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# FOREWORD

*What is the best moment of your life? It's a simple question to ask, a much harder one to answer. I should know. Over the past year I've asked it of hundreds of people who've travelled the globe, and often had to wait patiently for the answer. But every response – judiciously plucked from a lifetime's worth of memorable moments – was always worth the wait.*

Needless to say, the quality of replies made selecting the top 100 responses to fill this title a very difficult prospect indeed. What I hope to convey with the stories that I have chosen is the sheer variety of ways that travel can positively affect your life. Like the lives we live, each of these experiences is unique, both in how it plays out and how it has affected the author afterwards ('The Take Away').

For some, the best moment couldn't be more important, literally separating their life into a before and an after. This was certainly the case for me, as my life was transformed during my first foray into India (p. 8). There, on the bank of the River Ganges, I realised the biggest tragedy of my life wouldn't be dying – it would be not actually living. Another of the lives divided distinctly in two is that of actor, director and writer Andrew McCarthy. Although walking the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain (p. 36), he wasn't expecting his moment, yet it crept up on him regardless. And rather than being marked with joy and laughter, it was framed with tears and sorrow. Interestingly, its significance was actually lost on him at the time and was only to be discovered the following morning.

Other moments clearly mark high points or adventurous accomplishments in the lives of those who have lived them, whether summiting Yosemite's Half Dome (p. 60), cycling 11,000km around the shores of the Mediterranean (p. 80) or proving to yourself that parenthood won't curb your adventurous spirit (p. 84). For Katalin Thomann in Tibet, it was as simple as finding true love (p. 42).

Family bonds are key to most of our lives, so it's not surprising that they can play a role in some of our greatest moments. For Cristian Bonetto, it was travelling with his mother to her childhood haunt of Alexandria, Egypt – he not only witnessed elements

of the city first that he'd heard countless stories of, but more importantly he discovered another wonderful side to the woman who raised him (p. 12).

Wading into your own history or that of others is a remarkable thing, and it can certainly cement a moment's importance in your life. This could be playing a part of history itself, such as Duff Battye witnessing the first free speech of Nelson Mandela (p. 22), or it may be seemingly travelling back in time to touch a forgotten past. Emma Thomson's explorations of Sudan's pyramids at Begrawiya was a moving example of the latter (p. 90).

The power and majesty of wildlife, whether a captivating encounter with a mountain gorilla (p. 62), a fleeting glimpse of a snow leopard (p. 208) or long-awaited tiger sighting (p. 92), is also something that clearly impacts the lives of those who have witnessed it. The beauty and sheer scale of our environment that houses all of Earth's creatures has proved to be no less influential in travellers' lives, with best moments sparked by everything from the endless cosmos and dramatic deserts to twinkling city skylines and calving glaciers. The larger the backdrop, the more we seem to be able to bring some perspective to our place on this planet. As Adrian Phillips (p. 194) puts it so brilliantly: 'Strange as it sounds, nothing is more liberating – exhilarating even – than to experience a true sense of insignificance.'

Lastly, it's the interactions with our fellow humans that often spark moments of a lifetime. Opening yourself up to others, even at the expense of the best-laid plans, can often provide rewards you never dreamed possible. As my father says, 'Being present is a present.'

**Matt Phillips**



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# THE GREAT HINDU GATHERING

HARIDWAR, INDIA



*As the Kumbh Mela gathering reached a cosmic alignment of chaos and cacophony, the Hindustan Times was reporting 14 million pilgrims already inside the city and 100,000 arriving every hour. So when I stepped outside*

*my hotel I was buffeted along by a maelstrom of pilgrims seeking quick karma via an auspicious snan (bath) in the sacred Ganges. Hundreds and thousands were on the move: flowing like a river in spate towards Har-ki-Pairi Ghat, where Hindu mythology claims the amrit (nectar) of immortality was dropped down from heaven via Vishnu.*

*Immovable holy cows proved decorated impediments to the febrile crowd. The fug of marijuana exhaled by orange-robed ascetics mingled with sweeter aromas of sandalwood and incense. One long-haired pilgrim waving Shiva's trident smeared vermilion kumkum on my forehead and grinned maniacally. I told myself to just stay upright and stay alive in the crush. But actually I'd never felt more alive, cheek-by-jowl with the ecstasy of belief that there was life beyond mortality.*

*We poured over the stone ghat steps into the Ganges, as if a waterfall. Borne by momentum my karma was cast in Har-ki-Pairi's ancient sacred stones. I joined pilgrims in stripping down to underwear then splashed, howling with cold and laughing hysterically, into glacial waters that funnelled down from the Himalayas. I'd never felt so exhilarated. The devotional chant of Har Har Mahadev burrowed into my brain as a cup of sweet Indian chai revived my chilled extremities. The greatest show on Earth had held me in its throes.*

By Mark Stratton



A Hindu sadhu, or holy person, at Haridwar

One pilgrim collects alms prior to aarti worship



## The Take Away

Besides generating overwhelming emotions, this experience also imbued in me a new sense of self-confidence that I could thrive in any adversity – I'd lived off my instincts and survived the intense and mind-altering melee. I also felt honoured to better understand a religion that to outsiders can seem baffling.

## The Build Up

Determined by the cosmic alignment of the heavens, Kumbh Melas occur four times over a 12-year cycle at Haridwar, Prayag (Allahabad), Nashik and Ujjain. The next full Kumbh Mela returns to Haridwar in 2022. This experience is probably not one for first-time visitors to India – spend a week in Varanasi first to see if you can cope with

the cultural complexities (and also the heat if the mela occurs during summer).

Plan at least one year in advance; the issue isn't flights to India but getting to the city and accommodation once there. You can book a train to Haridwar from Delhi online via Indian Railways ([indianrail.gov.in](http://indianrail.gov.in)) some months in advance. Excellent options for accommodation are the purpose-built tented camps that you can arrange via specialist tour operators such as Transindus ([transindus.co.uk](http://transindus.co.uk)). Given the scale of the Kumbh Mela and your close proximity to millions of revellers, make sure your inoculations are updated because good karma doesn't guarantee immortality. Claustrophobics need not apply.

**Below:** crowds descend to bathe in the Ganges







# EYES OVER THE OUTBACK

RED CENTRE, AUSTRALIA



*Struggling to contain my excitement, I laid the wing of my paramotor out on the hot Australian sand. I was about to attempt to fly 30km (19 miles) south to Mt Connor (859m/2818ft), a distinctive flat-topped monolith rising dramatically out of Australia's Northern Territory – it was a flight I'd always longed to do.*

*With safety checks complete and the engine warmed up, I raised the wing above me. Glowing in the late-afternoon winter sun, my paramotor was ready for take off. I was soon airborne, and conditions were perfect – a slight tailwind was propelling me towards my lofty goal. I could feel the smooth, cold air on my bare legs (wearing shorts allows me to feel*

*the different air pressures, and enables me to avoid the more turbulent hot layers of air) as the sun started to near the western horizon.*

*However, it became apparent that the quickly fading light wouldn't allow me to reach Mt Connor, so I made a sweeping turn to aim back towards base. And then it hit me – soaring majestically out of Australia's Red Centre, some 120km (75 miles) away, were Uluru and Kata Tjuta. I couldn't quite believe the scale of the view that welcomed me. And the combination of desert dust and the sun's last light was turning everything the most astonishing orange.*

**By Ross Turner**

## The Take Away

I'd been so focused on getting to Mt Connor that I hadn't bothered to notice what was around me. Sometimes you have to lift your head up and relish the journey instead of solely concentrating on the destination. I now make sure I take moments to pause, reflect and take everything in.

## The Build Up

To fly a paramotor (powered paraglider; PPG) in Australia and elsewhere, it's necessary to get a PPG licence via the

Association of Paragliding Pilots and Instructors ([appippg.org](http://appippg.org)).

These can be acquired after an intensive training course and building up your flight hours.

For such an expedition in the Northern Territory you'd also need to bring plenty of kit besides the paramotors themselves, namely reserve wings, helmets, satellite phones, GPS tracker, solar panels, camping gear, fuel, food and water. Time is also needed to research local air restrictions, flight paths of commercial planes, emergency routes and roads, weather

systems and patterns, and thermal forecasts – all of which are crucial in determining your flight path.

Mt Connor has significant meaning to the Aboriginal people of Australia, who know it as Atila. Often mistaken for Uluru, it can be seen from the Lasseter Hwy, which connects Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park with Alice Springs via the Stuart Hwy. You'll see a well-signposted lookout about 20km (12 miles) east of Curtin Springs.

**Left:** looking down over Uluru and the great expanse of the Red Centre

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# WRITER BIOS

**Dayna Aamodt** has had many special moments while travelling, including riding gondolas in Venice, walking with her husband along the Seine in Paris, visiting the Great Wall of China and indulging in pastries in the cafes of Vienna, but nothing compares to the West Coast Trail.

**Benedict Allen** is one of the world's leading adventurer-explorers. Despite travelling in the modern era, he famously forgoes the technological safety net, choosing to travel without a GPS or phone of any kind. Instead he relies on training and the forging of relationships with the indigenous people he encounters. He has also pioneered the recording of extreme journeys for television.

**Will Allen** has lived in three cities and travelled to more than a dozen countries across three continents, which in his opinion is not nearly enough.

**Gary Arndt** is an awarding-winning blogger and travel photographer who has been roving the world since 2007. To date he has visited over 120 countries and more than 335 Unesco World Heritage sites.

**Brett Atkinson** has travelled to almost 80 countries, and is most content when discovering local flavours or checking out a region's craft beer scene. His favourite international cities are Istanbul, San Francisco and Hanoi. Home is New Zealand.

**Amy Balfour** has hiked, biked and paddled her way across the United States. Her favourite spots for US-based adventure include the Grand Canyon, the Gauley River, Half Dome and the Racetrack Playa. She has written or co-written more than 30 books for Lonely Planet.

**Duff Battye** has sheared sheep, bobsleighed, fished, dived with sharks, trekked, skydived, sailed and more while visiting countries as varied as Australia, China, Egypt, Iceland, India, Kiribati, New Zealand, Mexico and Russia. His favourite destination remains North Wales.

**Antonia Bolingbroke-Kent** is a travel writer, freelance TV producer and director of Edge Expeditions. She has written three books, the latest being *Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains: A Journey Across Arunachal Pradesh – India's Forgotten Frontier*. Learn more at [itinerant.co.uk](http://itinerant.co.uk) or follow her on Twitter and Instagram (@AntsBK).

**Oliver Berry** has had lots of wonderful wildlife encounters, from watching bears in the Rocky Mountains and orang-utans in the Bornean rainforest to swimming with humpback whales in Tonga. His latest adventures are published at [oliverberry.com](http://oliverberry.com).

**Abigail Butcher**, inspired by her life's best moment, left a stressful news editor desk job in London to live by the sea in the New Forest, Hampshire, UK. She now travels the world as a freelance adventure travel and ski journalist. Wherever and whenever possible she shares her forays with Thala, her Rhodesian ridgeback and partner in crime.

**Claire Beyer** is a keen off-the-beaten-track explorer who has also volunteered numerous times with various environmental organisations in Southeast Asia that work in the area of elephant conservation.

**Paul Bloomfield** is a writer and photographer who's hiked in six continents, tackling trails in India, Morocco and Australia. As well as contributing to Lonely Planet books, he writes for he writes for newspapers and magazines including *The Telegraph*, *Times*, *Independent* and *Wanderlust*.

**Cristian Bonetto** spends much of his time traversing the globe as a travel writer in search of curious characters, cultural quirks and decent cups of coffee. His main stomping grounds include Los Angeles, New York, Italy, Denmark and his beloved Australia.

**Charley Boorman** is an actor, travel adventurer and motorcycle enthusiast. His first big adventure was the iconic, award-winning series *Long Way Round*, which saw him and close friend Ewan McGregor motorcycle around the world.

**Nick Boulos** fell in love with travelling aged four on a trip to Egypt, sparking an affair that continues to this day. As an award-winning travel writer, he has visited more than 100 countries for titles such as the *Washington Post* and *The Sunday Times*.

**Paul Brady** is articles editor at *Condé Nast Traveler* in New York City. He's written about expats in Mérida, great Riesling in the Finger Lakes and a very strange puppet show in Providence, Rhode Island.

**Laura Brown** has travelled extensively across the Western Hemisphere, with a particular fondness for photographing

America's National Parks and hiking to watch sunsets from high peaks.

**Jean-Bernard Carillet** is a Paris-based writer and photographer who specialises in Africa, France, Turkey, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and the Pacific. He loves adventure, remote places, outdoors, archaeological sites, food and – unsurprisingly – islands.

**Penny Carroll** got her first taste of wanderlust in 1992 when her family took an epic, nine-month road trip around Australia. She's been exploring ever since, and now writes for Lonely Planet. Watching the northern lights in Iceland and hiking Tasmania's Overland Track in 3m-deep snow are among her most thrilling travel experiences.

**Paul Clammer** has worked as a molecular biologist, tour leader and travel writer. Since 2003 he has contributed to around 30 Lonely Planet guides, covering swathes of South and Central Asia, West and North Africa and the Caribbean.

**Lucy Corne** is a freelance travel and beer writer living in Cape Town. She has travelled to 50 countries and visited every continent bar Antarctica, but Tristan da Cunha remains her proudest passport stamp.

**Ruth Cosgrove** caught the travel bug when her Mum took her backpacking through Europe at the age of six. Since then she's sailed, walked and written in as many places as possible and plans to keep going.

**Duncan Craig** is Assistant Travel Editor of *The Sunday Times*, a former *Lonely Planet* magazine features editor, and has twice been shortlisted for AITO Travel Writer of the Year. Specialising in active and adventure travel, he's kayaked in Antarctica, trekked through the Congo and run ultramarathons in the Sahara.

**Sophie Cunningham** has been travelling since 1982, which is about five years longer than she's been working in publishing and as a writer. She's the author of four books. Her main ports of call have been India, Indonesia and the United States but she's hoping to expand her repertoire.

**Fionn Davenport** has been a travel writer since the mid-1990s (around the time he trekked Tiger Leaping Gorge; p. 192) and, despite travelling the world in pursuit of a good travel story, has yet to make it back to China.

**Liz Edwards** didn't board a plane or eat a curry till she was 17; she's been catching up ever since, visiting 50-plus countries to write about travel, food, or both. She's currently associate editor of *The Sunday Times Travel Magazine*.

**Mark Eveleigh** almost fell into travel writing – he was inspired to start by a nerve-racking six hours spent dangling on a frayed wire in Venezuelan cable car. Since then he's contributed to 80 international publications. Though based in SE Asia, he's always hankering to get back to Africa. Read more at [markeveleigh.com](http://markeveleigh.com).

**Ashley Garver** believes travel is one of the most empowering tools to get to know yourself, each other and the world around you. In 2013 she took a year-long sabbatical, traveling solo throughout Southeast Asia, India and Europe.

**Ethan Gelber** has been travelling well outside of his comfort zone for nearly 30 years, often by bicycle. In 1997, he successfully led an 'educational Internet adventure' team of five cyclists on BikeAbout–the Mediterranean ([bikeabout.org](http://bikeabout.org)).

**Don George** is the author of *The Way of Wanderlust* and *How to Be a Travel Writer*. He has been a travel writer and editor for the *San Francisco Examiner-Chronicle*, *Salon.com*, *Lonely Planet*, and *National Geographic Traveler*. In 40 years he has visited 90 countries on six continents.

**John Gimlette** is the author of five travel books, and has won the Shiva Naipaul Prize for travel writing, and the Dolman Travel Book Prize for 2012. He lives in London.

**David Gorvett** has travelled through much of the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific and his trip to Tanzania was the tantalizing first of many to come (he hopes) to Africa.

**Sally Gray** is a writer, editor and primary education specialist. Having edited the Kenya Airways inflight magazine, Africa remains her favourite destination, but her travels have taken her all over the world – from Alaska to New Zealand.

**William Gray**'s time on Heron Island nurtured a fledgling dream to become a photographer and writer. Nearly 30 years later, he's one of the UK's most respected travel journalists with numerous awards to his name,

including AITO Travel Writer of the Year.

**Emma Gregg** is an award-winning travel journalist who has visited over 30 African countries, sampling everything from obscure music festivals to five-star safaris. Based in the UK, she focuses on responsible tourism, wildlife, nature and culture and is always planning the next adventure.

**Anthony Ham** writes for magazines and newspapers around the world, and has written more than 120 guidebooks for Lonely Planet. He spent ten years living in Madrid and is most often found travelling in Africa, the Arctic or remote corners of Australia.

**Damian Harper**, holder of two degrees (History of Art from Leeds University, Modern and Classical Chinese from SOAS), travels the world as a writer for Lonely Planet. His rules: go everywhere with an open mind, prepare to be amazed by what you see and tell everyone about it.

**Simon Heptinstall** was described as 'a miserable little squirt' by *Private Eye* shortly after he took up journalism (he was formerly a taxi driver and garage manager). He says he's grown a bit and cheered up slightly since then, so only the 'squirt' still applies.

**Nicky Holford** is equally at home sleeping under the stars in the Wadi Rum desert, dancing to reggae in Jamaica or galloping a horse across the savannah in Botswana. She lives with her husband, Norfolk terrier and horse in the Cotswolds.

**Anne Howard** quit her job in 2012 as an executive editor in NYC to travel the world with her husband Mike. Considered to be on the world's longest honeymoon, the Howards are leading couples travel experts, sharing their tips on Twitter (@HoneyTrek) and in National Geographic's *Ultimate Journeys for Two*.

**Mike Howard** has been traveling around the world with his wife Anne ever since they left on their honeymoon in 2012. They've been chronicling their adventures across seven continents and 50+ countries HoneyTrek.com and their National Geographic book, *Ultimate Journeys for Two*.

**Aurelia India Birwood** made her first trip to Africa in 1997, which was an exciting foray into the streets of Cairo and the Pyramids of Giza. Since then she's returned often, falling for different things each and every visit.

**Anita Isalska** is a freelance travel writer. Though non-religious, Anita's travels have taken her to pilgrimage sites from Lourdes in France to Bulgaria's Rila Monastery. Anita covered Jerusalem for Lonely Planet's latest *Israel & the Palestinian Territories* guide.

**Pico Iyer** is the author of many books on the travel shelves, including *Video Night in Kathmandu*, *The Lady and the Monk* and, most recently, *The Man Within My Head* and *The Open Road*.

**Brian Jackman** is Britain's foremost writer on wildlife safaris. He's also a journalist and author (with Jonathan Scott) of *The Marsh Lions*. He is a patron of Tusk Trust and a trustee of the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust.

**Suzanne Joinson** is an award winning novelist, her books *A Lady Cyclist's Guide to Kashgar* and *The Photographer's Wife* are published by Bloomsbury. She regularly writes for the *New York Times* and other publications.

**Wailana Kalama** is a freelance travel writer from Hawaii, but currently hanging her hat in Stockholm. She's travelled through 40 countries, and lived in six. She has a complicated relationship with jet lag.

**Gopi Kallayil** pored over travel books about the world beyond his native India while growing up. Today he's travelled through nearly 60 countries and all seven continents – he is more awed than ever at the huge, diverse world we occupy.

**Susan Kurosawa** first travelled, at age seven, with her foreign correspondent father from England to France, where he insisted she learn "the art of observation". Based in Sydney, she has written eight books, including a best-selling novel, and has been Travel Editor of *The Weekend Australian* since 1992.

**Jamie Lafferty** is a Scottish travel writer and photographer who has visited over 100 countries and Antarctica three times (so far). He hates the smell of penguin guano, right up until he can't smell it any more. Read more at [jamielafferty.com](http://jamielafferty.com).

**Robert Landon** has lived a block from Copacabana beach for six years and has co-authored two editions of Lonely Planet's *Brazil* guide. He has attended Carnival as both a single and married, man. Both are magical, but if you can choose, he recommends the former.

**Chris Leadbeater** is a British travel journalist who has been filling his passport with niche stamps (many of them South American) for 20 years. He lives in London, but is working his way towards the feted 100-country mark (and has now reached 85), so is rarely ever there.

**John Lee** has been a full-time travel writer for 20 years, specialising in stories on beer, cities and trains. He has been a Lonely Planet contributor, concentrating on Vancouver and British Columbia, since 2005. Track his travels at [johnleewriter.com](http://johnleewriter.com).

**Stephen Lioy** is a photographer and travel writer based in the Central Asian state of Kyrgyzstan, where he's equally likely to be found in the hipster cafes of Bishkek or wild mountains of the Tien.

**Ian MacEacheran** was the first Scotsman to climb the North Face of the Eiger in Switzerland and has summited peaks in the Alps, Andes and Rockies. He has travelled from Costa Rica to Kenya, meeting gorillas in Uganda and coatis in Brazil along the way, yet is still happiest when in the mountains.

**Mike MacEacheran** is an Edinburgh-based writer and author who regularly contributes to *Lonely Planet* magazine, as well as to *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *Condé Nast Traveller* and BBC. In his search for the ultimate travel moment, he has visited 107 countries.

**Duncan Madden** has spent twenty years dragging body and board along the world's coastlines in search of empty waves, natural wonders and the perpetual sensation of being on holiday. He's told these stories in magazines, newspapers, travel guides and books.

**James Gabriel Martin** is a photojournalist with a passion for documenting the rich culture and stunning scenery in each of the places that he travels.

**Andrew McCarthy** is author of the *New York Times* best selling travel memoir *The Longest Way Home* and the young adult novel *Just Fly Away*. He is an editor at large for *National Geographic Traveler*. He is also an actor and director.

**Daniel McCrohan** is a UK-born, Asia-travel specialist who has been backpacking his way around the world for 25 years. He's worked on more than 30 guidebooks – for both Lonely Planet and Trailblazer – and posts off-the-

beaten-track videos on [danielmccrohan.com](http://danielmccrohan.com).

**Richard Mellor**, a former PR executive for travel companies, realised that he preferred writing about foreign lands rather than showing them to visiting journalists. Based in London, he specialises in Europe and cities, and loves nature, obscure historical titbits and anything newfangled or strange.

**Aaron Millar** is an award-winning journalist, author and the 2014 British Guild of Travel Writer's Travel Writer of the Year. Originally from Brighton, England he now hides out in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Read more at [thebluedotperspective.com](http://thebluedotperspective.com); @AaronMWriter

**Laura Millar** is an award-winning, London-based travel writer who grew up in Scotland. Having travelled to only France for the first sixteen years of her life (thanks to her French mother), she developed an insatiable wanderlust which has taken her to countries like Haiti, Iran, Patagonia and Lebanon.

**Korina Miller** grew up on Vancouver Island and has been exploring the globe independently since she was the age of 16, visiting or living in 36 countries and working with cultural organisations and minority groups. She has written nearly 40 titles for Lonely Planet.

**Thomas Mills** has logged many hours on Vancouver's ultimate fields and his Frisbee skills have come in handy on many adventurous journeys throughout the world, whether in Timbuktu, Katmandu, Bahir Dar, the Yukon or Hanoi.

**Joe Minihane** has travelled across Asia from Japan to Myanmar, tracked wild dogs in the Kenyan bush and eaten his way around New York's Outer Boroughs. He's happiest finding new wild swimming spots in his native UK.

**Katharine Nelson** dates her love of travel to a solo trip around South America when she was 18. She's followed this passion around the world since, hitting a particular high in Japan. Originally from Brighton, she now lives in London and works in marketing for Lonely Planet.

**Sarah Outen MBE** is an adventurer by land and sea. She has spent over a year, cumulatively, rowing solo across the world's oceans. Author of two books and a motivational speaker, she is an advocate of time spent outdoors,

whether doing, being or exploring.

**Simon Parker** is a travel writer and foreign correspondent that has reported from almost 100 countries. He makes TV and radio documentaries from all over the world and specialises in adventure travel. In 2016 he sailed and cycled from China to London, travelling east via the North Pacific.

**Stephanie Pearson** is a contributing editor to *Outside* magazine. She has meditated in Bhutan, dogsledded in Arctic Sweden, and circumnavigated Lake Superior, among many other fun adventures. She is yet to be fully enlightened and lives in northern Minnesota.

**Stephen Phelan** is an Irish writer who developed a wanderlust through the tall tales of his sailor father. He has lived in Scotland, Australia, Japan and Argentina but is now settled in Madrid with his adopted street dog from Buenos Aires.

**Adrian Phillips** is Managing Director of Bradt Travel Guides, and an award-winning travel writer and broadcaster who has written feature articles on everything from swamp-walking in the Everglades to seafood safaris in Sweden.

**Matt Phillips** was a Vancouver-based geologist working in gold mines of northern British Columbia when travel changed his life. After stints writing and researching Lonely Planet guides to countries across North America, Asia and Africa, he became editor of UK-based *Travel Africa* magazine. In 2013 he returned to Lonely Planet to become Destination Editor to sub-Saharan Africa. Home is happily now on the bank of the Thames in Hammersmith, London.

**Jane Powell** grew up in England before moving to Canada with her family while in her teens. A career in teaching followed and allowed her the time to notch up some rather memorable travel experiences across the globe, ranging from Australia to Venezuela.

**Lori Rackl**, driven by FOMO (fear of missing out) and wanderlust, has travelled to more than 70 countries, many of which she visited while backpacking through Europe in the early '90s. She's now the Travel Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*.

**Sarah Reid** is a former Destination Editor at Lonely Planet. She is now a globetrotting freelance travel writer for some of the world's top travel publishers. She also blogs about all things sustainable

travel-related at [ecotravelist.com](http://ecotravelist.com).

**Kait Reynolds** is a writer and designer from Austin, Texas. Recently she traded her suit for a plane ticket, and has been exploring the world without an end in sight. Find out more at [kaitflaked.com](http://kaitflaked.com).

**Brendan Sainsbury**, when not competing in dubiously-inspired endurance events, has contributed to over 50 Lonely Planet guidebooks with a strong preference for Cuba, Spain and Alaska.

**Toby Skinner** is a freelance editor and travel writer, who was formerly editorial development director at Ink, the world's biggest travel media company. He likes meeting local characters, sea swimming and adventures in cold places.

**Oliver Smith** is a features writer for *Lonely Planet* magazine, and a devotee of deserts from the Atacama to the Sahara. He was named Travel Writer of the Year 2017 at the Travel Media Awards.

**Phoebe Smith** is an award-winning editor, travel writer, author and presenter. By night she's an extreme sleeping outdoors adventurer who thrives on finding the strangest places to sleep in wild locations.

**Paul Stiles** began writing for Lonely Planet soon after seeing 'the Shadow' atop El Teide in Tenerife (p. 150). He has subsequently covered Morocco, Madagascar, Borneo, the Philippines, São Tomé and Príncipe, Nepal, and most of the Hawaiian Islands. He still lives in Spain.

**Mark Stratton** is a writer, photographer, and radio broadcaster based in the wilds of Dartmoor National Park. He has a preference for any journey that steps outside his comfort zone and for adventures to places most people have never heard of.

**Hannah Summers** is a writer whose career was born out of her love of two things: burgers and Bruce Springsteen. When she's not following Bruce around the world, you're likely to find her drinking in a backstreet bar or munching some unidentifiable street food (with The Boss on her headphones, of course).

**Jurriaan Tουλings** is an award-winning, serendipity-driven travel writer and photographer. He has covered all continents and comfort zones, from Amazonian *ayahuasca* communes and Iranian underground parties to

cross-continental luxury trains and private islands. Home is Amsterdam.

**Katalin Thomann** has travelled extensively, volunteering in Tibet, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Iran while working for organisations such as Amnesty International. She has surfed in the Maldives, kayaked in Alaska and snowboarded in Uzbekistan, but is equally at home in Edinburgh where she lives.

**Emma Thomson** is an award-winning freelance travel writer that spends roughly three quarters of the year on the road searching out stories – the more adventurous the better. Assignments have ranged from camping wild on the Antarctic Peninsula and walking the length of Namibia's Skeleton Coast to travelling the length of the ancient Silk Road.

**Jonathan Thompson** is a recent British Travel Writer of the Year, and is a regular contributor to publications including *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *Men's Health* and *Condé Nast Traveller*. Now based in Dallas, Texas, he specialises in US travel and has visited all 50 states.

**Marcel Theroux** is an award-winning novelist and broadcaster who writes regularly for *Lonely Planet* magazine. His novels include *Far North* and *Strange Bodies*, and most recently, *The Secret Books*.

**Nigel Tisdall** is an award-winning British travel writer and photographer whose globetrotting career began one wet Monday morning in 1985 when he went to London's Liverpool Street station and caught a train to Hong Kong. Since then he's roamed all over the world writing for leading newspapers and magazines including *The Telegraph* and *Financial Times*.

**Hugo Turner** is a British adventurer from Devon. Since the age of 17, when he broke his neck in a near catastrophic diving accident, he has been accomplishing goals – along with his twin brother – that no one else has ever achieved, all in aid of the spinal cord research. More details at [theturnertwins.co.uk](http://theturnertwins.co.uk)

**Ross Turner** has rowed across the Atlantic, climbed Mount Elbrus and trekked across the polar ice caps of Greenland, all with his identical twin brother Hugo. Most recently the Turner Twins have become the first adventurers to reach the Australian and South American poles of inaccessibility. Find out more at [theturnertwins.co.uk](http://theturnertwins.co.uk).

**Nicola Trup** is a London-based freelance travel journalist and editor. Formerly Deputy Head of Travel for *The Independent* and the *London Evening Standard*, she's a fan of big landscapes, spicy food and classic Americana.

**Mike Unwin** has travelled much of the world searching for wildlife and writes regularly about his experiences for *The Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *BBC Wildlife* and other publications. A specialist in Africa, his many books include the *Bradt Guide to Southern African Wildlife*.

**Neil Wilson** fled the rat race of the oil industry only four years after graduating as a geologist and has travelled and climbed in four continents. He has written more than 80 travel guidebooks for a range of publishers.

**Georgina Wilson-Powell** has been an editor for 15 years and a travel journalist for eight. She's lived in Dubai, France, Ireland and Australia, is obsessed with New Nordic food, loves an American roadtrip and is currently exploring the country on her doorstep, the UK.

**Tasmin Waby** is a writer and editor who grew up in Melbourne, Australia. Her latest adventures see her living on a narrowboat on Regent's Canal in London, a city she's called home on and off her whole life. She still loves night time – and snow.

**Tony Wheeler** made a trek along the Hippy Trail in 1972 that led him to write the very first Lonely Planet guide and left him with a lifetime travel addiction. Recently Tony travelled back across Asia in the opposite direction along the Silk Road.

**Art Wolfe** is an award-winning photographer who has worked on every continent. His photographs of indigenous cultures, vast landscapes, and wildlife are recognised for their mastery of colour, composition, and perspective. He has published over 100 books, including his magnum opus *Earth Is My Witness*, and is the host of the television series *Art Wolfe's Travels to the Edge*. Read more at [artwolfe.com](http://artwolfe.com).

**Chris Zeiher** describes himself as a massive Scandi-file, a Eurovision-tragic and wannabe wine connoisseur. His travels have taken him around the globe, from discovering boutique wine regions in Tasmania and enjoying delicious treats on the streets of Tokyo to escaping hippos on the Chobe River in Botswana and stumbling across lava fields in Iceland.