

AFTER MUCH SPIRITED DISCUSSION, countless days on the road, and plenty of nights sleeping around the West, we're excited to share the hotels, landmarks, gear, and travel trends that have made our year. Use this highly subjective list to help plan your next getaway—and the next and the next. There's plenty for the picking.



TRAVEL

2017

67 REASONS TO EXPLORE THE WEST NOW

STARS



GIRLS' WEEKEND

REI OUTESSA

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Maybe the outdoors is already your soul space. Maybe you just suspect it could be. Either way, REI Outessa retreats are a great way to get out there. These women-only nature retreats lead you through hiking, paddleboarding, yoga, and more, teaching outdoors skills minus the mansplaining. The three-day weekend in Mt. Hood, for example, includes all gear and instruction; lodging that ranges from camping to comfy resorts; generous meals; and s'mores, of course. *From \$799; outessa.com.*



NEW APRÈS-SKI LODGE

LIMELIGHT HOTEL

KETCHUM, ID

The Limelight Hotel is the first hip night's stay to open in Ketchum since John and Jackie Kennedy lent their glamour to Sun Valley's ski slopes. The December



Kid & Coe's family-friendly Hollyridge Residence in the Hollywood Hills. *From \$1,090; kidandcoe.com.*

launch of this 99-room boutique property kicked off a party that hasn't abated: The spacious, modern lounge draws everyone from locals to trout bums to vacationing families, thanks to its mix of shuffleboard, live music, bargain-priced food, and Sawtooth's locally brewed Idahome IPA. *From \$240; limelighthotels.com/ketchum.*



PICNIC PACK

DAKINE PARTY PACK

That wicker basket sure looks sweet...until you try to carry your feast in it for more than a few yards.

Dakine Party Pack makes longer hauls a whole lot easier by transferring the load to your back. Based in Hood River, Oregon—where wine and cheese qualify as essential food groups—the company has made a bag with a main compartment big enough to fit snacks for a herd, plus a soft-sided cooler, three koozies, and a picnic blanket clipped to the exterior. \$70; *dakine.com.*



FISHERMAN'S RESORT

THE RANCH AT ROCK CREEK
PHILIPSBURG, MT

Just outside the canvas cabins of The Ranch at Rock Creek flows the all-inclusive resort's star amenity: the namesake stream, nationally designated a Blue Ribbon fishery for its pureness and sustainability. The waters are packed to the gills with six species of wild-born trout, as well as Rocky Mountain whitefish, while moose and eagles look on from the ponderosa- and Douglas fir-lined banks. To keep numbers healthy,



FAR LEFT: JEFFERY CROSS; BOTTOM RIGHT: THOMAS J. STORY

IRENE EDWARDS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



It wasn't my proudest moment as a parent, but there I was, eating room service on the toilet so my kids (then mere babes) could sleep in my hotel room. Since then, I've turned to family rentals listed on **Kid & Coe** (*kidandco.com*), and after scoring a series of well-designed homes equipped with toys and a crib, I can safely say you won't find me hiding in the bathroom

again. Instead, I eat like a grown-up food lover—even while on spring break in Disneyland. After a big day of rides and churros, I drove my husband and kids 15 minutes to **Anaheim Packing House** (*anaheimpackingdistrict.com*), a gourmet food hall with suspended air plants and stalls that range from Vietnamese to Mexican. To keep the vacation vibes going at home, we hung a **TreePod** (\$325; *mytreepod.com*) tent in the yard. Sometimes I catch the kids playing “camping trip” here. And that's certainly something to be proud of.

EDITOR PICK

CAMP PROVISIONS

SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS IN STYLE AND COMFORT

GLAMPSITE

Yellowstone National Park's sleeping arrangements in Montana sure have gotten swankier. At Collective Yellowstone's new luxe camp in Big Sky's Moonlight Basin, tents come with king-size beds and cozy woodstoves. Wake up to French press coffee and pastries delivered to your deck. From \$500; collectivetretrats.com.

BASE CAMP

The peak-ringed town of Estes Park, Colorado, on the eastern side of Rocky Mountain National Park, is ringing in its 100th anniversary. It's an excellent excuse to pitch a tent in quiet Aspenglen, a 54-site campground, then hit up one of the birthday concerts in town. From \$26; nps.gov/romo.

CALL OF WINE

Bunk in a vintage trailer and wake up amid the grapevines on the organic Alta Colina Vineyard in Paso Robles, California. The Trailer Pond campground also has a pond-side dock, lots of hiking, and an included tasting of Syrahs and Grenache Blanc. From \$175; thetrailerpond.com.

CAR CAMP MAKEOVER

The one-of-a-kind Lava Flow Campground in Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve, Idaho, has a weird, wild landscape—and this summer it reopened after a yearlong renovation (now with more pull-through RV options). From \$15; nps.gov/crmo.

HANGOUT SPOT

Hammock tents are huge this summer—perfect for wet or uneven terrain. REI's lightweight Quarter Dome Air Hammock features a bug canopy, rainfly, and structured platform bottom for a comfy night's sleep. \$219; rei.com.

WELL CHILLED

Hydro Flask's stainless steel, double-wall insulated wine bottle swallows an entire 750-ml. bottle of your favorite wine, keeping it well chilled for hours without taking up space in a cooler. \$38; hydroflask.com.

HAT WITH A HEART

Twenty percent of each Headsweats trucker-cap sale goes to the National Park Foundation. Choose from colorful prints inspired by Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, or Yosemite. \$26; headsweats.com.

TRAIL SNACK

Gluten- and soy-free, clean-eating Frontier Bites max out at eight ingredients (such as nuts, fruits, organic honey) and come in tasty flavors like pecan cherry cinnamon. They're the next best thing to homemade goodness. \$5/3.5-oz; frontierbites.com.

FIRESIDE JAVA

Whip up a cup of butter coffee without all the gear—just squeeze one of Know Brainer creamer's single-serving packets of grass-fed, non-GMO butter oil into your morning cup. \$18/9 servings; myknowbrainer.com.



Clockwise from top: Quarter Dome Air Hammock; Hydro Flask; Alta Colina Vineyard's Trailer Pond campground; Headsweats' trucker hat; Collective Yellowstone glamping tent.



HYDROFLASK: WHERE'S MY OFFICE NOW? (@WHERE'SMYOFFICENOW)

fishing here (on your own or with a guide) is catch-and-release, but you can request lunch on your trip: When hunger strikes, the resort's chef will be waiting ashore with an organic campfire meal. *From \$1,300; theranchatrockcreek.com.*



▼ TICKET TO RIDE

HALA GEAR RADITO
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO

Using Colorado's Yampa River as his laboratory, avid paddleboarder Peter Hall designed an inflatable board that's also legit on the water. For travel, the board folds down into a roller-bag that can also be carried like a backpack. Inflated, the 10-foot-long Radito is so rigid, it punches and rises through the water like a hardboard, making it ideal for whitewater expeditions and overnight trips. Rigging points make it easy to lash on a cooler, a swallowtail lets you make last-minute maneuvers, and a veneer of re-inforced PVC makes the board nearly ironclad—in fact, Hala offers a three-year warranty, something that's unheard-of in the sport. *\$1,299; halagear.com.*

▼ JET-SETTER'S COMPANION

LILOU THE PIG
SAN FRANCISCO

Flying is stressful, but at San Francisco International Airport, the frazzled can unwind with an unlikely friend: LiLou, the world's first airport therapy pig. A piano-playing, tutu-wearing Instagram star ([@lilou_sf_pig](https://www.instagram.com/lilou_sf_pig)) trained by owner Tatyana Danilova and certified by the SPCA, the Juliana spotted swine struts through the terminals—her favorite is the carpeted Terminal 3 (it's less slippery)—looking for anyone who wants to say hi or have the ultimate meet-cute story to tell a seatmate later.

▼ DINNER DIVE

LITTLE RIVER INN
MENDOCINO, CA

The French may do escargot, but in Mendocino, they prefer snails that come from the sea. Abalone is a delicacy, and there are a lot of rules that aim to protect the population, which makes free diving for the mollusks out of reach for most people. But during three days at the end of each June, the Little River Inn offers an Abalone Camp. An expert guide will teach you how to plunge headfirst into the surging waters down to plump,

briny-sweet wild California red abalone. One pop to pry it off the rock, and up you go with your prize. Back at the hotel, you'll learn how to clean and cook your catch, then feast on it. Afterward, an ocean-view fireplace room awaits. *From \$575; littleriverinn.com.*

▼ SMARTER SUITCASE

RADEN

In chic colors ranging from hunter green to light pink, Raden suitcases were designed to stand out on the carousel. But it's the built-in extras that are guaranteed to win over seasoned travelers: Two USB ports for juicing up devices en route, a scale to make sure you don't get dinged for excess weight, and—best of all—Bluetooth technology that allows you to track the case's every move via an app on your phone. That's right: no more lost luggage. *From \$295; raden.com.*



▼ NATURE'S GREATEST DEAL

CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS
MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

How would you celebrate your 150th birthday? If you're Canada, you invite the entire world to your party by swinging open the doors to your national parks. For 2017, the country's making its annual Discovery Pass (normally \$68) free, giving visitors admission to all of the country's 40-plus parks for the calendar year, including 12 Western sites. Visit Vancouver Island's Pacific Rim for sandy beaches, year-round surfing, and a hiking trail originally forged by shipwrecked sailors; or hit north coast Gwaii Haanas for remote campsites, bald eagles, and ocean sightings of whales and dolphins. pc.gc.ca.

▼ PREFLIGHT MEAL

FLORA'S FIELD KITCHEN
SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO, MEXICO

Down a mostly paved road 20 minutes outside the Los Cabos International Airport lies an unexpected oasis: Flora's Field Kitchen. Here chef Guillermo Tellez, who has worked with Charlie Trotter, serves farm-to-table fare along with a few



Not-so-basic cocktails are served just a few minutes outside the Los Cabos airport, at Flora's Field Kitchen.

crowd-pleasers like Margherita pizza. Everything is grown or raised on the restaurant's 25-acre organic farm, dotted with a cluster of "culinary cottages" and a play structure where kids can burn some energy before boarding. facebook.com/flora.farm.cabo.



ON-THE-RISE WINE REGION

COLUMBIA GORGE
WASHINGTON AND OREGON

You're all about The Find—Grüner Veltliner? Bring it on. Cabernet? Absolutely. On your next wine weekend



in the Northwest, you don't have to choose. Heck, you don't even have to stay put in one state. The Columbia Gorge AVA, spanning its namesake river for 40 miles starting 45 minutes east of Portland and continuing through to Goldendale, Washington, has it all. Running through the Cascade Range, the youngish wine region (officially established

in 2004) comprises cool mountainous vineyards excellent for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, as well as warm, dry, desert-influenced vines that grow intense Rhônes. The laid-back tasting rooms along the river offer stealth quality, giving counterparts in the rest of the Northwest a run for their money. Get here before the crowds find out.



VINTAGE-TRAILER PARK

CARAVAN OUTPOST
OJAI, CA

You love the idea of a throwback home on wheels,

MARGO TRUE

FOOD EDITOR



I suppose it's no surprise that my favorite way to explore a place is by eating my way through it. And this has been one delicious year: In the fall, I visited the **Santa Fe Farmers' Market** (santafefarmersmarket.com), which comes alive with fresh and roasted chiles grown in the area (they also made for an edible souvenir). Closer to home, I splurged on the ultimate wine-country

meal at Healdsburg, California's **SingleThread** farm-to-table restaurant and inn (*from \$700/night; singlethreadfarms.com*). Each bite of chef Kyle Connaughton's *kaiseki*-style menu honors the vegetables raised on his and wife Katina's nearby farm and surrounding nature. And in Vancouver, I came across a food-lover's playground on **Granville Island** (granvilleisland.com). This strip of land offers more than 50 food stalls, small-batch *sake*, microbrews, and the best fish and chips I've ever had in Vancouver. It's one island I'd be happy to be stranded on.

EDITOR PICK

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY, JEFFERY CROSS, THOMAS J. STORY

GETTING AROUND

THE BEST NEW LINES, HUBS, AND GEAR TO HELP YOU ENJOY THE RIDE AS YOU NAVIGATE THE WEST



From top: AllBirds take-them-everywhere shoes; the scenic route via Rail Canada.

HAPPY HOOFING

Think of the San Francisco-based AllBirds as the unicorn of shoes. Made with natural resources like merino wool, they're light but durable, breathable, odor-resistant, and moisture-wicking—which you'll be especially grateful for after a day of sightseeing. \$95; allbirds.com.

LANDING PAD

The concourse at Long Beach Airport in Southern California looks more like a seaside resort than a commercial terminal,

thanks to an \$89 million facelift. Breezy security lines and nonstop flights to domestic destinations like Sacramento and Fort Lauderdale are nice perks, but the live music and food trucks may make you miss your flight. lgb.org.

CITY CYCLE

Ranked as one of the top mountain-biking towns in the country, Santa Fe boasts 230 trails—and growing—covering more than 145 miles. For the best view, shuttle up to Winsor Trail and then cruise 10 miles down to the base. santafe.org.

LEISURE LAYOVER

Dinner-and-a-show has never been an airport pastime, but leave it to Portland to change that. The dining court at PDX serves Blue Star Donuts and House Spirits Distillery libations; follow up with a show at Concourse C's free Hollywood Theatre, which shows short indie films by Oregon filmmakers. flypdx.com.

FERRY CRUISE

Alaska's rugged coastline is rewarding but tricky to navigate by car, which is why we suggest the Alaska Marine Highway System, a network of ferry routes through the Inside Passage from Bellingham to Yakutat. Instead of watching the road,

you can take in all the eye candy—glaciers, whales, bears, otters, and eagles—Alaska is legendary for. From \$532; dot.state.ak.us/amhs.

DRIVE-BY CULTURE

Denver's finest art collection isn't in a museum but rather in a series of rail stations and bus stops. Taking public transit through the 45-plus commissioned murals, mosaics, sculptures, and towering installations might just be the best case ever for taking the bus. rtd-denver.com.

OVERNIGHT TRAIN

Via Rail Canada's Vancouver-Edmonton line winds through British Columbia's passes for a mountaineer's-eye view of the Rockies—but without the schlep. Admire river canyons, waterfalls, and wildlife from the crystal-clear second-story Skyline Dome Car, then feast on local Canadian lake trout in the gilded vintage dining car. From \$169; viarail.ca.

RUBBERNECKING ROUTE

Towering tiki head, life-size dinosaurs, desert landscapes—when it comes to roadside attractions, Arizona's Route 66 is king. New to the mix is a crashed space capsule by Scottsdale artist Jack Milard in a farm field next to Interstate 10.

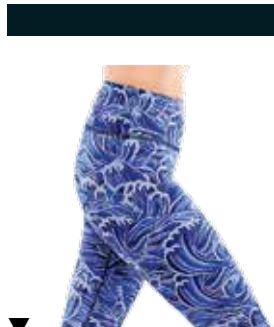
but towing just isn't your thing. The parked trailers at Caravan Outpost let you live the dream, at least for a night. Perched in the Topatopa Mountains, 11 gleaming Airstreams are kitted out with handwoven textiles reminiscent of a modern-day bedouin lifestyle. At night, in a palm-studded grove strung with lights, guests gather around the fire to swap stories and play music. *From \$180; caravanoutpost.com.*



▼ BREWS CRUISE

BREWCYCLE
PORTLAND

It doesn't get more Portland than craft beers and bicycles, which get the two-for-one treatment on BrewCycle's massive 15-seat bike-and-pedal tour. With three routes ranging from 1.5 to 3.5 miles, you can explore a new part of the city or hit breweries, like Lucky Labrador Brewing Co., BridgePort Brewing, and Lompoc. While there's no drinking onboard, music piped in over the bike's speakers will help you push through hills and any rain showers (this is the Northwest, after all). *brewgroupdpdx.com.*



▼ PACK LIGHT PANTS

OKIINO

The secret to minimalist carry-ons? Clothes that do double duty—or quadruple duty in the case of Okiino's leggings. Sure, they're quick-drying, durable, and offer UV protection, but they're also downright fashionable, meaning they can go from an eight-hour flight to yoga or kayaking to an elegant dinner. If you can spare the room, it might just be worth it to throw in one of their artist-created patterns for a colorful twist. *From \$98; okiino.com.*

▼ READERS' CHOICE

BRIDGE TO HALEAKALA
MAUI, HI

Every day, *Sunset* readers inspire us with their letters, tweets, Facebook posts, and Instagrams pointing us in the direction of the West's best hidden gems. When we asked you to share your all-time favorites online for this

story, Maui's Haleakala National Park emerged as the clear winner. Spanning more than 30,000 acres, the park is home to everything from the dormant Haleakala Volcano and lava tubes to freshwater pools and waterfalls. Your photo tip: Snap a selfie on the bridge leading into Haleakala's bamboo forest.

▼ VIRTUAL ITINERARY

GOOGLE TRIPS

You made all the hotel and dinner reservations two months ago, booked the flights, and Googled enough attractions to keep your upcoming trip action-packed. Instead of digging through your email inbox for details of your trip, you can keep everything in one place with Google Trips. The free app not only gathers your flight and plans from your email, but also adds curated lists of spots to visit based on your search data. From there, a



single click turns everything into an itinerary and map that can be saved on- or offline—because you never know when you'll find yourself in a Wi-Fi dead zone.

▼ WELLNESS HIGHWAY

HOT SPRINGS LOOP
WESTERN COLORADO

There's something wondrous about driving through the Centennial State: Just as you start achieving from hours behind the wheel, your road trip morphs into a spa vacation. A 720-mile trek takes you past 19 different soaks, ranging from the world's largest mineral hot-springs pool and geothermic vapor caves in Glenwood Springs to intimate and rustic natural steam baths in Chaffee County. Start your journey in Denver and make your way northwest to Steamboat Springs for a spring-fed plunge after a day of hiking. Then head south on the loop to a naturally occurring underground steam bath in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Continue south to Ouray to poach amid canyon scenery, and make your way southeast to Pagosa Springs to explore the world's deepest geothermal aquifer in the San Juan Mountains, surrounded by 3 million acres of wilderness. Colorado, take us away! *colorado.com/hotspringsloop.*

▼ OFF-GRID LUXURY

CAMP CECIL

ESPIRITU SANTO, MEXICO

South of the border, luxury isn't relegated to just the resorts. At the new Camp Cecil, on the UNESCO-protected island of Espíritu Santo in Baja, white canvas tents with cushy beds, teak lanterns, and rattan sofas in the sand are the kind of hide-away you could get used to. Naturalist guides take you kayaking around bird colonies, SUPing over translucent waves, bouldering up sculpted arroyos, and swimming with sea lion pups. Ivan, the camp's Italian chef, lays out three miraculously fresh meals a day, plus happy hour. *From \$275; tosea.net.*

▼ NATURAL WONDER

KANARRAVILLE FALLS

KANARRAVILLE, UT

Vermilion. Rose. Amber. At least a half-dozen colors play along the contoured walls of the Kanarra Creek slot canyon as you make your way to Utah's Kanarraville Falls, a roughly 5-mile round-trip. August temperatures in the 90s make the family-friendly water hike even more refreshing, yet the prize is not one but two waterfalls—plus a natural



Kanarrville Falls is a gateway for newbie adventurers who want to dip their toes into Utah's breathtaking scenery.

waterslide for the win. There, in red rock country just beyond Zion National Park's northernmost boundary, you can soak in the gush of the falls and take turns zipping down a smooth section of rock (about the length of a playground slide) that dunks you into the pool just below. *visit cedarcity.com.*



SOUTHWEST PUB CRAWL

FLAGSTAFF

For tourists who go out for a drink, it's sometimes one or two and done before heading back to the hotel. But this downtown's 60-plus

watering holes beg you to make a night of it. Slake your thirst with a pub crawl through the walkable bar scene, starting at Mother Road Brewery, where citrusy Tower Station IPA is one of eight-plus craft beers always on offer. The taproom puts you within inches of tuns and tanks and is housed in a 1920s commercial laundry building. Walk a few blocks to



The Annex, a dark, cozy lounge with a patio tucked into a handball court, built in 1926 by Basque shepherds. Bartenders mix old-school cocktails like Manhattans and shandies, or ask for a Founding Father (muddled cherries, Jefferson bourbon, and bitters, topped with a puff of pipe tobacco smoke). Finish with a tawny port nightcap at FLG Terroir, a second-story wine bistro that spotlights boutique Euro wineries. Exposed brick walls and wooden beams speak of the building's 1913 provenance. The bistro's sherry- and port-spiked ice creams speak to your sweet tooth. *motherroadbeer.com; tinderboxkitchen.com/annex; flgterroir.com.*

CHANTAL LAMERS

HOME EDITOR



Okay, I admit it, I'm a bit of a homebody. So when I travel, I'm always seeking out creature comforts. To start, I pack a snug blanket like a recycled cotton **Seek & Swoon's Baby Anywhere Throw** (\$80; *seekandswoon.com*), designed in Portland and compact enough to bring on a plane for napping. For planning group trips or events, I love **The Venue Report**

(*thevenuereport.com*), a site that curates stunning hotels, restaurants, and event venues (I've got my eye on a ranch in Hawaii and a colorful poolside pad in Phoenix). But for me, a dreamy getaway can also be just a quick trip to the urban bathhouse and Japanese-inspired restaurant **Onsen** (*onsensf.com*) in San Francisco. The owners spent three years converting a greasy car-repair shop into a light-filled escape full of vintage Japanese wooden tchotchkes and found artwork. It's a space so beautiful, I almost wish I could live there.

EDITOR PICK

THE CLASSICS

MARVELS TO DELIGHT AND INSPIRE—WHETHER IT'S
YOUR FIRST, TENTH, OR HUNDREDTH VISIT

National Park Lodge

From the outside, the Old Faithful Inn looms as shaggy and massive as the bison that roam in Yellowstone National Park. Inside, you'll gape at the lobby anchored by a 500-ton stone fireplace: It's the treehouse of your dreams, or maybe Hogwarts magically transported to the Wyoming frontier. *From \$119; yellowstonenationalparklodges.com.*

Hotel Lobby Bar

No stay shimmers with Old Hollywood glamour more than The Hollywood Roosevelt. As for the Library Bar, it's everything you want in a hideaway, where you can design your own cocktails in a noirish setting made for plotting a movie deal or an affair. *thehollywoodroosevelt.com.*

Coastal Resort

A multimillion-dollar renovation gave the Timber Cove in Jenner, California, the mod elegance it had when it first opened in 1963. The A-frame lobby and the Crosley LP record players in the guest rooms make for the most chic boho stay imaginable. *From \$250; timbercoveresort.com.*

Tour Guide

Idaho has more miles of white-water rivers than any other state in the country. And the person you want guiding you down them is Peter Grubb of Coeur d'Alene-based ROW Adventures. Whatever the trip, Grubb makes you feel like family, which makes sense since his wife, Betsy, and their children are also river guides. *From \$795; rowadventures.com.*

Urban Destination

Beyond the sun, surf, and beaches, San Diego has an action-packed urban core. Downtown shines with new skyscrapers, and the adjacent Gaslamp Quarter has a historic vibe that

mixes well with hipster restaurants and hotels. To the south, mural-rich Chicano Park was just named a National Historic Landmark. And by the airport, Liberty Station's former navy buildings now house restaurants, a public market, and shops. *sandiego.org.*

Mountain Retreat

Dunton Hot Springs in southwest Colorado is more like a frontier town, with historic cabins beautifully restored to provide the most luxurious retreat imaginable. Amenities include a first-rate spa, superb food, and world-class fishing and horseback riding. *From \$900; duntonhotsprings.com.*

National Monument

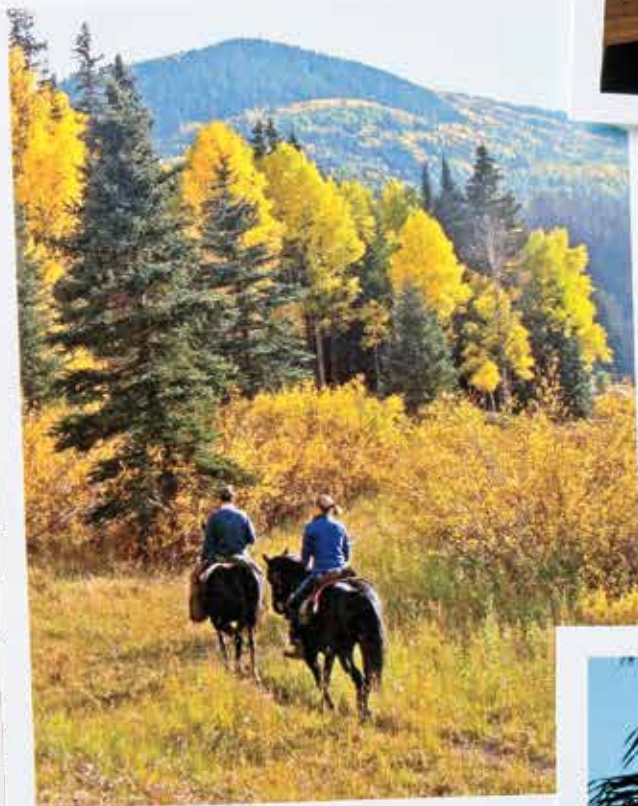
Wyoming's Devils Tower is one amazing sight: an 867-foot-high plug of igneous rock, rising above ponderosa pines. The Tower is venerated by the Cheyenne, Lakota, and Crow peoples. Odds are good that once you visit, you'll venerate it too. *nps.gov/deto.*

Amusement Park

Denver's beloved Elitch Gardens is a wooden roller-coaster aficionado's favorite: 10-story-high Twister II; the new-this-year 17-story Star Flyer; a charming 83-year-old carousel; and plenty of water rides to cool you off. And because this is Colorado, there's a beer garden with 12 local brews on tap. *elitchgardens.com.*

Las Vegas Casino

Of all of Sin City's luxury hotels, the Wynn best channels the Rat Pack past while updating it for 2017. Guest rooms are plush, not garish. The best of the food is American ritzy: serious beef at SW Steakhouse (overlooking the Lake of Dreams, with its nightly light show). *From \$189; wynnlasvegas.com.*





Clockwise from top: Timber Cove; Elitch Gardens; The Hollywood Roosevelt; Old Faithful Inn; Dunton Hot Springs.

OLD FAITHFUL: JOHN ELK III/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; FAR RIGHT: EVELILLA/GETTY IMAGES

▼ INSTA-MEMENTO

POSTAGRAM

Vacation's almost over, and you've forgotten to buy that postcard Mom's expecting. (Why she doesn't just follow you on Instagram, you'll never know.) Enter Postagram, a mobile app that creates a physical postcard from the photos in your feed. You could be boarding the plane and still have a few minutes to choose a photo, customize the card background, and ship it for \$2. Or do one better and snap a selfie in front of that iconic landmark—that'll really make Mom's day. *sincerely.com/postagram*.

▼ RAINY-DAY SPA TREATMENT

NAPA VALLEY SOLAGE SPA
CALISTOGA, CA

This winter saw Calistoga's wine country flooded with some unexpected—and much-needed—storms that didn't exactly encourage tasting-room tours. In response to guests just wanting to stay cozy, Solage's indoor-outdoor spa added Hot Toddy for the Body (from \$125) to its menu: a mud application followed by 20 minutes in a claw-foot tub filled with warm mineral

water (and a tea-based cocktail in hand!). The tub faces a garden-view window, allowing you to watch the downpour while you get your buzz on. *Dec-Mar; aubergeresorts.com*.



FIELD OF DREAMS

FARM CAMPING

Sleeping outside used to mean pitching a tent wherever the crowds parted ways and forgoing fresh vegetables and fruit until you got back home. This year, though, small farms around the West started opening up their orchards to summertime campers, allowing them to eat whatever they pick during their stay. Activities often include farm tours and sing-alongs around a fire (usually a safe distance from crops). For example, Capay Organic in Northern California is open to campers during farm-held festivals (*next one Sep 16*) featuring live music, a petting zoo, and a box of produce to take home with you. *Camping from \$35, festival from \$15; farmfresh toyou.com/events*.



▼ RESORT-LESS LAND

WEST MARIN, CA

Northern California is best known for its transcendent beaches and hiking trails, but it's also home to thousands of protected acres of farmland, much of it thanks to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT). In many ways, the organization is the reason why there are so many open spaces in this rural corner of Marin County—and why the area hasn't been colonized by mega hotels. To raise awareness and introduce visitors to West Marin's ranchers and farmers, MALT arranges day trips of all kinds throughout the year: How about a hike followed by locally produced ice cream or a barn dance serving organic beef at family-run Stemple Creek Ranch? It's a tasty way to explore a place and help preserve it at the same time. *malt.org*.



LA-LA LAND HIKE

BACKBONE TRAIL
SANTA MONICA

It took more than 40 years to complete, but the new 67-mile Backbone Trail was worth the wait. The

unbroken footpath across the Santa Monica Mountains' wild outback lets you wander from Malibu to Pacific Palisades, passing through sycamore groves, hidden waterfalls, rock outcrops, and historic movie locations along the way. It tops out at 3,111-foot Sandstone Peak, offering vistas that make L.A. realtors weak at the knees—a wide expanse of island-dotted Pacific and a sweep of downtown's jagged skyline, plus Mt. Baldy guarding the Inland Empire. Start at one of 12 trailheads for a quick stroll or backpack for a week. There are only five campgrounds along the route, but no worries. This is L.A., and Lyft can whisk you away at a moment's notice. *nps.gov/samo*.

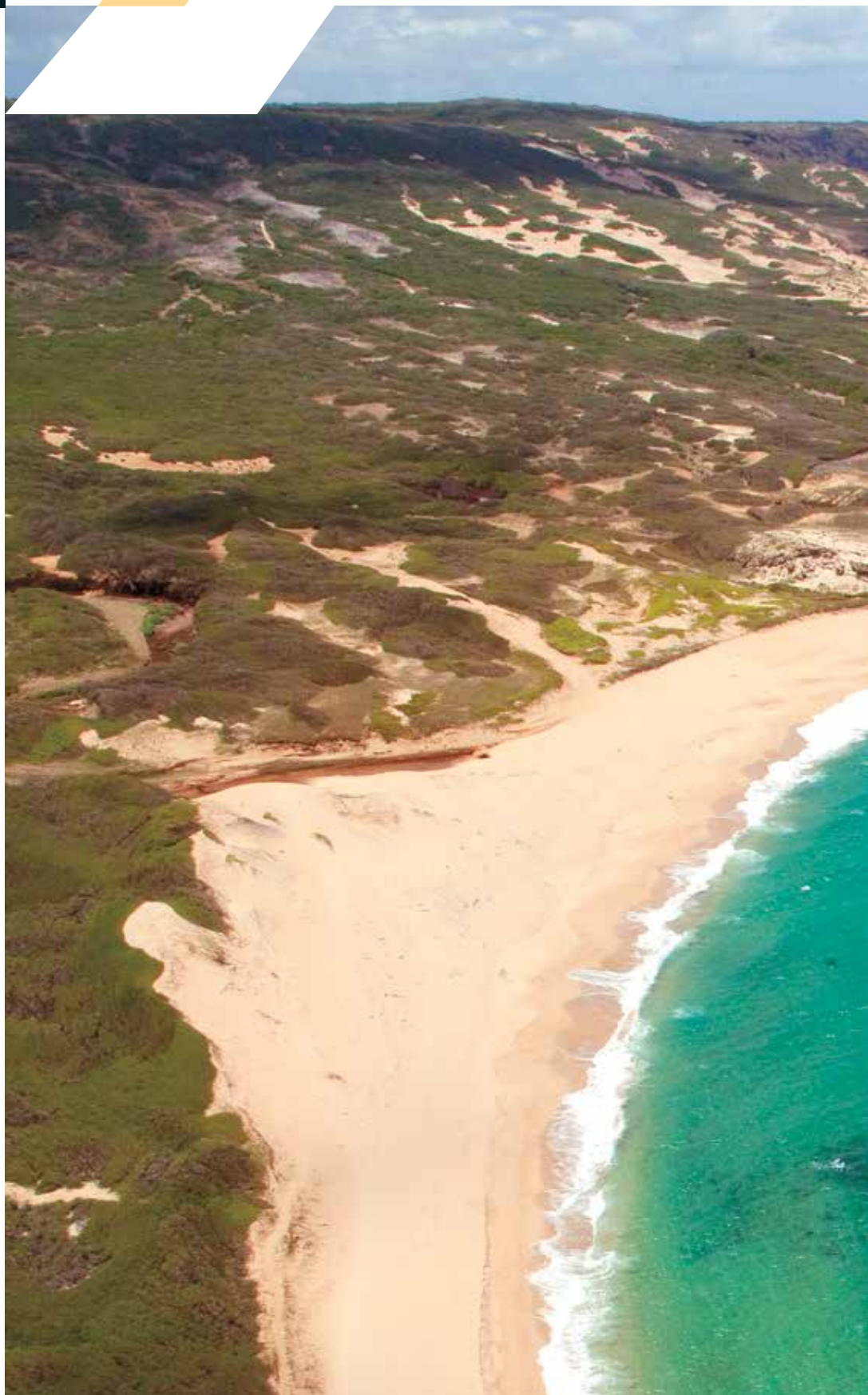


DO-GOOD VACATION

MOLOKAI LAND TRUST

MOLOKAI, HI

Get in some beach time, and do right by the planet while you're at it. Molokai Land Trust in Hawaii invites visitors to volunteer and help restore the island's native flora across thousands of acres, otherwise inaccessible to the public. We're talking rugged shorelines, coastal dunes, and seasonal wetlands via four-wheeling, followed by a day of cleanup, light weeding, and perhaps building a fence. It's a rewarding experience in a beautiful part of the islands, and the efforts are already paying off. Hawaiian artists were able to make leis





using rare, native 'ohai flowers—not seen in nearly a century—propagated from a single specimen gathered by the trust. molokailandtrust.org.



SURFER'S DELIGHT

STEAMER LANE SUPPLY
SANTA CRUZ, CA

For years, discerning locals in Santa Cruz, California, queued up for the fish tacos and seasonal *aguas frescas* Fran Grayson served out of her truck. Last summer, Grayson parked that truck next to her new cafe-and-surf-supply concession stand called Steamer Lane

Supply, located in Lighthouse Field State Park. It now stands at the ready on Saturdays and Sundays to sate surfers and tourists with budget-friendly, locally sourced grub like grass-fed beef burgers and those famous fish tacos. steamerlanesc.com.



MOVEABLE FEAST

FATBOY PICNIC LOUNGE

Summer's beach days and outdoor concerts call for an upgrade from that old blanket that may be stuffed in your trunk. Enter the Picnic Lounge. It's stylish—with an ornate-yet-cheeky

Persian-esque pattern featuring glazed doughnuts and rocket ships—and at nearly 7 feet by 9 feet, big enough to fit a bunch of friends plus a cooler. Plastic stakes prevent it from becoming a flying carpet, and a center grommet even lets you add an umbrella. And when you're ready to roll, the blanket folds to look like a duffle bag with a cross-body strap. \$249; fatboyusa.com.



GINA GOFF

SUNSET.COM MANAGING EDITOR



Do I bite the bullet on that Labor Day flight to L.A. or call it a road trip instead? To figure out which is cheaper, I use **GasBuddy.com's** trip calculator, which estimates fuel costs based on my car's MPG and community-reported gas prices at stations along the route. For the times I do fly, noise-canceling headphones are a must. **Doppler Labs' Here One** (hereplus.me)

smart earbuds are wireless and come with app-controlled filters that tune out noise you don't want to hear (like an overly chatty seatmate), while augmenting the sounds you do want to hear (say, the flight attendant offering you a drink). And for my tech-obsessed brother visiting me from out of town, I'm already looking forward to booking a stay at **Virgin San Francisco Hotel** (virginhotels.com), opening in the city's start-up neighborhood of SoMa in the fall. He'll love the restrictionless bandwidth and the hotel's app that'll let him order up room service. 🛏

EDITOR PICK