

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

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TRAVEL TIPS AND INTEL

Best Places to Travel in 2016

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To compile our annual list of the best places to travel in the upcoming year, T+L editors thoroughly and meticulously consider a variety of factors. Which under-the-radar gems are most exciting to our network of contributing writers and global correspondents? Which destinations are our *A-List travel specialists* fielding requests for? Which classic vacation spots are starting to emerge—but for entirely new and compelling reasons? Which global events and changes in travel restrictions have made certain destinations easier to get to?

This year's list ranges from the Andaman Islands, off India (which impressed even the most discerning ocean-lover, Jacques Cousteau), to an unspoiled stretch of the Caribbean, and nine other beach destinations with sun, sand, and beautiful views. For food lovers, we've got everything from Ghent, Belgium (where a group of young chefs is leading the culinary revolution and plans for a massive food hall are under way), to the canal town of Aarhus, Denmark, which is stepping out of Copenhagen's shadow with three Michelin-starred restaurants of its own.

Closer to home, once-overlooked spots have proven themselves worthy of another glance. The bike-friendly town of Richmond, Virginia, has standout architecture, a burgeoning art and food scene, and a brand-new design hotel. Detroit's renewal has been on our radar for a while, and with signs of life springing up in its abandoned buildings—including a hotel that set up shop in a historic fire-department headquarters—it's finally earned a much-deserved spot on this list. And in San Antonio, the Roman and Williams–designed Hotel Emma, in a former brewhouse, sits at the heart of the restaurant- and shopping-packed Pearl district.

In the geopolitical sphere, the recently signed nuclear deal between Iran and the UN security council has opened up opportunities for Americans to more readily visit the cosmopolitan capital of Tehran and the mosques of Kashan. And while Cuba was on last year's list, a spate of new cruises that dock in Havana—all thanks to eased travel restrictions for Americans—mean the destination is continuing to blossom. Cruise ships are also heading to Batumi, in Georgia, with its gorgeous botanical garden. It's a Black Sea port that's gaining attention from the big cruise brands given the safety concerns in Ukraine.

Whether you're looking for a weekend getaway close to home, a farther-flung bucket-list trip—or even a multi-stop tour that combines, say, the art- and design-filled Taipei, the classic Chinese retreat of Hangzhou, and the hip surf community of Canggu, Bali—consider the 50 incredible destinations on this list a road map for your planning and inspiration in 2016.

Flip through the slideshow for the full list, and share your thoughts (and travels) with us on social media with the hashtag #TLBestPlaces. —*Stephanie Wu*

3. Richmond, Virginia



Virginia's capital, with its Civil War monuments, distinctive architecture, and intriguing galleries, has started to draw a cosmopolitan crowd. For an ideal weekend trip, start by checking in to the new [Quirk Hotel](#), in a former department store. Then tour nearby Jackson Ward, a beautiful neighborhood that was once the epicenter of [Richmond's](#) black culture, and roam the many restaurants and galleries of Broad Street on foot or on a hotel bicycle. Make time to take in the architecture of Monument Avenue and shop in Carytown for labels like A.P.C. and Herschel at Need Supply Co. Some of the best restaurants in town are in the Church Hill neighborhood: try the gastropub fare at [Dutch & Co.](#) or the Southern poutine at [The Roosevelt](#). Finally, stock up on vegan baked goods at WPA or wood-fired traditional breads at Sub Rosa before tackling a bike ride along the 52-mile-long Virginia Capital Trail. Reward yourself afterward with a craft beer at the Hardywood Park brewery. —*Sara Ruffin Costello*



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