



World

Luxury Travel

Vol. 2 ■ Issue 7 ■ February, 2014

Magazine

**Five Breath-taking
Waterfalls
of the World**

**Best Honeymoon
Destinations of
Asia**

Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur
An epitome of effervescent elegance

Kuala Lumpur

*The gorgeous capital
city of Malaysia*

**March Festivals
around the World**

**ASEAN Tourism
Forum 2014**



This month we focus on the magnificence of waterfalls! When our jaws dropped to the sight of some of these, we guessed it was time to feature a cover story on some famous waterfalls around the world. Though the list went on and on, we picked the Top Five Breath-taking Waterfalls complete with fascinating trivia on each.

What better month for Romance than February! Small wonder that we are featuring an article this time on traveling for romance! So this month, we encourage you to romance in Asia.

Winter and early spring is the best time to visit most of the places in Asia. Take a look at our Valentine's Day Special Feature on the Best Honeymoon Destinations of Asia.

Focusing on Asia, we present you another must-visit destination of this continent – Kuala Lumpur. It is the gorgeous capital city of Malaysia. This rather new city is fast becoming a hub of Southeast Asia.

The much talked about ASEAN Tourism Forum 2014 (ATF2014) concluded recently. Read the review of the event in our Event Watch section followed by our regular section on festivals around the globe.

During our visit to Kuala Lumpur, we stayed in the centrally located Hotel Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. The location of the hotel just by the side of the city's two major landmarks – the Petronas Twin Towers and the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, make it an ideal business hotel. Read more about this hotel in our Luxe Stays section of the e-zine.

Happy reading!
Thank you!

Manashree Prakash
Editor-in-Chief

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Five Breath-taking Waterfalls of the World

Waterfalls are spectacular sights of nature! There is something spellbinding about the sight of tonnes of sparkling, frothy waters tumbling from great heights above and dashing to the grounds below. Did you know that waterfalls are broadly categorised under ten headings depending on the volume of water? There are different kinds of waterfalls including cascade, cataract, horsetail, plunge, segmented, tiered and punchbowl. Whatever the type, they are fascinating shows of nature.

Tallest, broadest, most beautiful – a variety of epithets are bestowed upon these cataracts. Let us explore five amazing waterfalls around the world and check out what makes them so special.

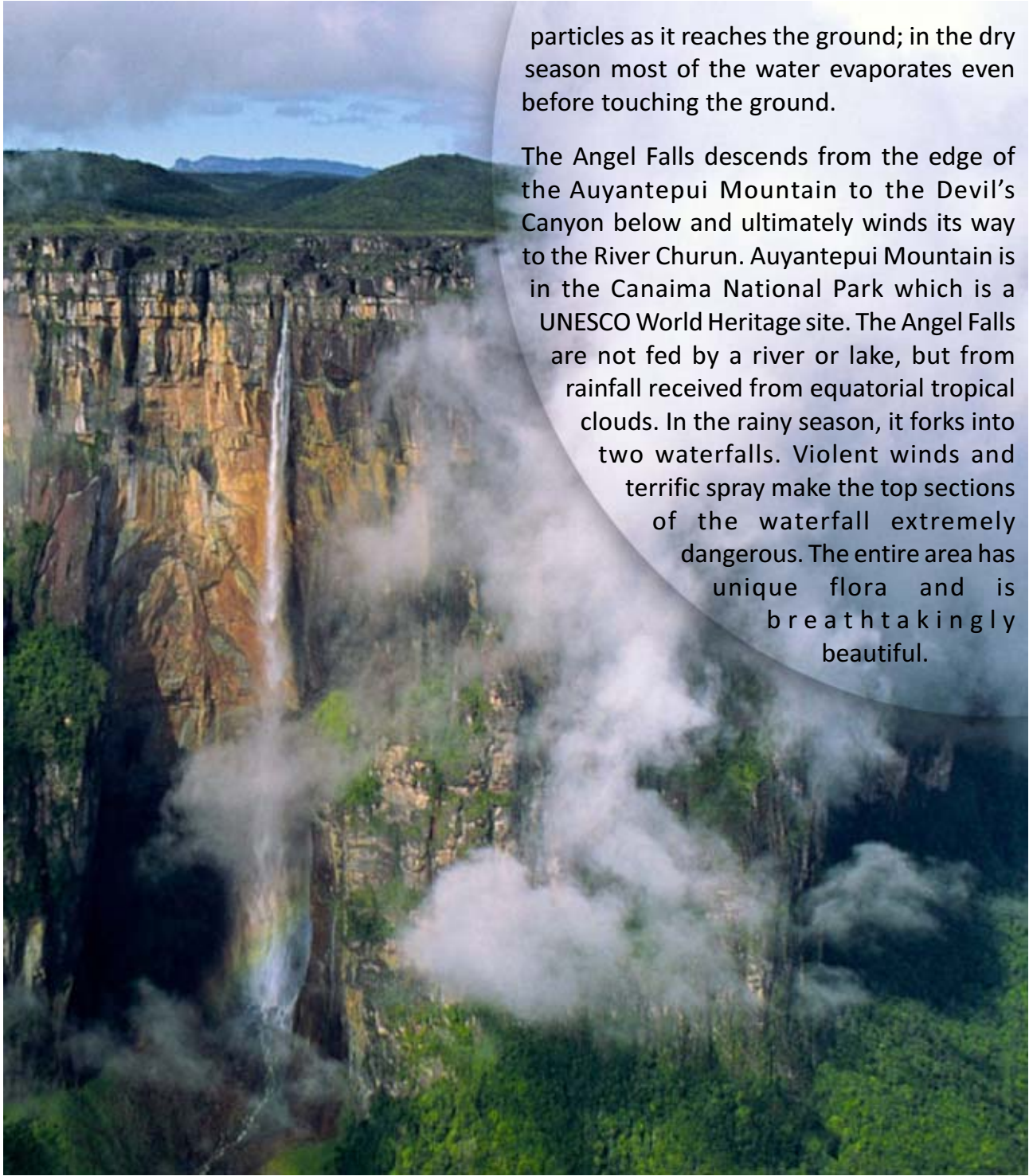
Angel Falls, Venezuela

Claim to fame: Highest uninterrupted water fall in the world.

Height: 979 m (3,212 ft.); **Plunge:** 807 m (from where the water drops vertically losing contact with the bedrock surface).

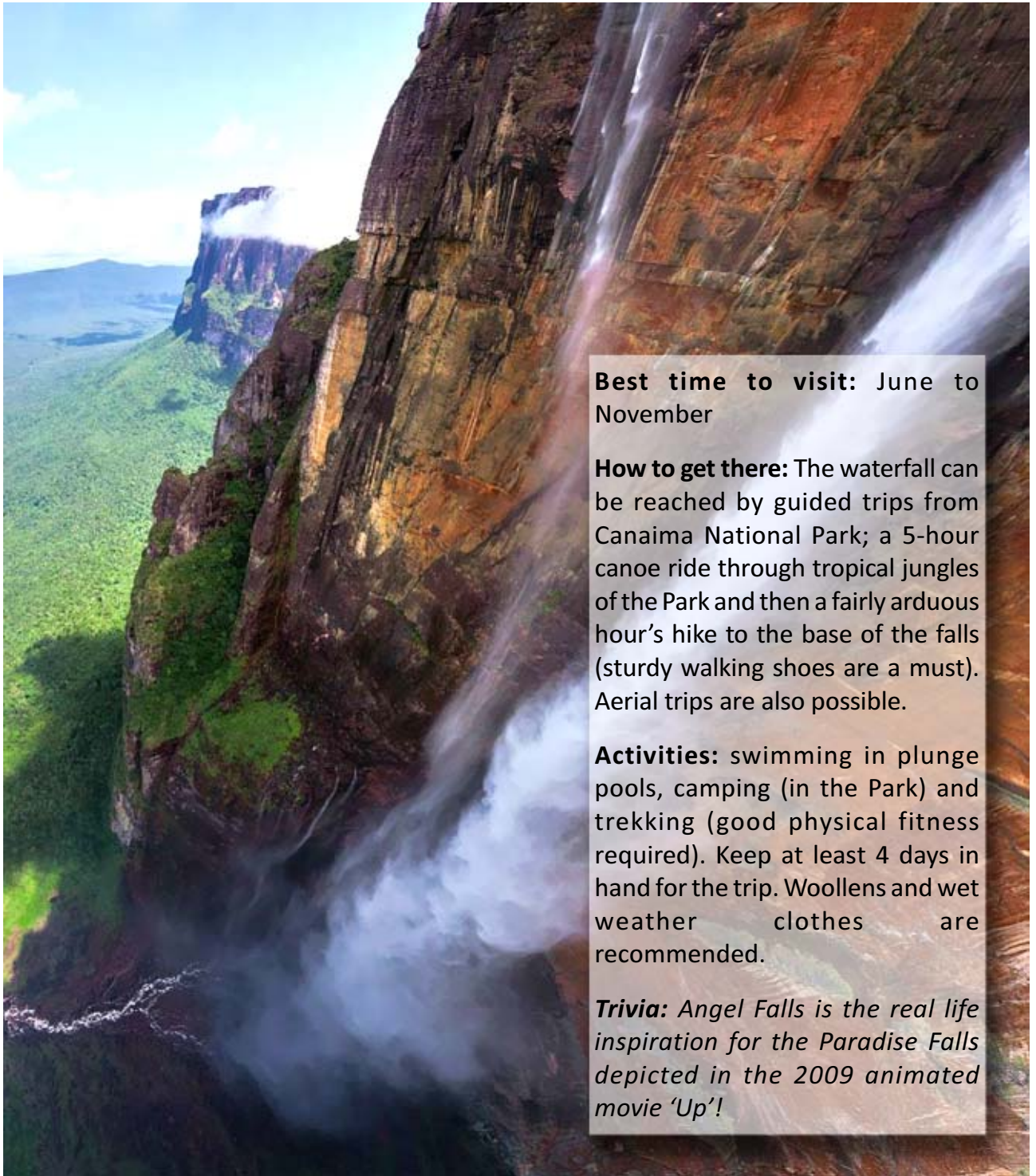
In 1933 a pilot named Jimmy Angel discovered an amazing waterfall while flying over it and it was later named after him as Angel Falls. The native Pemon name for it is Kerepakupai Merú, which means “waterfall of the deepest place.” It is the perfect name for a waterfall which is so tall that the water becomes fine mist-like





particles as it reaches the ground; in the dry season most of the water evaporates even before touching the ground.

The Angel Falls descends from the edge of the Auyantepui Mountain to the Devil's Canyon below and ultimately winds its way to the River Churun. Auyantepui Mountain is in the Canaima National Park which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Angel Falls are not fed by a river or lake, but from rainfall received from equatorial tropical clouds. In the rainy season, it forks into two waterfalls. Violent winds and terrific spray make the top sections of the waterfall extremely dangerous. The entire area has unique flora and is breathtakingly beautiful.



Best time to visit: June to November

How to get there: The waterfall can be reached by guided trips from Canaima National Park; a 5-hour canoe ride through tropical jungles of the Park and then a fairly arduous hour's hike to the base of the falls (sturdy walking shoes are a must). Aerial trips are also possible.

Activities: swimming in plunge pools, camping (in the Park) and trekking (good physical fitness required). Keep at least 4 days in hand for the trip. Woollens and wet weather clothes are recommended.

Trivia: *Angel Falls is the real life inspiration for the Paradise Falls depicted in the 2009 animated movie 'Up'!*

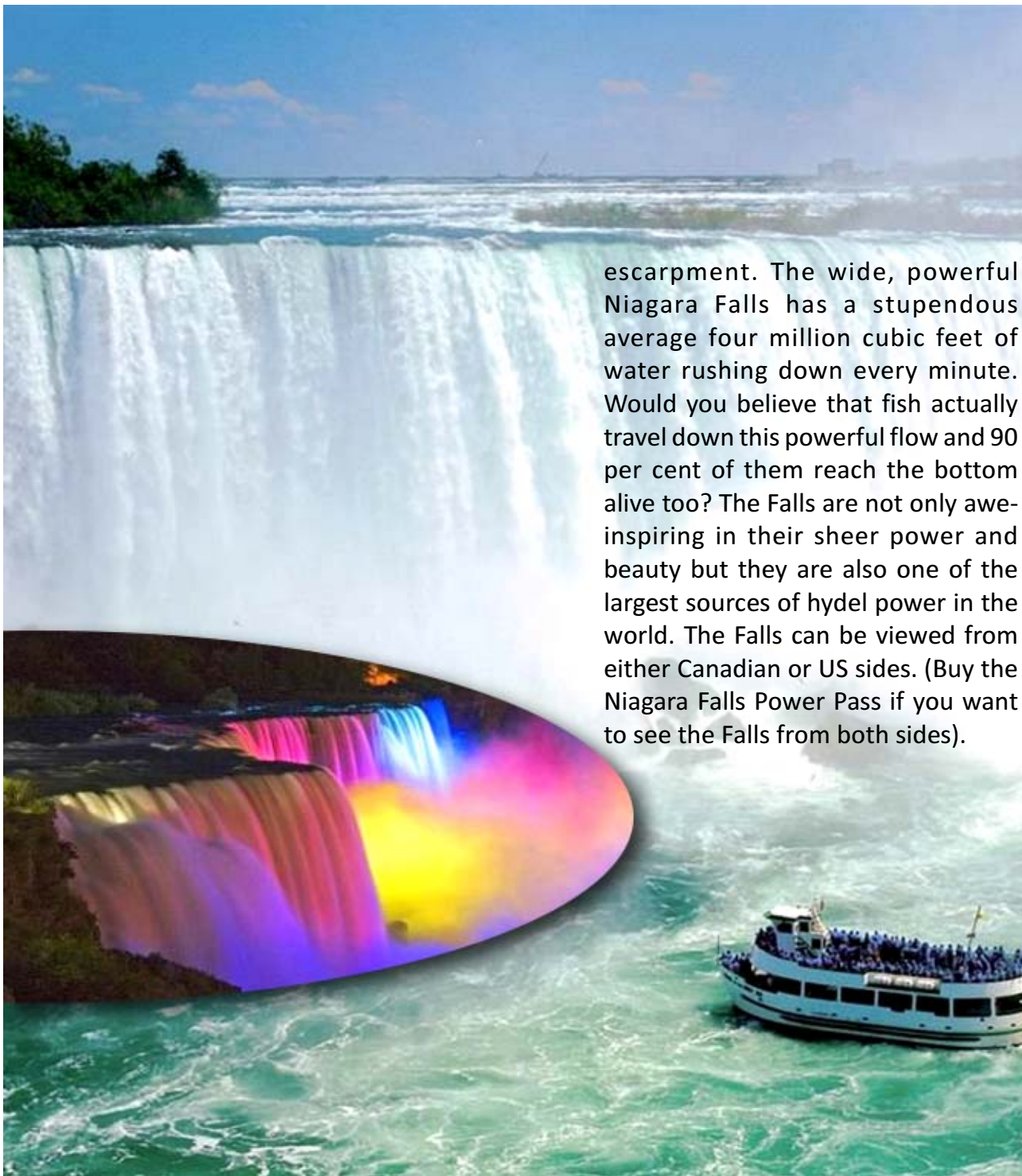


Niagara Falls, USA

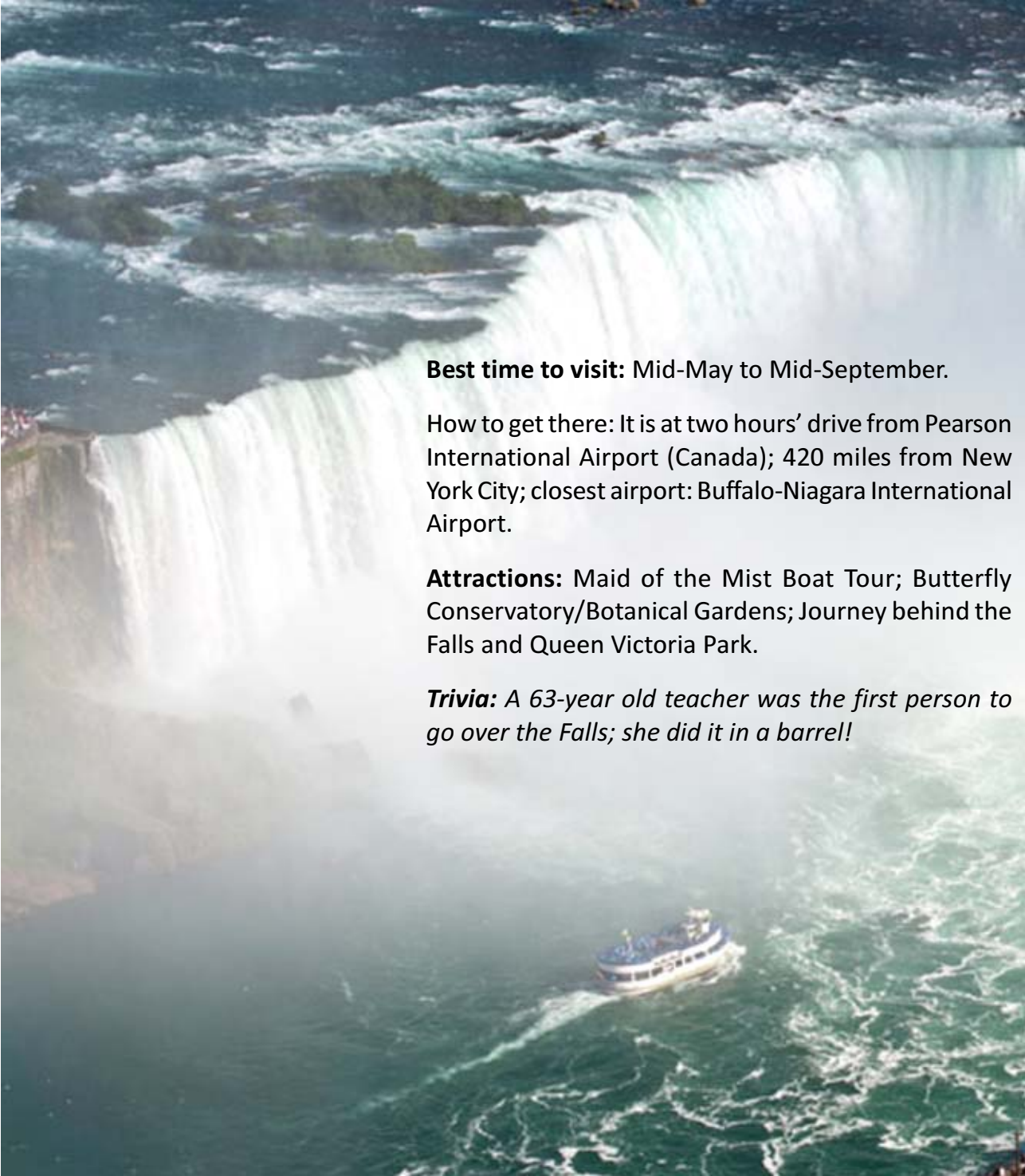
Claim to fame: Highest flow rate in the world.

Height: 165 feet

This iconic North American waterfall is actually three waterfalls (Horseshoe Falls, American Falls and Bridal Veil Falls) in one. Together they spread across the borders of both the USA and Canada. Horseshoe Falls (the biggest) lies on the Canadian side and is separated from the American Falls by the Goat Island while the Luna Island separates the smaller Bridal Veil Falls from the other two. Located on the Niagara River, the Niagara Waterfall is a result of melting glaciers and the erosion activity of the Great Lakes over the Niagara



escarpment. The wide, powerful Niagara Falls has a stupendous average four million cubic feet of water rushing down every minute. Would you believe that fish actually travel down this powerful flow and 90 per cent of them reach the bottom alive too? The Falls are not only awe-inspiring in their sheer power and beauty but they are also one of the largest sources of hydel power in the world. The Falls can be viewed from either Canadian or US sides. (Buy the Niagara Falls Power Pass if you want to see the Falls from both sides).

An aerial photograph of Niagara Falls, showing the massive volume of water cascading over the edge. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the surrounding area is filled with white foam and spray. In the foreground, a small boat with a blue and white striped canopy is visible on the water, moving towards the falls. The background shows the continuation of the river and some greenery on the banks.

Best time to visit: Mid-May to Mid-September.

How to get there: It is at two hours' drive from Pearson International Airport (Canada); 420 miles from New York City; closest airport: Buffalo-Niagara International Airport.

Attractions: Maid of the Mist Boat Tour; Butterfly Conservatory/Botanical Gardens; Journey behind the Falls and Queen Victoria Park.

Trivia: *A 63-year old teacher was the first person to go over the Falls; she did it in a barrel!*

A wide, powerful waterfall cascading over a dark, rocky cliff. The water is white and turbulent as it falls, creating a large plume of mist at the base. A vibrant rainbow is visible in the mist. The foreground is filled with lush green grass and some small plants. The background shows a flat landscape with scattered trees under a blue sky with light clouds.

Victoria Falls, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Claim to fame: Largest single sheet of falling water in the world, 1.7 km wide.

Height: 108 m

Dr Livingstone, the famous explorer, discovered this waterfall and named it after Queen Victoria. The

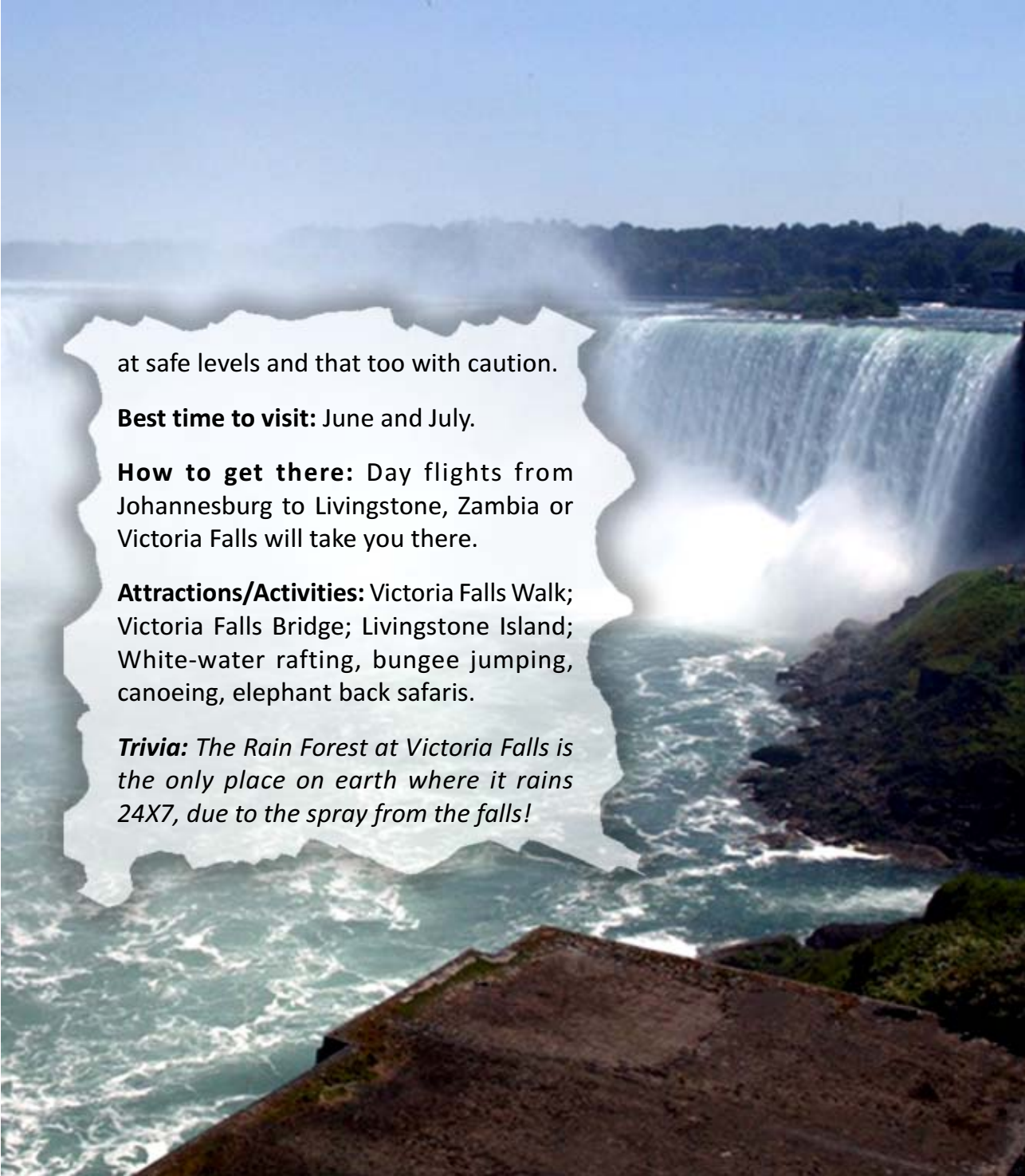
Victoria Falls is located on the borders of Zambia and Zimbabwe. One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is better described by the local name Mosi-oa-Tunya meaning "the smoke that thunders." Words can hardly describe the spectacular sight of the River Zambezi thundering down into the narrow gorge below. During heavy flow, around 500 million litres of water per minute descend creating a thunderous sound and clouds of misty



water spray. A breath-taking view of the waterfall and the panoramic surrounding can be enjoyed by viewing it aerially. Alternatively, you can view the falls from as close as 200 feet by taking the walking trails along the waterfall, a sight

that will leave you awestruck (and wishing you had worn waterproof wear!) A popular, and somewhat dangerous activity, is swimming in the Devil's Pool right on the edge of the falls. This can be attempted only when the river is flowing





at safe levels and that too with caution.

Best time to visit: June and July.

How to get there: Day flights from Johannesburg to Livingstone, Zambia or Victoria Falls will take you there.

Attractions/Activities: Victoria Falls Walk; Victoria Falls Bridge; Livingstone Island; White-water rafting, bungee jumping, canoeing, elephant back safaris.

Trivia: *The Rain Forest at Victoria Falls is the only place on earth where it rains 24X7, due to the spray from the falls!*

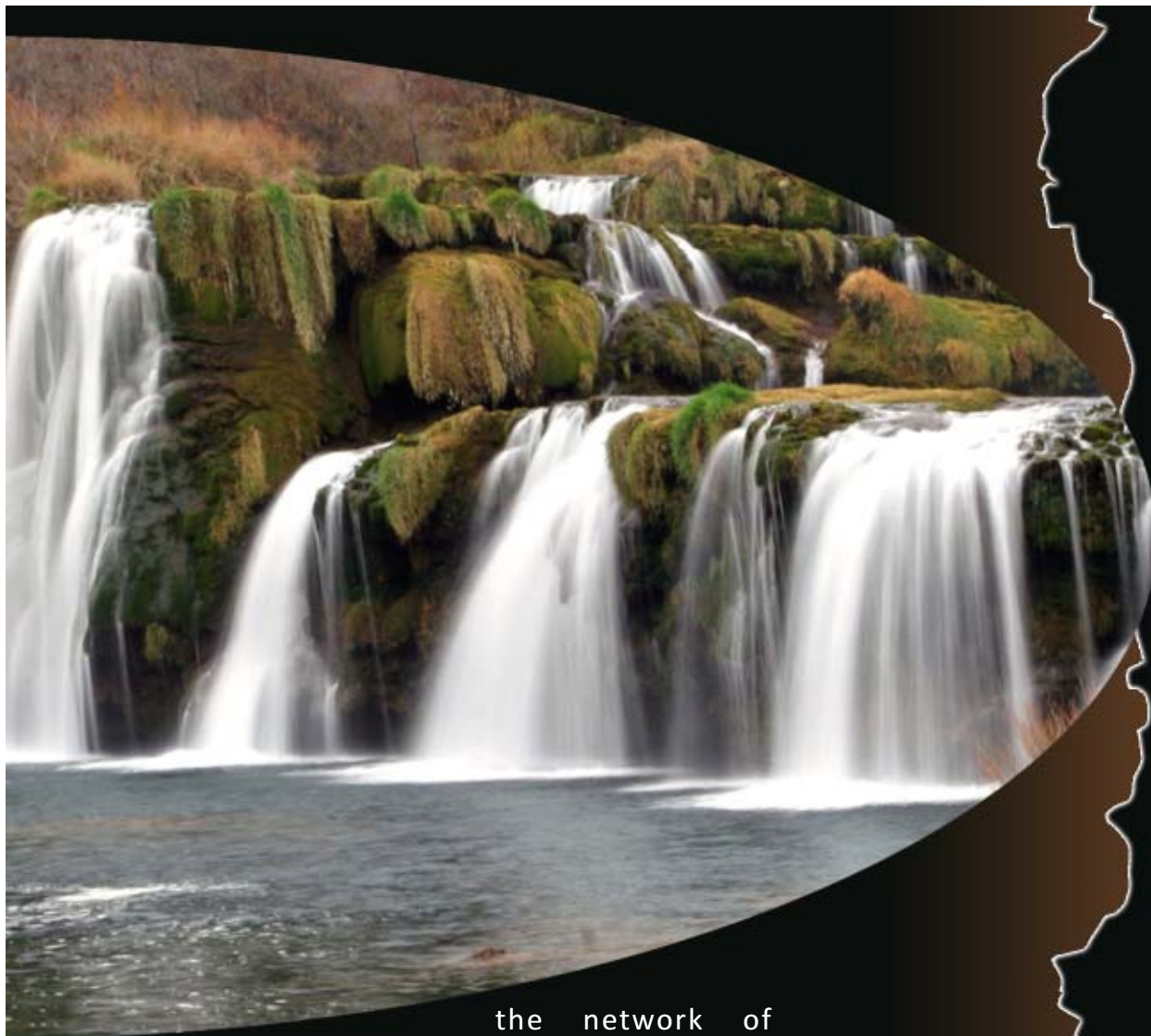


Plitvice Falls, Croatia

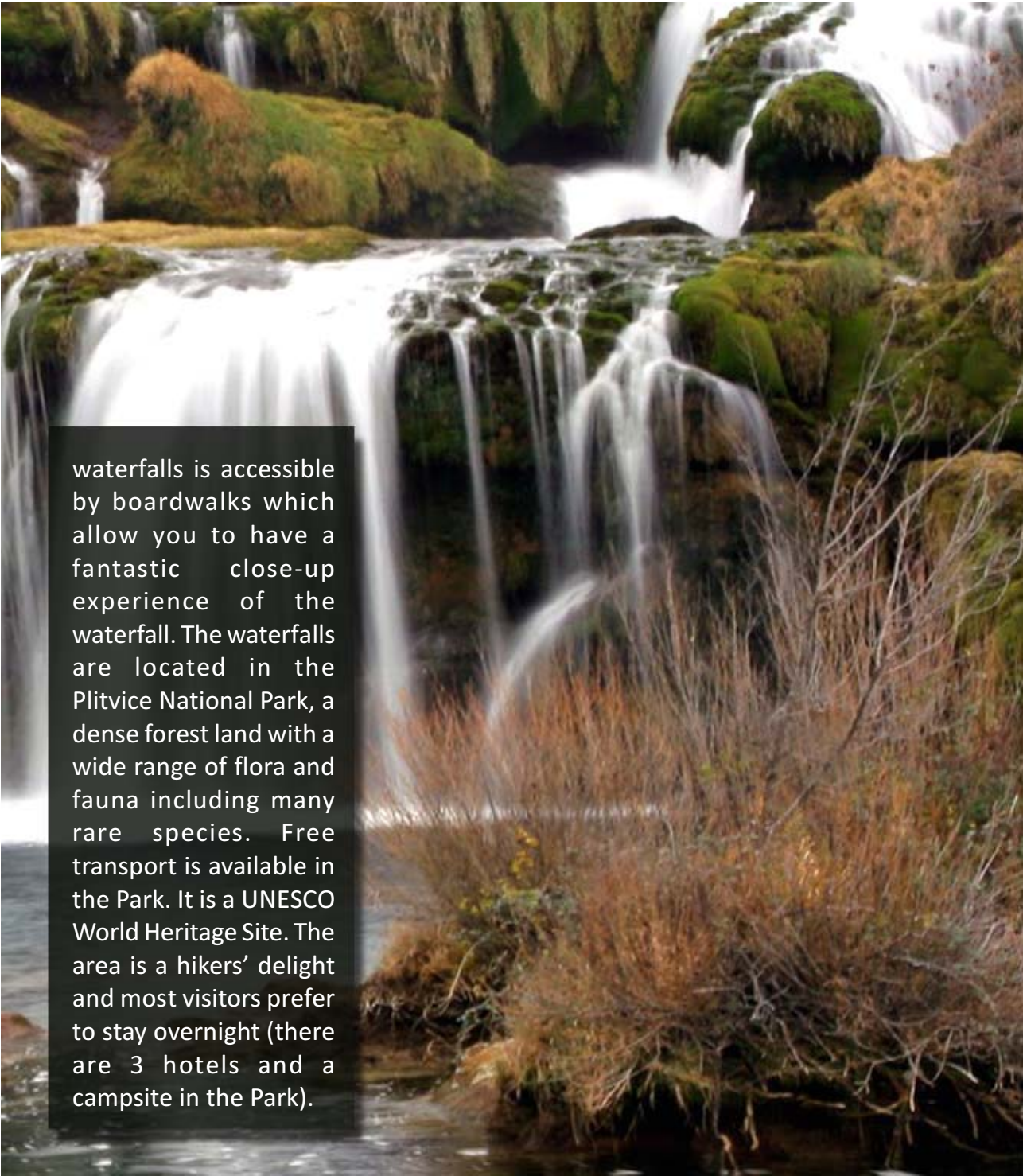
Claim to fame: It's a network of 16 cascading lakes and waterfalls.

Area: 296.85 sq. km./73,350 acres.

If Eden had a waterfall, this is how it would probably look. Countless milky ribbons of pouring water, 16 turquoise blue lakes at different heights interconnected by waterfalls and cascades make up



the network of Plitvice Lakes and Falls. The Plitvice lakes can be divided into two sections, Upper (12) and Lower Lakes (4). Each lake is fed from the lake above and subsequently drains into the lake below. The lakes abound in trout (do not think of fishing, it is prohibited). The lake-waterfall formation was the result of natural dams created by limestone erosion by water. Veliki Slap is the tallest waterfall with a height of 70 m. The entire network of

A photograph of a beautiful waterfall in a forest. The water flows over several tiers of moss-covered rocks, creating a series of small cascades. The surrounding vegetation is lush, with green moss and some autumn-colored trees. The water is white and frothy as it falls. In the foreground, there are some dry, brown bushes. A dark grey text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

waterfalls is accessible by boardwalks which allow you to have a fantastic close-up experience of the waterfall. The waterfalls are located in the Plitvice National Park, a dense forest land with a wide range of flora and fauna including many rare species. Free transport is available in the Park. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The area is a hikers' delight and most visitors prefer to stay overnight (there are 3 hotels and a campsite in the Park).



Best time to visit: April to June (high water volume); July to August (peak season); September to November (beauty of autumn).

How to get there: The nearest airport is Rijeka (60 miles from falls); buses from Zagreb or Zadar (2 hours away, 115 miles) are available too.

Activities: Hiking, kayaking, cycling and river rafting.

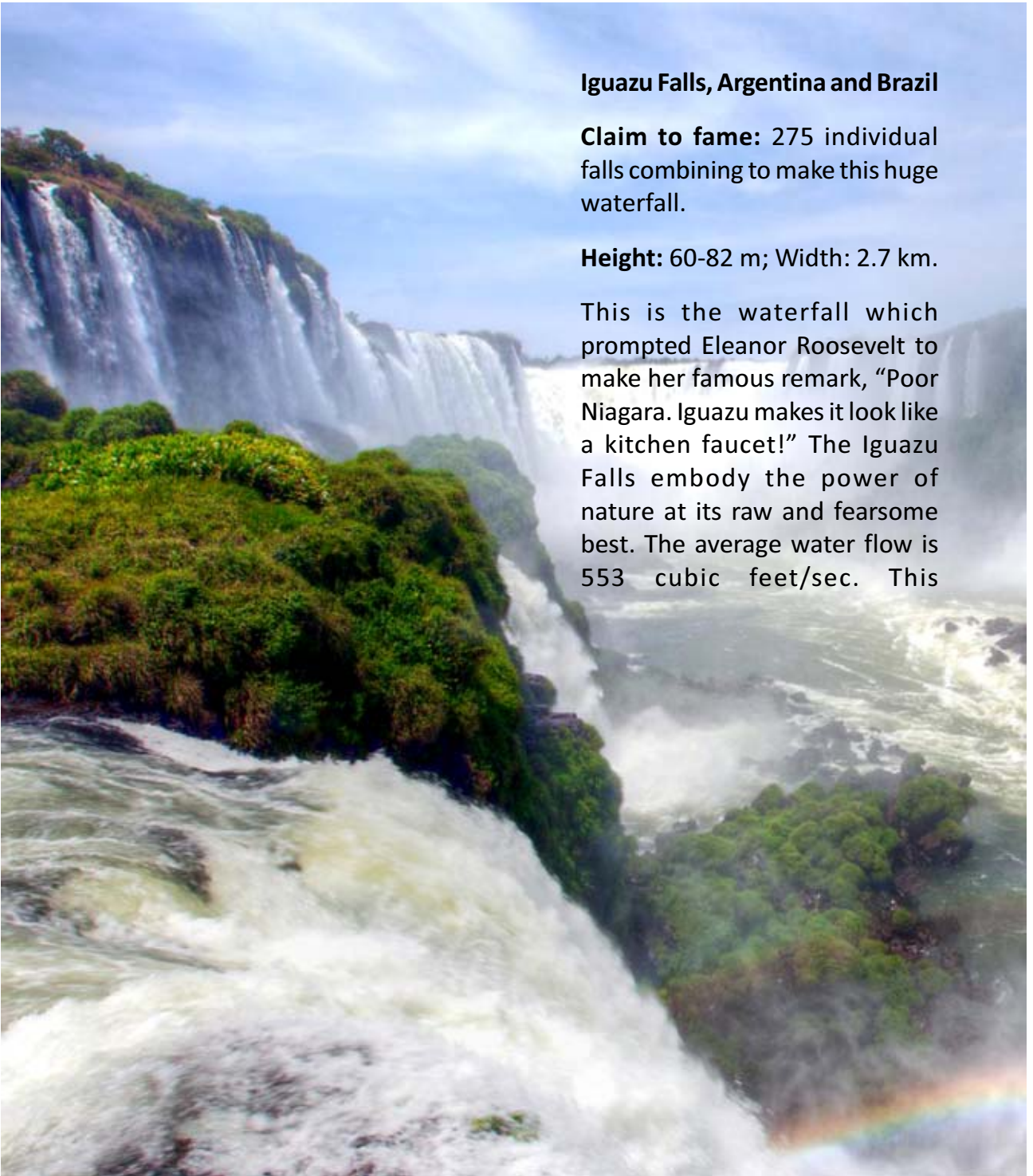
Trivia: *There are around 1267 plant species, 50 mammal species, 55 orchids, 321 different kinds of butterflies and up to 700 years old beech and fir trees in the Park!*

Iguazu Falls, Argentina and Brazil

Claim to fame: 275 individual falls combining to make this huge waterfall.

Height: 60-82 m; **Width:** 2.7 km.

This is the waterfall which prompted Eleanor Roosevelt to make her famous remark, "Poor Niagara. Iguazu makes it look like a kitchen faucet!" The Iguazu Falls embody the power of nature at its raw and fearsome best. The average water flow is 553 cubic feet/sec. This





gargantuan waterfall, located on the borders of Brazil and Argentina, is formed when the River Iguazu plummets over the Parana

Plateau with around half of the river descending into the long, narrow chasm called the Devil's Throat. Several small islands break up the Falls into individual drops all along its 2.7 km. width. Eighty per cent of the falls are on the Argentinian side but they can be viewed from either side. They are shared by both the countries. The falls is located in the Iguazú (Argentina) and the Iguacu (Brazil)

National Parks, both of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The flora and fauna of the region is famed for its diversity. The falls can be viewed aerially from helicopters. On land, walkways take you closer to the waterfall. While the

thunderous roar and crashing cascades of water spray soak you to the skin, the sight of rainbows over the waterfall simply take your breath away.

Best time to visit: Spring and autumn

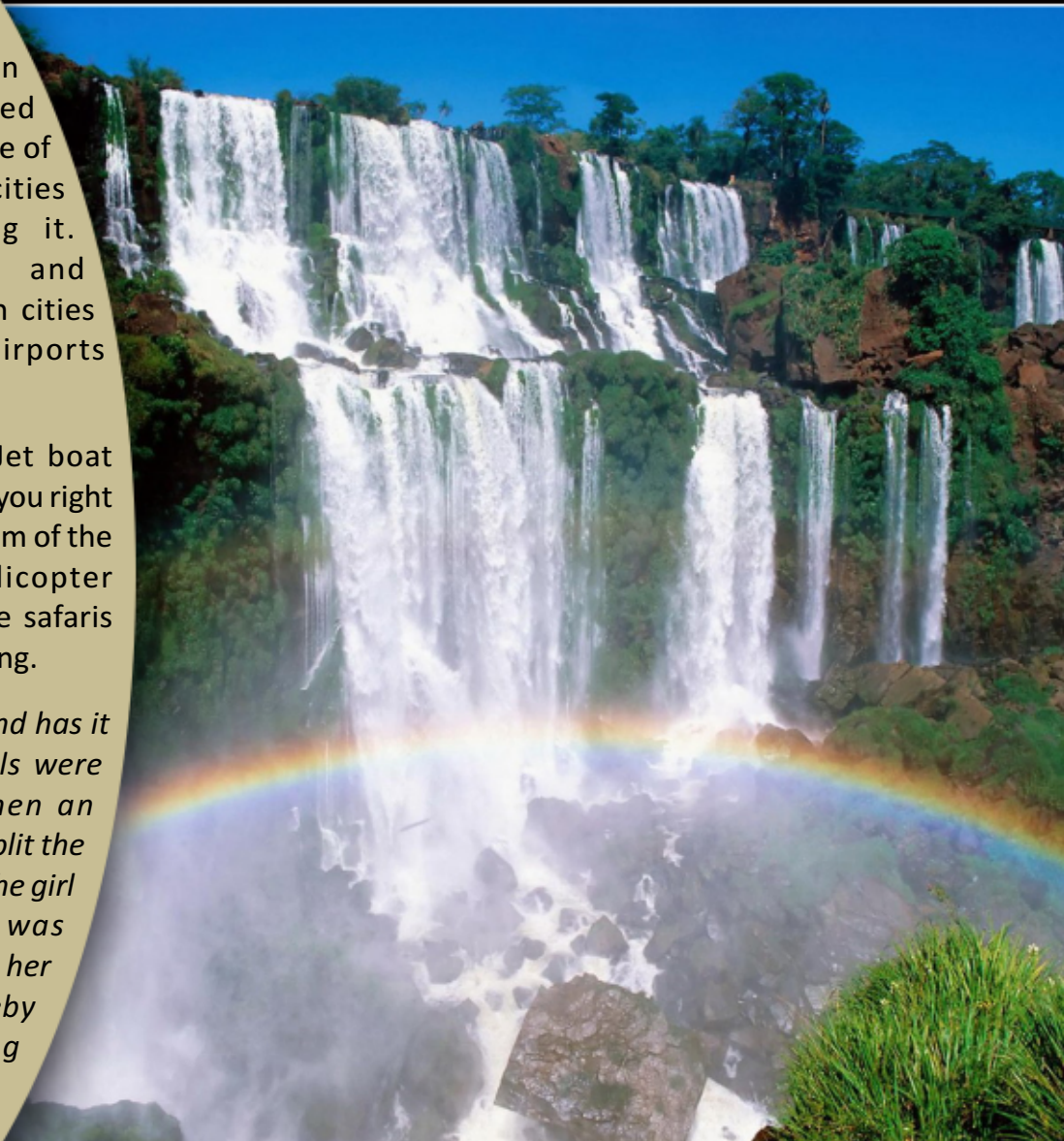


How to get there:

The falls can be accessed from any one of the three cities surrounding it. Brazilian and Argentinean cities have airports nearby.

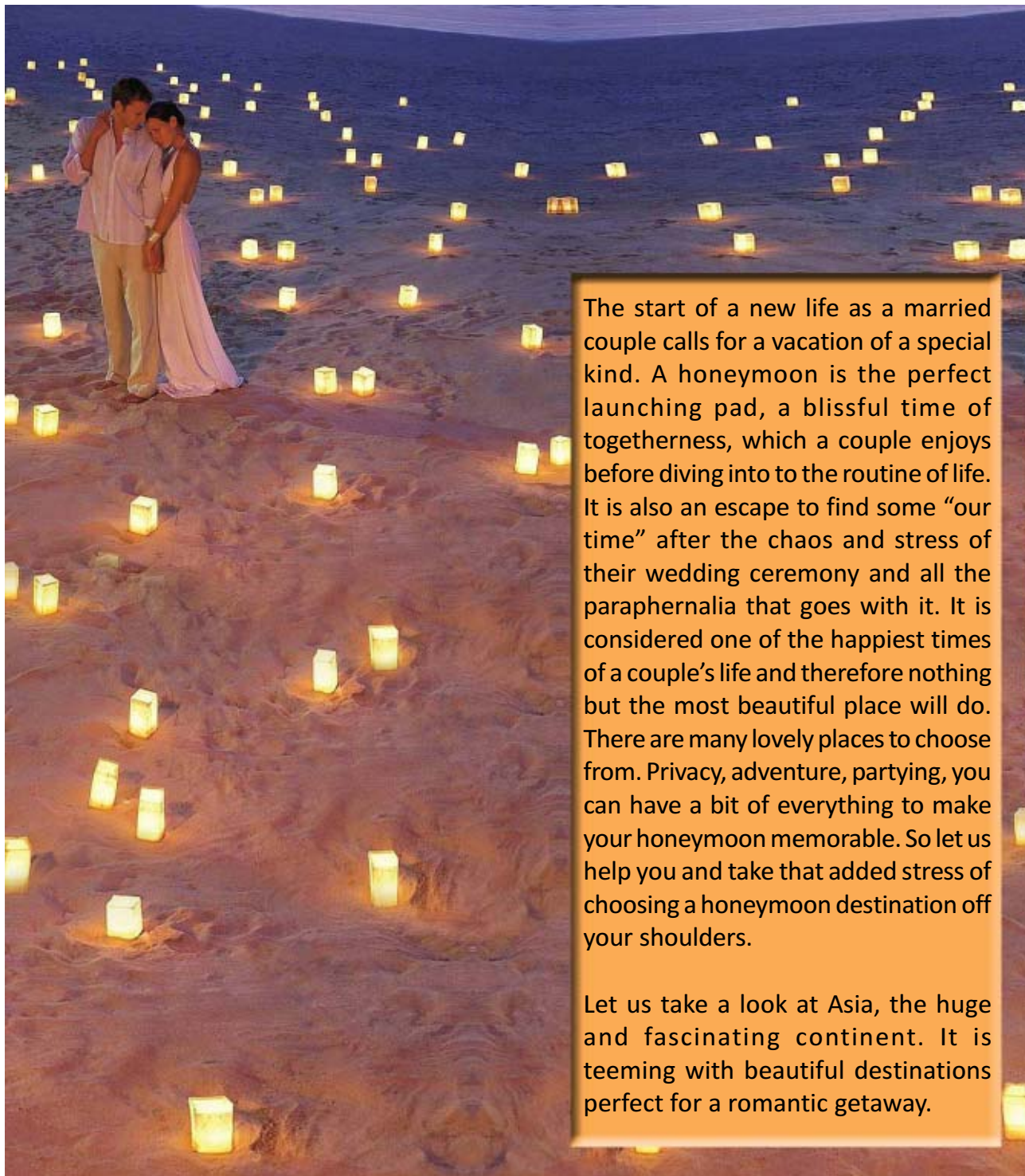
Activities: Jet boat tours (takes you right till the bottom of the falls), helicopter tours, jungle safaris and rappelling.

Trivia: Legend has it that the falls were created when an angry god split the river when the girl he loved was fleeing with her lover; thereby dooming them to an eternal fall!



Best Honeymoon Destinations of **Asia**





The start of a new life as a married couple calls for a vacation of a special kind. A honeymoon is the perfect launching pad, a blissful time of togetherness, which a couple enjoys before diving into the routine of life. It is also an escape to find some “our time” after the chaos and stress of their wedding ceremony and all the paraphernalia that goes with it. It is considered one of the happiest times of a couple’s life and therefore nothing but the most beautiful place will do. There are many lovely places to choose from. Privacy, adventure, partying, you can have a bit of everything to make your honeymoon memorable. So let us help you and take that added stress of choosing a honeymoon destination off your shoulders.

Let us take a look at Asia, the huge and fascinating continent. It is teeming with beautiful destinations perfect for a romantic getaway.



Bali, Indonesia

Pristine beaches, lush greenery and majestic mountains make Bali the top and natural choice as a honeymoon destination. A traditional Bali-style villa with its own garden and pool; a luxurious resort with the perfect romantic setting complete with candle light dinners, and exotic spa treatments or a lavish suite with an ocean view, Bali has everything your heart desires.



It is one of the famous archipelagos of the eastern hemisphere made of rich volcanic soil. Such variety in natural topography in one place is just phenomenal. With all its modern resorts and hotels, Bali still holds an old time magic, which is still close to earth. Couples can choose from some private or secluded beaches away from crowded places to enjoy privacy.

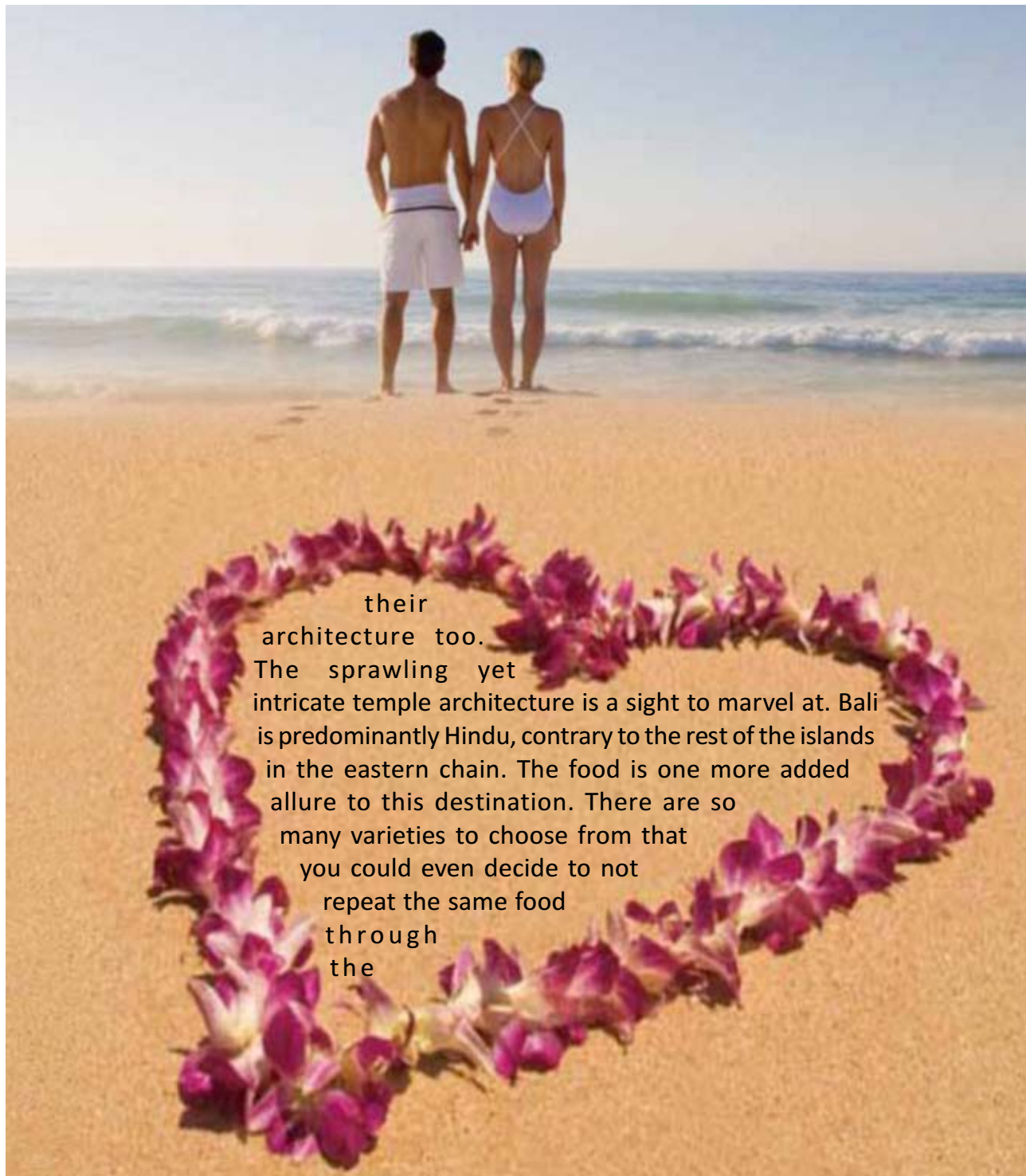
Snorkelling and water sports are a major part of outdoors

activity.

Alternately enjoy the beautiful coral reefs at Nusa Penida beach or go river rafting on the Ayung River. After having your fill of sun and surf, you could choose to move into the upper elevations and experience the lush forest and the natural habitats. The Ubud area has forests housing hundreds of crab-eating Macaque monkeys.

For those of you who like to shop there are street markets where you can buy local arts and crafts. Art and painting is an integral part of Bali, and its abundance is visible in





their
architecture too.
The sprawling yet
intricate temple architecture is a sight to marvel at. Bali
is predominantly Hindu, contrary to the rest of the islands
in the eastern chain. The food is one more added
allure to this destination. There are so
many varieties to choose from that
you could even decide to not
repeat the same food
through
the

entire honeymoon. The best season to visit this beautiful place is the dry season, which is between April to October.

Top romantic activity in Bali

Do not miss the one of a kind picnic arranged for the newlywed at the Canggu

beach. It's called the "Aphrodisiac Picnic in Bed". A beautiful bed on the secluded beach illuminated by hundreds of oil lanterns that compete with the moonlight above you is complete with irresistible desserts in the end and two blindfolds to add some excitement to your dining experience.



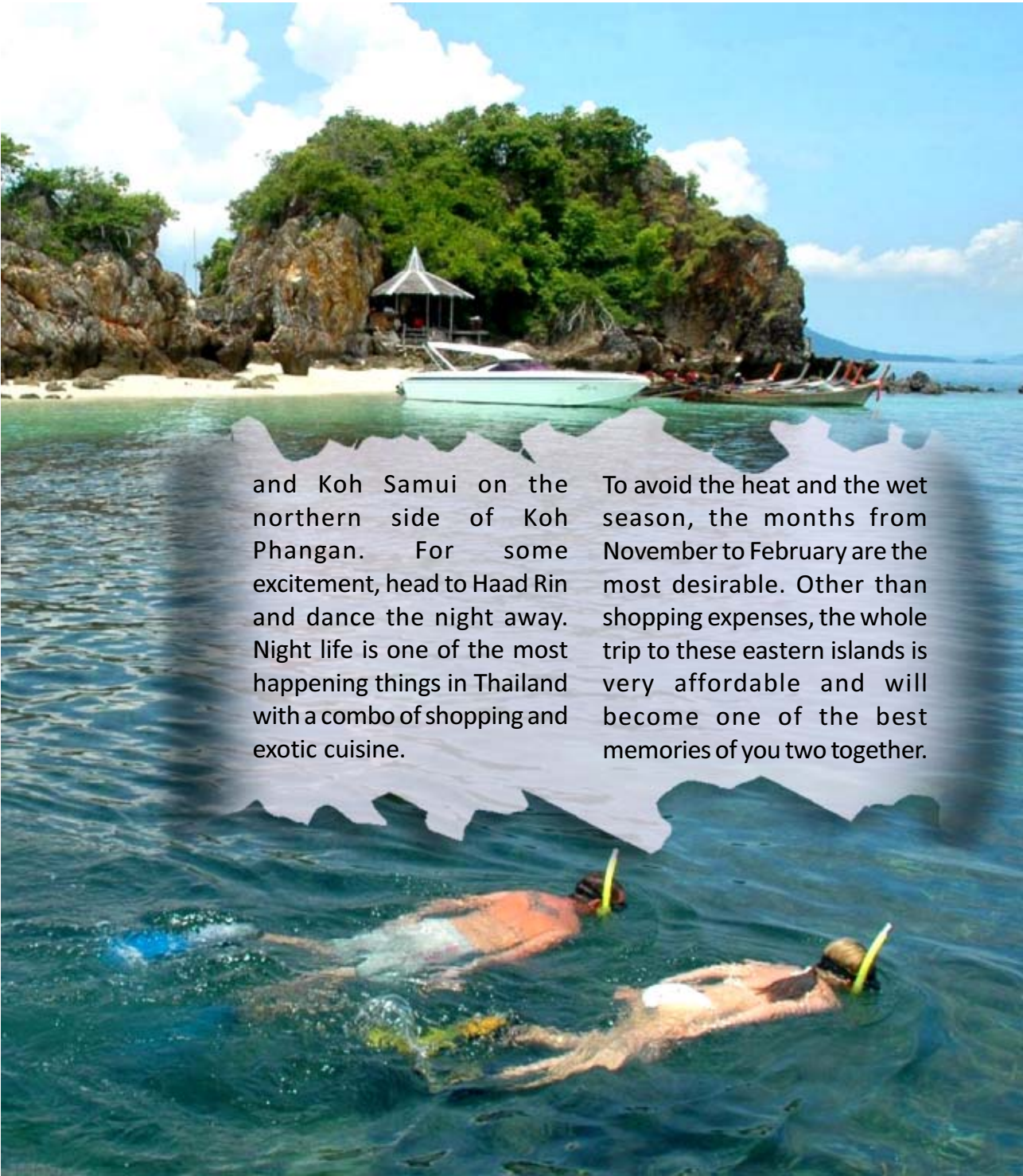


Thailand

The name of Thailand is dreamy enough for the newly wed couples to start their romantic vacation planning. Honeymooners can find their Mecca in these groups of islands, which have an excellent infrastructure for tourism. Beach and lush nature has its own unique benefits for starry eyed couples to enjoy spending time together in this beautiful country.

They are the perfect romantic getaways with tiny islands that provide abundant privacy, as in Koh Lipe in Phuket or Koh Lanta



A vibrant tropical beach scene. In the background, a white boat is moored near a small thatched-roof hut on a sandy beach. The beach is bordered by a steep, rocky cliff covered in lush green vegetation. The water is clear and turquoise. In the foreground, two people are snorkeling, their heads and snorkels visible above the water. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

and Koh Samui on the northern side of Koh Phangan. For some excitement, head to Haad Rin and dance the night away. Night life is one of the most happening things in Thailand with a combo of shopping and exotic cuisine.

To avoid the heat and the wet season, the months from November to February are the most desirable. Other than shopping expenses, the whole trip to these eastern islands is very affordable and will become one of the best memories of you two together.



Top Romantic Activity in Thailand

Get married! Oh, we mean get married again – the Thai way. The best thing about this marriage is that you arrange practically nothing. You could choose between a simple Thai wedding with just the monks performing the rituals or you could choose

a lavish wedding where everything right from the photographer, live band to a party dinner by the sea is arranged for you by your hotel or resort. All you have to do is bask in attention and enjoy being the special couple.

Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo

The perfect choice for a long honeymoon is in the country of Malaysia. Its different choices are spread out over the country. Together with its cheap airfare, it becomes an ideal honeymoon place. For the city loving couple,

you can stay at the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and have a gala time. There are scores of night clubs where you can party like crazy. It is also a fantastic destination for shopaholics. For the water loving couples, hop on a short flight to Penang and have the most romantic stays at the island of Langkawi. Water sports of all varieties,



breath taking scenery and less crowded beaches provide the perfect setting for you. The resorts are all situated on the beach making it conducive for late night romantic strolls.

Malaysian Borneo is a rainforest paradise and will appeal particularly to all nature-loving couples. This is one of the places in the world where wild orang-utans are still found. Trekking along the jungles, experiencing the wild, discovering the lovely waterfalls and marvelling at the flora and fauna will be an incredible experience.



Top Romantic Activity in Malaysia

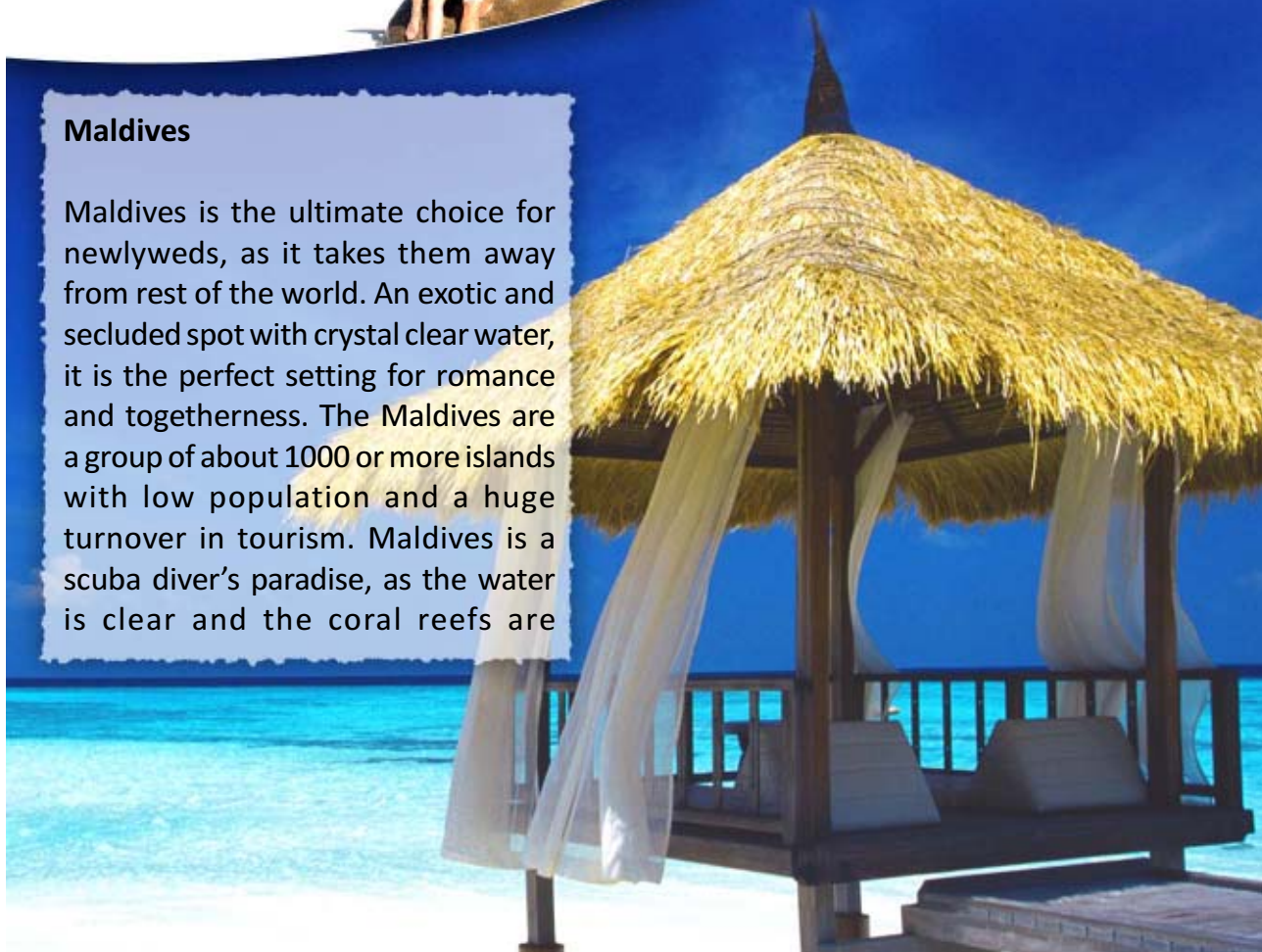
Watch hundreds of fireflies glittering in the twilight at Kuala Selangor (one of the largest firefly colonies of the world). The experience is enchanting. Do not forget to have a romantic meal at the popular seafood restaurants nearby.






Maldives

Maldives is the ultimate choice for newlyweds, as it takes them away from rest of the world. An exotic and secluded spot with crystal clear water, it is the perfect setting for romance and togetherness. The Maldives are a group of about 1000 or more islands with low population and a huge turnover in tourism. Maldives is a scuba diver's paradise, as the water is clear and the coral reefs are





beautiful with schools of tropical fishes inhabiting it. Snorkelling, fishing and surfing are popular too. The Grand Friday Mosque, the Maldives National Museum and the Kurumba Village are some of the other popular tourist spots here.

Heavy rainfall is one of the greatest drawbacks of this place, so do avoid that. The best months to enjoy would be from December to March.

Top Romantic Activity in Maldives

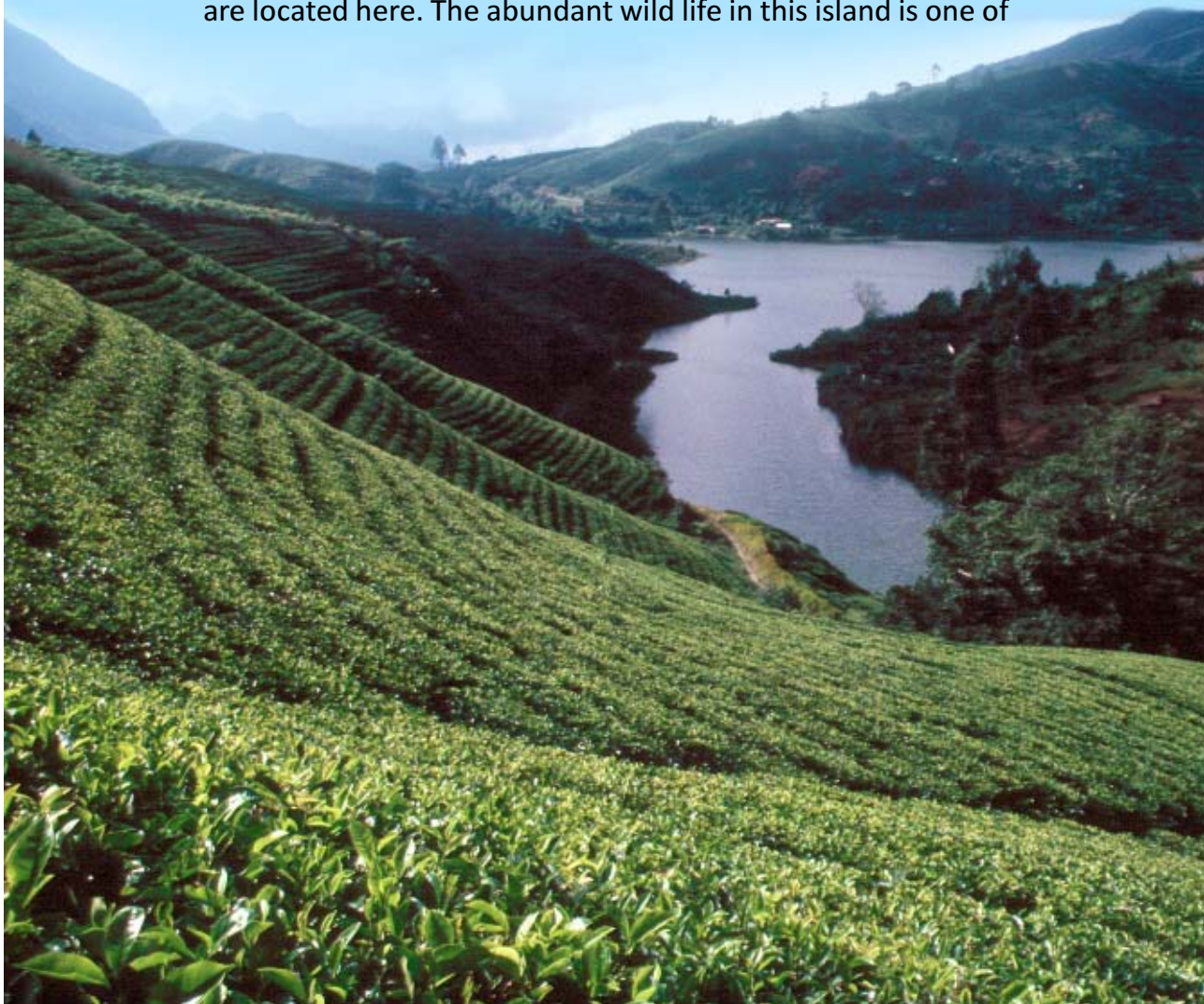
A romantic sunset cruise; watching the sun go down in a blaze of colours and the magical dusk create special moments effortlessly. A romantic dinner and a bottle of wine only add to the romance.




Sri Lanka

Originally known as Ceylon, this water drop shaped island, on the south of India, is a much overlooked destination. Sri Lanka with its gorgeous beaches and array of architectural temples is one of the most unexplored honeymoon destinations. The island is not very big in size. Therefore, it is accessible by bus or train (flying is the most convenient way of entering the island). After living in the sun and surf for some time, couples can experience the plantations inland (it

is much cooler inland too). The tea growing plantations are lush green and produce some of the world's best tea leaves. Sri Lanka is affected by both the coming monsoon and the retreating monsoon, so one part of the island is always dry on any half of the year. Unawatuna, Kalutara, Bentota, Negombo and Beruwela are some of the popular beach spots. The cultural hub of Sri Lanka is the city of Kandy, located in the Central Province. Some of the largest and significant Buddhist temples are located here. The abundant wild life in this island is one of



A romantic silhouette of a man and a woman embracing and kissing. They are positioned in the foreground, with the man on the left and the woman on the right. The background is a vibrant sunset over a body of water, with the sky transitioning from a deep orange near the horizon to a lighter yellow at the top. The water's surface is visible in the lower portion of the frame, reflecting the warm light of the sun.

its major attractions too. Asian elephants, leopards and many species of monkeys make this country their home. Spicy curries, great seafood, friendly people, surfing, marvellous national parks, Sri Lanka has it all.

Top Romantic Activity in Sri Lanka

Watch the gorgeous scenery while drifting along in a hot air balloon. Literally 'up in the air', you will find nothing beats the exhilaration of floating away above the earth and getting a bird's eye view of the breathtaking scenery below.

Land of Love

Asia is a land of mystery, history and diversity. The continent has a spot for each traveller depending on his/her choice. For honeymooners, we have mentioned just a few here, although justice cannot be done when the list of such beautiful places is endless. For all of you who are planning to tie the knot and whisk your beloved away to a 'land of love', consider these five places as you make your choice. These places have something for everyone, the comfortable resorts, mouth-watering food, spectacular tourist spots and fantastic shopping opportunities. Happy honeymoon!

Kuala Lumpur

*The gorgeous
capital city of Malaysia*



The Malaysia Tourism Board rightly defines the country with its tourism advertising campaign tag line as – Malaysia truly Asia. Kuala Lumpur proves this to be true even more. The population of Kuala Lumpur is a unique and evenly balanced mixture of Malay, Chinese, Indian and a few more

diverse ethnicities from all over Asia who came here ages ago. The local culture and cuisine carry that signature amalgamation of different ethnicities. The peaceful co-existence of diverse religions and beliefs is proved by the number of mosques, Buddhist temples, Hindu shrines and churches in this happening city.

Climate

The weather in Kuala Lumpur is steady with warm days, pleasant evenings and occasional rain showers in the afternoon. It has an equatorial climate characterised by humidity and plenty of rainfall. Temperatures can range from 30 degrees Celsius (86 F) to 34 degrees Celsius (93 F) during the day, though the temperature drops after rainfall.

Attractions

Petronas Twin Towers

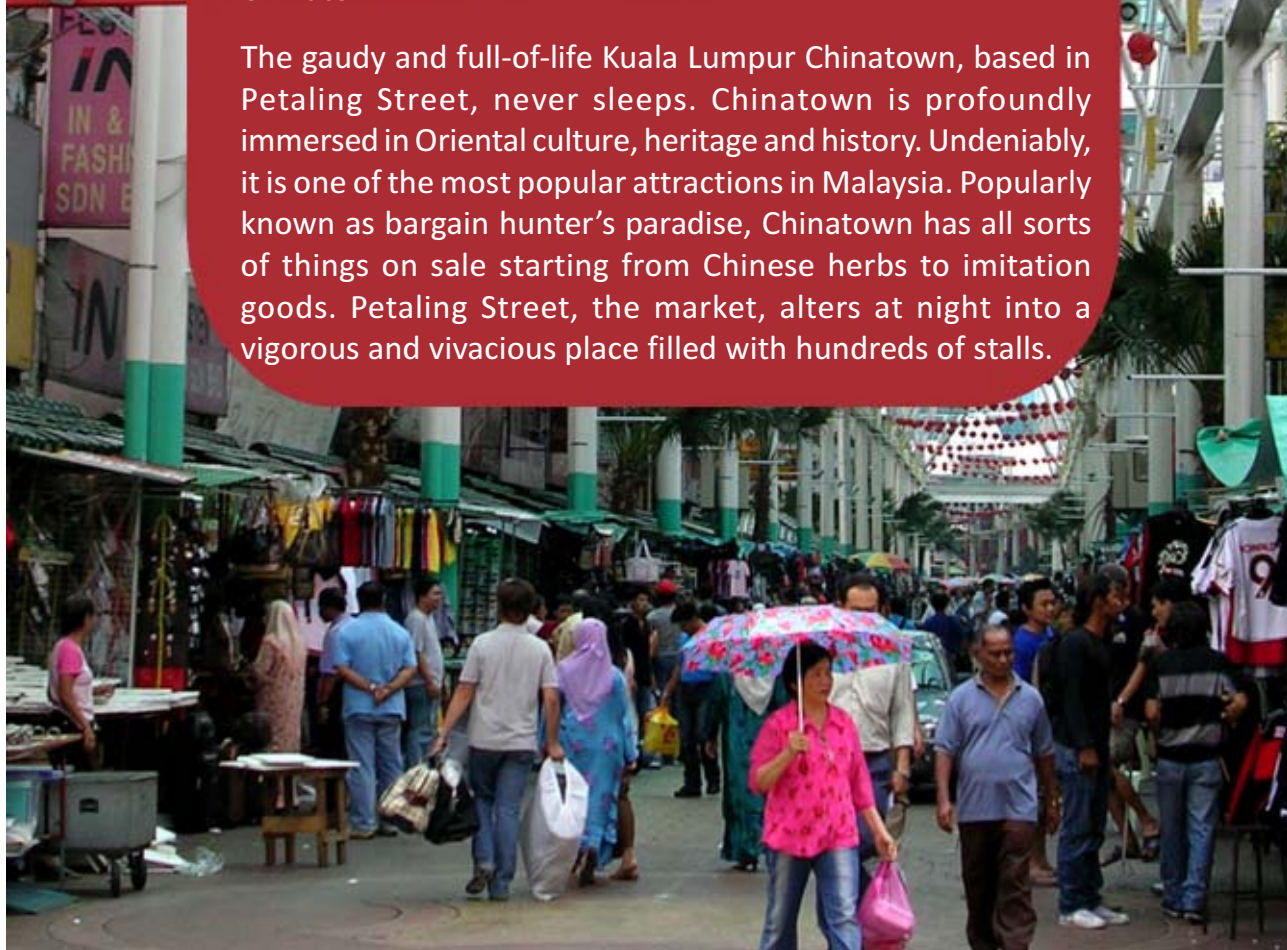
This famous 88-storey phenomenal twin structures right in the heart of the city were the tallest buildings in the world from 1998 to 2004. However, they retained their title as the tallest twin buildings in the world. These lustrous twin towers are inspired by Islamic architecture. The towers, standing tall at 452 metres, are the most popular tourist attractions in the city.



茨廠街

PETALING STREET

The gaudy and full-of-life Kuala Lumpur Chinatown, based in Petaling Street, never sleeps. Chinatown is profoundly immersed in Oriental culture, heritage and history. Undeniably, it is one of the most popular attractions in Malaysia. Popularly known as bargain hunter's paradise, Chinatown has all sorts of things on sale starting from Chinese herbs to imitation goods. Petaling Street, the market, alters at night into a vigorous and vivacious place filled with hundreds of stalls.





Menara Tower

Menara Kuala Lumpur is one of Malaysia's most identifiable landmarks. The tower is 421 metres tall and bestows the tourists with a spectacular view of Kuala Lumpur. The glinting spindle-like apex of the tower is visible from almost any place in Kuala Lumpur.

Batu Caves

Situated in Gombak district, the Batu Caves is a sandstone hill which comprises three major caves along with other small ones. Situated at a distance of 13 kilometres north of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the caves is accessible by road and Malaysian Tourism has comfortable tourist busses to take you there. The name of the caves was derived from the Sungai Batu or Batu River that flows past the hill.

This 100-year-old temple has idols and statues crafted inside and around the main caves. The cave temple dedicated to Lord Murugan (Hindu God) is one of the most popular Hindu shrines outside India. Thaipusam is the most important Hindu festival in Malaysia that is celebrated here.





Little India Brickfields

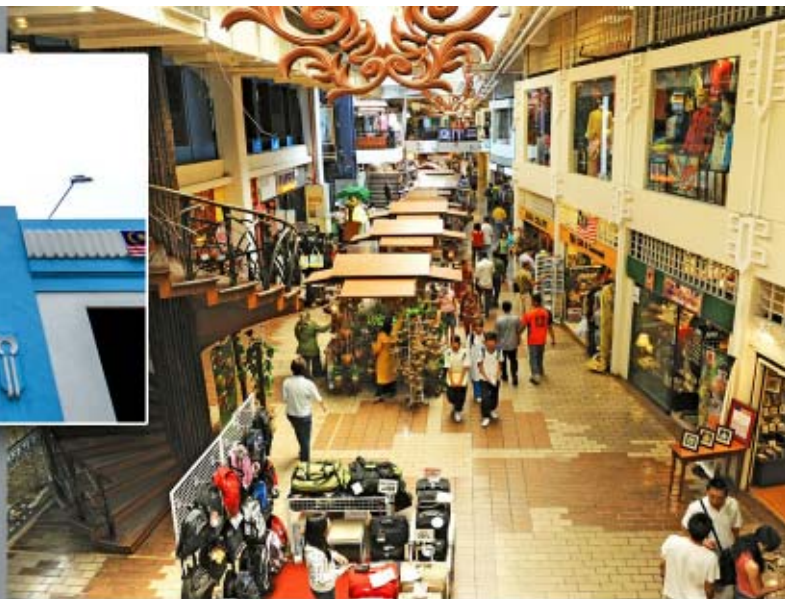
Little India Brickfields plays host to an enormous collection of Indian stores and restaurants run by the Indian community in Malaysia. It houses an array of Indian shops, retailing traditional Indian goods including saris, flower garlands, bangles and Bollywood music. Little India Brickfields is one of Kuala Lumpur's trademark tourist hotspots.





Central Market

Situated along the Jalan Hang Kasturi, it is an ideal place to buy souvenir. Also known as Pasar Seni, it is one of Kuala Lumpur's most familiar landmarks. You may also get some good bargain deals of handicrafts and authentic Malaysian batik prints here.



Thean Hou Temple

Thean Hou Temple is the oldest and largest six-tiered Chinese temple in Southeast Asia and a very well-known tourist attraction in Malaysia due to its absolute radiance.



Sri Maha Sakthi Mohambigai Amman Temple

This 100-year-old haven is in the centre of Mid Valley City. The holy place is easily accessible from the jumbo shopping mall. This daunting and gargantuan sight of the structure at night is truly out of this world.

Kuala Lumpur Bird Park

Kuala Lumpur Bird Park is one of the largest parks in the world and is part of the recognised lushly grassy 60-hectare Lake Gardens. This rambling 20-hectare

property was opened in 1991 and is the domicile for more than 3,000 birds and 200 species from all over the world.

Best Time to Visit Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur can be enjoyed in every season, as every season has something different to offer. It is possibly the most-visited destination in Malaysia.



Founded only in 1857 as a tin mining outpost, Kuala Lumpur is fairly new as far as Malaysian cities go and lacks the rich history of George Town or Malacca (Melaka). After the initial rough years, Kuala Lumpur started to prosper and was made capital of the Federated Malay States in 1896.

The economic boom of the 1990s brought Kuala Lumpur the standard trappings of a modern



city, rising with skyscrapers and modern transportation systems.

Getting there:

Air:

All scheduled flights, domestic and international, arrive at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in the Sepang district of Selangor about 60 km south of the city.



Kuala Lumpur International Airport's hall has a dedicated Tourism Malaysia tourist information centre which caters to all the needs of the tourists.

Road:

Kuala Lumpur is well-connected with all the nearby major cities. It has several bus stations or bus terminuses that handle long distance express bus services. You will need to exchange your ticket for a 'boarding pass' before boarding the bus, so it is advised to arrive at the bus terminal 10-15 minutes before the departure time.

Train:

KTM's intercity and international trains arrive at Kuala Lumpur Sentral railway station. There are day and overnight trains to places as far flung as Singapore, Hat



Yai in Thailand and Kota Bharu in Malaysia's north-east. Express trains to Ipoh also stop at Kuala Lumpur's old station, Kuala Lumpur Railway Station near Merdeka Square and Pasar Seni LRT station. The Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) national railway system provides information on schedules and seat availabilities.

Traveling around

Taxi

Kuala Lumpur has plenty of taxis and charges are very cheap. Kuala Lumpur has a fleet of air-conditioned taxis across the city.

Bus

The city now has a modernised bus system known as the 'Rapid KL' and Metroliner Buses. An information booth at the Jalan Sultan Mohammed bus stop in China Town is available where anyone can pick a route map and get information on various tickets.



Kuala Lumpur, the city of warmth and generosity, welcomes its visitors with absolute love and affection. Kuala Lumpur, dominated by the tallest skyscrapers in the entire Southeast Asia, overcame a lot of hurdles and obstacles to become one of the leading financial centres among the top economies in the world. The city is still growing and we recommend repeated visits to this city to witness its growth and prosperity.



Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur

An epitome of effervescent elegance



Nestled between the City Centre Park and the iconic Petronas Twin Towers, Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur enjoys a remarkable central location. Boasting of impressive facilities, stunning views and excellent service, it offers the best of privacy and accessibility. It has always been popular among business and leisure travellers for its warm hospitality. It has now also emerged as a coveted destination for MICE planners



from all over the world.

Accommodation Facilities

There are a total of 643 rooms, which provide a surreal view of the surroundings. The rooms are an amalgamation of both style and comfort. The hotel has 41 suites each with its separate living room and 51 executive apartments with impeccable service.





It provides a complimentary crib or an extra bed for children below 12 years of age as well as buggies, bath tubs and bath products on request. Babysitting services and sports coaching classes for children are also available.

State-of-the-art Business Centre

There are twelve function rooms, two

beautiful ballrooms and a renowned business centre to host all kinds of business meetings. The perks of hosting seminars here include efficient administrative services, use of modern technology, latest audio, video and projection equipment, automated fixed screens in the Ballrooms and the Summit Rooms, Wi-Fi access throughout the hotel, a professional team of audio visual technicians and so on.



Meeting Facilities

There are three floors of function space, including the largest ballroom in the city. The Grand Ballroom on the first floor is a vast and the largest pillar-less function space in Kuala Lumpur. It has ample natural light, a dramatic eight-metre high ceiling and glass panels overlooking the lush



green park. It can be divided into two separate rooms, Emerald and Sapphire. A magnificent foyer offers magnificent views over the park and is perfect for cocktail receptions. The Diamond Ballroom features plush carpets, wooden panelling and dramatic chandeliers. It has a reception area overlooking the lobby and a separate

entrance for VIPs. It can be divided into three smaller rooms - Jade, Opal and Pearl.

All the 12 meeting rooms offer direct lift access from both the lobby and car park. Summit is the largest room. It has wooden panelling, plush carpets and a generous foyer area for delegates. The five park view rooms overlook the KLCC Park, while the other six smaller Pinang rooms are apt for breakout sessions and executive dining.

Business Events - Seminars & Conferences

MICE organisers have plenty of options to choose from when the venue is Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur. The amazing function rooms, excellent catering options and service excellence of the staff ensure that every



seminar and conference held here becomes a memorable one.

Luxury Events – Dream Weddings and Private Parties

Guests can choose from Malay, Oriental and Western wedding packages to make their special day a really grand one. There are dedicated wedding and event teams along with experienced wedding specialists.

The packages include a pre-event food tasting and a stay in the luxurious Honeymoon Suite. The award-winning master chefs, complimentary eight-tier wedding cakes, marvellous floral arches, centrepieces and table



arrangements along with lovely details like ice-carvings, champagne fountains and strolling musicians are just some of the advantages you can enjoy here. That apart the hotel also arranges for photographers, entertainers and provides stylists, salon and spa services to ensure you look your best on the big day.

The other significant events that the hotel regularly hosts include annual company

dinners, graduations, charity benefits and birthday parties etc.

Recreational Facilities

Fine Dining – Guests can choose from a variety of cuisines and exotic dishes served by famous chefs. The selection of cocktails and Cuban cigars also deserve mention. Lai Po Heen, Wasabi Bistro and Mandarin Grill serve Cantonese, Japanese and grilled



variations respectively. The other popular hangout spots include Mosaic, Cascade Restaurant & Bar, Casbah, Lounge on the Park, Sultan Lounge, MO Bar, Mandarin Cake Shop, and Cigar Divan.

Spa & Salon - The well-designed spa and wellness facilities will let you rejuvenate your senses and leave you feeling wonderfully renewed. There are six single and two couples' treatment rooms, heat and water facilities, a relaxation Lounge, a spa



boutique, an outdoor swimming pool and children's pool, fitness centre with classes like yoga, step and Tai Chi, two outdoor tennis courts, indoor golf area along with a professional hair and beauty salon.



Mandarin Oriental Club – The luxurious Mandarin Oriental Club lounge has an exclusive environment in the heart of the city. It is immensely popular with the guests and offers breakfast, weekday lunch, afternoon tea and evening cocktails.

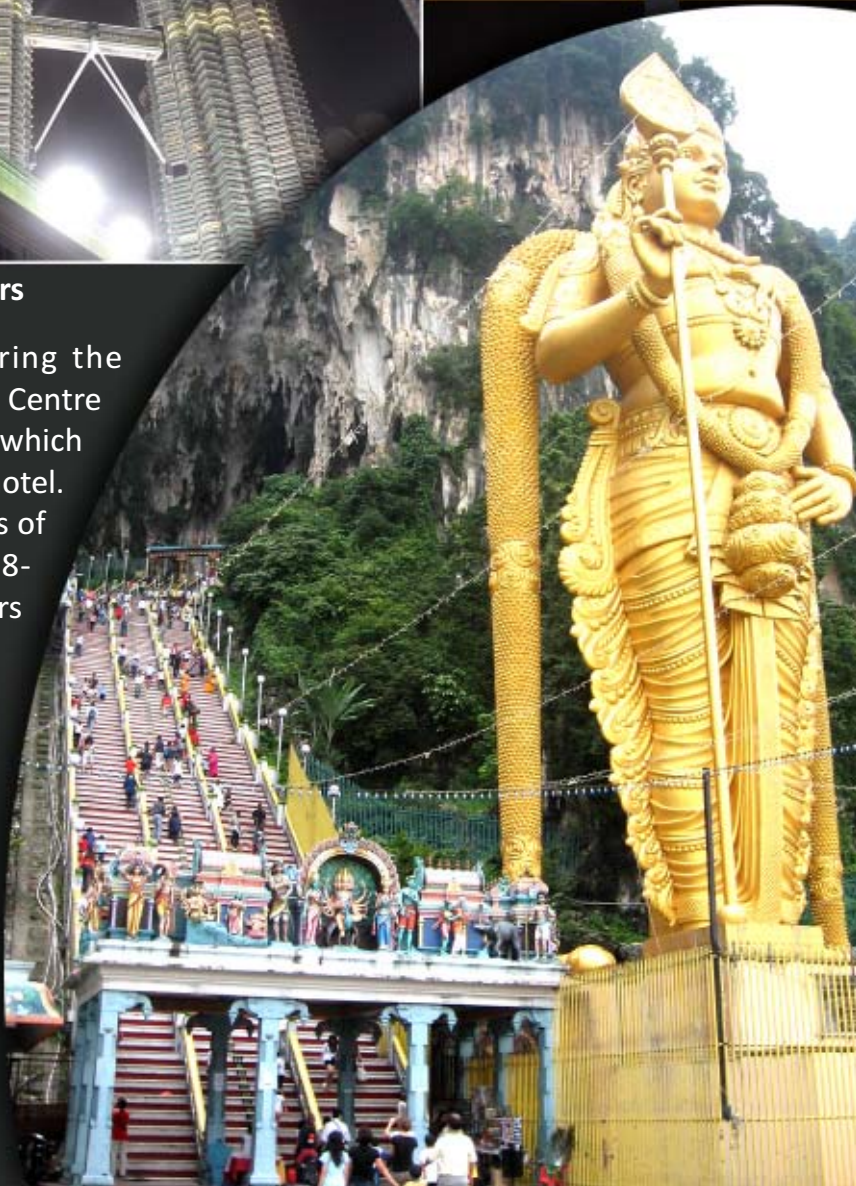


Nearby Attractions for Visitors

Petronas Towers – Anchoring the sprawling Kuala Lumpur City Centre are the Petronas Twin Towers which are situated right next to the hotel. Renowned as the Twin Jewels of Kuala Lumpur, the lavish 88-storey chrome and steel towers are definitely worth a visit.

Menara KL Tower – Crowning the Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve, the 421-metre-high Menara KL is the world's fifth tallest structure. Its spectacular viewing deck offers panoramic 360 degree views of the city.

Batu Caves – Batu Caves is a limestone hill that has three main caves and a few smaller





ones. The highlights of the caves are the magnificent idols, temples, and 400 million years old stunning limestone formations.

Aquaria KLCC – Situated on the concourse level of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, the 5000 square feet Aquaria KLCC is touted to be largest aquarium in the world. It houses nearly 150 species of marine life like scary tiger sharks, lethal sea snakes, blue rays, bright coral fish, seahorses etc.

Little India – Only a few blocks from the hotel, it is one of the oldest Indian settlements in the country. It was once located along Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman but later shifted to Brickfields in 2009.

Mandarin Oriental is considered to be a brand of repute in the hospitality industry. It

has earned a name for its excellent facilities and quality of service. Both spacious and well equipped with state-of-the-

art facilities, it is a preferred venue among meeting planners. If you are on the lookout for a world class business centre to host international conferences for your esteemed delegates, Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur will be an ideal choice. A dedicated team of professionals will take care of the entire process right from planning to execution to ensure your delegates have a truly enriching experience.





ASEAN Tourism Forum 2014

The ASEAN Tourism Forum 2014 concluded on January 23, 2014. The eight-day event was held in Kuching, Sarawak from January 16 to January 23, 2014 featuring ASEAN Tourism Conference (ATC), Travel Exchange (TRAVEX), ASEAN National Tourism Organization Meeting, and Ministerial Meeting.

The closing ceremony was held at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK) and was attended by the Minister of Tourism and Housing Development of Sarawak, Datuk Amar Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, ASEAN Tourism Ministers, and around 700 guests.

ASEAN Tourism Forum 2014 proved to be another successful event. The



ATF2014 has strengthened intra-regional cooperation and coordination in tourism through various meetings during the event such as the 17th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers, the 13th Meeting of ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and Republic of Korea) Tourism Ministers, besides other meetings of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs).

The event also included fruitful meetings of tourism working groups with experts and senior officials of tourism agencies of ASEAN countries; a meeting between ASEAN Tourism Agencies, ASEAN and partners and several press conferences by the NTOs.

The Minister of Tourism and Housing





Development of Sarawak, Datuk Amar Abang Haji Abdul Rahman said, "The Sarawak State Government is very pleased with the feedback of the ATF 2014 as it has provided us with an excellent platform to showcase the state's tourism attractions and position Sarawak as the tourism gateway to Borneo."

In line with its theme ASEAN - Advancing Tourism Together, the ATF2014 has raised the tourism industry value-chain to a higher level through significant cooperation among ASEAN member countries. The event also continued ASEAN's objective to explore the sustainable development of tourism.

TRAVEX was another significant part of the ATF2014. The 3-day business event saw a total of 450 booths, by 353 exhibitors. A total of 879 sellers took part in the b2b

event to market regional tourism products from ASEAN countries to 462 international buyers who attended the event.

The Director General of Tourism Malaysia, Dato' Mirza Mohammad Taiyab also took the opportunity to promote Visit Malaysia Year 2014 during the ASEAN NTOs Media Briefing. Other ASEAN countries including Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam also took turns to share their respective tourism developments, performances and attractions with the participating media.

The ATF2014 was attended by over 1,600 delegates, including 100 foreign and local travel trade media. The event offered Malaysia an excellent opportunity to showcase its diverse tourism products in general. Moreover, it also gave Sarawak an opportunity to portray itself as an



emerging eco-tourism destination.

During ATF2014, various awards were also presented including the 27th ASEANTA Awards for Excellence in Tourism and the ASEAN Green Hotel Award. Held biennially during ATF the ASEAN Green Hotel Award is presented to hotels for their efforts to be environmentally sustainable and for adopting measures for energy conservation.

Eighty six hotels from 10 ASEAN countries received this honour this year. Ten hotels from Malaysian including the Mandarin Oriental KLCC, Riverside Majestic Hotel, and Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort

won the prestigious award this year. Five Philippine hotels and resorts were recognized as "ASEAN Green Hotels" during the event.

At the closing ceremony of ATF2014, Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri handed over the Chairmanship of ATF 2015 to Myanmar's Minister of Hotels and Tourism, U Htay Aung by formally passing the baton to Myanmar as the next host of the ASEAN Tourism Forum.

The theme of ATF 2015 is ASEAN - Tourism towards peace, prosperity and partnership.



March Festivals around the World



Battle of oranges/ Carnevale di Ivrea

Place: Ivrea, Italy

Dates:

March 2 – 4

At the Carnevale di Ivrea, oranges are the weapon of choice. Each year, this tiny northern city of Ivrea in the Turin province stockpiles 500,000 kilograms of fresh oranges for Battle of the Oranges; this is a re-creation of a historic fight between residents



and a ruling tyrant.

Many years ago an evil marquiss attempted to rape a young woman in the town, but was instead decapitated by the woman. After his death, the whole town stormed his palace in revolt. It is this revolt, which is symbolized by the Battle of the Oranges every year.

Trivia - Many people leave the 'battle' with cuts and bruises.





Omizutori /Water-Drawing Festival

Place: Nara, Japan

Dates: March 1 – 14

Omizutori or the annual sacred water-drawing festival is a Japanese Buddhist festival that takes place in the Nigatsudô of Tôdai-ji, Nara, Japan. The festival is the concluding ceremony in observance of the two-week-long Shuni-e ceremony. This ceremony is meant to cleanse the people of their sins as well as to bring good fortune and protection from natural disasters. Among the many different events held during Omizutori, Otaimatsu is the most eminent and spectacular one.

As the evening sets in, every night from March 1 through 14, giant torches are lit up and are carried up to Nigatsudo's

balcony and held over the crowd. The size of the torches ranges from six to eight meters in length. The burning embers that shower down from the balcony are thought to give the viewers with a safe year. The size of the flames and the duration of Otaimatsu vary from day to day.

The festival reaches its climax when 11 special priests called the Renhyoshu draw water from the temple well after midnight accompanied by Ancient Japanese music.

Trivia - Todai-ji itself has burned down many times due to this festival. The Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsuden) has burned down and was rebuilt twice.



St. Patrick's Day

Place: Dublin, Ireland

Dates: March 14 – 17

On St. Patrick's Day everyone wants to be Irish. This is a religious and cultural holiday

celebrated internationally on March 17. It commemorates St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

The festival is a celebration of Irish culture and heritage. Initially the festival was celebrated for three days but gradually the fiesta got extended into a four days festival due to its popularity.

The festival is celebrated with music, boat race, treasure hunt, dancing, and of course, the colourful parade throughout the city. The most enticing thing during this event is the (green) beer flowing in the pubs and the Irish Craft Beer Festival.



Events take place every day, but you need to be in Dublin on March 17 if you want to watch the parade.

Trivia - St. Patrick's festival was established by the government of Ireland in November 1995.

Las Fallas

Place:

Valencia, Spain

Dates:

March 15 – 19

Las Fallas is Spain's exuberant spring fiesta held in commemoration of Saint Joseph in the city of Valencia, in Spain. Las Fallas is also a glorified puppet show. During this event, the entire city is filled with fallas, which are huge sculptures of papier-mâché on wood.

Throughout the night prior to the event more than 350 fallas are erected at various locations in the city until March 19. Reaching up to 15m in height, these





colourful effigies satirize celebrities, current affairs and local customs.

These fallas sometime even takes nearly a year to be built by the artists. People get four days to wander round the city

and check out the fallas and at the same time enjoy the festivities.

Trivia – The Las Fallas is a traditional celebration held in commemoration of Saint Joseph. The structures cost more than •350,000 to be built.



Holi

Place: India

Dates: March – 17

Holi is a festival of merriment that brings in unadulterated happiness, entertainment, dance and literally lots of bright colours into your existence. Celebrated throughout India, Holi, the Hindu festival of colours is equally popular amongst non-Hindus as well. This

enthusiastic festival is celebrated for over 16 days in Vrindavan and Mathura as a symbol of the immortal love between Lord Krishna and his lady love Radha. During Holi, people splash coloured powder (abir) and collared water on each other; dunk friends in mud pool and get intoxicated on bhang. This vibrant festival commemorates the victory of good over evil.

Trivia – Click to know more about Holi in our blog.





World Luxury Tourism