

The IFS Foundation Travel Guide



IFS FOUNDATION



Contents

Explanation of symbols



What destination is it?



What county or region is it?



What country is it?



How difficult is it to get there?
1 = easy 5 = hard



How long does it take?
Or recommended visit duration

Cornwall - The wild and relaxed South West

Cornwall has been an amazing family home to us and is so full of nature, adventure and life that it really ought to be explored with a child's mindset. There is so much to discover, but here are some of our favourites.

The Eden Project is a botanical wonder nestled in a bare clay mine. Great option on a rainy day, but very busy on weekends.

There are a multitude of stunning gardens in Cornwall, but my favourites are Trebah (on the Helford River), the Lost Garden of Heligan (very historical!) and the Trelissik National Trust property.

Godrevery beach is one of the most well-known beaches in Cornwall—rising to fame in Virginia Woolfe's novel *To the Lighthouse*—and has some beautiful walks and hidden gems. You can often see seals and dolphins here!



Destination
Cornwall



Difficulty
2/5



Country
England



Duration
1 week



Michael Schauer
Germany





The picturesque village and coastline at St. Agnes is certainly worth a visit. Visit the village and its closest beach at Trevaunance Cove, before driving 10 minutes out behind The Beacon and visit the ruins of Wheal Coates which lies just on top of the cliffs.

Falmouth town and harbour are always buzzing with a myriad of shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants all busy with locals, tourists and art students alike. There is also Pendennis Castle and the Marine Museum (which would be my personal rainy day favourite).

We love Loe Beach for a family water day as it's never that busy and you can rent kayaks, paddle boards and sailing boats for a reasonable cost.

Lastly, for some history visit the birthplace of King Arthur in Tintagel, the Bedruthan Steps or Porthcurno for some stunning coastal views.

“

Go to Chapelporth at low tide and walk on the beach further south to Porthtowan for a coffee/pint at the Blue Bar.”

Mahaweli River

Magical - that's the very first word that comes to mind if I am to sum up my kayaking journey on the River Mahaweli, since it was nothing short of entering a virgin planet unspoiled by human touch. No manmade structures, noise or interference; rather lush greeneries as far as the eye can see with blossoming vegetation and a warm embrace from Mother Nature.

On our journey, we saw river-crossing wild elephants, crocodiles that glided at arm's length from the kayak, tons of bird species and many other animals as the expedition took us through the 'Wasgamuwa' and 'Somawathi' game reserves.

There are many kayaking trails along Mahaweli River, but the one I would recommend is the 150km kayaking route 'Dehiaththakandiya' to 'Trincomalee' where the river meets the sea. I recommend staying on the kayaking trail in the Mahaweli for at least 3 days.



Sachitha De Silva
Colombo, Sri Lanka



Destination
Mahaweli River



Difficulty
4/5



Country
Sri Lanka



Duration
3 days minimum





One can camp on the riverbanks at night, but permission has to be obtained from the wildlife department. However, getting yourself enrolled with a professional kayaking tour provider for a Mahaweli river expedition makes the whole process easier.

All in all, it was truly a one-of-a-kind experience for me. If you dare to challenge yourself to paddle through rapids, see wildlife and camp on the riverbank, then visit the river Mahaweli kayaking trail!

Do not panic at the sight of wild animals like crocodiles and wild elephants. By nature they are shy creatures and would disappear into the wilderness if we keep a healthy distance and leave them unprovoked.

“

Waterproof sunscreen, waterproof bags and mosquito repellent are all a must.”

Galena

As a self-described history nerd, Galena provides ample opportunities for the adventurer to explore the past and enjoy the present. I have been making trips to the Galena area for the past 25 years, each time learning new stories and visiting new places.

If not for the modern-day goods sold in the retail establishments, you might think Galena was frozen in time. The six-block Main Street boasts striking examples of various architectural styles, ranging from French Colonial to Greek Revival, and a whopping 85% of the town is a national historic district.

General Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th U.S. President, lived here briefly before leaving to head the Union troops in the Civil War. Upon his triumphant return, the town presented him with an elegant mansion. That house and other restored historic homes are open to the public. There's much more here to fascinate the history enthusiast: the Old Market House and the Historical Society and Museum, housed in a stunning Italianate home.



Destination
Galena



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Illinois



Duration
1 - 2 days



Country
USA



Troy Kindle

Chicago, USA





Before its Civil War glory days, Galena was a booming lead-mining town. Today, you can descend underground into the Vinegar Hill Lead Mine. But don't stay down there too long, or you won't get to enjoy the rolling hills and lush valleys of this charming getaway, which also offers fine dining, numerous bed and breakfasts, golfing, and antiquing.

The best time to go is in late September - October. The town transforms into all things Halloween that culminates in Galena's Annual Halloween Parade the last Saturday night before Halloween.

“

If not for the modern-day goods sold in the retail establishments, you might think Galena was frozen in time.”

Tramway & Star Ferry

Still in operation since the early 1900s, the iconic Hong Kong Tramway and Star Ferry are by no means the quickest mode of transport compared to its modern mass transit counterpart, but it is the most rewarding in terms of truly soaking up the sights and sounds of this everchanging and vibrant metropolis.

Despite its impressive skyline, there are parts of Hong Kong you don't often see as these are shrouded by the surrounding skyscrapers. To get a real sense of Hong Kong's rich history and culture, there is no better way to experience this than to jump on a tram and navigate your way through the busiest areas of Hong Kong Island and witness the city's transition from old to new.

The locals call the tram a "Ding Ding", which is the bell sound the tram makes when alerting pedestrians. It runs from the east to west end of the island, and is also far less crowded than the metro system. However, be warned that the lack of air conditioning makes for a sweaty trip on a hot day!



Destination
Tramway & Star Ferry



Difficulty
1/5



Country
Hong Kong SAR

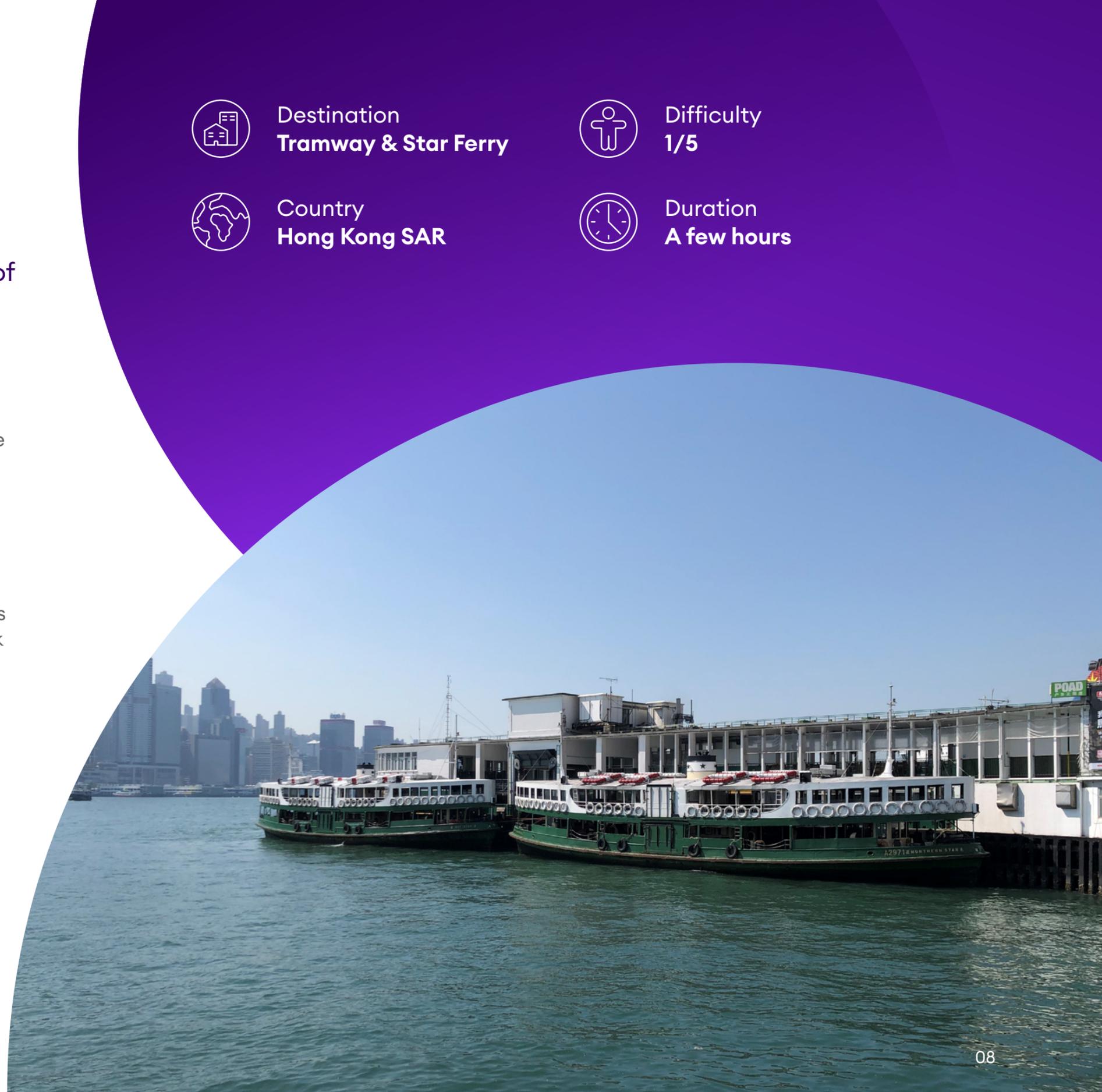


Duration
A few hours



Stephen Fung

London, UK





Both the ferry and tramway maintain their reputation for being operated largely in their own traditional manner and can be enjoyed at incredibly cheap prices. I'd advise purchasing an Octopus card, a contactless smart payment card, which is not only widely accepted on railways, buses and ferries, but also can be used for payment in certain retail stores.

“

The best time to hop on the ferry is at dusk when the lights come on and illuminate the entire Hong Kong skyline.”

Secret Beach

Mirissa is home to the most beautiful beach in my motherland, Sri Lanka. I have a personal attachment to this place as I chose to have my pre-wedding photo shoot here, as I know for a fact this beach offers picturesque scenery for photos.

The Secret Beach has the most beautiful surroundings; it is one of the few beaches in Sri Lanka where the jungle meets the ocean. The site of the beach is so breathtaking with all the clear blue water and different shades of green. It is nestled in a cove and surrounded by small hills covered in lush green palm trees on either side.

Secret Beach consists of three small beaches, which are just around the bay from the more popular Mirissa Beach. Palm Cove especially is a wonderful snorkelling location. Sri Lanka is home to five out of seven species of sea turtle in the world, so keep your eyes peeled while snorkelling!



Destination
Secret Beach



Difficulty
3/5



County/Region
Mirissa



Duration
1 day



Country
Sri Lanka



Piumi Narayana

Colombo, Sri Lanka



While the location is becoming more well-known, it still remains quiet and secluded, hidden behind a rocky and slippery path leading to the beach (so it is not an ideal location to visit on a rainy day!). I would suggest wearing shoes and carrying an extra set of clothing.

“

There are not many cafes around the beach, so I'd advise bringing some food and water with you!”

Reykjavík

The Land of Fire and Ice, Iceland is a very interesting country to visit as you explore where the freezing forces of glaciers and arctic weather meet volcanic heat. I did several activities to see waterfalls, geysers and even the volcano which was active at the time. I also took some boat rides to see whales, dolphins, and puffins.

Reykjavik is the capital and largest city in Iceland, located in the southwest of the country. As well as having a unique distinction as being the most northerly located capital city in the world, it has a reputation for being one of the cleanest, greenest and safest cities in the world. You can experience Icelandic history right at the centre of Reykjavík: for example, at the Settlement Exhibition built around an unearthed Viking longhouse.

I chose Iceland because it is very different from where I live. There is something for everyone: a lot of history, as the country was first settled in 874 AD; more than 10,000 waterfalls; and for geography-lovers there is regular volcanic activity!



Karin Rainesalo
Tucson, USA



Destination
Reykjavík



Difficulty
3/5



Country
Iceland



Duration
1 week





While Iceland is admittedly an expensive country, it gives you the experience of a lifetime so it is a very worthwhile trip.

Remember to bring warm clothes!

“

It has a reputation for being one of the cleanest, greenest and safest cities in the world.”

The Great Wall of China

The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and has been a UNESCO heritage site since 1987. With an astounding total length of over 4000km, it is a series of fortifications that were built across the historical northern borders of ancient Chinese states and Imperial China as protection against various nomadic groups from the Eurasian Steppe.

I trekked parts of The Great Wall of China back in 2018 for charity, through a company called Global Challenge Adventures who organised the whole 9-day experience. It was one of the best, and most challenging, travel experiences of my life. Having completed the journey with 25 other people for various charities, I made lifelong friends, and saw parts of China I didn't think possible. It certainly put life into perspective.



Danielle Durrant
London, UK



Destination
The Great Wall of China



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Beijing



Duration
9-10 days



Country
China





Some sections of the wall are trickier than others and I overcame fears and tasks that are not for the faint hearted. Thankfully there were skilled medics and experts on hand to guide us along the way.

If you can go, I would highly recommend it! The photos do not do the place justice. I will treasure my memories from the trip forever.

“

Make sure you bring trekking poles, good shoes, and an ability to want to take on a serious challenge if taking on some of the harder parts.”

K'gari–The Largest Sand Island in the World

An experience that you can't get in any other place in the world. Fraser Island is one of the only places where you will be able to see 4 different eco-systems in one 123km area. While remote, it is easily accessible by boat from Rainbow Beach and perfect for both children and adults. It provides a balance of nature and culture with over 500 archaeological sites around the island from its original inhabitants, the Butchulla tribe.

Aside from being the largest sand island in the world - Fraser Island is the only place on our planet where a rainforest has been known to grow from sand. This incredible place is the perfect island adventure that also features a desert, 100 freshwater lakes, native Dingos and (my favourite feature) an unbeaten view of our solar system come nightfall.



Destination
Fraser Island



Difficulty
3/5



County/Region
Queensland



Duration
3-5 days



Country
Australia



Joanna Darby

London, UK





From hiking, floating through natural water rapids, whale spotting from hill points and swimming in naturally formed ocean pools - Fraser Island offers something for everyone at a range of accessibility levels, through both self-guided and group tours.

If you don't feel confident doing a self-guided tour, join a group tour experience with the added benefit of getting to know other travellers. If you have a choice, choose tented accommodation for a more authentic experience of the island. When packing, take your bug spray (lots of it) and pack a hat as exposed lakes and deserts can result in long periods out in the sun.

“

Don't go into the sea!
As lovely as it looks, the sea
around Fraser Island is some of
the most dangerous in the world
due to its inhabitants.”

Whitby Abbey

A 7th century Christian monastery that later became a Benedictine abbey. The abbey overlooks the North Sea on the cliffs above Whitby in North Yorkshire, England.

Whitby is a fantastic coastal town, with great places to enjoy traditional English food and drink. Whitby Abbey is an imposing 7th century monastery that overlooks the town and provides stunning views and a rich history. There is a local and independent brewery behind the abbey, with delicious traditional ales that should not be missed!

Famously, the abbey and its surroundings play host to Bram Stoker's Dracula! You can celebrate over 125 years of Dracula with performances throughout the summer months. Visiting in October is certainly a must as the town celebrates this with a number of events, shows and activities.

There is even a Summer Explorer Quest especially for kids: encouraging them to uncover the history of the abbey in a fun and interactive way. As if that wasn't enough, discover tales of Viking raids and saintly Saxons in the museum.



Destination
Whitby Abbey



Difficulty
2/5



County/Region
North Yorkshire



Duration
1 day



Country
United Kingdom



David Clarke
London, UK





Take at least 2 hours to visit the abbey and the visitor's centre, but I would strongly encourage you spend the whole day exploring the town.

“

It's advisable to drive from the town to the abbey, or get a bus, as it can be a demanding walk.”

The Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá

This Cathedral, known in Spanish as Catedral de Sal de Zipaquirá, is one of the most unusual places of worship you can visit in South America. It is located 180m (590ft) underground and is built in the shaft of an abandoned halite salt mine.

The idea came after generations of miners devotedly carved an altar where they would pray for their safety before starting their workday. The cathedral was inaugurated in 1954 and was dedicated to the patron saint of miners. Today, the cathedral is illuminated by thousands of multicolored lights, sending sparkle and shimmer across the pillars of salt. It is a beautiful feast for the eyes.

Long gone are the days of salt mining in Zipaquirá and although it is not one of the Seven Wonders of the World, it was declared “the first wonder of Colombia”.



Destination
The Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca



Duration
Half day

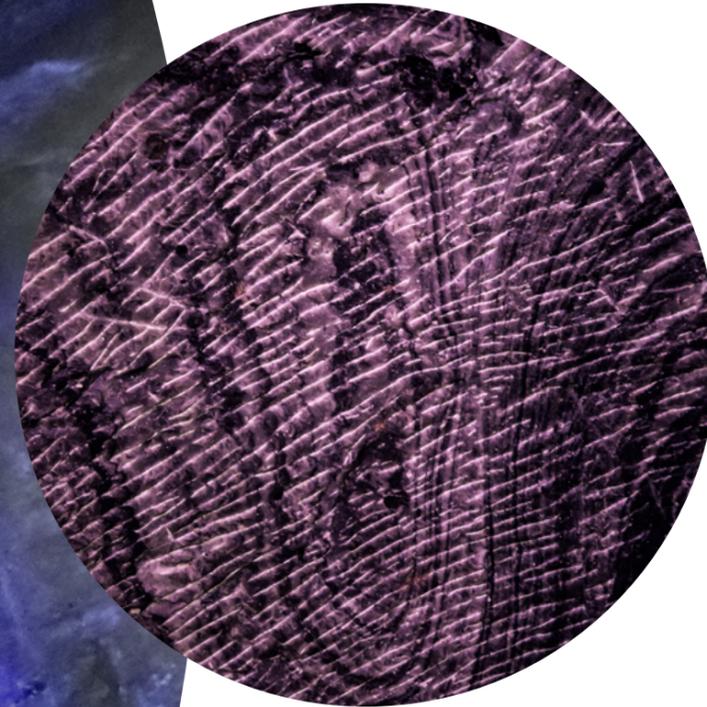


Country
Colombia



**Stephanie
Andrews Rojas**
London, UK





There is a fantastic amount of history to discover in the salt mines, dating back to the indigenous Muisca people.

The cathedral is not the only attraction you can enjoy in the area as it is set in the Parque de la Sal, which includes a small museum, a climbing tower, a zip-lining course, a food hall, and the highest rock-climbing wall in Colombia. It is a great day out for couples, the whole family, or a solo trip.

The tour inside the cathedral lasts 60 minutes, and is available in Spanish and English. Another option is to take a guided tour called The Miners Route where you can experience life as a miner. I recommend carving half a day to fully take in the wonder that surrounds you.

“

The Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral isn't for those who get claustrophobic easily, but for all others, a visit to this unique attraction is an absolute must when in Bogotá.”

Aurlandsdalen

A tremendously beautiful hike, through a landscape you can only reach by foot along lush, well-marked trails. It is a good 8-hour hike depending on how fit you are and which route you choose.

Dedicating a day to the hike will allow you to stop on the way for both photos (you'll take too many for sure) and to eat - as you will need the energy of at least two meals! It is recommended you have done some hiking before, but you do not need to be super fit. If you are a keen hiker, you could explore the mountains even more over a few days.

The untouched, natural beauty of Western Norway is combined with the age-old history and culture of abandoned farms and small settlements. Make sure you start early in the morning to allow time for exploring and enjoying the beautiful scenery.



Destination
Aurlandsdalen



Difficulty
3/5



County/Region
Vestland



Duration
1-3 days



Country
Norway



Tone Mette Pytte

Oslo, Norway





One of the best parts of hiking is that it doesn't have to be a very expensive thing to do. You could get there by bus or car—or by a combination of train and bus; you can camp in tent to make it affordable; or you could go for a bit of comfort and book yourself a room at a B&B nearby!

“

Bring good shoes, enough to drink and eat, clothes for changing weather and enough storage on your phone to take hundreds of photos.”

Sani Pass

The Sani Pass is a mountain pass bordering KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa and Lesotho. The pass is only accessible by 4x4 so it's recommended to book a 4x4 day tour trip with one of the tour operators based on KwaZulu-Natal.

A bonus is that the tour drivers have so much knowledge about the area and will explain the history of the pass, the geology and the plants and animals. The pass is about 9km long and has 13 hairpin turns, each turn with its own name and the tour driver explains the meaning of each one.

Sani Pass is one of the most iconic mountain passes in Southern Africa, it takes you to an altitude of 2876m above sea level and is a unique way to visit both South Africa and Lesotho. Take the whole day, driving up the pass is about an hour then explore Lesotho - you'll have enough time for lunch at the Highest Pub in Africa and to explore. Then another hour's drive down the pass again.



Destination
Sani Pass



Difficulty
5/5



County/Region
**Border of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa and Lesotho**



Duration
1 day



Country
South Africa



Caitlin Keam

Johannesburg, South Africa





Consider which time of the year you decide to visit Sani Pass as the pass is often closed during adverse weather conditions especially during winter. During icy or snowy conditions, leave the drive up to people who know the pass very well.

“

Take your passport and leave enough time at the border for passport control as you will cross a border between South Africa and Lesotho.”

Noosa National Park

Noosa National Park is 160km north of Brisbane along the beautiful Sunshine Coast. The national park starts only a short walk from Noosa Heads main beach and features the spectacular coastal scenery of Noosa Headland, as well as nearby areas including Lake Weyba, Peregrian and Coolum.

The Park is a wildlife sanctuary where you can expect to spot koalas, kangaroos, and many tropical birds in the bushland areas. If you take a look out towards the ocean, you can often witness the beautiful dolphins putting on a bit of a show for all to see. Between June and November, you might even see a humpback whale! For nature-lovers, expect to enjoy beautiful stands of eucalypt forest, woodland, melaleuca wetland, colourful wallum heathland and pockets of dense vine-strewn rainforest.

There are several easy to moderate walking tracks that wind along the coast, and you could stop for a picnic overlooking the beautiful Laguna Bay to enjoy sweeping views from Noosa to Cooloola.



Destination
Noosa National Park



Difficulty
3/5



County/Region
Queensland



Duration
1-2 days



Country
Australia



Hannah Wallace
Melbourne, Australia





It's a place that has always brought me peace and never ceases to amaze me. It doesn't matter how many times you visit, there is always something new to see and experience.

It can be enjoyed by yourself, but also with friends and family and has such a wide variety of activities nearby that you will be entertained all weekend long.

“

Remember to bring a bottle of water, some snacks and your towel and swimmers!”

Camino de Santiago

The Camino de Santiago is known in English as the Way of St James. It is a network of pilgrim routes or pilgrimages leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain.

You can start the route at any place depending on your goals, physical condition and time, but the end of the road is always Santiago.

It is a unique experience which will mark your life: you will share unforgettable moments with other people; you will get to know yourself; you will strengthen your spirit; and you will make great friendships for life.

The route can be done by foot or bike, alone or accompanied, and you can spend anywhere between two days or a week on the trail. I did this activity in 2015 with my son (when he was 12 years old) and we are thinking about repeating the experience!



Destination
Camino de Santiago



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Galicia



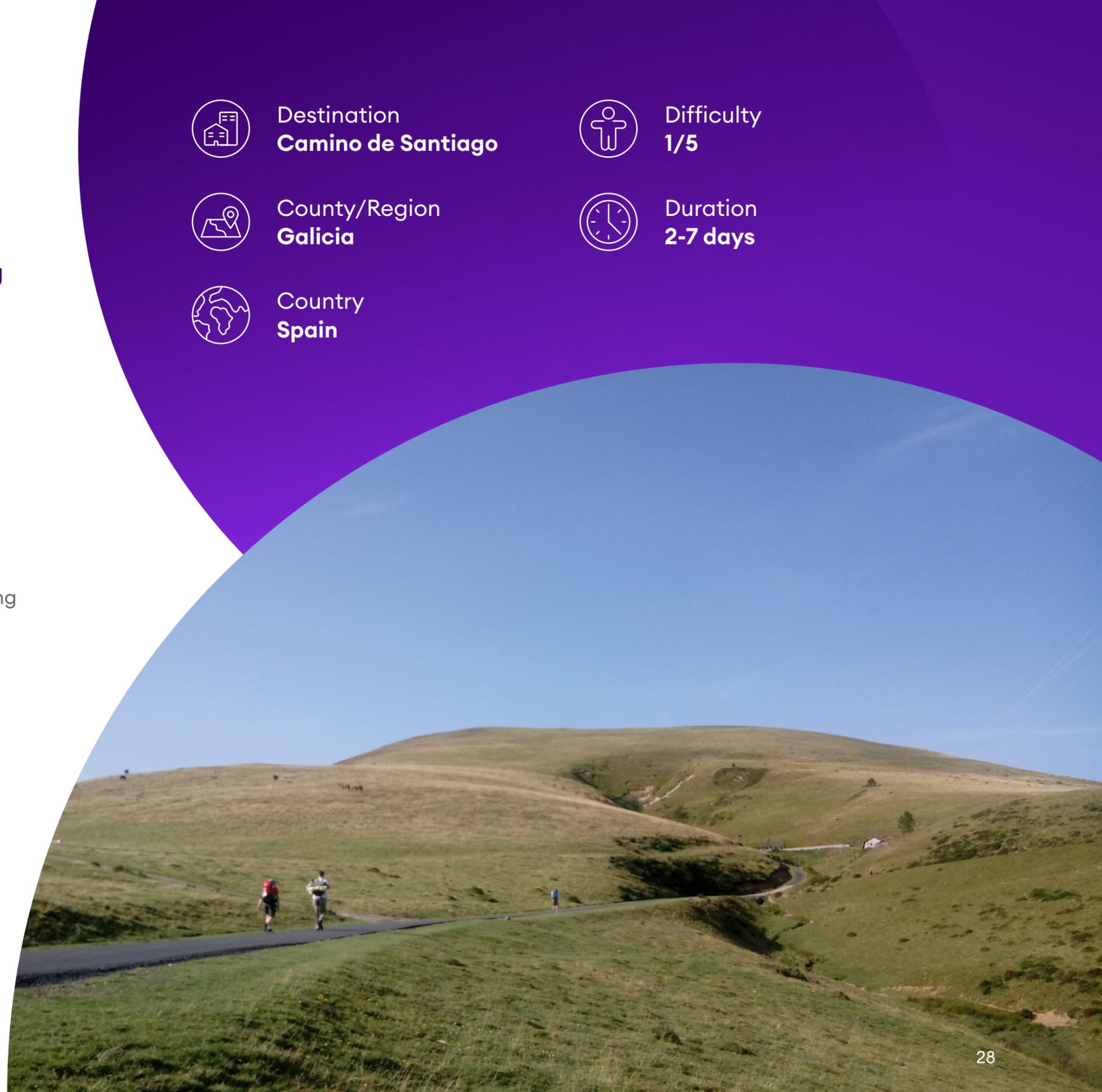
Duration
2-7 days



Country
Spain



**Abel Tapiador
Carretero**
Madrid, Spain





People usually walk around 15km per day and sleep in subsidized hostels (10€ per night with breakfast included). You only need basic things: a change of clothes, jacket, cap, glasses, sunscreen, soap to wash clothes, toiletry bag, toilet paper, comfortable slippers, etc.

“

It's recommended to only bring a bag with a maximum of 10% of your total weight to avoid problems with your feet.”

Durdle Door

Durdle Door is one of Dorset's most photographed and iconic landmarks. It is part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and is an extremely popular beauty spot.

Durdle Door itself is a natural arch, formed from a layer of hard limestone standing almost vertically out of the sea. On the walk towards it, several caves can be seen at the base of the chalk cliffs. It is certainly a good place to visit if you are interested in geology or geography!

I've chosen this destination as I recently visited here as part of a camping holiday. It's a wonderful place to visit if you like walking, taking in the magnificent views of the coast and visiting the pub! At the foot of the path to Durdle Door are two pebble beaches—Durdle Door to the West and Man O' War cove to the East.



Destination
Durdle Door



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Dorset



Duration
Half day



Country
England



Rebecca Walker

London, UK





Lulworth Cove, another beautiful spot, is a steep but worthwhile climb for a pub lunch after! The stretch of footpath between Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove is actually the busiest in the South West and sees more than 200,000 walkers each year. Durdle Door is perfect for dog lovers too.

“

Take walking shoes with you, there is quite a steep rocky path to walk to get down to the beach. It can be windy too as you are high up, as you can see in the picture!”

Mount Rinjani

Mount Rinjani is a 3726m high volcanic mountain with a breathtakingly blue lake inside the crater. There is a great variety of scenery around the mountain, with forests, rock formations and tropical rainforest.

I've had the pleasure of hiking this mountain back in 2017, taking the 3-day track, which was physically challenging, but therefore also hugely rewarding. The views are breath-taking and the scenery is simply unique, with the most beautiful sunset and sunrise I've ever seen.

I found the 3-day trek was perfect, guided by professionals that lead the way. On Day 1, we hiked from Sembalun up to base camp where tents are deployed. We especially enjoyed the most beautiful sunset over the crater lake.

On the second day, we hiked up to the summit at 3am to catch the sunrise at the top, and then we hiked back to base camp for breakfast. We had the opportunity to descend towards the crater lake and enjoy a swim. Then we hiked around the lake & ascended back to the rim.



Destination
Mount Rinjani



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Lombok Island



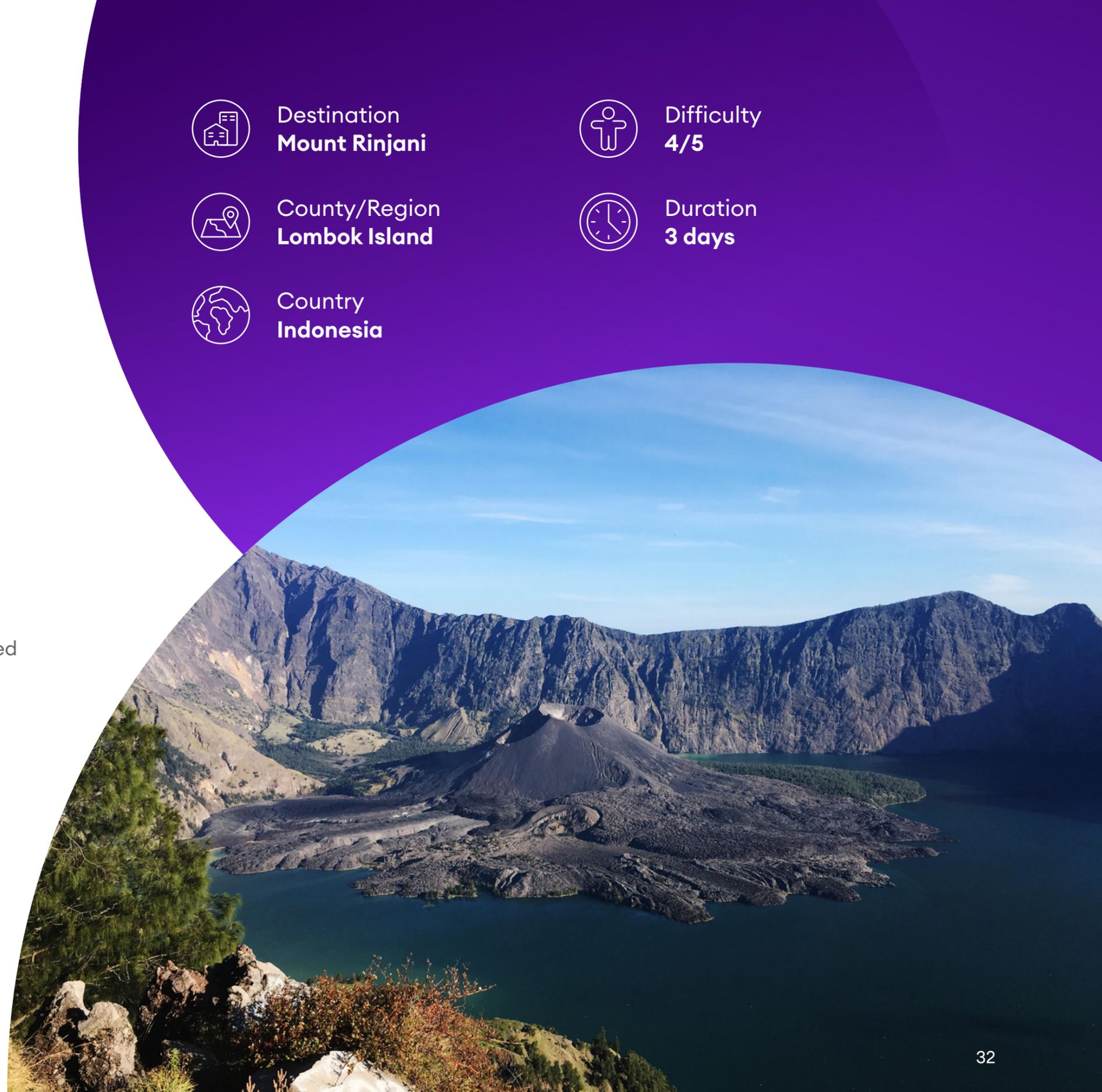
Duration
3 days



Country
Indonesia



Gideon Klipstein
Eindhoven, Netherlands





On day three, we descended back to Senaru through the tropical rainforest.

Ensure to take a guided tour with helpers that know the area and arrange for your supplies - tip them generously because they're the ones that make or break your trip. Ensure a good base condition and good hiking shoes - you'll need them!

“

The views are breathtaking and the scenery is simply unique, with the most beautiful sunset and sunrise I've ever seen.”

São Miguel dos Milagres Beach

As a Brazilian who likes to travel, throughout my life I have had the opportunity to visit many beautiful places in Brazil, such as the beautiful beaches of Rio de Janeiro, the waterfalls of Chapada dos Guimarães, and others.

In April, when I got married, my husband and I chose to spend our honeymoon in the state of Maceió (northern Brazil, which is well known for its beautiful beaches, calm seas, and warm waters), following recommendations from friends. Of the several beaches that we visited during our honeymoon in Maceio, one of the most beautiful was São Miguel dos Milagres.

São Miguel dos Milagres, or simply Milagres, is a city in Alagoas that is attracting more and more visitors. The small town is part of the so-called Ecological Route, a little piece of the northern coast of Alagoas that enchants for its simplicity, charming hotels and empty beaches, with natural pools and coconut trees as far as the eye can see.



Destination
São Miguel dos Milagres Beach



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Alagoas



Duration
3 days



Country
Brazil



Camila Ferreira
Chicago, USA





The beautiful sea and natural pools are the main reasons that Milagres is so popular. The city has 5 beaches, each one different from the other, but all have their unspoilt beauty in common. In addition to the beaches, São Miguel dos Milagres has other activities to do, such as a buggy ride through the region, bike rides along the coast, raft rides to the natural pools and a viewpoint overlooking the coast. In addition, the churches and old houses of the city enhance the tour of those who disembark there to spend their holidays.

“

You need to check the “tide table” in order to swim with the fish and see the corals when the tide is low.”

Cirque Peak

Cirque Peak summit is located off the Icefields Parkway, 20 minutes from Lake Louise, Alberta. Cirque Peak is a 17km hike that provides stunning mountain views and allows you to reach 9,500ft at the summit. From the summit you get amazing views of Bow Lake, Iceberg Lake, Peyto Lake and the surrounding mountain ranges.

The mountain has a cirque name, officially adopted in 1979, to describe the shape of its peak. The icefields parkway has some of the most stunning scenery in Alberta. This hike specifically provides views that will take your breath away.

The trail is primarily used for hiking, nature trips and bird watching and is best used from June to September. Dogs are welcome but must be on a leash. There are also lots of black flies and mosquitos, so bring bug spray with you for a more comfortable walk.



Destination
Cirque Peak, Ice Fields Parkway



Difficulty
1/5



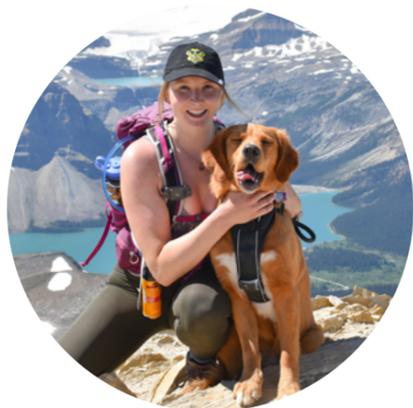
County/Region
Alberta



Duration
6-8 hours



Country
Canada



Meagan Fidyk
Vancouver, Canada





The route is generally considered to be a challenging route, especially in the last 500m where there is a loose scree section. If you are going to attempt Cirque Peak, ensure that you are comfortable with hiking/scrambling and have proper hiking shoes. Hiking poles might be handy too!

“

If you do not want to go all the way to the top, you can visit Helen Lake, which is the mid-point on the hike.”

Dresden

Dresden is the capital of the Free State of Saxony. With around 560,000 citizens, Dresden is the twelfth largest city in Germany. The city is also called “Florence on the Elbe” because of its scenic location on the Elbe, its magnificent Baroque buildings and wealth of artistic and cultural treasures, as well as its climatically advantageous features.

The city is a cultural heritage and a memorial of the times. Dresden’s old town was almost completely destroyed by the Allies in one of the most devastating air strikes during the Second World War. Since then, the people of Dresden have been rebuilding their city, partly with international support, and this process continues to this day.

If you’re looking for Mediterranean flair and the ideal combination of city, nature, art & culture, you can’t miss Dresden! I’d highly recommend a walk through the historic Old Town from the Golden Rider to the Brühl Terrace to the Frauenkirche and the Old Market Square or a trip on a paddle steamer down the river Elbe.



Markus Nosek
Erlangen, Germany



Destination
Dresden



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Saxony



Duration
2-3 days



Country
Germany





Other attractions to visit include the Frauenkirche (rebuilt in 2005), Semper Opera and the Dresden Zwinger, and the Albertinum Art Museum. If you fancy a trip out of the city, go on a day trip to the Saxon Switzerland National Park.

Top tip: Plan your trip to coincide with one of over 200 fireworks displays a year and numerous events such as the Bunte Republik Neustadt (BRN), Dixieland Festival, the Canaletto Festival, the big city festival.

“

If you're looking for Mediterranean flair and the ideal combination of city, nature, art & culture, you can't miss Dresden!”

Joffre Lakes

Three gorgeous glacial lakes allow hikers to immerse themselves in the alpine. Very few places in the world provide this easy of an access to glaciated surroundings, high peaks, and turquoise waters without any technical skills required.

To add to the adventure, carry a set of stand-up paddleboards to the highest lake and go for a paddle on the ice-cold glacier water.

The town of Pemberton is on your way North and offers a few options for a fun après. Head out into the Lillooet Valley to the Beer farmers for a post-hike drink, all made with locally sourced ingredients. The Pony and Mile One in town serve delicious pub fare, and Barn Ngok is the best Thai food restaurant north of Vancouver.

The total distance is around 8km, with around 400m elevation gain. The trail is well worn and busy, allowing access to most people regardless of previous hiking experience. Note that this trail is wheelchair accessible to the first lake.



Destination
**Joffre Lakes,
Pemberton**



Difficulty
2/5



County/Region
British Columbia



Duration
Half day



Country
Canada



Gabriel Keroack
Vancouver, Canada





I'd also recommend the Stonecrop glacier which provides easy access to the summit of Slalok Mountain (Class IV, PD+ mountaineering on alpine low angle ice) in the summer, and the icefield above the lake offers world class ski mountaineering in the winter. Notable outings in the area include the Aussie Couloir (45 degrees), Matier's Northwest Face (50 degrees) and the Cerise Creek to Joffre Lakes traverse (35km, ~3000m gain).

“

Remember to bring water, solid footwear, bug repellent and sunscreen.”

Cape Melville National Park

Cape Melville is a national park in the Shire of Cook, Queensland, Australia. It is characterized by the massive granite boulders of the Melville range and sandstone escarpments of the Altanmoui range which dominate the inland regions of the park. It also forms part of the living Aboriginal cultural landscape.

It is truly an amazing place to see: peaceful, quiet, no electricity, no phones, just Australia at its best!

You can only access in certain seasons (during the wet season it is closed) and you must book in advance. Visitors are limited to the extent that you can spend an entire week or two here and maybe see one other group passing through, which contributes to the peace and quiet of the park.



Destination
Cape Melville National Park



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Queensland



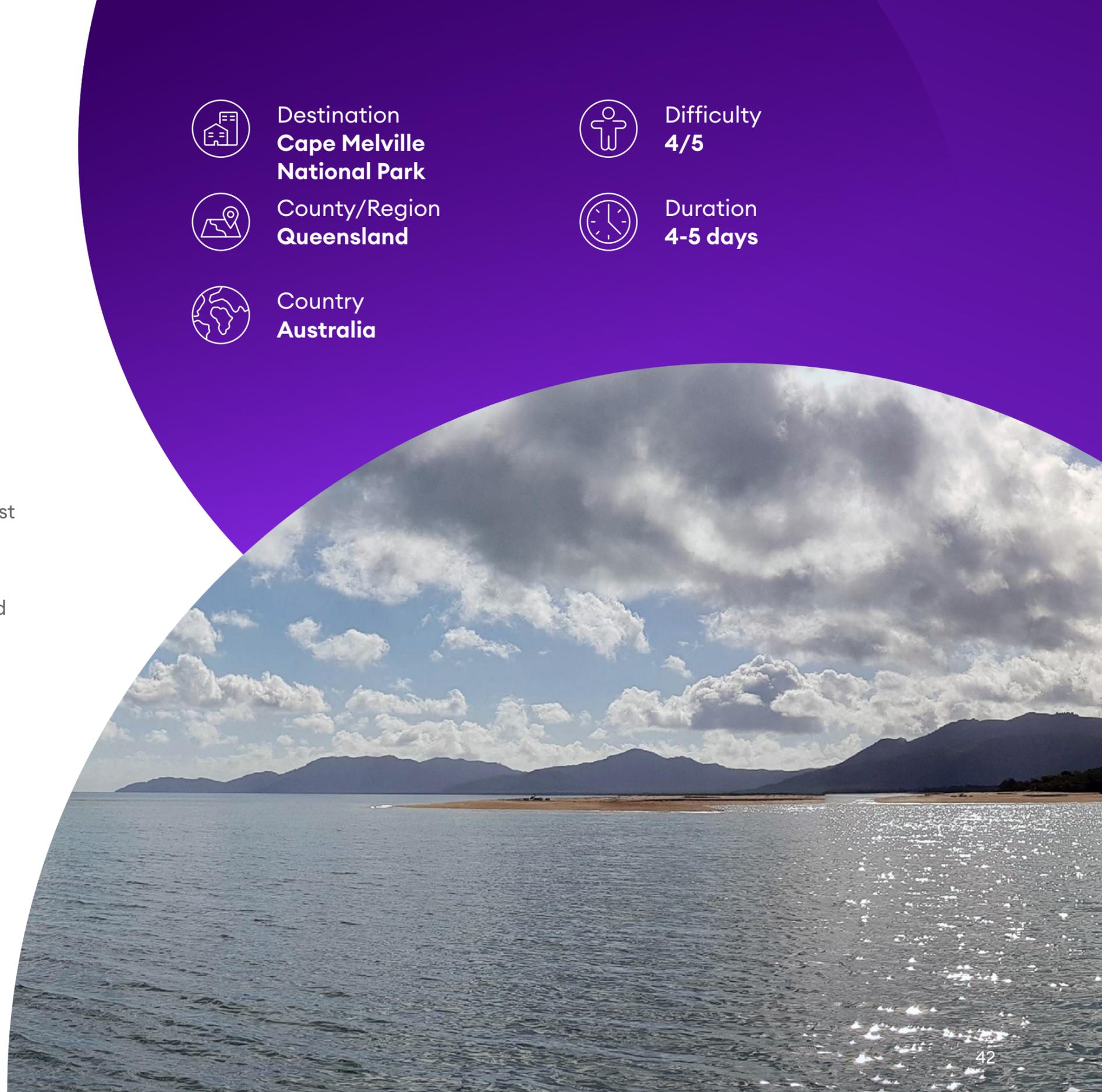
Duration
4-5 days

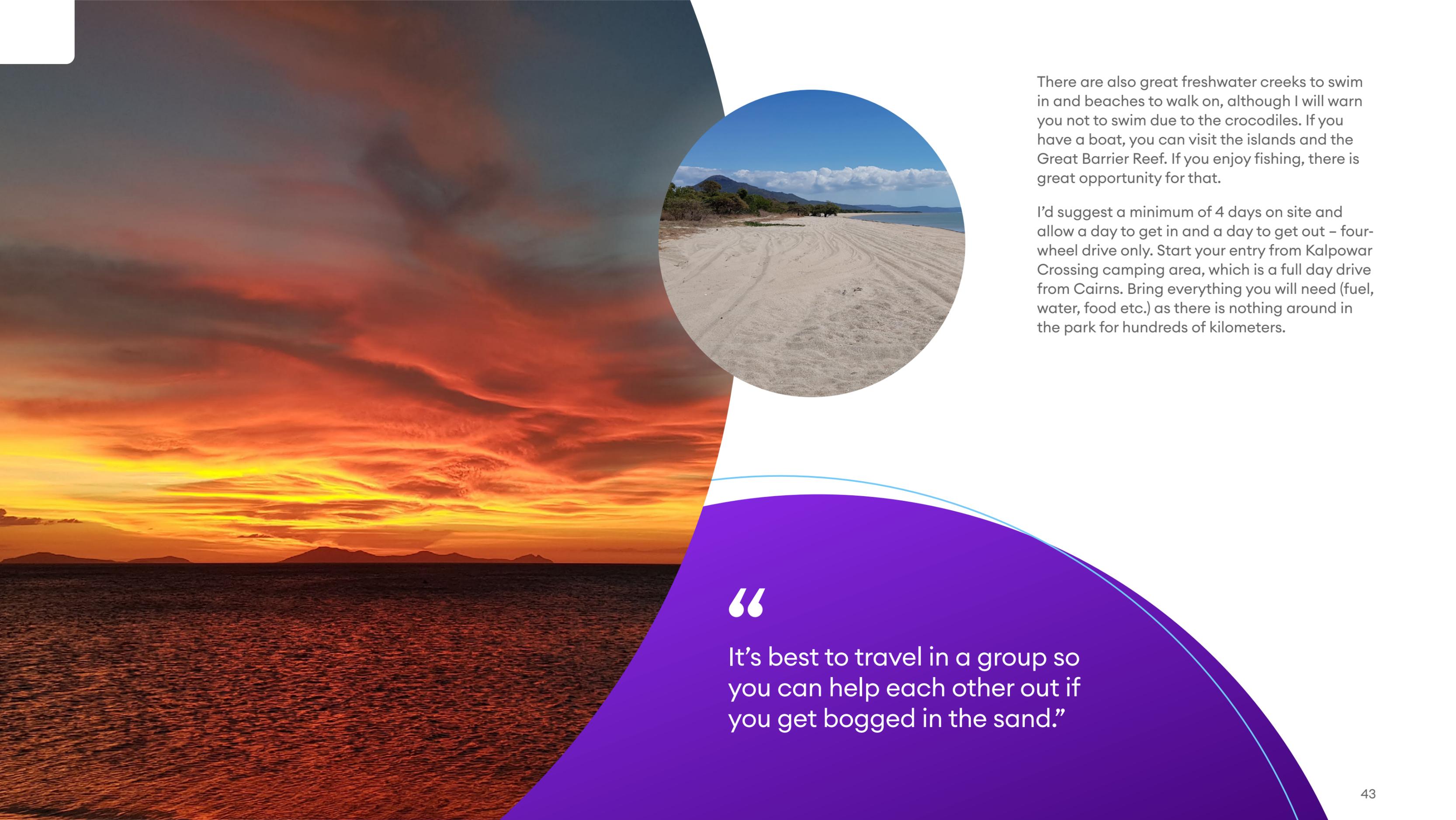


Country
Australia



Darrin Nicholson
Sydney, Australia





There are also great freshwater creeks to swim in and beaches to walk on, although I will warn you not to swim due to the crocodiles. If you have a boat, you can visit the islands and the Great Barrier Reef. If you enjoy fishing, there is great opportunity for that.

I'd suggest a minimum of 4 days on site and allow a day to get in and a day to get out – four-wheel drive only. Start your entry from Kalpowar Crossing camping area, which is a full day drive from Cairns. Bring everything you will need (fuel, water, food etc.) as there is nothing around in the park for hundreds of kilometers.

“

It's best to travel in a group so you can help each other out if you get bogged in the sand.”

Lion's Head

A hiking trail that gives you 360-degree views of Cape Town city, Table Mountain, Twelve Apostles Mountain Range and the Atlantic Ocean.

The hike is a 5km ascent up to about 500m above sea level, which takes about 90 minutes to two hours at a moderate pace. It starts out flat as the path winds around the mountain, towards the top be prepared to climb some ladders and chains over a steep point before a rocky path takes you to the highest point where you can enjoy the views.

One of the best hikes in Cape Town to get views over the city, of the ocean and of Table Mountain. It's not too strenuous and keeping a moderate pace allows you take in the different views. The path winds arounds the mountain so at one stage you are looking at the city, and then you are looking over the ocean.



Destination
Lion's Head



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
Cape Town



Duration
2 hours



Country
South Africa



Caitlin Keam

Johannesburg, South Africa





I'd highly recommend factoring in some extra time to enjoy the views at the top of the mountain. There are lots of good restaurants near Lion's Head so make a day of it and go out for a breakfast or lunch after the hike.

“

It's a popular hiking trail, so it's recommended to go early - if you go early enough you can watch the sun rise over the city and it's much cooler.”

Kraków

Kraków is one of the oldest and most amazing cities in Poland. It is the second largest city in Poland, located in the south of the country.

From the 16th century it has traditionally been one of the most important economic, artistic and cultural life centres. Moreover, it is one of the rare examples of big cities in Poland which has authentic monuments that were not destroyed during the Second World War.

It is also listed as one of Europe's most beautiful cities - no surprise there! The breathtaking Old Town with Wawel Royal Castle and Main Market Square was declared the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in the world. You can find a variety of architecture, wonderful stories, delicious food and local musicians and artists there. I'd also recommend visiting the Uniwersytet Jagielloński, which is the oldest college in Poland, founded in the 14th century.



Destination
Kraków



Difficulty
4/5



Country
Poland



Duration
A few days



Marta Golebiowska

Poland





If you are interested in Polish history during the time of Nazi occupation, visit the museum inside Oskar Schindler's factory and the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum. For nature-lovers, you will enjoy the Botanical Garden near the Old Town (only open from mid-April to mid-October).

“

Here are some useful phrases in Polish:
Dzień dobry – Good morning
Dziękuję – Thank you”

Yala National Park

Yala is the second largest national park of Sri Lanka, located in the southwest of the country. It covers 130,000 hectares of land and is home to 44 varieties of mammal and 215 bird species. It has the highest leopard density in the world, and is also inhabited by elephants and sloth bears.

If you are traveling on the Buttala-Kataragama Road, watch out for wild animals on the road, especially elephants. Some elephants are in the habit of soliciting fruits from motorists by standing across the road, allowing passage once appeased. However, don't assume every elephant venturing on to the road to be people-friendly. Always drive cautiously and never alight your vehicle.

I'd recommend booking a hotel close to the park. You can book a safari jeep through the hotel or you can book directly as well. You can find plenty of safari jeep/ driver recommendations online.



Destination
Yala National Park



Difficulty
3/5



County/Region
Southern and Uva Provinces



Duration
Half day



Country
Sri Lanka



Keerthie Maruthapillai

Colombo, Sri Lanka





Alternatively, you could combine your visit to a national park with a stay in a village-based eco-lodge, camp or resort, which will deepen your magical experience and also allow you to learn more about conservation and rural development efforts.

Overall, Yala is a perfect place to visit for someone who loves wildlife and it is a place close to my heart. It is a must-see place for anyone visiting Sri Lanka.

“

Ensure you are a responsible visitor of the park, leaving no footprint behind.”

Széchenyi Thermal Bath

The Széchenyi thermal bath is one of the many wonders in Budapest! Have you ever taken a bath in a museum? That is what this place feels like!

The baths are located near the centre of Budapest, which is the capital city of Hungary, on the beautiful Danube River. I visited the baths during the summer and it was pretty crowded. I've since heard that the best time to visit is during the winter, when the temperature outside is -15°C, but the water stays over 30°C!

There are three outdoor bathing areas and many more indoor, all with different temperatures. The price is 18€ with a private cabin to get changed and leave your stuff. There are even different treatments available as extras. If you like to play chess, don't miss the chance to play a game with elder locals in the water – it's a tradition!



Destination
Széchenyi Thermal Bath



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Budapest



Duration
2-5 hours



Country
Hungary



Daniel Paredes
Madrid, Spain





The Neo-Baroque architecture of the baths is stunning. The baths are in a beautiful area with a huge park, with lots of lakes and even a Castle! The environment is so picturesque!

While in Budapest, I'd recommend that you visit Heroes' Square (which is the largest square in Budapest), St Stephen's Basilica and the Hungarian Parliament.

“

You'll only need to bring bathing clothes, a towel and flipflops.”

Waterfalls of Borgarbyggo

A hidden gem in Iceland, the Waterfalls of Borgarbyggo are located around 2 hours from Reykjavík. The waterfalls stretch over approximately 900m of lava rock and pour into gorgeous turquoise waters below. Water comes out of the mountain in different layers – it is very hard to describe, you must see it!

Iceland is a hidden gem on its own, but this place caught us by surprise. The color of the water is stunning - I've never seen a waterfall like this.

The waterfalls are a detour from the Golden Circle, which is a popular tourist route containing several beautiful features that truly give you a taste of everything Iceland has to offer. But this detour is extremely worthwhile! If you leave a day to travel around the Golden Circle there is certainly enough time to enjoy this Bogarbyggo region!



Destination
**Waterfalls of
Borgarbyggo**



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Borgarbyggo



Duration
2 hours



Country
Iceland



Kristel van Steenhoven
Eindhoven, Netherlands





The waterfalls are located in the western fjords of Iceland and are home to the nearby town Borgarnes. Borgarnes has lots of fantastic activities on offer for visitors, especially in the summertime. You could go hiking in Einkunnir, climb the mountain Hafnarfjall or you could swim and chill out in Borgarnes swimming pool and hot tubs.

“

If you also want to spend the night close by, visit Guesthouse Milli Vina.”

Marrakech

The city is situated in the west of the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Whether you head to the Atlantic Ocean or towards the mountains, you will be surprised by the diversity of the landscapes crossed, sometimes arid, sometimes lush!

Marrakech is a city of cultural importance and interestingly is also known as the Red City due to its pink-tinted buildings and red-coloured walls. It attracts over two million visitors every year with its vibrant coloured tiles and endless souks filled with textiles and spices in every colour of the rainbow!

Marrakech is home to countless museums and historic sites, ranging from the smallest riads boasting private collections of artifacts to sprawling palace complexes constructed hundreds of years ago.

A great place to visit is the central public square, Jemaa el-Fnaa. During the day, the square is filled with henna artists, snake charmers, and other street performers.



Destination
Marrakech



Difficulty
1/5



Country
Morocco



Duration
1 week



Karin Rainesalo
Tucson, USA





By dusk, the square transforms into a cluster of market stalls serving up popular Moroccan street food. Will you try culinary delight babouche, a dish of boiled snails served in a spiced broth?

I visited Marrakech because it's very different from where I live. My favourite parts of visiting Marrakech were when I visited the famous souks, took a cooking class, and rode a camel.

“

You have to bargain in the souks, but there are some great deals on interesting products to be found!”

Moraine Lake

Moraine Lake is one of the most famous and most visited places in the Canadian Rockies. So much so that the parking lot is almost always full at around 3 in the morning in summers.

Having said that, actually very few people get to see the lake under a clear sky blanketed by millions of stars, the Milky Way Galactic Core and the northern lights (Aurora Borealis). I was lucky enough to witness all that during my recent trip to Moraine Lake. A moonless night and shooting stars (meteorites) getting caught in the frame were an added bonus!

I have nominated Moraine Lake for the sheer beauty of the grand landscape, lush turquoise waters of the lake and pristine reflections of the Rockies in Moraine Lake. I'd recommend visiting in time to see the sunrise or sunset - they are magical if you are lucky enough to have a clear sky!



Faisal Maqbool
Vancouver, Canada



Destination
Moraine Lake, Banff National Park



County/Region
Alberta



Country
Canada



Difficulty
1/5



Duration
1 day





Visiting Moraine Lake is easy. However, in peak summer season, it is very crowded and if you want to witness a sunrise or sunset, you will have to be there early, like 3-4 in the morning. Bring bug sprays and if a hike beyond the lake is desired (Larch Valley, Sentinel Pass, Mount. Temple etc.), bear spray is a must.

“

I'd recommend visiting in time to see the sunrise or sunset - they are magical if you are lucky enough to have a clear sky!”

Old Town

Stockholm's Old Town is an island in the middle of the modern city with buildings almost exclusively from the 14th, 15th and 16th century. Also known as Gamla Stan, it is one of Europe's largest and best-preserved medieval city centres. It is known to be a glorious labyrinth of cobbled streets, townhouses and meeting squares.

Walking in the narrow alleys of Old Town - some of them less than a meter across - is a great way to emerge yourself in centuries past. This is an experience you can only get in a few places, like Prague, but with far less people.

Everywhere you turn, there are winding streets, small cafés and houses that look like they came straight off the pages of an historical novel. Challenge yourself to get lost in the alleyways and look into the quirky shops you come across!



Destination
Old Town, Stockholm



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
Stockholm



Duration
Half day

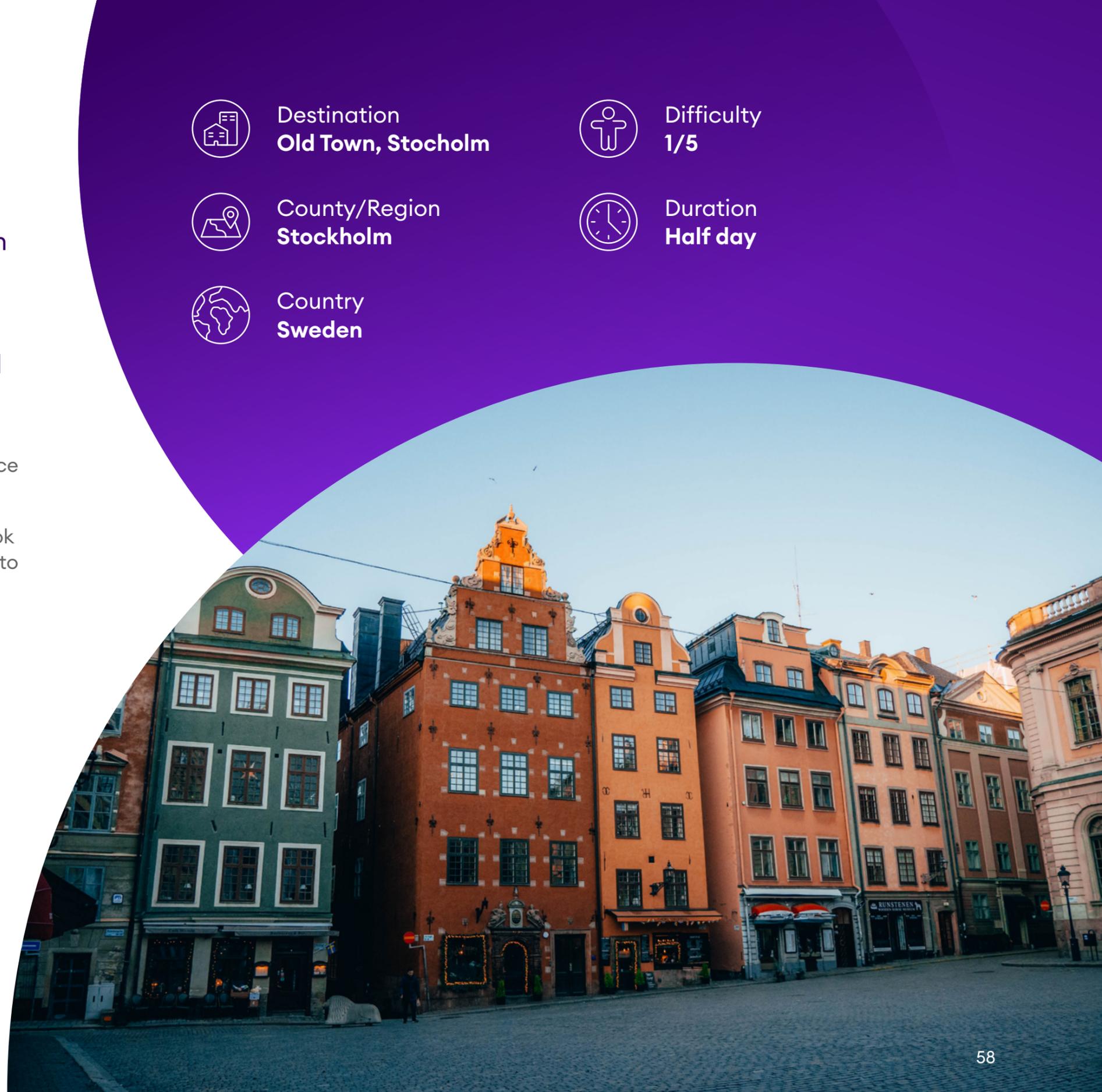


Country
Sweden



Per Åsberg

Stockholm, Sweden





Stockholm's Old Town is also home to the Royal Palace, Swedish Parliament and the Royal Chapel. Popular museums include the Nobel Prize Museum and the Post Museum.

Archaeology fans will love the Museum of Medieval Stockholm which houses the finds of a massive archaeological dig in the 1970s.

“

If you're not afraid of heights,
try a rooftop tour in Stockholm!”

Aruba

I visited Aruba in July 2022 and absolutely loved it! The weather was 30°C+ but you didn't necessarily realise the heat as it's a very windy island. The only time you did notice the heat was when the sand became too hot to walk on in the afternoon!

It's a stunning island with white sandy beaches and clear waters. Each beach is very different so it's worth exploring more than one when you are visiting. We hired a car for a few days so we could see a bit more of the island and visit the different restaurants.

Two of my favourite restaurants were Bugaloe on Palm Beach and Flying Fishbone in Savaneta. The flying fishbone restaurant allowed you to have a seafront table and after 6/7pm, the sea water started coming onto your feet which was very different. All the restaurants served fresh fish as well as European and American classics.



Destination
Aruba



Difficulty
1/5



Country
Technically the Netherlands



Duration
At least 1 week



Katie Chapman

London, UK





One of the activities we did was UTV driving around the island, which included visiting natural pools and the national park. We also went snorkeling, jet skiing and parasailing at La Cabana Resort.

“

I recommend hiring a car for a few days to explore the rest of the island rather than just staying in a resort!”

Aegean Ferry

The Greek Ferries are a wonder to behold and a joy to be on. Board at Piraeus (Athens' main port) or any of the other Greek ports and marvel at the process, the press of people, and the majesty of the Sea! And, of course, enjoy your destination... wherever that may be.

Will you take just a short hop to the Saronic isles to see Aphaia's temple on Aegina or escape the heat to relax like the Athenians? Or maybe, take the long journey to Rhodes or Crete on an overnight boat? How about joining countless honeymooners before steaming into the majesty of the Caldera (Santorini)? Or even popping over to Naxos and Paros for connections to the smaller Cyclades and (from on deck) seeing the Apollo's temple align with the setting sun? With the Greek Ferries, the world is your oyster (and you may even cling to the ship like one)!

Indeed, the Greek Ferries offer something for everyone - a way to get from A to B, a people-watching parade, a thrill, an escape, a love of the spray.



Destination
Aegean Ferry



Difficulty
1/5



County/Region
**Athens to any
Greek Island**



Duration
2 hours to 3 months



Country
Greece



Ryan Gatto

North America





View the Greek isles the way the Ancients saw them, stare into the wine dark sea, or just lay on the decks and catch some rays.

I'd recommend planning your itinerary and booking online for long trips, but for shorter trips you can book from the docks on the day. Bring your own food and wine – there is food on-board most of the time, but why pay those prices when you can pack your own picnic?

“

If you are one of those unfortunates who suffer from mal de mer (or naftía to the locals), opt for a bigger boat versus a fast catamaran!”

Fortress Marienberg

The Fortress Marienberg is a must-see landmark in the city of Würzburg and is enthroned behind the vineyards on the mountain Frauenberg. The fortress is popular with young and old alike as it is a short hike up to the Marienberg to enjoy the beautiful view and walk through the vineyards before heading back to Würzburg.

It is advisable to choose the historic Alte Mainbrücke (old bridge) as the start and finish of the tour. Visitors can experience a feeling of joie de vivre at the old bridge, which resembles the Charles Bridge in Prague with its figures. This is where the now traditional “Würzburger Brückenschoppen” (bridge drink with wine) takes place. Visitors can stand on the bridge with a glass of wine on sunny days, meet friends and enjoy the Main River and the view of the fortress, the famous pilgrimage church “Käppele” and the vineyards.

I like the fortress so much because you have a beautiful view over Würzburg and the wine region from the top of the mountain while standing behind the massive historic walls.



Destination
**Fortress Marienberg,
Würzburg**



Difficulty
2/5



County/Region
Bavaria



Duration
Half day



Country
Germany



Fabian Hubenthal
Erlangen, Germany





In Würzburg there are several other highlights to see, especially from the Baroque era. Visitors can take a tour by bus or explore the city by foot. Besides the fortress, visitors should definitely see the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage “Residence Palace” with its beautiful garden. If you are hungry after the walk, you will find a lot of good restaurants in Würzburg: I recommend the “Backöfele” with various traditional dishes, beers and wines.

“

If you are interested in the history of the fortress, I’d recommend booking onto a guided tour.”

Garibaldi Lake

A gorgeous approach to a gigantic glacial lake, the Garibaldi Lake trail is in itself enough for most day hikers. Don't limit yourself to the standard beach trip! Early season skiing is amazing up by Black Tusk, and Panorama Ridge ups the level of the hike to a healthy scramble.

The trail covers 21km and climbs 1100m over some very easy hiking terrain. A well graded trail ascends past several viewpoints up to the lake. Any terrain beyond has some scrambling potential, so people that aren't well equipped or ready for the outdoors should stick to the main trail to avoid getting into trouble.

For more experienced outdoorspeople; take the Taylor Meadows junction to go explore the heights of Panorama Ridge, soak in the gorgeous views under the Black tusk or link up with the Cinder Cone Trail to cruise over black sands and see the extent of the Garibaldi Volcanic Massif. A nice outing starts at Cheakamus Lake and lets you traverse down to Garibaldi Lake over 35km of easy graded running, a perfect fall adventure.



Destination
Garibaldi Lake, Whistler



Difficulty
4/5



County/Region
British Columbia



Duration
1 day



Country
Canada



Gabriel Keroack
Vancouver, Canada





If you happen to be around in the off season, snowshoes make this a moderately strenuous day, but skiers will be able to cruise up and down the trail and sample some fantastic early season powder on the slopes above the lake.

“

For a successful après, stop by Creekbread in Whistler for some delicious pizza, and at Coast Mountain Brewing for a drink after a long day.”

Sunayama Beach

Sunayama Beach is one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. There are many places to go snorkeling or diving to view the beautiful coral reef, as well as driving tours around the island that can be done in a day, and local restaurants that specialize in local cuisine & popular dishes of Okinawa.

I personally spent my days with family, getting take-out in many of the Okinawa specialty food restaurants we found along the drive and heading to the beach to enjoy the views, relax, play in the sand and explore the crystal blue waters.

The beach and surrounding Ryukyu islands give a peaceful escape from the hectic hustle & bustle of the metropolitan workers life that Japan is known for. If you are a wildlife-lover, try searching for the Okinawa Coconut Crab, the Habu Snake and the Okinawa Dugong.



Destination
Sunayama Beach



Difficulty
2/5



County/Region
**Northern part of
Miyakojima Island, Okinawa**



Duration
Half day



Country
Japan



Jesse Acosta

Tokyo, Japan





With a short ferry or plane trip, you can visit the other islands in the region. The main island Naha has the most choices in terms of attractions, but each of the 55 islands in the archipelago have their own local dishes, customs and even local languages, creating a different and unique experience on each island. My favorite activities in the area include Shurijo Castle, Okinawa World, Glass Bottom Boat rides, the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, the Ryukyu Glass Village, Dino Park, and of course Pineapple Park!

Don't forget your camera!

“

Each of the 55 islands in the archipelago have their own local dishes, customs and even local languages.”

Antarctic Expedition

I took a 10-day journey on an expedition ship from Ushuaia, Argentina to Antarctica during the Antarctica summer. There was daylight almost all day and the temperatures were right around freezing.

Once we reached the Antarctic Peninsula, we made 10 stops over the next six days to go ashore and to sail in Zodiac boats amongst icebergs. While in the Zodiac boats, we saw different kinds of whales, penguins, seals, and birds.

This was one of the most amazing trips I have ever taken. Antarctica is otherworldly. On land, the cacophony of the penguins is never-ending. But when sailing in the Zodiacs, the solitude and quiet are unlike anywhere else on earth.

I was amazed to see penguins everywhere. It was chick season, so there were a lot of stone nests and penguin chicks. Because penguins have no land-based predators, they completely ignore humans. As a result, we could walk amongst them and see their nests.



Destination
Antarctic Expedition



Difficulty
4/5



Continent
Antarctica



Duration
10 days



Karin Rainesalo

Tucson, USA





It's fascinating to just watch them and to listen to all the noise they make.

Only a couple of landings have any signs of civilization, but one is Port Lockroy, which is operated by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, and has the southernmost post office—and gift shop—in the world.

Remember to bring your camera and a lot of SD cards! Bring plenty of warm clothes—even in the summer, it's still brisk.

“

I got to see different kinds of whales, penguins, seals, and birds. It was also chick season on land so there were a lot of penguin chicks.”

Thank you to all of the IFS colleagues who shared their much-loved destinations and pictures with us. Thank you to all of those who helped create this guide. Thank you, dear reader, for supporting the IFS Foundation and using this guide. We hope it inspires you to visit new places and create new memories. Creating this guide has been a pleasure knowing that not only does it support an amazing cause, but it shares some of the incredible places explored by IFS colleagues.

So, whilst you bring your friends and families together to explore these destinations, please remember you form part of a community of people collectively making a difference by supporting the IFS Foundation.

The IFS Foundation is committed to supporting rural communities in Sri Lanka by investing in projects such as providing access to clean water, sanitation facilities, healthcare, education and employment opportunities.

Funds raised from this guide will go towards these essential projects.

On behalf of the IFS Foundation, thank you once again for your support. Together we can help make the world a slightly better place. Together we can make a difference.

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