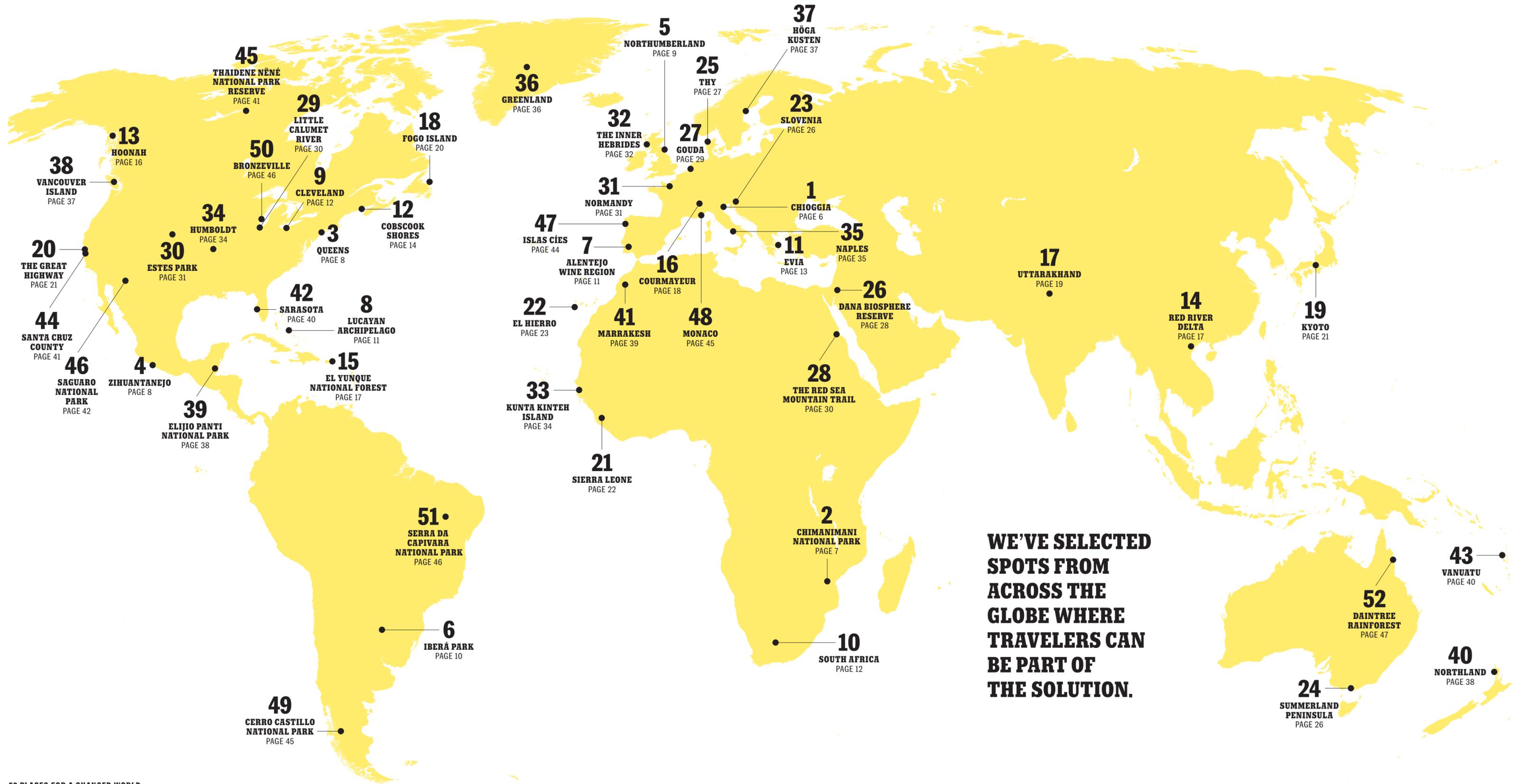

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022
A SPECIAL SECTION

The New York Times

52

PLACES
FOR A
CHANGED
WORLD





WE'VE SELECTED SPOTS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE WHERE TRAVELERS CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED. SO HAS 52 PLACES.

OUR ANNUAL LIST OF DESTINATIONS TO VISIT LOOKS AT SPOTS WHERE VISITORS CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS LIKE OVERTOURISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

BY AMY VIRSHUP

THIS YEAR, THE SECOND in a row, The New York Times's Travel desk faced the challenge of creating one of our signature pieces of journalism, the annual 52 Places list, in a world turned upside down.

A year ago, with global travel at all but a standstill, we turned to readers to ask about the places that had sustained them in the darkest days of lockdown. That list included locations as varied as fantastical colored-rock formations in India and a humble brickwork church in South London. They were faraway destinations held dear in memory, or nearby spots that had offered solace, and they served as a reminder that the world was still out there, waiting.

Now, with the pandemic hitting its third calendar year, global travel is

more possible, but it remains difficult and fraught with uncertainty. The populations of many countries outside of North America and Europe are largely unvaccinated, while China and other countries in Asia remain closed to most visitors. Shortly after the Biden administration loosened the rules around international travel to the United States, the Omicron variant of the coronavirus began spreading. Even vaccinated travelers who have received boosters are not immune to this latest twist in the virus. Travel restrictions for visitors from southern African nations were quickly put in place, then lifted.

Beyond the pandemic, there is a profound shift underway in the world's understanding of climate change and the swiftness and degree to which we are already seeing its effects. Wildfires, floods, dangerous storms, rising water levels and temperatures: All remind us how fragile our world really is. The travel industry is responsible for 8 to 11 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council, and at the Glasgow climate summit meeting this fall, the tourism industry made its first commitment to cut carbon emissions in half by 2030 and reach "net zero" by 2050.

There is also the problem of overtourism, which has been held in check by the pandemic but threat-

ens to reassert itself when the world once again starts to move. The crowds that have made Venice all but impassable in the high season, or turned neighborhoods in Barcelona into Airbnb outposts, have thinned for now. But will we have learned anything from the forced shutdowns, or will the same patterns re-emerge?

Yet as the tourism industry's Glasgow commitment demonstrates, travel can also be part of the solution, and not only on climate. Travel supports depleted economies in places that depend on tourists' dollars and opens the eyes of travelers to cultures and customs different from their own. That thought is the animating spirit behind this year's list, 52 Places for a Changed World.

In the past, the list has often focused on things like a newly hot restaurant scene, an exciting new museum or the opening of a fabulous beachfront resort. This list, instead, highlights places where change is actually happening — where endangered wild lands are being preserved, threatened species are being protected, historical wrongs are being acknowledged, fragile communities are being bolstered — and where travelers can be part of the change. Visiting a Canadian park run by an Indigenous tribe helps keep a culture alive.

Sampling whisky at a Scottish distillery turning to zero-emission fuel helps trim carbon emissions. Dining at a restaurant in the Midwest staffed by formerly incarcerated people contributes to uplift. We are especially keen on places where grass-roots efforts are pushing transformation, making their patch of the world better in the face of all that is wrong.

This is not the spinach (or broccoli) of travel lists: The vistas of Iberá Park in Argentina are stunning even if you don't know that the park's grasslands are crucial to saving a bird known as the strange-tailed tyrant. Diving with sharks in the Caribbean is magical, but it is even more so when you know you're helping to save these creatures that are so critical to the oceans' health. Touring Normandy's moody coast on a bike is delightful, and the carbon saved is a bonus.

Some of the places on this list are not yet open to travelers, and some are in areas hard hit by the virus that may not be safe, at least for now. Our message is not to hop on the next plane but to use this list as inspiration for your own more purposeful, more fulfilling travel in the coming year and beyond.

📍 Sanibel Island

it's a good day

Feeling waves of relaxation.



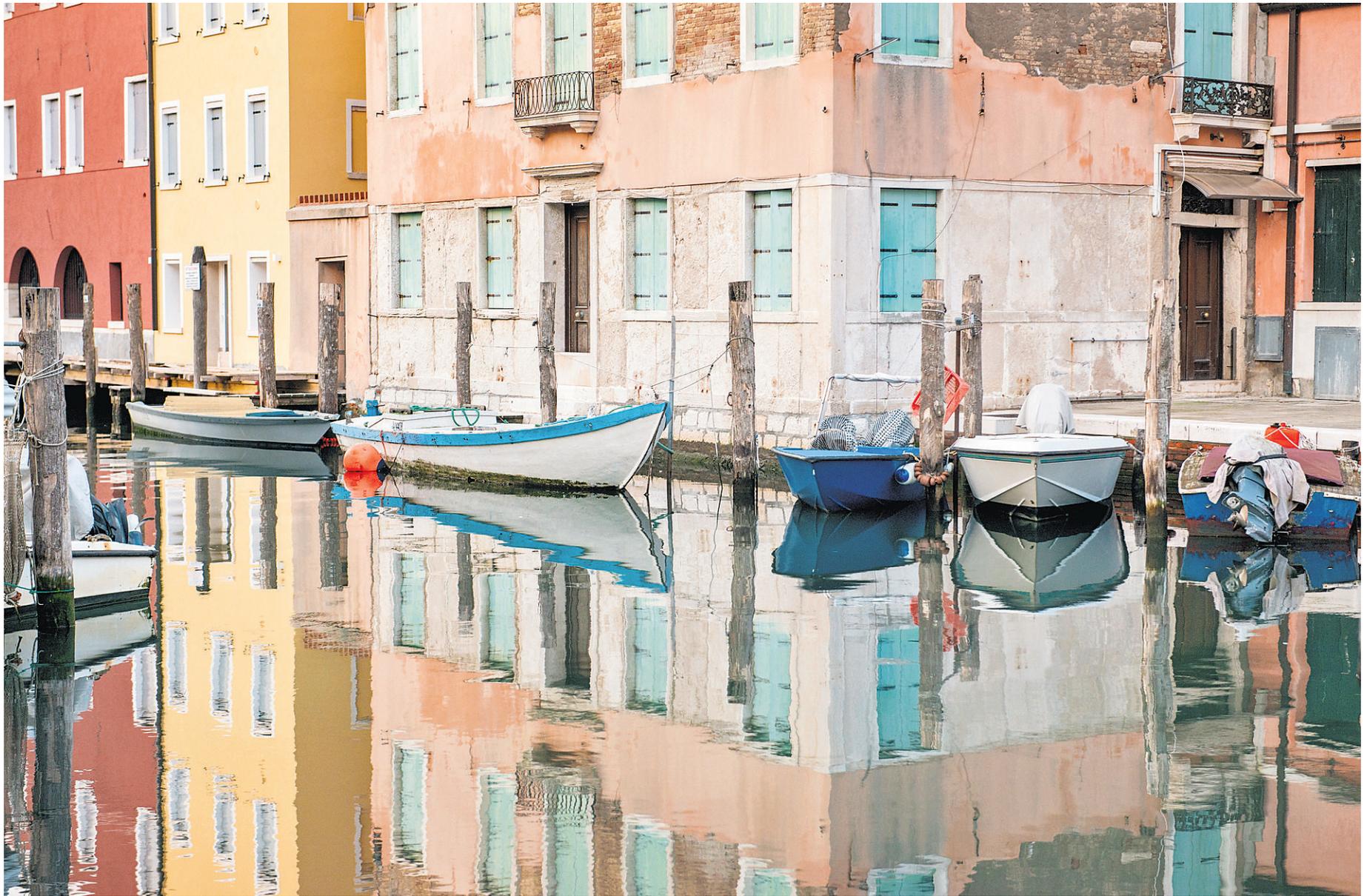
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1

CHIOGGIA ITALY

Near Venice, a town with history and architectural delights is an alternative to crowded tourist sites.



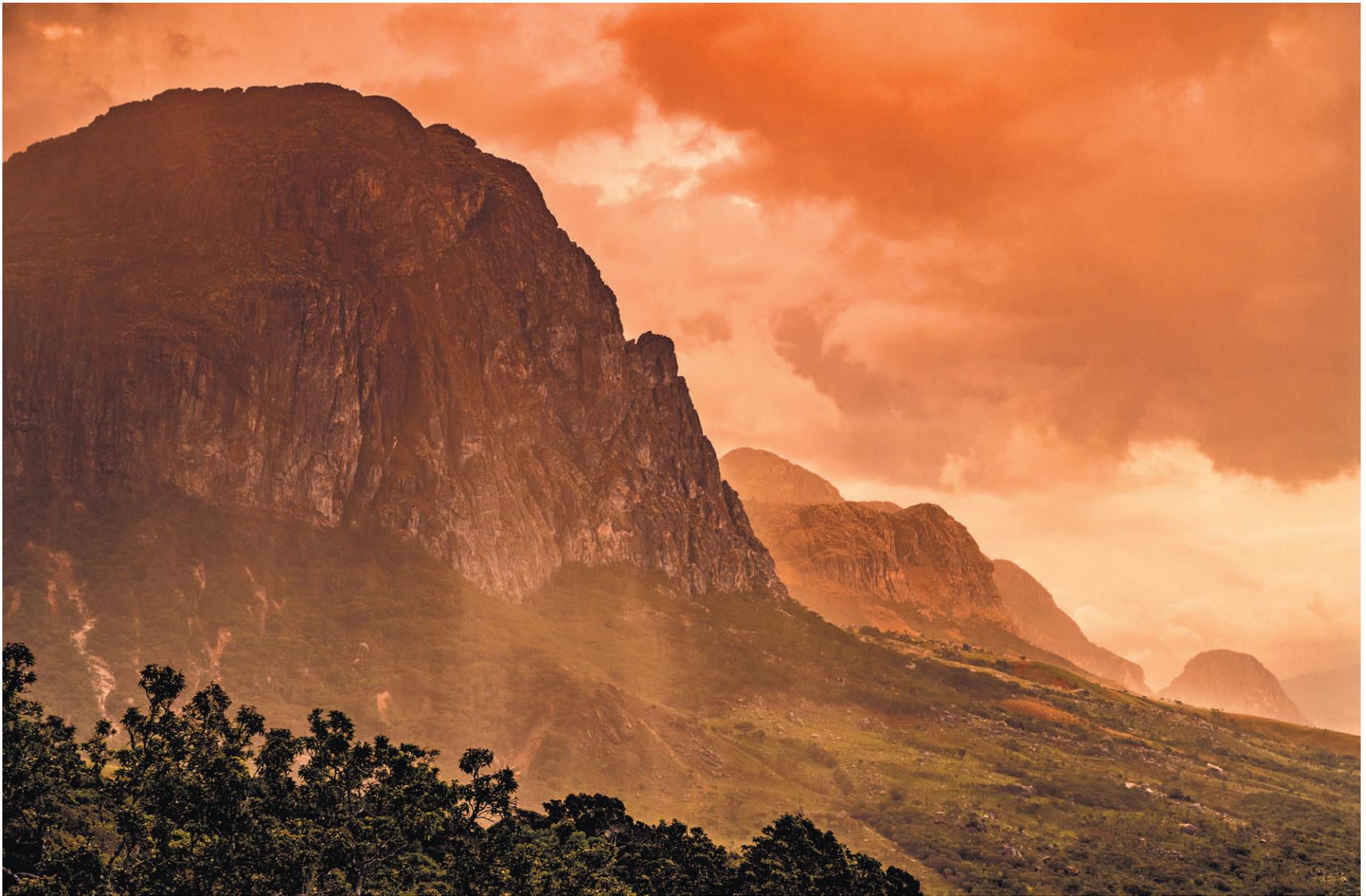
SUSAN WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BUILT ON A CLUSTER of islands in the Venetian lagoon, with centuries-old buildings rising from the canals in all their decadent glory, Chioggia is called “piccola Venezia,” or little Venice. Locals disagree: If anything, they say, it’s nearby Venice that should be described as Chioggia’s larger doppelgänger, and it’s true, Chioggia is older. Venice is so worried about being overwhelmed once again after the pandemic that it is

planning to resort to surveillance cameras and cellphone data to control the crowds; visiting other culturally rich places like Chioggia can help relieve the pressure. Today, Chioggia is popular with Italian and German visitors, drawn both by the architectural beauties in the historic center and the family-friendly beaches of its mainland suburb, Sottomarina. The city, which has preserved a rough maritime vibe,

can serve as an ideal base for bicycle tours. It is also known for its radicchio. During a time of increased awareness of overtourism, this miniature Venice is a delightful alternative for travelers looking for a lesser-known destination.

ANNA MOMIGLIANO



JEN GUYTON

2

CHIMANIMANI NATIONAL PARK

MOZAMBIQUE

A new park in a struggling country offers ancient rock paintings and a refuge for local animal species.

EVEN AT A TIME when many of the world's countries were under extreme duress, the case of Mozambique was severe enough to catch the attention of the United Nations: In March, Secretary General António Guterres called upon the international community to help the African country as it faced the triple threat of climate change, Covid-19 and conflict. It's not the first time that Mozambique has faced such

crises — its civil war of more than 15 years resulted in a million lives lost and huge losses for its wildlife, too. But the country showed its resilience. In 2008, the Gorongosa National Park started a vast program to repopulate a reserve decimated by poaching, accompanied by grassroots efforts like training local women as game wardens. In May, another spectacular national park was unveiled: Chimanimani, along the

border with Zimbabwe. The park has priceless ancient rock paintings; secluded sacred mountains including the country's highest peak, Mount Binga; and natural habitats for plants, birds and wildlife like the southern-ground hornbill, the miniature squeaker frog and the *Agama kirkii* lizard.

ONDINE COHANE

3

QUEENS NEW YORK

The home cooking of all the world, a la carte and available at the price of a subway ride.

QUEENS WANTS YOU to show up hungry. “There’s probably nowhere else in the world where you can sample the home cooking of more than 150 different countries within such a compact space,” said the restaurant critic Robert Sietsma, who covers the New York City borough’s restaurants for Eater.com. And at a time when long-haul travel is still uncertain, a dim-sum lunch at Nan Xiang Xiao Long Bao in Flushing is as quick and delicious a ticket to China as some nostril-clearing shrimp aguachile at the

new Mariscos El Submarino in Jackson Heights is a trip to Mexico. “The Queens restaurant industry was slammed by Covid-19, but now it’s recovering because we’re a borough of family-centered communities where the restaurants take care of their own,” said Jonathan Forgash, a chef and borough resident who founded Queens Together, a nonprofit, in March 2020.

ALEXANDER LOBRANO



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

4

ZIHUANTANEJO MEXICO

A grass-roots approach to conservation on the Pacific Coast protects whales and turtles and revives a local village.

THIS LAID-BACK beach town — a neighbor of Ixtapa, the resort destination on the Pacific Coast — and communities around it have spawned grass-roots environmental projects that travelers can support. The conservation nonprofit Whales of Guerrero has helped train fishermen as whale-watching guides, and Campamento Tortuguero Ayotlcalli offers opportunities to join turtle nest patrols and release hatchlings. The guitar duo Rodrigo y Gabriela, Rodrigo Sánchez and Gabriela Quintero, are involved with local vegan initiatives; Mr. Sánchez runs his own plant-based restaurant, La Raíz de la Tierra. Check into Playa Viva, 30 miles south.

The solar-powered regenerative resort has helped revive the adjoining village of Juluchuca by providing education and employment in conservation, tourism and agriculture. It recently joined a new regional project to protect the watershed of the Juluchuca River, which begins in the mountainous interior where guests can take A.T.V. excursions to explore the headwaters at an off-grid coffee and cacao plantation.

ELAINE GLUSAC



ADRIAN WILSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

5

NORTHUMBERLAND ENGLAND

Dark skies, pristine beaches and a 1,900-year anniversary on a coastline with newly opened trails.

ENGLAND'S DIVERSE COASTLINE, from the cliffs of Dover to the boardwalks of Brighton, will soon have a unifying element: the 2,800-mile England Coast Path. Developed in part by the governmental organization Natural England, the path aims to increase public access to the coast while also restoring landscapes, improving community connection and promoting sustainable travel. Trail segments that have opened include a 44-mile stretch in the northeast, from the River Tyne to the Northumberland coast, which is the epitome of rugged England: misty dunes, rocky headlands, wild beaches. At night, look up. The Northumberland International Dark Sky Park has some of the lowest light pollution in the country and features one of the largest areas of protected night sky in Europe. Gaze at galaxies sprayed across the sky at Kielder Observatory, and then venture to the ancient past as Hadrian's Wall is celebrating its 1,900th anniversary with a yearlong festival.

ANNELISE SORENSEN



ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

6

IBERÁ PARK ARGENTINA

The rewilding of grassland and wetlands created a home for dozens of endangered species.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOMAS MUNITA

TWENTY YEARS AGO, this reserve in Argentina's northern Corrientes region wasn't so much a park as it was tiny parcels of wilderness surrounded by cattle ranches. That's when the Rewilding Argentina foundation, created by the North Face co-founder Douglas Tompkins and now funded by tourism and a consortium of philanthropists around the world, began buying land. Today, Iberá Park is one of the largest in Argentina, close to two million acres of protected grasslands, lagoons, islands and wetlands — and a sanc-

tuary for huge populations of animals. The foundation has saved dozens of species from extinction here, notably jaguars, giant anteaters and giant river otters, and has become a refuge for marsh deer, maned wolves, rheas, grassland birds and the aptly named — and endangered — strange-tailed tyrants. Tourism and infrastructure are strictly managed, and staying in one of the park's campgrounds directly supports the foundation, continuing the cycle of conservation.

DANIELLE PERGAMENT



7

ALENTEJO WINE REGION

PORTUGAL

Sustainable winemaking isn't just on-trend — it's survival for a region where water is in short supply.

ALENTEJO HAS MOST of the elements required for wine production: sun, soil, native grape varieties and a centuries-old winemaking legacy. What does it lack? Rain. Global warming has increasingly threatened this arid region known for warm and full-bodied reds, so in 2015, the area created the Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program. By prioritizing water conservation, with measures like developing cover crops for water retention and creating ponds to collect rainwater, the program has helped wineries reduce their average water consumption by 20 percent; some that were using 14 liters of water to produce one liter

of wine have decreased their needs to six liters of water. While upcoming projects include an online calculator for members to measure their carbon and water footprints, the program in 2020 created a certification process to further verify that wineries are following green initiatives. These wineries include Herdade de Coelheiros, a verdant estate with a walnut orchard, a cork forest and a herd of sheep — an organic solution for weed control.

ANNELISE SORENSEN



MARCUS WESTBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

8

LUCAYAN ARCHIPELAGO

THE BAHAMAS, AND TURKS AND CAICOS

A new model for shark conservation saves creatures that are needed for the health of the seas.

CONSIDER, WITHOUT FEAR, the shark. In the last 50 years, global populations have declined by more than 70 percent. Industrial-scale fishing hauls them in by accident. Some cultures have an appetite for them. And yet sharks, one researcher has said, are the “white blood cells” of the seas, cleaning sick, dying and dead animals from the waters. The good news is that efforts are underway to support sharks — even in the turquoise waters off some of the most popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean. In 2011, the Bahamas established the Bahamas Shark Sanctuary, the first of its kind in the Atlantic Ocean. Now it's calling itself the “shark

diving capital of the world.” During the pandemic, Turks and Caicos — which, along with the Bahamas, forms part of the Lucayan Archipelago, an important shark habitat — began its own shark preservation effort, with help from the Caribbean Shark Coalition. Researchers have been tagging sharks in the waters off the tiny islands, gathering data that will assist Turks and Caicos, which has already prohibited most shark fishing, to establish further protections. NINA BURLEIGH



CAINE DELACY

9

CLEVELAND

OHIO

A restaurant serves dinner with an eye to entrepreneurial training and social justice.

DINNER ISN'T USUALLY part of the prisoner re-entry system, but at EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute in the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood of Cleveland, the mission is larger than braised artichokes and Burgundy snails: The aim is to teach former prisoners a new trade. Founded by Brandon Chrostowski, a classically trained chef, EDWINS includes a fine-dining French restaurant, a bakery, a butcher and an event space, all open to the public. The campus has a test kitchen, apartments and basketball courts, and EDWINS continues to buy and refurbish buildings in the underserved neighborhood (a culinary class is available on

closed-circuit tablets in prisons throughout the country). The institute helps former inmates get a place to live rent-free (relocation fees are paid in part by the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League), a driver's license, legal counseling and health care. "It's not just about a wonderful restaurant, it's not just about re-entry," said Councilman Blaine Griffin of Cleveland. "This is social entrepreneurship at its best."

DANIELLE PERGAMENT



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

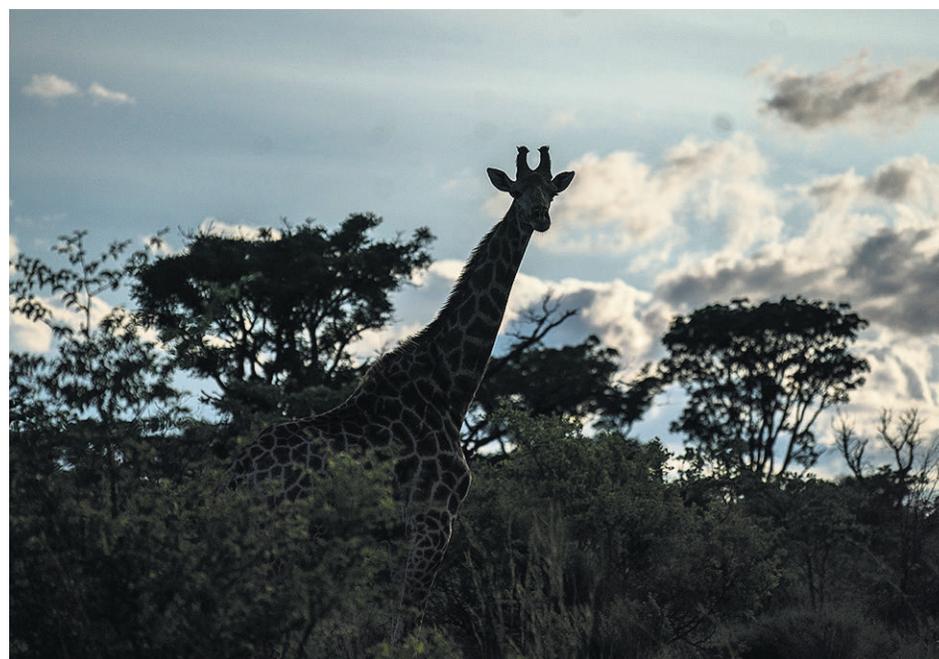
10

SOUTH AFRICA

Endangered wildlife, an underwater forest and a struggling UNESCO site support jobs and education.

AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS of restricted travel and the recent detection of the Omicron coronavirus variant in South Africa, the country's many outstanding wildlife reserves and conservation projects are badly in need of support. Lockdowns caused a 96 percent drop in visits to South Africa's national parks, jeopardizing the efforts of places like iSimangaliso Wetland Park, an 800,000-acre UNESCO World Heritage site on the country's eastern coast. Home to elephants, leopards, lions, rhinos and whales, iSimangaliso also supports more than 12,000 jobs and an environmental education program involving 150 schools. Visitors can keep it clas-

sic and track the "Big Five" — elephants, rhinos, buffalo, lions and leopards — on safari at some of the country's approximately 500 private game reserves, like Kariega and Manyeleti. Or they can go a step further and volunteer to monitor biodiversity with the Endangered Wildlife Trust at Medike Nature Reserve in the Soutpansberg Mountains or help save the dazzling aquatic life and octopus teachers that inhabit the Great African Seaforest, the planet's only forest of giant bamboo kelp. CHARLY WILDER



JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES



MARIA MAVROPOULOU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

11

EVIA GREECE

Community support for a ravaged island is helping locals survive environmental disaster.

THE OTHER HUMAN FOOD pantry was established more than 10 years ago, serving Athens, Thessaloniki and the island of Evia in the wake of Greece's financial crisis. As the country recovers from last year's wildfires and floods, the Other Human has expanded to help those who lost their livelihoods, and welcomes travelers to get involved. At weekly food drives held in Evia's capital, Chalkida, meals are cooked

and eaten together to establish a sense of community. Volunteers are invited to help cook, pack hampers with food and essentials, and contribute funds to rebuild schools and aid locals with essential bills. Lost in the fires were homes, businesses, olive groves and one third of Evia's beloved pine forest, which generations had relied upon for resin and honey. Increasing tourism is vital for the economic recov-

ery of this island a short trip from Athens. In addition to community projects, visitors will find a hilltop acropolis and other archaeological sites in Eretria, mineral-rich thermal springs in Edipsos and showstopper sunsets, with the Aegean Sea as a backdrop. CATERINA HRYSSOMALLIS

12

COBSCOOK SHORES

MAINE

A new park for nature lovers conserves a rugged coast and eases crowds in other areas.

“VACATIONLAND,” AS MAINE calls itself, thrives on the allure of its craggy coast and woodlands, and attracted more than three million visitors in the first nine months of 2021 to coastal Acadia National Park alone. Navigate 95 miles northeast near Lubec to find a new park that aims to ease overtourism: Cobscook Shores. Comprising 15 blocks of land spread primarily across three Down East peninsulas, Cobscook offers undeveloped beaches, coves and bluffs that can be reached by hiking trails and biking paths, as well as channels to be explored by paddlers. Just five backcountry campsites offer opportunities to stay overnight in the reserve, but there are more sites at nearby Cobscook Bay State Park, and the Inn on the Wharf in Lubec offers accommodations in a renovated sardine factory. The philanthropist Gilbert Butler, a conservationist who has invested in preserving natural areas from the Adirondacks to Patagonia, created the 780-acre Cobscook Shores, amplified by thousands of surrounding acres managed by state and federal entities and private conservation groups. ELAINE GLUSAC



CHRIS SHANE



CHRISTOPHER MILLER

13

HOONAH ALASKA

A community, largely Indigenous, embraces sustainable tourism and finds a way to deal with cruise crowds.

ONCE DEPENDENT on fishing and logging, Hoonah, about 20 miles south of Glacier Bay on the Inside Passage, now relies on cruise tourism, not just for its livelihood but also for its cultural continuity. The community, which is half Huna Tlingit, is counting on a robust return to sustainable tourism in 2022, having recently introduced a second ship dock at its cruise port, Icy Strait Point, a half-mile from the original

to prevent overcrowding. Additionally, the Native-owned Huna Totem Corporation, which runs tourism operations for the town on behalf of its 760 residents, built a gondola system to shuttle passengers in eight-person aerial cabins, which can handle 5,600 riders an hour, eliminating up to 100 exhaust-emitting buses. Bear- and whale-watching excursions underscore the community's reverence for nature, and

by next April, the gondola system will reach the top of Huna Mountain, with its hiking trails and views of Chichagof Island and the Tongass National Forest. Locals credit visitors' interest in Native culture with the revival of the Indigenous language and local art. ELAINE GLUSAC

14

RED RIVER DELTA

VIETNAM

Travelers can witness celebrations of age-old traditions in a country's less-visited northern region.

ONCE TRAVEL BEGINS to normalize, tourists will undoubtedly flock to Vietnam's world-famous beaches and dynamic megacities. But head north to the traditional villages of the Red River Delta, and you can immerse yourself in centuries-old cultural practices and a way of life that is at risk of disappearing. Since ancient times, villagers along the Cau River in northern Vietnam have sung Quan ho, a call-and-response folk music style performed by alternating all-female and all-male duets from neighboring villages that was recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage practice in 2009. In the decade since, 49 ancient villages in Bac Ninh and Bac

Giang Provinces have taken measures to safeguard the cultural heritage of Quan ho — which includes countless rituals celebrating culinary traditions — and to address rural-urban migration through cultural tourism. Hanoi-based tour operators like Vietnamstay and Khoa Viet Travel offer travelers a chance to explore the villages' Buddhist temples, craft communes, Ly Dynasty pagodas and waterways while helping to preserve the past.

CHARLY WILDER



JUSTIN MOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

15

EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST

PUERTO RICO

Local efforts revive a hard-hit reserve where government aid has been slow to arrive.

PUERTO RICO'S El Yunque National Forest is the only rainforest within the U.S. Forest Service's holdings. Named by the Indigenous Taino tribe, it offers one of the most diverse ecosystems in the network, with wildlife including the famed Coqui frog, the island's unofficial symbol. Hit by the back-to-back hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, El Yunque is still recovering from the storms, and funding for everything from infrastructure to conservation programs has been slow to arrive. But local organizations like the nonprofit Love in Motion haven't been waiting. The group's initiatives include

rebuilding the Picachos and Angelito trails (you can also swim in the natural pool along the latter); its sister organization Local Guest arranges low-impact activities like bird watching and hiking while community building. Stay in a locally owned property like Dos Aguas, which has been in the same family since the 1950s (currently available only as a full house rental because of Covid-19) or the Rainforest Inn, with a botanical garden and solar-powered electricity.

ONDINE COHANE



SHUTTERSTOCK



CLARA TUMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

THIS CHARMING TOWN at the foot of Mont Blanc, in a historically French-speaking region of Italy, has long made an effort to strike a balance between tourism and conservation. Decades before overtourism became alarming, Courmayeur began limiting access in the summer to its two high valleys, Val Veny and Val Ferret, with a fixed number of private cars and a separate quota for those with reserva-

tions at one of the local inns, known for their polenta concia — creamy polenta with local fontina cheese. Some days, private cars are banned altogether, and in the winter both valleys become ski slopes. The cable car that carries visitors to Mont Blanc, a breathtaking experience, uses energy from renewable sources. But it takes more than a village to stop the global warming threatening Mont Blanc and its

many glaciers. One of them, Planpincieux, has been declared in danger of collapse. The authorities are closely monitoring the situation, so visitors should follow warnings to avoid some routes — or the entire area — when risk is deemed too high. ANNA MOMIGLIANO



PORAS CHAUDHARY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

17

UTTARAKHAND INDIA

A tourism initiative empowers local women in northern India and gives travelers an intimate introduction to life in remote villages.

IN NORTHERN INDIA, along the Tibetan border, the Himalayas soar to 25,000 feet and paths wander by misty waterfalls, ancient temples and through rhododendron forests. But those paths can be deadly, especially to local men who drink too much and tumble to their deaths. In 2009, Poonam Rawat-Hahne, a social justice activist with ties to the region, learned of the tragedy of those left behind. Ms. Rawat-Hahne was inspired to start a nonprofit

called the Bachan Charitable Trust, which has a sustainable-travel arm called Fernweh Fair Travel that's based on a simple idea: Train widows and survivors of domestic violence to offer homestays, cook for visitors and be guides. Fernweh brings a maximum of eight groups of no more than 10 people a year to villages like Gopeshwar, Mandal and Chopta, where travelers can do yoga, take cooking lessons and hike among the wild orchids of the

nearby Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. Visitors stay in cabins, village homes and, soon, a new eco-retreat in Koteshwar. Funds support environmental and educational programs in at least nine villages; a group buying just one meal from a widow will support her for months. "This is not mass tourism," Ms. Rawat-Hahne said. "This is empowerment." TIM NEVILLE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX FRADKIN

IN 1992, NEWFOUNDLAND'S moratorium on cod fishing decimated villages along the region's Atlantic coast, including Fogo Island, a granite outpost of stilt-supported fishing shacks and saltbox cottages. But the arrival of the arresting Fogo Island Inn in 2013 changed the island's fortunes, as intended by its founder, the Fogo native Zita Cobb. Nine years later, the population has stabilized and more than 70 new businesses have opened, along with a dozen food producers. Now there are lodging alternatives to the inn

(where rates start at over 2,500 Canadian dollars, or about \$2,000, a night), including vacation homes with names like Aunt Glady's from the Old Salt Box Co., and cottages from Escape by the Sea. In summer, after summiting bald Brimstone Head or watching birds or icebergs, fuel up at Scoff, run by former cooks at the inn, or Bangbelly Café. The strong arts-and-crafts scene, including galleries such as Fogo Clay Studio, attests to the power of tourism to sustain a community.

ELAINE GLUSAC



19

KYOTO JAPAN

Tourism in service of traditional architecture that is facing a precarious future in this region.

TUCKED BETWEEN pachinko parlors and convenience stores, Kyoto's machiya — traditional wooden townhouses, long and narrow, and often hiding courtyard gardens just beyond their latticed fronts — have been vanishing since World War II. The city has worked hard to preserve the structures. A machiya development fund was created in 2005, and the buildings were twice put on a watch list by the World Monuments Fund. To encourage their conservation, the buildings are also taxed at a lower rate than modern high-rises. But those efforts may now fall short. Teetering

on the brink of bankruptcy, Kyoto is in cost-cutting — and revenue-raising — overdrive. After tourism dropped by 88 percent in 2020, some traditional neighborhoods may be threatened by commercial development. Tourism can help. Some investors have converted machiya into guesthouses, boutiques and high-end restaurants. When visitors come to these properties with their money, they send a message: The history of machiya matters to Kyoto.

DEBRA KAMIN



SHUTTERSTOCK

20

THE GREAT HIGHWAY SAN FRANCISCO

A coastal road becomes a must-go destination, pointing the way for post-pandemic urbanism.

MOST PANDEMIC-RELATED shutdowns were disruptive reactions to a disease-dominated world, but many people across the United States welcomed one exception: prohibiting car traffic on city streets. In San Francisco, the street shutdowns included a two-mile stretch on the city's far western edge known as the Great Highway. The coastal road became a destination, a beachfront promenade flanking the raw expanse of Ocean Beach, and a community center — friends met for walks, local children learned to ride bikes, and everything “popped up,” from street art to protests and trick-or-treating. But opponents took issue, with claims

of increased traffic, limited access for older people and the disabled, and general inconvenience. In an uneasy compromise, city officials reopened the highway to traffic Monday to Friday. Still, on weekends, the Great Highway has become a unique destination — in a city full of them — to take in San Francisco's wild Pacific coastline by foot, bike, skates or scooter, sample food trucks and explore local cafes, restaurants, record stores, bookstores and more. It's also a telling microcosm of the ways in which our cities, and our values, shifted during the pandemic. LAUREN SLOSS



BETH COLLIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



RENATO GRANIERI

21

SIERRA LEONE

Eco-tourism offers the chance to help a country recovering from a civil war and an epidemic.

IN THE 1980S, the sandy, palm-fringed beaches of this West African country used to attract high-flying tourists from Europe and beyond. But visitors disappeared when civil war broke out in the 1990s, and today — after nearly 20 years of peace and nearly six years after an Ebola outbreak ended — most have yet to return. But this small nation has an enormous

amount to offer adventurous visitors, and the authorities hope that tourism will be a more sustainable resource than diamonds or gold. Visitors who make the trip can spend the night in a jungly eco-lodge at the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary (your stay supports the sanctuary's work); enjoy a cold beer and fresh lobster on the beaches of the Western Peninsula;

learn about a painful chapter in history on a tour of the ruined slave fort on Bunce Island; and make the three- or four-day expedition to the top of 6,381-foot Mount Bintumani, the country's highest peak.

PAIGE McCLANAHAN



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILIO PARRA DOIZTUA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A FEW HUNDRED MILES off the coast of Morocco, is El Hierro, the most remote — and, some say, the most charming — of the Canary Islands. It's also a pint-size leader in renewable energy. In 2014, El Hierro opened Gorona del Viento, a power plant that uses a system of reservoirs and wind to supply the island's electricity (wind provides power while pumping water into reservoirs; hydraulic turbines take over when the wind dies down; diesel supplies a fallback when both those sources are lacking). Recently,

Gorona del Viento was able to supply the island's 11,000 inhabitants with 100 percent renewable energy for 25 consecutive days. As the infrastructure of El Hierro plants one foot in the future, the island's cultural identity keeps the other rooted in the past. El Hierro's historic language, Silbo Herreño, is one of the last whistling languages in the world. When the island's elders noticed that the Herreño whistle was dying out, the cultural association on El Hierro began offering free classes. DANIELLE PERGAMENT



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SLOVENIA

At a European crossroads, high-end dining is fed by the produce of local farms.

SLOVENIA WANTS to cook for you because the first Michelin guide devoted to its restaurants, in June 2020, was a source of national pride. It validated the way this central European country of just over two million people has been putting environmentally responsible travel and its good food and wines at the heart of its identity as a destination for travelers since it became independent 30 years ago. “From the very beginning, we knew our food was special and would become a major reason to visit our country,” said Ana Ros, the chef at Hiso Franko,

Slovenia’s most famous restaurant and the only one with two Michelin stars. Slovenian cooking is a delicious reflection of the country’s location at a culinary crossroads between Mediterranean, Germanic and Slavic countries, but the real reason its food is so good is that it’s made with produce from the country’s small farms. Some of them, like Govc, are part of a farm-stay network that the Slovenian government began in 1992. ALEXANDER LOBRANO



ANDREAS MEICHSNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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SUMMERLAND PENINSULA

AUSTRALIA

The largest colony of the world’s smallest penguin is an environmental success story.

EVERY EVENING ON the Summerland Peninsula of Phillip Island, a throng of tiny penguins emerges from the surf, waddling up toward nests that dot Summerland Beach. The penguin parade, as it’s known, is a sight that has garnered attention since at least the 1920s, when visitors began flocking to this island in southeastern Australia for a chance to see the world’s smallest penguin species (adults average just 13 inches tall) up close as they head home after a day of fishing. For a time, the crowds that gathered for the nightly ritual caused problems for the penguin colony, as did the cars, pets and construction that accompanied a nearby neighbor-

hood, Summerland Estates. Today, however, this piece of land is a remarkable ecological success story. In 1985, the state government put in place a plan to buy every piece of property on the peninsula and return the land to its natural state — and to its original inhabitants, the tiny penguins. The process was completed in 2010, and the penguin population now sits at around 35,000 birds of breeding age, up from 12,000 in the 1980s. In 2019, a new \$58 million visitor center opened to the public; it includes educational elements and a restaurant where you can sit and watch what is now the largest colony of the world’s smallest penguin. BESHIA RODELL



ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



ANDREAS MEICHSNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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THY DENMARK

Winds of change at the edge of the North Sea, where renewable energy is part of the attraction.

IF DENMARK HAS a final frontier, it's Thy. Silent dunes, tangled forests and near-mythic gales make this region in northwest Jutland about as far away from Copenhagen as you can get. Thy is an epicenter for wind energy — around 50 percent of Denmark's electricity in 2020 was powered by wind and solar — and those interested in learning more about wind turbines and renewable initiatives can visit the

Osterild test facility's visitor center. The wind also shaped Thy's coastline, where the wryly named Cold Hawaii surf community rides the curving shore's distinctive swells. Not to be missed is the sprawling Thy National Park, rippling with dunes, meadows, marshes and lakes, big and small, and its new visitor center in Norre Vorupor, uniquely designed to gently fold into the sandy landscape. The Thy

wilderness is also folded into food and drink: Enjoy beer spiced with bog myrtle from Thisted Bryghus, fresh catch from the fish auction at Medvind and the "National Park platter" at Stenbjerg Kro.

ANNELISE SORENSEN



DANIEL RODRIGUES

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DANA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

JORDAN

Sustaining traditional livelihoods through village restoration in a desert landscape.

PERCHED ON A CLIFF overlooking the central valley of Jordan's largest nature reserve stand the quaint Ottoman-era stone houses of Dana Village. Once abandoned by the Ata-ta tribe, the settlement is being brought back to life through an ecotourism project that aims to preserve the area's biodiversity by empowering local communities. Many of the 15th-century houses

have been converted into eco-lodges with terraced gardens and orchards, creating an oasis above the desert plains below. Along the village's cobbled streets, local women sell handcrafted jewelry and homemade jams produced from fruits grown in their orchards. Dana Village marks the start of the nine-mile Wadi Dana hiking trail that spans the reserve and its flora

and fauna. The reserve is home to 833 plant species and several endangered bird species, as well as archaeological ruins from the Byzantine, Nabatean and Roman periods, including the ancient copper mines in Wadi Faynan.

CEYLAN YEGINSU



SHUTTERSTOCK

IN 2019, THE DUTCH tourism board made the surprising announcement it would stop promoting travel to the Netherlands. Because of overtourism, it would also shift to encouraging visitors to consider the country beyond Amsterdam and to travel more sustainably. A charming example of a Dutch destination that ticks these boxes is Gouda, a small city in the south. Internation-

ally known for its namesake cheese, which has been produced there since 1184 and is one of the world's 10 most popular cheeses, Gouda is an ideal base for a car-free visit to the Netherlands. An extensive system of well-marked bicycle routes (with charging stations for e-bikes) makes it easy to explore the city and surrounding region. The new 25-room Weeshuis Gouda

hotel occupies a beautifully renovated 16th-century orphanage. Visit the new Gouda Cheese Experience, which opened in June 2020 in a butter-yellow former 19th-century military barracks, for a tasting of artisanal aged cheeses.

ALEXANDER LOBRANO

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THE RED SEA MOUNTAIN TRAIL

EGYPT

Rugged highlands, narrow gorges and generations of Bedouin culture reveal themselves in a region visited on foot.

FOR CENTURIES, pastoral nomads in Egypt's Eastern Desert traversed this arid region by a network of pathways over granite ranges, across barren valleys and through colorful canyons. Now the Ma'aza tribe has revived the ancient footpaths to create the long-distance Red Sea Mountain Trail. The 100-mile trail opened a few months before the pandemic shut the world down, and now its founders are hoping to organize the first through hike later this year. Meanwhile, the Ma'aza tribe offers day hikes through separate sections of this astonishing wilderness, hemmed between the Nile River and the Red Sea. All hikes are led by Bedouins. On the trek

to Jebel Abul Hassan, hikers find themselves in a magical narrowing gorge flanked by pink and black granite walls. The hike up the sheer slopes of Wadi El Gattar reveals stone hermit cells built by early Christians fleeing the Romans, and primitive rock art from long before then. It's the ultimate sustainable tourism project: the water drawn from wells, the flat bread baked in campfires, and the Bedouin legends, traditions and knowledge of the terrain preserved for future generations.

PATRICK SCOTT



SIMA DIAB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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LITTLE CALUMET RIVER

CHICAGO

African American history and restored marshlands await on a new marine trail on the city's Southeast Side.

IN THE CALUMET REGION of Southeast Chicago, interest in the area's nearly two centuries of African American heritage is flourishing alongside a new marine trail. Established by the urban conservation organization Openlands and community partners, the seven-mile African American Heritage Water Trail aims to tell the story of the Little Calumet River and those connected to it throughout history, like freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad who found shelter at Ton Farm, owned by Dutch immi-

grants. Paddle by canoe or kayak to the trail's other key sites, including Chicago's Finest Marina, one of the oldest Black-owned marinas in the area, and the Major Taylor Trail Bridge, named after the African American cyclist legend. And history isn't the only draw for visitors: Thanks to initiatives by Audubon Great Lakes and other conservation groups, more marsh bird species are returning to this restored wetland area. ANNELISE SORENSEN



RUDY SCHULTZ/OPENLANDS

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ESTES PARK

COLORADO

A ski town with no ski lifts makes for a smaller carbon footprint and gets travelers outdoors.

CLIMATE CHANGE HAS diminished snow and made for spottier ski seasons in many destinations. Skiers aiming to shrink their carbon footprint can turn to a ski town with no ski lifts: Estes Park, the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, about 65 miles north of Denver. The town's original ski area, Hidden Valley, opened in 1955 in the park but closed in 1991 because it couldn't compete with larger areas' snow-making capabilities. Now, with runs still cut into the mountain, it attracts backcountry skiers who champion its powder with a "no pain, no altitude gain" attitude. Those new to backcountry skiing can learn how to uphill and de-

scend safely with a course from the local Kent Mountain Adventure Center. Rewilding Expeditions offers more forms of recreation, including camping and snowshoe tours, and private tours led by Yellow Wood Guiding focus on wildlife and photography. Toast your adventures après-ski with an Altruism amber from Estes's Rock Cut Brewing Company, which donates \$1 of every Altruism beer sold to local organizations and nonprofits.

ELAINE GLUSAC



BENJAMIN RASMUSSEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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NORMANDY

FRANCE

Environmentally friendly bike trails that could inspire Impressionist painters.

CLAUDE MONET'S PAINTINGS of Normandy's moody Atlantic coast could now have another element: a bicycle path winding in the distance. New bike routes in the region include the 932-mile Vélo-maritime, which starts south in Brittany, travels along the shore of the English Channel and ends at the Belgian border. Along the way, Mont-Saint-Michel rises out of the water and World War II's D-Day landing beaches beckon. The Vélo-maritime is one of the newer trails making up the EuroVelo, a bike network that aims to unite the

European continent. The new 260-mile La Seine à Vélo, with a focus on promoting environmentally friendly bicycle tourism and connecting with local communities, embarks from Notre-Dame in Paris and follows the Seine to the Normandy coast, through sun-dappled countryside. La Seine à Vélo's final stretch swoops through the area of Pays d'Auge, the cradle of Camembert, Calvados and cider. ANNEISE SORENSEN



CLARA FERRAND

THE INNER HEBRIDES

SCOTLAND

A signature industry searches for a sustainable future using water and high-tech fuel.

THESE ISLANDS ALONG Scotland's west coast are known for their wild, secluded beauty: fields of wildflowers, solitary beaches, ever-swirling seas. They're also known for producing some of the world's best single-malt whisky. Now, several new energy initiatives are helping to make the region — and its distilleries, which are largely reliant on fossil fuels — more eco-friendly. This year, the Bruichladdich Distillery, founded in 1881, is starting a pilot project on the island of Islay to begin using hydrogen fuel, in addition to fuel oil, to power its stills. According to the company, the zero-emission boiler, which will generate some of the steam required for distillation, will be the first of its kind in Britain. Plans are also underway to build new underwater wind turbines in the waters around Islay and Jura, a neighboring island, beginning in 2023. Those, too, could one day contribute to powering the islands and their distilleries, bringing an age-old industry — and the many tourists it draws — into a more sustainable future.

JENNY GROSS



ANDY HASLAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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KUNTA KINTEH ISLAND

GAMBIA

A struggle between a sorrowful history and rising seas on an endangered spot of land.

A SPECK OF LAND NEAR the mouth of the Gambia River, Kunta Kinteh Island was a key site in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Formerly called James Island and used for hundreds of years as a staging ground for the transport of enslaved people, the island, part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, was renamed in recent years after a character in Alex Haley's best-selling book "Roots." Now, because of heavy erosion and rising seas, the island is at risk of being lost altogether. Its ruins, including the cramped quarters where men and women

were confined before being sent across the Atlantic, have been partly protected, but only a fraction of the island's land mass remains, the rest having been reclaimed by the surrounding water. Local tour guides can be hired to explain the island's history, and a small cruise company runs annual river trips into Gambia, giving guests the opportunity to donate to a school and film festival the company founded deeper inland. NINA BURLEIGH



SHUTTERSTOCK

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HUMBOLDT

KANSAS

Squint, and you'll see hints of Marfa in a Midwestern town aiming for renewal.

IN 2016, A GROUP of Kansas locals who had left decades ago began asking themselves, "What would it take to move back home?" The answer lay in Humboldt, two hours southwest of Kansas City with a population of fewer than 2,000 people. With the support of the local community, the group established an organization, A Bolder Humboldt, to revitalize rural living, with the town becoming an unexpected and affordable oasis of cool surrounded by fields of wheat and soybeans. A Bolder Humboldt has already opened shops, community gardens and

co-working spaces, with a boutique hotel, a honky-tonk bar and a bookstore all in the works. Outdoor movies are screened on the town square, and the whole town participates in an annual water fight. Base Camp is a collection of lakeside rental cabins at the edge of town, and cyclists can ride a 60-mile trail to nearby Lawrence and the University of Kansas. Humboldt is betting these elevated experiences will draw both locals and tourists to the glories of the Great Plains. GABRIELA HERMAN



GABRIELA HERMAN

NAPLES ITALY

Locals work to combat climate change in a city where exploring on foot is part of the solution.

SEE NAPLES AND DIE, they say, meaning that this Mediterranean beauty should be on everyone's bucket list. But sadly, Naples faces a precarious future. Without intervention, this densely populated city is expected to experience 55 days of extreme heat per year by 2049 and 93 days by 2081, according to a recent report. The good news is that some locals are rolling up their sleeves. A group of residents in the working-class neighborhood of San Giovanni a Teduccio has set up a "fair energy" community to provide free, clean electricity to families living below the poverty line, with a system of 166 solar panels. Local authorities encourage tourists to see the city by foot, taking tours across Naples's fabled stairways. The Pedamentina, a scenic route tracing its roots to the 14th century consisting of paved descents and more than 400 steps, cannot be missed. ANNA MOMIGLIANO



SUSAN WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Volunteer to help plant trees and see Norse ruins in one of the world's most threatened places.



CARSTEN SNEJBJERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

WITH ITS AVERAGE temperatures rising faster than anywhere else on the planet, Greenland is establishing a holistic, sustainable approach to tourism that aims to be in harmony with its people, natural wilderness and 4,500-year-old Inuit culture. The world's largest island, a Danish territory, is now directing various grants to locals, including the Inuit dog-sled tour company Greenland Dog Adventure, and offering free

training and tourism degrees at Campus Kujalleq in Southern Greenland. Also in Southern Greenland: Greenland Trees. For more than a decade, this nonprofit — in a region sheltered from the island's traditional stormy weather — has planted thousands of trees to offset carbon emissions, and plans include building a greenhouse to cultivate seedlings and restoring land at a former military base. Volunteers are

welcomed to help plant trees and enjoy Greenland off the beaten path. Here visitors can see Norse ruins — the area is a UNESCO World Heritage site, for Norse and Indigenous culture — and experience the aurora borealis, with few others blocking the view. DANIEL SCHEFFLER

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HÖGA KUSTEN SWEDEN

A natural refuge on the wild High Coast offers travelers a greener, less-trodden alternative.

SWEDES HAVE LONG sought solitude in the untamed northern region known as Höga Kusten, or the High Coast, for its dramatic cliffs and pristine archipelago. With more than 100 nature preserves, a national park and hundreds of miles of trails, this wilderness refuge is a draw for hikers, cross-country skiers and mountaineers seeking less-trodden paths, stunning vistas and uncrowded campsites. A dedication to sustainable tourism, including a pledge to make the area carbon-neutral by 2030, promises

to protect the future of the coast, its beautiful lakes and its old-growth forests. Last summer, new electric buses began ferrying hikers from nearby towns to the park's entrance. To inspire hikers to appreciate the surrounding nature, the ArkNat architecture project has built several sculptural huts along the trails.

INGRID K. WILLIAMS



TOMMIE SVANSTRÖM OHLSON & ARKNAT

38

VANCOUVER ISLAND BRITISH COLUMBIA

Undisturbed old-growth forests remind visitors of what's at stake with climate change.

LONG A DESTINATION for adventurers eager to surf Tofino or watch for orcas or humpback whales, Vancouver Island has recently been the center of a controversy around one of British Columbia's few remaining patches of old-growth rainforest. These complex ecosystems, which remove and store significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, are in increasingly short supply — an argument demonstrators are using against loggers as they try to protect Douglas firs and yellow cedars in the island's Fairy Creek forest on Pacheedaht First Nation

territory. While the fight rages on and Fairy Creek remains inaccessible, the wonderland of Cascadian rainforest can be explored at MacMillan Provincial Park, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve or the UNESCO-protected Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. Experiencing old-growth forests while we still can is an affecting way to better understand what's at stake, and what we stand to lose. LAUREN SLOSS



SERENA RENNER

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ELIJIO PANTI NATIONAL PARK

BELIZE

In a park where Maya herbalism takes center stage, culture and nature are preserved.

SINCE GAINING ITS independence in 1981, Belize has long prioritized the conservation of its lands and waters. At a park near the country's western border with Guatemala, those conservation efforts extend to cultural and floral realms, too. Elijio Panti National Park, a lush, 13,006-acre oasis, is one of only a handful of parks in Belize that's comanaged by a Maya community. The park takes its name from Don Elijio Panti, a renowned Maya healer who worked from a small hut a couple of miles from the park's entrance. A series of medicine trails display the names and uses of the nearly

100 native plants — like balsam and gumbo-limbo — that Mr. Panti foraged here. "The day we forget how to use our medicinal plants is the day we go extinct," said Maria Garcia, Mr. Panti's niece, who inherited her uncle's interest in herbal medicine and serves as one of the park's stewards. Nearby hotels have begun highlighting the park as an attraction; at GAIA Riverlodge, guests can sign up for a five-hour guided tour led by a local shaman. ALEX SCHECHTER



ROBERT RAUSCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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NORTHLAND

NEW ZEALAND

Cultural lessons await, as do hot springs where visitors can recharge body and soul.

ACCORDING TO MAORI LEGEND, the North Island of New Zealand was an enormous fish, caught by the demigod Maui, and now the forested region of Northland is known as "the tail of the fish." Endless cultural lessons await travelers here. At the newly redeveloped Ngawha Springs, where the people of Ngapuhi came to replenish their wairua, or spirit, visitors can soak in dozens of mineral-rich geothermal pools to alleviate pain and repair common ailments. Also reopening is the cultural and educational center Te Ahurea, which includes an interactive pa — or settlement site — highlighting the history and traditions of the Hongi, Rewa

and Tareha Maori Indigeneous peoples. For day tours, the Maori-owned-and-operated Tu Tika Tours organizes private adventures that reveal local customs through storytelling, welcome ceremonies, singing, weaving and cuisine. And to rest your head, the secluded eco-retreat Tahī offers luxury while boasting of giving 100 percent of its profits back to local conservation, culture and community.

DANIEL SCHEFFLER



NORTHLAND NZ

41

MARRAKESH

MOROCCO

Visiting a fabled city supports efforts to employ, educate and empower women.

WHILE WOMEN IN MOROCCO have been granted some additional rights in the past two decades, the country recently ranked 144th (out of 156 countries) in a World Economic Forum study of gender parity. Fortunately, entrepreneurs are creating foundations, cooperatives, shops and restaurants to employ, educate and empower Moroccan women. Since many are in Marrakesh, a trip to this “Jewel of the South” offers an opportunity for visitors to help. The Al Kawtar boutique, stocked with clothing, bags and other textiles sewn by disabled women, also operates a home where the women live and receive care. For carpets, consider visiting the atelier of Salam Hello, which is devoted to paying weavers — mostly rural women — a fair wage and using profits to assist them. Come lunch or dinner, a traditional Moroccan meal — tagine, couscous, fruit salad — at an Amal restaurant provides direct assistance to disadvantaged women and helps finance a nonprofit association that trains women in culinary skills. Finally, when it’s time to sleep, consider Peacock Pavilions. The luxury resort, located in an olive grove outside of Marrakesh, is owned by the creators of Project Soar, which provides education and leadership training to teenage girls.

SETH SHERWOOD



MALLORY SOLOMON

42

SARASOTA FLORIDA

Saving the architectural Mod squad to inspire innovative and sustainable design today.

ARCHITECTURE SARASOTA is a new organization founded to protect and promote the most spectacular concentration of Modernist buildings east of the Mississippi. In a booming city on Florida's Gulf Coast, where there's a constant tug of war between developers and preservationists, raising the profile of these Modernist buildings is intended to give them greater value in the eyes of locals and attract design tourists, said Anne-Marie Russell, the organization's executive director. The buildings were the work of architects in what was known as the Sarasota School of Architecture, which emerged during the 1940s and ran through the mid-1960s.

Among the best-known architects were Paul Rudolph and his partner Ralph Twitchell, Philip Hiss, Gene Leedy, Carl Abbott, Victor Lundy and Jack West. "Our hope is the Sarasota School's innovative sensitivity to climate and environmental concerns will spur innovative and sustainable design here today," Ms. Russell said. Architecture Sarasota organizes guided visits to and private stays at some of the best Modernist houses and runs an annual MOD Weekend of tours, exhibits and similar events.

ALEXANDER LOBRANO



RYAN GAMMA

43

VANUATU

Explore blue lagoons on a Pacific archipelago that is challenging the world on climate change.

VISITORS TO VANUATU'S alluring swimming holes insist that each one is a slightly different shade of blue — some are an intense turquoise, others are sapphire. After diving into these natural freshwater pools, surrounded by lush foliage, travelers will find remarkable water clarity, even 60 feet down. The pools have been off-limits to visitors from abroad since March 2020, when this collection of around 80 islands, scattered across an 800-mile arc of the South Pacific, shut its borders to protect itself from the coronavirus. The plan is to reopen when more residents are vaccinated. The archipelago, which some liken to Bali or Fiji 40 years ago, be-

cause it has yet to reckon with overdevelopment, is also confronting a crisis beyond the pandemic. Along with consistently ranking among the happiest nations out there, Vanuatu is the most disaster-prone country in the world, and climate change is contributing to those disasters, which include cyclones and sea level rise. This tiny country of around 300,000 people is leading the fight to get the International Court of Justice to issue a legal opinion on nations' obligations to take action to slow climate change. Addressing this area of international law could influence policies not only in Vanuatu, but also everywhere we travel. HEATHER MURPHY



VANUATU TOURISM OFFICE/DAVID KIRKLAND

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CALIFORNIA

**Appreciating old trees
on new trails after wildfires
threatened their future.**

IN 2020, WILDFIRES across California threatened some of the world's oldest forests, including at Big Basin Redwoods and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Parks in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Thankfully, most of the parks' mighty redwoods survived the flames, and now hope — in the form of expanded green initiatives — is dawning across Santa Cruz County. While Henry Cowell is open, as is a small section of Big Basin, with more ambitious rebuilding planned, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is developing new hiking trails, including in

the 8,500-acre San Vicente Redwoods. On the North Coast, the Cotoni-Coast Dairies, a recent addition to the California Coastal National Monument, is scheduled to open within the next year, with nearly 6,000 acres of coastal terraces, redwood forests and sweeping views of the Pacific. The area's designation as a national monument will help protect its rich ecology and cultural history, including ancestral sites of the Indigenous Cotoni people.

ANNELISE SORENSEN



BETH COLLIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

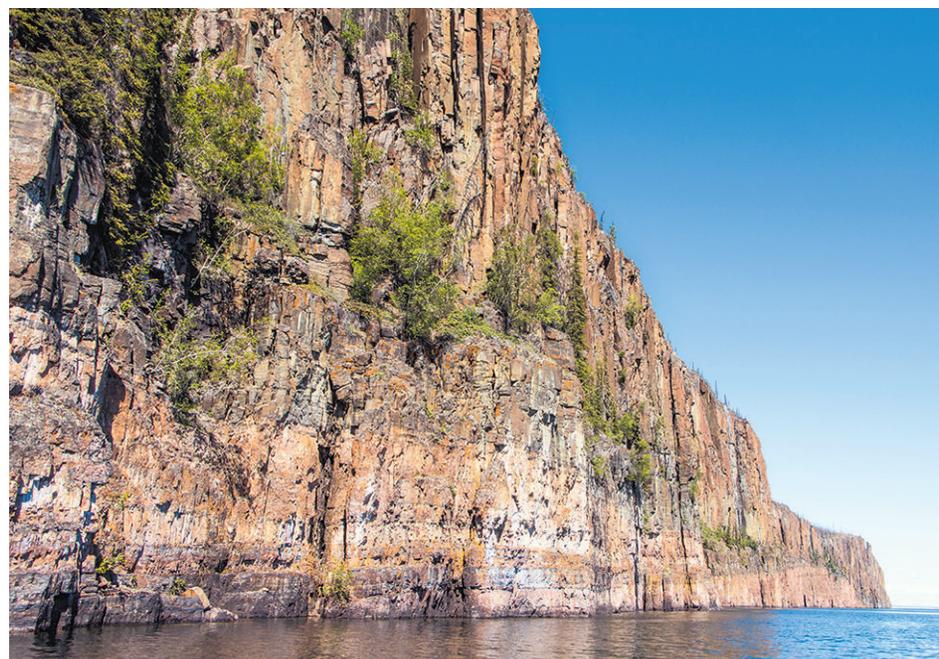
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THAIDENE NĒNĒ NATIONAL PARK RESERVE CANADA

**The country's newest national
park sets a model for Indigenous
control in a spectacular landscape.**

DESIGNATED IN 2019 and located in the Northwest Territories, Canada's newest national park is Thaidene Nënë, which means "Land of the Ancestors" in the Denesuline language. The park is a mix of boreal forest and tundra along the eastern shoreline of Great Slave Lake. It also sets a new precedent in including Indigenous peoples in park management and oversight. The first Canadian national parks, created in the 19th century, excluded Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. Although this policy changed, overall control remained in the hands of Parks Canada. At Thaidene Nënë, Indigenous communities, including the nearby

Dene settlement of Lutsel K'e, have helped create and manage the park from the beginning. Economic opportunities derived from the park, like guiding and cultural heritage tours, flow back to these communities. Ni Hat'ni Dene is a network of Lutsel K'e residents employed to protect, monitor and provide interpretive tours of the park. Visitors can hike along the trails of Dene ancestors, paddle through the many coves and waterfalls of the eastern arm of Great Slave Lake, fish for lake trout and Arctic grayling during the summer's nearly 24-hour light, and camp at the transition point between the subarctic and Arctic environments. PETER KUJAWINSKI



COREY MYERS/NWTT

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SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK ARIZONA

Communal help for a species threatened by climate change may sustain a park for the future.

SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK, whose two parcels sit on either side of Tucson, is home to almost two million of the tall, multilimbed cactuses for which it is named. For decades it has delighted visitors with hiking trails, archaeological sites and epic vistas. But climate change is now threatening the very cactuses that have made the park an iconic destination. Rising temperatures, along with more frequent — and hotter — wildfires, are curbing the growth of new saguaro. A National Park Service report found that out of 10,000 cactuses, only 70 were less than 11 to 15 years old, a disturbing trend that puts the future of the cactus population in the park at risk. To help mitigate the effects of wildfires, the park launched an eradication program targeting buffelgrass, an invasive species that is drought-resistant and provides an outside amount of wildfire fuel. The park has also organized monthly buffelgrass pulls, where teams of volunteers spend four hours digging up and disposing of the invasive species. Put on hold during the pandemic, the group pulls are slated to begin again early this year. Officials are also planning to begin a program where visitors can “adopt” specific areas of the park and pick buffelgrass on their own time. DANIEL TEPPER



JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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ISLAS CÍES

SPAIN

On this lush archipelago off the Galician coast, stopping overtourism is part of the charm.

EVEN BEFORE THE pandemic, the Islas Cíes off Spain's Galician coast had long limited the number of daily visitors — 1,800, in high season — to protect its environment and guard against overtourism. This verdant archipelago, part of the Atlantic Islands of Galicia National Park, is a vision of protected biodiversity: flourishing nature preserves, teeming marine life and robust colonies of seabirds. The strict conservation efforts include restrictions against cars, hotels and noise, and they ensure that only in designated areas can visitors explore long, curving beaches, snorkel through clear waters and hike trails that wind toward picturesque lighthouses. The delight continues at night. Ink-black starry skies have earned a Starlight designation for limited light pollution. Island ferries depart from Galicia's Rías Baixas region, with highlights that include misty albariño vineyards, Pontevedra's old town and Vigo and its Calle de las Ostras, where you can slurp fresh oysters at outdoor wooden tables. ANNELISE SORENSEN



EMILIO PARRA DOIZTUA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

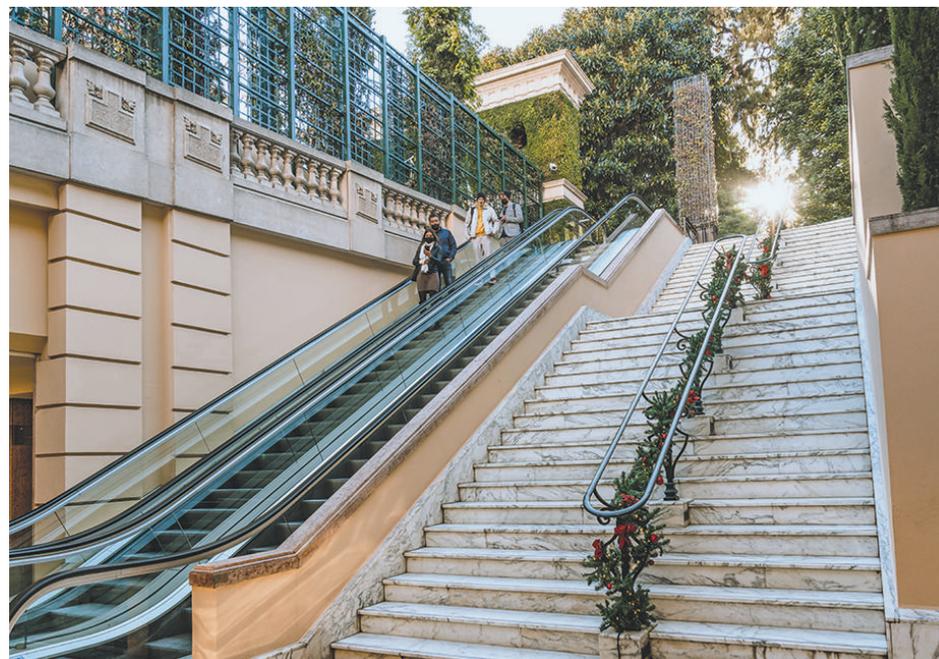
48

MONACO

The principality has a green sheen from its long-term carbon-neutral ambitions.

MONACO'S GILDED reputation shimmers worldwide, but these days the principality's glow is unequivocally green. The sovereign city-state on the French Riviera has an ambitious plan to cut its carbon emissions by 55 percent before 2030 and turn carbon-neutral by 2050. Its efforts are driven by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, a global charity prioritizing environmental action that was established in 2006. Sixteen years later, evidence of the principality's initiatives is visible (and enjoyable) in the 0.76-square-mile enclave. It has a robust network of electric cars, bikes and hybrid buses, and a solar-powered water taxi that transports people with

ease. Strollable public parks and gardens make up 20 percent of Monaco (where escalators help with the climbs), while snorkeling is the activity du jour off Larvotto Beach, where sea life thrives amid 3-D printed reefs, submerged to restore habitats damaged by human activity. The locally based company Terrae takes urban gardening and farming to new heights, populating rooftops and balconies, and supplying residents and restaurants, including the Michelin-starred Blue Bay. Meanwhile, the Distillery of Monaco produces bitter orange liqueur and gin, flavored with citrus from trees in Monaco and nearby villages. KIMBERLEY LOVATO



JOANN PAI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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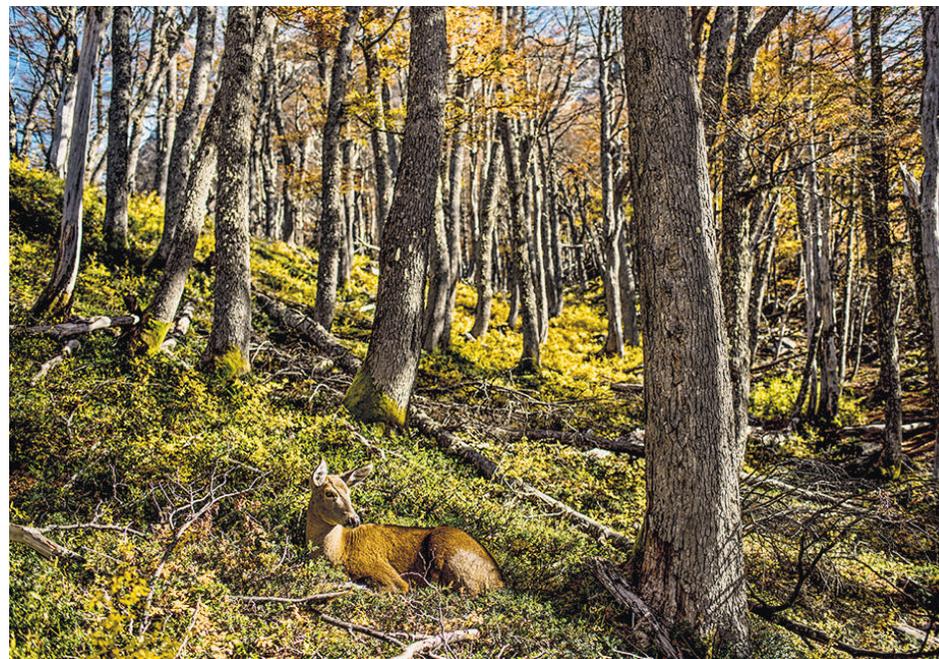
CERRO CASTILLO NATIONAL PARK

CHILE

Conservation efforts offer hope for a country's national animal whose numbers have dwindled.

LOCATED ALONG the Route of Parks of Patagonia, a network of 17 national reserves that make up about a third of Chile, Cerro Castillo was designated as a national park in 2018 and is at the center of an effort to protect the country's national animal, the huemul or South Andean deer, from extinction. The huemul population has dwindled to 1,500, about 1 percent of its historic size. Rewilding Chile, a conservation organization started by the co-founder of the North Face, Douglas Tompkins, working with the Chilean government, is leading an initiative to save the huemul. They established the National Huemul Corridor to give the huemules

more room to roam between the parks, and are building a huemul rehabilitation center in Cerro Castillo to treat animals infected with Linfadenitis caseosa, a disease transmitted by cattle. Visitors to Cerro Castillo may spot the animals while enjoying a short walk on one of the trails through the Lenga and Ñirre forests, or can opt for a circuit through the park that takes four to five days. The park's crown jewel is a mountain peak that resembles a castle, from which it takes its name. CONCEPCIÓN DE LEÓN



TOMAS MUNITA

50

BRONZEVILLE MILWAUKEE

With thriving businesses and the reopening of a noted museum, a largely Black district offers the chance to take part in renewal.

AT TIMES OVERSHADOWED by its namesake neighborhood in Chicago, Milwaukee's Bronzeville district is again distinguishing itself as a center of African American culture. From 1910 to the 1950s, the area buzzed with Black-owned businesses, but it was decimated by the "urban renewal" projects that razed thriving Black neighborhoods across America. Today's Bronzeville is supported by about \$400 million of redevelopment funds from organizations like the Historic King Drive BID, P3 Development Group and Maures Development Group (all led by people of color). Symbolic of this reinvigoration is the reopening next year of America's

Black Holocaust Museum. Founded in 1988 by Dr. James Cameron, the only known survivor of a lynching, the museum attracted visitors from around the world before closing in 2008 when it lost funding during the recession. On Feb. 25, the museum will reopen in a 10,000-square-foot space that takes visitors on a journey through more than 4,500 years of African and African American history. Nearby, businesses like Gee's Clippers (a barbershop housed in a 1930s bank) and the Bronzeville Collective (a retail space featuring local Black brands) elevate African American artistry. SHAYLA MARTIN



KEVIN MIYAZAKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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SERRA DA CAPIVARA NATIONAL PARK BRAZIL

Art and archaeology in a remote park that visitors can help preserve.

SURE, IT'S THE DRAMATIC mesas and canyons of northeastern Brazil's caatinga, or cactus-y shrub lands, that first catch the eye. But what distinguishes this national park from countless other breathtaking Brazilian landscapes are the archaeological and artistic remains of ancient humans who many researchers believe arrived more than 20,000 years ago. The now 88-year-old French-Brazilian archaeologist Niède Guidon first documented the exuberant red ochre cave drawings depicting hunters, prey, revelers and play in the 1960s. Her team unearthed archaeological finds that called into question previous theories on how humans reached the Ameri-

cas; the area became a national park in 1979, added the Museum of American Man in 1986 and became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991. The Museum of Nature, opened in 2018, brought a record 30,000 visitors to the park the next year. The pandemic slowed momentum but not progress: New archaeological sites were prepared for visitation, new visitor bathrooms were installed and, most notably, an impressive 200-foot enclosed ladder up a steep cliff face opened in October, allowing safer and far faster visitor access to a popular panoramic viewpoint. SETH KUGEL



EDU COELHO

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DAINTREE RAINFOREST

AUSTRALIA

A region returned to its Indigenous owners lets visitors learn about their culture and stewardship of the land.

THE 180-MILLION-YEAR-OLD Daintree Rainforest in northern Queensland is one of the world's most complex ecosystems. Part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, the area is home to sparkling rivers, copious wildlife and lush tropical flora, all of which tumble down to white sand beaches that abut the Great Barrier Reef. The region has always been popular with tourists. But in 2021 it became an even more compelling destination, after nearly 400,000 acres of land, including Daintree, were handed back to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji, an Aboriginal people who are believed to have lived in the area for more than 50,000 years. The hope is that the transfer of ownership will encourage visitors to learn more about the culture and ecological stewardship of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji, as well as provide career opportunities for members of the tribe. It is an example of the increasingly vital role Indigenous Australians are taking in the country's tourism industry. **BESHA RODELL**



ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



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