



World

Luxury Travel

Magazine

Vol. 3 ■ Issue 10 ■ May, 2015

**Five Best Storm
Chasing Destinations**

Green Tourism

An Insight

**Five Safest
Cities to
Live in Asia**

**June Festivals
around the Globe**



The World Luxury Travel Magazine is on an off-beat travel spree. In our previous issues, we talked about traveling under water as well as in the sky. We talked about wading with deep sea turtles, flying like a bird and interesting destinations which make it possible. This issue of the e-zine goes a step forward and takes you to this adrenaline gushing adventure of Storm Chasing. Find the best possible places to chase a tornado!

We understand storm chasing may not be on everyone's travel bucket list. For those who want to play it safe, delve into our article on the safest places to travel in Asia.

Traveling is fun and when done responsibly, nothing quite beats it. Tourism affects the environment in a significant way. Read more about green tourism in our feature article in this issue.

Happy travels everyone!



Manashree Prakash
Editor-in-Chief

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Five Best Storm Chasing Destinations



In 1996, the movie 'Twister' unleashed the fury of tornadoes on big screens across the world. The captivated audiences watched the thundering fury of nature with awe. Suddenly 'storm chasing' was a new addition to the bucket list. Everyone wanted to experience the majestic drama of nature played out in a storm – explosive thunder, vivid lightning, heavy rain, hail, massive storm clouds and cyclonic winds! Of course





storm chasing existed before the movie. In fact the movie is believed to have taken cinematic liberties with the reality of storm chasing. There's no denying, however, that 'Twister' brought storm chasing into public imagination. All at once, people started searching for places to go storm hunting.

What exactly does storm chasing mean? It

is defined as 'the pursuit of any severe weather condition'. It involves checking weather forecasts and trying to track, witness and record natural phenomena like storms, hurricanes or tornadoes. Storm chasing is done by meteorologists, photojournalists or simply by laymen interested in witnessing and photographing storms.

The hotspots

In recent times, storm chasing has taken the public imagination by storm, literally! There are a lot of people who are interested in it. As a result, there are storm chasing holidays, tour operators and vacationers. So which are the stormiest destinations in the world? Check them out:

Tornado Alley, USA

This expressive name is given to a high-tornado prone area of plains in the central part of Southern USA. It is not an exact geographical area and roughly covers the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, the Texas



Panhandle, Nebraska, eastern South Dakota, and eastern Colorado. This area has the ideal conditions for supercell thunderstorms and violent tornadoes, EF-2 or greater (tornado grading runs from EF0-EF5 in increasing order of intensity). Around 1200 twisters (tornadoes) hit this area every year. In 2011 over 500 people were killed in deadly tornadoes here. It is common for fierce storms to blow away roofs, uproot trees and damage buildings extensively.

Best time for storm chasing: May to July



Tampa Bay, Florida, USA

Tampa Bay is considered the lightning capital of USA. The highly charged clouds here lead to deadly lightning strikes. During 1959 to 1993, lightning accounted for 53 per cent of the weather-related deaths in Florida while hurricanes contributed to only 8.7 per cent! Around 90 to 100 thunderstorms hit Florida every

year. The storms last for just a couple of hours though, clearing up afterwards. The Sunshine State is a great destination for tornadoes, having the highest incidence of tornadoes per square mile.

Best Time for storm chasing: May to October



Lausanne, Switzerland

The beautiful city of Lausanne, on the shores of Lake Geneva, is famous for its museums, cathedral and scenic beauty. However, this charming place is also a storm chaser's destination. It gets its share of brooding weather with dark clouds, thundering rain and shattering hail storms. Alpine storms and foehn winds cause stormy weather conditions. For large doses of hail and thunder, this is the place for storm chasers to head.

Best time for storm chasing: June



Southwest Sweden

Storm activity has been on the rise in Sweden in the past ten years or so. Blizzards and ice storms have raged across the country, particularly its southern tip. 'Haftig snostorms' or blizzards disrupt regular life by piling up snow, stopping traffic, affecting flights and the heavy winds also have a hand in the disturbance. In 2012, blizzard conditions due to a Baltic storm caused 1.8 inches of snowfall in Stockholm and left around 6000 people without power. So if it's a snowstorm you want to chase, head to Sweden.

Best time for storm chasing: December to March





Drake Passage, Antarctica

The narrow Drake Passage between the southern tip of South America (Cape Horn) and Antarctica is notorious for some of the roughest waters in the world. The weather here is noted for its unpredictability, violent gales and blizzards. The terrific gales and the Antarctic Circumpolar Current squeeze into the bottleneck passage pouring 140 million cubic metres of water per second (or equal to 5000 Amazon Rivers). Needless to say, it makes for some sickening rolling ship movement out there. This is not storm chasing in the sense of running behind tornadoes, but it is as action packed and scary, if not more.

Drake Cruise Expeditions:
Silversea Expeditions,
Seabourn Quest

Storm Chasing Tour Operators

A few storm chasing tour operators are - Storm Chasing Adventure Tours; Weather Holidays; Silver Lining Tours; Extreme Tornado Tours; Cloud 9 Tours; PDS Storm Tours.

Storm Chasing Tips

- Storm chasing is dangerous. Avoid chasing alone. Take along an experienced chasing partner or join a tour group
- Be careful on the road, speeding resulting to accidents causes more deaths than the storm itself
- Do not get into the heart of the tornado or close to rotating wall clouds
- Be careful not to get struck by lightning
- Carry your cell-phone, weather alert





gadgets, video
cameras, tripods
and other
photography
equipment

**“Overall, it’s an
extremely safe hobby ...
unless you drive
straight into a tornado”**

That pretty much sums
up storm chasing! The
thrill sets your pulse
racing; the natural
spectacles are heart
stopping and the thirst
for catching up with yet
one more tornado is
never ending. That is the
reason so many people
who are neither

weathermen nor journalists or photographers are drawn to
this activity. Very few people actually earn a living out of
storm chasing. Most people are into it for fun, curiosity and
adventure, and there is an abundant supply of all three in
storm chasing. Just be responsible and follow the safety
measures.



Green Tourism

An Insight



Green Tourism is the buzz word for quite a few years now. Often interchanged with sustainable tourism and eco-tourism, it involves conserving the environment and the local community by adhering to a strict code of conduct and noteworthy guidelines. Plagued by the harrowing effects of global warming and environmental slaughter, no doubt sustainable business and industrial practices are the need of the day. The significance of the subject cannot be stressed enough and the present scenario screams loudly for intervention and damage control initiatives before it is too late.



Environment as the Scapegoat in the Progress of Civilisation

The environment has been the sacrificial lamb since ages in the steps towards advancement of mankind. The motivation behind taking up the cause of green tourism can be summarised as the increasing threat of potentially damaging effects as well as resurgence of moral standards that question the current onslaught. Unfortunately, most often, the allegiance to eco-tourism often oscillates between convenience and image building for organisations rather than real concern for the environment. Therefore only a sea-change in the general attitude can bring about the desired outcome as opposed to a flurry of fluctuating efforts that are easily engulfed without a trace in the real scheme of things.



Environmental Effects of Tourism

- The different facets of pollution which include air, land and noise pollution are by far the most atrocious contribution of tourism.
- Land resources like minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soil, forests, and wetlands continue to be eroded at a rollercoaster speed. The conservation initiatives are miniscule in comparison.
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) states activities like snorkelling, scuba diving, motor boating, yachting, fishing, sea food consumption, addition of plastic debris, deforestation, construction of artificial beaches etc. affect the environment adversely.



- The aviation industry that is intrinsically linked with tourism is responsible for accelerating carbon dioxide emissions and fuelling climatic change and global warming.
- The operations of the travel industry have led to depletion of the ozone layer that protects life on earth by absorbing the harmful ultraviolet rays.
- The loss of biodiversity and ecological balance are further accentuated by overuse of natural resources by the travel industry.
- Development of infrastructural facilities and recreational activities along with transfer of tourists exert pressure on the environment, local resources, raw materials, energy etc.
- Waste management is often neglected and few organisations adopt environment friendly initiatives while the majority concentrates on driving profits.



ECO TOURISM

Alarming Statistics – Threats to the Tourism Industry

- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) declares 97-98 per cent of climatic change is due to human activities.
- According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) tourism is responsible for about 5 per cent of global CO2 emissions and contributes to 4.6 per cent of global warming.
- The rapid changes in cloud cover, sea level, temperature, water vapour, ice caps, forest cover etc. spell prominent doom. The world is more prone to natural disasters like floods, hurricanes, drought, heat waves, earthquakes, wildfires, volcanoes along with widespread diseases.
- Melting of glaciers, polar ice and snow cover on the mountains deter winter tourism and associated recreational activities

like skiing, adventure sports, sledging, skating and so on. The rise in ocean level and the rapidly changing Arctic take the worries a step further.

- The Great Barrier Reef has reported coral bleaching for the last 20 years apart from threat to marine life and biodiversity.
- The accommodation sector leads to approximately 20 per cent of emissions from tourism as per UNWTO statistics.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Third Assessment Report and RFCs (five integrative reasons for concern) identifies the key impacts of global warming like added risk to unique ecosystems and cultures,



ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON
climate change



WMO



UNEP


especially species and systems with limited adaptive capacity; climate change related dangers from extreme events; effect on crop production, greater threat to disadvantaged people and communities and impact on biodiversity and the overall global economy.

- NASA findings show that the rise in global sea level is about 17 centimetres in the last century, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 per cent and glacial retreat has taken place in the Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rockies, Alaska and Africa.

Advantages of Green Tourism: Why should you change gears

- Raises concerns regarding ecological footprint
- Supports the local community and benefits the region
- Conserves the environment and addresses its pressing needs
- Designs a fulfilling experience for consumers and operators
- Brings about a much needed change
- Involves local residents and businesses helping them grow
- Reduces negative environmental and social impacts of tourism
- Curtails waste, increases efficiency and creates awareness



- 
- A glass globe is positioned on the left side of the page, resting on a mossy rock. The globe reflects the surrounding greenery. The background is a soft-focus image of a forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. A semi-transparent grey box on the right contains a list of benefits of ecotourism.
- Reduces congestion and pollution
 - Encourages responsible tourism and ethical practices
 - Fulfils corporate social responsibility
 - Promotes zero carbon footprint and carbon offset
 - Leads to recycling, reuse and prevents depletion of resources
 - Preserves the physical and cultural setting
 - A U.N. report states that ecotourism can boost the economy, create jobs, reduce poverty and save the environment



According to UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, “Advancing the sustainable agenda in tourism will allow the sector to strengthen its capacity to continue generating growth and creating jobs worldwide. The tourism sector can be a lead change agent in the transformation to the green economy.” He further stated, “Tourism can play a significant role in the preservation, conservation and

promotion of cultural and natural assets and this agreement further strengthens our capacity to integrate sustainable tourism principles with the protection of the world’s heritage.”

The tourism industry is known to share a love-hate relationship with the environment and waltz between both extremes. The negative impacts often overrun the positives. However the



dawn of green tourism promises a rewarding experience for travellers and a new page for the world at large. The famous words of Chief Seattle - "Take nothing but memories, leave nothing but footprints"- perfectly echo the sentiment of the green tourism movement and hope for a better future for the coming generations.



Five Safest Cities to Live in Asia



Safety features high on the list of majority of travellers as well as citizens in any part of the world. Our compilation of the five safest cities to live in Asia illustrates the various advantages and perks of residing in a place where laws and regulations guarantee a secured, hassle free life.

A well organised judicial system, efficient law enforcing bodies, an active police force and an overall ambience of peace go a long way to make a city a liveable one. The quality of life and tourism along with the happiness quotient of residents depend on the security that a town offers. The five safest cities to live in Asia score remarkably well on all these factors and some earn additional brownie points for their efficient transportation system, health care facilities and all round organisation.



The Gate Keepers of Peace and Harmony

Singapore

Singapore is one of the safest cities not just in Asia but in the whole world. A strict judicial system and efficient law enforcement agencies ensure no crime goes unpunished. The death penalty still exists and serious crimes are dealt with harshly. The good part is, single travellers especially women can roam around freely without being harassed. The statistics of murders, thefts and robberies are really low. The judiciary hands out swift, seamless justice and criminal laws are usually severe. Instances of pick-pocketing and shoplifting are also quite rare. The place itself is very clean and organised. It has earned a reputation for its civil justice system, anti-corruption policies and regulatory enforcement capabilities. All fundamental human rights are guaranteed and the readiness of the government to ensure safety is remarkable.





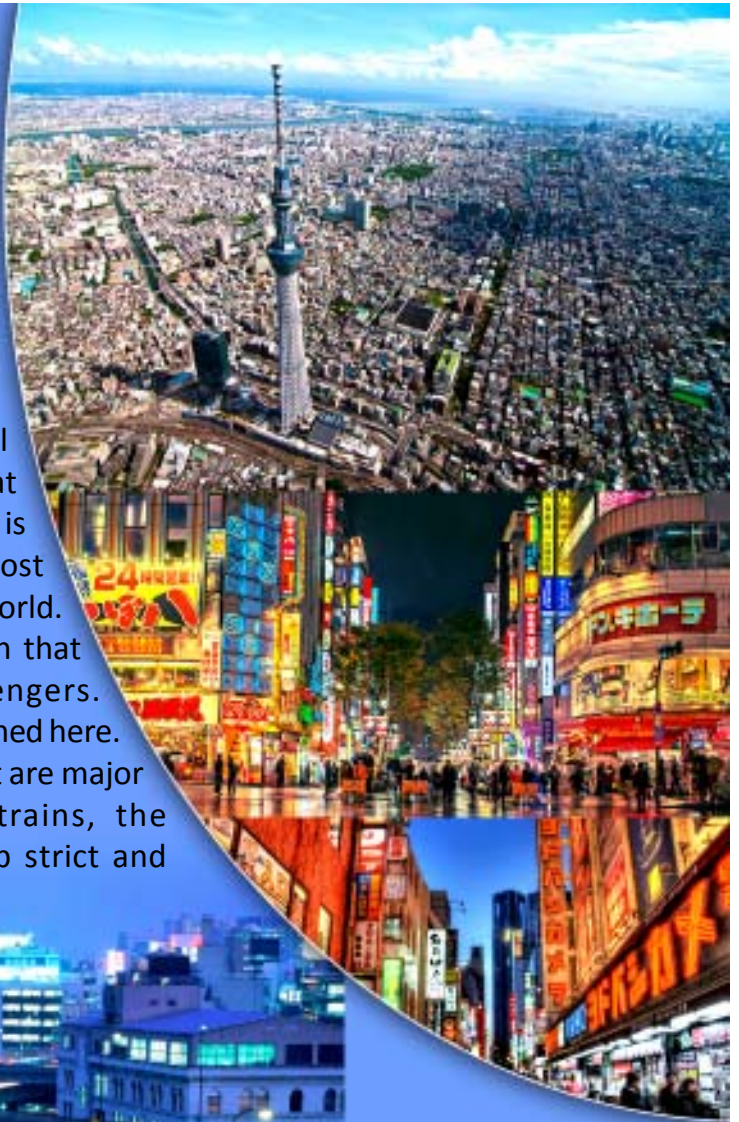
Hong Kong

Hong Kong ranks third among places with the lowest number of homicide as per the report submitted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2011. The intentional homicide rate is 0.2 per 100,000 people in the last 16 years. The Hong Kong police officials are cooperative, polite and strive to provide safety to both citizens and visitors. Regular patrols are commonplace and personal identification is often checked at public places. Traffic rules are quite strict and violent crimes are usually rare. Burglary and sexual assaults are relatively low, even less than that of Tokyo. Hong Kong has a traditional society that abides by its own customs and code of conduct.



Tokyo

Japan is known to be a very safe country and its capital is no different. The threat of being mugged, assaulted or robbed is relatively low. The policemen are quite active and take the necessary steps in case a crime has occurred. The civilians are believed to be law abiding, helpful and hospitable people. It is a great place to live, travel and explore though can be expensive at times. Its public transportation system is very efficient and it has one of the most extensive mass transit systems in the world. Most of the cabs have GPS navigation that ensures greater security for passengers. Majority of the stolen bicycles are returned here. Though groping and sexual harassment are major concerns especially in crowded trains, the authorities never hesitate to take up strict and



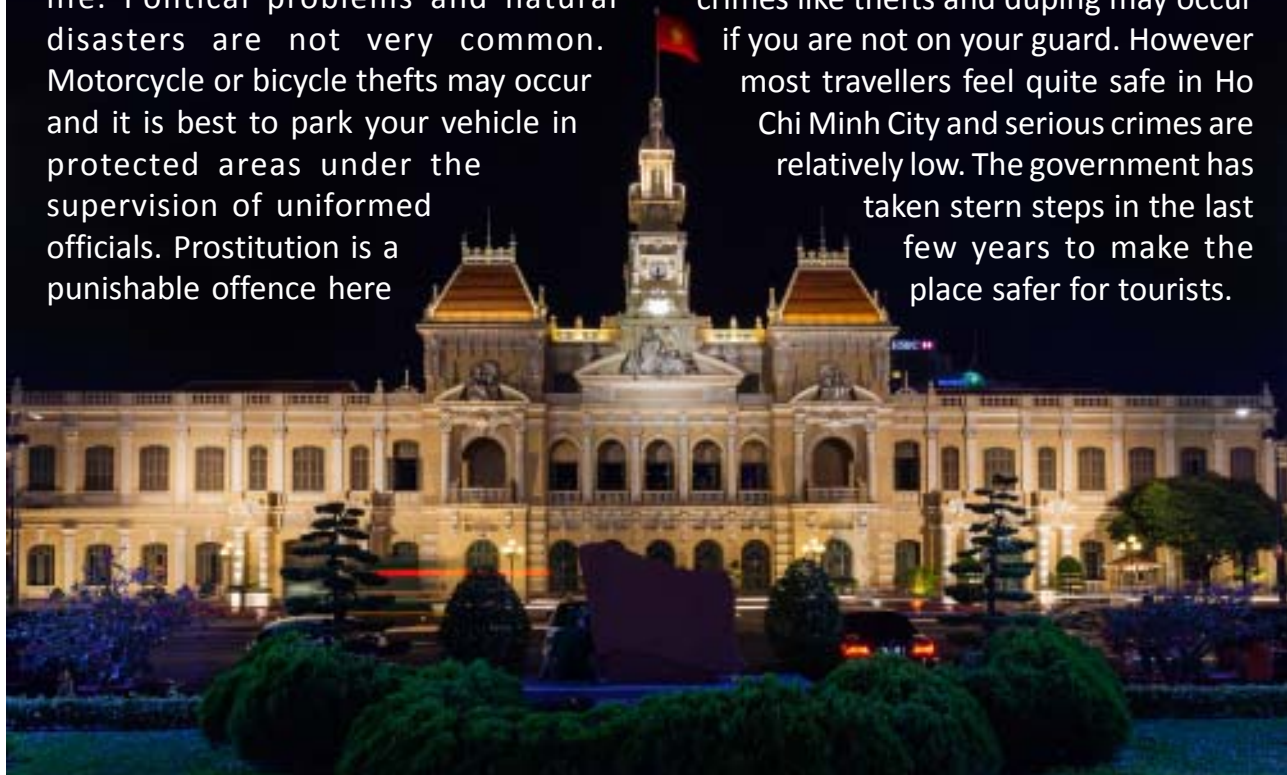
immediate action against the offenders. Ladies only subway coaches are available to address the problem and small police stations are located in every few blocks.



Ho Chi Minh City

People from different parts of the world come to live; study or work in Ho Chi Minh City, which makes it crowded no doubt but also speaks volumes about its quality of life. Political problems and natural disasters are not very common. Motorcycle or bicycle thefts may occur and it is best to park your vehicle in protected areas under the supervision of uniformed officials. Prostitution is a punishable offence here

and hotels often ask for identification proof. It is better to hire taxis from companies or those recommended by hotels if you are new to the city. Petty crimes like thefts and duping may occur if you are not on your guard. However most travellers feel quite safe in Ho Chi Minh City and serious crimes are relatively low. The government has taken stern steps in the last few years to make the place safer for tourists.



Seoul

Other than road safety or the lack of it, Seoul paints a pretty picture for citizens and vacationers. Traffic rules are often broken and the roads tend to be quite busy and chaotic. Speeding and road accidents are also other growing concerns but the troubles thankfully end there. It is a safe place to explore sometimes even late at night. Health and medical care are given adequate importance. Pick pockets are not that common compared to other places. A high level of hygiene is also diligently maintained throughout the city.





It has been established that citizens lead a stable, stress free and a comparatively content life when they feel secured. Economic stability, crime rates, weather conditions, risk of natural disasters, environmental hazards, road safety and prevalence of law and order are some of the determining factors. Travellers often strike off potential holiday locations from the list of places they are likely to visit if they feel threatened or ill at ease. As the government and tourism boards wake up to the increasing demand of providing safe and pleasant surroundings, tourists can raise a toast and look forward to many more viable destinations to explore in the near future.



June Festivals around the World

Happenings



Baby Jumping Festival

Place: Burgos, Spain

Dates: June 7, 2015

This annual festival will have you watching the proceedings with bated breath. New born babies less than a year old are lined up in groups on the ground. They lie on mattresses along a procession route along the village. Men disguised as the Devil or Colacho, dressed in the traditional red and yellow costumes,



leap over the babies. These devils carrying whips and truncheons are believed to be the personification of the Devil himself. The

jump symbolically cleanses the babies of the 'original sin' and protects them from the evil spirits and diseases.

Trivia: The Baby Jumping festival dates back to 1620!



The Dreaming

Place: Queensland, Australia

Dates: June 8 – 11, 2015

A part of the Woodford Folk Festival, The Dreaming is an international festival held in Queensland every year. It is a celebration of the indigenous culture, music, visual arts and even ancient healing techniques. The festival brings to the fore the culture of the local Jinibara people as well as the indigenous tribes across Australia and other

parts of the world. It is held in a beautiful valley outside Woodford. Festival goers often camp overnight and take full advantage of all the aspects of the festival including the various activities like story-telling, traditional rituals, music and dance.

Trivia: The term 'Dreaming', roughly translated, means an embodiment of creation and also places and localities in indigenous Australian tradition where the spirits reside.





Feast of St Anthony

Place: Lisbon, Portugal

Dates: June 13, 2015

The patron saint of Lisbon, St Anthony receives a 'fishy' adulation every year on his birthday! The feast day of the saint is marked by joyous celebration in which sardine snacking plays a central role. The revelry starts a day before the actual feast day on the 13th and extends over three days. The city explodes into a riot of parades, feasting, singing, dancing, drinking and gorging on grilled sardines. It is popular to hold weddings on this day as the saint is also believed to be a matchmaker saint. There are many quaint customs and rituals followed by single girls looking for a life partner.

Trivia: The tradition of St Anthony's Bread is a popular one. People write their prayers on bread rolls and garland and framing on the saint's image!





Regatta of St Ranieri

Place: Pisa, Italy

Dates: June 17, 2015

The citizens of Pisa honour their patron saint with a famous Regatta or boat race. The scene of action is the River Arno. The four districts of the city are represented by the

four different coloured rowboats which participate in the race. The goal is to grab the sacred palio (banner) which is atop a 10 m pole on a boat at the finish line. An ox or a rooster goes to the winner while goslings and abuses fall to the lot of the losers.

Trivia: Do not miss the beautiful Luminara or fireworks held on the eve of the feast day!





Pride Week

Place: New York, USA

Dates: June 19 – 27, 2015

Every year, New York is witness to the Gay Pride March, which passes along the Fifth Avenue culminating at the Greenwich Village. An important landmark which the parade passes is the Stonewall Inn, which saw a police raid in 1969 and marked the starting point of the modern Gay Rights Movement. There is plenty of visual dazzle at the parade with outlandish costumes, feather boas, skin hugging leather costumes and participants on motorbikes and colourful floats. The Pride Week is the largest event of its kind in the world. There are myriad events and over 250,000 participants.

Cheering spectators add to the excitement. The event is a declaration of the gay community's pride in itself and its way of life.

Trivia: The Dance on the Pier provides the grand finale to the festival with top city DJs and performers being part of the fun event!



Glastonbury Festival

Place: Pilton, England

Dates: June 24 – 28, 2015

First held in 1970, The Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts has evolved from an audience of 1500 hippies to 150,000 people. Today this annual festival is the largest green field open air event of its kind in the world. Music is the main theme of the festival but the other arts like dance, theatre, comedy and circus are also a part of the events. The venues include the Pyramid, Dance Village and Jazzworld as well as smaller stages in other locations. Various film screenings are also held. People also flock to the healing fields offering massages and relaxing music. For kids, there is the ever popular Kidz Field. Camping and pitching tents are popular with the festival goers.

Trivia: The festival site is often turned to a slushy, mud-bath venue due to the heavy rainfalls which occur at this time!





Boi Bumba

Place: Parintins, Brazil

Dates: June 26 – 29, 2015

Literally meaning 'Beat the Ox', the Boi Bumba festival is one of the top cultural events of Brazil. The central story consists of a man who

kills a bull for satisfying his pregnant wife's cravings for beef tongue. Faced with prison, the man is saved however, by a shaman whose rituals bring the bull back to life. As a result there was a celebratory

street procession which has evolved into the fantastic folk festival that it is today. This basic tale has several versions. Dazzling theatrical shows with music, drumming, fabulous costumes and a giant puppet show are all woven around this folk tale. The two rival teams of Garantido and Caprichoso outdo each other in putting up spectacular presentations of the story for three nights. Feasting, drinking and merry making follows the shows. The whole event is marked by passion, vibrant colours and amazing music and dance.

Trivia: The colours of the two teams – red for Garantido and blue for Caprichoso are splashed across the entire town, splitting it into two according to the chosen favourites!





World Luxury Tourism