

THE BUCKET LIST

*1000 Adventures
Big & Small*

EDITED BY
KATH STATHERS

UNIVERSE

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE, ALASKA, US

37. Track the Alaskan Big Five

When: May to September

Latitude: 63.3333°N Longitude: 150.5000°W

Denali National Park and Preserve is home to the northern hemisphere's "big five": grizzly bear, caribou, gray wolf, moose, and Dall sheep. The park takes its name from its crowning glory, Denali. This towering centerpiece is the tallest mountain in North America, measuring 20,340 ft (6,200 m). Until 2015, it was known as Mount McKinley.

Northeast of Denali lies Sable Pass, described as a "crossroads for bears," and the open tundra of the pass is the perfect place for you to spot the sandy-beige or brown fur of grizzly bears as they search for berries. You can also spot caribou at these crossroads—these wild reindeer will eat near grizzlies, but they know to choose a vantage spot above any bears, should a swift getaway be required.

For the predatory gray wolf, a little more stealth and cunning may be required. A food source, such as caribou at Sable Pass, is a good place to start. Sighting a wolf is rare, but you might hear its haunting howl.

As the brown, earthy tones of moose hide blend perfectly with its woodland habitat, the best way to find one is to find something it eats, such as bushes, tree needles, or leaves. Moose also enjoy the water, so look out for antlers poking out from the park's shimmering lakes.

To find elaborately horned Dall sheep, the best advice is simple: look up. This sure-footed native species can be found among the high-altitude ridges seeking out the lush mountain flora and vegetation.

A grizzly bear in the Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, US





LONDON, ENGLAND, UK

137. Take in a West End musical

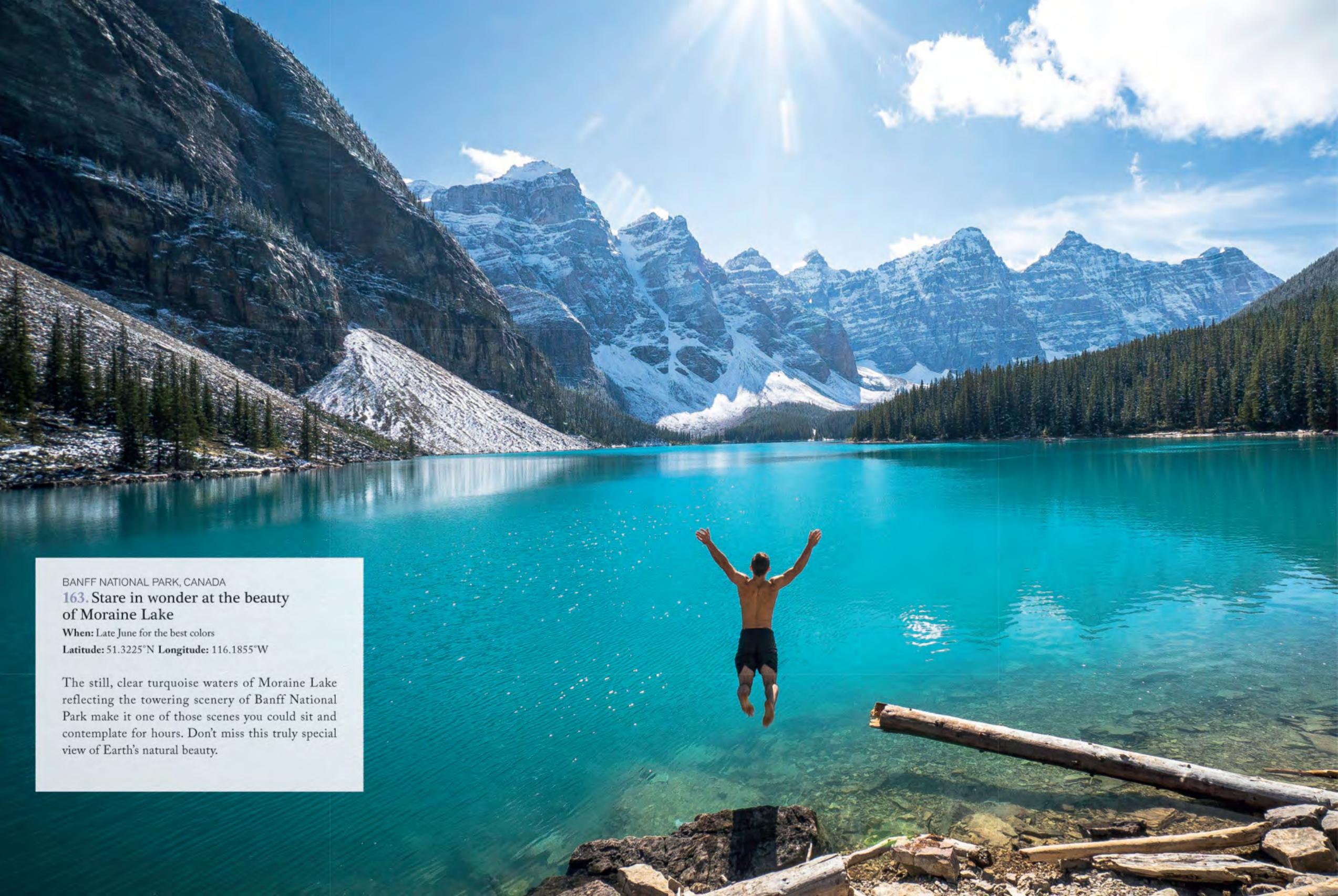
When: All year

Latitude: 51.5133°N

Longitude: 0.1286°W

From French political history to a pop group's early years or even a lion who doesn't want to be king, every story can be further enhanced with a cast of dancing extras, some amazing costumery, and, of course, unforgettable tunes. Be transported by the joy of song.





BANFF NATIONAL PARK, CANADA

163. Stare in wonder at the beauty of Moraine Lake

When: Late June for the best colors

Latitude: 51.3225°N **Longitude:** 116.1855°W

The still, clear turquoise waters of Moraine Lake reflecting the towering scenery of Banff National Park make it one of those scenes you could sit and contemplate for hours. Don't miss this truly special view of Earth's natural beauty.

START AT THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY IN PARIS, FRANCE

201. Visit the world's "Big Five" art museums

When: All year

Latitude: 48.8600°N Longitude: 2.3266°E

An art lover's bucket list must include our pick of the "Big Five:" the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Prado in Madrid, the Tate Modern in London, and MoMA in New York. Each offers a unique cornucopia of sensory delights, each will vie with each other for the title of the greatest collection for a long time, and you'll have a ridiculously good time trying to decide which one you like the most.

Paris' Musée d'Orsay is housed in the Gare d'Orsay, a former railway station on the Left Bank of the Seine—it's an almost magical place to set foot in.

The Hermitage in St. Petersburg occupies a series of six historic buildings, including the Winter Palace, in an absolutely massive, domineering building.

The Museo del Prado in Madrid is an understated and airy place in which to wander and ponder. The Tate Modern on London's South Bank is based in the former Bankside Power Station, and its Turbine Hall is the perfect place to profile huge, imposing pieces of art. Then to the Big Apple, and the Museum of Modern Art (or MoMA) is an alluring labyrinth to potter in. You just need to decide which is your favorite.

Musée d'Orsay, in Paris, France, is one of the world's Big Five art museums





FLORENCE, TUSCANY, ITALY

271. Marvel at Michelangelo's *David*

When: All year (less busy off-season)

Latitude: 43.8001°N **Longitude:** 11.2258°E

The inevitable line at the Galleria dell'Accademia is worth it: this sculpture is the jewel in the crown of Europe's most beautiful city. See Michelangelo's huge marble masterpiece, glaring threateningly toward rival Rome. It really is a miracle of sculpture and a still-stunning symbol of strength and youthful perfection.

► SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, US

329. Creep among the Savannah cemeteries

When: All year

Latitude: 32.0835°N Longitude: 81.0998°W

Captured eerily in John Berendt's book, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, Savannah is a city with a unique and sometimes dark atmosphere, full of Southern charm and ghostly mystery. Probably the most-photographed cemetery in the world is Bonaventure, where bizarre and creative headstones abound—the cover of Berendt's book featured the Bird Girl headstone, which once lay here but is now in the Telfair Museum of art.

Colonial Park Cemetery is home to many of Savannah's oldest citizens, including many killed in duels, and is a very popular stop on the city's popular ghost tours, for those with a strong nerve. The Laurel Grove Cemetery, meanwhile, is where 1,500 Confederate soldiers were laid to rest, and is one of the oldest African-American cemeteries still in use—fascinating tours run six days a week thanks to the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

A Savannah cemetery in Georgia, US





BLACK ROCK DESERT, NEVADA, US

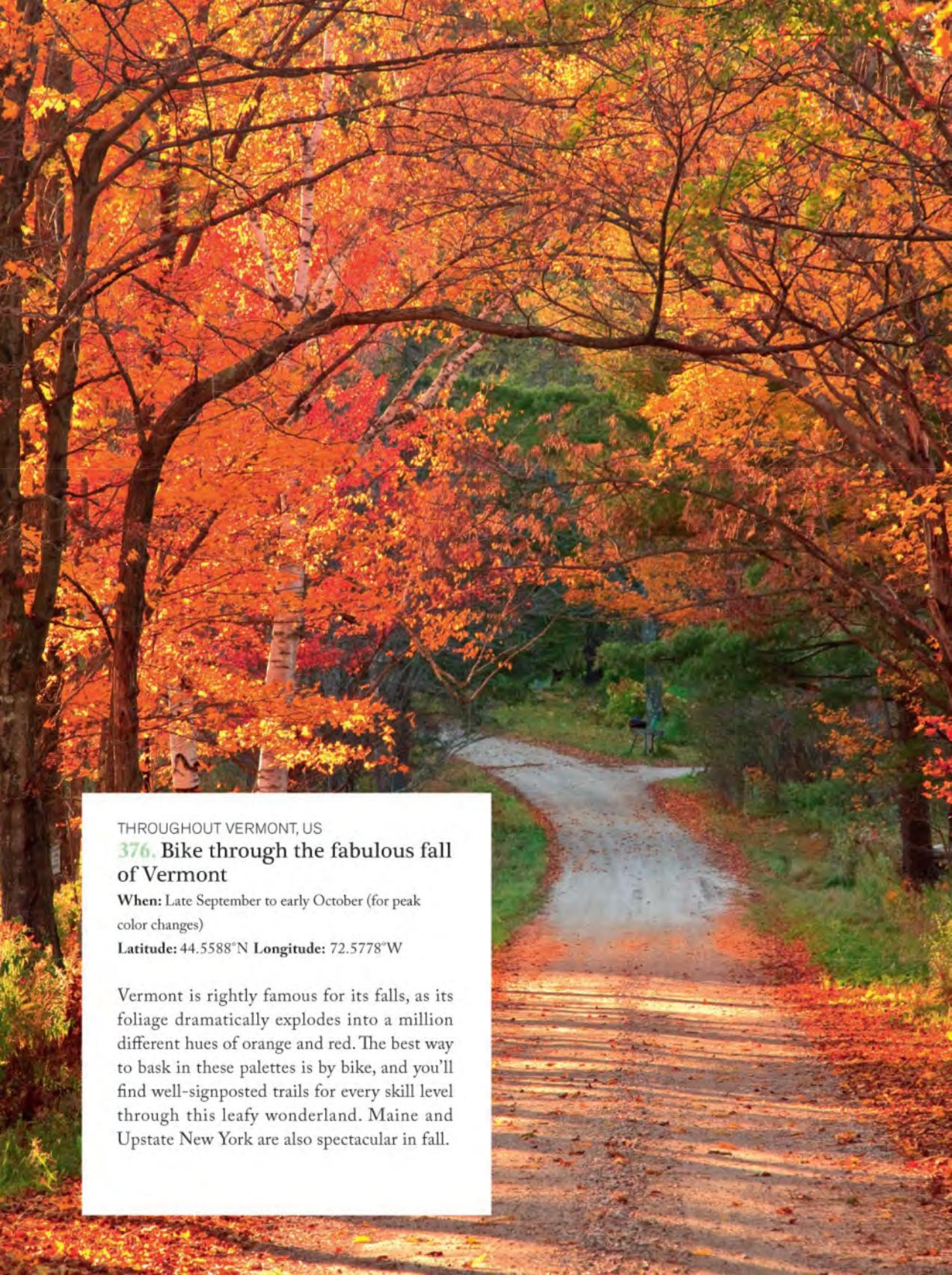
336. Enter the world of the Burning Man

When: Last Sunday in August through to the first Monday in September

Latitude: 40.9107°N **Longitude:** 119.0560°W

A crazy, sometimes bewildering, but never boring, experience: tens of thousands of people descend on the Nevada desert, set up a temporary city dedicated to art and self-expression, then head off a week later without leaving any trace. The central theme is to selflessly give over one's talents for the enjoyment of all: sculpture, building, performance, and elaborately decorated cars are all central to the experience.

Be one of the 70,000 who currently attend and witness the centerpiece of the event: the ritual burning of a huge wooden man, occurring on the Saturday.



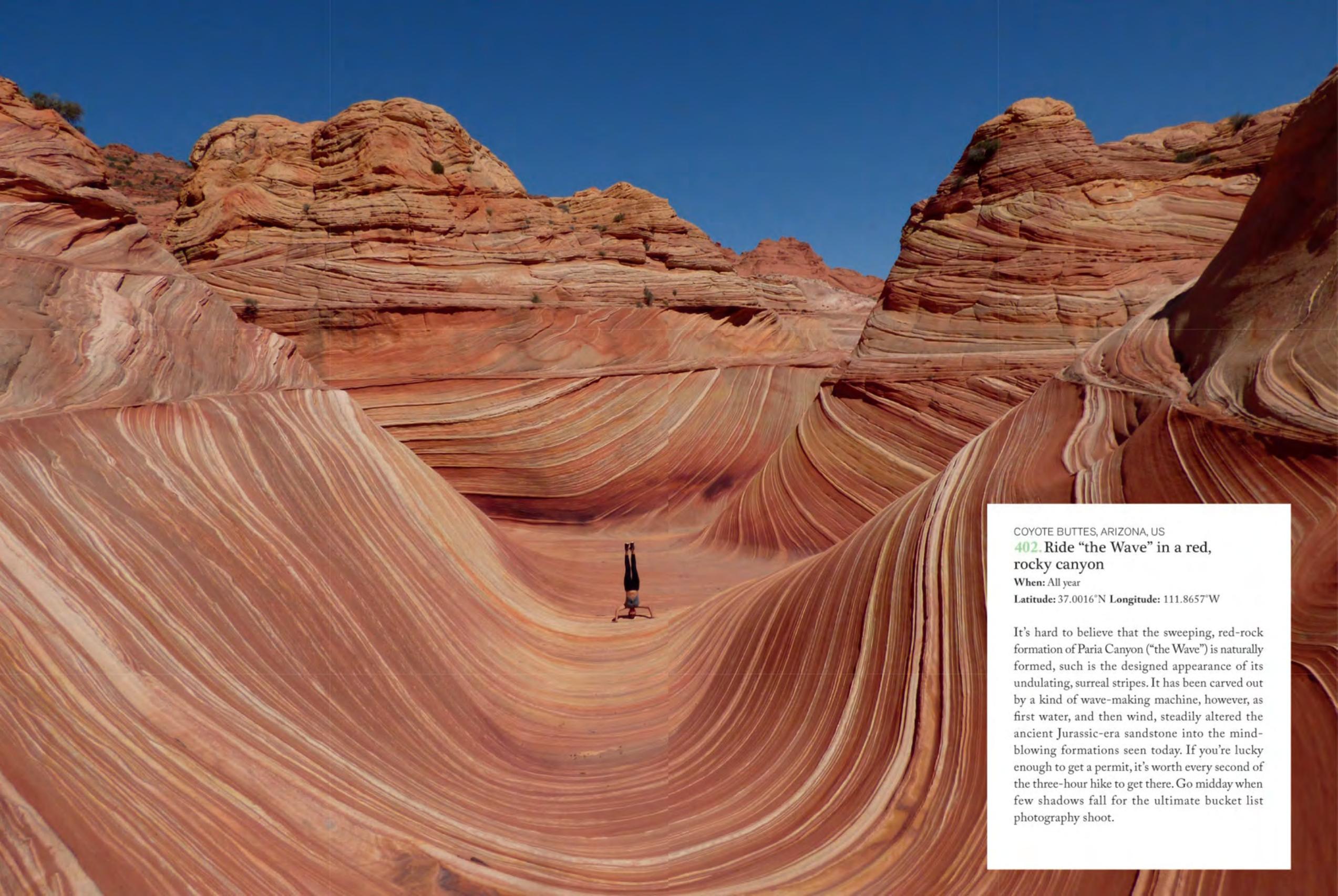
THROUGHOUT VERMONT, US

376. Bike through the fabulous fall of Vermont

When: Late September to early October (for peak color changes)

Latitude: 44.5588°N **Longitude:** 72.5778°W

Vermont is rightly famous for its falls, as its foliage dramatically explodes into a million different hues of orange and red. The best way to bask in these palettes is by bike, and you'll find well-signposted trails for every skill level through this leafy wonderland. Maine and Upstate New York are also spectacular in fall.



COYOTE BUTTES, ARIZONA, US

402. Ride “the Wave” in a red, rocky canyon

When: All year

Latitude: 37.0016°N **Longitude:** 111.8657°W

It's hard to believe that the sweeping, red-rock formation of Paria Canyon ("the Wave") is naturally formed, such is the designed appearance of its undulating, surreal stripes. It has been carved out by a kind of wave-making machine, however, as first water, and then wind, steadily altered the ancient Jurassic-era sandstone into the mind-blowing formations seen today. If you're lucky enough to get a permit, it's worth every second of the three-hour hike to get there. Go midday when few shadows fall for the ultimate bucket list photography shoot.

OIA, SANTORINI, GREECE

436. Sit back and enjoy a stunning sunset view

When: May to September

Latitude: 36.4618°N **Longitude:** 25.3753°E

Drink in the immense sight of the horizon turning a deep pink and orange as lights twinkle in the jumble of whitewashed buildings clinging prettily to the hillside. There may be more dramatic sunsets than the ones in this postcard-perfect village, but they've yet to be found.



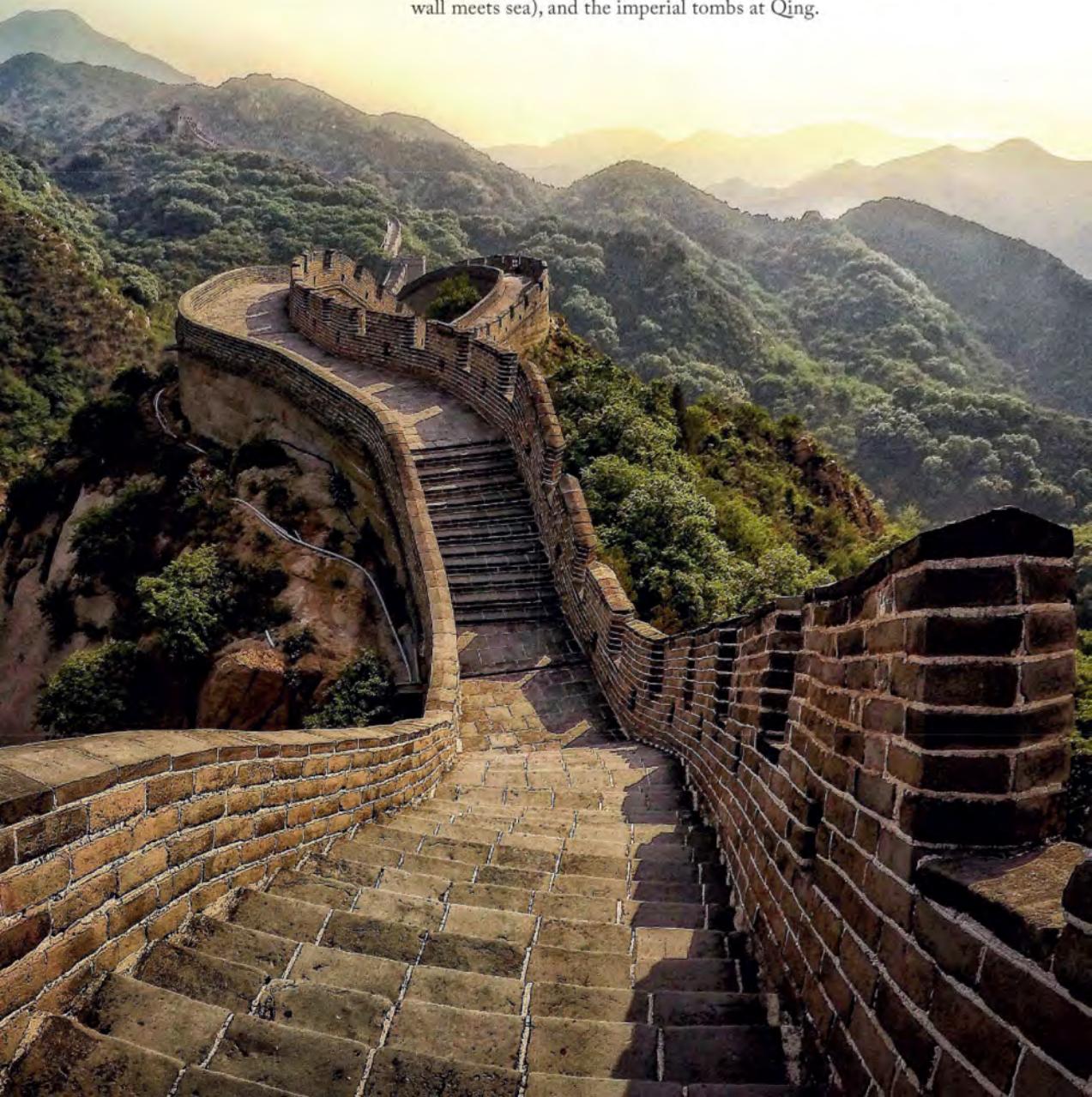
START IN BEIJING, CHINA

488. Stroll along the Great Wall of China

When: All year

Latitude: 40.4405°N Longitude: 116.5595°E

In *The Bucket List* movie, starring Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson, the daring duo break out of hospital and end up motorbiking along the Great Wall of China. Alas, this isn't actually legal in real life, but it's far better to do it on foot, anyway. The whole 13,171 mi (21,196 km) stretch isn't feasible—or is it?—but you can join in some great walking tours, which take in highlights, including Beijing, the Old Dragon's Head (where wall meets sea), and the imperial tombs at Qing.





Mardi Gras in New Orleans, US

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, US

564. Let your hair down at Mardi Gras

When: January to February

Latitude: 29.9500°N **Longitude:** 90.0667°W

Despite the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, New Orleans has proven to have an indomitable spirit, characterized by its annual carnival celebration, Mardi Gras. A time for overindulging on food, wine, and song before the fasting period of Lent begins, it is just one of many carnival celebrations in a city that you'd forgive if it just wanted to lick its wounds and mourn its dead. But that's not its style.

A visit to New Orleans should be a staple of any bucket list, any time of year. The architecture is bold and brassy; the food innovative, bordering on eccentric;

the music loud and never ending. Barely a week goes by when there isn't some kind of parade or party, but the city pulls out all the stops during the two weeks of Mardi Gras, also called "Fat Tuesday."

There are two ways to enjoy Mardi Gras: take in the drama and performance from the balcony of one of the many lodging houses lining the parade routes of the French Quarter, or down in the streets, where jazz vibrations reverberate and senses are teased with the potent smell of gumbo and jambalaya. This is where to truly experience the hedonism of Mardi Gras.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FLORIDA, US

568. Watch a rocket launch into space

When: All year

Latitude: 28.5241°N **Longitude:** 80.6509°W

Watching a space rocket fire up its boosters and blast off into the atmosphere isn't an everyday occurrence, but at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, it may happen more often than you might imagine.

Of all the space centers, Kennedy has the closest viewing platform for the public, so you won't see better anywhere else. Or hear better—the thundering roar of the rocket's engines will reach you shortly after the flames ignite, so you may want to bring earplugs. Expect your skin to prickle with the thrill of it all.

Tickets are available to buy online, although be aware that launch dates can change due to weather or technical issues. If you don't manage to see a launch, you can still visit to soak up the atmosphere of a ride into space. Check out, too, the 525 ft (160 m) tall "rocket garage," and 3 mi (5 km) long shuttle-landing facility. Parking these things takes some serious room.



AGRA, INDIA

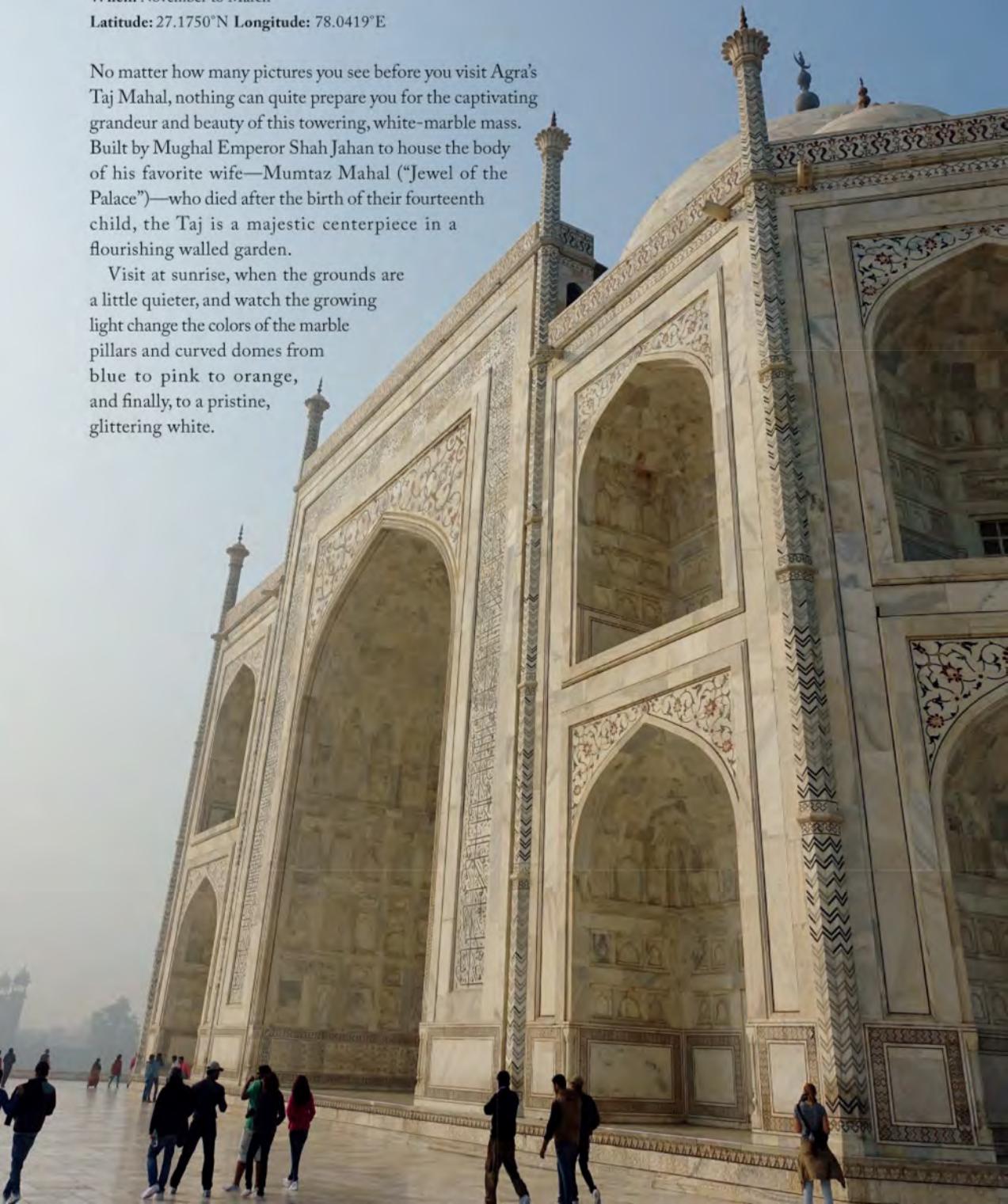
593. Be stunned by the Taj Mahal

When: November to March

Latitude: 27.1750°N Longitude: 78.0419°E

No matter how many pictures you see before you visit Agra's Taj Mahal, nothing can quite prepare you for the captivating grandeur and beauty of this towering, white-marble mass. Built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to house the body of his favorite wife—Mumtaz Mahal ("Jewel of the Palace")—who died after the birth of their fourteenth child, the Taj is a majestic centerpiece in a flourishing walled garden.

Visit at sunrise, when the grounds are a little quieter, and watch the growing light change the colors of the marble pillars and curved domes from blue to pink to orange, and finally, to a pristine, glittering white.





GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

811. Follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin**When:** All year**Latitude:** 0.7500°S **Longitude:** 90.3167°W

On September 15, 1835, almost four years after setting off from the UK, Charles Darwin arrived in a little-known archipelago stranded some 559 mi (900 km) off the Ecuadorian coast and populated by a host of strange creatures. He spent five weeks researching on these inaccessible islands, which inspired his theory of evolution and—with the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1858—changed the world.

To follow in his footsteps on the Galápagos archipelago is to explore one of the most extraordinary wildlife destinations on Earth. The animals and birds—many of which are endemic—display little fear of humans, which enables you to have close-up encounters with them.

Depending on your itinerary and the time of year, you will encounter at close quarters giant tortoises (“galápagos” in Spanish), frigate birds, blue-footed boobies, and marine iguanas. There are also sea lions, penguins, Pacific green turtles, spotted eagle rays, and vast schools of hammerhead sharks, among many other species.

One of the most impressive sights, however, are the Darwin’s finches, which are found on many of the islands. At first glance, they may seem underwhelming, but a closer look reveals that the birds on each island have beaks specially adapted to the local environment, an observation that played an important role in Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection.

Marine iguana on Charles Darwin's Galápagos Islands