

ANNUAL GUIDE TO THE
the knot
50
BEST HONEYMOON SPOTS

Pick one of these fantasy destinations and become a runaway bride (the good kind—with your new hubby).

BY NANCY RONES

BEST
10
BEACHES

kauai, hawaii

WHY GO On Kauai, you can scope out towering waterfalls, rugged cliffs, traditional towns and 50 miles of stellar beaches.

WHERE TO STAY No worries if you're not great at sharing your patch of sand: The Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa is the only property on a 50-acre-wide beach. Play in the ocean or float around in the sand-bottom, saltwater lagoon; honeymooners get a waterside cabana comped for a day (from \$440, Kauai.Hyatt.com).

WHAT TO DO Witness the monumental cliffs jutting off the Na Pali Coast on a boat tour. Trot past secluded beaches on horseback. >>



nuevo vallarta, mexico

WHY GO This popular resort town along the Pacific coast one-ups the typical beach spot with authentic Mexican flavor and an eco touch, including amazing wildlife viewing (whale-watching is a biggie).

WHERE TO STAY If you think the mini massage and cool towel at check-in are special, you'll be floored by the immense two-level Ambassador Penthouse Suite (with ocean-view terrace) at the all-inclusive Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit (Ambassador suites from \$390 per person per night, Vallarta.GrandVelas.com).

WHAT TO DO Head to the renowned Grand Velas Spa and slough off stress with one of the rejuvenating ritual treatments.

santa rosa beach, florida

WHY GO No need to go globe-trotting: Find soft, powdery sand (that keeps cool thanks to the Appalachian quartz) and emerald waters in this artsy beach community along the Gulf Coast in northwest Florida.

WHERE TO STAY The WaterColor Inn & Resort offers chic southern hospitality and 60 spa-inspired rooms with gulf views (from \$395, WaterColorResort.com).

WHAT TO DO Try your luck at stand-up paddleboarding on Western Lake.

negril, jamaica

WHY GO Picture reggae music, jerk cuisine and laid-back “No problem, mon” culture, plus pristine Seven Mile Beach.

WHERE TO STAY At Couples Swept Away, bounce between Seven Mile Beach and the all-inclusive resort's 10-acre sports and fitness complex complete with tennis courts and a jogging track (from \$800, Couples.com/swept-away).

WHAT TO DO Hold hands (tightly) while scaling Dunn's River Falls. Then watch the fearless cliff divers—and the island's most famous sunsets—at Rick's Café (RicksCafeJamaica.com).

praia do forte, brazil

WHY GO Hmm...seven miles of palm-tree-lined pearl sand, transparent blue water and natural pools. Sold yet?

WHERE TO STAY The beachfront at the all-inclusive Iberostar Praia do Forte is absolute decadence (from \$255 per person per night, with four-night minimum in summer, Iberostar.com).

WHAT TO DO Snorkel in the reef-rimmed Papa Gente tide pools (think: a stocked fish bowl). Visit the historic city of Salvador.

maldives

WHY GO Escapists looking for far-flung secluded shores should discover these unforgettable islands.

WHERE TO STAY Take an exhilarating 35-minute speedboat ride to the private island of Dhigu, where you'll find the tranquil Anantara Dhigu Resort & Spa Maldives nestled along an intense-turquoise lagoon (sunrise beach villas from \$613, Dhigu-Maldives.Anantara.com).

WHAT TO DO During a seaplane tour, “ooh” and “aah” about the jewel-tone water below. Head to the hotel's spa for signature Maldivian Coconut Marvellous treatments.

antigua

WHY GO Somehow this small eastern Caribbean gem (only 14 miles long by 11 miles wide) is said to boast a whopping 365 gorgeous sandy beaches.

WHERE TO STAY The ultra-luxurious all-inclusive Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa, along Dickenson Bay, has an alluring split personality: Choose a European-inspired suite in the Mediterranean Village or snooze in a unique round Rondoal suite in the resort's Caribbean-style zone (from \$545, Sandals.com/antigua).

WHAT TO DO As if you didn't have enough beach options, take a catamaran over to the pink sands of Antigua's nearby sister island, Barbuda. It's worth the trip.

bermuda

WHY GO You'll be lured by the sumptuous pink-sand beaches, storybook architecture and charming English influences.

WHERE TO STAY Part of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, the 98-room Elbow Beach, Bermuda epitomizes modern, sophisticated luxury (from \$595, MandarinOriental.com/bermuda).

WHAT TO DO Rent a moped to cruise the island. Close to Elbow Beach's shores, explore the underwater wreckage of *The Pollockshields*, a 1915 cargo steamer.

providenciales, turks and caicos

WHY GO Self-professed beach snobs pick breathtaking “Provo” for its quintessential Caribbean sand and piercing-blue water.

WHERE TO STAY Envision your ideal seaside escape and—presto!—the casual-chic Beach House Turks and Caicos appears. The hotel goes out of its way to personalize a honeymooning couple's visit; keep an eye out for surprises in your room (from \$532, BeachHouseTCI.com).

WHAT TO DO Surrender to an oceanfront neck-and-foot “teaser massage” by Beach House staffers. Kayak in Grace Bay.

grand cayman, cayman islands

WHY GO When you want to journey to paradise without totally leaving civilization, Grand Cayman is your answer.

WHERE TO STAY Fresh off a multimillion-dollar property-wide renovation, The Westin Grand Cayman Seven Mile Beach Resort & Spa is glowing (from \$224, WestinGrandCayman.com).

WHAT TO DO Swim with little sea turtles at the Cayman Turtle Farm (Turtle.ky). Check out Rum Point Club on Grand Cayman's North Side, where you can relax on a beautiful beach, try one of the water toys, or grab a hammock and sip on a mudslide. >>



woodstock, vermont

WHY GO This spot in central Vermont lives up to all the great stereotypes of a quaint New England town: cozy lodging, farm-fresh food, nature trails and tree-lined streets.

WHERE TO STAY Upscale meets country at the 142-room Woodstock Inn & Resort, which looks right out at the Village Green (from \$230, WoodstockInn.com).

WHAT TO DO Bring a picnic lunch and splash around a swimming hole on the Ottauquechee River. In the winter, go on a full-moon snowshoe hike or schuss downhill at Suicide Six ski area.

sonoma valley, california

WHY GO There's an almost obscene amount of epicurean pleasures squished into Sonoma Valley's 17 miles of bucolic vineyards, farmland and small towns.

WHERE TO STAY Your comfy Junior Suite at Vintners Inn in Santa Rosa includes a half bottle of wine, a Jacuzzi tub, a wood-burning fireplace, a feather-bed-topped king and a patio or balcony overlooking the vines (Junior Suites from \$395, VintnersInn.com).

WHAT TO DO Take a hot-air balloon ride over the vineyards.

hill country, texas

WHY GO Leave any postwedding angst behind and head for the gorgeous rolling hills outside San Antonio and Austin. Fall foliage time is particularly spectacular.

WHERE TO STAY The intimate Mexican-style Escondida Resort and Spa rests in the beautifully untamed environs of Medina Mountain. You'll remember what peace sounds like around the pool, at the spa or on the hiking trails (from \$279, EscondidaResort.com).

WHAT TO DO Have a picnic alongside Robertson Creek. In Fredericksburg, climb the summit trail of Enchanted Rock, an awesome, 425-foot pink-granite rock formation. Ultimate photo op.



los cabos, mexico

WHY GO Nothing equals eye candy more than the unbelievable landscape of this stretch on the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula—craggy cliffs, the ferocious Pacific and cacti-filled desert terrain. If you're a couple who's into golfing or fishing, look no further.

WHERE TO STAY The Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort resides on a tranquil bay in the azure Sea of Cortez and has one of the area's only swimmable beaches. (But there are plenty of infinity pools at the hotel too.) Arouse romance during a Couple's Oasis Total Ritual at the spa (from \$150, HiltonLosCabos.com).

WHAT TO DO Tee off on one of the oceanside Jack Nicklaus-designed courses. Go on a fishing excursion; afterward, chefs at the Hilton's El Meson Restaurant will turn your catch into dinner (Baja fish tacos, anyone?).

bora bora, french polynesia

WHY GO We're not sure even Crayola could pump out the brilliant blues and greens of Bora Bora's stunning lagoons and coconut forests. One word that describes this destination: magical. It's no wonder this is a honeymooner's dream—and truly worth the ultra-long travel time.

WHERE TO STAY Fringing a crystal-clear lagoon on a six-mile islet, Le Méridien Bora Bora provides VIP views of the famous Otemanu Mountain. Sleep in a secluded bungalow on the beach or in an overwater bungalow—some have large glass floors for prime sea-life spying (from \$745, LeMeridien-BoraBora.com).

WHAT TO DO Sail along the lagoon in a traditional Polynesian pirogue (a flat-bottomed boat). Sink your toes into the sand over a lovey-dovey lunch at Te Ava, the resort's beachfront restaurant.

charleston, south carolina

WHY GO Southern hospitality is very much alive in this vibrant city that delightfully struts its historical past (think: antebellum mansions, plantations and culinary institutions).

WHERE TO STAY Low-Country charm is off the charts at the elegant Planters Inn. The four-poster beds, nightly turndowns (with chocolate), free coffee and tea service in the parlor and super-gracious staff are all proof (from \$339, PlantersInn.com).

WHAT TO DO Take a private horse and carriage ride around the historic district. Tour Boone Hall Plantation (where Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds wed); snap a photo by the amazing live oaks dripping with Spanish moss (BooneHallPlantation.com).

london, england

WHY GO Besides the sprucing up it received before last year's Olympics, Will and Kate's regal city has extraordinary theater, art, parks and restaurants.

WHERE TO STAY The two townhomes that house DUKES Hotel are set on a quiet, gaslit courtyard overlooking magnificent Green Park. This enchanting English hideaway even has secret passageways that lead to Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly Circus (from \$716, DUKESHotel.com).

WHAT TO DO Indulge in a British tradition and have afternoon tea (finger sandwiches, scones, the whole nine yards) at The Promenade at The Dorchester.

peter island, british virgin islands

WHY GO Occupied by a single incredible resort, this private 1,800-square-foot paradise (with quite the who's who guest list) has five snowy-white beaches, 20 secluded coves and mind-blowing snorkeling.

WHERE TO STAY Dream it and your personal "Island Host" at the incredible Peter Island Resort & Spa will bend over backward to make it happen (from \$395, PeterIsland.com).

WHAT TO DO Claim the only two lounge chairs and enjoy some quality time on the island's made-for-two Honeymoon Beach. Arrange for "sunset at the Loop."

cannon beach, oregon

WHY GO Have visions of leisurely walks along the beach with the waves crashing at your feet? This relaxing spot along Oregon's coast delivers big-time.

WHERE TO STAY Between the fireside massages and the option of rose petals and a tray of fruit and chocolate fondue with a bubble bath, The Stephanie Inn is an all-out master at romance making (from about \$449, StephanieInn.com).

WHAT TO DO Let one of the inn's "fire butlers" build you a bonfire on the beach (s'mores are available too). Hike in Ecola State Park for wow-worthy views of Cannon Beach and iconic Haystack Rock. >>



puglia, italy

WHY GO Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel had the right idea getting hitched along the Adriatic in the "heel" of boot-shaped Italy. The food (the Altamura bread is to die for), the wine and the scenery will fire up your *amore*.

WHERE TO STAY Follow the lead of the A-list couple and celebrate your love at Borgo Egnazia seaside resort. Privacy-loving couples can seek refuge in the Mediterranean-style La Corte rooms. It's also the perfect setting for a destination wedding (La Corte rooms from about \$298, BorgoEgnazia.com).

WHAT TO DO Plunge into the sea at the resort's Cala Masciola beach club, where you can dine on fresh grilled fish on a rugged rock outcropping. Discover the nearby picturesque towns, including Ostuni, Martina Franca and Brindisi.

FROM LEFT: SHUTTERSTOCK; THINKSTOCK



curaçao

WHY GO On this Caribbean island, you'll experience a melting pot of culture that sways between Dutch and African. The sherbet-colored Dutch architecture is also completely irresistible.

WHERE TO STAY The Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino provides easy access to shopping and nightlife. When you want to chill, you'll appreciate the serene private beach and infinity pool (from \$168, RenaissanceCuraçao.com).

WHAT TO DO Sample local specialties at Marsche Bieuw, the old market in Willemstad (there's stewed iguana for adventurous palates). Roam the underground limestone formations and pools of the Hato Caves.

taos, new mexico

WHY GO In this town about an hour and a half north of Santa Fe, a strong Native American heritage and an artsy, bohemian edge radiate a special spiritual aura.

WHERE TO STAY It's easy to feel connected with your other half at El Monte Sagrado, which captures the peaceful, earthy spirit of Taos with warm décor, its pampering Living Spa and the New Mexican-inspired menu at De La Tierra (from \$179, ElMonteSagrado.com).

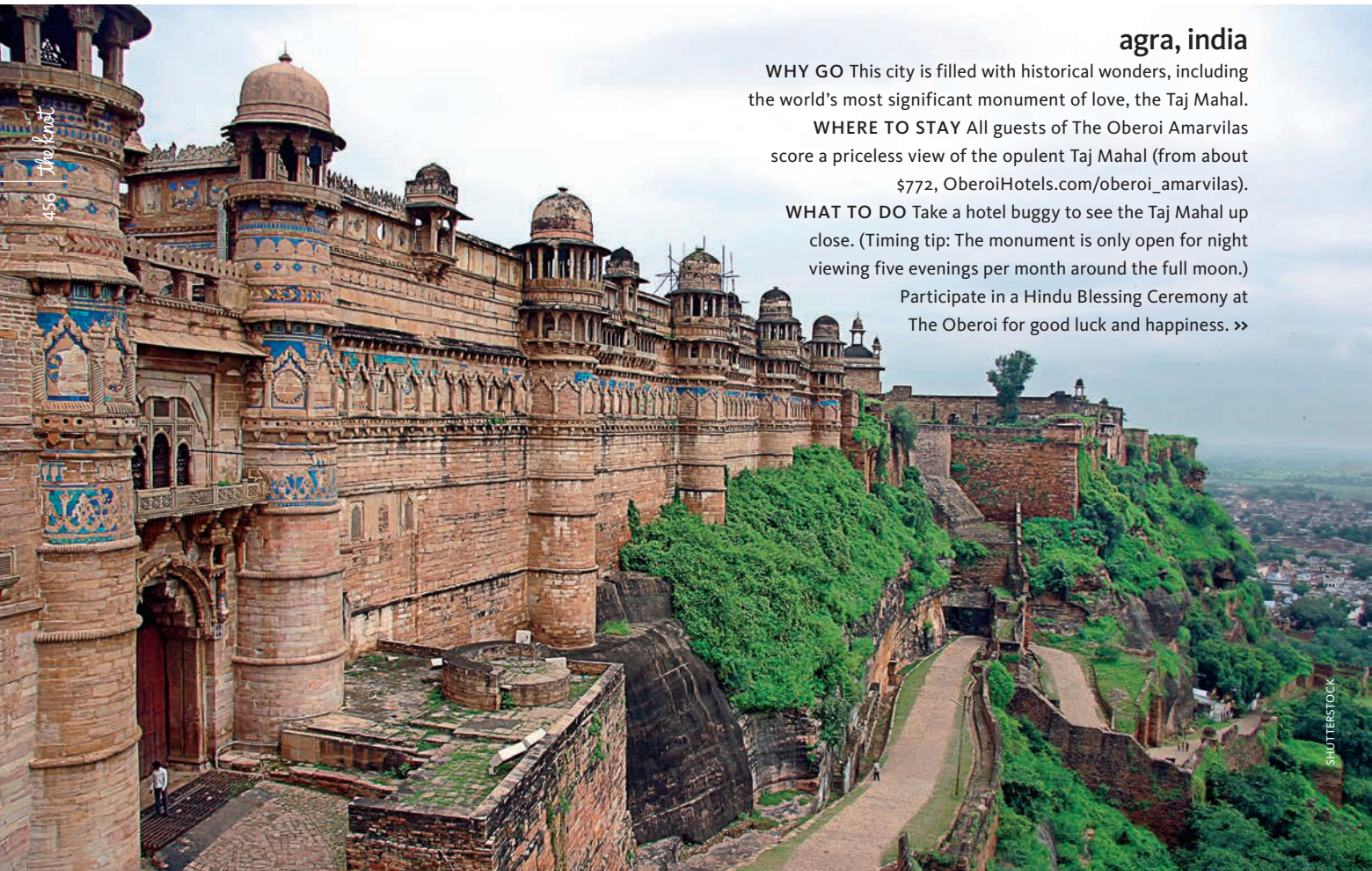
WHAT TO DO Visit Taos Pueblo, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where Native Americans live without modern amenities. Browse through the art galleries or take a pottery-making class.

ubud, bali

WHY GO This culturally centered inland community on the majestic Indonesian island is a party for your senses, starting with sights of terraced rice paddies, temples and performances of local rituals.

WHERE TO STAY At the tranquil Uma by COMO, Ubud, the 29 rooms reflect a chic Balinese design, with carved-wood window panels and tropical gardens separating your bathroom from your main hangout space. English-speaking guides are available to lead you on daily hikes through rice paddy fields or to more distant tourist destinations (from \$275, Uma.Ubud.COMO.bz).

WHAT TO DO Attend a performance of a traditional Kecak fire dance.



agra, india

WHY GO This city is filled with historical wonders, including the world's most significant monument of love, the Taj Mahal.

WHERE TO STAY All guests of The Oberoi Amarvilas score a priceless view of the opulent Taj Mahal (from about \$772, OberoiHotels.com/oberoi_amarvilas).

WHAT TO DO Take a hotel buggy to see the Taj Mahal up close. (Timing tip: The monument is only open for night viewing five evenings per month around the full moon.)

Participate in a Hindu Blessing Ceremony at The Oberoi for good luck and happiness. >>



st. martin

WHY GO This tiny island between the Atlantic and the Caribbean is split between two countries: The north is a French territory, and the south is Dutch-run. It's like getting two countries in one trip.

WHERE TO STAY Say *bonjour* to the sophisticated and luxurious Radisson Blu Resort Marina & Spa St. Martin on the island's French side (from about \$310, RadissonBlu.com/resort-stmartin).

WHAT TO DO Snag bargains on designer brands in St. Martin's cosmopolitan capital, Marigot. Discover the island's big nightlife with a little casino-hopping.

hawaii island, hawaii

WHY GO An authentic aloha spirit lives large in this Polynesian paradise, also called "the Big Island." Historic villages, Hawaiian cowboy country, coffee plantations and natural attractions (volcanoes are a big part of the landscape) have all stood the test of time.

WHERE TO STAY Hogging 62 oceanfront acres along the famed Kohala Coast, the massive Hilton Waikoloa Village immerses visitors in Hawaiian culture (from \$259, HiltonWaikoloaVillage.com).

WHAT TO DO Be amazed by the rhythmic hip shaking and colorful costumes at the resort's Big Island Luau—Legends of the Pacific dinner show.

new orleans, louisiana

WHY GO From jazz to jambalaya, N'awlins flaunts its own brand of soulful music, festivals, culinary treasures and revelry.

WHERE TO STAY The elegant Hotel Monteleone, a 127-year-old French Quarter landmark, recently gave itself a face-lift, yet left behind all the old-world charm (from \$159, HotelMonteleone.com).

WHAT TO DO Make reservations for the jazz brunch at Commander's Palace or Arnaud's. Stroll the open-air French Market for handicrafts and just-made pralines.

istanbul, turkey

WHY GO In this mystical location that spills into both Europe and Asia, magnificent remnants of past empires (mosques, palaces, churches) coexist with the city's cosmopolitan side.

WHERE TO STAY With its grand opening earlier this year, the Marti Istanbul Hotel is dressed to impress in sparkling chandeliers and stylish shades of purple and blue (from \$348, MartiIstanbulHotel.com).

WHAT TO DO Tour the ancient relics—Hagia Sophia, The Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace—in the Sultanahmet neighborhood. Brave The Grand Bazaar.

mauritius

WHY GO Who cares if friends say "Maurwhere???" Satisfy your wanderlust on this island stunner in the azure Indian Ocean.

WHERE TO STAY Discover true bliss and—when you can take no more—a boatload of water sports at the intimate, 52-suite Angsana Balaclava Mauritius. It's set on secluded Turtle Bay and just 15 minutes from the buzzing capital city of Port Louis (from about \$431, Angsana.com/en/balaclava).

WHAT TO DO Study life under the sea aboard *Le Nessee*, a semi-submersible boat. At Domaines Les Pailles, learn about the island's rich history. >>



bangkok, thailand ↷

WHY GO Witness perfect harmony: Depending on where you're standing in this bustling city, you'll either see a contemporary metropolis with first-class hotels and upscale shopping, or an old-world mecca with gilded Buddhist temples and folks following traditional ways of life.

WHERE TO STAY Commanding the top floors of a modern Bangkok building, the Tower Club at lebua is an all-suite retreat with velvet-rope-type appeal. Guests have access to the Tower Club Lounge for apps and drinks, plus priority reservations at The Dome, a collection of exclusive restaurants above the hotel (from \$559, lebua.com/en/tower-club/).

WHAT TO DO Go old-school: Visit the Grand Palace, the giant reclining Buddha of Wat Pho and a floating market. Then go the polar opposite: Touch the stars at swanky Sirocco, the world's highest alfresco restaurant, on the 63rd floor in The Dome.

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ADVENTUROUS

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sedona, arizona

WHY GO Just the feeling of being engulfed by mammoth red-rock formations, Sedona's scenic trademark, will get you guys revved up. **WHERE TO STAY** Stretching over 70 acres in Boynton Canyon, with adobe-style lodgings, Enchantment Resort certainly befits its name. Greet each day with a hike along one of the resort's trails (from \$325, EnchantmentResort.com).

WHAT TO DO With Pink Jeep's Broken Arrow tour, go off-roading over the red rocks and down the "Road of No Return" in a bubble-gum-colored 4x4 (PinkJeepTours.com). Take a copter ride above the rocks while descending into wondrous canyons and surveying ancient Indian ruins.

manuel antonio, costa rica

WHY GO Adrenaline-seeking newlyweds will heed the call of unspoiled beaches, lush rain forests and—the crown jewel—Manuel Antonio National Park.

WHERE TO STAY Perfectly situated for active couples, the eco-conscious Arenas Del Mar overlooks the expansive Pacific, has access to two white-sand beaches and is within walking distance of the national park. Unwind with Tico Sours at El Mirador Bar (from \$270, including breakfast, ArenasDelMar.com).

WHAT TO DO Go on a guided hike through the national park to look for monkeys, sloths and exotic birds. Glide above the rain-forest canopy on a zip-line tour.

queenstown, new zealand

WHY GO Do as the hobbits did in this country: Go on an action-packed journey (minus the goblins). Your bull's-eye is the alpine city of Queenstown, dubbed "the adventure capital of the world."

WHERE TO STAY After your exciting outings, the upscale Matakauri Lodge is the ideal place to zone out. The serene setting on mountain-lined Lake Wakatipu seems too lovely to be real (from about \$502, including breakfast and dinner, Matakauri.co.nz).

WHAT TO DO Careen through canyons on a high-speed jet boat. Go tandem bungee jumping off the Kawarau Bridge.

alaska

WHY GO Foray into America's untamed last frontier—experience glacier sightings, knee-knocking excursions and bear encounters.

WHERE TO STAY Traverse Alaska by sea and land on a 10-day Princess Denali Explorer Cruisetour. Two highlights: visits to Glacier Bay National Park (on the seven-day Voyage of the Glaciers cruise) and Denali National Park (interior staterooms from \$1,298 per person, Princess.com).

WHAT TO DO After docking in Juneau, go dog mushing, Alaska's state sport. Conquer the white rapids of Nenana River.

orlando, florida

WHY GO Mickey's hometown isn't only for kids. Thrills abound for adults, via motion simulators, waterslides, roller coasters, dolphin rides or, okay, golf carts.

WHERE TO STAY Close to the big parks, the upscale Mediterranean-style Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate breaks from in-your-face themes and serves up a 15-acre recreational zone that includes an adult pool, a meditation garden and two championship golf courses (from \$149, OmniOrlandoResort.com).

WHAT TO DO The non-motion-sickness-prone should hit Space Mountain at Magic Kingdom, Soarin' at Epcot, Expedition Everest at Animal Kingdom and the Dragon Challenge coaster at Universal Orlando's The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Or splash with the dolphins at Discovery Cove.

SHUTTERSTOCK

THINKSTOCK

aruba

WHY GO Kitesurfing? Yep. Snuba. Yep. Name the water sport and you'll find it on this sunny Caribbean island that just barely skims the hurricane belt (breathe easy, all you summer brides). Active landlubbers have the island's rugged northeast coast and sporty beach culture to keep busy.

WHERE TO STAY Everything about the impressive Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino checks the "mint condition" box (including the sands of renowned Palm Beach at its back door). Sleep like babies on the Hyatt's signature and insanely comfy Grand Bed (from \$335, Aruba.Hyatt.com).

WHAT TO DO Go on a jeep safari with De Palm Tours that takes you through the cacti-filled terrain of Arikok National Park and then parks it for a refreshing stop at Natural Pool (DePalmTours.com). Locals are crazy about beach tennis; hit the courts behind MooMba Beach Bar & Restaurant.

sleeping bear dunes national lakeshore, michigan

WHY GO One look at the massive (and we mean *massive*) sand dunes facing sparkling Lake Michigan and you'd agree that Mother Nature really worked her charms on this four-season destination in northwestern Lower Michigan—it has fabulous beaches and trails too. No wonder this spot has been named the "most beautiful place in America."

WHERE TO STAY Location, location, location. Nestled along the lakeshore in Glen Arbor, The Homestead is a 500-acre resort complex with four small hotels, lots of shops and a range of activities from golfing to spa-going. Direct your attention to Little Belle, the sweet couples-only lodging at The Homestead (Little Belle suites from \$94, TheHomesteadResort.com). Our favorite part: The cozy rooms come complete with fireplaces to curl up in front of together.

WHAT TO DO Well, don't just stare at the enormous dunes—grab some water and summit them on the Dune Climb. Bike along the shady Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. In the winter, try snowshoeing Sleeping Bear Dunes; there are miles of trails.

whistler, british columbia

WHY GO When it comes to cutting-edge outdoor adventure (and we're talking year-round), this Canadian nirvana for sports lovers breaks the mold. It's not shocking that this mega mountain resort (with a European-feeling village and spas for kicking back) helped host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

WHERE TO STAY The rustic-modern Four Seasons Resort Whistler emphasizes outstanding service, including a dedicated base camp where you're provided with expert adventure guidance and gear. Après activity, hit the heated outdoor pool (from about \$299, FourSeasons.com/whistler).

WHAT TO DO You're in the mountains—vertically challenge yourself. Heli-ski or snowmobile through killer powder.



st. lucia

WHY GO Soothe your restless spirits with a landscape that includes a drive-in volcano, lively coral reefs and the epic twin Pitons that soar from the aqua sea.

WHERE TO STAY At Sugar Beach, A Viceroy Resort, the chic, plantation-style Luxury Villas—done up in crisp whites with hardwood floors—look as if they've jumped off the pages of a design magazine. Another cool element on the property: tree-house treatment gazebos at the Rainforest Spa (Luxury Villas from \$715, SugarBeachViceroy.com).

WHAT TO DO Climb to the peak of Gros Piton (you'll have a lot to brag about later). Sign up at the resort's Dive Center to explore the National Marine Reserve at the foot of Petit Piton. >>

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estes park, colorado

WHY GO Embraced on three sides by Rocky Mountain National Park, this town is a mountain getaway with a cowboy vibe.

WHERE TO STAY One of the comfiest spots at rustic-styled Marys Lake Lodge and Resort: the outdoor hot tub that faces the majestic Rockies. Live music in the casual Tavern restaurant is a nice touch too (from \$99, [MarysLakeLodge.com](#)).

WHAT TO DO Take a fly-fishing lesson in Rocky Mountain National Park. Ride the aerial tram to the summit of Prospect Mountain ([EstesTram.com](#)).

punta cana, dominican republic

WHY GO If you're looking for a tropical oasis that doesn't shut down after dark, this nightlife-loving area on the island of Hispaniola doesn't disappoint.

WHERE TO STAY After arriving at the adults-only, all-inclusive Secrets Royal Beach Punta Cana, suit up for the turquoise sea or the pool. Honeymooners receive special treatment (from \$162 per person per night, [SecretsResorts.com/royalbeach](#)).

WHAT TO DO Dine at Secrets' ocean-view Seaside Grill restaurant and then bust some moves at the open-air Eclipse Night Club. Stroll along the cobblestoned streets of the historic capital, Santo Domingo.

las vegas, nevada

WHY GO From gambling to...a Venetian gondola ride? There's lots to explore, and prices are pretty reasonable.

WHERE TO STAY Since luxe Mandalay Bay lies on the southern end of The Strip, its rooms command amazing views of the carnival-like stretch (from \$94, [MandalayBay.com](#)).

WHAT TO DO Tour the "Eiffel Tower" at the Paris Las Vegas. Enjoy a vodka drink at the Minus5 Ice Bar—the walls, glasses and seats are all frozen ([Minus5Experience.com](#)).



budapest, hungary ↩

WHY GO Since the fall of Communism, this cultural jewel in Eastern Europe has hung on to some old ways, but it's definitely made moves toward modernization. See the contrast before the city's prices catch up with the spendy Western European cities.

WHERE TO STAY The boutique Lánchíd 19 Design Hotel is über-chic and has a dramatic interactive facade featuring changing images. Equally dramatic is the hotel's venerable location along the Danube and near the Chain Bridge that takes you to Pest (from about \$125, [Lanchid19Hotel.hu](#)).

WHAT TO DO You won't want to miss the Buda Castle and the Matthias Church. Soak in the local culture at the Costco-size bathhouse Széchenyi.

branson, missouri

WHY GO Dubbed the "live music show capital of the world," you can see a variety of wallet-friendly live entertainment—rock, country, Broadway-esque, whatever—from morning 'til night in this welcoming southern Missouri locale. When you need to stretch your legs, the Ozark Mountains are ripe for outdoor adventure.

WHERE TO STAY Hovering over sparkling Table Rock Lake, Chateau on the Lake Resort Spa & Convention Center looks like a skyward storybook castle. The resort's marina is your gateway to water sports, and the humongous spa is your gateway to *ahhhh*. And did we mention the amazingly comfortable beds... (from \$109, [ChateauontheLake.com](#)).

WHAT TO DO Catch two of the best sibling musical acts: The Haygoods and SIX. Breathe some fresh mountain air with a hike or jeep tour through the Ozarks' 2,200-acre Dogwood Canyon Nature Park.

grand bahama island, bahamas

WHY GO Just 55 miles off the coast of Florida, dazzling Grand Bahama Island is close to home, brimming with eco-adventures (it has three national parks and a ginormous underwater cave system) and can be easier on the pocketbook than other Bahamian tourist hot spots.

WHERE TO STAY While deciding whether you want to spa, swim or golf at the Grand Lucayan, lounge on the resort's seven-plus private acres of warm, white sand (you may decide to just stay put); hotel guests also have the choice of going all-inclusive or à la carte on-property (rooms from \$209, all-inclusive from \$312, [GrandLucayan.com](#)).

WHAT TO DO Bounce on a banana boat in the blue sea (go ahead, say that five times fast). Go to Lucayan National Park, where you can kayak along an inland reef and check out the cool Lucayan caves. >>



buenos aires, argentina

WHY GO With some planning and people-watching, you can discover this city's diverse neighborhoods, outdoor markets, local art, cafés and tango culture on a limited budget.

WHERE TO STAY Housed in a 100-year-old town house, Art Hotel is situated in the swanky Recoleta neighborhood. Admire works from Argentine artists in the ground-floor gallery and in your room as well (from \$91, including breakfast, ArtHotel.com.ar).

WHAT TO DO Hook up with the Google-like guides from BA Free Tours, who will show you around downtown sights for free, plus tips (BAFreeTour.com). Or take a cool tour of the city's graffiti and street art (\$20, BuenosAiresStreetArt.com).

siem reap, cambodia

WHY GO Make the worthwhile pilgrimage to this culturally abundant province in northwest Cambodia; you'll be rewarded with up-close views of UNESCO World Heritage site Angkor Archaeological Park—an array of ancient temples and other relics. Flights to Southeast Asia will cost you, but once you're there, the prices are sweet.

WHERE TO STAY Only 10 minutes from the relics, Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort lavishes you in French colonial sophistication and reinvigorating spa treatments, like rice body polishes (from \$220, Sofitel.com).

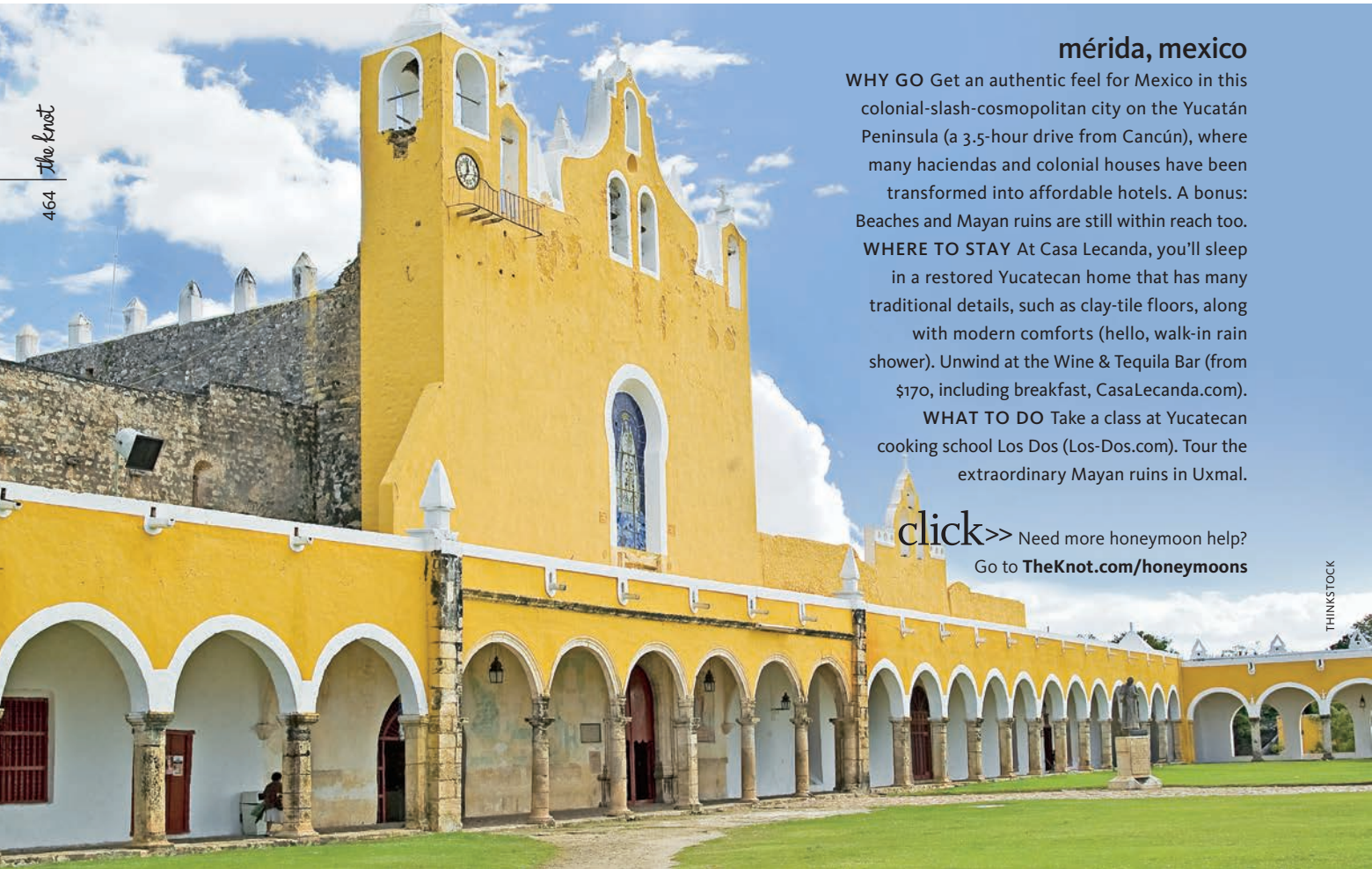
WHAT TO DO See a performance of the traditional Apsara dance. Roam the Angkor Night Market for souvenirs.

los angeles, california

WHY GO On La-La Land's "fun things to do" list, you'll find a ton of activities that won't break the bank—beaching it, visiting famous Hollywood spots, surfing, window-shopping on Rodeo and sighting celebrities. The weather is almost always good too.

WHERE TO STAY Full of vintage glam, the boutique Georgian Hotel, along the Santa Monica coast, has hosted many members of Hollywood royalty. For a primo location close to the beach, this charmer is a steal (from \$254, GeorgianHotel.com).

WHAT TO DO Wander the Hollywood Walk of Fame, searching for your fave star's handprints. Hike the three-mile Runyon Canyon Loop for fab views of the Hollywood sign and the Sunset Strip.



mérida, mexico

WHY GO Get an authentic feel for Mexico in this colonial-slash-cosmopolitan city on the Yucatán Peninsula (a 3.5-hour drive from Cancún), where many haciendas and colonial houses have been transformed into affordable hotels. A bonus: Beaches and Mayan ruins are still within reach too.

WHERE TO STAY At Casa Lecanda, you'll sleep in a restored Yucatecan home that has many traditional details, such as clay-tile floors, along with modern comforts (hello, walk-in rain shower). Unwind at the Wine & Tequila Bar (from \$170, including breakfast, CasaLecanda.com).

WHAT TO DO Take a class at Yucatecan cooking school Los Dos (Los-Dos.com). Tour the extraordinary Mayan ruins in Uxmal.

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