



DISCOVER
Puerto Rico

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CLIPPINGS REPORT

March, 2021

| OUTLET | KEY MESSAGING | MARKET | DATE | UMV CIRCULATION | AD VALUE/ EAV (USD) |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Choice Magazine | El Yunque rainforest | UK | 01/03/2021 | 85,000 | 5,009 |
| Seen in the city | Best beaches in Puerto Rico | UK | 04/03/2021 | 36,000 | 1,945 |
| Northern Ireland Travel News | Top reasons to visit Puerto Rico in 2021 | UK | 06/03/2021 | 28,000 | 2,749 |
| Epicurean Life | Best beaches in Puerto Rico | UK | 10/03/2021 | 70,000 | 5,501 |
| Euronews | Best beaches in Puerto Rico | UK | 16/03/2021 | 135,000,000 | 10,000 |
| New York Metropolitan | Best beaches in Puerto Rico | UK content syndicated in the US | 16/03/2021 | n/a | n/a |

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|-------------------------------|---|--|------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Northern Ireland Travel News | CRES turtle conservation ahead of World Earth Day | UK | 23/03/2021 | 28000 | 2,749 |
| Paul Cole Travels | Eco experience at Fina Oro Rojo | UK | 23/03/2021 | 5,000 | 1,305 |
| National Geographic Traveller | Hacienda San Pedro, coffee culture and cafes | UK | 27/03/2021 | 1,000,000 | 8,182 |
| Caribbean Travel | Best beaches in Puerto Rico | UK content syndicated in the Caribbean | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Choice Magazine | Travel and Learn | UK | 1/04/2021 | 85,000 | 5,009.00 |
| TOTAL CLIPS: 11 | | | | TOTAL UMV: 136,337,000 | TOTAL EAV: 42,449 |

Choice

Discoveries special

Grizzly Bear patrols the Katmai National Park



Shipwreck Lodge on Namibia's Skeleton coast



Le Morne mountain, Mauritius

Lockdown dreams of faraway lands

From Alaska to American Samoa, Bahrain to Namibia, **Norman Wright** looks at some of the remarkable, remote destinations you can visit when lockdown is lifted

THE WORLD may be out of bounds to travellers for most of this year – but while we can hopefully enjoy staycations on our home islands, we can also dream about some of the beautiful remote places around the globe.

So, to fuel those dreams, here are some of those places.

Some are challenging but, although off the beaten track, all are accessible. If you have visited some of them, our pictures will remind you of your trip and, if some of them are new, maybe they might tempt you when travel is open again.

Katmai National Park

The vast open spaces of Alaska's national parks are a haven for all manner of flora and fauna, and nowhere encapsulates this more than Katmai National Park and Preserve, renowned for the richness and diversity of its wildlife.

Around 280 miles south of Anchorage, this National Park offers thousands of square miles of pristine wilderness and the world's largest population of grizzly bears. There are spectacular grizzly bear viewing opportunities at Brooks River, where they congregate each summer to catch salmon on the falls and bathe.

Katmai tours and wildlife safaris are offered all summer, culminating in a trip to Brooks Lodge with special platforms overlooking the river.

■ Website: (www.visittheusa.co.uk).

The Skeleton Coast

Namibia, one of the least densely populated countries in the world, is the ideal place to escape to for a remote adventure. The word Namib translates to 'vast place' and the destination is home to desert salt pans, towering dunes and rugged coastlines.

Skeleton Coast, an apt name for the other-worldly stretch of sand on Namibia's

northern coast, is nestled between the Kunene and the Ugab Rivers.

The beautiful area is a photographer's dream, peppered with historic shipwrecks and fascinating whale bones, and lined by a wild ocean. Despite the dramatic harshness of the environment, an array of wildlife species have managed to make it their home.

Visitors are likely to spy black rhinos, lions, giraffes and the odd giant shadow of a desert elephant. Guests can stay at the luxury oasis, Shipwreck Lodge, located within the dunes with views of the Atlantic Ocean.

■ Website: (www.namibiatourism.com.na).

Le Morne

At the tip of the westerly peninsula of Mauritius is the astonishing sight of Le Morne – the stand-alone mountain which overlooks an exceptionally beautiful lagoon, famous for its sunsets.

Rich with history, Le Morne proudly represents a resistance to slavery. It formerly stood as a shelter for escaped slaves, and so its incredible universal values led it to being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Just south of Le Morne lies Black River Gorges, a national park and magnificent area for spotting the island's native species.

Formerly the prime hunting ground of

Mauritius, the area has been a protected reserve since 1994 after researchers recorded an incredible 300 species of flowering plants, nine endemic species of bird and an overwhelming population of fruit bats, which numbered more than 4000.

As well as this, endangered species such as the Mauritius kestrel, the echo parakeet and the pink pigeon all roam freely here. Among other opportunities for sightings are the wild boar, macaque monkeys and deer.

Perhaps the most spectacular sight of all in Black River Gorges National Park is of the outstanding landscape. A hike to the top ▶

Tranquil Trentino Valley with the saw toothed Dolomites overshadowing meadows and lush valleys



will provide panoramic views of the island and opportunities to see the canyon curving beautifully down the mountains.
 ■ Website: (www.tourism-mauritius.mu).

Trentino

Perfect for getting off the grid and escaping to the beautiful Dolomite Mountains of the Trentino region in northern Italy, the Treehouse has no WiFi or TV, allowing visitors to get back to nature and surround themselves with pure wilderness.

This new Treehouse accommodation is located near the town of Val di Fassa from where visitors can embark on the Dolomiti Panorama Trek, a 200km (125-mile) circular trekking trail linking Val di Fassa with Val di Fiemme and Primiero that takes in the Marmolada glacier. The Treehouse is offered on a bed and breakfast basis and features a double bed, bathroom with jacuzzi and sun terrace with spectacular mountain views.
 ■ Websites: (www.fiores.it/en/eco-green/treehouse), (www.visittrentino.info/en).

Churchill, Manitoba

Churchill in the province of Manitoba, in the heart of Canada, is the polar bear capital of the world and wildlife lovers can travel to the remote, small town to witness the creatures in their natural habitat.

Guests can stay at Nanuk Polar Bear Lodge, overlooking Hudson Bay, with the Boreal Forest as its back garden. Here, the remoteness of the lodge provides guests with exclusive access to one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world. It is

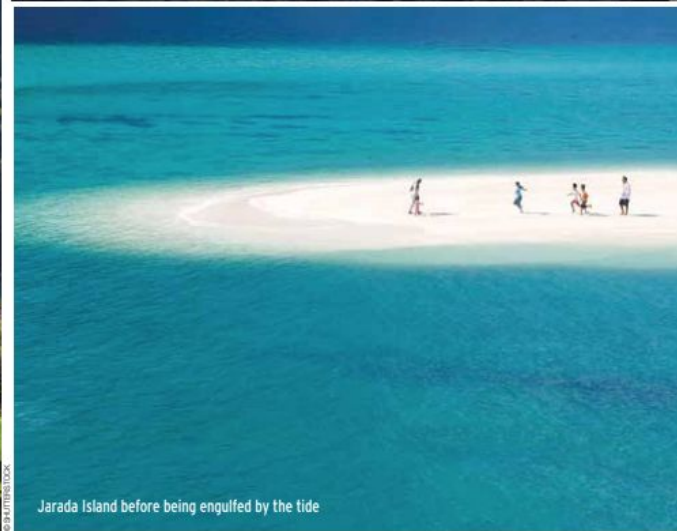
perfectly positioned to view various animal encounters, from polar bears and black bears to wolves and moose, all of which call this coastline home.
 ■ Website: (www.travelmanitoba.com).

Jarada, Bahrain

Travellers to Bahrain can escape to one of the world's smallest nations and immerse themselves in its treasures. Bahrain comprises 33 natural islands, which can be explored by boat, including the 'disappearing' island of Jarada.



Lone polar bear explores the Hudson Bay coast at Churchill, Manitoba



Jarada Island before being engulfed by the tide

“Around 280 miles south of Anchorage, Katmai National Park offers thousands of square miles of pristine wilderness and the world's largest population of grizzly bears”

Jarada is a secluded, picture-perfect tidal island, appearing in the ebb and disappearing with the tide. It is blessed with golden sands and surrounded by crystal-clear waters, and travellers can

take a picnic and snorkel and enjoy the island... while it's there.
 ■ Website: (www.bahrain-alwayswarmer.co.uk).

American Samoa

When it comes to finding a remote paradise, American Samoa is one to remember. Located deep in the South Pacific, this US Territory boasts tropical rainforest, white sandy beaches and coral reefs. It offers a tropical escape for those wishing to lounge on a beach, practise yoga on a mountain top, hike the National



White sand and crystal waters of American Samoa's South Sea paradise



Little Joe Lake in Algonquin park



Lake Ashinoko, Mount Fuji and Hakone's woodlands

© HAUTERSTOCK



Arowhon Pines lodge, internet and mobile free zone

◀ Park, visit Second World War sites or dive in the Marine Sanctuary.

Underwater and coastal splendours await visitors across American Samoa, and the pristine waters of the National Marine Sanctuary typify this more than anywhere else. This protected area is one of the island chain's most popular scuba diving spots, home to life-filled coral reefs.

■ Website: (www.visittheusa.co.uk).

Hakone

Just an hour outside Tokyo, and located

within the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, Hakone is renowned for its tranquil woodlands and open spaces, hot springs, shrines and stunning views across Lake Ashinoko and Mount Fuji.

Here is the place to escape the crowds and roam free, with excellent hiking trails to take in forests and waterfalls. Instead of being cooped up inside, visitors can enjoy the Hakone Open Air Museum. Japan's first open-air museum successfully balances nature and art by exhibiting sculptures on its grounds so visitors can enjoy the art as

well as the views of the surrounding valley and mountains.

The Prince Hakone Lake Ashinoko is the perfect base from which to explore this area of natural beauty. The quaint hotel sits on the edge of the lake, with each of the rooms boasting ceiling-to-floor windows, plus views of Mount Fuji and the lake on one side and woodlands on the other.

The property also has its own outdoor onsen (hot spring) with undisturbed views of Mount Fuji and is near the Hakone Shrine and Torii Gates – from the gate,

there are a series of steps flanked by lanterns through the forest to the main building of the shrine, which sits among the tall trees.

■ Website: (www.princehotels.com).

Algonquin

Canada's oldest – and Ontario's most famous – provincial park, Algonquin is located just over a three-hour drive north of Toronto. The park provides a perfect outdoor adventure playground, with lakes, maple hills and rocky ridges as the backdrop. It offers plenty to keep visitors entertained,

too, with hiking trails, canoe routes, SUP boards, boating, fishing, mountain biking and lots more.

For somewhere to stay the night, head to Arowhon Pines Resort which, thanks to a ban on TVs and mobile phones, offers a quiet place to digitally detox too. The secluded resort sits on the idyllic Little Joe Lake and is one of a handful of resorts within Algonquin's protected lands.

Explorers can rest weary legs back at the resort dining on impromptu summer barbecues by the lake and, as night draws

in, they can put their feet up with a nightcap around the fire pit listening to wolves howling in the distance.

■ Website: (www.ontariotravel.net/en/home).

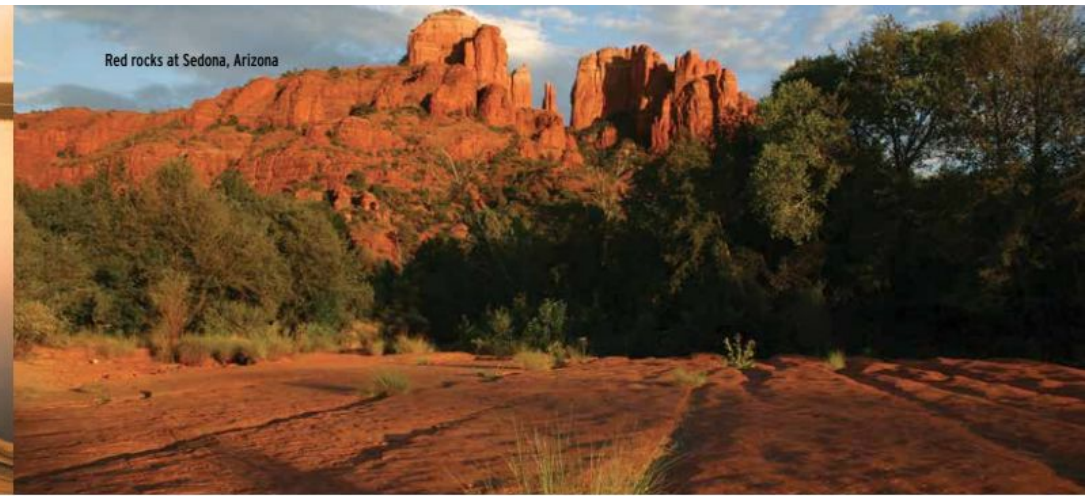
The Inland Sea

South from Qatar's capital city, Doha, is Khor Al Adaid (the Inland Sea) natural reserve. This inlet of the Persian Gulf lies on the border with Saudi Arabia, surrounded by a vast unspoilt desert landscape, and is a UNESCO-listed natural reserve.

It is one of the few places on earth where ▶



Qatar's mysterious Inland Sea



Red rocks at Sedona, Arizona



Black River Gorge cascade in Mauritius



One of the wrecks that gives the Skeleton coast its name captured by *Choice's* Clive Nicholls



El Yunque rainforest in Puerto Rico

◀ the sea encroaches deep into the heart of the desert, and boasts its own indigenous ecosystem, home to a wide variety of marine life, including turtles and dugongs (cousins of manatees).

The region also attracts species of birds including long-distance migrant waterfowl in winter and ospreys. This tranquil expanse of water can only be reached on a desert safari by 4x4. Tours can also include camel rides, quad-biking and sand-boarding before spending the night in a desert camp under the stars, enjoying

“Namibia, one of the least densely populated countries in the world, is the ideal place to escape to for a remote adventure”

a delicious Bedouin-style barbeque.

The luxury Regency Desert Camp is a blend of traditional design coupled with modern comfort. A traditional Arabian lounge serves as the focal point of the camp

where guests can immerse themselves and enjoy meals under the night sky.

■ **Websites:** (www.regencysealinecamp.com), (www.visitqatar.qa).

Arizona

A road trip offers the chance to take back control and depart on a real adventure. When choosing a destination, Arizona ticks plenty of boxes with its wide-open roads, breathtaking views and bucket-list attractions. Rental cars can be hired from Phoenix and driven north-west through

the desert to the Hualapai Mountain Park for an overnight stay, taking in the fresh mountain air and far-reaching views. The next stop has to be the state's must-see, the wild Grand Canyon National Park.

Heading back towards Phoenix, a stop at the spiritual desert town of Sedona offers iconic red rock landscapes, 'energy vortexes' and impressive artwork in the town's galleries. Before reaching Phoenix Airport for the journey home, travellers can stretch their legs one final time at Camelback Mountain, near Scottsdale, where they'll

will feel a million miles away from the Phoenix Valley below.

■ **Website:** (www.visitarizona.com).

El Yunque

The natural treasure of El Yunque in Puerto Rico is an excellent destination for those who want to be immersed in nature. El Yunque is the only tropical rainforest in the US National Forest Service and its name is a reference to Yuke, what the indigenous Taíno people defined as 'white lands'.

With an average rainfall of 120 inches a

year, El Yunque has a diverse ecosystem, and is home to hundreds of native plant and animal species. One of the most popular activities in El Yunque is hiking to one of the natural pools to cool off with a swim. Travellers can head over to La Coca trail and trek down to one of several ponds along the route for the perfect cool-down. For fun in the form of a rope swing, the El Angelito trail, offers a 4km (2.5-mile) hike, ending with an option dive into its lagoon.

■ **Website:** (www.DiscoverPuertoRico.com).



Travel Travel Abroad Travel Top Fives

The Five Best Beaches To Visit In Puerto Rico

By **Natasha Colyer** - March 4, 2021

As the idea of jetting abroad on holiday becomes more of a reality than a pipedream, it has us setting our sights on sunnier climes. If you're longing for white sands and crystal clear waters, here are the five best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico...

The roadmap to recovery has been laid and the premise of jetting off to sunnier climes is at the forefront of many of our agendas. After a year of residing in the same four walls, we are longing to lay on stretches of white sand, to swim in crystal clear waters, and smell the coconutty scents of sun cream in the air. For the ideal beach escape after the pandemic, look no further than Puerto Rico. With 270 miles of Caribbean coastline and over 300 beaches to choose from, there is a sandy retreat for every type of traveller. No matter if you are looking to ride the waves with your surf board or indulge in a luxury beachfront resort, Puerto Rico has it all. So sit, back, sip on a Pina Colada, pop on this [Puerto Rico playlist](#) and check out the five best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico...

Best award winning beach – Flamenco Beach, Culebra



Flamenco Beach is one of the five best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico and also the finest spots of sand in the Caribbean. It has been heralded as the second most beautiful beach in the world by The Discovery Channel. Located on Culebra Island off the coast of Puerto Rico, the beach extends for a mile and is framed by majestic hills and tropical palm trees. Known for its crystal clear and calm turquoise waters, the inlet is a haven for snorkeling, swimming and simply relaxing. Consistently ranked as one of the world's best beaches, most recently Flamenco Beach was named in the top 10 of Tripadvisor's 'best beaches in the Caribbean for 2021, making the award winning beach a dream destination for future travels.

Best black sand beach – Black Sand Beach, Vieques



Black Sand Beach is one of Puerto Rico's most rare and dramatic beaches, ideal for travellers looking to explore a hidden **Caribbean** gem. Set against a rugged shoreline, Black Sand Beach is located on the south side of Vieques Island, an enchanting island off the coast of mainland Puerto Rico, home to the world's brightest bioluminescent bay, a pristine wildlife refuge and a plethora of secret beach escapes. After following a short coastal trail, travellers will be rewarded with the stunning scenery and shifting volcanic sand art of this secluded beach spot.

Best surfing beach – Domes Beach, Rincón



On the northwest tip of Puerto Rico, Domes Beach is a year round surfer's paradise. Home to some of the best surf breaks on the Island, the beach is a hotspot for various surf competitions, including the Corona Pro Surf. Named after the white dome emerging from the surrounding lush vegetation, this beach is best known for whale watching during winter. Migrating humpback whales pass by Rincón from January to March and can be viewed from the historic Punta Higüero lighthouse or from the surf, as the locals do. The winter months are also best for bigger waves and is the best spot from which to experience a spectacular sunrise surf.

Best instagrammable beach – Mar Chiquita, Manatí



Mar Chiquita is one of the most popular natural pools on the north coast of Puerto Rico, a picture perfect spot with glistening azure waters. Mar Chiquita translates to *Little Sea*, an apt description of the cove protected from the Atlantic sea by two limestone outcroppings that shelter the beautiful beach. A firm favourite on the Island, food trucks serve beachgoers traditional Puerto Rican fritters and refreshing drinks on the weekends.

Best luxury hotel beach – Isla Verde, near San Juan



Isla Verde is Puerto Rico's premier beach destination for family travellers and a real favourite on our list of the five best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico. With an array of luxury hotels and restaurants, as well as close proximity to the heart of San Juan, the palm tree lined beach is a slice of Caribbean heaven. The golden sand shores are divided into three main beaches: Pine Grove, Alambique and Carolina. The latter of which is home to the beachfront Fairmont El San Juan Hotel, Ritz-Carlton San Juan and Courtyard by Marriott Beach Resort, hotels that allow visitors to experience a city slick beach holiday.

For more information on visiting Puerto Rico go to [DiscoverPuertoRico.com](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com) or follow Discover Puerto Rico's social channels on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Let us know your thoughts on the five best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico!

6 March 2021



Reasons to Visit Puerto Rico in 2021

A host of exciting new openings, conservation efforts, remote-work offers and anniversaries

Puerto Rico is set to be at the top of every traveller's bucket list this year with a new remote working campaign and hotel offers, the unveiling of the biggest entertainment district in the Caribbean, a new boutique hotel and several virtual experiences for travellers to take inspiration from. The Island's year-round tropical weather makes it an ideal choice for all seasons, with pristine beaches, rugged mountains and colourful cities to discover.

Discover Puerto Rico's 'Work in Full Colour' campaign launches to attract digital nomads

Having demonstrated the ease of remote working, 2020 saw a rise in people maintaining their professional roles from anywhere in the world. Studies show that dull, grey workspaces detriment mood and productivity levels, whereas clever use of colour can boost innovation and satisfaction at work. Puerto Rico's vibrant palette makes it a natural choice for digital nomads: since green encourages balance, blue improves performance, red increases energy and orange inspires imagination, the multi-tonal cityscapes, beaches and mountains on the Island will prove advantageous to remote professionals. Several of the Island's hotels have even launched special offers that encompass everything remote professionals will need.

Puerto Rico is primed to support professionals working remotely. With plenty of co-working spaces, a robust IT infrastructure and networks of tech experts and entrepreneurs, Puerto Rico's 'Work in Full Colour' campaign asks digital nomads: 'If you can work from anywhere, why work anywhere else?'

Preferred Hotels to open Palacio Provincial hotel in San Juan in January 2021

The world's largest independent hotel brand, Preferred Hotels, opened a new boutique hotel in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico this month. The new Palacio Provincial hotel is set in a 19th century building which housed Puerto Rico's centre of diplomacy for most of its 200-year existence. Meticulously restored with hints of its grand colonial past, Palacio Provincial opened in 2021 to mark 500 years since Old San Juan was founded by Spanish settlers, making it the second oldest European-founded city in the Americas. The grand hotel boasts first-class hospitality, 43 rooms and suites with 12-foot windows, an oasis-style courtyard restaurant and a rooftop pool deck, all within walking distance of the capital's best restaurants and historical sites.

El Distrito entertainment district opens in San Juan

Puerto Rico's capital city is set to become an epicentre for entertainment as it welcomes El Distrito in the first quarter of 2021. The 360,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art venue is unlike anything in the Caribbean and combines the best in art, music, technology and hospitality to put Puerto Rico on the global entertainment map. The immersive, multi-sensory space will include a 6,000 capacity music and performance venue; a dedicated radio and television production studio; and a high-tech centrepiece consisting of 14,000 square feet worth of digital screens in a central plaza, including the largest horizontal screens in the Americas.

In addition to an urban zipline experience, El Distrito will welcome the world's first permanent augmented reality zipline and Puerto Rico's first 24-hour nightclub, spanning two stories and several outdoor pool areas. Co-working spaces, bars, lounges, a micro-distillery and a high-end fitness studio will all be available, as well as the Caribbean's first ever ALOFT Hotel by Marriott with 177 loft-like bedrooms. The development is in the heart of San Juan's metro area, making it an accessible entertainment venue for visitors and locals alike.

Discover Puerto Rico's 'Sounds like Puerto Rico' video series inspires 2021 visits

Designed to inspire future travellers and satisfy wanderlust whilst restrictions are in place, Discover Puerto Rico's 'Sounds like Puerto Rico' series is a five-episode video collection focusing on the ubiquitous sounds of the Island. Each episode enables audiences to experience an element of Puerto Rico virtually: one episode captures the rhythms and movements of reggaetón, a fusion music and dance style that originated on the Island in the 90s, whilst another takes viewers on a road trip up to the Island's mountains to order coffee like a local. Each episode has an accompanying playlist on Spotify, featuring tracks with an unmistakably Puerto Rican sound to immerse travellers in the destination before they visit. The 'Sounds like Puerto Rico' series is the ultimate in sensory inspiration to help travellers plan their 2021 visit.

Protect an endemic species and adopt a Puerto Rican coquí frog

In partnership with local environmental research and conservation organisation, Conservación ConCiencia, Discover Puerto Rico invites everyone to give the gift of nature and Adopt a Coquí, supporting the destination's vast natural resources. A symbol of Puerto Rico worldwide, the coquí is a species of tree frog endemic to the nature-rich Island, and heartfully named for the sound they make. Pent-up travellers staying safe at home but thinking about their first trip in 2021, can support global conservation while virtually learning and dreaming of a destination filled with natural wonders and more. By visiting [DiscoverPuertoRico.com/coquí](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com/coqui) and making a donation of \$25 USD, coquí gift recipients will receive a digital keepsake adoption certificate with their name on it for their contribution to supporting conservation, sustainability, and climate resilience efforts by Conservación ConCiencia.

Puerto Rico celebrates the 500th anniversary of Old San Juan in 2021

Puerto Rico's colourful capital city San Juan is the second oldest European-founded city in the Americas, with 2021 marking 500 years since Old San Juan was founded by Spanish settlers. However, visitors can discover much more than cobbled streets brimming with history. Peaceful courtyards and commanding colonial fortresses can be found, such as El Morro and San Cristóbal, part of the San Juan National Historic Site and two of the largest fortifications built by the Spaniards in the Caribbean during the 16th century. In contrast, San Juan is also a cosmopolitan city of wide boulevards, lively cafes, exciting galleries and trendy boutiques. Where the old world now meets the new, San Juan has become a modern world capital.

Life's a beach! 5 of the best beaches to visit in Puerto Rico

With nearly 300 beaches and 270 miles of Caribbean coastline to choose from, Porto Rico offers a sandy retreat for every type of traveller. From active adventure and riding the waves, to relaxing at idyllic island inlets, and indulging in luxury beachfront resorts near San Juan, the idyllic Puerto Rican beach haven awaits, for when we can travel again.

Best award winning beach - Flamenco Beach, Culebra



Flamenco Beach is one of the finest spots of sand in the Caribbean and has been heralded as the second most beautiful beach in the world by The Discovery Channel. Located on Culebra Island off the coast of Puerto Rico, the beach extends for a mile and is framed by majestic hills and tropical palm trees. Known for its crystal clear and calm turquoise waters, the inlet is a haven for snorkeling, swimming and simply relaxing. Consistently ranked as one of the world's best beaches, most recently Flamenco Beach was named in the top 10 of Tripadvisor's 'best beaches in the Caribbean for 2021', making the award-winning beach a dream destination for future travels.

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Black Sand Beach is one of Puerto Rico's most rare and dramatic beaches, ideal for travellers looking to explore a hidden Caribbean gem. Set against a rugged shoreline, Black Sand Beach is located on the south side of Vieques Island, an enchanting island off the coast of mainland Puerto Rico, home to the world's brightest bioluminescent bay, a pristine wildlife refuge and a plethora of secret beach escapes. After following a short coastal trail, travellers will be rewarded with the stunning scenery and shifting volcanic sand art of this secluded beach spot.

Best surfing beach - Domes Beach, Rincón



On the northwest tip of Puerto Rico, Domes Beach is a year-round surfer's paradise. Home to some of the best surf breaks on the island, the beach is a hotspot for various surf competitions, including the Corona Pro Surf. Named after the white dome emerging from the surrounding lush vegetation, this beach is best known for whale watching during winter. Migrating humpback whales pass by Rincón from January to March and can be viewed from the historic Punta Higüero lighthouse or from the surf, as the locals do. The winter months are also best for bigger waves and is the best spot from which to experience a spectacular sunrise surf.

Best instagrammable beach - Mar Chiquita, Manatí



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Puerto Rico's best beaches for sun, sea and surf



By **Sarah Palmer** • Updated: 16/03/2021

As the roadmap to recovery becomes clearer, with the **roll-out of vaccine passports** and changing travel restrictions, the promise of a summer holiday is becoming more of a definite reality. Here, we explore why Puerto Rico is the perfect destination for a post-pandemic escape.

With nearly 300 beaches and 270 miles of Caribbean coastline to choose from, there is a retreat for every type of traveller. From active adventure and riding the waves, to relaxing at island inlets, Puerto Rico's idyllic beaches are waiting for when we can travel again.

The award-winning beach: Flamenco Beach, Culebra

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Located on Culebra Island, just off the coast of Puerto Rico, the stretch of sand extends for almost two kilometres and is framed by majestic hills and tropical palm trees. Known for its crystal clear and calm turquoise waters, Flamenco Beach is a haven for snorkelling, swimming and sunbathing.



Flamenco beach, Culebra - Discover Puerto Rico

The best beach for black sand: Black Sand Beach, Vieques

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The beach for surfers: Domes Beach, Rincón

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Surrounded by lush vegetation, this beach is best known for whale watching during winter. Migrating humpback whales pass by Rincón from January to March and can be viewed from the historic Punta Higüero lighthouse - or from the surf, as the locals do.

The winter months are also where you'll catch the biggest waves and this is the best spot from which to experience a spectacular sunrise surf.



The Instagram beach: Mar Chiquita, Manatí

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Mar Chiquita, Manatí - Discover Puerto Rico

Visit the **official tourism site** for more information on visiting Puerto Rico.

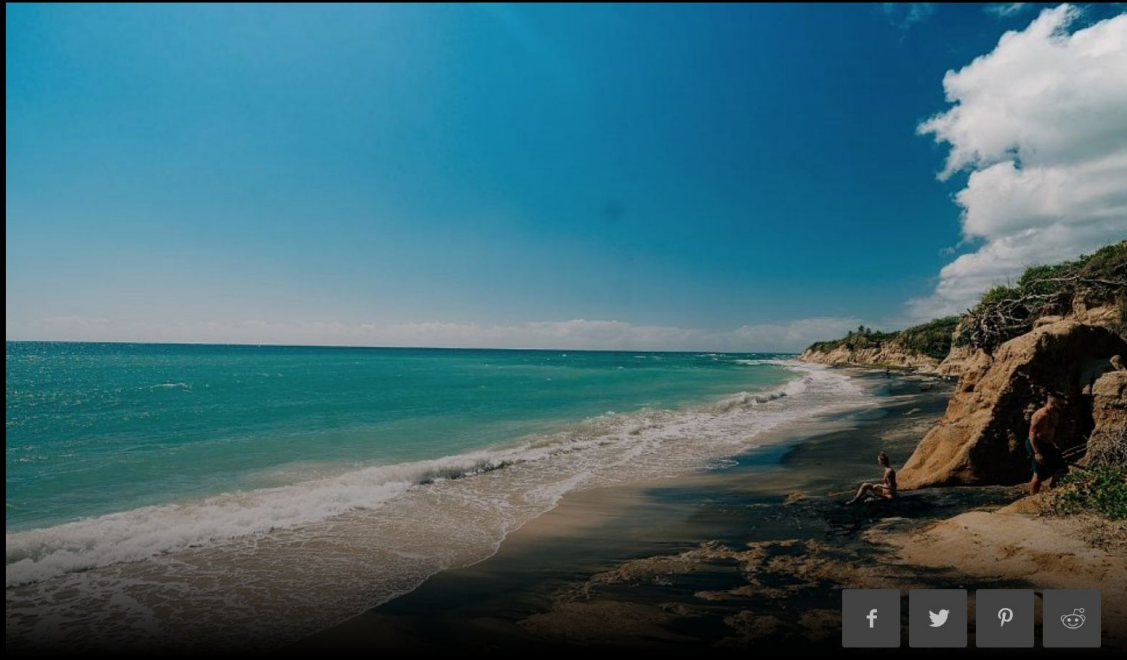
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Puerto Rico's best beaches for sun, sea and surf

Travel

Sarah Palmer March 16, 2021



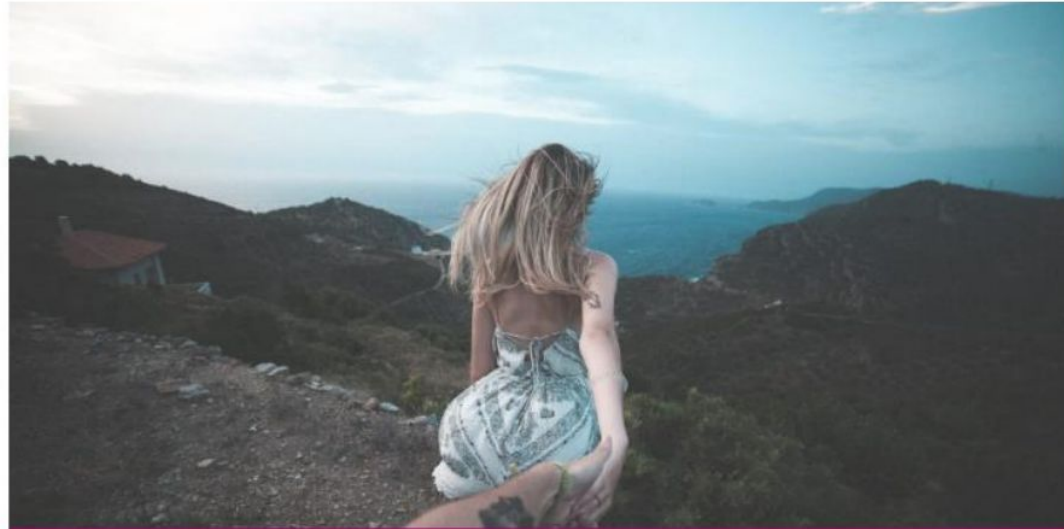
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The award-winning beach: Flamenco Beach, Culebra

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Responsible Travellers – 11 Transformative Experiences

11 experiences around the world that will transform tourists into responsible travellers, in celebration of Earth Day, 22 April 2021

23 March 2021

As the UK emerges out of lockdown, the thought of a holiday is no longer a distant pipedream for many and consumers are eager to know how they can travel smarter and greener than ever before.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has now called for a "responsible recovery of the tourism sector" in order to "balance the needs of people, the planet and prosperity." The notion of travelling responsibly stretches across a broad spectrum, from a traveller reducing their carbon footprint; to taking part in a destination's conservation initiatives; or staying at an eco-resort; to building relationships with the locals and learning about the community and its culture. There has never been a more important time for travellers, tour operators and destinations alike, to proactively work together and show that travel really is a force for good.

To celebrate Earth Day 2021, below are 11 experiences from across the world, enabling travellers to explore the very best of a destination whilst creating positive change for the environments and local communities. From conquering and conserving the Appalachian Trail in the U.S., which stretches all the way from Maine to Georgia, to caring for Colombia's incredible coral reefs – travellers will be spoilt for choice when it comes to deciding how they are going to make their next holiday a more responsible and impactful one.

Follow in the footsteps of rhinos with an anti-poaching team in Namibia

When it comes to Africa's conservation, Namibia leads the way as it was the first country in the continent to incorporate conservation into its constitution and today, over 43% of the country's surface area is under conservation management. With the largest quotient in the world of free-roaming animals including the rare black rhino, lion and zebra, Namibia offers travellers endless opportunities to participate in wildlife conservation initiatives first-hand.

Those looking to immerse in the exhilarating realm of anti-poaching methods and challenges can prove themselves fearless during the 14-day "Rhino Rangers" programme located in the 7,600-hectare Zannier Reserve. Specifically tailored to emphasise the necessity of protecting threatened wildlife, Rhino Rangers invites those brave enough to join the anti-poaching unit on their patrols, master firearm skills, learn about navigation and tracking techniques and to discover the science of poaching itself. After getting to grips with the challenges of living and surviving in the bush during the day, Rhino Rangers can rest under Namibia's star-studded skies surrounded by the sounds of nocturnal animal activity.

Conquer and conserve the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, from Maine to Georgia USA

The Appalachian Trail is the world's longest hiking-only footpath, which roughly stretches across an impressive 3,500 kilometres and 14 states including Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Georgia and more. Not only are travellers able to embrace the great outdoors by hiking across a world-class trail boasting jaw-dropping scenery, there are also a range of conservancy initiatives that travellers can take part in, allowing them to give back to the environments they explore.

Volunteers have the choice to take part in a selection of different projects hosted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) team: from joining resource forums; or signing up to a bespoke five-day course focused on the Leave No Trace initiative; to booking a slot on one of the ATC's regular climate change events which are held in some of the trail's most scenic spots. Additionally, an experience along the Appalachian Trail has been heralded as life changing by many. On GoUSA TV's series, Trails & Trailblazers, Jennifer Pharr Davis shares how the trail was a significant experience for her, enabling her to overcome issues relating to confidence, due to building relationships with both nature and other individuals she met along the way. For travellers who are passionate about protecting the great outdoors and yearning to roam free, then setting foot on the Appalachian Trail is a must.

Care for coral reefs in Colombia

Incredible coral reefs can be found in Colombia's warm Caribbean and Pacific waters, but without protection, these natural ecosystems face disruption and damage. In partnership with diving companies, coral reef research organisation Corales de Paz offers diving experiences with purpose: divers not only observe incredible reefs but work to monitor and re-weave corals, as well as collect plastics from the ocean bed. During a field programme, visitors can spend four or five days taking part in meaningful dive projects that monitor, survey and analyse the health of precious coral reefs to provide crucial insights into the protection of Colombia's marine life.

Reef repair sessions teach divers innovative coral gardening methods, in which corals are generated in nurseries and transplanted into reefs to repair damaged areas. Visitors become 'coral reef citizen scientists', meaning they are qualified to monitor and restore Colombia's coral reefs and record their findings in national and international databases. Under the leadership of experienced coral reef scientists,

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Indulge in art and eco-innovation in Vienna

Vienna is often regarded as the cultural hub of Europe, rich in history, music, art, culture and cuisine, but it is also one of the greenest cities in the world, housing a global hub for sustainability and innovation. It's only fitting therefore that the Vienna Biennale for Change returns this summer with sustainability at its core, under the motto 'Planet Love: Climate Care in the Digital Age'.

Taking place from 28 May - 3 October 2021, the Vienna Biennale for Change 2021 will see a number of highly-esteemed Viennese museums and galleries joining forces to shine a light on climate change and environmental protection, inspiring thoughts on how we can form a more sustainable relationship with the planet. Visionary projects by artists, designers and architects will be showcased, with aims to spark imaginations, promote the vision of sustainable societies and economies, as well as offer innovative solutions for radical change.

The Vienna Biennale was established with the recognition that Vienna is a modern centre for positive change and revolutionary ideas, so in the post-pandemic era, the city is more forward-thinking than ever before.

Join a carefully curated ecotourism project in Rwanda

Rwanda's Gishwati-Makura protected reserve spans across 8,400 acres with lush mist-covered forests, primates, waterfalls and native Umushwati trees. However, Gishwati-Makura wasn't always so abundant: in the early 2000s, 98% of the woodland was diminished due to increased human settlement. The local community, with the help of the Forest of Hope Association, undertook a major restoration effort to bring the area back to health and rewild the forest.

Today, eastern chimpanzees, golden monkeys and side-striped jackals roam freely throughout the vegetation, amongst dozens of varieties of bats, frogs and birds. Carefully curated ecotourism projects such as guided nature hikes, chimp and monkey tracking, bird watching and visits to the waterfalls have helped to fund conservation, whilst providing income and enrichment for the surrounding communities. Gishwati-Makura is living proof of the impact that communities can have when they pull together, put the planet first and work to restore landscapes.

Eight Earth Day travel ideas for post pandemic plans

by PAULCOLEWRITER · 2 DAYS AGO



THE coronavirus pandemic has made us reconsider our place on the planet and, with vaccines offering hope that lockdowns may lift, here are eight travel treats ahead of Earth Day.

First celebrated in 1970, it's an annual event marked around the world each April 22 to demonstrate our support for environmental protection, and make us think. Fittingly, this year's theme is 'Restore Our Earth'.

And, although it's unlikely we'll be travelling freely for some time yet, they're eco-ideas to add to your post-pandemic bucket list.

The notion of travelling responsibly includes taking part in a destination's conservation initiatives. You might stay at an eco-resort, build relationships with the locals and learn about the community and its culture.

1. Follow in the footsteps of rhinos with an anti-poaching team in [Namibia](#)



Namibia leads the way as the first country in Africa to incorporate conservation into its constitution and today more than 43% of the country's surface area is under conservation management.

With the largest quotient in the world of free-roaming animals including the rare black rhino, lion and zebra, Namibia offers endless opportunities to participate in wildlife conservation.

You can help anti-poaching efforts during the 14-day "*Rhino Rangers*" programme set in the 7,600-hectare Zannier Reserve.

Tailored to emphasise the necessity of protecting threatened wildlife, you join the anti-poaching unit on patrol, master firearm skills, learn about navigation and tracking techniques and discover the science of poaching itself.

After getting to grips with the challenges of living and surviving in the bush during the day, you can rest under Namibia's star-studded skies surrounded by the sounds of the night.

2. Conquer and conserve the Appalachian National Scenic Trail



The *Appalachian Trail* is the world's longest hiking-only footpath, stretching 3,500 kilometres and across 14 states including Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Georgia and more.

Not only are you able to embrace the great outdoors and spectacular scenery, but there's also a wide range of conservancy initiatives you can take part in.

Volunteers can sign up to projects hosted by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy team from joining forums to booking on a bespoke five-day course focused on the *Leave No Trace* initiative.

Then there are the ATC's regular climate change events which are held in some of the trail's most scenic spots.

On GoUSA TV series *Trails & Trailblazers*, Jennifer Pharr Davis shares how the trail helped her overcome confidence issues by building relationships with nature and those she met along the way.

3. Care for coral reefs in Colombia



Incredible coral reefs can be found in Colombia's warm Caribbean and Pacific waters, but without protection, these natural ecosystems face disruption and damage.

In partnership with diving companies, coral reef research organisation *Corales de Paz* offers diving experiences with a difference.

Divers not only get to see the observe reefs but also work to monitor and re-weave corals, as well as collecting plastics from the ocean bed.

Visitors spend four or five days taking part in meaningful dive projects that monitor, survey and analyse the health of precious coral reefs to provide crucial insights into the protection of Colombia's marine life.

Reef repair sessions teach divers innovative coral gardening methods, in which corals are generated in nurseries and transplanted into reefs to repair damaged areas.

Under the leadership of experienced coral reef scientists, divers can explore areas such as Providencia where Colombia's healthiest coral reef – the second largest in the Caribbean – can be found.

Meet the maker: the keeper of Puerto Rico's coffee-making traditions

For Roberto Atienza, the key to making the finest coffee is sticking to the methods – and even the equipment – that have served his family well for four generations and nearly a century.

BY FARIDA ZEYNALOVA

PUBLISHED 27 MAR 2021, 08:00 GMT, UPDATED 28 MAR 2021, 17:15 BST



65-year-old Roberto has been working at the family farm, Hacienda San Pedro, for the past 45 years. It's been a family business since 1931.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNIS MANUEL RIVERA

In the central mountains of Puerto Rico, artisanal coffee farmer Roberto Atienza still uses the same century-old coffee-drying drums once used by his grandfather, Don Emeterio.

“He came here from Palma de Mallorca in the late-19th century and developed a passion for agriculture and coffee,” says the 65-year-old. “I have no memory of him, but from the stories I’ve heard, he was a humble and honourable man, and it’s my responsibility to emulate his passion for high-quality coffee.”

Roberto has been working on the farm for the past 45 years, taking over from his father, Alberto. The [Hacienda San Pedro](#) plantation sits high up in the leafy valleys of the Jayuya municipality, in the middle of the Caribbean island. It’s been a family business since 1931, and his team includes his daughter Rebecca, who also owns four coffee shops in the island’s capital, San Juan.

An ordinary day for Roberto starts at 4am with a cup of black coffee with no sugar, or ‘puya’, as it’s known locally. He claims that coffee runs in his veins and, seeing as he drinks 10 to 12 cups of the stuff every single day, that could well be true. Everything, from picking and milling of the cherries (the term for the reddish fruit encasing the beans) to the roasting and even the eventual packaging of the coffee, takes place at the family farm, a process the Atienzas call “project seed to cup”. The result? A coffee that’s velvety and slightly sweeter than most, with hints of chocolate and spices.

“Although the processing machines have changed [since Don Emeterio’s times], the procedures remain traditional: the coffee is pulped, the fermentation process is either natural, wet or dry, and the coffee is dried in metal drums or sundried on African beds that were used by my grandfather,” says Roberto.



Roberto with his daughter, Rebecca, who owns four coffee shops in the island's capital, San Juan.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAHAN RAVILO

He pays particular attention to the critical coffee-drying process and, just like Don Emeterio, often spends nights awake next to the drums waiting for just the right moment, marked by a distinctive sound, to unload the coffee. He's even continued the family tradition of giving each and every coffee tree on the plantation its own name.

When asked what makes Jayuya so well suited to the cultivation of coffee, Roberto credits the area's high rainfall, cooler temperatures and rich combination of soils. This, combined with his artisanal approach, has made Hacienda San Pedro a favourite among locals, but it hasn't always been smooth sailing for the Atienzas. In September 2017, Hurricane Maria ripped through Puerto Rico and destroyed approximately 90 per cent of the island's coffee harvest and plantations.

"It was the beginning of the crop season," says Roberto. "Everything was destroyed within a few hours." Since then, Roberto and his team have been working tirelessly to restore the farm — planting new crops, pruning, fertilising and rebuilding all that Hurricane Maria took away.

Today, visitors to the hacienda can tour the fields, try the coffee in the cafe, learn about Puerto Rican coffee at the on-site museum, and take home a bag from the hacienda's shop.

Despite the temptations to bring in new equipment or machinery, Roberto is perfectly happy making coffee the same way it was done almost a century ago. You could say he marches to the beat of his own drum. Well, his grandfather's drums, actually.



Everything, from picking and milling of the cherries to the roasting and even the eventual packaging of the coffee, takes place at the family farm.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNIS MANUEL RIVERA

Where to try coffee in Puerto Rico

Café Cola'o, San Juan

This relaxed, bayside cafe in Old San Juan offers a selection of coffees from small farms dotted around the central mountains of Puerto Rico.

Don Ruiz Coffee Shop, San Juan

Inside Ballaja courtyard is this coffee shop and museum, where you can try not only Puerto Rican coffee but rum, smoothies and cigars.

Café Tres Picachos, Jayuya

One of the island's oldest haciendas, complete with a water mill, roaming turkeys and an antiques museum.

Café Nativo, Jayuya

Situated on top of a hill in the heart of lush Jayuya, Cafe Nativo offers a sublime menu of waffles, sandwiches and, of course, coffee.

CARIBBEAN



PUERTO RICO CELEBRATES FIVE OF THE BEST BEACHES

Sun, Sea, Sand, and a New Spotify Soundtrack

Mar 05, 2021

Mar Chiquita Beach is a natural pool on the north coast and most often posted on Instagram Photo Credit Discover Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is the perfect beach destination for a post-pandemic escape. With nearly 300 beaches and 270 miles of Caribbean coastline to choose from, there is a sandy retreat for every type of traveler. From those who enjoy surfing and swimming to those who covet a day on a black sandy beach or a stay in a luxury beachfront resort near San Juan, Puerto Rican beaches await.

Best Award-Winning Beach - Flamenco Beach, Culebra

Flamenco Beach is one of the finest spots of sand in the Caribbean and has been heralded as the second most beautiful beach in the world by The Discovery Channel. Located on Culebra Island off the coast of Puerto Rico, the beach extends for a mile and is framed by majestic hills and tropical palm trees. Known for its crystal clear and calm turquoise waters, the inlet is a haven for snorkeling, swimming, and simply relaxing. Consistently ranked as one of the world's best beaches, most recently Flamenco Beach was named in the top 10 of TripAdvisor's best beaches in the Caribbean for 2021', making the award-winning beach a dream destination for future travels.

Best Black Sand Beach - Black Sand Beach, Vieques

Black Sand Beach is one of Puerto Rico's most rare and dramatic beaches, ideal for travelers looking to explore a hidden Caribbean gem. Set against a rugged shoreline, Black Sand Beach is located on the south side of Vieques Island, an enchanting island off the coast of mainland Puerto Rico, home to the world's brightest bioluminescent bay, a pristine wildlife refuge and a plethora of secret beach escapes. After following a short coastal trail, travelers will be rewarded with the stunning scenery and shifting volcanic sand art of this secluded beach spot.



Flamenco Beach on Culebra Island is nirvana for snorkeling Photo Credit Discover Puerto Rico

Best Instagram Beach - Mar Chiquita, Manatí

Mar Chiquita is one of the most popular natural pools on the north coast of Puerto Rico, a picture-perfect spot with glistening azure waters. Mar Chiquita translates to Little Sea, an apt description of the cove protected from the Atlantic sea by two limestone outcroppings that shelter the beautiful beach. A firm favorite on the Island, food trucks serve beachgoers traditional Puerto Rican fritters and refreshing drinks on the weekends.

Best Luxury Hotel Beach - Isla Verde, near San Juan Isla Verde is Puerto Rico's premier beach destination for family travelers. With an array of luxury hotels and restaurants, as well as proximity to the heart of San Juan, the palm tree-lined beach is a slice of Caribbean heaven. The golden sand shores are divided into three main beaches: Pine Grove, Alambique and Carolina. The latter of which is home to the beachfront Fairmont El San Juan Hotel, Ritz-Carlton San Juan, and Courtyard by Marriott Beach Resort, hotels that allow visitors to experience a city slick beach holiday.

Best Surfing Beach - Domes Beach, Rincón

On the northwest tip of Puerto Rico, Domes Beach is a year-round surfer's paradise. Home to some of the best surf breaks on the Island, the beach is a hotspot for various surf competitions, including the Corona Pro Surf. Named after the white dome emerging from the surrounding lush vegetation, this beach is best known for whale watching during winter. Migrating humpback whales pass by Rincón from January to March and can be viewed from the historic Punta Higüero lighthouse or from the surf, as the locals do. The winter months are also best for bigger waves and is the best spot from which to experience a spectacular sunrise surf.

For the perfect Puerto Rican beach soundtrack, listen to Discover Puerto Rico's Spotify playlist here: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2oBDfXuiPFjXHklGYw8weR>

For more information, click on [DiscoverPuertoRico.com](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com) and follow Discover Puerto Rico's social media channels on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#)

About Discover Puerto Rico

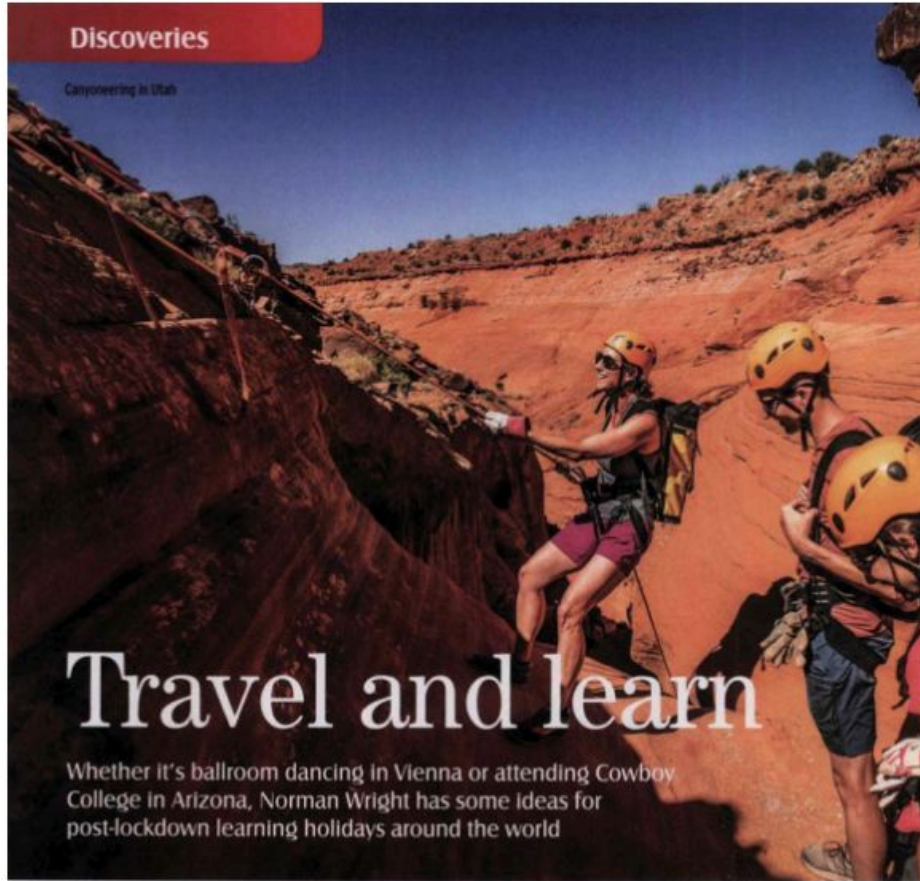
Discover Puerto Rico is a newly established private, not-for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to make Puerto Rico visible to the world as a premier travel destination. The DMO brings prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico by collaboratively promoting the Island's diversity and uniqueness for leisure and business travel, and events. It is responsible for all global marketing, sales, and promotion of the destination and works collaboratively with key local governmental and non-governmental players throughout Puerto Rico's visitor economy and community at large, to empower economic growth. To discover all the beauty the Island has to offer, visit [DiscoverPuertoRico.com](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com).

Domes Beach in Rincón is the best surfing beach on the island Photo Credit Discover Puerto Rico



Discoveries

Canyoneering in Utah



Travel and learn

Whether it's ballroom dancing in Vienna or attending Cowboy College in Arizona, Norman Wright has some ideas for post-lockdown learning holidays around the world

WITH VACCINES being rolled out across the country and around the world, there's a great deal of hope and a clear demand for enriching, immersive travel later in 2021 and into 2022.

In the post-vaccine world, travellers will look to maximise their holiday experiences – how a trip aligns with an individual's sense of self and their life aspirations is anticipated to be just as important as their destination of choice.

A learning holiday allows travellers to pick up skills from masters of the craft, while

"A learning holiday allows travellers to pick up skills from masters of the craft, while also engaging with local communities and forging a stronger relationship with the destinations they visit"

also engaging with local communities and forging a stronger relationship with the destinations they visit. Whether it's ballroom dancing in Vienna or attending Cowboy College in Arizona, this could be the time to plan a holiday which enhances

your skill set and expands the mind. Here are some ideas. Although they will appeal to many active readers, some might be a bit too active but perhaps ideal for taking older grandchildren while you relax and watch. Travel and learn...

Dancing

Vienna is not only one of Europe's most beautiful cities, but also a global centre for culture and the arts. It is renowned for being the 'capital of music' complete with opera performances, classical music highlights and dazzling balls, and visitors can immerse themselves in the city's

elegant grandeur at Elmayer dance school.

Founded more than 100 years ago, Elmayer is one of Vienna's most famous dance schools and prides itself on being able to teach guests the Viennese Waltz in just under an hour. In addition to the famous waltz, visitors can book private tuitions of any ballroom dances such as the foxtrot, the quickstep or the tango. Once visitors have mastered the elegance of ballroom dance, they can head to one of the dances held at Ballsaal, a venue taking inspiration from the classic Viennese ballrooms of the past, which allows dancers to show off their moves among locals and professional ballroom dancers.

■ Elmayer's Viennese Waltz sessions cost €50 (€45) per couple per hour. Website: www.wien.info.

Surfing

Considered by many as 'unconquered' in the surfing world, Colombia is the only South American country with both Pacific and Caribbean coastlines and, consequently, the destination offers a variety of surf conditions and world-class waves throughout the year.

For beginners, Costeño Beach on the Caribbean coast proves an excellent spot with gentle waves and a laid-back

atmosphere. The main surf camp – Costeño Beach Surf Camp and Ecology – is located on a former coconut farm, where the emphasis isn't just on learning to surf, but also adopting a surfer's way of life.

Surf lessons and board rental are available year-round with weekly introductions to surf basics conducted in the swimming pool to help beginners master the key skills. Once surfers have found their sea legs and are looking for more challenging waves, they can discover the more demanding surf spots along the Pacific Coast such as Cabo Corrientes and El Valle.

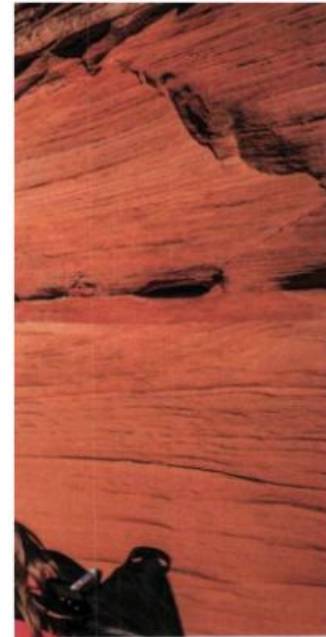
Beaches are even quieter here and frequented by humpback whales from July to October.

■ One-to-one surfing lessons at Costeño Beach Hostel's surf camp start at 110,000 COP (€23.50) for two and a half hours. Website: www.colombia.travel.

Canyoneering

Utah is home to some of the most astonishing natural landscapes in the world, with its burnt-red towering rock formations and deep canyons in a desert-scape that stretches as far as the eye can see.

In particular, Moab in south-eastern Utah is ideal for learning new outdoor adventure skills such as canyoneering – the sport of

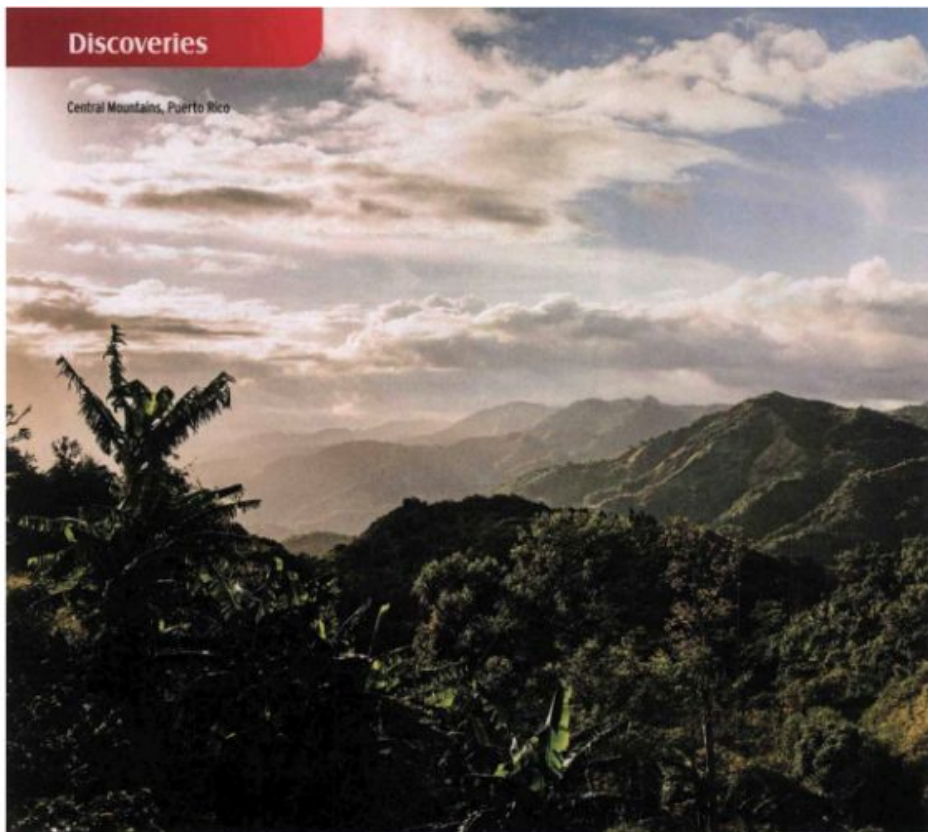


The Grange by the Sea



Discoveries

Central Mountains, Puerto Rico



exploring canyons by climbing, 'rappelling' or rafting. Adventurers can safely and confidently conquer Moab's canyons with Moab Canyon Tours, as experts teach beginners to climb and scale creeks, with wild canyon swims and helicopter experiences featuring in certain tours.

It is recommended that beginners start with the half-day expert-led Bow and Arrow Tour where they will learn key techniques to traverse through canyons, exploring ancient petroglyph panels and a beautiful 80ft archway along the way.

The tour also offers four separate abseiling experiences, including an exhilarating free-hanging 110-foot abseil from a cliff edge. Once canyoneering skills are mastered, travellers will be spoilt

for choice in Utah, with national parks including Zion National Park and Arches National Park named as some of the best canyoneering destinations in the world.

■ **The Moab Canyon Tours half-day Bow and Arrow Tour is \$129 (£94) per person. Website: www.visitmoab.com.**

Write fiction

The Isle of Wight has historically been a place of inspiration for writers, with John Keats and Lewis Carroll both penning some of their best work on the island, along with many others including Charles Dickens and Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

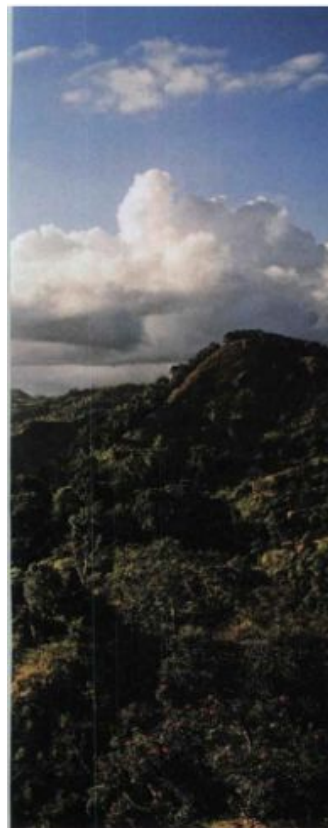
In 2021, visitors can follow in the footsteps of literature heroes with writing retreats at The Grange by the Sea, a

charming Georgian country house nestled within the countryside on the Island's south coast.

The B&B's secluded setting immerses visitors in writing masterclasses, such as the Life, Dreams and Fiction weekend last month. Guests learned new ways of writing about their life with tips and techniques for turning personal events, dreams and memories into powerful fiction, drama and poetry.

The two-night retreat included six hours of course time with award-winning screenwriter and novelist Steve Attridge, as well as plenty of quiet time to write, with local walks and excursions also offered.

Complementing a mindful experience to the Isle of Wight, Wightlink is the easy-



to-use ferry service, with flagship vessel Victoria of Wight, which is England's first hybrid energy ferry. A short-break car ferry return crossing from Portsmouth to Fishbourne costs from £65.50. Foot passenger tickets cost £14.40 per person.

■ **Website: www.wightlink.co.uk.**

Eco-living

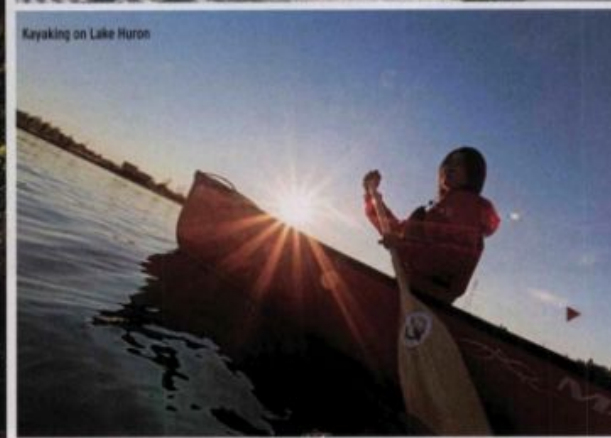
In Puerto Rico's verdant central mountain range, considered to be the geographical heart of the island, the Finca Oro Rojo eco-farm and glamping site is nestled among the rugged beauty of the Otrocovis rainforest.

The wide biodiversity of Puerto Rico's mountains makes it the perfect destination to master the eco-farming basics, and at Finca Oro Rojo visitors can learn to live

APRIL 2021 CHOICE



Kayaking on Lake Huron

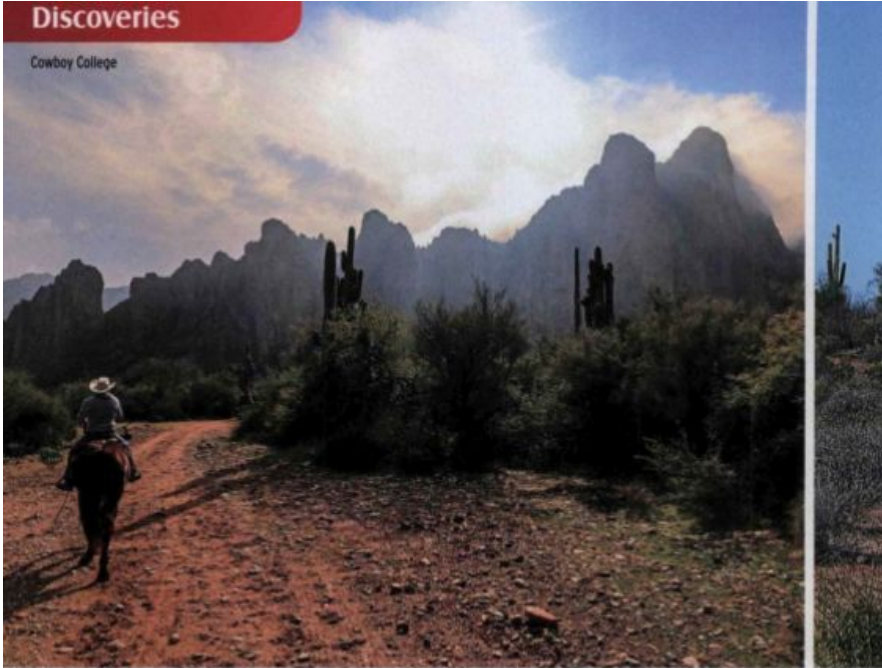


Spirit Trail in Ontario



Discoveries

Cowboy College



off the earth, discovering ways of growing, cultivating and harvesting their own crops in the orchard. Guests can learn from on-site farmers who are experts in selecting the best native crops and fruits for guests to cook and prepare.

Finca Oro Rojo is strict about not using any pesticides or chemical fertilisers, instead using only the compost made on site to fertilise crops. Perfect for those who want to connect with Puerto Rico's wildlife and learn to become self-sufficient, Finca Oro Rojo is also complete with hot water, private bathrooms and showers, queen beds with plush linens and cosy hammocks, meaning comfort is never compromised.

■ Rooms at Finca Oro Rojo start at £140 per night, which grants guests full access to the farm and enables them to harvest their own crops freely. Website: (www.discoverpuertorico.com).

Cross-country skiing

The peaks of the Dolomites in Italy are world-renowned for cross-country skiing, which attracts beginners and expert skiers alike, particularly as no ski lifts are used.

Cross-country skiers traverse the slopes using their physical force alone, and the basic gliding techniques can be taught in as little as 45 minutes.

Trentino is home to many famed cross-country ski races – visitors can trace the route of the region's most important race, the Marcialonga, which covers 70km across the ski resorts of Val di Fassa and Val di Fiemme.

Cross-country skiers can even take on Val di Fiemme's Cross-Country Stadium Lago di Tesero, a cutting-edge stadium that will host some of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, with a 3.5km route perfectly designed to challenge and reward those who have picked up the skill.

Trentino's many mountain refuges and wellness centres offer plenty of restorative apres-ski opportunities to help muscles rest and recover after a day on the pistes.

■ One-hour cross country ski lessons in Val di Fiemme's Lago di Tesero ski school start at €39 (£35) per person or €52 (£47) for a family lesson. Website: (www.visittrentino.info).

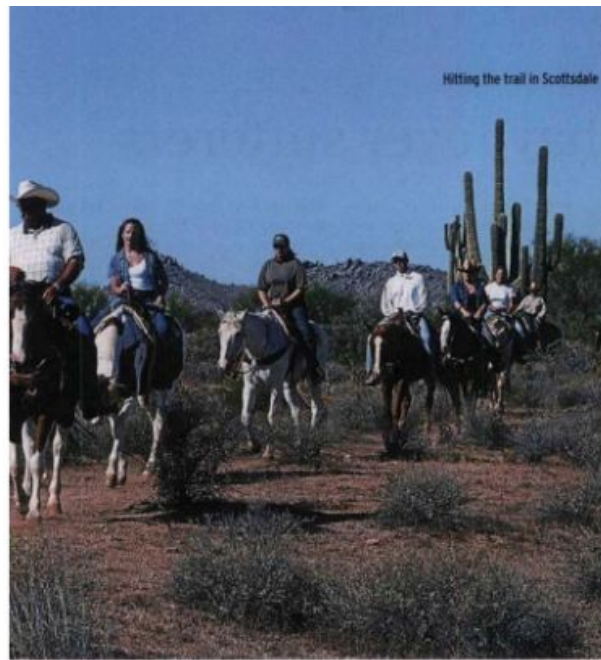
Study First Nation Canadians

Situated on Manitoulin Island in north-eastern Ontario, Canada, the Great Spirit Circle Trail invites travellers to discover the culture of the indigenous Anishnawbek people, one of the First Nation communities of Canada.

Travellers will take part in Aboriginal-led experiences including medicine walks through the wilderness to learn about the medicinal uses of different plant and tree varieties, and canoe heritage tours where guests paddle through Lake Huron discovering local stories and legends as well as traditional survival techniques.

A number of 'Make and Take Experiences' teach guests lifelong skills, including how to make a fire from scratch and baking bread over an open grate fire. After a full day of activities, travellers can camp out in a traditional teepee listening to the wildlife under the stars. Direct flights from Toronto to Sudbury, the Manitoulin Island's nearest airport, transport passengers to one of the most serene locations in the province in just over an hour.

Hitting the trail in Scottsdale



■ The four-day Great Spirit Circle Trail starts from £504 per person including return air fare between Toronto and Sudbury, accommodation and experiences. Website: (www.ontariotravel.net).

Make a country record

Nashville, Tennessee, otherwise known as 'Music City', is renowned for being the home of touring and recording, with some of the world's biggest hits being written and recorded by the city's local talent.

A musical getaway in Nashville is sure to be a hit, but in addition to discovering the city that inspired so many songwriters, visitors can also learn to record their own tracks.

At Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, visitors can experience the life of a recording artist first-hand, joining the ranks of the musical heroes who have performed at the traditional Grand Ole Opry venue such as Hank Williams and Dolly Parton – in fact, every major country star since 1925.

Musicians can belt out a well-loved classic or even perform an original

composition in the studio. A professional sound engineer will guide guests through the recording process and share some tricks of the trade, giving visitors an understanding of how their favourite tracks were produced.

Guests will leave with their own Ryman Record CD, labelled with their name and song, to show off their recording artist skills.

■ Ryman Auditorium's Air Castle Studio recording sessions start at \$15 (£11). Website: (www.visitmusiccity.com).

Ride the range

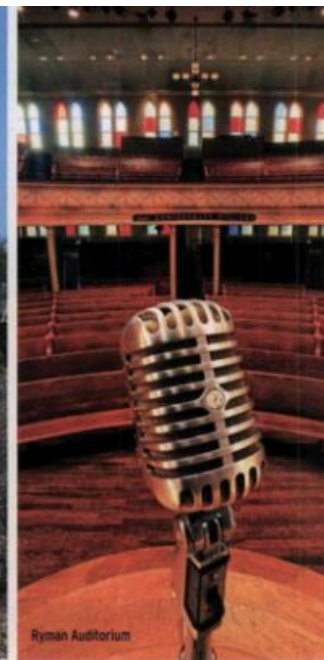
Arizona's desert city, Scottsdale, teaches visitors some out-of-the-ordinary skills that instil resilience and a sense of adventure. In this outdoor playground framed by the Sonoran Desert, guests can learn the ropes of authentic cowboy culture at Arizona Cowboy College. Choosing between one-day, three-day or week-long sessions, guests will rope, ride and round-up cattle in the desert alongside real-life cowboys, reinforcing a sense of self-determination

and spirit. Guests will be particularly put through their paces on the three-day course led by owner and senior instructor Rocco, an expert in horsemanship who shares his decades of knowledge on penning, rider safety and equitation.

Guests will step outside their comfort zone as they master the saddle, learn to lasso and feed, groom and look after the horses and cattle. Visitors will put their skills to the test on the final day as they join Rocco on a horseback trek up the nearby Seven Springs mountain, spotting wildlife and learning about the Arizona desert landscape.

During their stay, guests will be provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner in the main house and will sleep in the cosy bunkhouse, complete with wooden beds and a rainbow of rosettes covering the guest room walls.

■ A three-day session at Arizona Cowboy College starts at \$1250 (£959) per person, including airport transfers, all meals and bunkhouse accommodation. Website: (www.experiencescottsdale.com).



Ryman Auditorium