre of the city, in neighbourhoods such as the cobbled old town of La Candelaria, or to the north, home to boutique hotels and the entertainment districts of Zona Rosa and Zona G. Temperatures are consistently mild; the driest periods are June to August and December to March.

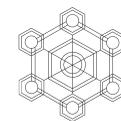
²⁰ ZERMATT, SWITZERLAND

Zermatt is the terminus for the Glacier Express train from Bergün. You can't drive into Zermatt. Park at the Matterhorn Terminal Täsch and take the shuttle train. Switzerland has an extensive rail network and trains depart from Brig for Täsch. Around 3000 experienced climbers take on the Matterhorn each year. The rest of us take summer hikes around Zermatt – the Glacier Trail has great views of the Matterhorn. There are hostels and hotels in Zermatt but many open only from July to October. In winter, skiers take over. International flights to Switzerland arrive at Geneva, Zurich and Basel.





REFLECTION



Reflection is about taking time to consider experiences. We're often more productive when we've stepped outside our daily routines and detached from work. It's part-meditation, part-musing – and it's not as easy as it sounds for people who are by habit always 'on'. Mindfulness, as defined by the University of California's Greater Good Science Center in Berkeley, means maintaining 'a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment'. There is evidence that meditation lowers stress and anxiety, and even that it boosts immunity levels. It has its roots in the Buddhist faith but is today as secular as you want it to be. However, being in a suitable and stimulating place is a good starting point.

For Lonely Planet contributor and travel writer Pico Iyer, Kyoto in Japan (also see p232) – a beautiful city of temples and shrines where, as he puts it, 'people have been sitting still for 800 years' – was where he discovered the art of stillness: 'I began to feel that if you were lucky enough to walk around the candlelit temples of Tibet or to wander along the seafronts in Havana with music passing all around you, you could bring those sounds and the high cobalt skies and the flash of the blue ocean back to your friends at home, and bring some magic and clarity to your own life.

① BHUTAN

The country's international airport is Paro, which receives flights from India, Nepal, Singapore and a few other countries; most people will need transfer flights. Entrants to Bhutan are required to pay a daily fee (with a surcharge for solo visitors), which covers food, accommodation and a guide but not every extra. Trongsa monastery is an eight-hour drive east of Paro, and is open to visitors from 6am to 5pm daily (4pm in winter). The Tiger's Nest monastery is much closer to Paro and it's possible to hike up in about three hours (open daily, from 8am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm October to March, and until 6pm April to September).

② YÚNNÁN, CHINA

Several international airlines fly to Kūnmíng. It's an enjoyable place from where to start your Yúnnán trip but you can also fly direct to Dàli, Lìjiāng and Zhōngdiàn from several domestic airports. Buses link most of Yúnnán's cities but the timetables can be impenetrable. Tour operators can take some of the guesswork out of the process. Yúnnán has a temperate climate with a dry season that runs from November to April. See Lonely Planet's website or guidebooks for the latest reviews of guesthouses and hotels in the region.



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