

# A FAR

WHERE TRAVEL CAN TAKE YOU

AFAR.COM

#TRAVELDEEPER

# WHERE TO GO IN 2019

## THE TOP 25 PLACES TO TRAVEL TO NEXT

### **PLUS**

**Egypt**  
Is Back:  
Book a  
Trip Now

p.104

**The Last  
Secret  
Spot in  
Italy,  
Revealed**

p.82

**Scotland's  
Newest  
Must-Drive  
Road Trip**

p.94

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

FLIP THE  
ISSUE TO  
FIND OUR  
TRAVELERS'  
CHOICE  
WINNERS





Your guide to where, when, and how to travel this year.

# WHERE TO GO IN 2019



## Where to (Let Your Mind) Wander This Year

**L**AST SUMMER MY family and I took a road trip from our home in the Bay Area through the Central Coast of California and down to the beach communities of Orange County. We visited several historic missions along the way, we saw friends and family, we ate decadent meals and tasted delicious wines, and we enjoyed top-notch hospitality at some truly beautiful hotels.

But what I will remember most about the trip happened on California state route 150, a steep road riven with switchbacks between Santa Barbara and Ojai. As my husband piloted our borrowed minivan over golden hills studded with old oaks, I sat in the passenger seat, watching the landscape shift. There were Christmas tree farms covered in saplings and orchards of avocado trees heavy with fruit growing on craggy hillsides. With our windows rolled down and the summer sun setting behind us, our two daughters (ages 3 and 1) slept in their car seats.

For this brief moment, I was free of life's everyday distractions—Slack alerts, social media feeds, child care calendars, emails to delete, and the incessant whines of small children. I had time to simply watch the passing scenery and let my mind wander. And wander it did. I thought about California's diverse landscapes and patchwork quilt of people—those who pick our grapes and our tomatoes; those who fight our wildfires; those who invent

the technology that reshapes how we live. And I thought of my own family—past and present—and the gauzy promise of the state's golden dream.

For me, moments like these are what makes travel magical—and memorable. When you're out of your humdrum routine, you see things with fresh eyes and a more nuanced, thoughtful perspective. And while a trip is more than just the sum of its parts, it's these discrete moments that make for the most vibrant memories. That short (and enchanting) drive on route 150 gave me the time and the space to think, which is today's ultimate luxury.

Every fall, the editors here at AFAR scour the world to present to you the top destinations to visit in the upcoming year. My contribution? Santa Barbara, one of the 25 places that appear on our list of where to go in 2019. (Turn the page to see them all on a map, then dive into the stories starting on page 27.) It's my way of saying thanks to the place that offered me that rare chance to reflect.

All the places on our list can offer you the opportunity to expand your mind and make your own memories. Maybe you'll do something grand: witness a total eclipse or see gorillas in the wild. Or maybe you'll find an unexpected moment of peace on a back road—and the chance to let your mind wander, uninterrupted.

—JULIA COSGROVE

*Editor in Chief*



Turn the page and open the gatefold for our Where to Go in 2019 map.

# THE DESTINATIONS

WHERE TO GO IN 2019

**WANT  
TO KNOW MORE?**  
GO TO [AFAR.COM/WTG2019](http://AFAR.COM/WTG2019)  
TO LEARN HOW TO TRAVEL  
DEEPER IN THIS YEAR'S  
DESTINATIONS.





## WINTER

### 1. Byron Bay

Foodies are transforming a mellow Australian beach town that's long been a bastion for hippies and surfers.

### 2. Cambodia

A new, luxurious tented camp will get you off the beaten path and into the Cardamom Mountains.

### 3. Careyes

An exclusive Mexican enclave becomes more approachable.

### 4. Cayman Islands

An airport expands, and so do your Caribbean beach getaway options.

### 5. Dominica

A year after Hurricane Maria wreaked havoc, a small island recovers in a big way.

### 6. Dominican Republic

Commemorate 175 years of independence.

### 7. Honshu

Skip the crowded Hokkaido slopes and head for the ski resorts on Japan's largest isle.

### 8. St. Lucia

The resorts are great, as are a slew of new heritage tours (some of which promise chocolate).

## SPRING

### 9. Bora Bora

Immersive experiences lure travelers beyond the Tahitian overwater bungalow.

### 10. Germany

The whole world is invited to a Bauhaus birthday party.

### 11. Houston

Where else can you celebrate a special *Apollo 11* anniversary and a booming art scene?

### 12. Lyon

Thirteen acres of shopping and gastronomy are unveiled.

### 13. New Orleans

New workshops and a museum honor the city's culinary and cocktail roots.

## SUMMER

### 14. The Azores

These must-visit Portuguese islands are easier than ever to reach.

### 15. The Berkshires

Music and culture meet adaptive reuse architecture in the Massachusetts mountains.

### 16. Elqui Valley

See the stars—and maybe an eclipse—in some of Chile's clearest skies.

### 17. New Brunswick

You needn't be a camper here to connect with nature.

### 18. Rwanda

Stay in luxury, see the Big Five, and learn why Kigali is no longer just a stopover.

### 19. Santa Barbara

This might be the ultimate California beach town.

### 20. Switzerland

In the town of Vevey, a wine festival held only five times a century returns.

### 21. Warsaw

Plan a trip to the Polish capital to experience its burgeoning creative scene and, yes, the vodka.

## AUTUMN

### 22. Albuquerque

Get to know New Mexico's biggest city by spending time on its new 50-mile loop trail.

### 23. Denver

Artisan goods, bold murals, and handcrafted spirits are redefining a formerly industrial neighborhood.

### 24. Hong Kong

Art is everywhere, including a new waterside cultural district.

### 25. Lebanon

Locals open the doors to their homes—and to a different side of their country.

### Bora Bora

New tours, such as one to the Mount Otemanu volcano, introduce travelers to the wonders of French Polynesia.



## SANTA BARBARA

The American Riviera gets a modern makeover.

by Kirsten Whatley

**WHEN TO GO** The annual California Wine Festival (July 19–20) celebrates some of the best wines in the state, including those from the nearby Santa Ynez Valley, with two days of tastings and food-and-wine pairings.

**WHY NOW** A year after devastating wildfires and massive mudslides in neighboring Montecito, **Santa Barbara is back in full swing.** The Hotel Californian (pictured), with its original 1920s Spanish colonial revival facade, has introduced elegance and energy to the city's historic waterfront. Celebrity designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard dreamed up the interiors,

infusing the 121 rooms and suites with Moroccan elements such as geometric patterns, arched entryways, and gilded sconces. Exit the hotel, and the best of the city is within walking distance. West Beach is just steps away, as is the innovative new MOXI discovery museum, where kids can play with 3-D printers and create their own movie sound effects. Also close: the tasting rooms of the Funk Zone and several new restaurants that round out the city's maturing food scene. There's Blackbird, a Mediterranean restaurant led by a French Laundry and Per Se alum who uses locally sourced, seasonal ingredients, and three new spots—including the Vietnamese restaurant Tyger Tyger—from the prolific Acme Hospitality group. Early 2019 will bring more hotel news, when the Rosewood Miramar Beach opens with 124 rooms and 37 suites on a secluded beach 10 minutes south of downtown.

**HOW TO GET THERE** From Los Angeles, it's a 50-minute flight or a three-hour Amtrak ride to Santa Barbara.

