

LUXURY

LUXURY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2018



CANADA



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Extreme Marine Experiences

STRETCHING AS FAR AS THE ARCTIC CIRCLE, THE COUNTRY'S ICY WATERS ARE HOME TO SUPREME SPECIES.

1. Baby Harp Seals Between late February and early March, tens of thousands of harp seals give birth in the frozen environs around Quebec's Îles de la Madeleine. Helicopter onto the ice floes to watch countless fuzzy, white pups scooting across snowy expanses. The ultimate way to achieve this seal experience is through a multi-night, all-inclusive package offered by the remote hotel Château Madelinot. tourismeilesdelamadeleine.com

2. Orcas Take a four- to five-day sea kayak excursion through this killer whale's prime habitat, Johnstone Strait in British Columbia, with outfitter Wildcoast's remote Orca Camp. kayakbritishcolumbia.com

3. Narwhals Head way north to 74° latitude to reach Lancaster Sound off northern Baffin Island to witness the migration from mid-May to late June of these elusive, tusked whales—the so-called “unicorns of the sea.” On weeklong excursions with Arctic Kingdom, stay overnight in safari yurts while traveling by day to the edge of surrounding ice floes via snowmobile and *qamutiik* (ice sled). Weather permitting, it's also possible to kayak and snorkel. arctickingdom.com

4. Pilot Whales Nova Scotia's most gregarious residents frequent the northern coast of Cape Breton from mid-June until mid-October. The quirky and personable Captain Zodiac Whale Cruise company carries the only permit to snorkel among them. Prepare to don a wetsuit and swim beside an entire pod. novascotiarwhales.com

5. Humpback Whales Observe these 50-foot, 75,000-pound leviathans from a Zodiac half their size. Ocean Quest Adventures in St. John's, Newfoundland, offers three-hour ocean safaris by boat from May to September. Spot dolphins and sea turtles in between whales surfacing. oceanquestadventures.com

6. STAY: National Geographic Expeditions Ships *National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion* have special permission to explore British Columbia's Haida Gwaii archipelago, an area referred to as the “Canadian Galápagos.” Nat Geo sails round-trip from Seattle to the region on four departures in 2019 (May, August, and September) as part of its 15-day cruise expeditions. From \$10,900/person; nationalgeographic.com

1. MCLaBlanc; 2. National Geographic Image Collection/Alamy Stock Photo; 3. Elizabeth Mall/Stock; 4. Michael Nolan

5. Douglas Neasloss; Robert Postma

Rare Wildlife Encounters

VAST SWATHS OF WILDERNESS ALLOW FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF ANIMAL SAFARI THAT RIVALS AFRICA'S BEST.

1. Polar Bears Discover an area where the polar bear population is thriving—the west Hudson Bay coast, home to nearly 1,000 plump polar bears. Outfitter Churchill Wild has exclusive rights to approach these endangered species on foot (yes, you read correctly) under the tutelage of expert guides. All other companies are required to use a tundra buggy. churchillwild.com

2. Gray Wolves More than 40 wolves live within the 200-acre Parc Mahikan, a wildlife observation center in the coniferous forest of Girardville, Québec. On a day trip, interact with habituated individuals or observe their wild counterparts on guided hikes through the boreal forest. Fall asleep to a symphony of wolf howls if overnighting at one of the park's basic yurts or tree houses. aventuraid.qc.ca

3. Grizzly Bears Fifty air miles from Port Hardy, British Columbia, in the heart of grizzly bear territory, Great Bear Lodge offers front-row seats to the annual salmon run. Perfectly positioned viewing blinds (wooden structures camouflaging observers) facilitate prize-worthy photos of salmon-fishing mama bears and their cubs. greatbeartours.com

4. Barren-Ground Caribou Travel with Weber Arctic to witness the spring migration of one of the largest herds of this reindeer subspecies at the outfitter's Arctic Haven Wilderness Lodge, a fly-in outpost off Ennadai Lake in Nunavut. Expect to also spot wolverines, wolves, and bears while following the 300,000-plus caribou herd by snowmobile. Choose from five scheduled dates in April and May. weberarctic.com

5. Spirit Bears Studying and capturing images of this rare and elusive light-colored subspecies of the American black bear is a Holy Grail among Canadian wildlife safaris. From June to mid-October, hedge your bets on seeing them during boat trips and on short hiking tours from Spirit Bear Lodge in BC's Great Bear Rainforest. spiritbear.com

6. STAY: Seal River Heritage Lodge This fly-in lodge sits smack in the center of prime polar bear territory, which also hosts populations of wolves, arctic hares, arctic fox, and beluga whales. Due to its remote nature, the lodge bundles overnight stays into scheduled wildlife safaris (typically one week in length) from July to early November. From \$14,000/person/night; churchillwild.com >

—Paul Rubio

THAILAND



City Slickers

BANGKOK'S FIRST-EVER MICHELIN GUIDE IN 2017 PROVED THE CAPITAL TENDERS FAR MORE THAN STREET FOOD.

1. Gaggan The well-documented, emoji-only, 25-course tasting menu features a yogurt explosion, mango snowballs, and an eggplant cookie (a coin-sized bite that takes four days to create). Ask for a counter seat in the whitewashed colonial house to watch the dishes unfold. Two-Michelin-starred Chef Gaggan Anand is a regular on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list and plans to shutter Gaggan in 2020, so make haste as the typical reservation books four months out. eatatgaggan.com

2. Chatuchak Weekend Market On 35 acres in the city's northeast outskirts, the largest weekend market in the country consists of 26 sections, including food (giant bowls overflowing with spicy *nam prik* sauces), fashion (bespoke straw sandals; vintage jewelry), art, antiques, and housewares. Shop Sunday for bargains. chatuchakmarket.org

3. Smalls Despite its name, this corner townhouse turned cocktail bar with Rococo tiling, velvet barstools, and contemporary art occupies three levels. Expat co-owner David Jacobson spent the better part of three decades cultivating its relaxed scene (Parisian bistro meets jazz club) with rotating DJs and musicians, plus a sizable late-night eats menu and robust spirits program. +66.95.585.1398

4. The Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School The city's largest compound of Buddhist temples consists of brightly colored pavilions, the 150-foot golden Reclining Buddha, and this no-frills house of traditional bodywork established in 1955 under the Thai Ministry of Education. Be advised: There are no private rooms and the school is popular with locals. Arrive at 8 a.m. to avoid the crowds. watpho.com

5. The Jim Thompson House Museum Arriving in-country during World War II, American expat Jim Thompson transformed Thai silk from a cottage industry into a global one, hosted high-profile guests, and mysteriously vanished in a Malaysian jungle in 1967. Tour his canal-hugging home, a complex of six Thai-style teak structures filled with Asian antiques and custom furniture. You can shop for silk scarves and fabrics right off the loom. jimthompsonhouse.com

6. STAY: Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok Book a split-level Garden Room or suite, which, in addition to a butler, offers colonial-inspired design and floor-to-ceiling windows with views of both the city and the Chao Phraya River. Upon arrival, ask for vintage-style luggage tags that double as postcards. From \$535; mandarinoriental.com

2. Prisma by Dukas Presseagentur/Alamy Stock Photo; 3. no credit; 5. Thailand Landmarks and People by Vision/Alamy Stock Photo



Island Seekers

PHUKET, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST ISLE, FACILITATES BOTH ADVENTURE AND RELAXATION.

1. Phuket Pearl Travel privately on a long-tail boat to this floating pearl farm, an intricate maze of wooden planks, overwater sticks, and barrels where oysters are sorted, implanted, and harvested. Visitors can partake in the process and then purchase pearls from the factory and showroom. phuketpearl.com

2. SSS Phuket Dive and Surf Center Explore the emerald waters surrounding Koh Phi Phi island and the sapphire shores of the Similan Islands by snorkeling and diving. Book half- and full-day trips as well as surfing missions and stand-up paddleboarding lessons. The prime swell season lasts from April to October. sssp Phuket.com

3. Blue Elephant Phuket Housed in the 115-year-old Phra Pitak Chinpracha Mansion, this restaurant (one of four worldwide) specializes in Royal Thai and Phuketian cuisine, including a coconut milk-based lamb curry and *tom yam koong lai doi kha*, a spicy, sour soup with eryngii mushrooms and tiger prawns. Chef Nooror Somany Steppe's knowledge of Thai history and local flavors is unsurpassed. Sign up for on-site cooking classes. blueelephant.com/phuket

4. Nguan Choon Tong Herbs Shop The oldest medicine shop on the island, run by a descendant of the herbalist who opened it, has been a stalwart of Thalang Road for more than 100 years. Its wooden apothecary cabinets, individually labeled via red ink, are filled with roots, barks, leaves, insects, herbs, and more natural remedies favored by locals. *Thalang Road, Phuket Town*

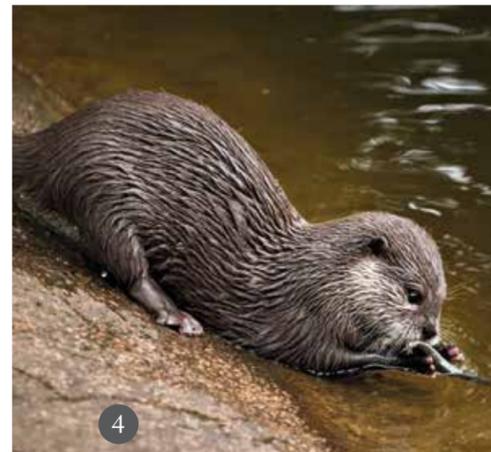
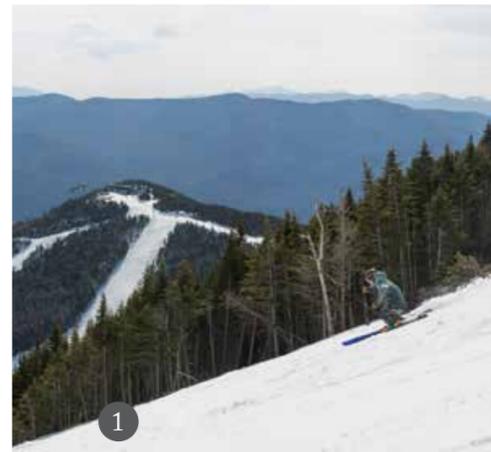
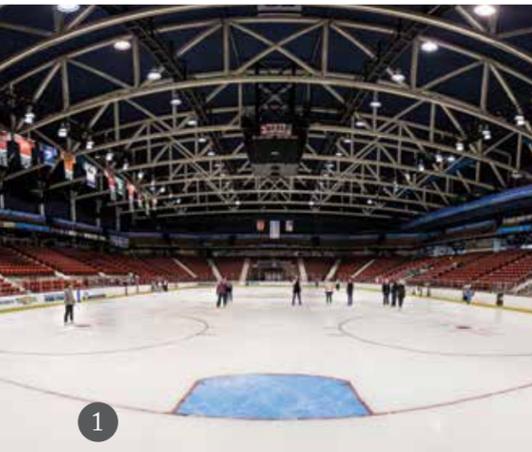
5. Banana Beach The charm here lies in its seclusion—and absence of peddlers. There's a single bar/restaurant/fruit stand and lounge chairs for hire. Trees stretch over a portion of the fine white sand and a few boats dock in the bay. Tiny waves lap onshore and the swimming is exceptional, as is the coastal exploring, should you fancy a walk.

6. STAY: Trisara The Andaman Sea-facing villas and their private pools are nestled among a canopy of old-growth trees and plants. From the water, the resort looks like no more than a mélange of lush greens punctuated by Trisara's red roofs. Fresh produce grown on property goes to both the chefs and Jara spa masseuses, who perform the only six-hand massage on the island. From \$1,185; trisara.com ▶

—Alexandra Cheney

Taveesakri/Stock; 3. J. Arny; 4. Tibor Bogner; 5. Andrizej Suwara/Unsplash

LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK



Around Town

CANADIANS AND EUROPEANS ALIKE FLOCK TO THIS OLYMPIC VILLAGE IN THE HEART OF THE ADIRONDACKS.

1. Ice Skating Don some long-bladed speed skates to discover your inner Olympian on the outdoor circuit where Eric Heiden famously won five gold medals in 1980. The indoor rinks a few steps away regularly host ice shows and skating competitions and are a mecca for the Miracle on Ice hockey win over Russia in the 1980 Olympics. lakeplacidskating.com

2. Best BBQ There are quite a few good restaurants in this small village—don't be surprised if your server is an Olympian-in-training—but none is more popular than Smoke Signals. The Main Street eatery serves up mouth-watering barbecue dishes with house-made sauces. It doesn't take reservations, but the bar area is always lively with diners sampling local micro-brews. smokesignalsq.com

3. Dogsledding Mushers operate eager teams of Huskies around frozen Mirror Lake (the small body of water alongside Main Street that is often mistaken for the much larger Lake Placid). Private one-hour jaunts through the forest can also be arranged, as well as horse-drawn sleigh rides. nysleighbrides.com

4. Tobogganing Slide down a newly refurbished 30-foot-high chute converted from the original 1932 Olympic ski jump and see how far you can shoot out across the frozen lake. Or go where the locals take their sleds to a hilly golf course on the outskirts of town. lakeplacid.com

5. Spa Day Charming Mirror Lake Inn offers a vast array of treatments using SkinCeuticals marine-based products in its award-winning spa. Book a deep-tissue massage after runs on the slopes with two-time Olympic-medal skier Andrew Weibrecht—his parents own the place. mirrorlakeinn.com

6. STAY: Lake Placid Lodge The Relais & Châteaux property is on the shore of its namesake and offers 30 guest rooms, many of which are individual cabins. The interior design features classic Adirondack, or “twiggy” furniture-making, at its best. The Artisans restaurant and the dine-in wine cellar are exceptional culinary experiences. For a casual evening of dining, playing billiards and unwinding in a deep armchair next to a fireplace, Maggie's Pub is the place to be. From \$400; lakeplacidlodge.com

3. 8213erika/Stock; 4. Nathan Allred/Alamy Stock Photo; 6. Don Riddle

In the Mountains

CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES FOR THE SPORTS-OBSSESSED AND RELAXING FUN FOR THE LEISURE-MINDED ABOUND.

1. Downhill Skiing Whiteface Mountain has the biggest vertical drop for downhill skiing east of the Rockies, which is why two winter Olympics, 1932 and 1980, have been held here. With 86 trails spread over 22 miles, it attracts an international crowd and the scene is more relaxed than trendy. The slopes are a mix of natural and man-made snow, and the best skiing is usually in the morning hours. whiteface.com

2. Cross-Country & Bobsled Mt. Van Hoevenberg is the downhill alternative with an extensive and varied 50 km network of cross-country and snowshoe trails that includes a chance to experience the biathlon (skiing and rifle shooting combined). But don't miss the rare opportunity to join a driver and brakeman on an exhilarating four-man Olympic bobsled run. On the way back to town, stop for a bird's-eye view of the scenery from the 120-meter observation deck at the Olympic Jumping Complex. mtvanhoevenberg.com

3. Chocolate Factory Adirondack Chocolates has an outlet in town, but its delicious hand-crafted treats are made in Wilmington, a short drive from Whiteface Mountain. adirondackchocolates.com

4. Wildlife Up Close Spend some time with otters, porcupines, owls, and other forest creatures at The Wild Center in Tupper Lake, a museum devoted to preserving the state park. wildcenter.org

5. Fresh Fish The Hungry Trout, up the road from Whiteface, is ranked among the best restaurants in the North Country. Scenically located on the West Branch Ausable River, a legendary fly-fishing spot, trout is a favorite on the regionally sourced menu. A less formal option is R.F. McDougall's pub downstairs. hungrytrout.com

6. STAY: The Point Harking back to the Gilded Age of the Adirondack Great Camps when high-society magnates owned log cabin palaces in the area, The Point was originally built by William Avery Rockefeller II as a private residence nearly a century ago. With just 11 sumptuously appointed rooms, it's an intimate experience. Recent renovations to the 75-acre property overseen by new ownership means a large, popular suite in The Boathouse is now fully winterized and offers lovely views of Upper Saranac Lake. From \$1,750, all-inclusive; thepointsaranac.com ♦

3. Sheri Silver/Unsplash; 4. Daniel Ollay/Unsplash; 5. rudijsill/Stock; 6. Kindra Clneff

—Frank Vizard