World LUXUIY Trovel Vol. 3 - Issue 5 - December, 2014 World Magazine

STARGAZERS PARADISE

The best Astronomical Tourism destinations on the planet

Top Ten Cities with Amazing Nightlife

Five Astounding Ecolodges in Asia

January Festivals around the Globe



The last month of the year is here. It is amazing how time flies while we remain busy carrying responsibilities of life. With the long holidays around the corner, December is the perfect time to take a break and travel. Just pack your bags and hop on that plane. Most often such

impromptu trips become the game changers. They teach you more than you could ever learn in your regular life.

Every tourist belongs to a genre that fulfils his or her deep rooted desire to wander. We at World Luxury Tourism have been trying to cater to all the genres of tourism to help travellers plan the perfect trip. This month, we are addressing the quest for the unknown sky. Our cover story on the best Astronomical Tourism destinations on the planet lets stargazers find out the best place for them to visit.

New Year Eve is all about the party at night. Previously, we talked about the best places to ring in the New Year. This time in our City Guide section, we are talking about the Top

Cities with Amazing Nightlife. Just drive to the nearest destination and have a night to remember.

Have you ever felt an urge to just get away from it all? Our Luxe Stays section gives you a few of the amazing spots to do just that. These are unique ecolodges in Asia that help you get away from the technology overload of a big city life. A stay here helps you get in touch with nature as well as yourself.

Happy reading!

Manashree Prakash Editor-in-Chief



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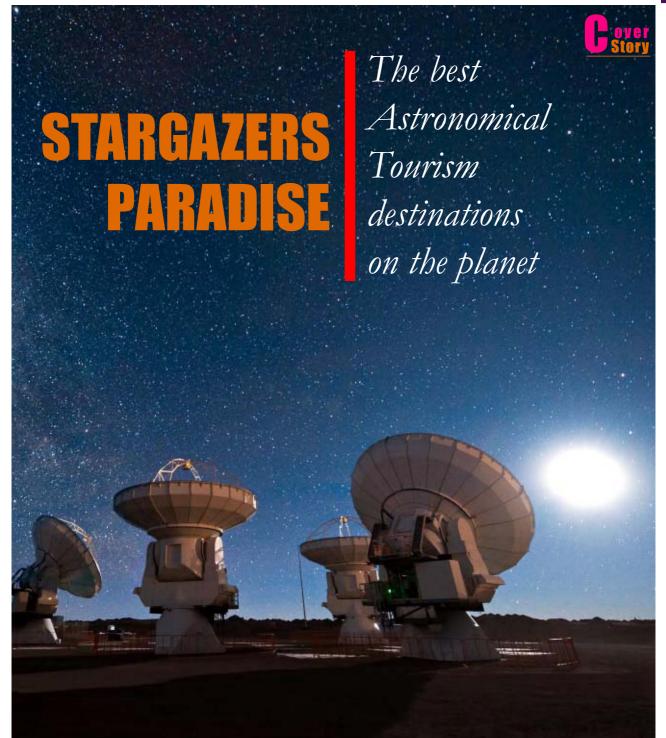
January Festivals around the Globe

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Astro tourism or Astronomical Tourism is exponentially on the rise as a result of the latest discoveries in the world of space, sophisticated equipment and our never ending desire to discover the unknown. This special interest tourism deals with the treasures of the outer space and makes it possible to admire its offerings on a wider spectrum.

Anyone who has gazed upon a clear night sky complete with constellations, planets, meteors and astral bodies knows what an enthralling experience it can be. If you want to lie back under a canopy of stars and enjoy the gifts of nature, take a look at our compiled list of some of the best stargazing spots in the world:

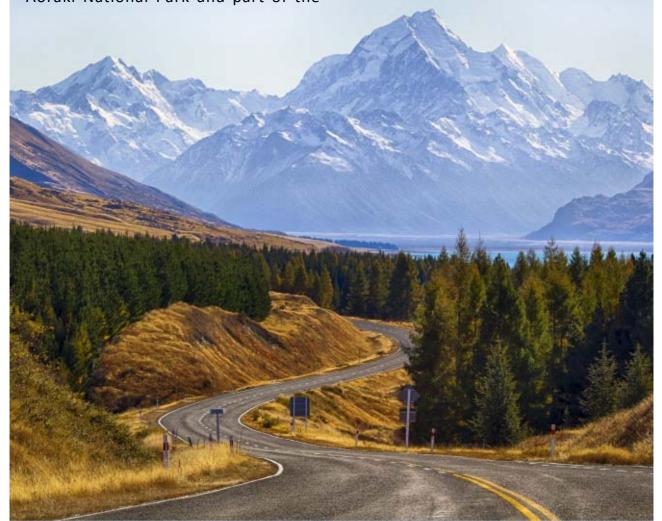


Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, New Zealand

New Zealand is the best place on earth where you can indulge in some precious 'nature therapy'. Its Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserve is the largest in the world and covers 1,600 square miles that includes Aoraki National Park and part of the

Mackenzie Basin. Aoraki is the Maori name for Mount Cook, the highest mountain in the country.

Located in the heart of the Southern Alps, the International Dark Sky Reserve offers a



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Atacama Desert, Chile

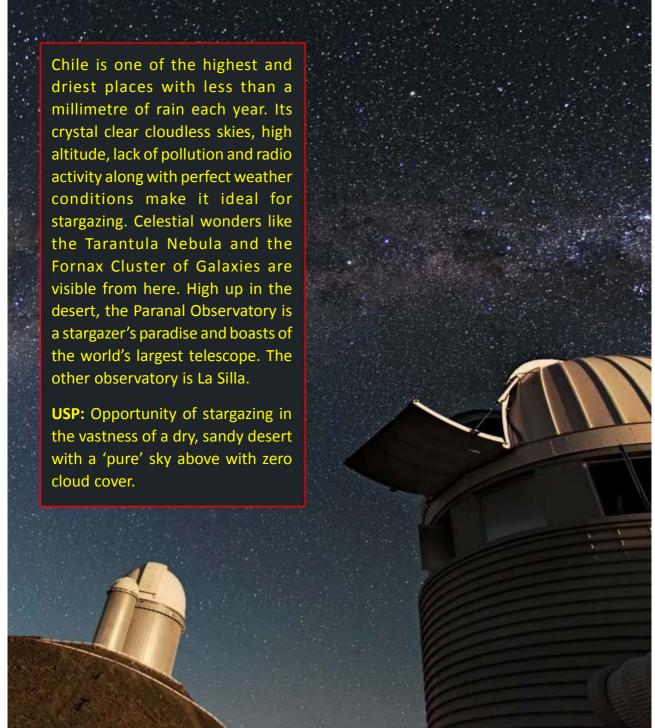
Chile, South America's crown jewel in astronomy tourism paints a breath-taking picture with its powder blue skies and 300 days of sunshine. "By the year 2020, Chile will concentrate over 70 per cent of the world's astronomical infrastructure,

representing an investment of USD 6 billion," said Monica Rubio, director of the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research in Chile.

Atacama Desert in the northern part of



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Mauna Kea, Hawaii, USA

Mauna Kea, Hawaii, boasts of one of the most renowned and unique observatories of the world. Set atop the 13,796-foot dormant volcano that last erupted about 4,500 years ago, the observatory has 13

telescopes from 11 different countries. The dry atmosphere, lack of clouds and light pollution along with a strategic location in the midst of the Pacific Ocean contribute to its growing popularity among stargazers.

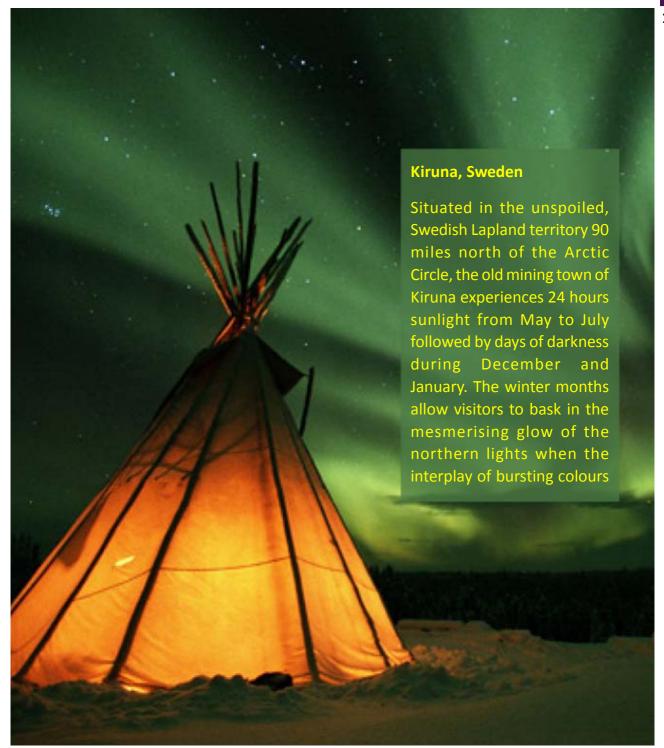


The University of Hawaii is of the opinion that Mauna Kea contains a tropical inversion cloud layer below its summit that swipes off lower moist maritime air from its upper atmosphere. This in turn provides dry and pollutants free clear skies. The region is apt for beginners as well as professional astronomers.

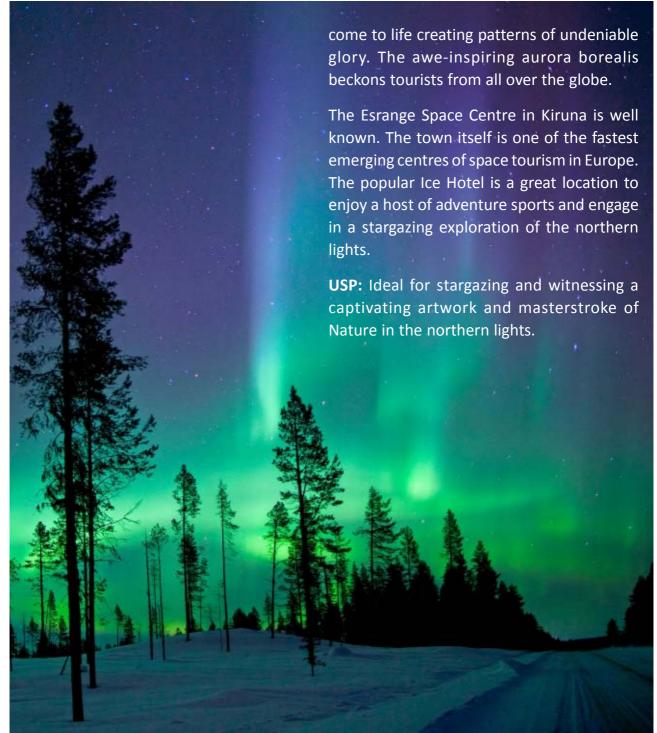
USP: The 14,000-high volcanic summit encircled by the Pacific is a Mecca for stargazers.



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Galloway Forest Park, Scotland

Nestled in Scotland's south-western corner, the Galloway Forest Park was named United Kingdom's first Dark Sky Park in 2009. Sprawling over 185,000 acres with few buildings in between, it offers an unending canvas to the star gazers. It is possible to view the Andromeda Galaxy, the Aurora Borealis and over 7,000 stars with a naked eye. The Forestry Commission lists 10 viewing sites within the park best suited for stargazing. The Scottish Dark Sky Observatory is also situated here.

According to Martin Morgan-Taylor, the International Dark Skies Association's British board member, "The dark sky park concept is really about restoring and protecting the

night sky. It's an award for effort and commitment as much as its quality as a dark sky."

USP: The thrill of stargazing in the midst of stunning valleys, wild forests and untamed wilderness!

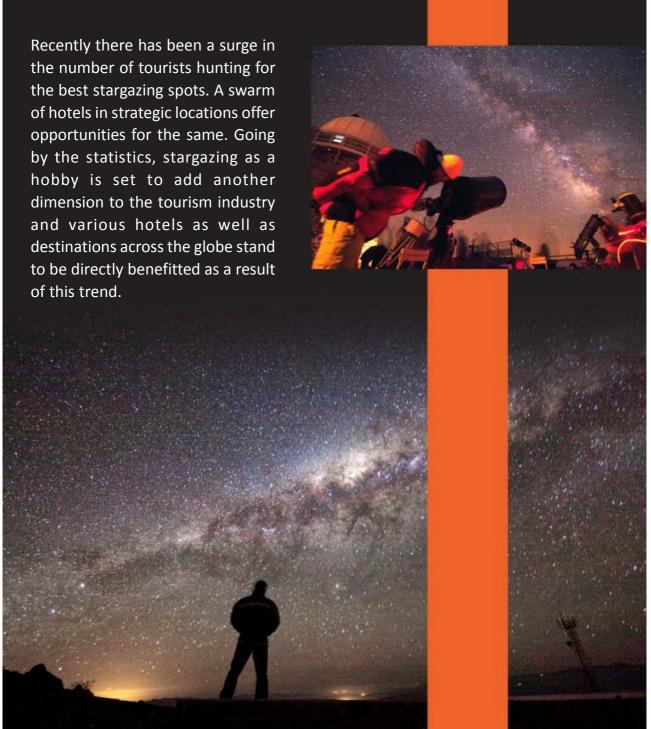




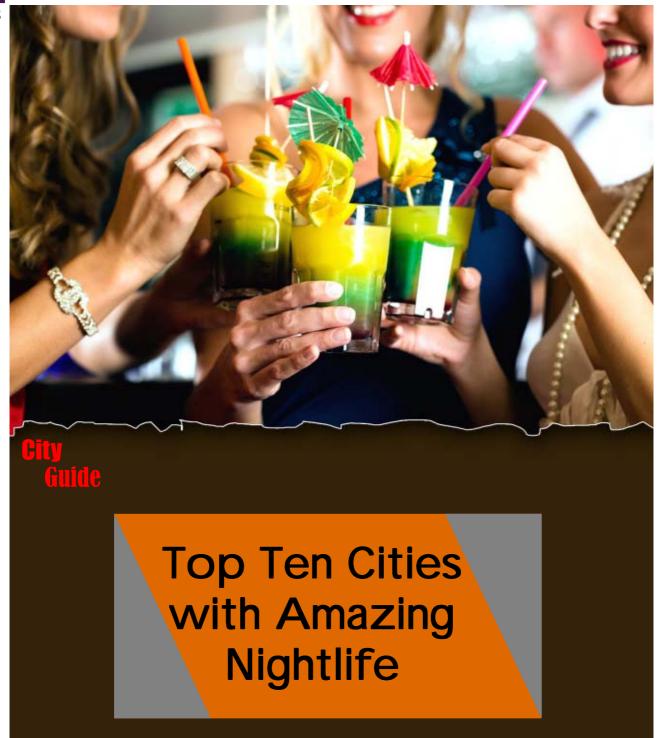
- Patience is a virtue as it takes time to adjust your eyes in darkness
- Use a red torch, red light will not interfere with your ability to see in the dark
- New moon is the best time for

- Plan your activity around an important event like a meteor shower for more excitement
- ➤ Join a club, subscribe to a journal and invest in some quality equipment for a memorable experience





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Have you ever made a list of all offerings that make a perfect vacation? Or for that matter what are the pre requisites for a destination to be a huge draw for travellers? While some vacationers prefer sight-seeing and lots of activities, others look for adventure thrills and the rest probably love

to relax amidst breath-taking surroundings.

Irrespective of the type of tourist you are or the kind of activity you opt for during the day, it goes without saying that the best of holidays include letting your hair down after dusk. Take a look at the top ten cities with an amazing nightlife and unwind in style:



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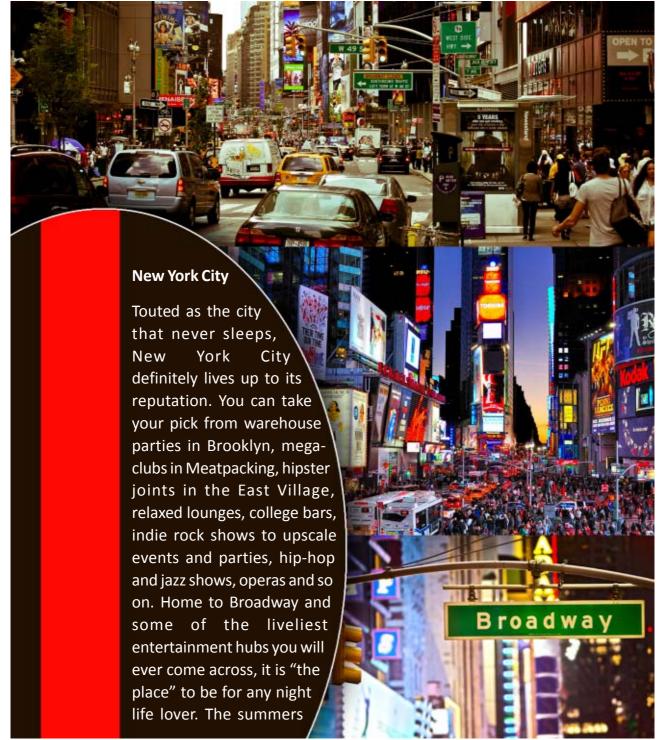
Las Vegas

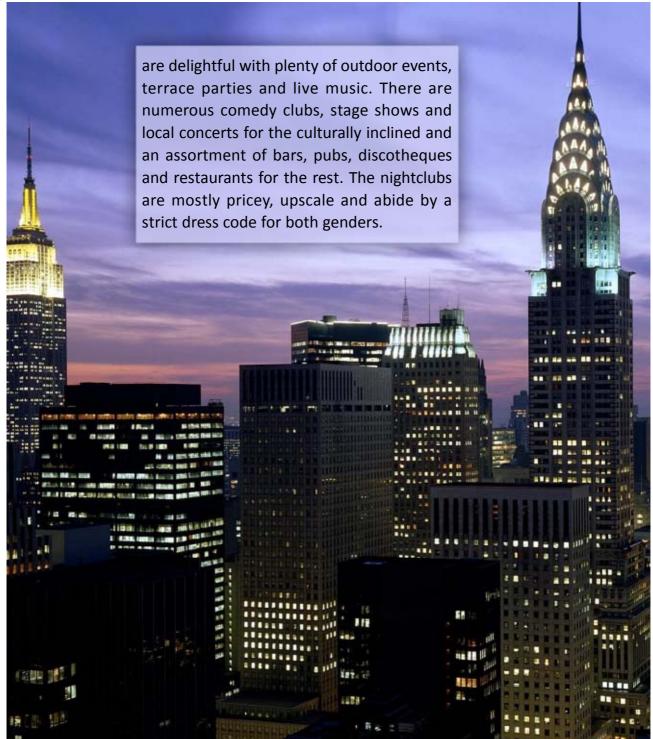
No list can be complete without the mention of Las Vegas when it comes to nightlife. Vegas tops our chart for the obvious reasons. There is no dearth of entertainment and of course the fun never ends here. From elite clubs, bars, pubs, discotheques, restaurants, cruises, lounges, casinos to glamourous events, pool parties and all night revelry, there is something for everyone. As a premier entertainment destination, Vegas serves the best staple diet to win over any partygoer.



Every street, every nook and corner offers an array of splendid options to choose from. The Sin city has a diverse crowd throughout the year and enjoys unrivalled popularity. It is one of the best places to go to for a chill-out vacation.







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Miami

Frolicking around the stunning beaches of Miami will leave you little time to do anything else; such is the charm of the place. But fortunately for you, most of the party scene of the city takes place around its breath-taking beaches. Relaxed, laidback and informal, the nightlife here is both a refreshing variation and a stark

contrast to many of its contemporaries where revellers are usually dressed to kill. The beach parties during the day usually pave way to night long revelry. There are a number of posh nightclubs and cocktail lounges but the real fun is in the outdoor parties complete with hammocks, beach beds and of course the gentle sea breeze.



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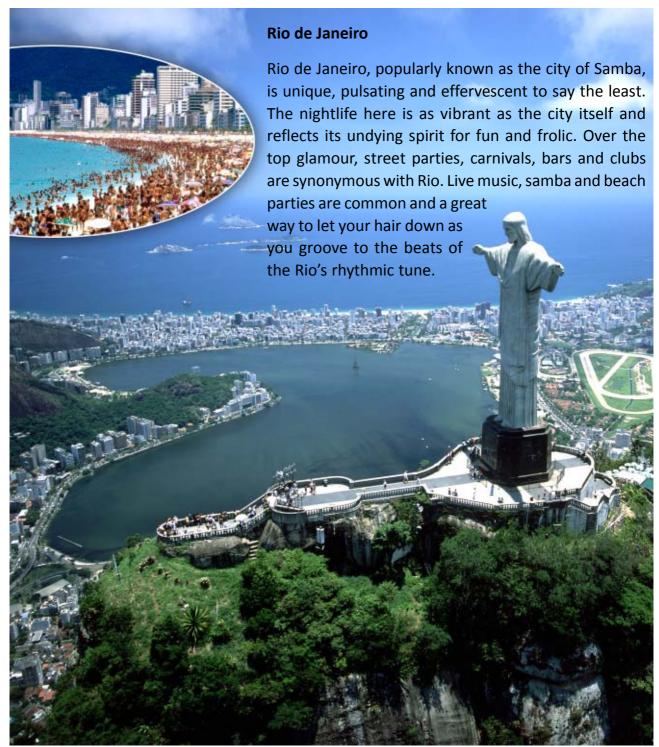


Bangkok has a reputation of having rowdy after-hours and most tourists conjure images of seedy joints and cheap pubs in reference to nightlife in Bangkok. However there is a lot more to the city than it is credited for. A number of posh nightclubs, elite bars and trendy lounges grace the party

Bangkok. However there is a lot more to the city than it is credited for. A number of posh nightclubs, elite bars and trendy lounges grace the party scene in Bangkok. Classy, cosmopolitan and ever ready to cater to different tastes and mind-sets, the metropolis is in a league of its own. Scrumptious food, warm hospitality and value for money pretty much sum up the way of life here. Try a slice of it and before long you will be craving for more!



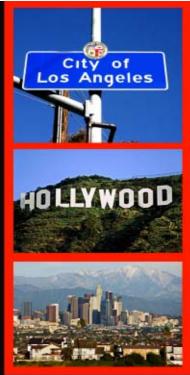
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Los Angeles

The glitz and glamour that surrounds Los Angeles very well seeps into its nightlife. Being the hotspot of movie producers, actors, actresses and other celebrities, it boasts of innumerable V.I.P joints, contemporary clubs, cafes, parties and events. The calendar is almost always full throughout the year and there is a lot to look forward to for visitors. Downtown LA's vibrant nightlife is highly sought after. However it is advisable not to naively assume you will rub shoulders with celebrities and socialites just because you are in Los Angeles. Since most of the aforementioned hubs usually come with special enclosures and private seating arrangements.







Paris is as much about fashion, art and architecture as it is about parties and old school glamour. Traditionally affluent and ever so refined, it practically sums up everything that the good life offers. Aptly named as 'the city of lights', Paris comes alive beautifully once the sun goes down. The iconic buildings dazzle in the glowing lights, the champagne keeps coming and conversations flow effortlessly as the click

Paris

of heels and jewellery blend in with the music that keeps the city awake till wee hours. Cabaret shows have been quintessential to the French capital but for those who prefer otherwise, the clubs and bars are plenty. If you are lucky you might even hobnob with the A-listers from Hollywood. Sample the delicious food and drinks here while basking in the magic of the land.



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Amsterdam

Though famous for its red light district and quaint coffee shops, Amsterdam in reality comes with immense possibilities. The nightlife here is pretty casual and upbeat. Most of the haunts are free to get in but some charge a minimum fee. The popular hangouts are typically concentrated around the Leidseplein and the Rembrandtplein. Both these squares are adequately adorned with bustling hangout locations. The Dutch are known for being laidback. They usually enjoy a relaxed night out rather than wild parties. That explains the popularity of the coffee shops and bars. In fact there are special bars for those who love cocktails, beers or whisky.



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Tokyo

The best way or perhaps the only way to describe the spirit of Tokyo is that it is international and cosmopolitan. Its global outlooks transcends to every sphere of life here. Be it shopping or parties, everything takes place on a grand scale. The energy is eclectic; the venues are amazing and the temptations undeniable. In the glow

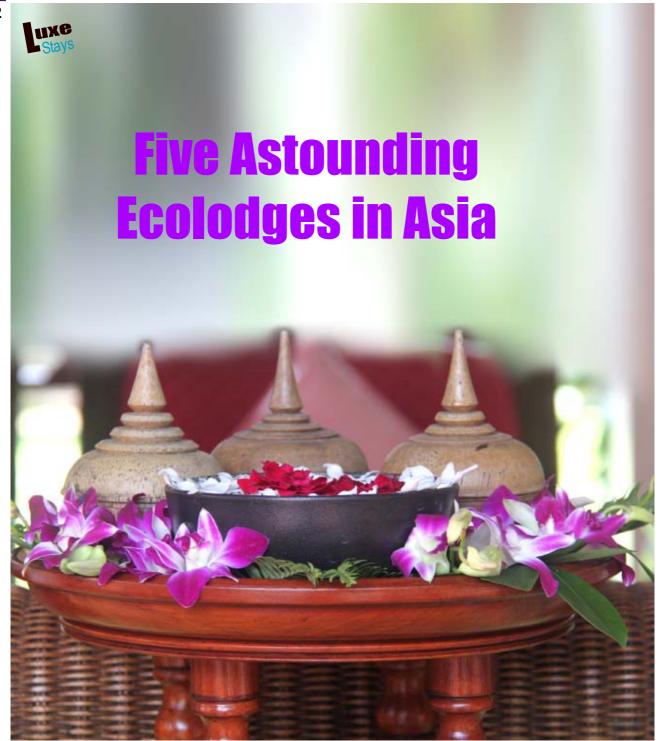


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of the neon lights and the paper lanterns, the city transforms and reinvents itself as one of the most ravishing party destinations around.

Having a little fun never hurt anyone and if you are on a holiday, you might as well check out the local hotspots and sign up for a whirlwind time. As long as you take some basic safety measures, you will be good to go, soaking in the charm and energy and exploring unchartered territories.





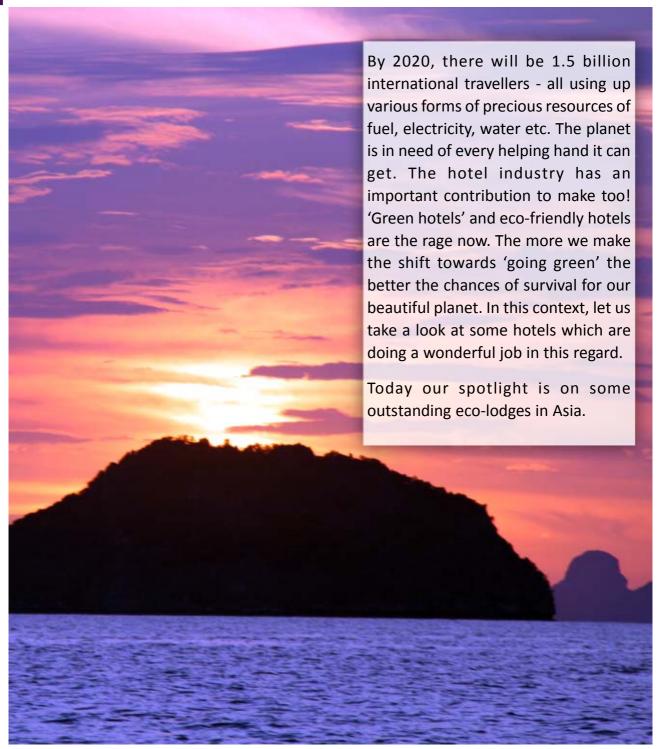
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"For every towel that you don't put out, we will plant a tree", reads a sign in an environment-friendly hotel. The hand that you stretch out unthinkingly to hand over your towel for washing is reaching out to grab some of the depleting resources of the planet. Sounds extreme? Take a look at some interesting statistics:

An average household in Canada uses 326 litres of water in a day. A village of 700 people in a developing country uses around 500 litres per month. A single guest in a luxury hotel uses 1800 litres of water per night!

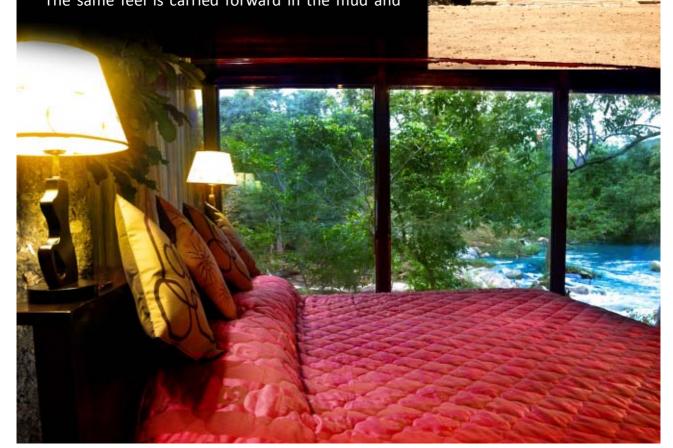


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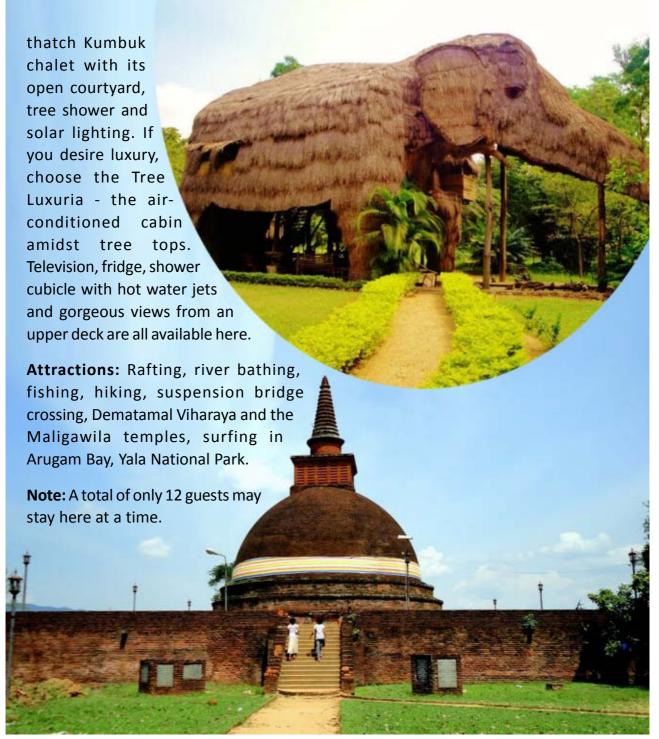


Kumbuk River Resort, Sri Lanka

Sleep in the belly of an elephant, relax in the surreal glow of lamp lights and get lost in the heart of Nature! This is Kumbuk River Resort, a 16-acre gem tucked away on the banks of River Kumbukkan Oya, bordering the famous Yala Wild Life Sanctuary. This lovely eco-lodge is famous for its main accommodation - the elephant-shaped, two-storeyed eco- villa, made of straw and wood. The two large bedrooms and lounge area with living spaces echo the rustic theme of wood and lamplight. The same feel is carried forward in the mud and



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4 Rivers Floating Eco Lodge, Cambodia

Set like a string of pearls on the Tatai River, this 12-tented eco-lodge is nestled in the lap of nature. Lush greenery, blue waters and the magnificent Cardamom Mountains make up the breath-taking landscape. Situated about four hours from Phnom Penh, the resort is accessible by the Highway 48 which cuts through the jungle and a short boat journey from Tatai village. The floating tents are connected by a boardwalk. Each tent stands on its



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own platform with enough distance to maintain privacy. Twelve luxury, double and twin-bed African style tented villas provide accommodation. Each villa has a flat screen television, DVD player and a mini-bar. 'Escape' is the keyword here and the private balcony is the perfect place to do this while sipping cocktails or any of your favourite drinks. Sustainability finds place in the environment friendly building materials, waste water treatment system and the involvement of locals in the running of the



Attractions: Jungle trekking tours, mangrove kayaking, Tatai waterfalls, Sunset Cruise, wildlife watching.

Wow: The surrounding rainforest eco-region harbours over 100 mammal and 553 bird species. Rare or endangered species include the Javan rhinoceros, pileated gibbon, the silver oriole and great hornbill.

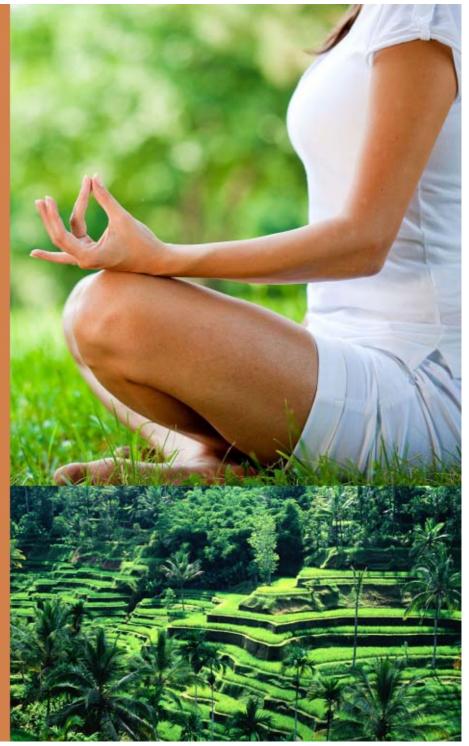




per cent being grown in the resort itself. The resort is built with recycled or sustainable materials. Measures like use of organic drinking straws and biodegradable washing products; re-use program of sheets and towels are all geared towards sustainability. Desa Seni is also involved in several community welfare programmes. The unique blend of beauty, wellness and harmony make this a truly magical place to stay in.

Attractions: Wellness and cultural activities, yoga, art, dance, meditation, saltwater lap pool.

Fancy that: The resort sits right in the middle of lush paddy fields!



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Six Senses Con Dao, Vietnam

This Six Senses beach resort is located in the strikingly beautiful surroundings of Vietnam's unspoilt Con Dao Island. The location is a Marine National Park. Accommodation comes in the shape of 50 antique-wood-panelled luxury villas that blend in beautifully with the natural surroundings. The villas have private infinity pools and spacious dining and sitting spaces. DVD players, a flat-screen



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TV, free Wi-Fi, butler service, superb bathrooms and gorgeous ocean views are the added perks. The lovely spa is the perfect place to rejuvenate body and mind. Four dining options offer delicious fresh food bursting with flavours. The beauty of the entire resort lies in the way it integrates luxury with sustainability. The resort is totally committed to preserving and protecting the Marine National Park.

Attractions: Snorkelling, Scuba diving, gym, Con Dao historical and prison tour, turtle



discovery, trek to lighthouse.

Wow: The resort uses 100 per cent biodegradable golf balls. If they fall in water they dissolve completely down to inner core composed of fish food.



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Three Camel Lodge, Mongolia

Set in the heart of the Gobi desert against the backdrop of the majestic Gobi-Altai Mountain Range, The Three Camel Lodge is a unique resort. The lodge consists of 20 deluxe gers (traditional felt tents), which use wooden stoves for heating, and furnished with hand-painted wooden king-size beds. Luxury amenities include private bathrooms, Mongolian bathrobes, indigenous toiletries and camel milk



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moisturising lotions. The Dino House at the centre is built like a Mongolian temple and provides indoor game options, a small library, music and dance performances for guests. There is also a spa for massages and other treatments. Amazing food is served at the Bulagtai Restaurant using locally grown, organic fruits and vegetables. Guests can quench their thirst at the naturally geo-cooled Thirsty Camel Bar that serves a wide range of drinks. The lodge is a shining example of environment and cultural sustainability. It participates in conservation, sponsors local projects, recycles its organic waste and largely uses solar and wind energy. Attractions: Naadam Festival (June 21 – August 2), Bulgan Soum, Havtsgait petroglyphs, Moltsog Els Sand Dunes, Flaming Cliffs.



Did you know: Constructed in accordance with Mongolian Buddhist architecture, the buildings in the lodge have been built without using a single nail!

Travelling with Conscience

Each of the eco-resorts featured here are unique in their own way. Whether it is an elephant shaped resort, a tented lodge in a vast desert or luxury villas on a beautiful beach, each one stands out for providing a setting, a holiday and an experience that is unforgettable. Their commitment to sustainability and their contribution in helping us travel with a conscience is laudable!





The celebratory zest of the New Year spills onto the festivals in the opening month of the year. This time let us explore some festivals not featured before, as well as some lesser known celebrations across the world. Not to give the major ones a miss, we shall be taking a peek at them too! Take a look at what January brings in the way of festivals across the globe.



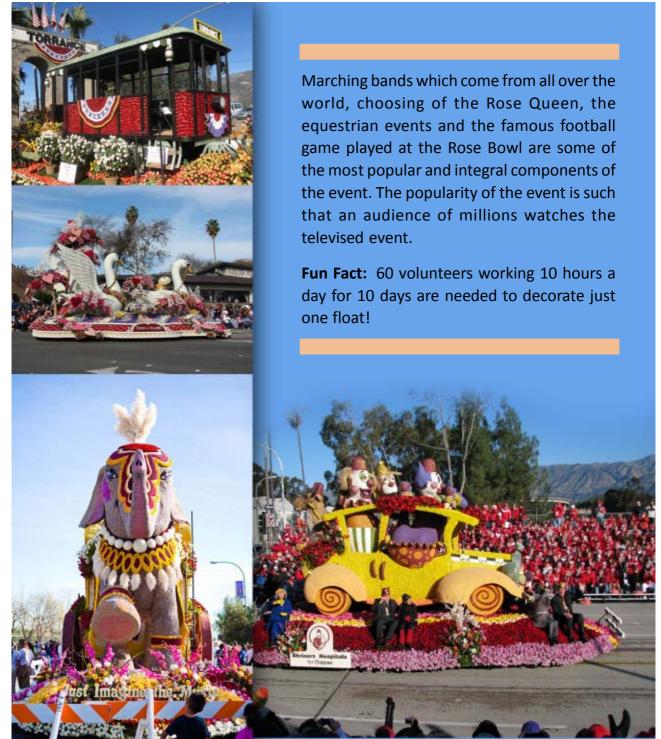


Rose Parade

Place: Pasadena, California, USA

Dates: January 1

The Rose Parade is all about floral beauty, creativity and heady perfumes of course. The Tournament of Roses Association organises this event. The major attraction of the festival consists of the eye-catching floats beautifully bedecked with flowers, grass, bark etc.



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Junkanoo Parade

Place: Nassau, Bahamas

to the charged atmosphere.

Dates: January 1

This is a vibrant festival, exploding with brilliant colours, sounds and high energy and spirits. The festival traces its origins to the 17th century when plantation slaves got leave for Christmas celebrations with their families and friends. Thousands of people participate in this street parade dazzling in colourful, flamboyant and highly creative costumes and masks. The lively rhythm of brass instruments, drums and cowbells add

Fun Fact: Participating groups prepare for months to win the coveted prizes for best costume, music and overall presentation.





International Kite Festival

Place: Gujarat, India

Dates: January 14

To celebrate the shift of the sun to the Northern Hemisphere, Indians celebrate the popular festival of Makar Sankranti. Associated with the festival is the popular and fun-filled event of kite flying. The festival sees the skies dotted with colourful kites in an array of shapes and sizes. This year a laser and sound show has been added to the festival. Kite-flying enthusiasts from all over the world gather here to watch and participate in this interesting event. The participants are

serious about the sport and friendly yet fierce competition ensues to gain supremacy over the sky. Single or in groups, fliers focus intently on their kites, navigating them safely away from rivals who will be trying to snap the kite's thread. The kite market, food stalls, specially illuminated kites for night and cultural performances are the added attractions.

Fun Fact: Preparing the strings of the kites with coatings of finely powdered glass to make them stronger is an art in itself!

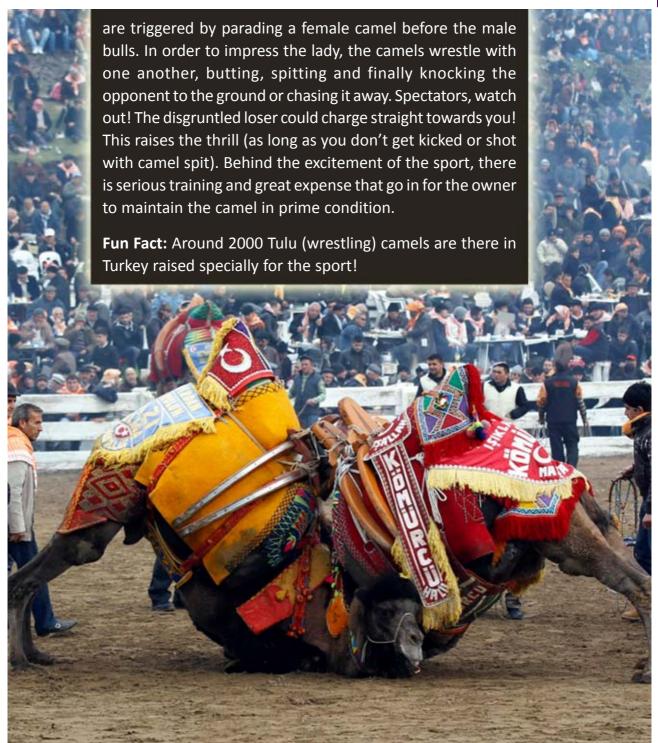


Camel Wrestling Festival

Place: Selcuk, Turkey

Dates: January 18

Exploit the natural instincts of camels during the mating season and what do you get? A quirky sport that sees the male bulls charging at one another in a combat that combines action with a dose of humour. Camel fighting is more than a thousand year old tradition, especially popular in the Aegean Coast of Turkey. Passions



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International Monte Carlo Circus Festival

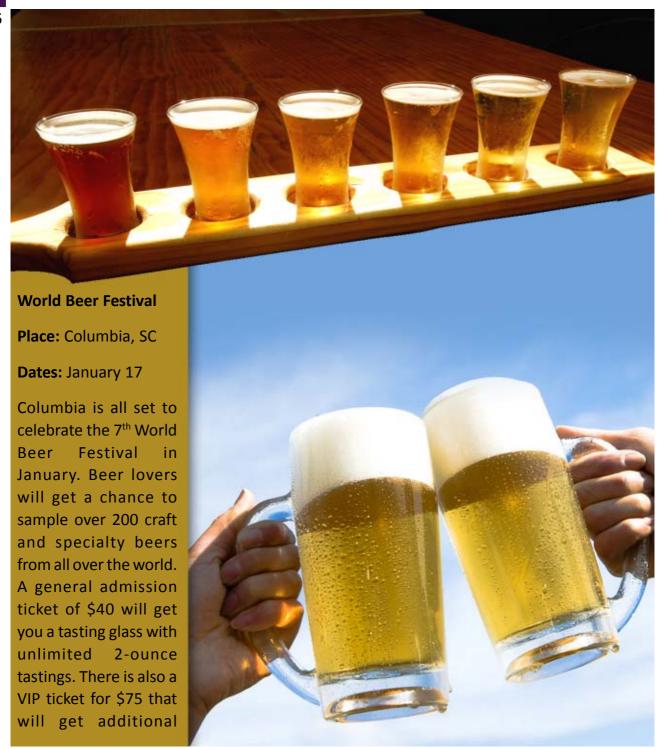
Place: Monte Carlo, Monaco

Dates: January 15-25

Carlo International Circus audiences while vying for Around 25 acts are



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goodies like a bonus selection of rare beers and a private VIP lounge. So what are the events to look forward to this year? The festival will highlight offerings from local South Carolina breweries. There will be more beers from the Palmetto State and Belgian beer on the stands for the first time. Cheese and beer pairings, live music, more food choices and the popular Silent Disco will all be part of the festival.

Fun Fact: The festival is organised by the All About Beer Magazine!







