



THE TRAVEL BOOK

A JOURNEY THROUGH EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

MELBOURNE | OAKLAND | LONDON

THE STORY OF THE TRAVEL BOOK

Most travel journeys take in just a country or two, but the journey you're about to embark on incorporates every country on earth. In this book you'll find evocative glimpses of every single nation in the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, from the postage-stamp-sized Vatican City to the epic expanse of the Russian Federation.

To actually visit all the countries in this book would require several passports and a suitcase of plane tickets, or it can be simulated with a turn of these pages. Highlighted by some of the finest photography in the world, the *Travel Book* offers a glimpse of each country's perks and quirks: when to go, what to see, how to eat it up and drink it in, and ways to immerse yourself in the life and the land. What results is a grand snapshot of our diverse and kaleidoscopic world rather than an encyclopedic reference. It's a book that unashamedly views the planet through the prism of the traveller, focusing on places for their beauty, charm or singularity, even if this does sometimes conflict with defined political or geographical borders.

THE COUNTRY CONUNDRUM

A country count can be an arbitrary thing. At its core we've used the UN's list of 192 member states. Every one of these countries features in the book, but we've also built on the list to include foreign dependencies, whether they be self-governing or not, that are popular traveller destinations. Thus you'll find Caribbean islands (Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Turks & Caicos, Virgin Islands), Atlantic islands

(Bermuda, Falkland Islands) and Pacific islands (Cook Islands, Guam & Northern Marianas, New Caledonia, Pitcairn Islands, Tahiti & French Polynesia). There are the two great land masses of Antarctica and Greenland, which are too large and fascinating to leave out of any true world guide. There are disputed lands such as Palestine, Kosovo, Tibet and Taiwan, and recognisably unique regions such as Hong Kong, Macau and French Guiana. We've also divided Great Britain into its component parts

(England, Scotland and Wales) to recognise their individual appeal and their rich and distinctive histories and cultures.

At the book's end you'll find an additional 11 places of interest, chosen by Lonely Planet's founder and chief frequent-flyer Tony Wheeler. These bonus destinations are small dependencies that still warrant great attraction, whether it be the smoking cigar of Montserrat or Gibraltar, that little piece of Britannia on the Mediterranean. In total, you can read about 229 countries and destinations. It's exhausting just to think about.

THE STRUCTURE

The Travel Book follows the most straightforward of formats – A to Z – rolling through the alphabet of nations. From a travellers' perspective, a country's might and power aren't necessarily relative to its fascination and appeal, and we've tried to capture that, giving equal weight to every country regardless of whether it has had 15 minutes or 15 centuries of world fame – the likes of Djibouti and Suriname are as noteworthy here, as the superpowers of the US and China.

The book's guiding philosophy is to present a subjective view of the world from Lonely Planet's perspective, looking below the surface to show a slice of life from every country in the world. Entries evoke the spirit of each place by appealing to the senses – what you might see and feel, what kind of food and drink might flavour your visit, and which books, music or films will help prepare you for the experience. You'll find the events, objects and people that are central to each country's identity and you'll find curious, little-known facts.

Photos are paramount to capturing and sharing the spirit of a place and its people, and images in this book have been chosen to weave stories of their own. Clichéd icons and picture-postcard views have been avoided in favour of photos that tell of life in its myriad forms – at work, at play, at worship, laughing, singing, relaxing, dancing or just surviving – in order to bring you countries, not brochures.

You may never visit all the *Travel Book's* destinations, but if it's true, as Aldous Huxley once wrote, that 'to travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries', then to read about them all is to find out if you are right.

We hope the *Travel Book* inspires a world of travel.





POPULATION 4400 (SUMMER), 1100 (WINTER) | AREA 14.2 MILLION SQ KM

Snow, ice, water, rock, sky. The stark surroundings of Antarctica and the enormousness of its ice shelves and mountain ranges make for an elemental beauty that can haunt you for the rest of your life. Nothing compares and nowhere else on earth can so heighten feelings of humanity's insignificance and nature's grandeur. The wildlife, including emperor penguins, leopard seals and minke whales, are not afraid of humans, allowing for spectacular and surreal close encounters. Governed by 29 nations, this continent/country is primarily dedicated to scientific research but it's also one of the planet's regions that's most visibly affected by global warming; as parts of the continent melt, others grow, leaving scientists to debate what it all actually means.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

November to February for 'summer'

TOP THINGS TO SEE

- Majestic icebergs and mountain reflections on the water at Paradise Harbour
- The true grit of Antarctic exploration icily preserved at Shackleton's expedition hut
- Dazzling blooms of violet, pink and white in the gardens on Campbell Island
- Three eerie, ghost-filled explorer's huts on Ross Island
- A beautiful blue-eyed shag regurgitating a meal to its chick

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Glide on a Zodiac under the morning's pink skies past basking Weddell seals and noisy gentoo penguins
- Sail inside the restless volcano at Deception Island
- Get startled by a loud 'fffff', then be bathed in a fish-scented mist as a whale surfaces next to your boat
- Experience the bluster of 'Home of the Blizzard', one of the windiest places on earth

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN

Read *Travelers' Tales Antarctica: Life on the Ice*, a collection of Antarctic tales from the goofy to the harrowing

Listen to Rothera Station's wintering rock band Nunatak – made up of two scientists, two engineers and a field assistant



COURTESY OF ILLUSTRATION | LONELY PLANET IMAGES





GRANT DICKIN | LONELY PLANET IMAGES

Watch the beautifully restored footage of Shackleton's men and dogs working on the ice-beset ship *Endurance* in the 1998 film *South*

Eat an Antarctic barbecue, set up on deck or even on the ice

Drink an Antarctic Old Fashioned: made from one fifth of 100-proof bourbon, seven packets of multiflavored Life Savers sweets and just-melted snow

IN A WORD

The A-factor (The local term for the unexpected difficulties caused by the Antarctic environment)

TRADEMARKS

Icebergs; penguins; freezing cold; geologists; explorers; the South Pole; glaciers; seals; 24-hour sunlight, sled dogs; global warming

RANDOM FACT

Antarctica's ice sheets contain 90% of the world's ice – 28 million cu km – holding about 70% of the world's fresh water



PHOTO LIBRARY



MAP REF Y,30

1. You'll need a few layers of clothes to brave camping in the true wilderness of Patriot Hills
2. Browning Peninsula resembles a bite taken from a giant ice-cream cake – and the aerial views are just as appetising
3. The march of the king penguins spans the land as far as the eye can see, Lusitania Bay
4. Roll on the ice like a local on the western Antarctic Peninsula





CAPITAL BRATISLAVA | POPULATION 5,463,046 | AREA 49,035 SQ KM | OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SLOVAKIAN

SLOVAKIA

Slovakia long played second fiddle to the Czech Republic, but with the demise of Czechoslovakia in the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the Slovaks moved on with a characteristic lack of rancour and went about their business unperturbed. Here, folk traditions still hold sway, family life is paramount, and no one is particularly bothered with glitz and glamour. Slovakia offers a wealth of outdoor attractions, with well-marked paths criss-crossing forested hills, the High Tatras mountains and Malá Fatra National Park. Unpretentious Gothic cities, stately castles and picturesque villages with wooden churches made without nails, punctuate the landscape. The locals appreciate the unspoiled nature of their surrounds so wherever you go you're sure to be greeted by a Slovak striding out bearing a backpack.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

May to September

TOP THINGS TO SEE

- The sprawling, rocky mass of Spiš Castle, a ruin rambling over four hectares
- Neat pastel facades on the Gothic-Renaissance burghers' houses in Bardejov
- Precipitous peaks and pine-topped ridges in the Malá Fatra National Park
- Prickly spires and battlements on Bojnice Castle, the most visited chateau in Slovakia

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Wander the streets beneath Bratislava Castle dropping in at the narrow Museum of Clocks and Museum of Jewish Culture
- Plunge into a thermal pool, breathe 'seaside' breezes in a salt cave, or be wrapped naked in hot mud at a Piešťany thermal treatment
- Dip your toes over the edge of a *plte* (wooden raft) down Dunajec Gorge
- Clamber up the ladder and chain ascents to the precipice in Slovenský Raj
- Crunch through the snow on the walking trails of the High Tatras

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN

Read the straightforward tales of feisty Slovakian women in *That Alluring Land: Slovak Tales* by Bozena Slancikova-Timrava

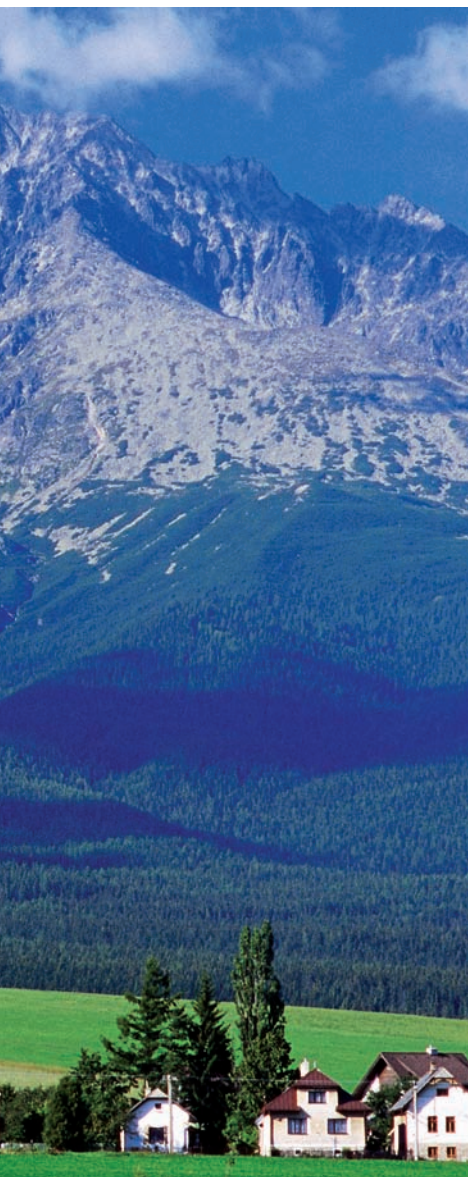


PHOTO: HUBERT | LOWEY/PLANET IMAGES





MICHAEL HERRMAN | LONELY PLANET IMAGES

Listen to wailing *gajdy* (bagpipes) and *konkovka* (shepherd's flutes) that are central to much Slovakian folk music
Watch internationally acclaimed *Krajinka*, directed by Martin Sulik, 10 vignettes of Slovakian rural life, landscape and ways throughout the 20th century
Eat schnitzel, *bryndzove halusky* (potato dumplings with sheep's cheese and bacon)
Drink local beers such as dark, sweet Martiner or full-bodied Zlatý

IN A WORD

Ahoj (Hello)

TRADEMARKS

855289483/549

RANDOM FACT

A mammoth bone found near Piešťany in 1938, is almost 25,000 years old



OLIVER BIRMAN | LONELY PLANET IMAGES



MAP REF H, 22

1. Performers dance in folk dress at the annual Gemer folk festival, Rejdová
2. The view from St Michael's Tower, Bratislava, takes in the historical old town nestled beneath Bratislava Castle
3. National Park
4. The view from St Michael's Tower, Bratislava, takes in the historical old town nestled beneath Bratislava Castle





South Africa overshadows almost every other country on the continent with its economy, its influence and the turbulence of its history. Yet, it's only in the microcosm of daily life where the country's real spirit emerges. Share a drink with locals in a tin-roofed shebeen (illegal drinking establishment); glance into a township school; sip a glass of wine on a blue-sky day on a Winelands Cape Dutch estate; sit at dawn at a watering hole in any of South Africa's national parks; spend a morning at Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum. Wherever you go, South Africa's human drama – with its pain, its injustice and its hope – mixes with an unsurpassed natural beauty. The result is sobering and challenging, fascinating and inspiring – and alluring enough to keep most visitors returning time and time again.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Year-round, with spring (September to November) and autumn (April to May) ideal almost everywhere

TOP THINGS TO SEE

- Cape Town, Robben Island and Table Bay from the top of Table Mountain
- Namaqualand's vast, colourful carpets of spring flowers
- The convergence of two oceans at the Cape of Good Hope
- Stark and solitary landscapes of shifting sands in Ggalagadi Transfrontier Park
- Stunning panoramas from almost anywhere amid the peaks and valleys of the Drakensberg

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Bush walk at dawn past elephants and zebras in Kruger National Park
- Spend time in Soweto, Johannesburg's sprawling, turbulent, hope-filled soul
- View dolphins, crashing waves and waterfalls while trekking along the Wild Coast
- Discover Cape Town, with its lively vibes and cosmopolitan rhythms
- Explore the beauty and birdlife of lovely iSimangaliso Wetland Park

GETTING UNDER THE SKIN

Read *Long Walk to Freedom* – Nelson Mandela's inspirational autobiography



CAROL POUGH | LONELYPLANETIMAGES





WATCH REBORN | LONELY PLANET IMAGES

Listen to *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa) – part of the South African national anthem of unity
Watch *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, which uses music, song and the voices of political activists and other prominent South Africans to document the anti-apartheid struggle
Eat *biltong* (dried and cured meat); *mealies* (maize); and *boerwors* (sausages)
Drink wines from the Cape Winelands; or *rooibos* herbal tea

IN A WORD

Howzit?

TRADEMARKS

Table Mountain; Springboks rugby team; Nelson Mandela; Kruger National Park; wildlife; whales; surf; *braai* (barbecue)

RANDOM FACT

Almost half of South Africa's wealth is concentrated among just 10% of the population



CRAG PERISCHOE | LONELY PLANET IMAGES



MAP REF S,22

1. Unsuspecting prime rump is enough to make any predator's eyes light up, as Burchell's Zebras quench their thirst in Kruger National Park
2. Fancy a cuppa? San people (Kalahari Bushmen) prepare a brew
3. A young lion plans his next move while lapping water from a pool in Sabi Sands Game Reserve
4. Sheltered from the wind, the beaches at Clifton are regarded as Cape Town's top sunbathing spots