

W L T
World Luxury Travel

World

Luxury Travel

Magazine

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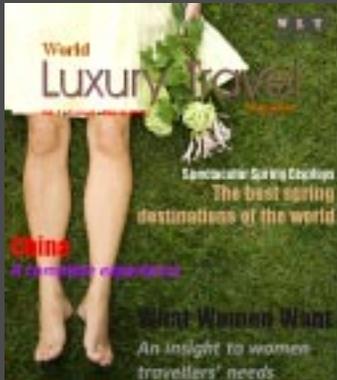
Spectacular Spring Displays
The best spring
destinations of the world

China

A complete experience

What Women Want
An insight to women
travellers' needs

- Vol. 1
- Issue 8
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World Luxury Tourism

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Imagine spring. A refreshing, bright and promising new beginning awaits us. The best part is, it starts this month! What can be a better time to travel than the time when Nature is at its best display? To help you decide on your spring destination, the World Luxury Travel Magazine brings you Spectacular Spring Displays - The best spring destinations of the world. It's time to pack your bags and get going!

March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day every year and we had to have something special for our women readers. So, here's bringing you an interesting feature on What Women Want - An insight to women travellers' needs.

Where luxury travel is being talked about, can we keep luxury food away from it? Continuing our section on Luxe Food, this time we look into one of the global favourite drinks – coffee. Read on to know about the various blends and brews of this magic bean.

In destinations, this issue of the WLTM visits China – A complete Country. Yes, we have a reason to call it one. Moreover, have a look into the MICE prospects in Cape Town, South Africa. The country never fails to surprise us!

I am sure many of our readers will be travelling the amazing destinations of spring. How about sharing some pictures with us? You may even post it on our [facebook page](#)!

Thank you!

Manashree Prakash
Editor-in-Chief

Cover
Story

Spectacular Spring Displays
**The best spring
destinations of the world**

*"Awake, thou wintry earth
Fling off thy sadness!
Fair vernal flowers, laugh forth
Your ancient gladness!"*

– Thomas Blackburn



Spring has been the eternal symbol of hope and re-awakening. Nature sets the tone by flinging off the icy cloaks of winter and donning the colourful capes of spring. What colourful capes they are too, visual treats for the eyes dulled by winter scenes with fragrance to awaken the senses. Of all times, this is perhaps one of the best times to quench the wanderlust. Though spring adds a beauty to every humble garden and field, there are some places which outdo others in showing off their spring finery.

Catch Nature at her spring-time best in these places:

Keukenhof, Holland

Can you imagine what it looks like when seven million tulips, daffodils and hyacinths bloom in one place? Head to the Keukenhof Spring Gardens, the world's most beautiful spring garden and largest bulb park, and see this blooming loveliness. Located near Lisse, established in 1949, it attracts people from all over the world who flock to see the various flower shows held here (thirty in all). The lovely gardens including the English landscape garden and the Japanese country garden, hundred works of art and over 32

hectares of grounds covered with lovely flowering bulbs this place is a winner. The tulips are particularly spectacular, spread row after lovely row, in riots of colours. They are not the only flowers either, there are azaleas, orchids, hydrangeas and many more. Get the Spring Pass if you are planning to visit the gardens couple of times throughout the season. You can purchase not only flower bulbs but also souvenirs.

Tip: *Open from: March 21 - May 20, 2013*

Snippet: *Keukenhof means kitchen garden, the place originally supplying herbs for the kitchen of a 15th century local castle.*

Namaqualand, South Africa

Namaqualand is an arid region of Namibia and South Africa, extending 600 m along the west coast. Come Spring and the rugged, desert landscape of Namaqualand undergoes a

magical transformation. The dull brown sandy earth bursts into a riotous carpet of wildflowers - gorgeous African daisies, multi-coloured gazanias, the unique Halfmens cactus flowers, lilies, aloes and millions of lovely spring wildflowers. The area is home to over 4000 species of plants with more than 1000 flowers unique to this area alone. Tourists generally travel along the 'Flower Routes' with main areas of flower viewing including Springbok, Garies and Kamieskroon. The explosion of colours and the heady fragrance filling the air create an experience never to be forgotten.

Tips:

Flower season – July to September but exact months depend on when it rains.

Flowers face the sun always, so make sure the sun is behind you as you travel.

Snippet: *Namaqualand is also famous for its diamond mines!*



Cherry Blossoms, Japan

Rows of snowy trees bearing weight of their delicate pearly-white and pinkish sprays of cherry blossoms give an ethereal, fairy-like beauty to spring time Japan. The cherry blossoms (sakura) are Japan's unofficial national flowers and an integral part of Japanese culture. The lovely 'sakura' flowers with their brief burst of beauty are associated with the transience and mortality

of human life. Depending on the warmth of the weather, cherry blossoms start blooming from January to May though the peak season is generally in April. It follows a northward trail blooming as early as January in Okinawa, during late March or April in Tokyo and Kyoto and moving to Hokkaido around late April. Meteorological and other agencies follow the cherry blossom front (blooming trail) across the country and publish reports which



guide people in flower viewing. There are various cherry blossom festivities where people feast, drink sake and celebrate under the lovely blooming trees. Yoshino is the top spot for cherry blossoms with the mountainside

completely covered with floral clouds of thousands of cherry trees. Ueno-Koen and Shinjuku-gyoen parks in Tokyo and the Imperial Palace Park of Kyoto are other popular spots.

Tip: *Yoshino, Ueno-Koen in Tokyo (with 1000 cherry trees), is the top spot for cherry blossom viewing.*

Snippet: *'Hanami' or picnicking under blooming cherry trees is the most popular seasonal event in Japan!*

Cotswold, England

English countryside at its rural best is on display in the Cotswolds Hills region. This picture postcard setting with sheep grazing on rolling green fields becomes even lovelier during spring. Tourists flock to Cotswold villages to see the famous gardens, woods and fields carpeted with daffodils, crocuses, primroses, cowslips, roses, bluebells, rhododendrons, celandines or daisies. There are organised tours and walks to enjoy this lovely spectacle. Spring puts up a show everywhere – wildflowers in the woods, flowers by the roadside or masses of roses covering pretty cottages. Tourists also flock to The Painswick Rococo Gardens for seeing the lovely white carpet of snowdrops and to the Daffodil Way in Leadon Valley to see masses of daffodils blooming in dazzling profusion.

Tip: Spring season is from March to May but the weather can be unpredictable, check local conditions for flower viewings.

Snippet: Stretching across 2038 square kilometres, this area has been declared ‘Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’.





**Picacho
Peak State
Park, Arizona, USA**

This famous park is not only renowned for its landmark 1028 m. high Picacho Peak but also for the dazzling profusion of wild flowers which bloom here every spring. The show stoppers are the sea of golden poppies

which cover the slopes of the mountain. The dazzling site is visible all the way from the highway 1-10, near which the park is located. Hiking trails up the peak offer spectacular views of hillside covered with masses of poppies and other wildflowers as well. March and April are generally the best months for the flower display.

***Tip:** Wear shoes with good grip if you are planning to hike (and possess a good head for heights!)*

***Snippet:** Picacho means 'big peak' in Spanish!*

Oregon, USA (For Portland Rose Festival)

If you consider rose as the 'queen of flowers' then



Portland is the place for you in spring. Roses of every imaginable colour, variety, sizes and fragrances bloom in glorious profusion here. The city is not surprisingly named 'the city of roses'. The hotspot for marvelling at these ravishing blooms is The International Rose Test Garden, which has over 550 varieties and more than 7000 rose plants. The garden is an experiment site for growing various varieties of roses. Feast your senses on the beauty and heady fragrance of roses at the Portland Rose Festival held in June. The highlight floral parade is attended by over 2 million visitors.

Tip: *Roses bloom from April through October but the best months are May and June.*

Snippet: *The Portland Rose Festival is organized by the non-profit Portland Rose Festival Association.*

Provence, France

The lovely region of Provence in South-Eastern France has inspired many a painting with its quaint cottages, flower-filled fields and charming cafes. The land shrugs off the yoke of winter and bursts into life with a renewed crop of colourful blooms- roses, irises, cherry trees, poppies, wild orchids, crocuses and the crowning beauty, rows and rows of beautiful lavender which simply take your breath away. Lavenders run in mauve



rivers everywhere with their fragrance filling the air. Tourists can take the lavender tours to see the best of these flowers. Some popular spots include the Abbey Senanque (12th century monastery with large lavender fields maintained by monks), Pays de Valensole and Mont Ventoux. Stunning fields of sunflowers turn fields to gold towards the end of July.

Tip: Late June to July is generally the peak time for lavender flowers.

Snippet: Tourists can also enjoy activities like visiting lavender distilleries, enjoy various lavender fetes, make your own perfumes, shop at local boutiques and also see lovely butterflies and birds of the area.



Valley of Flowers National Park, India

Against the backdrop of the magnificent Himalayas, 300 species of brilliant alpine flowers form a colourful carpet across an 87.5 square kilometre valley. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the valley is a serene and lovely place abounding with

flowers, streams and waterfalls. The area is transformed after the monsoon rains with masses of asters, blue poppies, daisies, geraniums and bellflowers blooming in profusion everywhere. Tourists are not allowed to stay in the valley itself, they trek upwards from the village base of Ghangaria

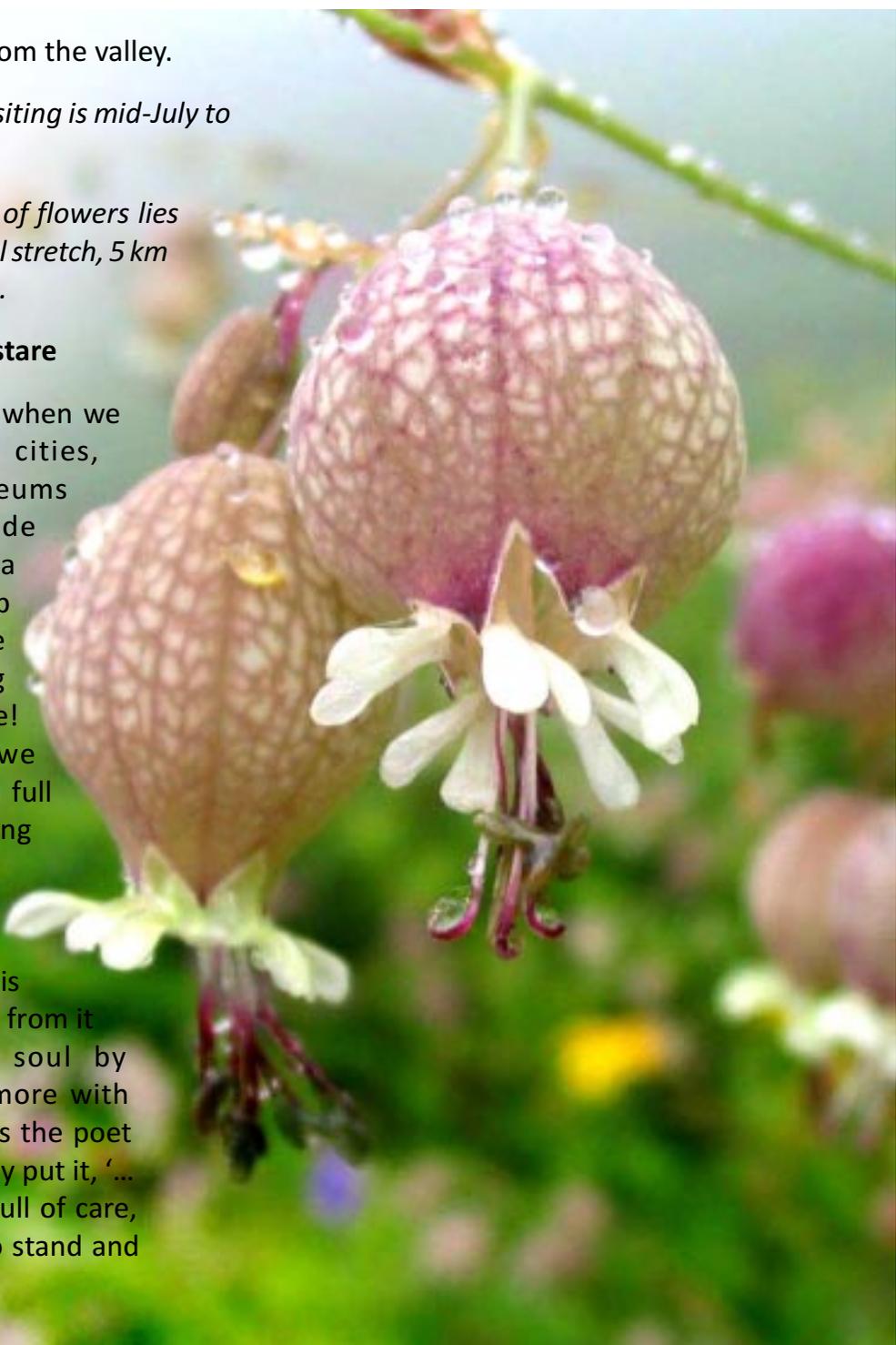
a kilometre away from the valley.

Tip: Best time for visiting is mid-July to mid-August.

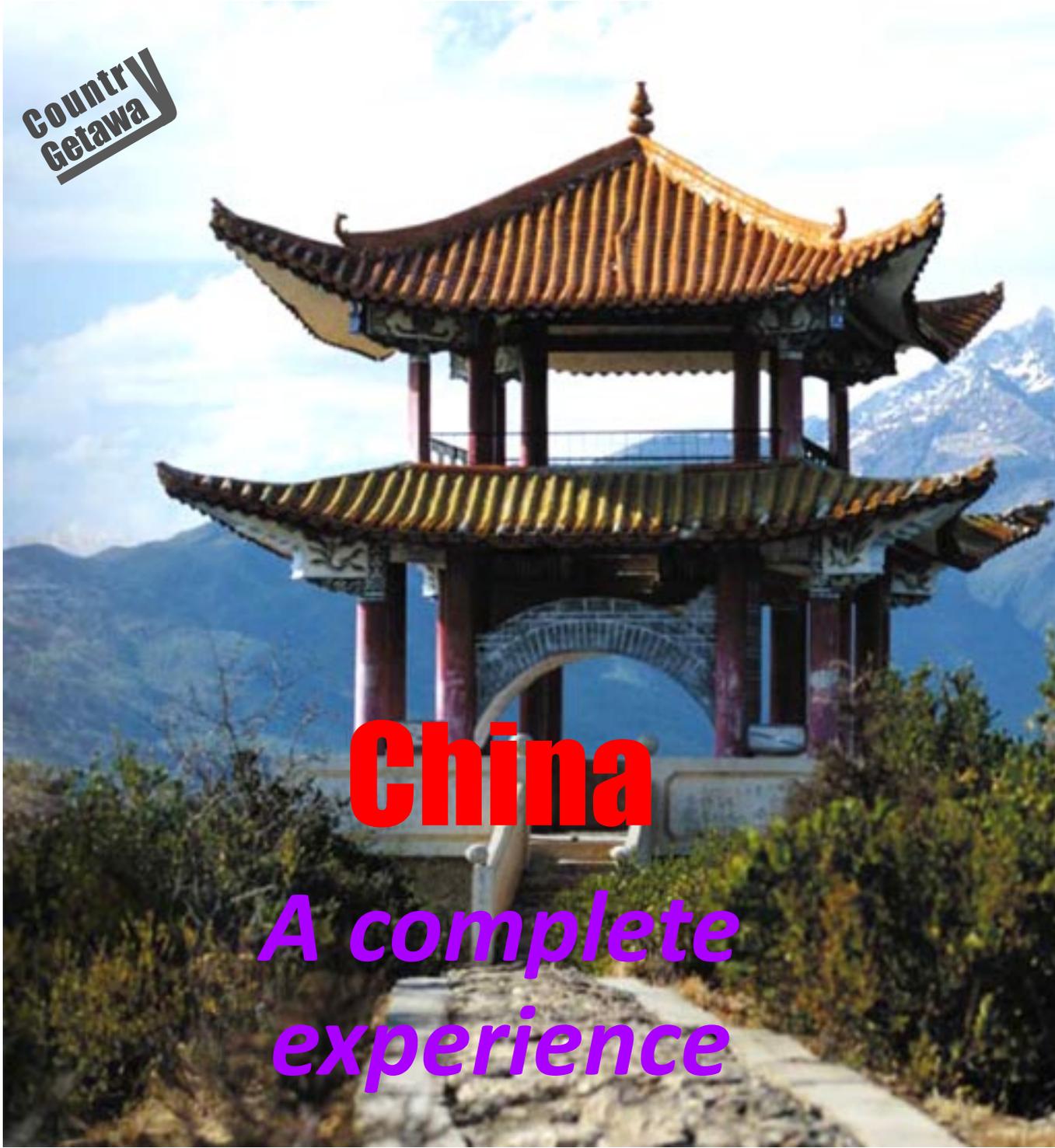
Snippet: The valley of flowers lies primarily on a glacial stretch, 5 km long and 2 km wide.

Time to stand and stare

There are holidays when we have all seen cities, monuments, museums and man-made marvels. There is a quiet backdrop against which the entire show is being played out - Nature! How often have we passed by a tree in full bloom with unseeing eyes or hurried along to work without hearing the song of the birds. This spring, take a break from it all; renew your soul by connecting once more with the planet earth. As the poet W.H Davies famously put it, '... what is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare'.

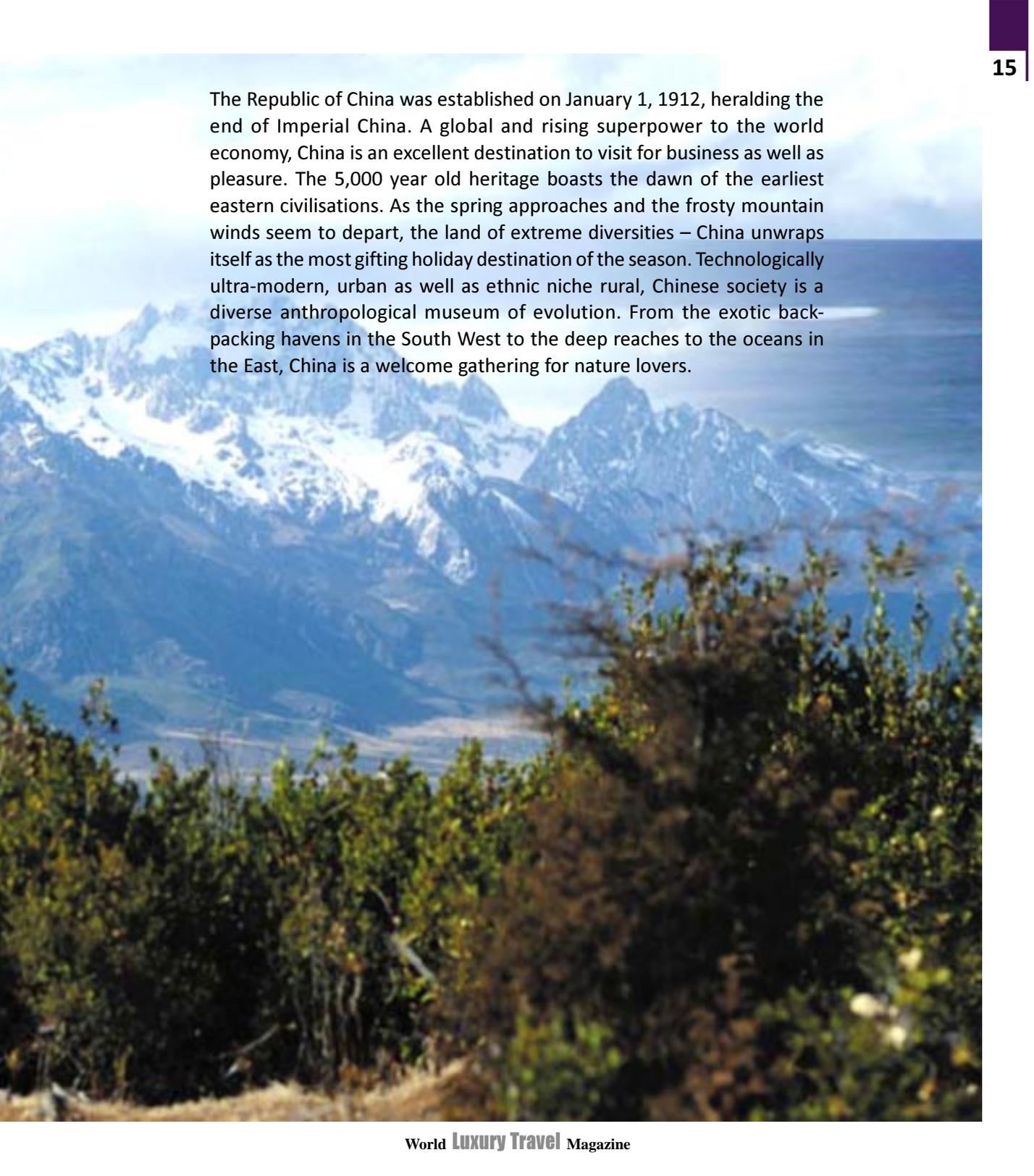


Country
Getawa



China

*A complete
experience*



The Republic of China was established on January 1, 1912, heralding the end of Imperial China. A global and rising superpower to the world economy, China is an excellent destination to visit for business as well as pleasure. The 5,000 year old heritage boasts the dawn of the earliest eastern civilisations. As the spring approaches and the frosty mountain winds seem to depart, the land of extreme diversities – China unwraps itself as the most gifting holiday destination of the season. Technologically ultra-modern, urban as well as ethnic niche rural, Chinese society is a diverse anthropological museum of evolution. From the exotic backpacking havens in the South West to the deep reaches to the oceans in the East, China is a welcome gathering for nature lovers.

Climate

China is a small scale version of the world in terms of climate. The country is close to the highest tip of the world, Mount Everest (now located in the Tibet Autonomous Region) to the second deepest land point, the Turpan depression. The extreme Northern areas have a sub-arctic climate but in general the northern plains of various river deltas have four distinct continental climatic seasons. The northern and western areas seem to be dry, leaving the southern districts to be wetter and milder. The South-Western highlands of Tibet are harsh and extreme. The oceanic warmer climate rules the eastern shores.

Must-carry

- Warm clothes (though air-conditioning culture is becoming increasingly popular, but most places are devoid of it),
- A Chinese language guide (useful since the local variants of the



Mandarin Chinese are difficult to understand),

- Good resolution camera workable at varying altitudes (you wouldn't want to miss on this).

Culture, Currency and Language

Fifty six ethnic communities, ten vastly varying neighbouring countries and not

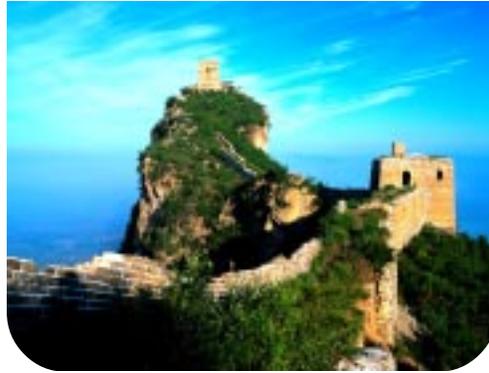
to mention the many dialects in its vicinity! China is considered as one of the leading culturally variant countries of the world. The majority Han makes 90 per cent of its population but do not be fooled because the Han traditions also vary largely in different areas. Weddings, birthdays, funerals are all twined with ceremonial customs and rituals. Even the Lunar New Year has different customary celebrations in different villages. Foreign customs, especially in the neighbouring countries of Russia and Mongolia, and other Islamic countries have influences in the western part of the country. Language, as suggested by linguists, is Standard Mandarin but dialects vary hugely even though the



writing characters remain the same. Yuan remains to be the sole currency of the People's Republic of China.

Cuisine

When it comes to eating in China, you have to know how to use your chop sticks well. Chinese can be quite quirky around their chop-stick manners in a serious way. The menu may be a bowl of rice served in the street side stalls (more popularly known as "gai bin dong") of China's innumerable Cantonese-spoken areas. You still would need to know not to plunge your sticks in the bowl vertically or it might symbolise incense sticks that are burnt in funerals. Even if the homely welcoming hospitality of the locals is left out, the actual taste of China will still belong to its streets. Capital Beijing's Snack Street in the high-rising Wangfujing district mar the posh tastes of many a five-

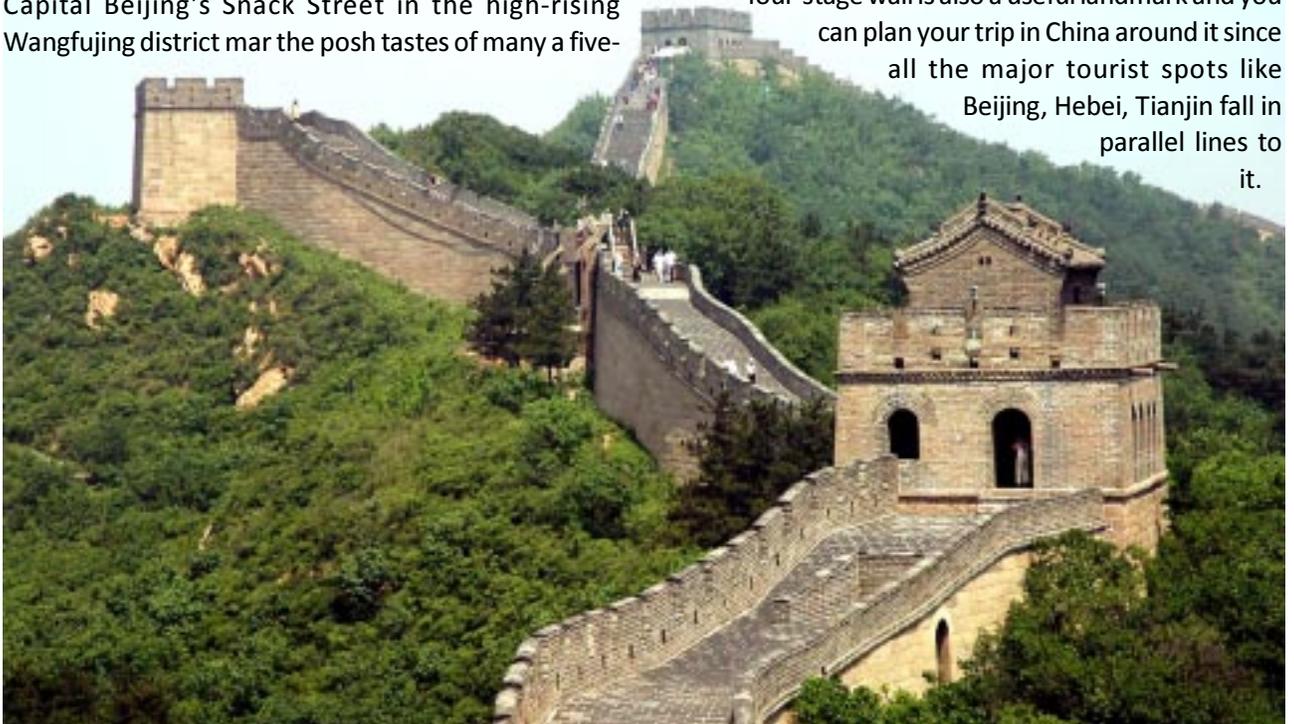


star dining experiences catered there. Every area in the country has their own set of regional cuisines, their own special recipes. Considering the size of the country, the expectations from the culinary surprises can only rise by the sheer number of choices.

Places to See

The Great Wall of China

Once famously believed to be visible also from outer space, this 6352 km wall truly marks its place in man's architectural history as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nature has also lent its creative hand in flustering myriad flora and fauna around this structure which took a millennium's hard work to build. The four-stage wall is also a useful landmark and you can plan your trip in China around it since all the major tourist spots like Beijing, Hebei, Tianjin fall in parallel lines to it.



Hainan

Hainan province at the south of the Chinese boundaries is a tropical paradise with exotic locations, luxurious resorts and plenty of spots for fun. This is the smallest province of China which was once used as a spot for exile of Chinese officials. While ethnic life is centred at the central hilly regions of the tourism oriented islands, the beaches await you at the coasts.

Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve

Famous for its scenic beauty and diverse land formations, Sichuan province hosts one of the most coveted nature reserves of the world – the Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve. Famously known also as the Jiuzhai Valley, the reserve is habitat to the rare Giant Panda and the Sichuan Golden Snub-nosed Monkey. Green Mountains, cascading waterfalls, clear blue lakes, and about 140 species of birds welcome art-lovers every year to this UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Shanghai

The emblem of prosperous China, Shanghai is the city where dreams get realised. The city flourishes on an enviable diet of high-end technological amusements and ethnic values. Divided by the Huangpo River, the older west side (Puxi) and the modern east side (Pudong) have an intellectual battle of its own. Be sure to choose your side wisely while conversing.



Beijing

The cultural and the administrative capital of China, Beijing, is the second most advanced city in China after Shanghai. Based on its glorious past, the city still follows the architecture and infrastructures of the former royal dynasties. Tianamen Square, Forbidden City bears the mysterious charm of old times while the shopping district of Wangfujing attracts modern city dwellers. The city is well to say the commercial tourist hub of China and also the main transport terminal.





Suzhou

Dreamboat of merry holidays is nothing but a ride in the Water Lane of Suzhou. Spellbinding dim lighted evenings around the water edges is a romantic end to an otherwise picturesque day in this artist's paradise. Beautiful gardens seem to leave an everlasting impression in the visitor's mind. No wonder UNESCO has awarded the prestigious World Heritage Site status to the Classical Gardens of Suzhou.

Getting there

By Air:

In China, with over 467 airports, it seems that once in a while every international flight has gone by China. It is advisable to book your tickets from the official websites of Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) and to plan your landing at the Beijing Capital International Airport. Though connected partially by land, flights to Macau and Hong Kong are considered international with respect to

Mainland China.

By Rail:

China has the highest number of adjoining neighbour countries and this fact has been heavily utilised in strategizing its international railways. Broad gauge lines see smooth railway operations between China and neighbouring North Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia. Lines leaving for Vietnam and Hong Kong are also used.

By Road:

China has made a rapid growth in road sectors in the last few decades. Combined with its National Highways and Expressways China is now connected to all its nearby countries, such as North Korea (G12 expressway), Mongolia (G10), Russia (G12), Kyrgyzstan (G30), Kazakhstan (G30), Vietnam (G72, G75), Burma (G56), Thailand (G85) etc. Neighbouring India is connected through the mountainous Nathula Pas and special administrative areas like Macau (G4w) and Hong Kong (G4) are also connected through expressways.

By Water:

China has over 2000 ports. Its major usage is in freights transportation. Its 130 foreign docking areas have some ferry transportation services.

Getting Around**Biking**

There is no doubt that the best and the most flexible way to move around within the developed areas in China is the bicycle. If the paddling ones seem too tedious, one may try the modern electricity driven ones as well. China Bicycle Association needs to be contacted for renting bikes. Bike tours are also not that unheard of in these quarters. Macau has its own bike tour planning associations.

Buses:

Bus Rapid Transits and Trolleybus Systems are few of the innovative projects which have been initiated and modified by the public transport sectors. These systems operate mainly within the city limits and sometimes are also used for intercity transport between main cities like

Shanghai, Beijing, Dalian, Guangzhou etc.

Tramlines:

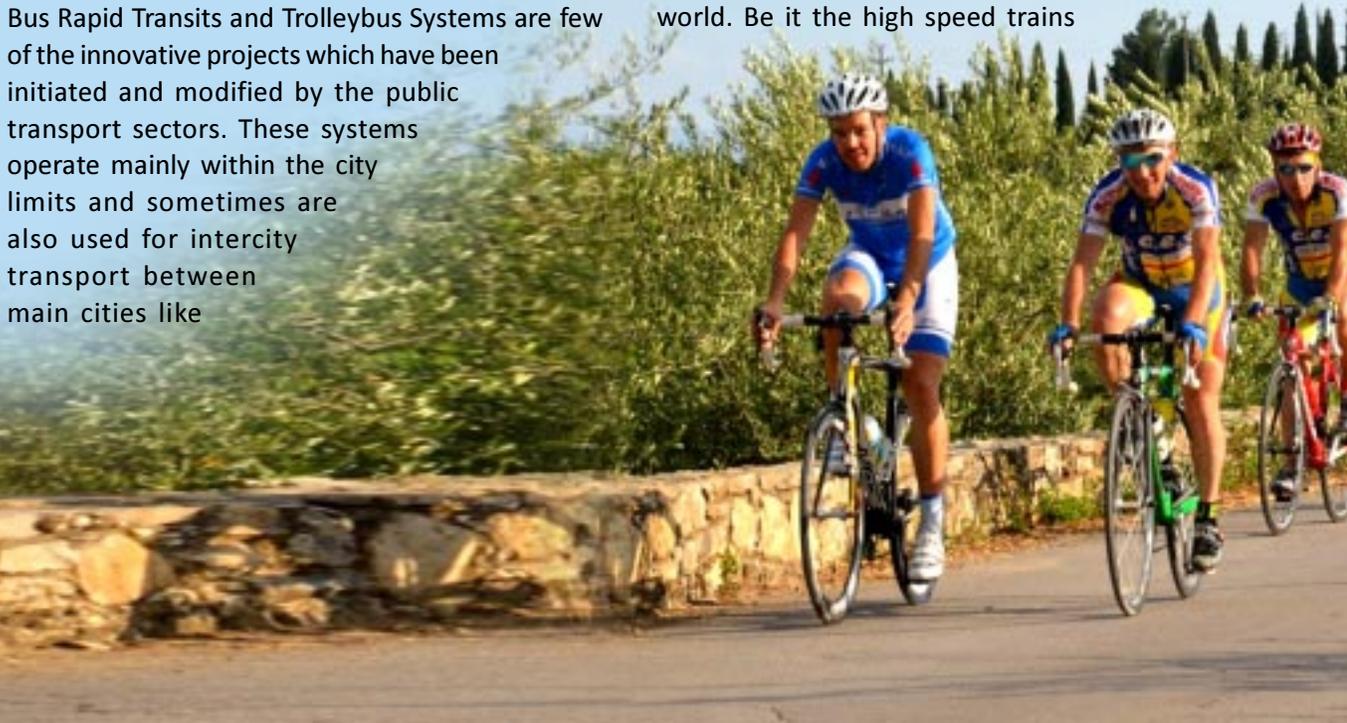
Though facing closures at different times in the past, tramways still have made comebacks in different cities under different project names (such as, Zhanjiang Tram in Shanghai). They provide for cost-efficient and effective transportation within city limits.

Cars:

Unlike in other countries, cars are not such a common transport in China. Though taxi systems operate in the main cities like Shanghai but it is better to avail public transport as they are more frequent, efficient and well-networked.

Trains:

China's rail network is the third largest in the world. Be it the high speed trains



(nine 300+km/h intercity transit lines), the futuristic maglev (magnetic levitation, two 110km/h transit lines) trains or even the normal locomotives China, especially the Eastern and Southern parts of the country is a complete railway corridor. It is the cheapest and the most efficient intercity transport service.

Waterways:

If the ocean ports are 2000, then inland ports are 5100 in number. China has the largest network of navigable water bodies (110,000km) in the world. Not only by size but the river rides are also enviably great for photo sessions on a magnificent sunsets and diverse sceneries of the

riverbanks. In the relatively virgin eastern China, waterways are the best for navigating in the wilderness and the rural areas.

Airlines:

Almost every major city of China has its own airport. So, in the need of speedy transports, airlines can always make a good option.

China is a country that has protected its heritage for over 5000 years. From the abyss of turmoil and internal wars, the country has risen to such a height that even developed countries bow in respect of its greatness. Ridden through administering issues, China still urges to push the limits, push to go forward. The hard work, dedication and 'can do' attitude puts China and its people on another level altogether. The simplicity and world famous cuisine also make it one of the most visited countries in the world.



Special
Feature



What Women Want

*An insight to women
travellers' needs*

The lone woman traveller is no longer a curiosity. We live in an age where women are travelling almost as much as men. Whether travelling for business purposes or any other, the segment of the women travellers is quite a sizeable one. Research has shown that 70 per cent of decisions regarding travel are taken by women and over 40 per cent of business travellers are women. Surprisingly, travel companies, airlines and hotels have been slow in recognising this very important fact.

You may wonder if women have special needs in the first place! They certainly do! Research, while indicating the growing number of women travellers also reveals that while women are not looking for extra special treatment, they do want some deference to their needs as women. A few changes in infrastructure are definitely needed, but what is more crucial is a change in attitude and sensitivity towards solo women travellers' and their needs.

General Security is undoubtedly the first and the major concern for women. Women travellers often complain of not feeling 'safe' in hotels and airports. If staff in airlines and hotels were 'sensitised' to recognise and have a helpful attitude towards a woman's security concerns, it would go a long way in addressing the issue. Once the mind-set is in place, it is just a small step to show willingness to accommodate requests from women guests and be flexible enough to make a few necessary changes. They will be amply rewarded too, as women are habitually 'loyal' to the brands which make them feel safe and

comfortable. Loyalty translates to numbers and numbers in turn to profits.

In Hotels

The top things women look for in hotels are security, courteous and helpful staff and those conveniences which make them feel cared for. Apart from these, small touches to acknowledge a woman guest will be met with pleasure creating loyalty and a great image for the hotel. Having fresh flowers in the room, essential female toiletries and courtesy towards female guests create the special 'wow' factor.

Security in hotel: Women have reported 'security' as the primary concern in hotels. The hotel should have a definite commitment to



make a woman guest feel safe in its premises. Good lighting in corridors and parking lots is important. A woman guest should not have security concerns in dining alone in the hotel restaurant or working out alone in the hotel gym. Staff should be well-trained to spot and defuse any potentially unpleasant situation that can make their female guests uncomfortable. There are many simple features that can be included in hotels to address the security issue.

Privacy of check-in: Staff at the front-desk should be trained to be discreet by not to announcing names or room numbers loudly. In several good hotels, key-cards are individualised making the female occupant feel much safer. The woman's name or room number is not announced aloud. It is written down and handed over.

Room location: Women should preferably

be allotted rooms with 'safer' locations. Allotting a room at the end of a dimly lit corridor definitely makes a woman feel unsafe. Allotting rooms too close to elevators or areas where renovation work is going on, or near public access areas should



be avoided. An increasing number of hotels are introducing 'women's only floors', which is proving to be a big hit with women travellers.



Room safety: Peep-holes, chain locks on doors, in-room safety deposits and emergency alarm buttons are all great women-friendly features. Room service by females is a great idea to beat the 'let me make myself presentable' pre-room service scramble and is a sure way to make lone women more comfortable.

Conveniences: Good bathrobes and towels, full-length mirrors, women-specific toiletries, sanitary napkins in bathrooms, cleanliness of room, hair-dryer and skirt hangers are all things which will earn big brownie points from women. A working phone for keeping in touch with family or call for help if needed is also an essential for a woman guest.

Others: After a tiring day, a woman will feel great unwinding with a relaxing massage, but chances are she may not want to leave her room to get one. An in-room spa treatment will be great under the circumstances. Similarly offering in-room free Wi-Fi access, a mini-bar and coffee-maker can take care of those times when a woman opts to go without a drink or avoid

checking an email because she is not comfortable stepping out of her room at a late hour.

Worthy mentions:

- The Crowne Plaza SilverSmith, Chicago, makes an 'all is well' call after a female guest has checked in. Furthermore, it provides women detergents to wash delicate lingerie. Their

24-hour fitness room is strategically located opposite to the registration desk, which gives a 'safer' feeling to women. Now that's thoughtfulness.

- Wyndham Hotels and Resorts have a special By Request program to cater especially to business women travellers who frequently stay there. Personalised service includes keeping tabs of their likes and dislikes and friendly alert calls before room service.
- Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club in Miami has a Patrician Floor with 18 rooms solely dedicated to the woman business traveller. The small details which 'wow' women include magnifying makeup mirrors,



special toiletries and even special women magazines. It is no coincidence that the floor is 95 per cent occupied all the time!

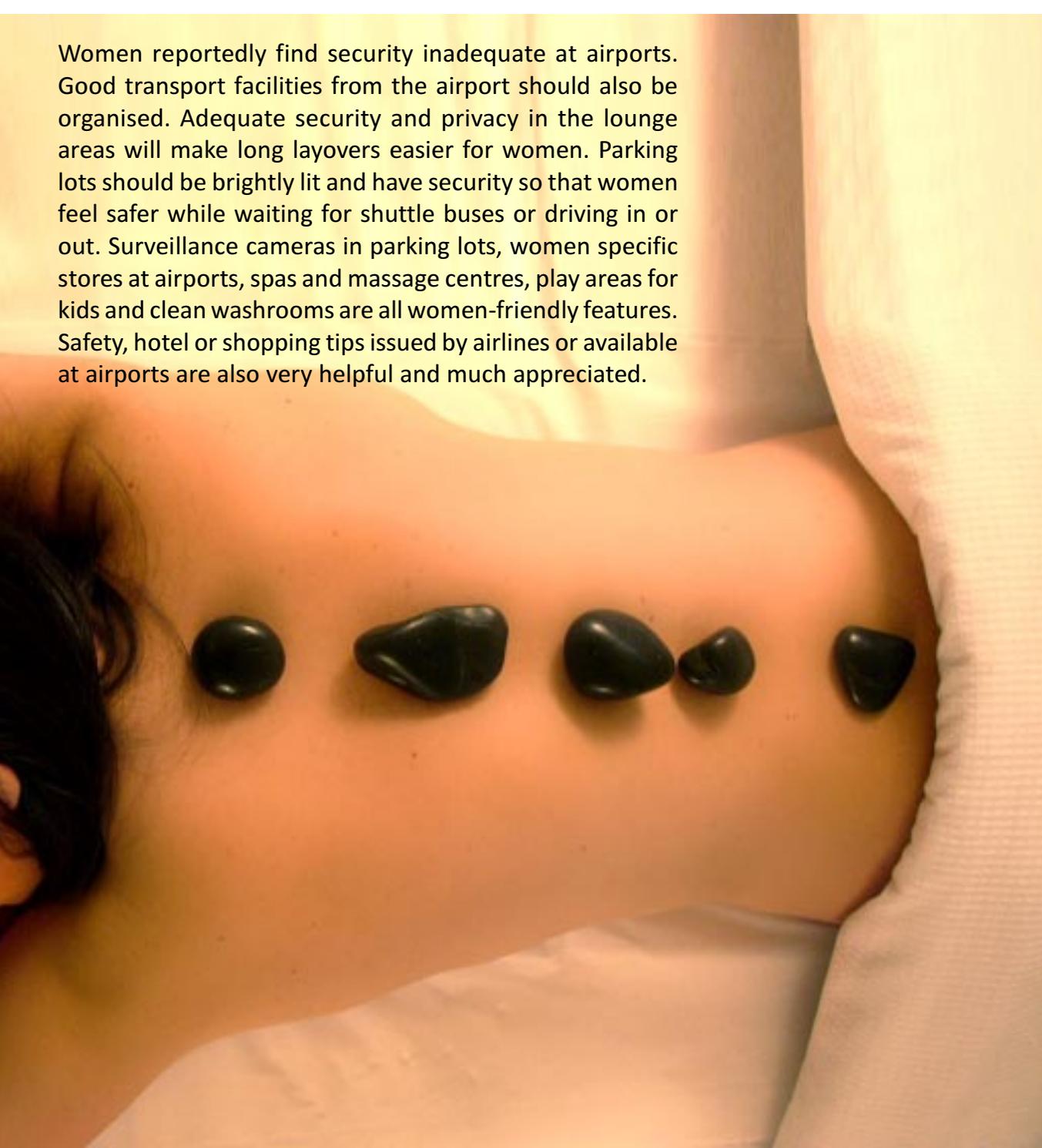
- Hyatt Regency in Ft Lauderdale takes care that the parking spots allotted to its women guests are close to the hotel entrance.
- The Barbizon, New York offers escorts for women who wish to go walking or jogging to the nearby Central Park.

In Airlines and Airports

Now, what do women want from airlines and airports? Research shows that women choose airlines with frequent flights, convenient timings, friendly staff, cheap fares and prior seat allocations. Results from various surveys have revealed that women reportedly feel they get 'second class' treatment as compared to men during travelling. They feel short-shifted in terms of not getting upgrades or equal treatment as men, more so in some specific countries. Again, the play of attitude comes in. For instance, a man hogging the arm-rest is often taken for granted; or a woman's request for a change of seat due to unwanted attentions from a male passenger, may not always get the attention it deserves. On the convenience front, amenity packs specially designed for women, courteous airline staff, help with luggage and customs, helpful attitude towards seat allocation (especially during long hauls) are all things that woman look for. More than huge infrastructural changes, change in attitude of staff will go a long way in making women comfortable during travelling.



Women reportedly find security inadequate at airports. Good transport facilities from the airport should also be organised. Adequate security and privacy in the lounge areas will make long layovers easier for women. Parking lots should be brightly lit and have security so that women feel safer while waiting for shuttle buses or driving in or out. Surveillance cameras in parking lots, women specific stores at airports, spas and massage centres, play areas for kids and clean washrooms are all women-friendly features. Safety, hotel or shopping tips issued by airlines or available at airports are also very helpful and much appreciated.



Worthy mentions:

- Japanese Airlines has dedicated washroom for women with washbasin and large mirrors where they can freshen up and change.
- According to Lufthansa, over 180,000 women in

Germany fly around ten times or more a year. The airlines have come up with the neat idea of a special woman's magazine dedicated to their frequent women flyers.

- airBaltic has a Seat Buddy programme which allows people to choose the 'type' of person you sit next to (related to four moods 'work', 'business talk', easy chat or relax).



- KLM and Malaysia Airlines have ‘social seating’ systems whereby people can share their social networking profiles and choose seating partners beforehand. (Used with caution, this is a great idea!)

Give Me Wings to Fly

Woman all over the world are exploring new horizons and

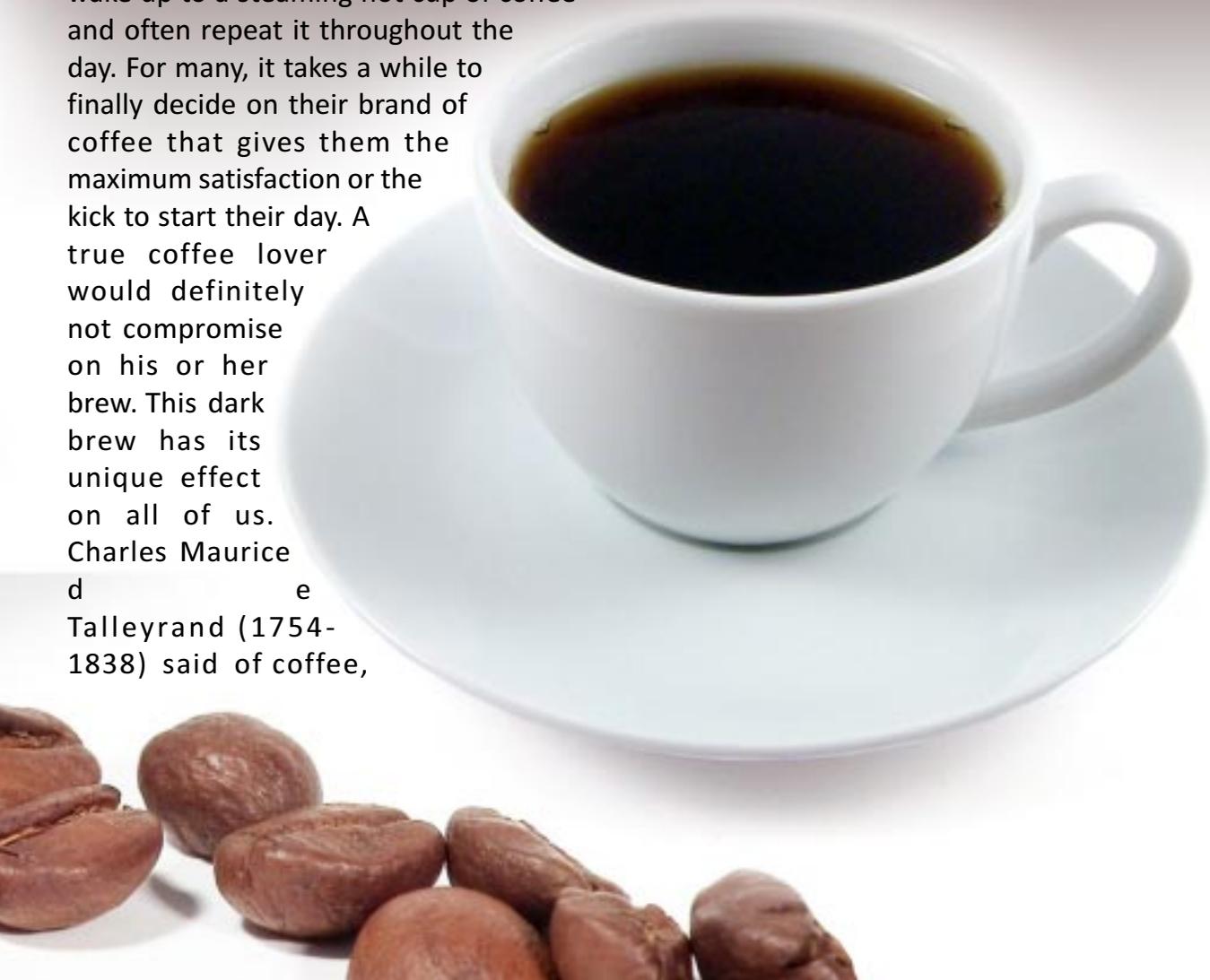
achieving goals to be proud of. We live in times where both men and women have equal rights to fulfil their dreams. Where those dreams require taking off from beyond home and hearth, the role of the travel and hospitality industry comes in. These industries have to take steps to empower the women of today so that they can truly excel and fulfil their dreams. It is no small responsibility but the rewards will not be mean either. If the service industries rise to meet the challenge, they can proudly claim its share in the success story of the modern woman.



Coffee the Magic Bean



A witty lady once said, “Chocolate, men and premium gourmet coffee – some things are better rich.” Most people around the world wake up to a steaming hot cup of coffee and often repeat it throughout the day. For many, it takes a while to finally decide on their brand of coffee that gives them the maximum satisfaction or the kick to start their day. A true coffee lover would definitely not compromise on his or her brew. This dark brew has its unique effect on all of us. Charles Maurice de Talleyrand (1754-1838) said of coffee,



“Black as the devil, hot as hell, pure as an angel, sweet as love.” A perfect description of the perfect cuppa indeed!

Coffee comes from the seed or the bean inside the cherry red coloured berries. The coffee trees can be as tall as 30 ft. and they are cultivated in spaced manner for easy picking. The beans inside these berries are either collected after drying or washed off when ripe. This depends on the blend of the coffee. The beans are then roasted till they attain the correct consistency to be ground and brewed. The varieties which are most common in brewing are the Espresso (just the brew nothing else), Breve (espresso+foam), Americano (espresso+water), Cappuccino (espresso+milk+lots of foam), Mocha (e s p r e s s o + c h o c o l a t e syrup+milk+whipped cream), and Cafe Latte (espresso+lot of milk+foam). The caffeine in the coffee has the unique capacity to make an

individual perkier. According to an Ethiopian legend, some shepherds noticed that their goats started dancing or becoming frisky after they ate coffee berries.

Apart from flavour, another factor governs coffee around the world – its

trade value. It is said to be the second most traded commodity in the global market. Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Indonesia and India are the top producers of this red berry. Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark and Netherland are the top five consumers according to the per

capita consumptions. To get acquainted with the different flavours and intensity of these magic beans let us find out some interesting facts about the exceptional blends from around the world.

Sumatra's Kopi Luwak:

One of the most expensive of all coffees around the world Sumatra Kopi Luwak has a very exotic way of processing (or should we say, naturalized) the coffee beans. Coffee berries eaten and then excreted by the Asian Palm Civet are accumulated. The beans when travelling through the digestive track of the Civet acquires enzymes that ferment the beans to its premium flavour. It is priced at \$700 per kg



due to its rare accumulation. This particular brand proves quality comes in small quantity.

As all exotic things around the world, controversy surrounds this particular type of coffee too. Some of these are acquired by civets in captivity, where they are forced to produce more quantity. The quality differs and often this rubs the animal activist in the wrong way.

Hawaii Kona Coffee:

Originally brought from a Brazilian cutting in 1828 this coffee was cultivated in the Kona



district of the mainland of Hawaii and is now counted among the most expensive coffees of the world. Only the coffee cultivated in this particular belt gets to have the name 'Kona' to it. The weather and topography is the perfect condition to enhance this coffee's production and flavour. It is now also sold by some retailer as "Kona Blend" owing to the rarity and price of Kona coffee. The Kona blend is a combination of Kona and Colombian, Brazilian or other foreign coffees and contains only 10% of minimum requires Kona coffee and 90% of other cheaper imported beans.

Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee:

As the beautiful name of this particular coffee suggest, this coffee is grown in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. The weather is cool and misty with large amount of rainfall. The excellent drainage of the topography



makes it ideal coffee plantation. They yield a smooth tasting coffee without the bitterness. The maximum export is to Japan. These coffee plantations are well monitored by the Jamaican Coffee board, and only the real thing gets its certified seal, making it a uniquely exotic blend.

Guatemala Antigua Coffee:

Highlands, rainfall and the rich soil of the volcanic region, Antigua is heaven for coffee production. This gourmet blend has a smoke induced chocolate like undertone and finishes with spicy flavour. The website of Volcanica Coffee perfectly described this coffee by saying, "Guatemala Antigua Coffee elevates your taste buds to a Seventh Heaven Experience," and went on to add that this impeccable fusion of Latin American caffeine ferocity and Middle Eastern charms is an attractive package and an undeniable must-have.

Sumatra Lintong Coffee:

Grown near Lake Toba in the North Central Sumatra, this coffee has a bold, full taste yet with a low acidity. Apple, lemon and musty earthy aroma infuses from this steaming brew. It has a solid sweetness

Java Arabica Coffee:

A washed coffee production from the exotic island of Java, Indonesia, it is one of the full bodied blend yet light and less acidic with a unique herb-like after taste. As the island itself, the coffee is definitely



than the traditional blend of the region. Coffee Review rightly described this coffee as, "A gloriously autumnal coffee with its deep intensity and notes of earth, apple and cedar."

rustic in overall aspects. In spite of the slightly quicker finish of this coffee, as compared to other Indonesian coffees, it is often found to contain a slightly smoky, spicy twist.

Perci Red Panama Geisha:

This is another specimen of washed coffee which come from Ethiopian derived tree and usually harvested in the Panama and Vulcan area. A natural tropical fruity flavour with notes of lavender and honeysuckle are predominant in this blend.

Costa Rican Geisha coffee from The Roasterie:

This is a blend which is next to none. It is unique with trace of citric tinge with a combination of sweet cherry wrapped with a floral aroma. The Roasterie can boast this particular washed coffee to be is valued at a little more than \$111 for a 12oz. bag.

The varied blends and the enormous popularity of this brew make it the drink of life. A little coffee break during the day is a vital pause to regenerate our thoughts and regain a bit of the used up energy. A mug during the late nights is just what keeps us going and cups shared with friends and family help us bond together. The global popularity of this hot beverage is proved by successful coffee outlet chains like Starbuck, Caribou Coffee, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf etc. So, if you need a quick 'pick me up', pick your favourite cup of drink and let it help you get going.

MICE

MICE

in

Cape Town, South Africa



Cape Town is a potpourri of creativity, culture, natural beauty and an incredible spirit. This world class port city enjoys a strategic location and is often referred to as the ‘Gateway to Africa’. Boasting of sound infrastructure and exemplary services, the city is host to a number of international conferences, exhibitions and events.

The city is also home to 13 internationally acclaimed Blue Flag beaches that make for ideal summers destination. The city was selected as the 2014 World Design Capital, which highlights the importance of its thriving creative and industrial sectors. Its appeal lies in its value for money when it comes to meetings and events, while its vibrant lifestyle seem inviting enough for expatriates to feel at home.

Why Cape Town

Great Weather – A perfect Mediterranean climate with warm summers and mild winters make any trip quite pleasant at almost any time of the year.

Affordable – A host of facilities and luxuries are available here at really affordable rates from hotels, transportation, convention centres to sight-seeing and other activities.

Variety and diversity – Cape Town is known for its enriching and diverse ambience. Tourists can experience the best of nature, wildlife,

culture, adventure, heritage and arts.

Accessibility – Being served by 20 international airlines on a weekly basis making the city a very well connected destination.

Safety and Security - Cape Town is one of the safest destinations in Africa. This makes it easier to schedule events and conferences in the city, making it an obvious choice for MICE planners.



Convention and Events Bureau

The Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau aims to promote Cape Town and the Western Cape as South Africa's premier conventions, meetings and incentives destination. The Bureau assists MICE organizers with all event-related information, administration, planning and hosting of successful conferences. Cape Town Tourism has partnerships with more than 2500 industry service providers, which provide wonderful venues, facilities and services across the city. Some of

the successful conferences, exhibitions and congresses held in the city include the WWF International Congress, the World Energy Council Executive Assembly, the International Meeting of Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Harvard Business School Global Alumni Conference, the World Congress of Anaesthesiology and the International Diabetes World Congress. The Cape Town Convention Bureau is also a certified member of the BestCities global network and regularly undergoes quality management surveys, rigorous inspections and evaluations that in turn help in organizing unique as well as memorable events.



Cape Town International Convention Centre

Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) is a world class venue for conferences, exhibitions, trade shows, concerts and other important events. It comprises of approximately 6.1 ha on the city's foreshore and is located in the vicinity of V&A Waterfront, famous hotels and the rest of the city centre. The CTICC was founded in 2003, as a partnership between the City of Cape Town, the Western Cape government and Business Cape. It encourages sustainable tourism a great deal. It is synonymous with innovative design concepts, meticulous attention to detail, comprehensive world-class services, dedicated, qualified professionals and five-star accommodation facilities. Around 11200 sq. m. of exhibition space is available for MICE buyers that can be divided into multiple conference or banquet venues and include two high-tech auditoriums with seating for about 600 delegates and a 2000

sq. m. Grand Ballroom with panoramic views. Catering services, buffet, live music and entertainment are some of the perks for visitors.

Incentive Prospects

Table Mountain view – Go for a ride in a revolving cable car or set off on a hiking trail to the immensely popular Table Mountain. When



you reach the summit of this world famous attraction, you will be rewarded with stunning, sweeping views of the Camps Bay below.

Dive with Nile crocodiles – Take a trip to the Oudtshoorn for Nile crocodile cage diving, ostrich racing and the 20 million years old Cango Caves.



Visit Cape Agulhas - Cape Agulhas is the southernmost tip of Africa and the meeting point of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. It also houses one of the oldest working lighthouses in South Africa.

A game of golf – You possibly cannot come back from Cape Town without playing a round of golf in one of its many alluring golf courses. While out there, try bungee jumping from the highest commercial bungee in the world.

Swim with the African Penguins – The Boulders Beach in Simon’s Town is the only place in the world where you can swim freely with penguins.

Visit the oldest townships - Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu are some of the lively old towns you can tour during a cultural excursion. Experience the Xhosa culture, eat traditional food and tap your foot to the local jazz.

Shark cage diving - If you are a thrill seeker, you will absolutely fall in love with Cape Town. Gansbaai in the Cape

Overberg region of the Western Cape is the Great White Shark capital of the world where you can have a brush with the deadly.

Kite surfing – Some of the best kite surfing destinations in the world can be found here. Coupled with scrumptious seafood in the wind swept villages and wildflower trails, tourists are surely in for a treat.

Wine tasting – There are plenty of wine growing regions, each offering their own variety. The most popular ones are Constantia, Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, Paarl, Robertson and Wellington with more than 120 wine estates to choose from.

Horseback safari – The best part of South Africa is its wildlife





safaris. Hop on a horseback and encounter Africa's Big 5 - lions, leopards, water buffalo, rhino and elephants.

Cape Town continues to hog the limelight for its environment friendly measures and for promoting responsible, sustainable tourism. It sets a worthy example for its contemporaries, thereby climbing the charts as a popular business destination. Equipped with world class venues for large gatherings, state-of-the-art facilities as well as the support services to ensure that all kinds of events run smoothly – the vibrant city of Cape Town is truly a class apart. Travel to the harbour city for your next MICE event for a thoroughly rewarding experience.



CAPE TOWN
& Western Cape
Convention Bureau

wesgro.co.za

Happenings

April Festivals



April Fool's Day

Where: Worldwide

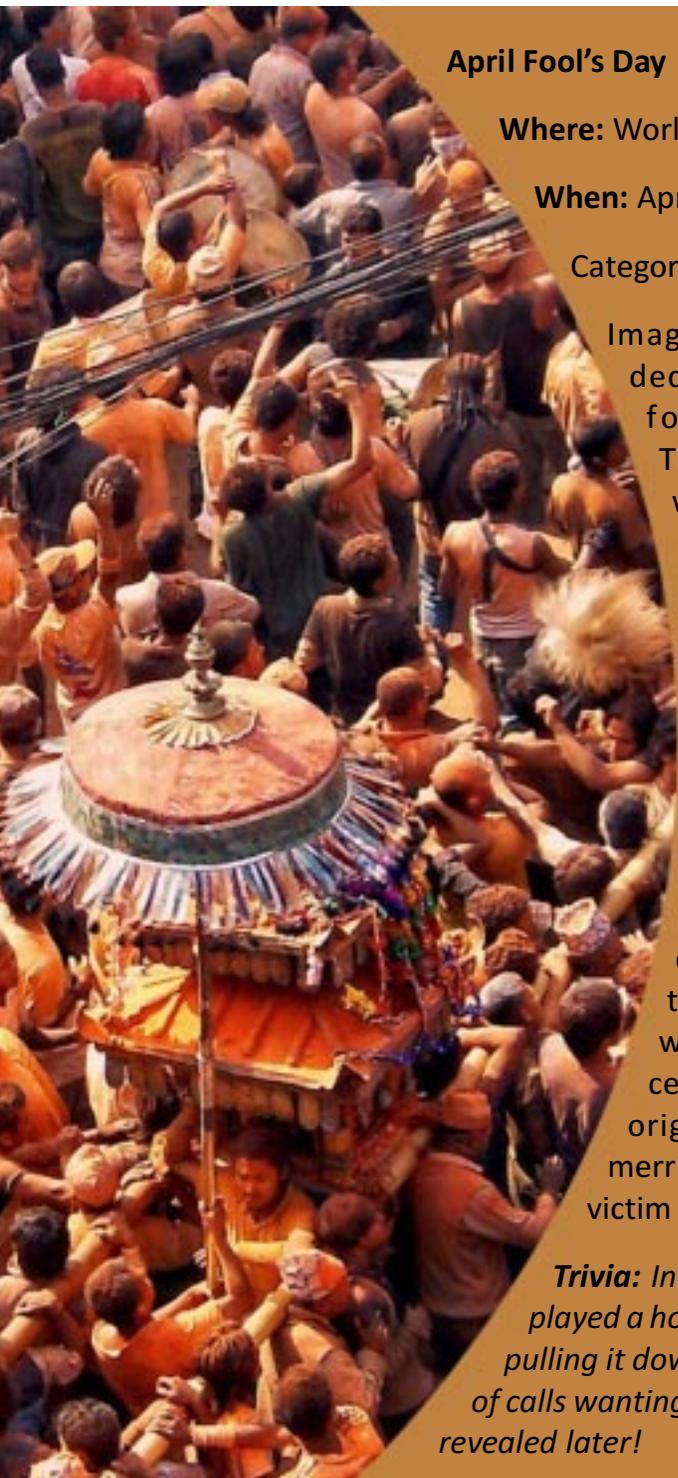
When: April 1, 2013

Category: Fun

Imagine a day dedicated to foolishness! That's exactly what April Fool's Day or

All Fool's Day does. This is the day to play pranks on your friends and invent every trick under the sun to fool them. Needless to say, everything is taken in good spirit. The origin of the festival is unclear but it probably goes back to 16th century France when the King Charles IX replaced the Julian Calendar with the Gregorian Calendar. This changed the New Year to January 1. People who would not accept this change or were not aware of it became the targets of jokes for celebrating New Year on the wrong day. Some people also link this festival with celebrating the arrival of spring. Whatever the origin, it is celebrated with good humour and merriment all over the world with the unfortunate victim earning the title of 'April Fool'!

Trivia: In 1957, *Panorama*, a BBC television programme played a hoax, showing Swiss farmers harvesting spaghetti, pulling it down from trees; stunned viewers made thousands of calls wanting to learn how to grow spaghetts! The hoax was revealed later!



Dead Sea Ultra Marathon

Where: Amman, Jordan

When: April 5, 2013

Category: Sports

Have you ever heard of a race that begins 900 m above sea-level and ends 400 m below sea-level? This arduous race begins in the high areas of Amman and ends at the Dead Sea in the South Jordan desert. The total distance covered is 50 km and a descent of 1300 m. The race is divided into three events

– the half marathon (21 km), the standard marathon (42 km) and the gruelling 52 km which follows tarmac roads under the burning sun. Participants can run alone or in a team of four. Though there are no monetary rewards, thousands of runners participate every year for the thrill of achievement in conquering this gruelling track.

***Trivia:** The race is a fund-raising event for The Society for the Care Neurological Patients (SCNP) to help in treatment of patients and create awareness of neurological diseases.*

Dead Sea Ultra Marathon

Run to the lowest point on earth



Hamburger Dom

Where: Hamburg,
Germany

When: March 22
– April 21, 2013

Category: Tourism

The Hamburger Dom, held in spring, summer and winter, is the largest and longest festival in Germany. It takes place in the Heiligengeistfeld fair ground. Attracting over 10 million visitors from all over the world, it is a fun-fair, complete with carousels, thrilling rides, show booths, and food stalls selling lip-

smacking 'fair-fare'.

Family day Wednesdays are a hit with children who are enthralled by clowns, acrobats, jugglers and fire-eaters. The major draw of the fair is the fabulous fireworks

display which lights up the sky every Friday at 10:30 pm.

***Trivia:** 4 million kilowatt-hours of electricity are needed to power the dome lights and rides!*



Bisket Jatra (Nepali New Year)

Where: Bhaktapur, Nepal

When: April 10 – 19, 2013

Category: Traditional

The New Year is rung in with great excitement and revelry in Bhaktapur with celebrations starting before and extending beyond the actual New Year Day (April 14). The patron deities Bhairav and his consort Bhadrakali are carried in a procession of two chariots through the streets. A huge tug of war takes place to decide whom fortune will favour in

the coming year. Other events marking the festival are the construction of the huge pole (Yeo-sin-deo) and pulling it down the next day amidst cheering and tug of war; chariot processions of popular deities and ritualistic bathing and worship.

Trivia: *Bisket Jatra means the Celebration after the death of serpents (related to a legend in which a serpent used to kill any man the city's princess married; a brave prince finally killed the serpent and consummated the wedding)!*



Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival

Where: California, USA

When: April 12 – 14 and 19 – 21, 2013

Category: Hobby Fest

One of the most prestigious music festivals in the world, the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival features rock, hip hop, indie, electronic music and legendary names in music. Organised by Goldenvoice, it is held in the Empire Polo Club of the desert city of Indio in California every year in April. Although the heat is formidable, the pulsating music by world famous bands and performers draws thousands of visitors to enjoy the event every day. There are eight stages across which music performances take place. Apart from music there are art studios, a farmers' market, Yoga and pinball at the festival. Camping is allowed and various food stalls cater to the public.

Trivia: *The fantastic line-up for 2013 includes The Stone Roses, Blur, Yeah Yeahs, Red Hot Chilli Peppers and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds!*





Songkran

Where: Thailand

When: April 13 – 15, 2013

Category: Traditional

Songkran or the Thailand Water Festival is celebrated with great joie de vivre and buckets of water. Celebrating the shift of the sun to the northern hemisphere, this important festival is celebrated over three days - 'Mahasongkran' (April 13, end of old

year), Wan Nao (April 14) and the Wan Thaloeng Sok (April 15, New Year). Children squirt water from water guns and unsuspecting victims are drenched with a cold shower from buckets or sprays. The cool showers are most welcome in the April heat and everyone enjoys the fun. It is customary for Thai people to visit Buddhist temples, give alms to monks and take part in the ritual bathing of Lord Buddha.

Trivia: The 'water-baths' are symbolically considered to purify the body, mind and soul.

Takayama Matsuri

Where: Japan

When: April 14 – 15,
2013

Category: Traditional

The Takayama Matsuri is one of the loveliest festivals of Japan. The Spring Festival or the Sanno Matsuri of the Hie shrine is marked by the display of lavishly decorated, colourful floats. In the evening, hundreds of lanterns transform the procession of floats (yatais) into a magnificent spectacle never to be forgotten by the thousands of spell-bound visitors. Another charming feature is the Karakuri puppet shows held atop some of the floats. The deity of the shrine is also taken around the town in a mikoshi (mobile shrine) and returned to the temple in the evening. In



case of inclement weather, the floats are displayed in the storehouses across the town in which they are stored.

***Trivia:** The same festival held in autumn is called Hachiman festival, being a festival of the Hachiman shrine at this time.*



April Fair (Feria de Abril)

Where: Seville, Spain

When: April 15 – 21, 2013

Category: Traditional/Tourism

Spanish culture at its quintessential best is on display at the April fair, held two weeks after the Holy Week or Semana Santa. It is one rollicking party with a procession of stately horse-drawn carriages, Spanish beauties in gorgeous flamenco costumes and more than a thousand decorated

casetas (marquees) where you can party the night away. The air is lively with flamenco performances, music, food and drinks. Bullfighting, an integral part of the fair, is a big draw and so is The Calle de Infierno (Hell Street), a fantastic amusement park. The fair area (near the Guadalquivir River) is enormous and the event attracts around a million visitors annually. A spectacular display of fireworks at midnight closes the event.

***Trivia:** You can attend the parties in the casetas only if you have invitation.*



Fiesta San Antonio

Where: Texas, USA

When: April 18 – 28, 2013

Category: Traditional/Tourism

What began as a one-parade event in 1891 to honour war heroes has evolved into one of the greatest festivals in the US today. This 11 day and over 100 events festival is a celebration of the culture and heritage of San Antonio. The festival attracts around 3.5 million visitors. Parades, art exhibitions, music, dance, food, fashion and every aspect

of culture are on display. Cascarones or colourful, confetti-filled eggshells are broken over heads, fiesta medals are worn and people are dressed in their colourful and flamboyant best. The Battle of the Flowers Parade, the Fiesta Flambeau Parade and the Oyster Bake are some of the major events.

***Trivia:** Each one of the 100 official events is sponsored by local non-profit or military organizations, making it the biggest community benefit event in the country.*



New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

Where: New Orleans, USA

When: April 26 – May 5, 2013

Category: Hobby Fest/Tourism

The legendary jazz festival is a fantastic celebration of the music and culture of New Orleans and Louisiana. Held at the Fair Grounds Race Course, it features the best names in music and every genre of music including jazz, blues, R&B, African, Latin,

Cajun, rap, country and much more. Parades are held throughout the event with lively band music. Over seventy food stalls sell various delicacies. Crafts and arts stalls display various fascinating handicrafts. There are dedicated areas where local cultural traditions are showcased, such as the Louisiana Folklife Village.

***Trivia:** This year's line-up includes names like Fleetwood Mac, Black Keys, Billy Joel and David Matthews Band, to name just a few.*



Queen's (Orange) Day

Where: Amsterdam, Netherlands

When: April 30, 2013

Category: Traditional/Tourism

Koninginnedag or Queen's Day, a national holiday and celebration of Queen Beatrix's birthday, is marked by festivities, colour and revelry. Everyone is dressed in orange (the colour of the Dutch royal family), canals are packed with colourful, decorated boats;

there is live music, bands and outdoor parties in square and parks everywhere. People also flock to the 'vrijmarkt', the largest flea market in the world, to sell or buy thousands of second-hand goods. The Queen's Night is especially popular with a range of events being hosted by bars and clubs. The Vondelpark is a hit with kids with events like face-painting and various games.

***Trivia:** Celebration's this year mark the abdication of Queen Beatrix in favour of her son, Crown-Prince Willem-Alexander!*



W L T

World Luxury Tourism