



Explore the flamboyant favelas of Rio de Janeiro on page 52.

Turn to page 167 to find out about life in the gleaming skyscrapers of Hong Kong.

IN WHICH CITY COULD YOU DISCOVER...

The bones of a fire-breathing dragon?
Page 90.

Castles made out of human building blocks?
Page 119.

Market stalls selling roasted rodents?
Page 57.

Space-age babies climbing up a tower?
Page 93.

People bathing in mud from an active volcano?
Page 201.



THE CITIES BOOK



You probably think you know what a city is. It's a place where lots of people live – like a town, only bigger. You even might live in a big city yourself, and be tempted to think that all of them are the same.

This book is going to blow your mind.

Around the world people come together to live, work and play in thousands of exciting and extraordinary locations. Each time, the geography of the land combines with the culture and history of its people to create a city that is as incredible as it is unique.

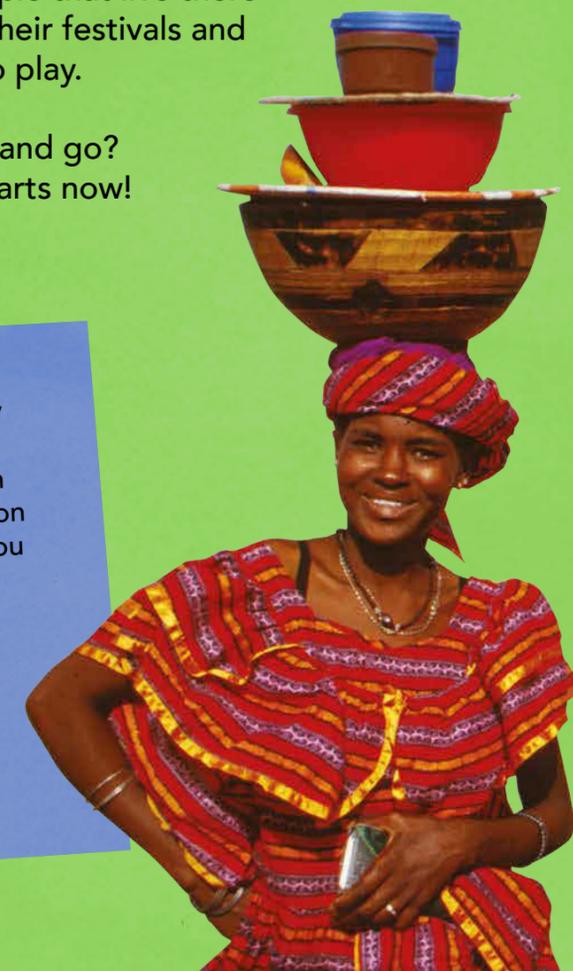
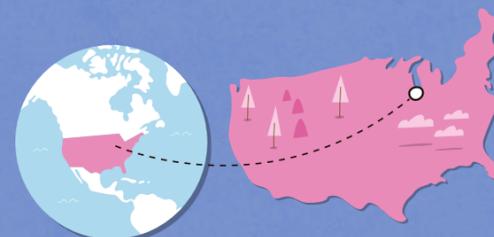
In the pages of this book you'll discover cities filled with sand-swept mud houses, beautiful felt yurts, ancient stone buildings and eye-popping modern architecture. Some have canals instead of streets, others cling to snowy mountain peaks while some are lapped by ocean waves. Find out about daily life for the people that live there – their clothes, the food they eat, their festivals and the sports they love to play.

Are you ready to get up and go?
The ultimate city break starts now!



LOOK OUT FOR THE LOCATOR

At the start of each new city page, you'll find a handy locator map. It pinpoints where the city sits within its country, but also where it is placed in the world. Each continent is shown in a different colour. The introduction underneath will give you a flavour of the city before you dive down into its streets.

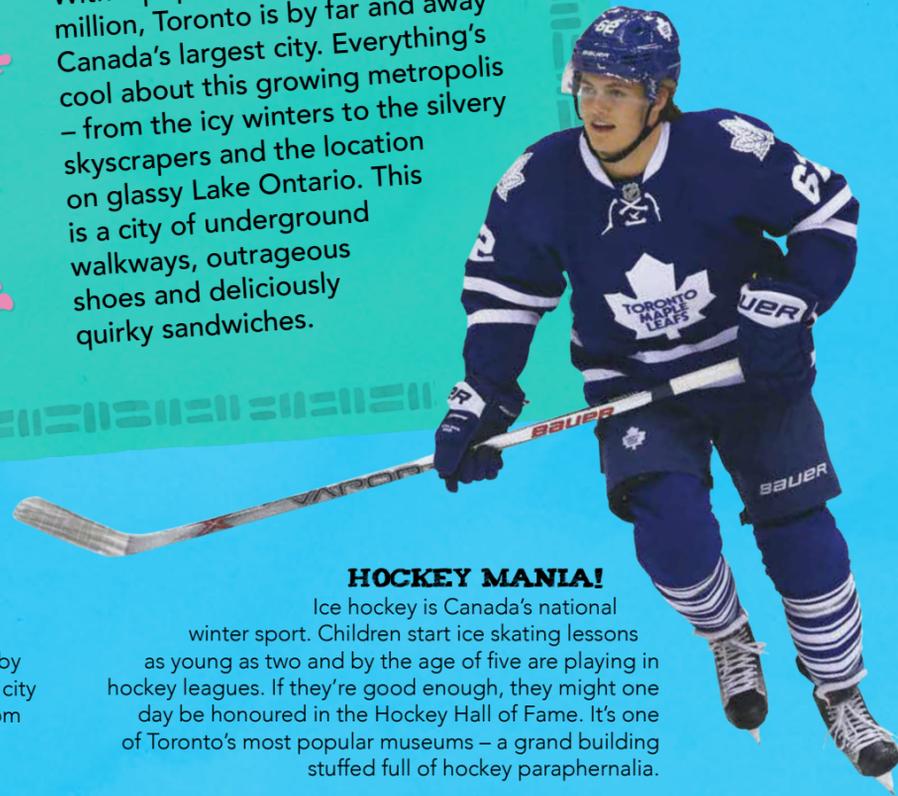


TORONTO

CANADA North America



With a population of over six million, Toronto is by far and away Canada's largest city. Everything's cool about this growing metropolis – from the icy winters to the silvery skyscrapers and the location on glassy Lake Ontario. This is a city of underground walkways, outrageous shoes and deliciously quirky sandwiches.

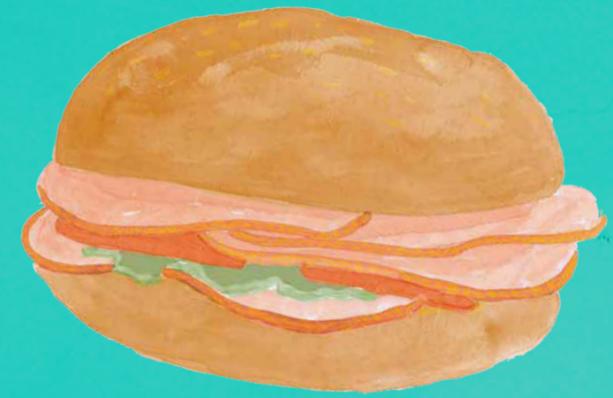


HOCKEY MANIA!

Ice hockey is Canada's national winter sport. Children start ice skating lessons as young as two and by the age of five are playing in hockey leagues. If they're good enough, they might one day be honoured in the Hockey Hall of Fame. It's one of Toronto's most popular museums – a grand building stuffed full of hockey paraphernalia.

LIFE BENEATH THE EARTH

Winters in the city are so cold, Toronto has built a system of underground walkways to help residents get around while avoiding the sub-zero temperatures. Thirty kilometres (19 miles) of paths connect up City Hall, museums, hotels and countless office buildings. It's possible to get nearly everywhere without coming to the surface.



FAVOURITE SANDWICH

The peameal bacon sandwich is a Toronto specialty. Never heard of peameal? It's a tasty mix of ground yellow peas. In the late 1800s this was used to help preserve meat – a peameal bacon sandwich was made of slices of pork rolled in peameal, grilled and then heaped onto a bun. Cornmeal is used instead of peameal these days. On a busy Saturday, the Carousel Bakery in St Lawrence Market can expect to sell over 2,600 peameal sandwiches in a single day.

ISLAND STYLE

The Toronto Islands are a chain of tiny islands scattered offshore from the city in Lake Ontario. People have lovely homes there, but cars are not permitted. Instead, everyone gets around by boat or bicycle. Or they walk under the water. The city recently built a pedestrian tunnel that stretches from the islands' airport to the mainland, diving 30 metres (98 feet) beneath the waves.



A WALK IN THE CLOUDS

You can't miss the big needle poking up above Toronto's soaring skyline. The CN Tower is the Western Hemisphere's tallest freestanding structure, rising 553.3m (1,815ft) into the air. Glass elevators whisk you to the top and on a clear day you can see as far as Niagara Falls. Daredevils can strap into a harness, join a tour and walk the perimeter. Just don't look down!

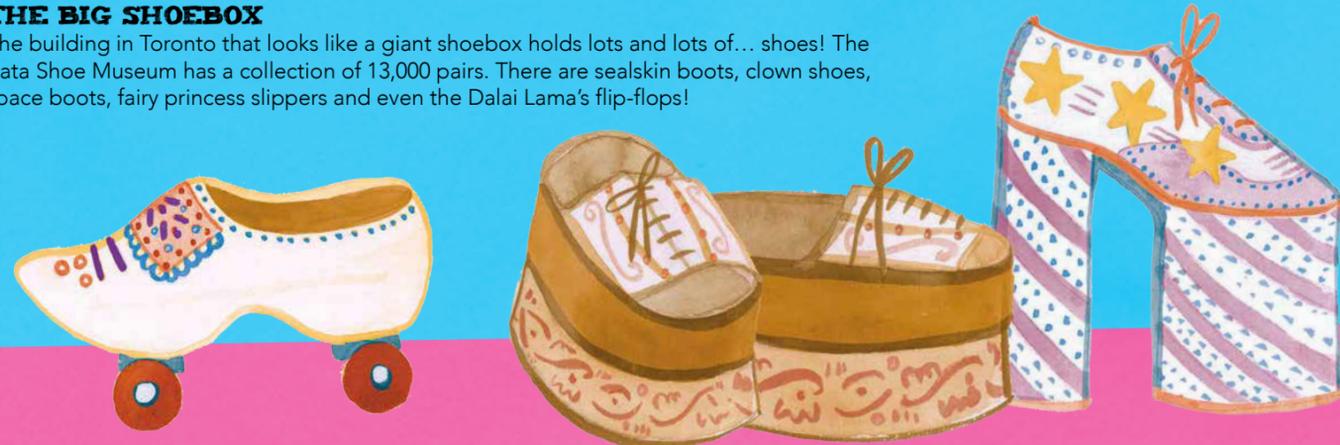


WHOOPEE DOO

Toronto has invented lots of great things including insulin and anti-gravity suits, but nothing beats the whoopee cushion. The noisy pink bags are sold in joke shops all across the world. In the 1930s, employees at the JEM Rubber Company were playing around with scrap sheets of rubber when they discovered the funny sound they could make. Next time you plop down on a whoopee cushion and a big, bubbly bottom sound blows forth, thank Toronto for the laugh!

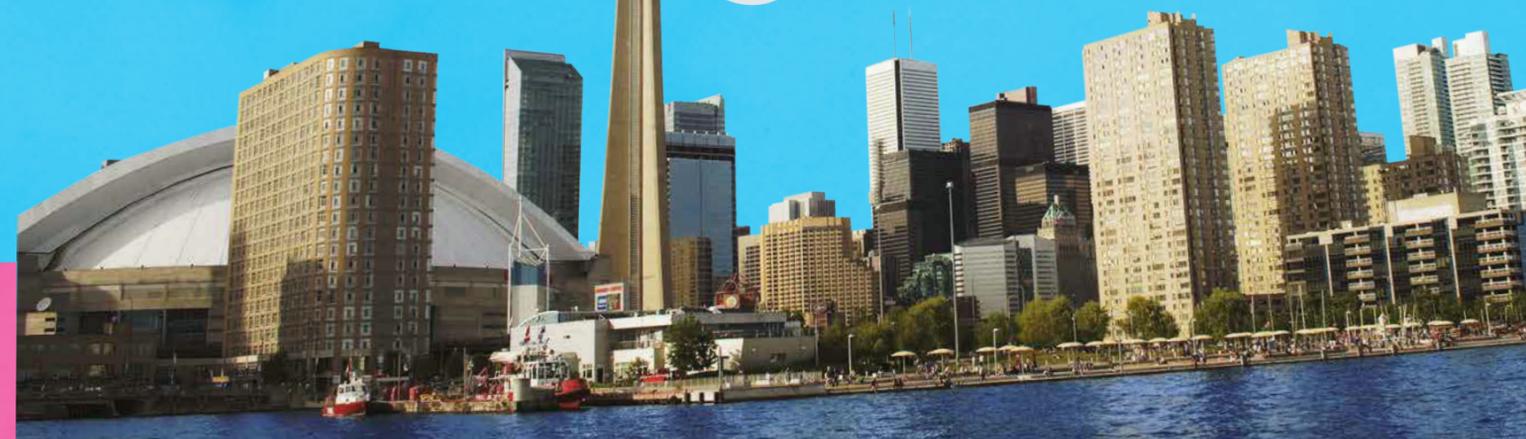
THE BIG SHOEBOX

The building in Toronto that looks like a giant shoebox holds lots and lots of... shoes! The Bata Shoe Museum has a collection of 13,000 pairs. There are sealskin boots, clown shoes, space boots, fairy princess slippers and even the Dalai Lama's flip-flops!



PEOPLE FROM EVERYWHERE

Toronto is said to be the most culturally diverse city in the world. Forty-nine per cent of its residents were born in a different country, and more than 140 languages are spoken. Ethnic neighbourhoods pop up everywhere. As well as Little Portugal, there's Little Italy, Little India, Little Tibet, Little Jamaica – and that's just the 'littles'! Chinatown, Greektown and Koreatown are also thriving communities.



NASHVILLE

USA North America



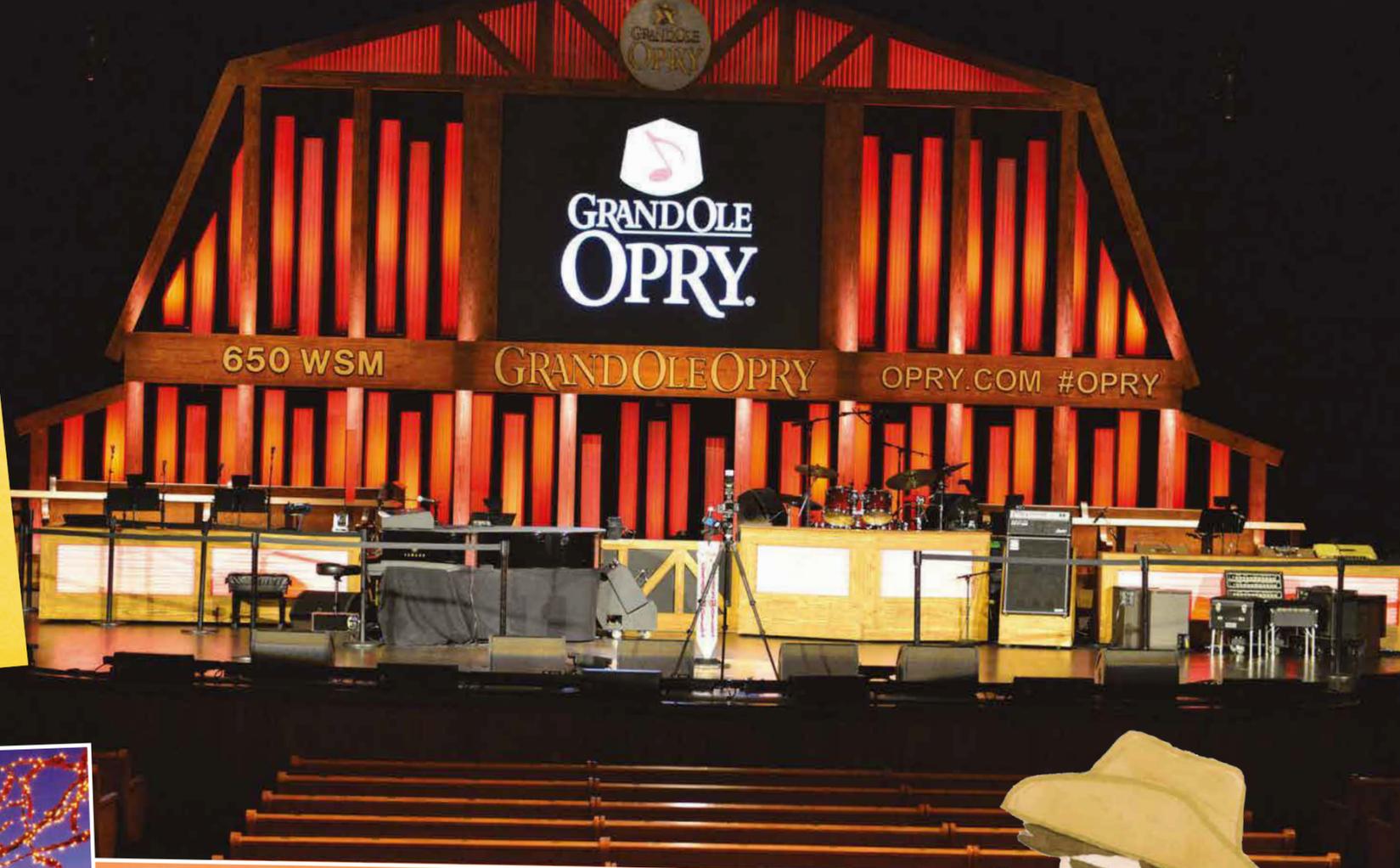
Guitars twang and neon lights blaze in Nashville. Country music is the city's main business, but tunes of all kinds fill the air. It's a polite city – and Tennessee's capital – with a southern accent and taste for hot chicken and gooey chocolate treats.

WHERE COUNTRY BEGAN

In 1925, a Nashville radio host invited fiddle and banjo players to come to the studio to perform bluegrass or 'country' music from the nearby Appalachian Mountains. People across America heard it, and that's how country music became famous. The radio show was called the Grand Ole Opry and it's still on every Friday and Saturday night in more than 30 US states. Now it broadcasts from the Grand Ole Opry House, a 4,372-seat theatre where country music's top stars perform.

GOOEY TREATS

Nashville has its own candy bar called the Goo Goo Cluster – a sticky blend of marshmallow, peanuts and caramel wrapped in milk chocolate. A local factory started making the treat more than 100 years ago, and now 20,000 Goo Goo's an hour pop out of the plant. No one is sure how the candy got its name, although some say it comes from the first words that a baby says.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Nashville's Opryland Hotel is one of the world's most enormous hotels. It's so big that a river runs through it! There's a mansion built inside its glass walls, along with 17 restaurants and 2,882 rooms. Staff start decorating for Christmas in July – it takes months to string two million lights up through the hotel's trees.

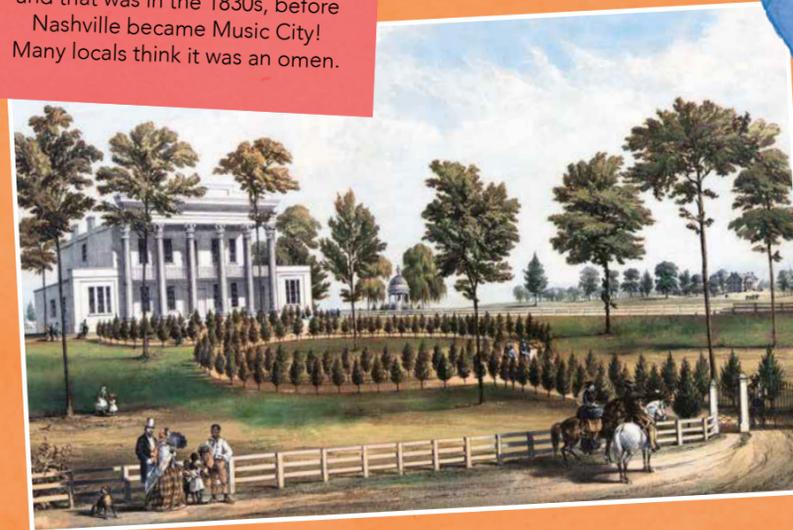


GUITAR-SHAPED DRIVEWAY

Andrew Jackson, the USA's seventh president, lived in Nashville. He's famous for fighting duels and being a war hero (his soldiers nicknamed him 'Old Hickory', because he was as tough as hickory wood), but also for having slaves and forcing Native Americans off their land. His Nashville mansion is called the Hermitage. Weirdly, he built his driveway in the shape of a guitar – and that was in the 1830s, before Nashville became Music City! Many locals think it was an omen.

SINGING AND SONGWRITING

Over the years, so many musicians came to town to play for the Grand Ole Opry that an entire industry grew up around them. Recording studios, record companies and performance halls opened, many packed into an area known as Music Row. Singers and songwriters continue to stream into Nashville to find fame, not just in country music, but in rock, folk and blues, too. No wonder it's nicknamed 'Music City'.



REVENGE OF THE HOT CHICKEN

Nashville's most famous dish is hot chicken – fried poultry pieces coated in a super-spicy sauce made with cayenne pepper. A local woman invented the recipe to get revenge on her boyfriend. He stayed out too late one night, so she secretly poured loads of hot sauce on his chicken to teach him a lesson the next morning. Turns out he loved it, and started making the peppery recipe at his restaurant soon after. Today eateries all over town fry up hot chicken.

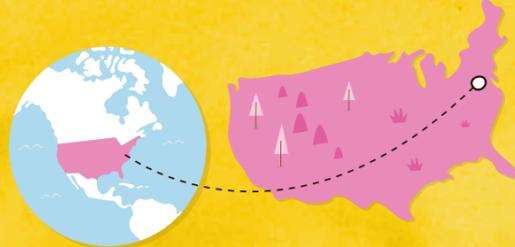
THE OTHER PARTHENON

Have you heard of the Parthenon – the temple built in Greece 2,500 years ago? Nashville has the world's only full-scale replica, and it's much easier to get to! Climb the steps, go through the towering columns, and you'll see the biggest indoor statue in the Western Hemisphere – a gold Athena, the goddess of wisdom. The replica was all built when Nashville held the Tennessee Centennial Exposition (a sort of mini World's Fair) in 1897.



WASHINGTON, DC

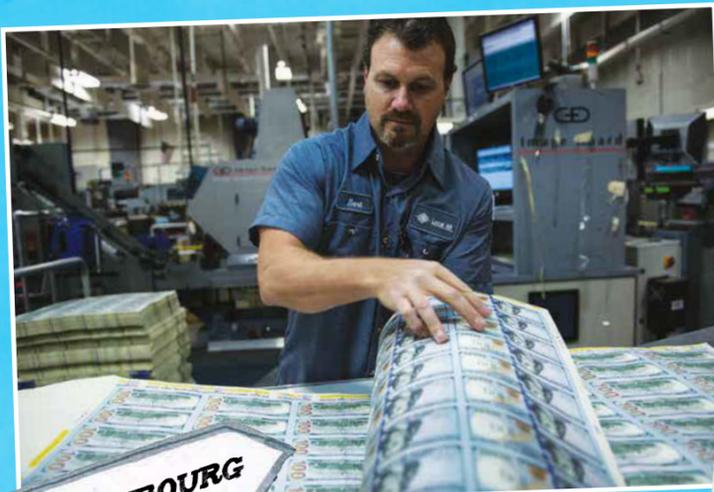
USA North America



New York may be the USA's Big Apple, but Washington, DC is the country's capital. On the surface the city may appear stately and sombre – a place of grand ministerial buildings including the domed Capitol, the columned Treasury and the President's White House residence. Don't be fooled however, the streets also buzz with busy students, smart professionals and crowds of excited tourists.

MONEY, HOT OFF THE PRESS

Ker-ching! At the Bureau of Engraving and Printing you can watch real money being printed. If you had time to stand there all day you'd witness over \$500 million roll off the presses. Before this new money goes into circulation, an equal amount of old money is removed. The average \$1 bill lasts for 5.8 years before it gets too tattered for general use.



LUXEMBOURG

KENYA

CITY OF COUNTRIES

Washington, DC is home to more than 170 embassies from all around the world. If you step into one you are technically entering a foreign country, as the grounds are part of the embassy nation's territory. Visitors to DC can visit India, Kenya, Laos, Luxembourg, Malawi, Morocco and Zambia within an hour's walk!

MOROCCO

INDIA

ZAMBIA

THE TWO-TONE MONUMENT

The Washington Monument is the tallest structure in DC. It took so many years to build that the marble used to construct it had to come from different quarries. If you look closely, you can see the difference in colour where the old and new stone meet. The column honours the USA's first president and founding father George Washington. No building is allowed to be higher, by order of federal law.

WHITE HOUSE'S WEIRDEST RESIDENTS

Many presidents bring their pets with them when they move into the White House, but Theodore Roosevelt's family takes the prize. They arrived with a small bear, a lizard, five guinea pigs, a badger, a blue macaw, a hyena, a one-legged rooster, a barn owl, a pig, a rabbit, a hen and a pony, in addition to several dogs.



SMITHSONIAN TREASURES

Many people think the Smithsonian Institution is one place, but it's actually a group of 19 museums. The National Museum of American History shows Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*, while the Air and Space National Museum displays the Wright Brothers' first plane. The National Museum of Natural History is home to the big, blue Hope Diamond. The gem is a beauty, but is said to bring tragedy to those who wear it. France's Marie Antoinette inherited the diamond in the 18th century, only to be beheaded by guillotine.



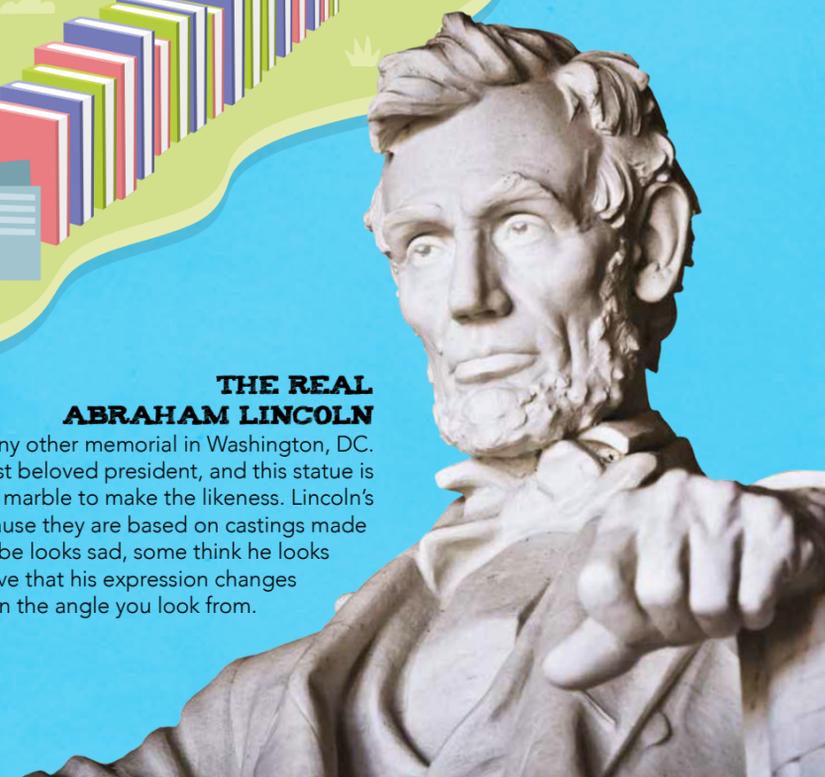
WORLD'S BIGGEST LIBRARY

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world. A staggering 160 million books, photographs and maps are stored on 1,349km (838mi) of bookshelves. Imagine a bookcase that extends from Washington, DC to Chicago, and then another that stretches from Washington, DC to Philadelphia – the library's titles would barely fit on them! President Thomas Jefferson helped increase the library's collection when he offered 6,000 of his own books, several of which are still on display.



THE REAL ABRAHAM LINCOLN

More people visit the Lincoln Memorial than any other memorial in Washington, DC. Everyone wants to take a snap of the USA's most beloved president, and this statue is as good as it gets. Sculptors used 28 blocks of marble to make the likeness. Lincoln's face and hands are particularly realistic because they are based on castings made shortly before he died. Some people think that Abe looks sad, some think he looks thoughtful, and others believe that his expression changes depending on the angle you look from.



KYOTO

JAPAN Asia



Japan's former imperial capital, Kyoto, perfectly showcases the nation's ancient traditions and architecture. Secret temples and shrines pepper the city and surrounding mountainsides, confectioners create sweets to reflect the blossoms that are in bloom and revered geisha women, with their powder white faces and painted red lips, bustle elegantly down the streets.



SAKURA SPOTTING

One of the most magical times in Kyoto is early spring when the beautiful pink sakura (cherry blossoms) burst out of the trees. The most famous *hanami* (cherry-blossom viewing) spots are Maruyama Park and the Heian Shrine. The blossom season only lasts for about two weeks, but people get so excited they put on *sakura*-patterned kimonos and party under the trees.



DAINTY DISHES

The Japanese take their food very seriously and Kyoto is definitely one of the best places to eat in the whole country. *Kaiseki* cuisine is the most famous, where chefs show off their skills by serving lots of tiny, beautifully presented dishes.

Diners sitting down to a typical *kaiseki* meal would get up to 15 courses, probably including *mukozuke* (sashimi or raw fish), *konomono* (Japanese pickles) and *yakimono* (grilled fish).



A CITY OF TWO HALVES

When it comes to status, Tokyo is just a newcomer. Kyoto was the imperial capital of Japan for over a thousand years, between 794 and 1868. It was originally designed as a square-shaped city, neatly split into two halves – the 'Right Capital' and the 'Left Capital'. A central avenue divided the sectors, with the emperor's palace presiding at the top. This perfect shape (which is hard to see now that Kyoto is covered in modern buildings) was supposed to mirror the perfect order of the empire.

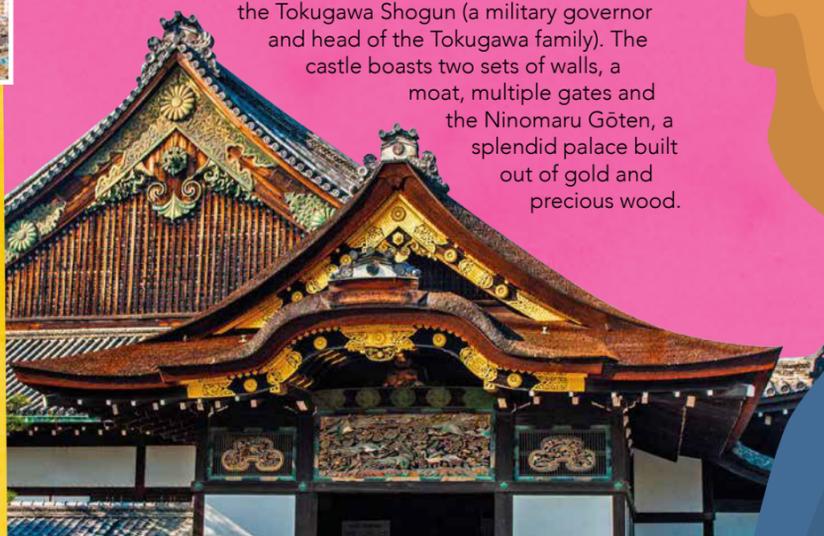
WET YOUR WHISTLE AT KIYŌMIZU

Kyoto is a very spiritual place – it has over 2,000 Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines. Shintō is an ancient Japanese religion, in which people worship gods called *kami*. Perhaps the most extraordinary temple is the Buddhist Kiyōmizu-dera Temple, perched on the side of Mount Otowa. There has been a shrine here for over 1,200 years. While the current buildings 'only' date back to the 17th century, they're among some of the most beautiful in the country. There's a waterfall in the centre of Kiyōmizu, from which visitors can drink the sacred water of Otowa.



MIGHTY NIJŌ CASTLE

Nijō Castle is one of Kyoto's greatest sights. It belongs to a time now known as the 'Warring States' period, when Japan was a violent and lawless country and warlords fought each other for power. Nijō Castle was built at the very end of this era, between 1601 and 1603. It became the Kyoto home of the Tokugawa Shogun (a military governor and head of the Tokugawa family). The castle boasts two sets of walls, a moat, multiple gates and the Ninomaru Gōten, a splendid palace built out of gold and precious wood.



NEVER BE RUDE TO A SAMURAI

During the Tokugawa period, the Shogun employed fierce warriors to defeat his enemies and control the people. These were the samurai, men who lived by a code called *bushido*. The samurai increasingly became rulers rather than warriors during the relatively peaceful times of the Tokugawa period, but they were still allowed to use their swords on any commoner who didn't show them enough respect! There are no samurai left today, but Kyoto has many sites – like the Sanjō Bridge – that are associated with the legendary swordsmen.

