GREAT 1001

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS, EXCLAVES AND TERRITORIES

Earth in 1001 Regions – The Handbook for Sovereign Explorers



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STAATENLOS

GREAT1001 – Earth in 1001 Regions
The Handbook for Sovereign Explorers

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You can find the complete Masterlist and the community "GREAT1001 // Sovereign Explorers" through Staatenlos.

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FOREWORD

AT 5,644 METERS

Nature knows no bureaucratic borders. It knows no ISO codes, no provincial committees and no politically correct sensitivities.

When you stand at over 5,600 meters on Kala Patthar, in the heart of the High Himalaya, with Mount Everest before you and the colossal ice wall of Pumori at your back, one thing becomes instantly clear: Up there, there is only tectonics, rock, ice and thin air — and the human will to take in our planet with our own eyes.

No boundary stone, no visa and no statistic explains what you are seeing in that moment. Geologically, Everest belongs neither to Nepal nor to China; it belongs to the collision of two continental plates. The valley below you was carved by glaciers, not by civil servants. And yet almost every travel list in the world counts exactly that: countries, provinces, federal states — lines drawn on paper by politicians.

Since the beginning of the year, I have been working behind the scenes on a project that does away with this illusion: **GREAT1001** — *Geographic Regions, Exclaves and Territories*. A remapping of Earth into exactly 1001 non-overlapping tiles, the way our planet physically exists: oceans and deep-sea basins, watersheds and biomes, mountain crests and deserts, true megacities as centers of gravity in their own right — and the most bizarre exclaves and no-man's-lands that human stubbornness has produced.

Let's not kid ourselves: The established clubs of frequent travelers have turned into bookkeeping societies. They count airport transits and five-minute border crossings, while the vastness of Siberia, the Amazon Basin or the Tibetan Plateau carries barely more weight than a rock in the Caribbean. Whoever counts this way is not measuring the world, only their passport stamps.

> *GREAT stands for greatness in every sense: for the magnificence of our planet, freed from the artificial cages that politicians and bureaucrats have imposed on it.*

This book is the map to go with it. It presents each of the 1001 regions — briefly, precisely and in a way that makes you want to set off. It is not a travel guide with hotels and bus timetables; those change faster than a book can be printed. It is an atlas of destinations, a checklist for an entire lifetime and an invitation to see the Earth anew.

Anyone who travels the GREAT1001 collects the true building blocks of our planet — on land, on water, under water and in the air.

The world belongs to those who truly set foot on it. See you out there.

CHRISTOPH HEUERMANN

CHAPTER 1

WHY THE OLD LISTS FAIL

For decades, the travel world has argued over one question: When have you truly seen the world? Every previous answer has failed at the same point — the artificial borders of politics.

Until now, anyone who wanted to measure themselves against other world travelers had to choose between three systems. Each has its merits, and each is broken in its own way. A look at their weaknesses shows why a completely new approach is needed.

SYSTEM 1

TRAVELERS' CENTURY CLUB: THE WESTERN IMBALANCE

With its roughly 330 territories, the Travelers' Century Club was historically the most logical approach. Born in the era of classic aviation, it understood that remote islands and distant territories feel like worlds of their own. But three design flaws make it unusable:

- **Colonial asymmetry.** Crossing the entire Amazon Basin, traveling the Siberian taiga from the Urals to the Pacific or trekking across the Tibetan Plateau earns exactly as much recognition as two hours ashore on a small Caribbean island. Giant countries with dozens of biomes are a single dot, while European overseas possessions are split into tiny fragments.
- **Identical military atolls.** The list is full of closed military bases and reefs that are ecologically and visually indistinguishable from their neighbors. The Chagos Archipelago with Diego Garcia is the southern continuation of the Maldives ridge; Wake, Midway and Johnston are ordinary Pacific atolls.
- **Destinations for the few.** Some of these places remain on the list only because a handful of travelers reached them decades ago with special permits. For everyone else they are closed today. That is not geography, that is a barrier to entry.

SYSTEM 2

MOST TRAVELED PEOPLE: ISLAND FETISH AND LANDING ACROBATICS

To outdo the TCC, Most Traveled People inflated the world map to around 1,500 regions — and lost itself in island obsession and administrative trivia.

- **The obsession with uninhabited rocks.** Oceans are broken down into endless lists of guano rocks, sub-Antarctic ice cliffs and lonely reefs that must be physically set foot on. Spending tens of thousands of dollars on a charter vessel to jump onto a slippery volcanic rock in a five-meter swell, often in the middle of protected areas, has nothing to do with understanding the world. Exploration becomes an expensive stunt for box-tickers.
- **Administrative arbitrariness on land.** While every ocean rock gets its trophy, continents are cut up along arbitrary state, oblast or provincial borders. The reward goes to whoever passes an invisible sign on a highway between two identical cornfields.

SYSTEM 3

NOMADMANIA: PROVINCE COUNTING AND THE ANTI-ISLAND REFLEX

With its 1,381 regions, NomadMania set out to correct the island mania — and swung to the opposite extreme while doubling down on administrative bureaucracy.

- **True island worlds thrown under the bus.** In a reflex against island collectors, islands were radically purged, even where they are geographically, culturally and historically worlds of their own. Merging distinct island civilizations, isolated archipelagos and unique volcanic ecosystems into mainland provinces destroys geographical reality.
- **The rule of the census map.** Instead of looking at the Earth, the system follows the administrative units of statistics offices. If a densely populated country redraws its provinces, dozens of tiles appear. If a vast wilderness happens to lie within a single administrative district, it disappears.

ONE FLAW, THREE VARIANTS

Different as the three systems are, they share the same birth defect: They start with the political map and then try to squeeze nature into it. GREAT1001 reverses this logic. It begins with the Earth as it is. Politics only comes into play where it has truly created a reality of its own.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOLUTION: 1001 TILES

GREAT1001 shatters these illusions with a first-principles approach and the "Goldilocks Principle": exactly 1001 logical, non-overlapping tiles that map our planet as it physically exists.

Imagine crossing the endless expanses of the Siberian taiga, passing over the Urals and reaching the Arctic Ocean. On political lists, you have visited exactly one country: Russia. If instead you fly to the Lesser Antilles for a long weekend and hop between four tiny, politically separate islands, you are suddenly hailed as a world traveler.

GREAT1001 ends this distortion. We ignore the invisible lines of politicians and statistics offices and follow the hard, visible lines of nature: tectonic rifts, great watersheds, ocean basins, biomes, urban centers of gravity and genuine geopolitical anomalies.

NOT TOO COARSE, NOT TOO FINE

The Goldilocks Principle describes the search for the right measure. A list with 300 entries is too coarse: It shrinks entire continents to a single dot. A list with 1,500 entries is too fine: It loses itself in rocks and provinces. 1001 tiles are enough to capture every great landscape, every independent island world and every true global city, and few enough to remain tangible as a life goal. As in the Thousand and One Nights, every tile tells its own story.

Non-overlapping means: Every point on Earth belongs to exactly one tile. There is no double counting, there are no gaps and no special categories running in parallel. A metropolis is cut out of its surroundings, an exclave out of its environment — and the surrounding land still counts in its own right.

THE 1001 TILES AT A GLANCE

I	The Hydrosphere	1–40	**40**
II	Antarctica & the Sub-Antarctic	41–64	**24**
III	Europe	65–300	**236**
IV	Asia	301–545	**245**
V	Oceania	546–630	**85**
VI	North & Central America	631–768	**138**
VII	South America	769–843	**75**
VIII	Africa & the Western Indian Ocean	844–1001	**158**

Anyone who travels the GREAT1001 collects the true building blocks of our planet. The following five paradigms explain the logic by which these building blocks are cut.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIVE PARADIGMS

Five principles determine how the Earth is broken down into 1001 tiles. They explain why an ocean, a desert and a megacity stand side by side as equals on the same list. The numbers in the small boxes refer to the tiles in the main part of the book.

1 THE WATER-MASS REVOLUTION

TILES 1–40

Seen from space, 71 percent of our planet is covered by water. Yet for a century, every travel club in the world has treated the oceans as annoying empty space between two airports. GREAT1001 is the first system to make the hydrosphere a destination in its own right. The first 40 tiles belong to the open ocean basins, the most important marginal seas, the great rift lakes and humanity's most monumental hydrological works.

- **Oceans and marginal seas.** Crossing the Drake Passage 15, sailing the South Pacific 23, navigating the shoreless Sargasso Sea 6 or diving in the rift basin of the Red Sea 13, in the Coral Sea 21 or in the Torres Strait 20 means engaging with self-contained marine worlds that no state owns.
- **Inland seas and hydraulic engineering.** A body of water like Lake Baikal 306 — over 1,600 meters deep and holding a fifth of the Earth's unfrozen surface freshwater — or the Caspian Sea 40, Lake Tanganyika 38 and Lake Superior 30 is geographically more significant than dozens of small nations. Passing through the locks of the Panama Canal 9, transiting the Suez Canal 12 or standing before the Three Gorges Dam 448 and the Itaipu Dam 35 means witnessing humanity severing continents and taming water masses of planetary scale.

2 INTELLIGENT ISLAND LOGIC

ISLANDS

GREAT1001 strikes the balance that MTP and NomadMania missed: consolidate where it makes sense, separate where it is earned.

- **Smart consolidation of identical atolls.** Instead of sending travelers chasing eight closed American military reefs that all look like ordinary coral rings, GREAT1001 bundles Wake, Midway, Johnston, Palmyra, Kingman, Baker, Howland and Jarvis into one tile 613. In the same way, New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands are grouped with the Chatham Islands 584, and France's scattered coral islands around Madagascar form the Îles Éparses 997.
- **When an island earns its own tile.** Islands are never merged into mainland provinces if they possess true geographical, biological or cultural independence. An island or archipelago earns its own tile if it meets at least one of three strict criteria.

THE THREE ISLAND CRITERIA

Distinct cultural and historical identity: Rapa Nui 830, Okinawa and the Ryukyu Arc 484, Zanzibar 951, Socotra 373, Corsica 146 or Jeju 475 are civilizations in their own right.

Extreme isolation, endemism and pelagic ecology: Laboratories of evolution and oases in the open ocean such as the Galápagos 803, St. Helena 58, Tristan da Cunha 57, South Georgia 54 or the shark ridge of Cocos Island and Malpelo 730. A mini-continent like Madagascar is divided into its five ecological zones 992–996.

Tectonic and geological uniqueness: The western Azores 179 lie on the North American Plate, the rest 178 at the triple junction with Eurasia and Africa. Macquarie Island 64 consists of mantle rock above sea level. In the Indian Ocean, the active shield volcano of Réunion 999, the eroded caldera of Mauritius 1000 and the lagoon of Rodrigues 1001 each receive a tile of their own.

3 METROPOLISES
URBAN ISLANDS

Why is Greater Tokyo 479, Chongqing 447 or New York 663 a standalone geographic region, on par with the Sahara or the Amazon? Because in the 21st century, humanity itself has become a geological force. True megacities have permanently overwritten their original biomes. They generate their own heat islands, alter the water balance and bend the economic, cultural and logistical gravity of entire continents.

GREAT1001 treats these colossi as "Urban Islands," cut out of their natural hinterland. To experience wild, volcanic Japan, you travel Hokkaido 476 or the Japanese Alps 480; to experience the greatest density of people on Earth, you enter Tokyo. The Sichuan Basin 445 and the Three Gorges 448 are a completely different reality from

the vertical megacity of Chongqing. From Lagos 905, Cairo 868 and Jakarta 517 to São Paulo 801, Mexico City 714, Bangalore 422 and Lahore 390, only true urban heavyweights receive this status — never provincial towns.

4 CONTINENTS
WATERSHEDS, TECTONICS & BIOMES OVER ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERS

How do you divide giant landmasses like the United States, Russia, China, Brazil, Canada, Australia or India? Ask a politician or a travel app and you get 50 US states, 85 Russian federal subjects or 26 Brazilian states. Yet when you drive across the ruler-straight border from North to South Dakota or from Saskatchewan to Alberta, nothing changes at all. You are standing in the same endless prairie of the Great Plains 680 653.

- **The watershed principle.** A river basin is a self-contained natural unit. In the Amazon, GREAT1001 distinguishes the delta with Marajó 786, the Solimões floodplain 789, the acidic blackwater basin of the Rio Negro 790, the clear-water basins of the Tapajós and Xingu 788 and the Madeira Basin 791. Cross the Andean watershed into the Atacama 829 or the volcanic Puna 828, and you leave the world's wettest river system for the driest desert on Earth.
- **Rain shadows and vertical zones.** Conventional lists look at the Himalaya and see only "Nepal" or "India." Any real explorer knows that the jungles of the Terai 399 and the glaciated southern wall of the High Himalaya 398 are separated by a tectonic wall from the rain-shadow desert north of the main crest: the Trans-Himalaya of Mustang and Dolpo 397, Ladakh 396 and Western Tibet with Mount Kailash 432.
- **True wilderness instead of clustered capitals.** Rather than collecting points in crowded tourist centers, GREAT1001 maps every major wilderness biome on Earth: from the fjord system of Northeast Greenland 631 and the Putorana Plateau 304 to Colombia's western Guiana Shield 776, the Kimberley 548, the great deserts of Western Australia 566, the Ennedi 877, the Danakil Depression 926 and the Kaokoveld 965.

5 ANOMALIES
RIFTS IN THE MATRIX

Geography is 95 percent raw nature. The remaining five percent is the fascinating, bizarre result of human stubbornness, medieval treaties, colonial mapping errors and geopolitical standoffs. When a border is drawn so absurdly that it defies all phys-

ical logic, it creates a micro-reality of its own on the ground. GREAT1001 includes these territorial anomalies as true expedition targets.

- **Enclaves and counter-enclaves.** In Baarle-Hertog and Baarle-Nassau 125, the border between Belgium and the Netherlands runs through living rooms and cafés. Madha and Nahwa 364 form an Emirati village inside an Omani enclave in the middle of the Emirates. In the Fergana Valley lie the heavily guarded exclaves of Sokh 331, Shohimardan 332 and Vorukh 333.
- **Pene-exclaves and border points.** Jungholz 200 is connected to Austria by a single point on a mountain summit, joined by Alpine curiosities such as the Kleinwalsertal 199, Samnaun 197 and Livigno 198. In North America lie Point Roberts 649 and the Northwest Angle 678 — US territories cut off from the mainland by the 49th parallel.
- **True no-man's-land.** Between Egypt and Sudan lies Bir Tawil 872, a desert trapezoid of around 2,060 square kilometers that neither state claims — alongside Marie Byrd Land 50 in Antarctica, the last true no-man's-land on Earth.

CHAPTER 4

THE GOLDEN RULES: WHAT COUNTS AS A VISIT?

A flyover at ten kilometers' altitude counts for nothing. Nor does the bureaucratic game of sitting in an airport lounge. Four clear, pragmatic rules decide whether a tile counts as visited.

1

PHYSICAL CONTACT — THE STANDARD FOR LAND TILES

For more than 90 percent of the list, you must set foot on the ground of the tile and move through its geographical space. Whoever drives, hikes, paddles or spends the night in a region has experienced it.

2

PASSAGE ON THE WATER — FOR WATER TILES 1 TO 40

Looking at the sea from the beach does not count. Oceans, marginal seas, great lakes and canals must be crossed on or in the water — aboard a ship, ferry, expedition vessel or sailboat, or by diving and swimming in open water.

3

THE VISIBILITY RULE — NO SUICIDAL STUNTS, NO PERMIT BARRIERS

Unlike MTP, GREAT1001 forces no one to break conservation laws or jump onto vertical rocks in heavy seas. For places that are legally off-limits — military and nuclear exclusion zones like Bikini Atoll or Diego Garcia, strict nature reserves like Bouvet Island — or that are life-threatening, such as the summit of Mount Everest or hyperactive volcanoes like Mount Erebus or Whakaari, the Visibility Rule applies: If you approach the target at ground or sea level close enough to see it clearly, unmistakably and unobstructed with your own eyes, you have captured its geography. For example, when viewing Erebus from an expedition ship, or from Kala Patthar at 5,644 meters, with a clear view of the summit pyramid of Everest.

4

THE ANTI-TRANSIT CHECK

Airport transits never count — unless you leave the terminal and actually experience the surrounding city or natural region.

HONESTY INSTEAD OF BURDEN OF PROOF

GREAT1001 is not an examination board. There are no stamp checks and no commission reviewing photos. The rules are worded so that every traveler can honestly apply them for themselves. Whoever cheats, cheats only themselves — and still won't have seen the world.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Unlike conventional lists, which dump regions into alphabetical tables or sort them by country, the Masterlist from 1 to 1001 is laid out as one continuous journey across the planet.

A JOURNEY IN 1001 STEPS

After the Hydrosphere 1–40 and Antarctica 41–64, every tile borders the next. Metropolises and exclaves sit in their true neighborhood, not in separate category blocks: Traveling down the Italian peninsula from the Dolomites 205 and the Po Valley 206, you meet Milan 207, San Marino 211, Rome 213 and the Vatican 214 in exactly the order in which they appear on the ground.

This lets you trace your finger across the globe without interruption: from Iceland 65 through the British Isles, Scandinavia and Continental Europe to the Urals 298–300, across the watershed into Siberia 301, through Central Asia, the Middle East, the Himalaya, China, Japan and Southeast Asia down to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific 546–630, across the Bering Strait to Greenland, Arctic Canada and Alaska 631–644, down the entire spine of the Americas to Cape Horn 842 — and finally from Morocco 844 through the Sahara and West, Central, East and Southern Africa to the Cape 989 and out into the Indian Ocean 990–1001.

ANATOMY OF AN ENTRY

Every tile follows the same structure: on the left, its Masterlist number and a box to check off; on the right, its Masterlist name, expedition grade and category. Below, a short text explains what defines the region and why it is a tile of its own. The highlights name places and experiences you should not miss.

306 ☐

LAKE BAIKAL RIFT BASIN

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *Deepest Continental Rift Lake / RU*

The oldest and deepest lake on Earth: over 25 million years old, up to 1,642 meters deep and home to around a fifth of the liquid freshwater on the Earth's surface. The Baikal seal and countless endemic species live here. In March the crystal-clear ice becomes a road; on Olkhon, Shaman Rock rises from the water.

HIGHLIGHTS Olkhon & Shaman Rock · Clear ice in March · Circum-Baikal Railway

THE FOURTEEN CATEGORIES

- Ocean & Sea
- Inland Waters
- Polar & Ice
- Extreme Point
- Island & Archipelago
- Mountains & Highlands
- Volcano & Geothermal
- Desert & Arid Land
- Forest & Rainforest
- Plain, River & Steppe
- Cultural Landscape
- Coast & Peninsula
- Urban Island
- Anomaly & Exclave

THE EXPEDITION GRADE

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY	A metropolis or well-developed region, reachable at any time with normal travel infrastructure.
◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE	Developed for tourism, but requires some planning, ferries or domestic flights.
◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE	Off the main routes: long journeys, 4x4 vehicles, visas or seasonal windows required.
◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION	A true expedition: remote and expensive, often with permits or specialist ships.
◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME	Extreme: nearly unreachable, militarily restricted or life-threatening. The Visibility Rule often applies.

A WORD ON SAFETY AND ACCURACY

The expedition grade is an assessment as of fall 2026. It describes how much effort it takes to reach a tile — not how rewarding it is. Wars, border closures, visas and permits change quickly. Check current travel and safety advisories before every trip, and respect protected areas, local rules and the people who live there.

I

TILES 1–40 · 40 REGIONS

THE HYDROSPHERE

Oceans, Marginal Seas & Inland Waters

71 percent of the Earth is blue — and yet every travel list so far has treated water as empty space between two airports. That is why GREAT1001 begins where the planet is at its greatest: on the open ocean basins, the marginal seas, the great rift lakes and at the works with which humanity has severed continents and tamed rivers.

A rule of its own applies to these forty tiles: The view from the beach bar does not count. To claim a water tile, you must sail across it or swim through it — aboard a ferry, a freighter, an expedition ship or a sailboat, or on a dive in open water.

21 Ocean & Sea **16** Inland Waters **3** Extreme Point

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **2.7** OF 5

1 Geographic North Pole

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *90° N*

Not land but pack ice two to three meters thick, drifting over more than 4,000 meters of deep sea: Here all lines of longitude meet and every direction points south. The Pole can only be reached by icebreaker or on skis across the ice — and because the ice is constantly moving, the exact point must first be found by GPS on the day of arrival.

HIGHLIGHTS 90° N · Icebreaker passage · "Last Degree" ski expedition · Polar day

2 Arctic Ocean

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The smallest and shallowest of the world's oceans, almost entirely enclosed by Eurasia and North America and hidden under sea ice for months on end. In summer, the Northeast and Northwest Passages open to expedition ships. What counts is a voyage across the open basin beyond the shelf seas — a world of drifting floes, walruses and polar bears.

HIGHLIGHTS Pack ice edge · Northeast Passage · Polar bears on floes

3 North Atlantic Ocean

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The ocean that links the Old World with the New: the Gulf Stream, the North Atlantic Drift and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which pushes Europe and America a good two centimeters apart every year. Whoever crosses it by transatlantic passage, freighter or sailboat follows the classic route of the explorers — with storms, whales and days of nothing but horizon.

HIGHLIGHTS Transatlantic passage · Gulf Stream · Whales off the Azores

4 North Sea & Wadden Sea Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

OCEAN & SEA

A shallow shelf sea over sunken land: Where ferries and oil rigs now operate, the inhabited land of Doggerland lay 10,000 years ago. The Wadden Sea between Den Helder and Esbjerg is the largest continuous tidal system on Earth and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It counts on the water — by ferry or sailing trip, not on a mudflat walk.

HIGHLIGHTS Dogger Bank · Seal banks · Ferry to Heligoland

5 Baltic Sea

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

OCEAN & SEA *Brackish Inland Sea*

The largest brackish sea on Earth — so low in salt that pike swim alongside herring in its inner bays. The Baltic is young, formed only after the last Ice Age, and the land around the Gulf of Bothnia still rises by almost a centimeter each year. Night ferries between Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn and Travemünde make it Europe's easiest water tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Night ferry Stockholm–Helsinki · Skerry gardens · Gulf of Bothnia

6 ☐

Sargasso Sea

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

OCEAN & SEA *The Sea Without Shores*

The only sea without a coast: It is bounded not by land but by four ocean currents that form a giant gyre around Bermuda. Golden-brown mats of sargassum drift on the deep blue, nutrient-poor water, and European and American eels spawn in its depths. Reachable on Atlantic crossings, sailing trips from Bermuda or repositioning cruises.

HIGHLIGHTS Sargassum mats · Eel spawning grounds · Sailing from Bermuda

7 ☐

Gulf of Mexico

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Deep-Sea Basin & Campeche Bank*

An almost enclosed deep-sea basin more than 4,000 meters deep, with the Chicxulub crater on its southern edge — the impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. Its warm water is the kitchen of hurricanes and feeds the Gulf Stream; the Campeche Bank off Yucatán is a shallow limestone platform full of reefs. It counts by ferry, cruise or offshore dive.

HIGHLIGHTS Sigsbee Deep · Chicxulub crater · Campeche Bank

8 ☐

Caribbean Sea

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

OCEAN & SEA *Deep-Sea Basin*

The basin between the Greater and Lesser Antilles and the Central American mainland drops to over 7,600 meters in the Cayman Trough. Turquoise shallows over coral, deep blue passages in between: No other sea is so densely traveled by cruise ships and sailing yachts. A true passage counts — the view from the beach bar is not enough.

HIGHLIGHTS Cayman Trough · Sailing the Grenadines · Mesoamerican Reef

9 ☐

Panama Canal

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Western Continental Cut*

The western continental cut: 82 kilometers of canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific and lifting ships 26 meters up to Gatún Lake by way of locks. Since 1914 it has spared vessels the voyage around Cape Horn. The tile only counts with a true transit — as a passenger on a transit boat, freighter or cruise ship, or as a line handler on a sailing yacht.

HIGHLIGHTS Miraflores Locks · Gatún Lake · Line handling on yachts

10 ☐

Mediterranean Sea

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

OCEAN & SEA *Pelagic Deep Sea*

A remnant of the ancient Tethys Ocean, wedged between Africa and Europe and more than 5,200 meters deep in the Calypso Deep off Greece. Almost six million years ago it dried out nearly completely. The cradle of the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans only counts on the open sea — for instance on a night ferry from Genoa to Tunis or from Barcelona to Mallorca.

HIGHLIGHTS Calypso Deep · Night ferries · Messinian salinity crisis

11 ☐

Corinth Canal

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Human Geography*

Six kilometers long, only 21 meters wide and flanked by rock walls almost 80 meters high: Opened in 1893, the canal separates the Peloponnese from the Greek mainland, effectively making it an island. Emperor Nero had already begun digging here. The tile counts with a passage — by excursion boat, sailing yacht or small cruise ship.

HIGHLIGHTS Passage through the rock cleft · Nero's excavations · Submersible bridges

12 ☐

Suez Canal

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *Eastern Continental Cut*

The eastern continental cut: 193 kilometers of lock-free waterway between Port Said and Suez that has separated Africa from Asia since 1869 and nearly halved the sea route from Europe to India. Around one-eighth of world trade passes through the desert here. Passengers experience it on repositioning cruises, freighter voyages or as crew on delivery trips.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Bitter Lake · Port Said · Ships in the middle of the desert

13 ☐

Red Sea

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Tectonic Rift Basin*

An ocean in the making: Here the Arabian Plate is tearing away from Africa by a good centimeter each year. Few inflows and strong evaporation make the Red Sea one of the saltiest seas in the world, home to coral reefs of astonishing heat tolerance. Dive safaris from Hurghada, Marsa Alam or Port Sudan count just as much as a ship passage.

HIGHLIGHTS Dive safari · Brothers Islands · Wreck of the Thistlegorm

14 ☐

South Atlantic Ocean

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The loneliest of the great oceans: hardly any shipping, hardly any islands — only St. Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha as tiny dots in the blue. Beneath the surface runs the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, from whose vicinity these volcanic islands rise. Those who cross it do so by freighter, expedition cruise or sailboat between Cape Town and South America.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Town–Rio passage · Mid-Atlantic Ridge · Flying fish

15 ☐

Drake Passage & Scotia Sea

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA *Southern Ocean Bottleneck*

The bottleneck of the Southern Ocean: Only about 800 kilometers separate Cape Horn from the South Shetland Islands, and through this gap squeezes the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, the mightiest ocean current on Earth. Ten-meter waves are not uncommon. Every ship expedition from Ushuaia must pass through: the "Drake Shake" — or, with luck, the "Drake Lake."

HIGHLIGHTS Drake Shake · Wandering albatrosses · Antarctic Convergence

16 ☐

Southern Ocean

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA *Antarctic Basin*

The ocean encircling Antarctica south of 60° South, driven by the Circumpolar Current and recognized as an ocean in its own right only in recent decades. Tabular icebergs the size of small states, huge swarms of krill, whales and penguins by the million. What counts is a voyage south of the Antarctic Convergence — usually on the way to the Peninsula or the Ross Sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Tabular icebergs · Krill & humpback whales · 60° South

17 ☐

Indian Ocean

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The warmest of the world's oceans and the basin of the monsoons: For millennia, its seasonally reversing winds carried Arab dhows, Indian traders and Swahili merchants back and forth between Africa and Asia. Today it is the main artery for oil and containers. What counts is a passage on the open sea — between the Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius or on the South Africa–Australia route.

HIGHLIGHTS Monsoon winds · Dhow routes · Bioluminescence

18 ☐

Arabian Sea

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

OCEAN & SEA

The northwestern arm of the Indian Ocean between Arabia and India — the stage of the southwest monsoon, which slams into Oman, Pakistan and India's west coast with full force every summer. At mid-depth lies one of the largest oxygen minimum zones in the world. The sea routes between Oman, Gujarat and the Lakshadweep Islands are among the oldest trade routes of humankind.

HIGHLIGHTS Monsoon coast of Dhofar · Dhow yards of Sur · Lakshadweep Sea

19 ☐

South China Sea

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

A marginal sea carrying around one-third of global shipping, framed by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Borneo and the Malay Peninsula. Beneath the surface: reefs, atolls and a central basin more than 5,000 meters deep; politically, one of the most contested waters on Earth. It counts by ferry, cruise or dive safari, for example between Hong Kong, Vietnam and Borneo.

HIGHLIGHTS Typhoon season · Spratly atolls · Container convoy off Singapore

20 ☐

Torres Strait & Arafura Sea

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA

The flooded land bridge between Australia and New Guinea — dry land until around 8,000 years ago, today a shallow shelf sea with more than 270 islands and treacherous tidal currents. The Torres Strait Islanders maintain their own Melanesian culture here. What counts is a passage through the strait or across the Arafura Sea between Darwin, Thursday Island and New Guinea.

HIGHLIGHTS Thursday Island · Tidal currents · Dugongs & sea turtles

21 Coral Sea

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

OCEAN & SEA

Named for its reefs: On its western edge lies the Great Barrier Reef, and farther out solitary reef platforms such as Osprey Reef rise steeply from the deep sea. In 1942 it saw the first naval battle in which the opposing ships never laid eyes on each other. It counts on liveaboard dive trips into the Coral Sea Marine Park or on passages to New Caledonia and Vanuatu.

HIGHLIGHTS Osprey Reef · Liveaboard diving · Battle of the Coral Sea

22 Tasman Sea

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

OCEAN & SEA

The rough sea between Australia and New Zealand, known to sailors simply as "The Ditch": around 2,000 kilometers of open water, notorious for sudden westerly storms. Abel Tasman was the first European to cross it, in 1642. Today cruises link Sydney with Auckland, and the legendary Sydney–Hobart yacht race runs along its western edge.

HIGHLIGHTS "The Ditch" · Sydney–Auckland passage · Sydney–Hobart race

23 South Pacific Ocean

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The largest empty space on Earth: Between New Zealand, Chile and Polynesia lie millions of square kilometers of ocean with only scattered dots of islands. Polynesian seafarers navigated here by stars, swell and bird flight, centuries before the Europeans. What counts is a true high-seas passage, for instance by supply ship to Pitcairn, on the sailors' "Coconut Milk Run" or by expedition cruise.

HIGHLIGHTS Polynesian navigation · Coconut Milk Run · South Pacific swell

24 Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *Point Nemo / South Pacific Gyre*

The oceanic pole of inaccessibility: around 2,700 kilometers from the nearest land — the crew of the space station, orbiting about 400 kilometers overhead, is often closer than anyone on land. The point lies in the nutrient-poor South Pacific Gyre, one of the most lifeless ocean regions, and serves as a graveyard for decommissioned spacecraft. Only ocean races and rare expeditions cross here.

HIGHLIGHTS 48°52′ S, 123°23′ W · Spacecraft graveyard · The Ocean Race route

25 North Pacific Ocean

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

OCEAN & SEA *Open Basin*

The largest continuous expanse of ocean on Earth, from Japan to California, from the Aleutians to Hawaii. Here lie the Ring of Fire with its deep-sea trenches, the migration routes of tuna and whales — and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. What counts is a true high-seas passage, for instance a Vancouver–Japan repositioning cruise, a crossing to Hawaii or a container ship voyage.

HIGHLIGHTS Kuroshio Current · Passage to Hawaii · Pacific Ring of Fire

26 Mariana Trench

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *Deepest Point of Earth's Crust*

The deepest point in the Earth's crust: In the Challenger Deep, the seafloor drops to around 10,935 meters — Mount Everest would vanish inside, with two kilometers of water still above its summit. Here the Pacific Plate dives beneath the Philippine Plate. What counts is crossing the trench by ship; dives to the bottom are reserved for a handful of people.

HIGHLIGHTS Challenger Deep · Subduction zone · Marianas marine protected area

27 Bering Sea

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

OCEAN & SEA *Northern Marginal Sea*

The northern marginal sea of the Pacific between Alaska and Siberia — one of the most productive fishing grounds in the world and home to seals, walruses and seabirds in unimaginable numbers. The first people migrated to America across the Ice Age land bridge of Beringia. It counts by expedition ship between Nome, the Pribilof Islands and Chukotka.

HIGHLIGHTS Pribilof Islands · Crab fishermen · Beringia

28 Great Bear Lake

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

INLAND WATERS *Canada*

The largest lake lying entirely within Canada, and one of the last great lakes without roads or industry on its shores. The Arctic Circle cuts through it, and it lies under ice for eight months a year. The Dene community of Déline is the only settlement on its shore; fly-in lodges attract anglers, for the world-record lake trout was caught here in 1995.

HIGHLIGHTS Arctic Circle · Fly-in fishing lodges · Déline

29 Great Slave Lake

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *Canada*

At around 614 meters, the deepest lake in North America. On its north shore lies Yellowknife, capital of the Northwest Territories; in winter the ice becomes a road and a front-row seat for the northern lights. The East Arm with the young Thaidene Nëné protected area displays fjords and granite cliffs in the middle of the Canadian Shield.

HIGHLIGHTS Yellowknife · Ice roads · Northern lights

30 Lake Superior

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *North American Great Lakes*

The largest freshwater lake on Earth by area: 82,000 square kilometers, cold, clear and moody — storms have sunk over 350 ships here, including the "Edmund Fitzgerald" in 1975. The north shore in Ontario is wild and almost deserted, and ice caves form at the Apostle Islands in winter. It counts by ferry to Isle Royale, kayak trip or lake cruise.

HIGHLIGHTS Isle Royale · Pictured Rocks · Ice caves of the Apostle Islands

31 ☐

Lake Michigan–Huron

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Dual Hydrological System*

Hydrologically a single lake: Lakes Michigan and Huron lie at exactly the same elevation and are linked by the eight-kilometer-wide Straits of Mackinac — together the largest freshwater basin in the world by area. Migrating dunes on Michigan's east shore, the tens of thousands of islands of Georgian Bay and car-free Mackinac Island define this tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Mackinac Island · Sleeping Bear Dunes · Islands of Georgian Bay

32 ☐

Hoover Dam & Lake Mead

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *USA*

A monument to American engineering: 221 meters of concrete, completed in 1936, impound the Colorado River to form the largest reservoir in the USA. The water level has fallen dramatically for years; white "bathtub rings" on the rock walls show the former waterline. A boat trip on the lake, just 40 minutes by car from Las Vegas, completes the tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Walk across the dam · Kayaking in Black Canyon · Bathtub rings

33 ☐

Lake Titicaca

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *High Andes*

At 3,812 meters, the highest commercially navigable lake on Earth, shared between Peru and Bolivia. The Uros live on floating reed islands, and on the Isla del Sol stand Inca sanctuaries — here the sun god is said to have created the first Inca. It counts by boat, for instance from Puno to the islands or from Copacabana to the Isla del Sol.

HIGHLIGHTS Reed islands of the Uros · Isla del Sol · Taquile

34 ☐

Guri Dam & Reservoir

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

INLAND WATERS *Venezuela*

The Simón Bolívar hydroelectric plant on the Río Caroní supplies most of Venezuela's electricity and is among the most powerful in the world. Its reservoir covers more than 4,000 square kilometers between the Guiana Shield and the savanna, with dead treetops rising from the dark water. The starting point is Ciudad Guayana — it counts with a boat trip on the lake.

HIGHLIGHTS Dam on the Caroní · Drowned forests · Ciudad Guayana

35 ☐

Itaipu Dam

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Brazil/Paraguay*

The binational plant of Brazil and Paraguay on the Paraná long held the world record for power generation at over 100 terawatt-hours a year. Twenty turbines, a dam almost eight kilometers long and a reservoir of 1,350 square kilometers lie near Foz do Iguaçu, not far from Iguazú Falls. Boat tours on the reservoir complete the tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Tour inside the dam · Night illumination · Foz do Iguaçu

36 ☐

Aswan High Dam & Lake Nasser

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Egypt/Sudan*

Completed in 1970, the dam tames the annual Nile flood that had shaped Egypt since the time of the pharaohs. Behind it, Lake Nasser stretches over 500 kilometers into Sudan; for its sake, the temples of Abu Simbel were moved block by block. A multi-day cruise across the lake to Abu Simbel is the most elegant way to claim this tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Abu Simbel · Lake Nasser cruise · Temple of Kalabsha

37 ☐

Lake Victoria

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *East Africa*

The largest lake in Africa by area and the largest tropical lake on Earth, shared between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. At Jinja, the White Nile leaves the lake. Lake Victoria is a laboratory of evolution: Hundreds of cichlid species arose here in the shortest of geological times. Ferries to the Ssese Islands or to Ukerewe make it a water tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Source of the Nile at Jinja · Ssese Islands · Cichlid evolution

38 ☐

Lake Tanganyika

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *East African Rift*

Up to 1,470 meters deep and around 670 kilometers long: the second-deepest and one of the oldest lakes on Earth, sunk into the western arm of the East African Rift. Four countries share its shores. The legendary MV Liemba, built in Papenburg in 1913, sailed between Kigoma and Mpulungu for decades; in Gombe and Mahale, chimpanzees live right on the shore.

HIGHLIGHTS MV Liemba · Chimpanzees of Gombe · Kigoma

39 ☐

Kariba Dam & Reservoir

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Zambia/Zimbabwe*

One of the largest reservoirs in the world by volume, filled in 1959 between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The dead trees of the drowned Zambezi valley still rise from the water; elephants, hippos and crocodiles line the shores, and houseboats drift beneath a vast African sky. A houseboat tour or the ferry across the lake secures the tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Houseboats · Matusadona · Tigerfish

40 ☐

Caspian Sea

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *Largest Endorheic Inland Sea*

The largest landlocked body of water on Earth — bigger than Germany and neither a true lake nor a real sea. Five states share its shores; here live the last great sturgeon stocks and the Caspian seal. As the water level falls, coasts and islands are growing. It counts by cargo ferry between Baku and Aktau or Türkmenbaşy — an adventure with an open timetable.

HIGHLIGHTS Ferry from Baku · Caspian seal · Oil city of Neft Daşları

II

TILES 41–64 · 24 REGIONS

ANTARCTICA & THE SUB-ANTARCTIC

The Ice at the End of the World and Its Lonely Islands

A continent without a state, without inhabitants and without roads — and a ring of islands among the most remote points on Earth. Here lie the South Pole, the Pole of Cold, the highest mountain and the largest unclaimed land on Earth, along with the islands of the South Atlantic and southern Indian Ocean, where penguins form the majority.

Many of these tiles can only be reached on expeditions, and some cannot be set foot on at all. For places such as Bouvet Island or Mount Erebus, the Visibility Rule therefore applies: Whoever sees them clearly with their own eyes from a ship has captured them.

10 Island & Archipelago	6 Polar & Ice	3 Extreme Point
3 Volcano & Geothermal	1 Mountains & Highlands	1 Desert & Arid Land

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **4.8** OF 5

41 Geographic South Pole

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *90° S*

At 2,835 meters, on ice nearly three kilometers thick: Here stands the US Amundsen-Scott Station with the ceremonial pole and its ring of flags. The geographic marker is reset every year because the ice moves on by around ten meters. Roald Amundsen reached the Pole in 1911; today expeditions fly from Union Glacier or ski the "Last Degree."

HIGHLIGHTS Ceremonial pole · Amundsen-Scott Station · Last Degree on skis

42 Karman Line Space

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *Curvature of Earth*

The only tile without ground: At an altitude of 100 kilometers, space begins by international convention. From there the curvature of the Earth is unmistakable, the sky black and the atmosphere just a thin blue seam. Since suborbital flights began carrying private passengers, this boundary has been within reach of civilians for the first time. Taken to its logical end, only those who actually pass the 100-kilometer mark count.

HIGHLIGHTS 100 km altitude · Weightlessness · View of the Earth's curvature

43 Vostok Station Region

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

EXTREME POINT *Glacial Pole of Cold*

The Earth's Pole of Cold: In 1983, minus 89.2 degrees Celsius was recorded at Russia's Vostok Station — the lowest air temperature ever directly measured. Under almost four kilometers of ice lies Lake Vostok, cut off from the outside world for millions of years. For tourism, the region is practically unreachable; only research flights and traverses lead here.

HIGHLIGHTS −89.2 °C · Subglacial Lake Vostok · Ice cores

44 Queen Maud Land

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

POLAR & ICE *East Antarctica*

A sector of East Antarctica claimed by Norway: Spectacular granite spires such as Ulvetanna and Rakekniven rise from the ice sheet here — big-wall objectives at the end of the world. On the coast, emperor penguins breed on the sea ice. Adventurers reach this part of the continent by direct flight from Cape Town to ice runways near Novolazarevskaya Station.

HIGHLIGHTS Granite spires of Fenriskjeften · Emperor penguins · Flight from Cape Town

45 Amery Ice Shelf Region

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE

Here the Lambert Glacier, one of the largest glaciers in the world, flows into the sea and feeds the third-largest ice shelf in Antarctica. Prydz Bay with Australia's Davis Station and the ice-free Vestfold Hills lies in one of the most remote corners of the planet — a rare destination even for Antarctic expeditions.

HIGHLIGHTS Lambert Glacier · Vestfold Hills · Prydz Bay

46 Wilkes Land

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE *East Antarctica*

A huge, rarely visited coastal sector of East Antarctica opposite Australia, with Casey Station and the Totten Glacier, which alone stores enough ice for several meters of sea-level rise. Farther east, at Commonwealth Bay, Douglas Mawson's huts stand in the "Home of the Blizzard." Only rare expedition ships from Hobart or New Zealand come here, when the pack ice allows.

HIGHLIGHTS Casey Station · Totten Glacier · Mawson's Huts

47 Ross Ice Shelf & Victoria Land

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE

The largest ice shelf on Earth, almost the size of France, ends in an ice cliff up to 50 meters high, the "Great Barrier" of the polar explorers. On the Ross Sea stand the huts of Scott and Shackleton, as if abandoned only yesterday. Victoria Land with the Transantarctic Mountains can only be reached on rare expeditions from New Zealand.

HIGHLIGHTS Ice barrier · Scott's Hut at Cape Evans · Transantarctic Mountains

48 Mount Erebus

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Active Antarctic Ice Volcano*

The southernmost active volcano on Earth, 3,794 meters high, with one of the few permanent lava lakes in the world in its crater. Escaping steam forms ice towers and ice caves on its flanks. The Visibility Rule applies to this tile: Whoever sees the smoking summit clearly and unobstructed from a ship in the Ross Sea or from McMurdo has captured it.

HIGHLIGHTS Lava lake · Fumarole ice towers · Visibility Rule

49 McMurdo Dry Valleys

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND *Ice-Free Polar Desert*

The most extreme desert on Earth: Parts of these ice-free valleys have seen no rain for millions of years, and katabatic winds evaporate all moisture. Here lie mummified seals, salt lakes under ice lids and Blood Falls, whose iron-rich water seeps rust-red from the Taylor Glacier. NASA tests Mars technology here. Access only by helicopter as part of an expedition.

HIGHLIGHTS Blood Falls · Don Juan Pond · Mars test site

50 Marie Byrd Land

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE *Largest Unclaimed Territory on Earth*

The largest piece of land on Earth claimed by no state: around 1.6 million square kilometers of ice, volcanoes and coast between the Ross Sea and the Amundsen Sea. Here stands Mount Sidley, the highest volcano in Antarctica, and beneath the ice lies an active volcanic province. Expeditions are extremely rare — a place almost no one ever reaches.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Sidley · Terra nullius · Amundsen Sea coast

51 Vinson Massif & Ellsworth Mountains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

At 4,892 meters, the highest mountain in Antarctica and one of the Seven Summits. The Ellsworth Mountains rise in absolute solitude above the Ronne Ice Shelf; from base camp on the Branscomb Glacier, the normal route leads over glaciers and snow slopes. Access is by jet from Punta Arenas to the blue-ice runway at Union Glacier, then on by ski plane.

HIGHLIGHTS Seven Summits · Union Glacier · Blue-ice runway

52 Antarctic Peninsula & South Shetland Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

POLAR & ICE

The gateway to Antarctica and the most visited region of the continent: glaciers calving directly into the sea, gentoo penguin colonies and humpback whales in the Lemaire Channel. At Deception Island, ships sail into a flooded volcanic crater. Expedition ships from Ushuaia reach the Peninsula after two days across the Drake Passage — or you fly from Punta Arenas to King George Island.

HIGHLIGHTS Lemaire Channel · Deception Island · Port Lockroy

53 South Sandwich Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Sub-Antarctic / UK*

A chain of ice-covered, partly active volcanic islands above the South Sandwich Trench, uninhabited and almost never visited. Zavodovski hosts one of the largest penguin colonies in the world — around a million chinstrap penguins among steaming fumaroles. Surf and protection rules make landings nearly impossible; the Visibility Rule from the expedition ship usually applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Zavodovski · South Sandwich Trench · Visibility Rule

54 South Georgia

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Sub-Antarctic / UK*

For many, the most spectacular wildlife paradise on Earth: hundreds of thousands of king penguins on Salisbury Plain and at St. Andrews Bay, elephant seal bulls and icebergs before mountains nearly 3,000 meters high. In Grytviken, whaling stations rust away, and the cemetery holds Ernest Shackleton, who crossed the island in 1916 on his legendary rescue mission. Reachable by expedition ship from Ushuaia or the Falklands.

HIGHLIGHTS St. Andrews Bay · Grytviken · Shackleton Traverse

55 Bouvet Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Most Isolated Rock on Earth / NO*

The most remote island in the world: The nearest land, Antarctica, is more than 1,600 kilometers away. A volcano over 90 percent glaciated with sheer ice cliffs, a Norwegian nature reserve with no harbor or landing place — even research teams are often defeated by the surf. The Visibility Rule applies to Bouvet: A clear view from a ship is enough.

HIGHLIGHTS Most remote island on Earth · Ice cliffs · Visibility Rule

56 ☐

Gough Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *South Atlantic / UK*

A steep, emerald-green volcanic island around 400 kilometers southeast of Tristan da Cunha and one of the most important seabird paradises in the Atlantic — almost the only breeding ground of the Tristan albatross. Only a South African weather station is staffed. Tourist landings are not provided for; you claim this tile by the Visibility Rule on rare South Atlantic passages.

HIGHLIGHTS Tristan albatross · UNESCO World Heritage · Visibility Rule

57 ☐

Tristan da Cunha

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Most Isolated Inhabited Archipelago / UK*

The most remote inhabited archipelago on Earth: Around 240 people live in Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, some 2,800 kilometers from Cape Town — with no airport, with communal land and a handful of family names. Only a few fishing and supply ships travel there each year. Getting there takes patience, permission from the Island Council and luck with the weather.

HIGHLIGHTS Edinburgh of the Seven Seas · Queen Mary's Peak · Ship from Cape Town

58 ☐

St. Helena

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mid-Atlantic / UK*

Napoleon's final exile: a green volcanic island in the middle of the South Atlantic with the Georgian harbor town of Jamestown, the 699-step Jacob's Ladder and Jonathan, the oldest known land tortoise in the world. Since 2017 the island has had an airport with a connection to Johannesburg. Between December and April, whale sharks swim off the coast.

HIGHLIGHTS Longwood House · Jacob's Ladder · Whale sharks

59 ☐

Ascension Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mid-Atlantic / UK*

A volcanic moonscape from which Green Mountain rises with an artificially planted cloud forest — an experiment suggested by Joseph Hooker and Charles Darwin. Green sea turtles lay their eggs on the beaches, and the island serves as a military and satellite base. Access is restricted; arrival is by ship or infrequent flight via St. Helena.

HIGHLIGHTS Green Mountain · Turtle beaches · Two Boats Village

60 ☐

Crozet Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Indian Ocean / FR*

A French archipelago in the wildest part of the southern Indian Ocean, inhabited only by the Alfred Faure research station. Millions of penguins live here in vast king penguin colonies, along with albatrosses and orcas that hunt seals right on the beach. Only the supply ship Marion Dufresne occasionally takes paying passengers on its rotations from Réunion.

HIGHLIGHTS Île de la Possession · King penguins · Marion Dufresne

61 Kerguelen Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Desolation Islands / FR*

The "Desolation Islands": an archipelago of over 7,000 square kilometers of fjords, glaciers and windswept grassland, one of the most remote island groups in the world. Researchers overwinter in Port-aux-Français; feral reindeer, mouflon and Kerguelen cabbage define the landscape. Access only with the supply ship Marion Dufresne from Réunion.

HIGHLIGHTS Port-aux-Français · Mont Ross · Kerguelen cabbage

62 Heard Island & McDonald Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Sub-Antarctic / AU*

The only active volcanoes on Australian territory: Glaciated Big Ben on Heard Island reaches 2,745 meters at Mawson Peak, and the McDonald Islands have visibly grown through eruptions in recent decades. No station, no harbor, UNESCO World Heritage. Reachable only on rare expeditions — it usually comes down to the Visibility Rule.

HIGHLIGHTS Mawson Peak · UNESCO World Heritage · Visibility Rule

63 Amsterdam & Saint-Paul Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Indian Ocean / FR*

Two lonely volcanic islands in the southern Indian Ocean, halfway between Africa and Australia. Amsterdam is home to the Martin-de-Viviès station, fur seals and the Amsterdam albatross, one of the rarest birds in the world; Saint-Paul is a collapsed crater into which the sea flows. Access only with the supply ship from Réunion.

HIGHLIGHTS Amsterdam albatross · Crater bay of Saint-Paul · Phylica groves

64 Macquarie Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Sub-Antarctic Mantle Ridge / AU*

A geological one-of-a-kind: The island consists of rock from the Earth's mantle and oceanic crust that was pushed above sea level at the Macquarie Ridge — unique in the world. Add millions of penguins, including the royal penguins that breed only here, and elephant seals. Expedition ships from New Zealand or Hobart land with a permit.

HIGHLIGHTS Royal penguins · Earth's mantle at the surface · Elephant seals

III

TILES 65–300 · 236 REGIONS

EUROPE

A North–South–East Traverse

Europe is the continent where borders were drawn most densely — and also where you can see most clearly how little they have to do with the landscape. GREAT1001 divides it by mountain ranges, basins, coasts and islands, by great cities that form worlds of their own, and by the curiosities left behind by centuries of treaties.

The journey begins in Iceland and the High Arctic, leads across the British Isles and Scandinavia through Western Europe, the Iberian Peninsula and the Alps, the Mediterranean and the Balkans to Eastern Europe — and ends at the Urals, where Asia begins.

41 Mountains & Highlands
35 Island & Archipelago
30 Plain, River & Steppe
29 Urban Island
27 Coast & Peninsula
26 Anomaly & Exclave

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **1.6** OF 5

North Atlantic, Iceland & the European High Arctic	65–76
British Isles & Ireland	77–93
Scandinavia, Finland & the Baltics	94–120
Benelux & France	121–146
Iberian Peninsula & Macaronesia	147–179
Central Europe & the Alpine Core	180–204
Italian Peninsula & the Central Mediterranean	205–223
East-Central Europe & the Carpathian Basin	224–247
Southeastern Europe, the Balkans, Greece & Cyprus	248–281
Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, European Russia & the Urals	282–300

III · 1 TILES 65–76

NORTH ATLANTIC, ICELAND & THE EUROPEAN HIGH ARCTIC

Europe's wild north is young, volcanic and shaped by ice. In Iceland the Earth visibly tears apart; on Spitsbergen and Franz Josef Land, glaciers and polar bears rule. Twelve tiles from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge to the northern edge of the continent.

65 Vestmannaeyjar / Heimaey

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Iceland*

An archipelago of young volcanic islands off Iceland's south coast. In 1973 Eldfell tore open on Heimaey; the residents cooled the lava with seawater and thereby saved their harbor. Out at sea, the island of Surtsey emerged from 1963 onward — an open-air laboratory for the colonization of new land. Ferry from Landeyjahöfn.

HIGHLIGHTS Eldfell · Puffin colonies · View of Surtsey

66 Iceland: Southwest Rift & Reykjanes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Reykjavik*

Here Iceland visibly tears apart: At Þingvellir you stand in the rift between the North American and Eurasian Plates, and on the Reykjanes Peninsula fissure volcanoes have been erupting again and again since 2021. Add Geysir, Gullfoss, the Blue Lagoon and Reykjavík, the northernmost capital of a sovereign state.

HIGHLIGHTS Þingvellir · Lava fields near Grindavík · Golden Circle

67 Iceland: Westfjords Peninsula

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

COAST & PENINSULA

The oldest part of Iceland, around 16 million years old, a tangle of fjords and table mountains connected to the rest of the island only by a narrow isthmus. The cliffs of Látrabjarg rank among Europe's largest bird cliffs, and arctic foxes rule in Hornstrandir. Few roads, plenty of gravel, almost no people.

HIGHLIGHTS Dynjandi · Látrabjarg · Hornstrandir

68 Iceland: Northern Volcanic Zone & Highlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Sulfur steam at Mývatn, the Krafla caldera, the Askja crater lake and Dettifoss, one of the most powerful waterfalls in Europe. Only the F-roads lead into the deserted Highlands, passable in summer with four-wheel drive and the nerve to ford rivers. From Húsavík, whale-watching trips set out into Skjálfandi Bay.

HIGHLIGHTS Askja & Víti · Dettifoss · Mývatn Nature Baths

69 ☐

Iceland: Vatnajökull & Eastern Glacier Zone

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

❄ POLAR & ICE

Vatnajökull is Iceland's largest ice cap, one of the most voluminous glaciers in Europe, and it covers active volcanoes such as Grímsvötn and Bárðarbunga. At the Jökulsárlón lagoon, icebergs drift out to sea and lie like crystals on the black sand of Diamond Beach. In winter, blue ice caves open up; in the east, quiet fjords await.

HIGHLIGHTS Jökulsárlón · Ice caves · Skaftafell

70 ☐

Faroe Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *North Atlantic Archipelago / DK*

Eighteen grass-green basalt islands between Scotland and Iceland, home to more sheep than people. Lake Sørvágsvatn seems to float above the ocean, and at Gásadalur a waterfall plunges straight into the sea. Undersea tunnels with a roundabout link the islands; the Faroes are autonomous and not part of the EU.

HIGHLIGHTS Mykines · Sørvágsvatn · Eysturoy undersea tunnel

71 ☐

Jan Mayen

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Arctic Volcanic Island / NO*

A lonely Norwegian volcanic island in the Norwegian Sea, dominated by 2,277-meter Beerenberg, the northernmost active volcano above sea level. Inhabited only by a small station crew, with no harbor or regular access. Landings rarely succeed on expedition voyages — otherwise the Visibility Rule remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Beerenberg · Norwegian Sea fog · Visibility Rule

72 ☐

Bear Island / Bjørnøya

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Barents Sea / NO*

The southernmost island of the Svalbard archipelago lies alone in the Barents Sea between the North Cape and Spitsbergen. Mighty bird cliffs, a Norwegian weather station and fog-shrouded rocks — there is nothing more. Expedition ships pass it on the way to Spitsbergen; landings are the exception.

HIGHLIGHTS Bird cliffs · Barents Sea · Visibility Rule

73 ☐

Svalbard: Spitsbergen

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

❄ POLAR & ICE *West Coast & Fjords / NO*

Longyearbyen is the world's northernmost town with more than a thousand inhabitants, and a place where you only leave the house with a rifle, because polar bears are everywhere. Inside the mountain lies humanity's seed vault, on the fjord the Soviet ghost town of Pyramiden. Glaciers, walruses and the midnight sun.

HIGHLIGHTS Pyramiden · Global Seed Vault · Glaciers of Isfjorden

74 ☐

Svalbard: Nordaustlandet & Eastern Ice Caps

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

❄ POLAR & ICE *NO*

The icy east of Svalbard: The Austfonna ice cap is among the largest in Europe and ends in a glacier front around 200 kilometers long, over which meltwater falls cascade into the sea in summer. Polar bears live on the pack ice here and walruses on deserted beaches. Reachable only on circumnavigations by expedition ship.

HIGHLIGHTS Bråsvellbreen · Polar bears on the pack ice · Kvitøya

75 ☐

Franz Josef Land

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE *High Arctic Archipelago / RU*

An archipelago of almost 200 glaciated islands, Russia's northernmost outpost and part of the Russian Arctic National Park. Fridtjof Nansen overwintered here in a stone hut in 1895/96, and mysterious stone spheres lie on Champ Island. Access only by Russian icebreaker — currently hardly possible for Western travelers.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Flora · Stone spheres of Champ Island · Rubini Rock

76 ☐

Novaya Zemlya

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE *Arctic Ural Extension / RU*

The Arctic extension of the Urals: two long islands between the Barents and Kara Seas. Here in 1961 the Soviet Union detonated the Tsar Bomba, the most powerful explosion in human history. The area remains a restricted military zone to this day — the Visibility Rule applies from the ship.

HIGHLIGHTS Northern ice cap · Tsar Bomba 1961 · Visibility Rule

III · 2 TILES 77–93

BRITISH ISLES & IRELAND

From the Viking islands of Shetland and Orkney across the Highlands to the cliffs of Cornwall: In a small space, the British Isles display ancient mountains, moors, coasts and two of the great world cities. Then there are the Crown Dependencies of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, which belong neither to the United Kingdom nor to the EU.

77 ☐

Shetland Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

⛱ ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *UK*

Britain's northernmost outpost lies closer to Norway than to Edinburgh, and its Viking roots are felt everywhere, most loudly at the Up Helly Aa fire festival. Puffins at Sumburgh Head, the prehistoric settlement of Jarlshof and ponies on the moor. Overnight ferry from Aberdeen.

HIGHLIGHTS Up Helly Aa · Jarlshof · Muckle Flugga

78 ☐

Orkney Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *UK*

A heartland of the European Neolithic: The village of Skara Brae is older than the pyramids of Giza, joined by stone circles such as the Ring of Brodgar and the chambered tomb of Maeshowe. In Scapa Flow, the German High Seas Fleet scuttled itself in 1919, and off Hoy the Old Man of Hoy sea stack rises from the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Skara Brae · Ring of Brodgar · Scapa Flow

79 ☐

Hebrides

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Inner & Outer + St. Kilda / UK*

Hundreds of islands off Scotland's west coast: Skye with the rock pinnacles of the Storr, Islay with its peaty whiskies, Lewis and Harris with white beaches and the stones of Callanish. Far out lies St. Kilda, abandoned in 1930 and a double UNESCO World Heritage Site for nature and culture. Gaelic is still spoken here.

HIGHLIGHTS Isle of Skye · Luskentyre Beach · St. Kilda

80 ☐

Scottish Highlands & Cairngorms

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *UK*

The Highland Boundary Fault separates the rugged uplands from the south. Ben Nevis, at 1,345 meters, is Britain's highest summit, the Great Glen with Loch Ness follows a mighty fault line, and a subarctic climate reigns on the high plateau of the Cairngorms. Glencoe, lochs and single-track roads.

HIGHLIGHTS Glencoe · Ben Nevis · North Coast 500

81 ☐

Scottish Lowlands & Southern Uplands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *UK*

Scotland's densely populated heart between Edinburgh and Glasgow, studded with old volcanic plugs — Edinburgh Castle sits atop one, and another is Arthur's Seat. To the south rise the gentle sheep hills of the Southern Uplands with the ruined abbeys of the Borders.

HIGHLIGHTS Edinburgh Castle · Arthur's Seat · Borders abbeys

82 ☐

Northern Ireland: Causeway Coast & Antrim Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *UK*

Around 60 million years ago, lava solidified here into some 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns: the Giant's Causeway. Along the coast, the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge sways above the surf, and the Dark Hedges are familiar from "Game of Thrones." Belfast tells the story of the Titanic.

HIGHLIGHTS Giant's Causeway · Carrick-a-Rede · Titanic Belfast

83 ☐

Ireland: Wild Atlantic Way

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Western Coastal Mountains*

A 2,500-kilometer coast of cliffs, peninsulas and peat bogs. The Cliffs of Moher drop 200 meters into the sea, the Burren is a karst desert full of orchids, and on Skellig Michael early medieval monks' cells cling to a rock in the Atlantic. Connemara, Dingle and Achill complete the picture.

HIGHLIGHTS Skellig Michael · Cliffs of Moher · Burren

84 ☐

Ireland: Central Plains & East Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

Green pastures, raised bogs and the Shannon define the interior, while Dublin pulses on the east coast. The passage tomb of Newgrange is older than Stonehenge and flooded with sunlight at the winter solstice. South of the capital, the Wicklow Mountains with the monastic settlement of Glendalough form a counterpoint.

HIGHLIGHTS Newgrange · Glendalough · Dublin

85 ☐

Isle of Man

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Irish Sea Crown Dependency*

A Crown Dependency in the middle of the Irish Sea, part of neither the United Kingdom nor the EU. Tynwald is considered one of the oldest continuously existing parliaments in the world, and the TT motorcycle races among the most dangerous. Add tailless Manx cats and the mighty Laxey Wheel.

HIGHLIGHTS Tourist Trophy · Laxey Wheel · Calf of Man

86 ☐

British Pennines, Lake District & Northern Uplands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *UK*

The backbone of England: The Pennines run from Derbyshire to the Scottish border; to the west lies the Lake District with Scafell Pike, England's highest mountain. Hadrian's Wall marks the former northern frontier of the Roman Empire, and the Yorkshire Dales and Moors offer endless footpaths.

HIGHLIGHTS Hadrian's Wall · Scafell Pike · Yorkshire Dales

87 ☐

Greater Manchester Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *UK*

The world's first industrial city: In the 19th century, cotton mills made Manchester "Cottonopolis." Today the name stands for two football giants, a legendary music scene from Joy Division to Oasis, and red-brick warehouses turned into lofts.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Trafford · Northern Quarter · Science and Industry Museum

88 ☐

Wales: Snowdonia & Cambrian Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *UK*

The land of castles and the Welsh language. Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), at 1,085 meters, is the highest mountain in Wales, and the slate landscape of the northwest is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Edward I built fortresses here such as Conwy, Caernarfon and Harlech — today a backdrop for hikers.

HIGHLIGHTS Yr Wyddfa · Caernarfon Castle · Llanberis slate quarries

89 ☐

Greater Birmingham & West Midlands Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *UK*

The "City of a Thousand Trades" was the workshop of the Industrial Revolution — and has more miles of canal than Venice. The Black Country recalls coal and iron, balti cuisine the immigration from South Asia. Today it is a young, multilingual hub in the heart of England.

HIGHLIGHTS Canals at Gas Street Basin · Black Country Museum · Balti Triangle

90 ☐

English Lowlands, Cotswolds & Fens

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *UK*

Gentle chalk hills, honey-stone villages and university towns: Here stand Stonehenge and Avebury, Oxford and Cambridge, the Cotswolds with their limestone cottages and the White Cliffs of Dover. The Fens in the east were once swamp and today lie partly below sea level.

HIGHLIGHTS Stonehenge · Cotswolds · White Cliffs of Dover

91 ☐

Greater London Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *UK*

The world city on the Thames, where over 300 languages are spoken and the financial world still ticks to the rhythm of the City. The Tower, Westminster, the British Museum and an underground railway running since 1863, the oldest in the world. London is not a part of England you brush past, but a planet of its own.

HIGHLIGHTS Tower of London · British Museum · Thames by boat

92 ☐

Cornwall, Devon & Isles of Scilly Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *UK*

England's southwestern peninsula: granite moors such as Dartmoor, fishing villages, tin mines with World Heritage status and the headland of Land's End. Cornwall maintains its own Celtic language and identity. Offshore lie the Isles of Scilly, where subtropical gardens bloom thanks to the Gulf Stream.

HIGHLIGHTS Land's End · Dartmoor · Gardens of Tresco

93 ☐

Channel Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Jersey, Guernsey & Sark*

Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark belong to the British Crown but to neither the United Kingdom nor the EU — and lie closer to France than to England. Sark was Europe's last feudal state until 2008. The tides are among the highest in the world, and German bunkers recall the occupation.

HIGHLIGHTS Car-free Sark · Tides of Jersey · Occupation bunkers

III · 3 TILES 94–120

SCANDINAVIA, FINLAND & THE BALTICS

Fjords, fells, taiga and tens of thousands of lakes: Northern Europe was shaped by the Ice Age and is still rising out of the sea today. Between the North Cape and the Curonian Spit lie autonomous islands, divided rocks and, with Kaliningrad, one of the best-known exclaves in the world.

94 ☐

Arctic Finnmark & North Cape Tundra

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

POLAR & ICE *NO*

Europe's wild north: At the North Cape, the land drops vertically into the Arctic Ocean at 71 degrees north, and Sámi reindeer herders roam the tundra inland. In summer the sun does not set for weeks; in winter the northern lights dance. At Kirkenes, the Hurtigruten ends near the Russian border.

HIGHLIGHTS North Cape · King crab safari · Northern lights

95 ☐

Lofoten & Vesterålen Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *NO*

Granite spikes shooting straight out of the sea, red fishermen's cabins and racks full of stockfish: The Lofoten are the postcard of Norway. The warm Gulf Stream keeps the climate mild, and cod spawn here in winter. From Andenes in Vesterålen, boats set out to see sperm whales.

HIGHLIGHTS Reine · Henningsvær · Whale safari from Andenes

96 ☐

Central Norway / Trøndelag

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *NO*

The historic heart of Norway lies around the Trondheimsfjord. Nidaros Cathedral is the goal of St. Olav's Way, Europe's northernmost pilgrimage route. Inland lies the mining town of Røros with its wooden houses, and musk oxen roam Dovrefjell.

HIGHLIGHTS Nidaros Cathedral · Røros · Musk oxen in Dovrefjell

97 Norwegian Alpine Highlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Jotunheimen & Hardangervidda / NO*

In the "Home of the Giants" stands Galdhøpiggen, at 2,469 meters the highest mountain in Northern Europe. To the south stretches Hardangervidda, Europe's largest high plateau, home to the continent's biggest herd of wild reindeer. The Besseggen ridge is one of Norway's most popular hikes.

HIGHLIGHTS Besseggen · Galdhøpiggen · Reindeer of Hardangervidda

98 Western Norwegian Fjordland

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Vestlandet / NO*

The fjord country is an Ice Age landscape brought to perfection: The Sognefjord reaches over 200 kilometers inland, and Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord are World Heritage Sites. Rock pulpits such as Preikestolen and Trolltunga hang above the abyss, and the Flåm Railway winds down through tunnels. The gateway to the region is Bergen.

HIGHLIGHTS Geirangerfjord · Preikestolen · Flåm Railway

99 Southern Norway

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Sørlandet & Telemark / NO*

White wooden towns on the skerry coast of the Skagerrak, Norway's summer paradise. Telemark is where modern skiing was invented, the Telemark Canal climbs inland by way of locks, and the stave church of Heddal is the largest in the country. Lindesnes marks the southern tip of the Norwegian mainland.

HIGHLIGHTS Telemark Canal · Heddal Stave Church · Lindesnes Lighthouse

100 Swedish Lapland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Scandinavian Fjälls / SE*

The fell country of the north: Kebnekaise, at just over 2,000 meters, is Sweden's highest mountain, and the Kungsleden is one of Europe's great long-distance trails. Sarek and the Laponia region are Sámi heartland and a World Heritage Site. In winter, Abisko lures with its northern lights and Jukkasjärvi with its Icehotel.

HIGHLIGHTS Kungsleden · Abisko · Icehotel Jukkasjärvi

101 Scandinavian Taiga & Bothnian Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Norrland / SE*

Endless coniferous forest, wild salmon rivers and moose: Norrland is Europe's great taiga. On the High Coast, the land rose by almost 300 meters after the Ice Age — more than anywhere else in the world. The skerries of Luleå freeze in winter and become ice roads.

HIGHLIGHTS High Coast · Luleå archipelago · Moose safari

102 Svealand Great Lakes Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *Vänern & Vättern / SE*

The land of great lakes: Vänern is the largest lake in the European Union, Vättern famous for its clear water. The Göta Canal links both with the Baltic and the North Sea. Farther north, in Dalarna, people carve the red Dala horses and celebrate Midsummer like nowhere else.

HIGHLIGHTS Göta Canal · Midsummer in Dalarna · Läckö Castle

103 Greater Stockholm Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Sweden*

Sweden's capital is built on 14 islands where Lake Mälaren flows into the Baltic. Gamla Stan preserves the medieval tangle of lanes, the Vasa Museum a warship that sank in 1628. Before the city lie around 30,000 skerry islands — an archipelago on the doorstep.

HIGHLIGHTS Gamla Stan · Vasa Museum · Stockholm archipelago

104 Gotland & Öland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Baltic Limestone Islands / SE*

Two limestone islands in the Baltic with a light and climate of their own. Visby on Gotland is an almost completely preserved Hanseatic town with a city wall, and bizarre limestone pillars, the rauks, stand on Fårö. Öland's Great Alvar is a steppe-like limestone heath and a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Hanseatic town of Visby · Rauks on Fårö · Stora Alvaret

105 Småland Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Götaland / SE*

Forests, lakes and red wooden houses — storybook Sweden. In the "Kingdom of Crystal," glassworks have been blowing crystal for centuries, Astrid Lindgren was born in Vimmerby, and IKEA began in Älmhult. The region's barrenness and inventiveness shaped Swedish emigration to America.

HIGHLIGHTS Kingdom of Crystal · Vimmerby · Moose in the forest

106 Scania (Skåne) & Swedish West Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *SE*

Sweden's fertile south and its granite coast: Malmö is linked to Copenhagen by the Øresund Bridge, and Gothenburg is the gateway to the rounded skerries of Bohuslän. On the cliff at Kåseberga stands the stone ship of Ales stenar, Sweden's Stonehenge.

HIGHLIGHTS Øresund Bridge · Bohuslän skerries · Ales stenar

107 ☐

Bornholm

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Baltic Granite Island / DK*

A granite island in the middle of the Baltic that belongs to Denmark but lies closer to Sweden. Four medieval round churches also served as fortresses, and the ruins of Hammershus are the largest castle ruins in Northern Europe. A mild climate, rocky coasts and smokehouses make the "Sunshine Island" unique.

HIGHLIGHTS Østerlars Round Church · Hammershus · Smokehouses of Gudhjem

108 ☐

Danish Straits Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Zealand & Funen / DK*

Denmark's core territory consists of islands linked by mighty bridges such as the one across the Great Belt. On Zealand lie Copenhagen and Kronborg Castle, the setting of Shakespeare's "Hamlet"; on Funen lies Odense, the city of Hans Christian Andersen. At Møns Klint, chalk cliffs drop into the Baltic.

HIGHLIGHTS Copenhagen · Kronborg Castle · Møns Klint

109 ☐

Jutland Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Continental Denmark / DK*

Denmark's only land link to the continent: In the north, at Skagen, the Skagerrak and Kattegat collide, and the migrating dune of Råbjerg Mile moves on every year. On the west coast lies the Wadden Sea; inland stand the runestones of Jelling, Denmark's "birth certificate."

HIGHLIGHTS Grenen at Skagen · Råbjerg Mile · Jelling runestones

110 ☐

Hans Island (Tartupaluk) & Märket Reef

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Arctic/Baltic Divided Rocks*

Two divided rocks, two curiosities: Hans Island between Greenland and Canada was the subject of a decades-long "Whisky War" between the two states until they split it in 2022 — creating a land border in the middle of the Arctic Ocean. On the skerry of Märket in the Baltic, the Finnish–Swedish border snakes around a lighthouse.

HIGHLIGHTS "Whisky War" · Märket Lighthouse · Boat trip from Åland

111 ☐

Åland Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Autonomous Archipelago / FI*

An autonomous, demilitarized and Swedish-speaking island realm under Finnish sovereignty — with its own flag, its own stamps and a special status in the EU tax union. Around 6,700 islands and skerries lie between Sweden and Finland. The ferries between Stockholm and Turku call at Mariehamn.

HIGHLIGHTS Mariehamn · Kastelholm Castle · Cycling across island bridges

112 Finnish Lapland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

POLAR & ICE *Northern Boreal & Tundra / FI*

North of the Arctic Circle begins the realm of reindeer, northern lights and fells. In Rovaniemi you cross the Arctic Circle, in Inari the Siida Museum tells of the Sámi people, and from glass igloos you watch the aurora. In summer, the midnight sun glows over the wilderness.

HIGHLIGHTS Arctic Circle at Rovaniemi · Glass igloos · Inari

113 Finnish Lakeland Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *Saimaa Basin / FI*

Finland has around 188,000 lakes, and in the Saimaa region the boundary between water and forest blurs completely. Here lives the Saimaa ringed seal, one of the rarest seals in the world, in fresh water only. Olavinlinna Castle in Savonlinna is the stage for a famous opera festival, and Koli offers the view over it all.

HIGHLIGHTS Saimaa ringed seal · Olavinlinna · View from Koli

114 Finnish Coastal Plains & Archipelago Sea

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *FI*

The south and west of Finland with Helsinki, Turku and the island fortress of Suomenlinna. The Archipelago Sea off Turku is one of the largest archipelagos on Earth by number of islands, a world of granite humps, summer houses and ferries. The Baltic here lifts the land a little out of the water every year.

HIGHLIGHTS Suomenlinna · Turku Archipelago Trail · Helsinki

115 Estonian West Coast Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Saaremaa & Hiiumaa / EE*

Juniper, windmills and old farmsteads: Saaremaa and Hiiumaa seem to have fallen out of time. At Kaali, a meteorite struck a few thousand years ago and left a perfectly round crater lake. On Hiiumaa stands the Kõpu Lighthouse, one of the oldest still in operation in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Kaali crater · Windmills of Angla · Kõpu Lighthouse

116 Estonian Coastal Plain, Peipus & Taiga

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *EE*

Tallinn's old town is one of the best-preserved Hanseatic towns in Europe. Behind it begin raised bogs, forests and the Klint, a limestone escarpment on the north coast. On Lake Peipus, Russian Old Believers live in street villages, and in Narva you look across the river at the Russian fortress of Ivangorod.

HIGHLIGHTS Tallinn Old Town · Lahemaa bogs · Narva and Ivangorod

117 Livonia & Courland Lowlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Latvia*

Riga has the densest Art Nouveau architecture in Europe, the Gauja valley red sandstone cliffs and castles. In Courland, the land ends at Cape Kolka, where the Baltic and the Gulf of Riga collide. The Baroque palace of Rundāle is often called the Versailles of the Baltics.

HIGHLIGHTS Art Nouveau in Riga · Gauja National Park · Cape Kolka

118 Lithuanian Highlands & Nemunas Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Aukštaitija / LT*

Vilnius is a Baroque capital with over twenty churches in its old town, Trakai a water castle on an island in a lake. The Aukštaitija highland is a mosaic of lakes and forests, and near Šiauliai hundreds of thousands of crosses stand on the Hill of Crosses. Near Vilnius lies the geographic center of Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS Trakai Island Castle · Hill of Crosses · Center of Europe

119 Curonian Spit

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Coastal Dune Anomaly / LT & RU*

A hair-thin sand spit 98 kilometers long between the Baltic and the lagoon, shared by Lithuania and Russia. Migrating dunes up to 60 meters high once buried whole villages; today pine forests hold them in place. In Nida, Thomas Mann spent his summers — a World Heritage Site between two seas.

HIGHLIGHTS Parnidis Dune · Thomas Mann House · Witches' Hill

120 Kaliningrad Exclave

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Russian Exclave on the Baltic*

The former Königsberg is today a Russian exclave between Poland and Lithuania, cut off from the Russian heartland. Immanuel Kant's tomb lies at the rebuilt cathedral, and on the coast lie around 90 percent of the world's minable amber reserves. Getting there requires a Russian visa.

HIGHLIGHTS Kant's tomb at the cathedral · Amber Museum · Russian Curonian Spit

III · 4 TILES 121–146

BENELUX & FRANCE

From the Dutch delta to the summits of Mont Blanc: Here lie landscapes wrested from the sea, ancient uplands, volcanoes and Mediterranean coasts. Hidden among them are border curiosities such as Baarle and the Vennbahn exclaves — and, with Monaco, one of the smallest states on Earth.

121 Frisian Islands Chain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *West, East & North / NL, DE, DK*

A chain of islands off the Wadden Sea coast of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark — from Texel via Borkum and Norderney to Sylt and Rømø. Many islands are car-free, seals lie on the sandbanks, and at low tide the landscape changes to the rhythm of the tides. Add the North Frisian Halligen.

HIGHLIGHTS Halligen · Seal banks · Car-free islands

122 Veluwe Heathlands & Northeastern Geest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *NL*

An Ice Age push moraine of heath, sand and forest — for the flat Netherlands, almost a mountain range. In Hoge Veluwe National Park, Van Goghs hang in the Kröller-Müller Museum among red deer and wild boar. In Drenthe stand the megalithic tombs, and in the water village of Giethoorn canals replace streets.

HIGHLIGHTS Kröller-Müller Museum · Hunebedden of Drenthe · Giethoorn

123 Randstad Megacity Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Amsterdam/Rotterdam/The Hague / NL*

A ring of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, home to around eight million people, most of them below sea level. Canals, bicycles, polders and Europe's largest port make the Randstad the prime example of a megacity wrested from the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Canals of Amsterdam · Port of Rotterdam · Windmills of Kinderdijk

124 Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt Delta

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Zeeland / NL*

After the storm flood of 1953, the Dutch built the Delta Works here, including the Oosterscheldekering, a storm surge barrier kilometers long. Zeeland is a puzzle of islands, dikes and tidal creeks. Oysters and mussels are farmed in Yerseke, and Middelburg preserves its wealth from the days of the East India Company.

HIGHLIGHTS Oosterscheldekering · Oysters of Yerseke · Middelburg

125 Baarle-Hertog / Baarle-Nassau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Fragmented Enclave Complex / BE & NL*

Europe's craziest border tangle: Around thirty Belgian and Dutch enclaves and counter-enclaves are nested inside one another here. The border runs through cafés, supermarkets and living rooms — the location of a house's front door decides its nationality. Markings in the pavement show the line.

HIGHLIGHTS Border lines in the pavement · House numbers with flags · Enclave bike tour

126 Flanders Coastal Plains & Marshes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Belgium*

Bruges and Ghent bear witness to the wealth of the Flemish cloth merchants, Ypres and the fields of Flanders to the battles of World War I. On the coast, the Kusttram runs around 67 kilometers from France to the Netherlands — one of the longest tram lines in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Bruges · Menin Gate in Ypres · Kusttram

127 Greater Brussels Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Belgium*

The capital of Europe: seat of the EU Commission and NATO, bilingual, multilingual and a culinary power of fries, waffles and chocolate. The Grand-Place is considered one of the most beautiful squares in the world, the Atomium the icon of the 1958 World's Fair, Victor Horta's houses the birthplaces of Art Nouveau.

HIGHLIGHTS Grand-Place · Atomium · Art Nouveau by Horta

128 Vennbahn Counter-Exclaves

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *German Enclaves in Belgium*

When the route of the Vennbahn railway was awarded to Belgium after World War I, several German districts to its west were left behind as exclaves, among them Mützenich and Ruitzhof. Today the former railway line is a cycle path, and whoever rides it keeps switching between Belgium and Germany.

HIGHLIGHTS Vennbahn cycle path · Mützenich exclave · High Fens

129 Ardennes Forest Massif

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Wallonia BE & Luxembourg Oesling*

An old, deeply furrowed forest massif between Belgium and Luxembourg, cut by the Meuse, Ourthe and Semois. In the winter of 1944 the Battle of the Bulge raged here, recalled by museums in Bastogne and Clervaux. Castles such as Bouillon, the caves of Han-sur-Lesse and the Oesling shape the landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS Bouillon Castle · Caves of Han · Bastogne

130 ☐

Luxembourg Gutland & Moselle Valley

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The fortress city of Luxembourg towers above deep gorges, threaded with casemates kilometers long. The Mullerthal is "Little Switzerland" with its sandstone rocks, and Riesling and Crémant grow on the Moselle. In the wine village of Schengen, the agreement on open borders was signed in 1985.

HIGHLIGHTS Casemates · Mullerthal Trail · Schengen

131 ☐

Normandy Chalk Coast & Cotentin Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *FR*

The rock arches of Étretat, the D-Day landing beaches and Mont-Saint-Michel, which becomes an island at high tide: Normandy is natural and world history at once. The Bayeux Tapestry tells of the conquest of England in 1066, and on the Cotentin Peninsula the Atlantic lashes Cap de la Hague.

HIGHLIGHTS Mont-Saint-Michel · Omaha Beach · Cliffs of Étretat

132 ☐

Armorican Massif

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Brittany Peninsula / FR*

Ancient granite, a Celtic language and the sea everywhere: At Carnac, around 3,000 menhirs stand in rows, and pink rocks glow on the Côte de Granit Rose. Pointe du Raz is the western end of France, and offshore lie Belle-Île and the lighthouses of Ouessant. Add crêpes and cider.

HIGHLIGHTS Carnac stones · Côte de Granit Rose · Pointe du Raz

133 ☐

Paris Basin & Loire Valley Lowlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *FR*

A huge geological basin of limestone and chalk, France's breadbasket and cultural landscape. Along the Loire stand châteaux such as Chambord and Chenonceau, in Champagne the sparkling wine matures in chalk cellars, and Chartres Cathedral towers above the wheat fields of the Beauce.

HIGHLIGHTS Château de Chambord · Champagne cellars of Reims · Chartres Cathedral

134 ☐

Greater Paris Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Île-de-France / FR*

More than twelve million people live in the Île-de-France region. The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre-Dame and Haussmann's boulevards make Paris the most visited city in Europe; beneath it lie the catacombs with the bones of millions. A center of gravity that aligns all of France around itself.

HIGHLIGHTS Louvre · Montmartre · Catacombs

135 Vosges Mountains & Alsace Rhine Rift West

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *FR*

Alsace lies on the western side of the Upper Rhine Graben, with the Vosges as its shoulder. Half-timbered villages such as Riquewihr and Colmar line the Wine Route, and Strasbourg is the seat of the European Parliament and has one of the greatest cathedrals in Europe. From the Grand Ballon you can see all the way to the Alps.

HIGHLIGHTS Wine Route · Strasbourg Cathedral · Haut-Kœnigsbourg

136 Franco-Swiss Jura Fold Belt

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *FR/CH*

The fold mountains that gave an entire geological age its name — the Jurassic. Limestone ridges, karst springs and raised bogs stretch from Switzerland into France. Comté cheese and the finest watches in the world are made here, in the Vallée de Joux and La Chaux-de-Fonds. The Creux du Van is a mighty rock amphitheater.

HIGHLIGHTS Creux du Van · Watch city of La Chaux-de-Fonds · Doubs gorge

137 Massif Central Volcanic Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Auvergne / FR*

Around eighty extinct volcanoes form the Chaîne des Puys, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and France's volcano park. Puy de Dôme towers over Clermont-Ferrand, and Le Puy-en-Velay is a starting point of the Way of St. James. Farther south, the Gorges du Tarn cut into the limestone plateau, and the Millau Viaduct spans the valley as one of the tallest bridges in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Puy de Dôme · Gorges du Tarn · Millau Viaduct

138 Aquitaine Basin & Landes Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Bordeaux Region / FR*

The Dune of Pilat, at over 100 meters, is the highest migrating dune in Europe, and behind it stretches the pine forest of the Landes, one of the largest man-made forests in Western Europe. Bordeaux is the world capital of wine, and the Atlantic waves of Hossegor attract surfers. In the Périgord lie the caves of Lascaux.

HIGHLIGHTS Dune of Pilat · Bordeaux · Cave art of Lascaux

139 Languedoc-Roussillon Mediterranean Plain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *FR*

A Mediterranean plain full of lagoons, vineyards and Cathar castles. The fortified city of Carcassonne is the Middle Ages brought to perfection, the Canal du Midi has linked the Atlantic and Mediterranean since 1681, and the Pont du Gard is the masterpiece of Roman engineering. Flamingos stand in the étangs.

HIGHLIGHTS Carcassonne · Pont du Gard · Canal du Midi

140 ☐

Rhône–Saône Tectonic Corridor

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *FR*

A corridor through which traders, armies and wine have flowed since antiquity. In the north lies Burgundy with the Côte d'Or and the Hôtel-Dieu of Beaune, in the south the Rhône Valley with its vineyards. Here runs one of Europe's most important traffic axes between the North Sea and the Mediterranean.

HIGHLIGHTS Hospices de Beaune · Côte d'Or · Rhône wine

141 ☐

Greater Lyon Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *France*

At the confluence of the Rhône and Saône, the Romans founded Lugdunum, the capital of Gaul. Through the traboules, hidden passageways, silk weavers once carried their fabrics dry through the old town. Today Lyon is considered the capital of French cuisine, with its bouchons and the legacy of Paul Bocuse.

HIGHLIGHTS Traboules · Fourvière · Bouchons

142 ☐

French Alps & Mont Blanc Massif

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *FR*

Mont Blanc, at around 4,806 meters, is the highest mountain in the Alps, and Chamonix the birthplace of alpinism and host of the first Winter Olympics in 1924. The Aiguille du Midi cable car soars to 3,842 meters above the Mer de Glace. Farther south lie the Vanoise, the Écrins and Lake Annecy.

HIGHLIGHTS Aiguille du Midi · Mer de Glace · Lac d'Annecy

143 ☐

Provence, Verdon & Côte d'Azur

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *FR*

Lavender fields on the Valensole plateau, the Verdon Gorge with walls up to 700 meters high, Roman towns such as Arles and the Palace of the Popes in Avignon. Nice, Cannes and Antibes line the Côte d'Azur, and in the Rhône delta of the Camargue stand flamingos and white horses.

HIGHLIGHTS Gorges du Verdon · Lavender near Valensole · Camargue

144 ☐

Greater Marseille Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *France*

France's oldest city was founded around 600 BC by Greek seafarers as Massalia. The Vieux-Port, the basilica of Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde and the Calanques, jagged limestone coves with turquoise water, form a Mediterranean counterpart to Paris. Offshore lies the prison island of Château d'If.

HIGHLIGHTS Calanques · Vieux-Port · Château d'If

145 ☐ **Principality of Monaco** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Microstate*

The second-smallest state in the world after the Vatican — around two square kilometers, ruled by the Grimaldis since 1297 and more densely populated than any other country. Monaco is growing into the sea on reclaimed land. The Monte Carlo Casino, a Formula 1 circuit through the streets and yachts in the harbor.

HIGHLIGHTS Monte Carlo Casino · Prince's Palace · Grand Prix circuit

146 ☐ **Corsica** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Alpine Mountain Core & Coast / FR*

A mountain in the sea: Monte Cinto reaches 2,706 meters, and the GR20 is considered Europe's toughest long-distance trail. The limestone cliffs of Bonifacio hang above the water, and the Scandola nature reserve is a World Heritage Site. The island cherishes its language, polyphony and pride — and is Napoleon's birthplace.

HIGHLIGHTS GR20 · Bonifacio · Scandola Peninsula

III · 5 TILES 147–179

IBERIAN PENINSULA & MACARONESIA

The Pyrenees separate Iberia from the rest of Europe; the Meseta forms its heart, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean its edges. In the south lie Gibraltar and the Spanish exclaves in Africa, and far out in the Atlantic the volcanic islands of the Canaries, Madeira and the Azores — reaching all the way onto the North American Plate.

147 ☐ **Pyrenees Main Crest** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *FR/ES/AD*

A 430-kilometer wall between the Atlantic and Mediterranean, on whose crest France, Spain and Andorra meet. Aneto, at 3,404 meters, is the highest peak, and the rock amphitheater of Gavarnie and the Ordesa Canyon rank among Europe's great natural wonders. Basques in the west, Catalans in the east.

HIGHLIGHTS Cirque de Gavarnie · Ordesa Canyon · Haute Route Pyrénéenne

148 ☐ **Llívia** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Spanish Exclave in the French Pyrenees*

A Spanish town in the middle of France: When Spain ceded 33 villages of the Cerdanya in the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, Llívia was left out, as it counted as a town rather than a village. Ever since, it has been an exclave of around 13 square kilometers, linked to Spain only by a neutral road. One of the oldest pharmacies in Europe stands here.

HIGHLIGHTS Esteve Pharmacy · Neutral road · Cerdanya high valley

149 ☐

Principality of Andorra

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Pyrenean Microstate*

A Pyrenean microstate with two heads of state: the Bishop of Urgell and the French president. Andorra la Vella, at around 1,000 meters, is the highest capital in Europe. Tax-free shopping, ski areas and mountain lakes in the smallest of spaces — almost the entire country lies above 1,000 meters.

HIGHLIGHTS Andorra la Vella · Caldea spa · Madriu Valley

150 ☐

Os de Civís

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Spanish Pene-Exclave via Andorra*

A Spanish mountain village that can only be reached by car via Andorra — a so-called pene-exclave. Coming from Spain, you must first drive into another country to get back to Spain. A few stone houses, pastures and the absolute silence of the Pyrenees.

HIGHLIGHTS Access via Sant Julià de Lòria · Stone houses · Pyrenean silence

151 ☐

Catalan Coastal Ranges

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *ES*

Between the Pyrenees and the Ebro, a coastal range accompanies the Mediterranean. Montserrat with its saw-toothed conglomerate rocks holds the monastery of the Black Madonna, and on the Costa Brava rocky coves alternate with fishing villages. Salvador Dalí lived and painted in Figueres and Cadaqués.

HIGHLIGHTS Montserrat · Costa Brava · Dalí Museum in Figueres

152 ☐

Greater Barcelona Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Spain*

Gaudí's Sagrada Família has been growing skyward since 1882, and the grid district of the Eixample is a masterpiece of urban planning. Barcelona combines beaches, the Gothic Quarter, Catalan identity and a zest for life that lasts deep into the night. Around five million people live in the metropolitan area.

HIGHLIGHTS Sagrada Família · Park Güell · Barri Gòtic

153 ☐

Ebro River Basin & Bardenas Reales

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *Spain*

In the middle of Navarra lies a semi-desert with bizarre clay towers: the Bardenas Reales, a backdrop for films and series. The Ebro flows through Zaragoza with its Basilica del Pilar and ends in a delta of rice fields and flamingo lagoons. In between stretches the barren steppe of Los Monegros.

HIGHLIGHTS Castildetierra · Basilica del Pilar · Ebro Delta

154 ☐ **Cantabrian Mountains & Picos de Europa** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *ES*

Behind Spain's green north coast rise jagged limestone peaks — the Picos de Europa, Spain's first national park in 1918. The Cares Gorge is a footpath hewn into the rock, and the Cave of Altamira holds Stone Age art of world rank. Asturian cider, Basque pintxos and Bilbao's Guggenheim round it out.

HIGHLIGHTS Cares Gorge · Naranjo de Bulnes · Guggenheim Bilbao

155 ☐ **Galician Massif & Rías Baixas Coast** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *ES*

Spain's Celtic northwest: Drowned river valleys, the rías, reach deep inland, and the Cíes Islands have Caribbean-white beaches. In Santiago de Compostela the Way of St. James ends, and at Cape Finisterre people once believed they had reached the end of the world. Add Albariño and octopus.

HIGHLIGHTS Santiago Cathedral · Cíes Islands · Cape Finisterre

156 ☐ **Douro River Basin & Northern Portugal** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The terraced vineyards of the Douro Valley are a World Heritage Site of slate and sweat, and in Porto the port wine matures in the lodges of Vila Nova de Gaia. Guimarães is considered the birthplace of Portugal, and Peneda-Gerês National Park the country's last wilderness, with wolves and wild horses.

HIGHLIGHTS Port lodges of Gaia · Douro Valley · Peneda-Gerês

157 ☐ **Tagus (Tejo) Estuary & Central Portugal** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA

The heart of Portugal stretches from the university town of Coimbra to the Atlantic coast. In Nazaré, the highest waves ever surfed break over a deep-sea canyon in winter, and Tomar preserves the castle of the Templars. The Serra da Estrela is the highest range on the Portuguese mainland.

HIGHLIGHTS Giant waves of Nazaré · Convent of Christ in Tomar · University of Coimbra

158 ☐ **Greater Lisbon Metropolitan Area** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Portugal*

The city on seven hills, whose old quarter of Alfama survived the great earthquake of 1755. Tram 28 rattles through steep lanes, and in Belém the tower and monastery recall the Age of Discovery. At the gates lie the palaces of Sintra and Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of mainland Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS Alfama · Belém · Cabo da Roca

159 ☐

Alentejo Plains & Algarve Cliffs

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Southern Portugal*

Cork oaks, wheat and white villages: The Alentejo is Portugal at its widest and quietest — the country supplies around half the world's cork. In Évora stand a Roman temple and a chapel made of human bones. In the Algarve the sea hollows out golden cliffs, and at Sagres Europe ends at Cabo de São Vicente.

HIGHLIGHTS Benagil Cave · Évora · Cabo de São Vicente

160 ☐

Extremadura & Middle Tagus Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *ES*

The homeland of the conquistadors: Pizarro came from Trujillo, Cortés from Medellín. Roman monuments in Mérida, the medieval old town of Cáceres and the dehesa, a pastoral landscape of holm oaks where Iberian pigs feed on acorns. Griffon and cinereous vultures circle over Monfragüe.

HIGHLIGHTS Roman Theater of Mérida · Cáceres · Vultures in Monfragüe

161 ☐

Northern Castilian Meseta

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *High Plateau / ES*

A high plain at 800 meters, the core of the Spanish kingdom. Salamanca glows in golden sandstone, Segovia has a Roman aqueduct without mortar, Ávila a completely preserved city wall. The cathedrals of Burgos and León line the Way of St. James through endless grain fields.

HIGHLIGHTS Aqueduct of Segovia · Walls of Ávila · Plaza Mayor of Salamanca

162 ☐

Greater Madrid Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Spain*

At around 650 meters, the highest capital in the EU and the geographic center of Spain — kilometer zero lies at the Puerta del Sol. The Prado is among the most important art museums in the world, and the Retiro among the most beautiful city parks. Madrid eats late, parties long and sleeps little.

HIGHLIGHTS Prado · Retiro · Tapas in La Latina

163 ☐

Southern Castilian Meseta & La Mancha Plains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *ES*

Here Don Quixote fought against windmills, and they still stand on the hills of Consuegra and Campo de Criptana. Toledo was the city of three cultures, and in Cuenca houses hang over the gorge. La Mancha supplies saffron, Manchego and the wine of the largest contiguous vineyard area in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Windmills of Consuegra · Toledo · Hanging Houses of Cuenca

164 Levante Mediterranean Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Valencia & Murcia / ES*

Spain's sunny coast with the Costa Blanca, Alicante and the high-rises of Benidorm. The Palm Grove of Elche is a World Heritage Site, and the Mar Menor one of the largest saltwater lagoons in Europe. In the huerta of Murcia, vegetables have been irrigated since Moorish times.

HIGHLIGHTS Palm Grove of Elche · Mar Menor · Guadalest

165 Greater Valencia Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Spain*

The birthplace of paella and the stage of Las Fallas, when giant figures go up in flames every March. The old bed of the Turia is now a nine-kilometer city park, at whose end stands Calatrava's futuristic City of Arts and Sciences. To the south lie the rice fields of the Albufera.

HIGHLIGHTS Ciudad de las Artes · Las Fallas · Albufera

166 Balearic Islands: Mallorca & Menorca

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *ES*

Mallorca is more than Ballermann: The Serra de Tramuntana is a World Heritage Site, Cap de Formentor plunges into deep blue sea, and Palma Cathedral towers over the harbor. Menorca, a biosphere reserve in its entirety, preserves Bronze Age talayots and quiet coves.

HIGHLIGHTS Serra de Tramuntana · Cap de Formentor · Talayots on Menorca

167 Balearic Islands: Pityusic Group

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Ibiza & Formentera / ES*

Ibiza is a global stage of club culture, but the old town of Dalt Vila and the seagrass meadows between Ibiza and Formentera are World Heritage — some Posidonia colonies are thought to rank among the oldest living organisms on Earth. Formentera tempts with Caribbean-clear water, and off Ibiza the rock of Es Vedrà rises from the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Dalt Vila · Es Vedrà · Ses Illetes

168 Guadalquivir Basin & Andalusian Lowlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *ES*

The Moorish heritage of Andalusia in all its splendor: the Mezquita of Córdoba, the Alcázar and the cathedral of Seville. In the estuary lies Doñana, one of Europe's most important wetlands, and in Jerez the sherry matures. Flamenco was born here.

HIGHLIGHTS Mezquita of Córdoba · Alcázar of Seville · Doñana

169 ☐

Baetic System & Sierra Nevada

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Andalusian Fold Mountains / ES*

Mulhacén, at 3,479 meters, is the highest mountain on the Iberian Peninsula, and at its feet stands the Alhambra of Granada. The white villages of the Alpujarras cling to the slopes, Ronda towers above a deep gorge, and the Caminito del Rey leads along walkways through a rock canyon.

HIGHLIGHTS Alhambra · Caminito del Rey · Ronda

170 ☐

Gibraltar

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *British Overseas Territory in Iberia*

A 426-meter limestone rock at the entrance to the Mediterranean, British since 1713. Here live the only free-living monkeys in Europe, the Barbary macaques, and a main road crosses the airport runway. Inside the rock run tunnels kilometers long, dating from the days of siege.

HIGHLIGHTS Upper Rock · Barbary macaques · Great Siege Tunnels

171 ☐

Ceuta

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Spanish Exclave in North Africa*

A Spanish city on African soil and an external border of the EU with Morocco. Monte Hacho is considered one of the two Pillars of Hercules, and the Royal Walls with their moat recall Portuguese and Spanish fortress engineering. Ferries from Algeciras take just under an hour.

HIGHLIGHTS Royal Walls · Monte Hacho · Ferry from Algeciras

172 ☐

Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera & Alhucemas

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Spanish Micro-Forts*

Tiny Spanish military rocks right off the Moroccan coast, relics of the 16th century. Since a storm in 1934, the Peñón de Vélez has been linked to Africa by a sandy land bridge; the resulting border, at around 85 meters, is considered one of the shortest in the world. Civilians are not admitted — the Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Shortest land border · Military fortresses · Visibility Rule from the beach

173 ☐

Melilla

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Spanish Exclave in North Africa*

The second Spanish city in North Africa has more Art Nouveau buildings than anywhere in Spain except Barcelona. On a headland stands the fortified town of Melilla la Vieja, surrounded by bastions and tunnels. All around runs a multi-layered border fence — a flashpoint between Europe and Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Melilla la Vieja · Modernisme buildings · Border fence

174 Canary Islands: Eastern Desert Group

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *Lanzarote & Fuerteventura / ES*

Lanzarote and Fuerteventura are the oldest and driest of the Canary Islands. In Timanfaya the earth still seethes from the eruptions of 1730 to 1736, and César Manrique transformed lava caves into art. Fuerteventura offers migrating dunes at Corralejo and Saharan dust in the air.

HIGHLIGHTS Timanfaya · Jameos del Agua · Dunes of Corralejo

175 Canary Islands: Central Shield Volcanoes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Tenerife & Gran Canaria / ES*

Teide, at 3,715 meters, is Spain's highest mountain and, measured from the seabed, one of the largest volcanoes on Earth. Gran Canaria is called a "miniature continent" for its diversity, with the rock finger of Roque Nublo and the dunes of Maspalomas. Two volcanic islands with cities, beaches and high mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS Teide · Roque Nublo · Dunes of Maspalomas

176 Canary Islands: Western Steep Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *La Palma, La Gomera & El Hierro / ES*

The steep, green western islands: Tajogaite erupted on La Palma in 2021, and world-class telescopes stand above the Caldera de Taburiente. On La Gomera, shepherds whistle to each other across ravines in the whistled language Silbo, and until the discovery of America, El Hierro was the western end of the known world.

HIGHLIGHTS Caldera de Taburiente · Silbo Gomero · Garajonay laurel forest

177 Madeira & Porto Santo Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *PT*

A volcanic island like a green tower of cloud in the Atlantic: Levadas, old irrigation channels kilometers long, lead through the laurel forest protected as a World Heritage Site. From Pico Ruivo you look out over a sea of clouds. The neighboring island of Porto Santo has a golden sand beach nine kilometers long.

HIGHLIGHTS Levada walks · Pico Ruivo · Beach of Porto Santo

178 Azores: Eastern & Central Group

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Eurasian/African Plate / PT*

Nine islands in the middle of the Atlantic, where the Eurasian, African and North American Plates meet. The crater lakes of Sete Cidades on São Miguel, the stew called cozido that simmers in hot volcanic soil, and Pico, Portugal's highest mountain with its World Heritage vineyards. Sperm whales roam around the islands.

HIGHLIGHTS Sete Cidades · Pico · Whale watching

179 ☐ **Azores: Western Group** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Flores & Corvo on the North American Plate / PT*

The westernmost islands of Europe already lie on the North American Plate. Flores is a garden of waterfalls and hydrangeas, Corvo the smallest of the Azores with just one village and a mighty crater, the Caldeirão. Here Europe ends geologically — and America begins.

HIGHLIGHTS Waterfalls of Flores · Caldeirão on Corvo · Rocha dos Bordões

III · 6 TILES 180–204

CENTRAL EUROPE & THE ALPINE CORE

Germany, Switzerland and Austria: from the red sandstone of Heligoland across the central uplands to the four-thousanders of the Alps. Nowhere else on Earth has such a density of pene-exclaves, customs-free zones and border points — from Büsingen to Jungholz.

180 ☐ **Heligoland** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Offshore Red Sandstone Cliff / DE*

Germany's only offshore island: a red sandstone rock in the North Sea with the free-standing sea stack of Lange Anna and a gannet colony. In 1947 the British tried to blow up the island with one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever. On the neighboring island of Düne, gray seals lie on the beach.

HIGHLIGHTS Lange Anna · Gray seals on Düne · Guillemot rock

181 ☐ **Rügen, Usedom & German Baltic Lagoons** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *DE*

Caspar David Friedrich painted the chalk cliffs at Königsstuhl, and the white villas of the resort architecture line the beaches of Binz and the Imperial Baths. Between the mainland and the islands lie the Bodden, shallow lagoons full of birds. At Prora stands the monumental colossus of a never-completed seaside resort.

HIGHLIGHTS Königsstuhl · Imperial Baths on Usedom · Darss

182 ☐ **North German Plain, Lüneburg Heath & Coastal Marshes** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *DE*

Flatland shaped by the Ice Age, from the North Sea dikes to the Oder. In August the Lüneburg Heath blooms purple, in the marshes dikes protect the land from the sea, and in the Spreewald you travel by punt along the waterways. Hamburg and Bremen are the great gateways to the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Lüneburg Heath · Port of Hamburg · Spreewald

183 ☐ **Greater Berlin Metropolitan Area** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Germany*

The capital through which a wall ran until 1989 — remnants still stand at the East Side Gallery. The Brandenburg Gate, Museum Island, club culture and a green belt of lakes and forests. Next door in Potsdam lie the palaces and gardens of Sanssouci.

HIGHLIGHTS East Side Gallery · Museum Island · Sanssouci

184 ☐ **Harz, Thuringian Forest & Central German Uplands** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *DE*

According to legend, witches dance on the Brocken, and a narrow-gauge steam train puffs its way up. At the Wartburg, Luther translated the New Testament; in Weimar, Goethe and Schiller worked. The band of central uplands reaches as far as the table mountains of Saxon Switzerland.

HIGHLIGHTS Brocken Railway · Wartburg · Bastei Bridge

185 ☐ **Rhine-Ruhr Megacity Conurbation** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Germany*

Around ten million people in a chain of cities that have grown together, from Cologne Cathedral to the winding towers of the Ruhr. The Zollverein colliery is a World Heritage Site, and Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord a blast-furnace adventure playground. Coal and steel are history; the culture of the conurbation remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Cologne Cathedral · Zollverein · Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord

186 ☐ **Rhenish Massif** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Eifel, Hunsrück & Middle Rhine Gorge / DE*

Between Bingen and Koblenz, the Rhine has sawn deep into the slate mountains — the Upper Middle Rhine Valley with the Lorelei and its castles is a World Heritage Site. In the Eifel lie maars, perfectly round crater lakes of young volcanoes, and Laacher See is the remnant of a mighty eruption around 13,000 years ago.

HIGHLIGHTS Lorelei · Eifel maars · Moselle loop at Bremm

187 ☐ **Greater Frankfurt Rhine-Main Metropolitan Area** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Germany*

"Mainhattan": Germany's only true high-rise skyline, seat of the European Central Bank and one of the largest airport hubs in the world. Between bank towers and Römerberg square there is apple wine and green sauce, and all around lie Mainz, Wiesbaden and Darmstadt.

HIGHLIGHTS Skyline on the Main · Römerberg · Apple wine in Sachsenhausen

188 ☐

Black Forest, Odenwald & Upper Rhine Rift East

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *DE*

Dark fir forests, cuckoo clocks and the Feldberg at almost 1,500 meters: The Black Forest is a myth. At Triberg plunge Germany's best-known waterfalls, Baden-Baden cultivates its spa culture, and Heidelberg's castle ruin towers above the Neckar. On the Kaiserstuhl, wine grows on an extinct volcano.

HIGHLIGHTS Triberg Waterfalls · Heidelberg Castle · Kaiserstuhl

189 ☐

Swabian & Franconian Jura Karst Escarpment

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *DE*

A karst range full of caves in which the oldest figurative artworks of humankind were found — the Lion Man and the Venus of Hohle Fels, around 40,000 years old. Here the Danube seeps away into the limestone, and the Nördlinger Ries is a meteorite crater 15 million years old.

HIGHLIGHTS Ice Age caves of the Swabian Jura · Nördlinger Ries · Altmühl Valley

190 ☐

Bavarian Alpine Foreland & Lake Constance Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *DE*

Between the Danube and the edge of the Alps lie moors, lakes and onion-domed churches. Neuschwanstein stands at the foot of the mountains, and on Herreninsel in the Chiemsee a Bavarian Versailles. On Lake Constance, Germany, Austria and Switzerland meet — without any border ever having been fixed across the water.

HIGHLIGHTS Neuschwanstein · Chiemsee · Mainau flower island

191 ☐

Greater Munich Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Germany*

Bavaria's capital combines global corporations with beer gardens, Oktoberfest and the Hofbräuhaus. In the English Garden, people surf the standing wave of the Eisbach, and on föhn days the Alps seem to move right up to the city. One of the wealthiest metropolises in Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS Eisbach wave · Marienplatz · Beer garden at the Chinese Tower

192 ☐

Büsingen am Hochrhein

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *German Exclave in Switzerland*

A German village completely surrounded by Switzerland, and yet in the Swiss customs territory. People mostly pay in francs, and there is both a German and a Swiss postal code. A curiosity of history that was confirmed several times by referendums but never united with Switzerland.

HIGHLIGHTS Double postal code · Banks of the Rhine · Border stones

193 ☐

Swiss Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Mittelland / CH*

The densely populated heart of Switzerland between the Jura and the Alps, with Zurich, Bern, Lucerne and Lake Geneva. Here are the old towns, banks and watch manufacturers, but also lakes, hills and villages such as Gruyères. The federal city of Bern is a World Heritage Site, with six kilometers of arcades.

HIGHLIGHTS Chapel Bridge in Lucerne · Old Town of Bern · Lake Geneva

194 ☐

Swiss High Alps & Pennine Crest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Matterhorn/Jungfrau / CH*

The Matterhorn is the pyramid par excellence, and the Dufourspitze, at 4,634 meters, the highest summit in Switzerland. On the Jungfraujoch, a cog railway climbs to the highest railway station in Europe, and below it flows the Aletsch Glacier, the largest in the Alps. The Glacier Express links Zermatt and St. Moritz.

HIGHLIGHTS Matterhorn · Jungfraujoch · Aletsch Glacier

195 ☐

Campione d'Italia

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Italian Enclave on Lake Lugano in CH*

An Italian exclave on the shore of Lake Lugano, completely surrounded by Switzerland. For a long time people paid in francs here and lived off the huge casino, a building by the architect Mario Botta. Since 2020 the town has been part of the EU customs territory — a piece of Italy you can only reach through Switzerland.

HIGHLIGHTS Casinò di Campione · Lakeside promenade · Santuario dei Ghirli

196 ☐

Principality of Liechtenstein

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Alpine Rhine Microstate*

A principality on the Alpine Rhine, just 160 square kilometers in size and — like only Uzbekistan — doubly landlocked. Without an army since 1868, with more companies than inhabitants and a prince who resides in his castle above Vaduz. One of the world's largest manufacturers of artificial teeth is also based here.

HIGHLIGHTS Vaduz Castle · Kunstmuseum · Liechtenstein Trail

197 ☐

Samnaun

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Swiss Customs-Exclave & Pene-Enclave*

A Swiss high valley that could only be reached through Austria until 1912. Since 1892, Samnaun has been a customs-free zone — and thus a duty-free shopping paradise at 1,800 meters. In winter it is connected to Austria's Ischgl through the Silvretta Arena.

HIGHLIGHTS Duty-free shopping · Silvretta Arena · Double-decker cable car

198 ☐

Livigno

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Italian Trans-Alpine Watershed Anomaly*

An Italian high valley on the "wrong" side of the Alps: Its water flows via the Inn and Danube into the Black Sea. Livigno has long been a duty-free zone and, at just over 1,800 meters, is one of the highest towns in Europe. In 2026 it hosted the Olympic freestyle and snowboard events.

HIGHLIGHTS Duty-free zone · Lago di Livigno · Munt la Schera Tunnel

199 ☐

Kleinwalsertal

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Austrian Topographical Pene-Exclave in DE*

An Austrian valley that can only be reached by car from Germany, via Oberstdorf. In the 13th century it was settled by Walser from the Valais, whose dialect and timber building style still shape it today. Hoher Ifen and Widderstein form the backdrop for a valley between two countries.

HIGHLIGHTS Hoher Ifen · Breitachklamm · Walser timber houses

200 ☐

Jungholz

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Austrian Quadripoint Pene-Enclave in DE*

An Austrian municipality connected to Austria by just a single point: the summit of the Sorgschrofen. All around lies Germany, and the only road in runs through Bavarian territory. A topographic one-of-a-kind — whoever stands on the summit touches the link between the two parts.

HIGHLIGHTS Summit of the Sorgschrofen · German–Austrian postal code · Allgäu Alps

201 ☐

Northern Limestone Alps

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Berchtesgaden, Karwendel & Dachstein / AT & DE*

White limestone walls from the Karwendel via Berchtesgaden to the Dachstein: The east face of the Watzmann is one of the highest rock walls in the Eastern Alps, and the Königssee an emerald fjord. In Hallstatt, salt has been mined for over 7,000 years, and eternal ice glitters in the Dachstein caves.

HIGHLIGHTS Königssee · Watzmann · Hallstatt

202 ☐

Austrian Central Alps

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Hohe Tauern & Ötztal Glaciers / AT*

The Grossglockner, at 3,798 meters, is Austria's highest mountain, and the High Alpine Road leads right up to the Pasterze. Hohe Tauern National Park is the largest in the Alps, and the Krimml Waterfalls plunge 380 meters. In the Ötztal, the glacier mummy Ötzi was found in 1991.

HIGHLIGHTS Grossglockner High Alpine Road · Krimml Waterfalls · Ötztal glaciers

203 ☐ **Austrian Danube Basin, Wachau & Vienna Woods** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *AT*

The Danube flows here through one of the most beautiful cultural landscapes in Europe. In the Wachau, Grüner Veltliner and Riesling ripen on terraces, Melk Abbey towers baroque above the river, and in Dürnstein Richard the Lionheart was held captive. The Vienna Woods form the capital's green edge.

HIGHLIGHTS Melk Abbey · Dürnstein · Heuriger in the Wachau

204 ☐ **Greater Vienna Metropolitan Area** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Austria*

The old capital of the Habsburgs, whose coffee house culture is recognized as intangible World Heritage. Schönbrunn, the Ringstrasse, the State Opera and the Ferris wheel in the Prater define the city, which is regularly rated the most livable in the world. On the outskirts, the Heurigen serve young wine.

HIGHLIGHTS Schönbrunn · Coffee houses · Prater Ferris wheel

III · 7 TILES 205–223

ITALIAN PENINSULA & THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

A boot of mountains, plains and volcanoes jutting into the Mediterranean. From the Dolomites to Etna, the list follows the peninsula southward, with San Marino and the Vatican in their natural place — and ends on the islands of the African Plate and in Malta.

205 ☐ **Dolomites & South Tyrol** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Limestone Alps / IT*

Pale rock towers that glow pink at sunset — the "Enrosadira." The Three Peaks, Seceda and the Marmolada are icons, and via ferratas from World War I lead through the walls. South Tyrol mixes German, Italian and Ladin; Ötzi lies in Bolzano. Cortina was an Olympic venue in 2026.

HIGHLIGHTS Three Peaks · Seceda · Ötzi Museum in Bolzano

206 ☐ **Po Valley Alluvial Plain & Venetian Lagoon** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Italy*

Italy's most fertile plain, watered by the Po. On its edge, Venice floats on 118 islands, Verona has a Roman arena, and Bologna the oldest university walls in Europe. Parma ham, Parmesan and balsamic vinegar come from here, and the mosaics of Ravenna are Byzantine gold.

HIGHLIGHTS Venice & Burano · Arena di Verona · Mosaics of Ravenna

207 ☐

Greater Milan Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Italy*

Italy's business and fashion capital, whose Gothic cathedral of white marble bears over 3,000 statues. Leonardo's Last Supper, La Scala and the canals of the Navigli show its cultural side. At the gates begin Lake Como and the Alps.

HIGHLIGHTS Milan Cathedral · The Last Supper · Navigli

208 ☐

Ligurian Coast & Apuan Alps

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Cinque Terre / IT*

A steep coast where colorful villages such as the Cinque Terre cling to the rock. Genoa has one of the largest medieval old towns in Europe, and Portofino is the postcard image of the Riviera. In the Apuan Alps near Carrara, the marble is quarried from which Michelangelo carved his David.

HIGHLIGHTS Cinque Terre · Carrara marble quarries · Portofino

209 ☐

Tuscany Hills & Tiber River Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *IT*

Cypress avenues, vineyards and hill towns: Florence is the cradle of the Renaissance, Siena celebrates the Palio, Pisa has its leaning tower. The Val d'Orcia is a World Heritage Site, and Umbria with Assisi and Perugia the green heart of Italy. Between them, the Tiber flows toward Rome.

HIGHLIGHTS Florence · Val d'Orcia · Assisi

210 ☐

Tuscan Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Elba & Montecristo / IT*

Elba was Napoleon's first exile in 1814/15, Montecristo inspired Alexandre Dumas and is today a strictly protected reserve with few visitor places per year. The Costa Concordia capsized off Giglio in 2012, and Pianosa was long a prison island. A marine national park of seven islands.

HIGHLIGHTS Elba · Montecristo · Giglio

211 ☐

Republic of San Marino

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Apennine Microstate*

By tradition a republic since the year 301, and thus one of the oldest in the world. On Monte Titano, three fortress towers stand above the Adriatic plain, and the old town is a World Heritage Site. A state of 61 square kilometers, completely surrounded by Italy.

HIGHLIGHTS Three Towers · Monte Titano · Palazzo Pubblico

212 ☐

Central Apennines & Gran Sasso Massif

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Italy's Spine*

The backbone of Italy reaches 2,912 meters at Corno Grande. The high plain of Campo Imperatore is called "Little Tibet," and in Abruzzo National Park live Marsican brown bears and Apennine wolves. Mountain villages such as Santo Stefano di Sessanio seem straight out of the Middle Ages.

HIGHLIGHTS Campo Imperatore · Abruzzo National Park · Monti Sibillini

213 ☐

Greater Rome Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Italy*

The Eternal City: almost 3,000 years of history on seven hills. The Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the Pantheon and the Via Appia tell of a world empire, Baroque fountains and trattorias of a way of life. Hardly any city condenses so much history into so little space.

HIGHLIGHTS Colosseum · Pantheon · Via Appia Antica

214 ☐

Vatican City

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Enclaved Sovereign Microstate*

The smallest state on Earth, just 0.44 square kilometers, completely surrounded by Rome. St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museums hold treasures of humankind, and the Swiss Guard has stood watch since 1506. Citizenship here comes not by birth but by office.

HIGHLIGHTS St. Peter's Basilica · Sistine Chapel · Climb to the dome

215 ☐

Campania Volcanic Arc, Vesuvius & Amalfi

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *IT*

In the year 79, Vesuvius buried Pompeii and Herculaneum, and west of Naples the Phlegraean Fields seethe, a supervolcano that raises and lowers the ground of Pozzuoli. Add the Amalfi Coast with its lemon terraces, Capri with the Blue Grotto and the thermal island of Ischia.

HIGHLIGHTS Pompeii · Amalfi Coast · Blue Grotto

216 ☐

Greater Naples Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Italy*

Chaotic, loud, warm-hearted: Naples is the birthplace of pizza, whose art is recognized as intangible World Heritage. The Spaccanapoli slices through the old town, and beneath the streets lies a labyrinth of Greek cisterns. Maradona murals and nativity makers shape the neighborhood.

HIGHLIGHTS Spaccanapoli · Napoli Sotterranea · Pizza in the old town

217 Apulia Karst Plateau & Salento Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *IT*

The heel of the boot is a limestone plateau full of olive groves. In Alberobello stand the trulli, round stone houses with conical roofs; Lecce is a Baroque jewel, and Polignano a Mare towers on cliffs above the sea. In the far south, the Adriatic and Ionian Seas meet.

HIGHLIGHTS Trulli of Alberobello · Baroque in Lecce · Polignano a Mare

218 Calabria & Aspromonte Massif

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *The Toe of Italy*

The toe of Italy is surprisingly mountainous: the Aspromonte and Sila with dense forests, along with rock towns such as Tropea and the fishing village of Chianalea in Scilla. The Riace bronzes stand in the museum of Reggio, and across the strait you look out at Sicily and Etna.

HIGHLIGHTS Tropea · Riace bronzes · Strait of Messina

219 Aeolian Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Stromboli & Vulcano Volcanic Arc / IT*

The islands after which volcanologists named entire types of eruption: Stromboli has been spitting lava every few minutes for millennia, while Vulcano steams and invites you to mud baths. Lipari yields obsidian and pumice, Salina capers and Malvasia. A World Heritage Site of volcanology.

HIGHLIGHTS Stromboli at night · Mud bath on Vulcano · Salina

220 Sicily & Mount Etna

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *IT*

Etna, at over 3,300 meters, is the highest active volcano in Europe and almost constantly in motion. Sicily is a treasure chest: Greek temples in Agrigento, Arab-Norman churches in Palermo, the Baroque of the Val di Noto and the theater of Taormina. Add cannoli and arancini.

HIGHLIGHTS Etna summit craters · Valley of the Temples · Taormina

221 Sardinia

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Paleozoic Island Core & Gennargentu / IT*

One of the oldest landmasses in Europe, with rock from the Paleozoic. Around 7,000 nuraghi, Bronze Age stone towers, define the landscape, the Costa Smeralda the turquoise sea. In the mountain region of Barbagia, a striking number of centenarians live — one of the world's "Blue Zones."

HIGHLIGHTS Nuraghe Su Nuraxi · Gorropu Gorge · Costa Smeralda

222 ☐ **Pelagie Islands & Pantelleria** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *African Plate Outposts / IT*

Italy's African outposts: Lampedusa lies on the African Plate, closer to Tunisia than to Sicily, and has one of the most beautiful beaches in the Mediterranean at Isola dei Conigli. Pantelleria is a black volcanic island with dammusi houses, caper fields and the crater lake Specchio di Venere.

HIGHLIGHTS Isola dei Conigli · Specchio di Venere · Passito di Pantelleria

223 ☐ **Malta & Gozo Archipelago** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On Malta and Gozo stand temples older than Stonehenge and the pyramids — Ġgantija was built over 5,500 years ago. Valletta was built as a fortress city by the Knights of St. John, and the Maltese language is Semitic and written in Latin script. Add the Blue Lagoon of Comino.

HIGHLIGHTS Valletta · Temples of Ġgantija · Blue Lagoon

III · 8 TILES 224–247

EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE & THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

Between the Baltic and the Black Sea lie lowlands, primeval forests, the High Tatras and the great arc of the Carpathians around the Hungarian puszta. At the end stand the Danube Delta and, with Gagauzia and Transnistria, two territories that do not even appear on most maps.

224 ☐ **Pomeranian Lakeland & Polish Baltic Coast** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *PL*

In Słowiński National Park, dunes up to 40 meters high migrate over forests, and the Hel Peninsula juts like a finger into the Bay of Gdańsk. Gdańsk is a Hanseatic city and the birthplace of Solidarity, and Malbork Castle of the Teutonic Knights is the largest brick castle in the world by area. Inland glitter the lakes of Kashubia.

HIGHLIGHTS Migrating dunes at Łeba · Malbork Castle · Main Town of Gdańsk

225 ☐ **Greater Poland Lowland** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Warta River Basin / PL*

The cradle of the Polish state: In Gniezno and on the island of Ostrów Lednicki, Poland's history began around the year 1000. Poznań has a Renaissance town hall tower on which two billy goats butt horns at noon. In Biskupin stands a reconstructed Iron Age settlement.

HIGHLIGHTS Town hall goats of Poznań · Gniezno Cathedral · Biskupin

226 ☐

Masovia, Masurian Lakes & Białowieża Primeval Forest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *PL*

Masuria is the land of a thousand lakes, linked by canals and locks. Near Kętrzyn lie the ruins of the Wolf's Lair, and in the east the Białowieża Forest — Europe's last lowland primeval forest and home of the European bison. The Biebrza marshes are among the wildest wetlands on the continent.

HIGHLIGHTS Bison in Białowieża · Masurian Lakes · Biebrza marshes

227 ☐

Greater Warsaw Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Poland*

Almost completely destroyed by the German occupiers in 1944, the old town was faithfully rebuilt and became a World Heritage Site as a reconstruction. The Palace of Culture, a gift from Stalin, now towers over a skyline of glass high-rises. Chopin, the banks of the Vistula and a young food scene shape the capital.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town · Palace of Culture · Łazienki Park

228 ☐

Silesian Lowland & Upper Oder Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *PL*

Wrocław is a city of bridges and islands whose lanes are dotted with over 600 small bronze dwarfs. The Churches of Peace in Jawor and Świdnica, built entirely of wood and clay, are World Heritage Sites, and Książ Castle towers over a gorge. In Upper Silesia, collieries tell of coal and steel.

HIGHLIGHTS Dwarfs of Wrocław · Church of Peace in Świdnica · Książ Castle

229 ☐

Sudetes & Giant Mountains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Krkonoše / CZ & PL*

Sněžka, at 1,603 meters, is the highest mountain in Czechia and a border peak with Poland. Sandstone towers pile up in the rock labyrinth of Adršpach-Teplice and the Table Mountains, and the Elbe rises in the Giant Mountains. Krakonoš, the mountain spirit, is said to still roam here.

HIGHLIGHTS Sněžka · Adršpach rock town · Source of the Elbe

230 ☐

Bohemian Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Vltava-Elbe Bowl / Czechia*

A basin ringed by mountains and drained by the Vltava and Elbe. Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně are part of the World Heritage of the Great Spa Towns, Český Krumlov is a Renaissance jewel, and Pravčická Gate in Bohemian Switzerland is the largest natural sandstone arch in Europe. Add Pilsner beer.

HIGHLIGHTS Český Krumlov · Pravčická Gate · Colonnades of Karlovy Vary

231 Greater Prague Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Czechia*

The city of a hundred spires with the Charles Bridge, the Castle — one of the largest castle complexes in the world — and the astronomical clock of 1410, one of the oldest still working in the world. Prague came through the wars of the 20th century almost undamaged. In the evening, the best beer in Europe flows here.

HIGHLIGHTS Charles Bridge · Prague Castle · Astronomical Clock

232 Moravian Corridor & Karst

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Czechia*

In the Moravian Karst, the Macocha Abyss plunges 138 meters, and you travel through the Punkva Caves by boat. The Lednice-Valtice cultural landscape is a vast landscaped garden, and Brno a city of modernism with the Villa Tugendhat. The wines of Czechia grow in South Moravia.

HIGHLIGHTS Macocha Abyss · Lednice-Valtice · Villa Tugendhat

233 Lesser Poland & Northern Carpathian Foothills

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *PL*

Kraków has one of the largest medieval market squares in Europe in the Rynek, and the coronation castle of the Polish kings in Wawel. In Wieliczka, miners carved entire chapels out of salt. In Oświęcim, the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial bears witness to the greatest crime of the 20th century.

HIGHLIGHTS Rynek in Kraków · Wieliczka Salt Mine · Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial

234 High Tatras Alpine Massif

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Slovakia & Poland*

High mountains in miniature: Over a length of only around 26 kilometers, granite peaks such as Gerlachovský štít rise to 2,655 meters, the highest in the Carpathians. Mountain lakes such as Morskie Oko mirror the walls, and Zakopane and Štrbské Pleso are the gateways to the mountains of Poland and Slovakia.

HIGHLIGHTS Morskie Oko · Rysy · Štrbské Pleso

235 Slovak Ore Mountains & Danubian Lowland

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *SK*

Bratislava is the only capital that borders two neighboring states. In Slovak Paradise you climb ladders through waterfall gorges, and in the Dobšiná Ice Cave millennia-old ice glitters. The mining town of Banská Štiavnica lies in an extinct volcanic crater.

HIGHLIGHTS Slovak Paradise · Dobšinská Ice Cave · Banská Štiavnica

236 North Hungarian Mountains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Mátra & Bükk Karst / HU*

Kékes in the Mátra, at 1,014 meters, is Hungary's highest mountain, and the Bükk a karst range full of caves. In 1552, the castle of Eger was defended against the Ottomans — and the red wine "Bull's Blood" supposedly owes its name to those days. The Tokaj wine region matures the "king of wines," and the Baradla Cave is a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Eger Castle · Tokaj wine cellars · Baradla Cave

237 Greater Budapest Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Hungary*

Two cities, one river: Buda with Castle Hill and Fisherman's Bastion, Pest with Parliament and ruin bars. The city sits on over a hundred thermal springs, and the Széchenyi Baths are a palace of bathing. In 1896, the first subway on the European continent ran here.

HIGHLIGHTS Parliament on the Danube · Széchenyi Baths · Ruin bars

238 Transdanubian Hills & Lake Balaton Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *HU*

Balaton is the largest lake in Central Europe, shallow, warm and lined with vineyards. Lavender blooms on the Tihany Peninsula, and in Hévíz you bathe in the largest natural thermal lake in the world. The Archabbey of Pannonhalma and the early Christian necropolis of Pécs are World Heritage Sites.

HIGHLIGHTS Thermal Lake Hévíz · Tihany Peninsula · Pannonhalma

239 Great Hungarian Plain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Pannonian Puszta / HU, RS, RO*

An endless grassland reaching from Hungary into Serbia's Vojvodina and Romania's Banat. In Hortobágy National Park the csikós show off their horsemanship, and gray steppe cattle and racka sheep graze the pastures. Sweep wells, paprika and shimmering summer heat are part of it.

HIGHLIGHTS Hortobágy · Horse herders · Mirage over the puszta

240 Apuseni Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Western Romanian Karst / RO*

A karst range in western Romania with over 4,000 caves. Scărișoara Cave holds one of the largest underground glaciers in Europe, around 3,500 years old, and in Bears' Cave the skeletons of cave bears were found. In many places, the villages of the Moți still live as they did a hundred years ago.

HIGHLIGHTS Scărișoara Ice Cave · Bears' Cave · Turda Salt Mine

241 Transylvanian Plateau & Southern Carpathians

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *RO*

Transylvania with its Saxon fortified churches, Sighișoara, birthplace of the historical Dracula, and Bran Castle. The Transfăgărășan high road winds across the Southern Carpathians, whose Moldoveanu, at 2,544 meters, is Romania's highest peak. The forests are home to Europe's largest brown bear population outside Russia.

HIGHLIGHTS Transfăgărășan · Biertan fortified church · Old Town of Sighișoara

242 Western Moldavia & Eastern Carpathian Foreland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *RO*

In Bukovina stand monasteries whose outer walls are completely covered in frescoes — Voroneț is called the "Sistine Chapel of the East." The Bicaz Gorge cuts through the Eastern Carpathians, and Red Lake was created by a landslide. Iași is the cultural center of the region.

HIGHLIGHTS Voroneț Monastery · Bicaz Gorge · Lacu Roșu

243 Wallachian Plain & Iron Gates Gorge

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Lower Danube / RO*

At the Iron Gates, the Danube squeezes through the Carpathians — a gorge on whose rocks a 55-meter likeness of the Dacian king Decebalus has been carved. Behind it lies the Wallachian Plain with Bucharest and the Palace of the Parliament, one of the largest buildings in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Cazane narrows · Rock sculpture of Decebalus · Palace of the Parliament

244 Danube Delta & Dobruja Steppe

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *RO & BG*

The largest contiguous reed bed on Earth and one of the most important bird paradises in Europe: pelicans, herons and cormorants in a labyrinth of channels. It can be reached by boat from Tulcea to Sulina at the mouth. To the south lies the Dobruja steppe with the cliffs of Cape Kaliakra.

HIGHLIGHTS Pelican colonies · Boat trip to Sulina · Cape Kaliakra

245 Moldovan Central Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Codri Hills / MD*

The forested hill country of the Republic of Moldova is wine country. Mileștii Mici is the largest wine cellar in the world, with around two million bottles in galleries kilometers long, and Cricova an underground wine city with street names. The cave monastery of Orheiul Vechi hangs above a river bend.

HIGHLIGHTS Mileștii Mici · Cricova · Orheiul Vechi

246 ☐ **Gagauzia** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Autonomous Territorial Unit in Moldova*

An autonomous territory in southern Moldova, home to a Turkic-speaking, Orthodox Christian people — with its own flag, parliament and governor. The capital is Comrat. Vineyards, Soviet monuments and an identity between Turkey, Russia and Europe make the region unique.

HIGHLIGHTS Comrat · Gagauz Museum · Wine cellars of Avdarma

247 ☐ **Transnistria** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Dniester Strip Geopolitical Anomaly*

An internationally unrecognized state on the Dniester, born in the war of 1992. The hammer and sickle still adorn its flag, people pay with the Transnistrian ruble — in part with plastic coins — and Lenin stands in front of the parliament in Tiraspol. An open-air museum of the Soviet Union with its own border post.

HIGHLIGHTS Lenin in Tiraspol · Bender Fortress · Kvint brandy

III · 9 TILES 248–281

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE, THE BALKANS, GREECE & CYPRUS

The peninsula of karst mountains, gorges and islands: from the Julian Alps across the Adriatic and the Accursed Mountains to the Cyclades and Crete. At the Bosphorus Asia begins, on Athos monks rule, and on Cyprus four powers share a single island.

248 ☐ **Slovenian Karst, Julian Alps & Soča Valley** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *SI*

Triglav, at 2,864 meters, is Slovenia's highest mountain and national symbol, and Lake Bled with its island church the postcard motif. The Soča glows emerald green, and in World War I the Isonzo Front ran here. The Karst gave its name to an entire geological phenomenon, with the caves of Postojna and Škocjan.

HIGHLIGHTS Lake Bled · Škocjan Caves · Soča Valley

249 ☐ **Istrian Peninsula** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *HR & SI*

A heart-shaped peninsula shared by Croatia and Slovenia. Pula has a Roman amphitheater, and Rovinj and Piran are Venetian harbor towns. In the hinterland stand hill towns such as Motovun, where truffles are hunted, and Hum, which calls itself the smallest town in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Amphitheater of Pula · Rovinj · Truffles near Motovun

250 ☐

Kvarner Gulf Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Krk, Cres & Lošinj / HR*

Krk can be reached by bridge, griffon vultures nest on the cliffs of Cres, and dolphins live off Lošinj. On Krk, the Baška Tablet was found, one of the oldest records of the Glagolitic script. Opposite lies Opatija, the old seaside resort of the Habsburgs.

HIGHLIGHTS Griffon vultures on Cres · Dolphins off Lošinj · Baška Tablet

251 ☐

Dalmatian Mainland Coast & Velebit Karst

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Croatia*

The Velebit range drops steeply to the Adriatic, and the Paklenica gorge is a climbing paradise. In the hinterland lie the Plitvice Lakes and the waterfalls of the Krka, and on the coast Split with Diocletian's Palace, Šibenik and Zadar with its Sea Organ, played by the waves.

HIGHLIGHTS Diocletian's Palace · Plitvice Lakes · Sea Organ of Zadar

252 ☐

North & Central Dalmatian Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Zadar Arch., Brač & Hvar / HR*

Hundreds of islands off the coast: the Kornati, a barren stone archipelago of around 90 islands, Brač with Zlatni Rat beach, Hvar with lavender and nightlife. Vis was a restricted military area for decades; off neighboring Biševo glows the Blue Cave.

HIGHLIGHTS Kornati · Zlatni Rat · Blue Cave of Biševo

253 ☐

South Dalmatian Islands & Dubrovnik Exclave

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Korčula & Mljet / HR*

Dubrovnik was a republic of its own for centuries and was cut off from the rest of Croatia until 2022 — a coastal strip of Bosnia at Neum pushes in between. Only the Pelješac Bridge reconnected the country. Korčula is said to be the birthplace of Marco Polo, and Mljet holds green saltwater lakes.

HIGHLIGHTS City walls of Dubrovnik · Pelješac Bridge · Mljet

254 ☐

Dinaric Alps Core

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Bosnian Highlands & Sutjeska / BIH*

The forested heart of Bosnia with Sarajevo, where Orient and Occident meet in a single lane. Sutjeska National Park holds Perućica, one of the last primeval forests in Europe, and above it Maglić, the country's highest mountain. In Jajce, a waterfall plunges right through the town.

HIGHLIGHTS Baščaršija in Sarajevo · Perućica primeval forest · Jajce Waterfall

255 Herzegovinian Neretva Karst & Poljes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *BIH*

The Old Bridge of Mostar has spanned the Neretva since 1566 — rebuilt after the war, with young men leaping from it into the water. In Blagaj, a dervish monastery stands at a powerful karst spring, and the Kravica Falls are a cascade of travertine. At Neum, Bosnia has its narrow access to the Adriatic.

HIGHLIGHTS Stari Most · Blagaj dervish house · Kravica Falls

256 Montenegrin Durmitor Massif, Tara Canyon & Bay of Kotor

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *ME*

The Tara Canyon, up to 1,300 meters deep, is the deepest in Europe, spanned by the Đurđevića Tara Bridge. In Durmitor, glacial lakes mirror the peaks, and on the coast the Bay of Kotor pushes into the mountains like a fjord. The Venetian old town of Kotor is a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Tara rafting · Black Lake · Bay of Kotor

257 Accursed Mountains

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Prokletije / Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro*

The wildest range in the Balkans, spread across Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. The long-distance “Peaks of the Balkans” trail links remote valleys such as Theth and Valbona, where tower houses from the days of the blood feud still stand. The ferry across the Koman reservoir is one of the most beautiful boat trips in Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS Peaks of the Balkans · Theth · Koman ferry

258 Albanian Coastal Lowlands & Ionian Riviera

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *AL*

Albania only opened up in 1991 — as attested by around 170,000 bunkers from the Hoxha era. Today the beaches of Ksamil, the ancient city of Butrint and the stone towns of Berat and Gjirokastër attract visitors. Tirana is colorful, loud and full of new beginnings.

HIGHLIGHTS Butrint · Berat · Beaches of Ksamil

259 Ohrid & Prespa Tectonic Lakes Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *MK, AL, GR*

Lake Ohrid is over a million years old, one of the oldest lakes in Europe, with over 200 endemic species. The town of Ohrid was once known as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans,” and Saint Naum Monastery stands at crystal-clear springs. Next door, three states share Lake Prespa, where Dalmatian pelicans breed.

HIGHLIGHTS Church of St. John at Kaneo · Saint Naum Monastery · Pelicans on Lake Prespa

260 Vardar River Basin & Šar Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *North Macedonia*

The core of North Macedonia with Skopje, whose center has been restaged with hundreds of statues and facades. Matka Canyon lies at the gates of the capital, and the Painted Mosque stands in Tetovo. In the Šar Mountains, Šarplaninac dogs still guard the flocks of sheep.

HIGHLIGHTS Matka Canyon · Painted Mosque of Tetovo · Ancient Stobi

261 Danubian Plain of Northern Bulgaria

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *BG*

Between the Danube and the Balkan range lies fertile northern Bulgaria. Veliko Tarnovo was the capital of the medieval tsardom, and the rock churches of Ivanovo and the Madara Rider are World Heritage Sites. In Belogradchik, red sandstone rocks form a bizarre backdrop for a fortress.

HIGHLIGHTS Tsarevets Fortress · Belogradchik Rocks · Madara Rider

262 Balkan Mountains Main Crest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Stara Planina / BG*

The range that gave the whole peninsula its name runs straight across Bulgaria. At Shipka Pass, a monument recalls the battle of 1877, and on Buzludzha sits a UFO-like monument of the Communists. In the Rose Valley near Kazanlak, a large share of the world's rose oil is distilled.

HIGHLIGHTS Buzludzha Monument · Rose Valley · Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak

263 Rila, Pirin & Rhodope Massifs

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Bulgaria*

Musala, at 2,925 meters, is the highest mountain in the Balkans. Rila Monastery is the spiritual heart of Bulgaria, and the Seven Rila Lakes lie stacked like pearls. In the Pirin stands Vihren, and the Rhodopes are the legendary land of Orpheus, with deep gorges and the Devil's Throat cave.

HIGHLIGHTS Rila Monastery · Seven Rila Lakes · Devil's Throat

264 Thracian Plain & Maritsa Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *BG, GR, TR*

Plovdiv is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Europe, with a Roman theater still in use today. The plain of the Maritsa is wine country and orchard, and its delta on the Greek-Turkish border a paradise for birds. Here once lived the Thracians, masters of goldsmithing.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town of Plovdiv · Evros Delta · Thracian gold treasure

265 East Thrace

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *European Turkey West of the Bosphorus*

The European part of Turkey west of the Bosphorus. In Edirne stands the Selimiye Mosque, Sinan's masterpiece, and for centuries the oil wrestling of Kırkpınar has taken place here. On the Gallipoli Peninsula, memorials recall the battle of 1915, and at the Dardanelles Asia begins.

HIGHLIGHTS Selimiye Mosque · Kırkpınar oil wrestling · Gallipoli

266 Istanbul: European Side & Golden Horn

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Turkey*

Capital of three world empires: Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace and the Blue Mosque stand on the historic peninsula, and the Grand Bazaar is one of the oldest covered markets in the world. On the Golden Horn and in Galata, modern Istanbul pulses. The ferries across the Bosphorus link two continents.

HIGHLIGHTS Hagia Sophia · Grand Bazaar · Galata Tower

267 Greek Macedonia, Chalkidiki & Mount Olympus

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *GR*

Olympus, at 2,918 meters, is Greece's highest mountain and the seat of the gods. Thessaloniki has Byzantine churches and the White Tower, and in Vergina lie the royal tombs of Philip II. Chalkidiki stretches three fingers into the sea, with beaches, pine forests and the holy mountain of Athos.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Olympus · Royal tombs of Vergina · Thessaloniki

268 Autonomous Monastic State of Mount Athos

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Greece*

An autonomous monastic state on the easternmost peninsula of Chalkidiki with 20 great Orthodox monasteries. For over a thousand years the avaton has applied: Women are forbidden to enter, and men need a limited pilgrim permit. The Visibility Rule applies to everyone else: The boat trip from Ouranoupoli passes close by the monasteries.

HIGHLIGHTS Pilgrim permit · Simonopetra Monastery · Boat trip from Ouranoupoli

269 Epirus, Vikos Gorge & Pindus Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Greece*

The Vikos Gorge is considered one of the deepest in the world relative to its width. In the Zagori villages, arched stone bridges link the valleys, and in Ioannina the island in the lake recalls Ali Pasha. Dodona was home to the oldest oracle in Greece.

HIGHLIGHTS Vikos Gorge · Zagori bridges · Oracle of Dodona

270 Ionian Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Corfu, Kefalonia & Zakynthos / GR*

Green islands with a Venetian heritage: The old town of Corfu is a World Heritage Site, the underground lake of Melissani glows on Kefalonia, and on Zakynthos a shipwreck lies in Navagio Bay. Ithaca is considered the home of Odysseus.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town of Corfu · Melissani cave lake · Navagio Bay

271 Thessalian Plain & Meteora Monoliths

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Greece*

Sandstone rocks several hundred meters high rise from the plain, and from the 14th century monks built monasteries on their summits — long accessible only by net and windlass. Thessaly is the granary of Greece, and the Pelion range the legendary home of the centaurs.

HIGHLIGHTS Meteora monasteries · Pelion · Vale of Tempe

272 Greater Athens & Attica Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Greece*

Above the capital towers the Acropolis with the Parthenon, a symbol of democracy and European culture. Below lie the Plaka, the Agora and a sea of houses for almost four million people. At Cape Sounion the Temple of Poseidon stands above the sea, and from Piraeus the ferries set out for the islands.

HIGHLIGHTS Acropolis · Cape Sounion · Port of Piraeus

273 Peloponnese Peninsula & Taygetus Range

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *GR*

The Olympic Games began in Olympia, Agamemnon ruled in Mycenae, and the theater of Epidaurus has acoustics that remain legendary. On the Mani Peninsula stand defiant tower houses, and Monemvasia is a rock town in the sea. The Taygetus forms the wild backbone of the south.

HIGHLIGHTS Olympia · Theater of Epidaurus · Monemvasia

274 North Aegean Islands, Sporades & Euboea

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *GR*

Euboea is Greece's second-largest island and hardly touristy, and the Sporades are green and wooded: Skopelos is familiar from "Mamma Mia!," and around Alonissos lies a marine park for monk seals. Farther north lie Thasos with white marble and Samothrace, where the famous Nike was found.

HIGHLIGHTS Alonissos Marine Park · Skopelos · Sanctuary of Samothrace

275 East Aegean Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Lesbos, Chios & Samos / GR*

Off the Turkish coast lie islands of distinct character: Lesbos with a petrified forest and the home of the poet Sappho, Chios with its mastic villages — the only place the resin grows — and Samos with the Tunnel of Eupalinos from the 6th century BC. On Ikaria, people live to a strikingly old age.

HIGHLIGHTS Petrified Forest of Lesbos · Mastic villages · Tunnel of Eupalinos

276 Cyclades Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Santorini Caldera & Naxos / GR*

White cube houses, blue domes, windmills: The Cyclades are Greece's picture book. Santorini is the rim of a caldera formed in a mighty Bronze Age eruption, and the island of Delos was the sanctuary of Apollo. Naxos, Milos, Paros and Mykonos each have a soul of their own.

HIGHLIGHTS Caldera of Santorini · Delos · Sarakiniko on Milos

277 Dodecanese Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Rhodes, Karpathos & Kos / GR*

The old town of Rhodes was built up as a fortress by the Knights of St. John and is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe. Hippocrates taught on Kos, and John wrote the Apocalypse on Patmos. In Olympos on Karpathos, older women still wear traditional dress in everyday life.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town of Rhodes · Lindos · Patmos

278 Crete

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *White Mountains & Samaria Gorge / GR*

The largest Greek island was the center of Minoan high culture, whose palace of Knossos is over 3,500 years old. The Samaria Gorge runs around 16 kilometers through the White Mountains, and pink sand shimmers on the beaches of Balos and Elafonisi. Zeus is said to have been born in a cave on Psiloritis.

HIGHLIGHTS Knossos · Samaria Gorge · Balos Lagoon

279 Cyprus: Southern Troodos & Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Republic of Cyprus*

In the Troodos Mountains, an ancient seabed lies exposed — one of the best-preserved ophiolites in the world. Painted barn-roofed churches are World Heritage Sites, and at the rock of Petra tou Romiou Aphrodite is said to have emerged from the sea. The mosaics of Paphos and the divided capital of Nicosia tell two millennia of history.

HIGHLIGHTS Troodos churches · Rock of Aphrodite · Mosaics of Paphos

280 Cyprus: Northern Kyrenia Range & Karpas

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *TRNC*

Northern Cyprus has been under Turkish control since 1974, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is recognized only by Turkey. St. Hilarion Castle clings to the Kyrenia range, and Bellapais Abbey is Gothic splendor. On the Karpas Peninsula wild donkeys roam free, and Varosha near Famagusta is a fenced-off ghost town.

HIGHLIGHTS St. Hilarion Castle · Bellapais Abbey · Ghost town of Varosha

281 Cyprus: British Sovereign Base Areas & UN Buffer Enclaves

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Akrotiri, Dhekelia & Kokkina*

The British sovereign areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, the United Nations buffer zone — the "Green Line" with the abandoned Nicosia airport — and the Turkish Cypriot exclave of Kokkina form a patchwork of sovereignties. Thousands of flamingos winter at the Akrotiri salt lake.

HIGHLIGHTS Akrotiri salt lake · Green Line in Nicosia · Kokkina exclave

III · 10 TILES 282–300

EASTERN EUROPE: UKRAINE, BELARUS, EUROPEAN RUSSIA & THE URALS

The great East European Plain stretches from the Carpathians to the Urals — steppe, forest-steppe, marshes and Europe's longest rivers. Many of these tiles are currently marked by war or can only be reached with restrictions. At the Urals, Europe ends at a line drawn by a mountain range, not by a bureaucrat.

282 Ukrainian Eastern Carpathians

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Hoverla & Bukovina / UA*

Hoverla, at 2,061 meters, is the highest mountain in Ukraine. In the Carpathians, the Hutsuls maintain their wooden churches, costumes and trembita horns, and the Residence in Chernivtsi is a World Heritage Site. Since 2022, Russia's war of aggression has overshadowed every trip to the country; current safety advisories apply on the ground.

HIGHLIGHTS Hoverla · Hutsul wooden churches · University of Chernivtsi

283 Podolian Upland & Dniester Canyon

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Ukraine*

The Dniester has cut deep into the upland, and on a river loop stands the fortress of Kamianets-Podilskyi. Other castles such as Khotyn guard the old borders. Lviv, with its coffee house culture and old town, is the western Ukrainian center of the region.

HIGHLIGHTS Kamianets-Podilskyi · Khotyn Fortress · Old Town of Lviv

284 Dnieper Upland & Central Forest-Steppe

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Ukraine*

The heartland of Ukraine on fertile black earth, once the granary of Europe. Sofiyivka Park in Uman is a romantic landscape garden, and the national poet Taras Shevchenko lies buried in Kaniv. Gentle hills, sunflower fields and the broad Dnipro define the land.

HIGHLIGHTS Sofiyivka Park · Shevchenko's Grave in Kaniv · Banks of the Dnipro

285 Greater Kyiv Metropolitan Area

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

URBAN ISLAND *Ukraine*

Kyiv is centuries older than Moscow and was the center of Kyivan Rus: Saint Sophia's Cathedral and the Lavra cave monastery are World Heritage Sites, and the Arsenalna metro station, at just over 100 meters, is one of the deepest in the world. The Maidan stands for Ukraine's will to freedom, proven under air raids since 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS Pechersk Lavra · Saint Sophia's Cathedral · Maidan

286 Pontic Steppe & Black Sea Lowland

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Southern Ukraine*

Endless steppe all the way to the Black Sea: The Askania-Nova reserve is home to Przewalski's horses and saiga antelopes, and Odesa, with the Potemkin Stairs and opera house, is the pearl of the coast. The Dnipro Delta and the Kinburn Spit form a wilderness by the sea — currently near the front line.

HIGHLIGHTS Potemkin Stairs · Askania-Nova · Kinburn Spit

287 Crimean Peninsula & Crimean Mountains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Steep coast, vineyards and the Crimean Mountains with cave cities such as Chufut-Kale. The Swallow's Nest perches on a cliff, the Yalta Conference met in Livadia Palace in 1945, and the palace of the Crimean Khans stands in Bakhchysarai. Under international law, Crimea belongs to Ukraine; it has been occupied by Russia since 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS Swallow's Nest · Livadia Palace · Chufut-Kale

288 Donets Ridge & Donbas Steppe

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Eastern Ukraine*

Ukraine's coal district, defined by spoil heaps rising like pyramids from the steppe. On chalk cliffs above the Siverskyi Donets stands the cave monastery of Sviatohirsk. The region has been a war zone since 2014 and cannot currently be visited.

HIGHLIGHTS Chalk cliffs of Sviatohirsk · Spoil heaps · Steppe on the Donets

289 Pripyat Marshes

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Polesia Wetlands & Chernobyl Zone / BY & UA*

Polesia is the largest wetland in Europe, a labyrinth of bogs and river branches between Belarus and Ukraine. In 1986 the Chernobyl reactor exploded here; the ghost town of Pripyat and the Duga radar are memorials. In the exclusion zone, nature is taking back the land — tours have been suspended since 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS Ghost town of Pripyat · Duga radar · Wilderness of the exclusion zone

290 Belarusian Ridge & Neman-Dvina Lowlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Belarus*

A country of forests, lakes and swamps with Minsk as a monumental postwar city. The castles of Mir and Nesvizh are World Heritage Sites, and Brest Fortress recalls June 1941. The Braslaw Lakes in the north are among the most beautiful lake districts in Eastern Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS Mir Castle · Brest Fortress · Braslaw Lakes

291 Greater Saint Petersburg & Neva Delta

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Russia*

In 1703, Peter the Great had a city built in the swamps of the Neva — the window to Europe. The Hermitage holds around three million works of art, and in June the White Nights bathe the canals in twilight. At night the bridges open for ships, and in Peterhof the fountains play.

HIGHLIGHTS Hermitage · White Nights · Peterhof

292 Kola Peninsula, Khibiny Tundra & White Sea Coast

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

POLAR & ICE *Arctic RU*

Murmansk is the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, and Teriberka a fishing village on the Arctic Ocean. On Kola, the deepest hole humans have ever driven into the Earth was drilled, more than 12 kilometers. In the White Sea lie the Solovetsky Islands with their monastery, and in Lake Onega the wooden churches of Kizhi.

HIGHLIGHTS Teriberka · Solovetsky Monastery · Wooden churches of Kizhi

293 Upper Volga Basin, Valdai Hills & Golden Ring

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Russia*

In the Valdai Hills, the Volga rises from an inconspicuous bog. All around lie the towns of the Golden Ring — Suzdal, Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Sergiev Posad — with white cathedrals and onion domes. In Veliky Novgorod, medieval letters written on birch bark were found.

HIGHLIGHTS Suzdal · Kremlin of Novgorod · Source of the Volga

294 Greater Moscow Metropolitan Area

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Russia*

The Kremlin, Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral form the center of a metropolitan area of around 20 million people. The metro stations are underground palaces of marble and mosaic, and the towers of Moscow City reach skyward. A city that never stands still.

HIGHLIGHTS Red Square · Metro stations · Moscow City

295 Middle & Lower Volga Steppe & Volga Delta

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Kazan to Astrakhan / RU*

Europe's longest river winds through the steppe to the Caspian Sea. In Kazan, a mosque and a cathedral stand side by side in the Kremlin, and in Volgograd "The Motherland Calls" towers above Mamayev Kurgan. Kalmykia is the only Buddhist republic in Europe, and in the delta near Astrakhan lotus fields bloom.

HIGHLIGHTS Kremlin of Kazan · Mamayev Kurgan · Lotus fields in the delta

296 Ciscaucasia & Kuban Steppe

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Fore-Caucasus / RU*

The northern foreland of the Caucasus is fertile black earth and Cossack country. In Pyatigorsk and Kislovodsk, Lermontov and Tolstoy took the mineral waters, and on the Black Sea coast at Sochi the 2014 Winter Olympics were held. On the horizon gleams Elbrus.

HIGHLIGHTS Spas of the Mineral Waters · Sochi · Kuban Cossacks

297 Greater Caucasus Northern Flank

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Elbrus, Dagestan & Chechnya / RU*

Elbrus, at 5,642 meters, is the highest mountain in Europe — if the border is drawn along the Caucasus. In Dagestan, the Sulak Canyon cuts deep into the range, and Derbent is among the oldest cities in Russia. Ingushetia has medieval defensive towers, Grozny the enormous Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque.

HIGHLIGHTS Elbrus · Sulak Canyon · Defensive towers of Ingushetia

298 Polar & Subpolar Ural Mountains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Komi & Yamalo-Nenets Border / RU*

Here the Urals take their wildest form: Narodnaya, at 1,895 meters, is the highest peak, and the rock pillars of Manpupuner rise from the plateau like petrified giants. The Virgin Komi Forests are the largest untouched forest in Europe and a World Heritage Site, reachable only by helicopter or on a weeks-long expedition.

HIGHLIGHTS Manpupuner · Virgin Komi Forests · Narodnaya

299 ☐

Central Ural Mountains

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Yekaterinburg & Perm Taiga Divide / RU*

A low, heavily forested section where obelisks mark the boundary between Europe and Asia. In Yekaterinburg the tsar's family was murdered in 1918, and the Church on the Blood stands in that place. The Kungur Ice Cave and the Perm-36 Gulag museum tell of nature and history.

HIGHLIGHTS Europe–Asia border obelisk · Kungur Ice Cave · Perm-36

300 ☐

Southern Ural Mountains

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Bashkortostan & Ural River Headwaters / RU*

In the Southern Urals rises the Ural River, the traditional boundary between Europe and Asia as far as the Caspian Sea. In Shulgan-Tash Cave, Stone Age people painted mammoths on the walls, and Arkaim is a Bronze Age ring settlement. Taganay National Park and clear Lake Turgoyak are hiking destinations in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS Cave paintings of Shulgan-Tash · Arkaim · Taganay

IV

TILES 301–545 · 245 REGIONS

ASIA

From the Urals and Bosphorus to the Pacific

The largest continent on Earth is also the one most distorted by political lists: The vastness of Siberia, the Tibetan Plateau or the Gobi Desert count for hardly more there than a city-state. GREAT1001 gives Asia back its true size — with 245 tiles from the taiga to the coral reefs.

The journey leads from Siberia through Central Asia to the Middle East, across Iran and the Himalaya to China, Korea and Japan, and finally through the island realm of Southeast Asia to the edge of Oceania. Here lie the highest mountains, the largest megacities and some of the most convoluted exclaves in the world.

48 Mountains & Highlands
41 Urban Island
36 Island & Archipelago
23 Desert & Arid Land
20 Cultural Landscape
17 Plain, River & Steppe

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **2.4** OF 5

Siberia & the Russian Far East	301–317
Central Asia & Mongolia	318–338
South Caucasus, Anatolia, the Levant & the Arabian Peninsula	339–373
Iranian Plateau, Afghanistan & Pakistan	374–394
Indian Subcontinent, Himalaya & the Northern Indian Ocean	395–431
Greater China & Taiwan	432–466
Korean Peninsula & the Japanese Archipelago	467–485
Southeast Asia: Mainland & the Malay Archipelago	486–545

IV · 1 TILES 301–317

SIBERIA & THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST

Siberia is larger than every continent except Asia itself. Its tiles follow the great rivers Ob, Yenisei and Lena, lead onto basalt plateaus, to the Pole of Cold and to Baikal — and end at the volcanoes of Kamchatka and in the tiger forests on the Sea of Japan.

301 Western Siberian Lowland

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Ob-Irtysh Taiga & Swamp Basin / RU*

One of the largest plains on Earth, so flat that the Ob and Irtysh have barely any gradient over thousands of kilometers. Here lies the Vasyugan Mire, one of the largest swamps in the world, and beneath the ground lie Russia's oil and gas reserves. Tobolsk has the only stone kremlin in Siberia, and Novosibirsk is Siberia's largest city.

HIGHLIGHTS Kremlin of Tobolsk · Vasyugan Mire · Novosibirsk

302 Taymyr Peninsula

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE *Eurasian High Arctic Tundra / RU*

The northernmost mainland region on Earth: At Cape Chelyuskin, Eurasia ends. Huge herds of wild reindeer roam the tundra, and Dolgans and Nganasans live here as reindeer herders. Access is only via Norilsk, an industrial city closed to foreigners, and with expedition logistics.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Chelyuskin · Reindeer migrations · Taymyr Reserve

303 Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE *Arctic Ice Caps / RU*

The last large archipelago on Earth to be discovered — first sighted in 1913 and mapped from 1930 to 1932. Mighty ice caps, polar desert and Cape Arktichesky, the starting point of some North Pole expeditions. A place known almost only to researchers and polar bears.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Arktichesky · Ice caps · Polar desert

304 Putorana Plateau

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Sub-Arctic Basalt Trap Canyonlands / RU*

A high plateau of basalt, formed in the eruptions of the Siberian Traps 252 million years ago — the event linked to the greatest mass extinction in Earth's history. Deep canyons, table mountains and more waterfalls than anywhere else in Russia. A World Heritage Site, reachable only by helicopter or boat.

HIGHLIGHTS Canyon lakes · Waterfalls · Snow sheep

305 Central Siberian Plateau

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Yenisei & Tunguska Basin / RU*

Endless taiga between the Yenisei and Lena. In 1908, a celestial body exploded over the Stony Tunguska and flattened around 80 million trees across more than 2,000 square kilometers. At Lake Vivi lies the geographic center of Russia, and near Krasnoyarsk the rocks of the Stolby rise from the forest.

HIGHLIGHTS Tunguska explosion site · Yenisei shipping · Stolby

306 Lake Baikal Rift Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *Deepest Continental Rift Lake / RU*

The oldest and deepest lake on Earth: over 25 million years old, up to 1,642 meters deep and home to around a fifth of the liquid freshwater on the Earth's surface. The Baikal seal and countless endemic species live here. In March the crystal-clear ice becomes a road; on Olkhon, Shaman Rock rises from the water.

HIGHLIGHTS Olkhon & Shaman Rock · Clear ice in March · Circum-Baikal Railway

307 Yakutia / Lena River Basin & Verkhoyansk Range

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

POLAR & ICE *Pole of Cold / RU*

The Pole of Cold of the Northern Hemisphere: In Verkhoyansk and Oymyakon, temperatures below minus 67 degrees Celsius have been measured — the coldest permanently inhabited places on Earth. Yakutsk is built on permafrost, and the Lena Pillars rise above the river as forests of stone. Mammoths thaw out of the ice in the ground.

HIGHLIGHTS Oymyakon · Lena Pillars · Mammoth Museum in Yakutsk

308 New Siberian Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE *Laptev/East Siberian Sea / RU*

An archipelago between the Laptev and East Siberian Seas whose soil is full of Ice Age bones and mammoth ivory. The islands consist partly of ice and permafrost, and their coasts crumble further every year. Only rare expeditions and ivory hunters come here.

HIGHLIGHTS Mammoth ivory · Permafrost cliffs · Laptev Sea

309 Wrangel Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE *Pleistocene Mammoth Steppe Refugium / RU*

The last refuge of the woolly mammoths: They survived here until around 4,000 years ago, when pyramids already stood in Egypt. Today the island has the highest density of polar bear dens in the world, and walruses lie on the beaches in the tens of thousands. A World Heritage Site, reachable only by expedition ship.

HIGHLIGHTS Polar bears · Walrus colonies · Mammoth steppe

310 ☐

Kolyma Basin & Magadan Highlands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Russian Far East*

The “Road of Bones” runs over 2,000 kilometers from Yakutsk to Magadan, built by Gulag prisoners whose remains lie beneath the asphalt. The Kolyma was synonymous with labor camps and gold. In Magadan, the “Mask of Sorrow” commemorates the victims.

HIGHLIGHTS Kolyma Highway · Mask of Sorrow · Gold mines

311 ☐

Chukotka Peninsula

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

POLAR & ICE *Bering Strait Tundra / RU*

Russia’s far east on the Bering Strait, just 82 kilometers from Alaska. On Yttygran Island stand prehistoric avenues of whale bones, and Chukchi and Yupik still hunt whales today. A border area requiring a special permit — one of the most difficult destinations in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale Bone Alley · Uelen · Bering Strait

312 ☐

Kamchatka Peninsula

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Ring of Fire Volcanoes & Geysers / RU*

Around 300 volcanoes, some 30 of them active: Klyuchevskaya Sopka, at over 4,700 meters, is the highest active volcano in Eurasia. In the Valley of the Geysers hot fountains erupt, and at Kuril Lake hundreds of brown bears fish for salmon. There are hardly any roads — the wilderness begins just beyond Petropavlovsk.

HIGHLIGHTS Valley of the Geysers · Bears at Kuril Lake · Avachinsky

313 ☐

Commander Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Bering Sea Aleutian Termination / RU*

The western end of the Aleutian arc: On Bering Island, Vitus Bering died in 1741, and his physician Steller described Steller’s sea cow here — less than thirty years later it was extinct. Today sea otters, fur seals and whales live here in a nature reserve.

HIGHLIGHTS Bering Island · Sea otters · Fur seal colonies

314 ☐

Kuril Islands Volcanic Arc

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Sea of Okhotsk / RU*

A chain of more than 50 volcanic islands between Kamchatka and Hokkaido, between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific. Japan claims the southern islands as its “Northern Territories,” a dispute dating from 1945. Steaming craters, hot springs and fog; access only with a border-zone permit.

HIGHLIGHTS Iturup · Crater lakes · Japanese–Russian island dispute

315 ☐ **Sakhalin Island** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *North Pacific Taiga Island / RU*

A long taiga island off the mouth of the Amur, whose south belonged to Japan as Karafuto until 1945. Anton Chekhov described the misery of the penal colony in 1890. Today corporations extract oil and gas, and on the coast rocks such as those at Cape Velikan rise from the Sea of Okhotsk.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Velikan · Japanese heritage · Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk

316 ☐ **Amur River Basin & Zeya-Bureya Plains** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Russian Far East*

For thousands of kilometers, the Amur forms the border between Russia and China. In Blagoveshchensk you look across the river at the Chinese city of Heihe, and Khabarovsk is the center of the Far East. In the hinterland, Russian spaceflight launches from the Vostochny Cosmodrome.

HIGHLIGHTS Amur riverfront · View of Heihe · Khabarovsk

317 ☐ **Sikhote-Alin Mountain Range** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Ussuri Amur Tiger Taiga / RU*

A taiga where conifers, lianas and tigers come together: Here lives the Amur tiger, and in the south the Amur leopard, one of the rarest big cats in the world. In 1947, one of the largest observed iron meteorites struck here. In Vladivostok the Trans-Siberian Railway ends after 9,289 kilometers.

HIGHLIGHTS Amur tiger · Land of the Leopard · Vladivostok

IV · 2 TILES 318–338

CENTRAL ASIA & MONGOLIA

Steppe, desert and the high ranges of the Tian Shan and Pamir: Central Asia is the land of nomads and the Silk Road. In the Fergana Valley, Soviet border-drawing left one of the most complicated tangles of exclaves on Earth; in the Karakum, a crater has been burning for decades.

318 ☐ **Kazakh Steppe & Turgai Valley** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Kazakhstan*

A sea of grass stretching for thousands of kilometers, home of the saiga antelope and of nomadic traditions. In the middle of the steppe, Astana was raised as a futuristic capital, with the Bayterek Tower and the tent-like Khan Shatyr. In the north, the lakes of Burabay mirror granite rocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Astana · Saiga herds · Burabay

319 ☐

Mangystau Karst Plateau & Ustyurt Escarpment

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Caspian KZ*

A moonscape on the Caspian Sea: chalk canyons such as Bozzhyra, the valley of stone spheres at Torysh and underground mosques such as Beket-Ata. The Karagiye Depression lies 132 meters below sea level. The edge of the Ustyurt Plateau runs through the desert as a white wall.

HIGHLIGHTS Bozzhyra · Beket-Ata underground mosque · Torysh

320 ☐

Aral Sea Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Desiccated Ecological Extreme / KZ & UZ*

Once the fourth-largest lake in the world, today one of the greatest man-made environmental disasters: Since the 1960s its tributaries have been diverted for cotton. In Moynaq ships lie in the sand, and a new desert, the Aralkum, has formed. The northern Small Aral is recovering thanks to a dam. Nearby lies the oasis city of Khiva.

HIGHLIGHTS Ship graveyard of Moynaq · Savitsky Museum in Nukus · Itchan Kala in Khiva

321 ☐

Lake Balkhash Endorheic Basin & Charyn Canyon

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *KZ*

Lake Balkhash is half fresh and half salt, with a narrow strait separating the two parts. Charyn Canyon with its “Valley of Castles” is called the little brother of the Grand Canyon, and in Altyn-Emel National Park a singing dune hums.

HIGHLIGHTS Valley of Castles · Singing Dune · Lake Balkhash

322 ☐

Kazakh Altai & Irtysh Headwaters

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Eastern Kazakhstan*

Belukha, at 4,506 meters, is the highest peak of the Altai and a sacred mountain for many peoples. Lake Markakol lies in a wilderness of larches and alpine meadows, and in Semey on the Irtysh a memorial recalls the Soviet Polygon nuclear test site, where over 450 bombs were detonated.

HIGHLIGHTS Belukha · Lake Markakol · Memorial in Semey

323 ☐

Mongolian Altai Mountains

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Western Mongolia*

In the far west of Mongolia rises Tavan Bogd with Khüiten Peak, the highest point in the country. Here live Kazakh eagle hunters, who go after foxes with trained golden eagles. Rock art spanning millennia is a World Heritage Site, and the Potanin Glacier flows into a deserted wilderness.

HIGHLIGHTS Eagle Festival in Ölgii · Tavan Bogd · Rock art

324 Khangai Mountains, Orkhon Valley & Khövsgöl Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Central Mongolia*

The heart of Mongolia: In the Orkhon Valley lay Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire, today with the monastery of Erdene Zuu. Lake Khövsgöl holds most of Mongolia's freshwater, and reindeer herders live on its shores. Ulaanbaatar is the coldest capital in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Erdene Zuu · Lake Khövsgöl · Yurt camps in the Orkhon Valley

325 Gobi Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Flaming Cliffs & Khongoryn Els / Southern Mongolia*

A cold desert of steppe, rock and dunes. At the Flaming Cliffs of Bayanzag, the first dinosaur eggs were found in 1923, and the dunes of Khongoryn Els sing in the wind and reach almost 300 meters. In the Yolyn Am gorge, ice lingers into summer. Two-humped camels move through the emptiness.

HIGHLIGHTS Flaming Cliffs · Khongoryn Els · Yolyn Am

326 Northern Tian Shan Foothills & Ili Valley

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Kazakhstan*

Almaty lies right at the foot of the Tian Shan, with glaciers and ski areas half an hour away. Big Almaty Lake gleams turquoise, and in Lake Kaindy sunken spruces rise from the water. In the Ili Valley, the petroglyphs of Tamgaly are a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Big Almaty Lake · Lake Kaindy · Medeu ice rink

327 Issyk-Kul High-Altitude Endorheic Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Kyrgyzstan*

A huge mountain lake at around 1,600 meters that never freezes despite its altitude — its name means "warm lake." All around stand peaks over 5,000 meters, the red rocks of Jeti-Ögüz and the fairy-tale gorge of Skazka. In Karakol and Cholpon-Ata, eagle hunters and rock carvings show old Kyrgyzstan.

HIGHLIGHTS Jeti-Ögüz · Skazka Canyon · Eagle hunters

328 Central Tian Shan High Peaks

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Victory Peak & Naryn Highlands / KG*

Two seven-thousanders guard the border with China: Jengish Chokusu at 7,439 meters and Khan Tengri, a marble pyramid that glows at sunset. The Inylchek Glacier dams Lake Merzbacher, which drains explosively each year. At Song-Köl, nomads live in yurts, and Tash Rabat is a stone caravanserai.

HIGHLIGHTS Khan Tengri · Song-Köl · Tash Rabat

329 ☐

Greater Tashkent Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Uzbekistan*

Central Asia's largest city was rebuilt as a Soviet model city after the 1966 earthquake. The metro stations are works of art, the Chorsu Bazaar is a domed building full of spices, and the Khast Imam complex houses one of the oldest Qurans in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Chorsu Bazaar · Metro stations · Khast Imam complex

330 ☐

Fergana Valley Intermontane Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *UZ, KG, TJ*

The most densely populated basin in Central Asia, divided between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan along borders drawn in Soviet times. In Margilan silk is woven as it was centuries ago, and in Rishtan ceramics are fired. Above Osh rises the sacred mountain of Sulaiman-Too.

HIGHLIGHTS Yodgorlik silk factory · Ceramics of Rishtan · Sulaiman-Too

331 ☐

Sokh

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Uzbek Exclave in Kyrgyzstan*

An Uzbek exclave in Kyrgyzstan with around 70,000 inhabitants, most of them Tajiks. Sokh is among the most populous exclaves in the world and lies in a mountain valley reachable only across Kyrgyz territory. The borders are sensitive, and travel requires planning and permits.

HIGHLIGHTS Sokh Valley · Border posts · Tajik villages

332 ☐

Shohimardan

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Uzbek Exclave in Kyrgyzstan*

A small Uzbek exclave in the Kyrgyz part of the Alai Range, once a popular health resort. Above it lies Kurbankul, a turquoise mountain lake. An excursion spot for Uzbeks, and for border collectors one of the most delicate tiles in Central Asia.

HIGHLIGHTS Blue Lake Kurbankul · Mountain resort · Border crossing

333 ☐

Vorukh

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Tajik Exclave in Kyrgyzstan*

A Tajik exclave in Kyrgyzstan with around 30,000 inhabitants, the scene of heavy border conflicts over water and pasture in 2021 and 2022. A border agreement of 2025 is meant to calm the situation. Anyone wanting to come here should check the current situation carefully.

HIGHLIGHTS Isfara Valley · Mountain villages · 2025 border agreement

334 Pamir Mountains

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *"Roof of the World" / Gorno-Badakhshan, TJ*

The "Roof of the World": The M41 Pamir Highway crosses passes above 4,600 meters through a moonscape, and Ismoil Somoni, at 7,495 meters, is the country's highest peak. Lake Karakul lies in an impact crater, and from the Wakhan Valley you look across the river into Afghanistan. A permit for Gorno-Badakhshan is required.

HIGHLIGHTS Pamir Highway · Karakul · Wakhan Valley

335 Vakhsh & Panj River Lowlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Southwestern Tajikistan*

The southwest of Tajikistan with the capital Dushanbe, whose flagpole is among the tallest in the world. On the Vakhsh, the Nurek Dam is one of the highest on Earth, and the Rogun Dam is meant to surpass it. Hissar Fortress has guarded the valley for centuries.

HIGHLIGHTS Dushanbe · Hissar Fortress · Nurek Reservoir

336 Kyzylkum Desert & Zarafshan Oasis Corridor

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Samarkand/Bukhara, UZ*

The Silk Road at its most magnificent: Samarkand with the Registan, Bukhara with the Kalon Minaret and the Ark citadel, Shakhrisabz as the birthplace of Timur. Behind the oases on the Zarafshan begins the red sand desert of the Kyzylkum, with yurt camps and Lake Aydar.

HIGHLIGHTS Registan in Samarkand · Old Town of Bukhara · Yurt camp at Lake Aydar

337 Karakum Desert & Kopet Dag Foothills

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Turkmenistan*

Turkmenistan is one of the most closed countries in the world. Ashgabat is a city of white marble with a world record to its name, and in the desert lie the ruins of the oasis city of Merv and the Parthian fortress of Nisa. At the foot of the Kopet Dag, breeders raise Akhal-Tekes, the "golden horses."

HIGHLIGHTS Marble city of Ashgabat · Ruins of Merv · Akhal-Teke horses

338 Darvaza Gas Crater

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *"Gates of Hell" / Central Karakum, TM*

The "Gates of Hell": a crater around 70 meters wide in the middle of the Karakum that has been burning for decades, probably since a Soviet drilling operation around 1971. At night it glows orange in the desert. The government has repeatedly announced plans to extinguish it, and the flames have recently grown weaker.

HIGHLIGHTS Night camp at the crater rim · Karakum · Desert track

IV · 3 TILES 339–373

SOUTH CAUCASUS, ANATOLIA, THE LEVANT & THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

From the defensive towers of Svaneti across the fairy chimneys of Cappadocia and the Dead Sea to the largest sand desert on Earth. Here lie the cradles of agriculture, of writing and of three world religions — and enclaves such as Madha and Nahwa that only the Arabian Peninsula could have produced.

339 Southern Greater Caucasus & Colchis Lowland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Georgia*

Georgia unites high mountains and subtropical lowlands. In Svaneti stand medieval defensive towers, and Ushguli is among the highest permanently inhabited villages in Europe. Gergeti Trinity Church stands before Kazbek, and in Colchis the Argonauts sought the Golden Fleece. Tbilisi and 8,000 years of wine culture belong here too.

HIGHLIGHTS Ushguli · Gergeti · Old Town of Tbilisi

340 Armenian Volcanic Highland & Lake Sevan

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Lesser Caucasus*

A highland of basalt and tuff on which stand the oldest churches of Christendom. Tatev Monastery is reached by one of the longest reversible cable cars in the world, Geghard is carved into the rock, and Lake Sevan lies at almost 1,900 meters. From Yerevan you look out at Ararat — on the other side of the border.

HIGHLIGHTS Tatev Monastery · Khor Virap · Lake Sevan

341 Nakhchivan Exclave

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Azerbaijani Exclave between Armenia, Iran & Turkey*

An Azerbaijani exclave between Armenia, Iran and Turkey, cut off from the heartland. Noah's tomb is said to lie here, Alinja Fortress sits atop a rocky peak, and asthma is treated in the Duzdag salt mine. Access by flight from Baku or via Turkey and Iran.

HIGHLIGHTS Alinja Fortress · Duzdag Salt Cave · Momine Khatun Mausoleum

342 Kura-Aras Lowland & Absheron Mud Volcanoes

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Azerbaijan*

Azerbaijan has several hundred mud volcanoes, around a third of all those in the world. In Gobustan they bubble next to Stone Age rock art, and at Yanar Dag a hill has been burning for as long as anyone can remember. Baku combines its old town with the Flame Towers, and in the Caucasus foothills lies the Khan's Palace of Sheki.

HIGHLIGHTS Mud volcanoes of Gobustan · Yanar Dag · Old City of Baku

343 Istanbul: Asian Side

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Anatolian Bosphorus Shore / Turkey*

On the other side of the Bosphorus, Istanbul lives more calmly: Kadıköy and Moda are hip neighborhoods with markets and cafés, Üsküdar is pious and old, and on Çamlıca Hill stands the largest mosque in the country. Maiden's Tower keeps watch offshore, and every ferry back to Europe is an event.

HIGHLIGHTS Kadıköy · Maiden's Tower · Ferry across the Bosphorus

344 Aegean Coast & Sea of Marmara Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Western Turkey*

Western Turkey is an open-air museum of antiquity: Troy, Pergamon, Ephesus with the Library of Celsus and the travertine terraces of Pamukkale above ancient Hierapolis. Bursa was the first Ottoman capital, and Izmir and Bodrum are the lively ports of the Aegean.

HIGHLIGHTS Ephesus · Pamukkale · Pergamon

345 Pontic Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Black Sea Cloud Forests / Northern Turkey*

A green wall between the Black Sea and the highlands: rainforests, tea plantations near Rize and summer pastures, the yayla. Sumela Monastery clings to a rock face above the fog, and the Kaçkar Mountains reach almost 4,000 meters. In Safranbolu stand the most beautiful Ottoman wooden houses.

HIGHLIGHTS Sumela Monastery · Kaçkar Mountains · Safranbolu

346 Central Anatolian Plateau & Cappadocia Tuff Cones

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Turkey*

Volcanoes deposited tuff that wind and water sculpted into fairy chimneys. In Cappadocia people have lived in the rock for millennia, and Derinkuyu is an underground city spanning eight levels. Every morning, hundreds of balloons take off. Add Konya, the city of Rumi, and 9,000-year-old Çatalhöyük.

HIGHLIGHTS Balloon ride over Göreme · Derinkuyu underground city · Mevlana Museum in Konya

347 Taurus Mountains & Lycian Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Southern Turkey*

The Lycian Way follows over 500 kilometers of coast with rock tombs, sunken cities at Kekova and coves such as Ölüdeniz. At Yanartaş, gas flames have been burning from the rock since antiquity — the Chimera of legend. Behind rises the Taurus, cut by gorges such as Saklıkent.

HIGHLIGHTS Lycian Way · Kekova · Flames of the Chimera

348 ☐

Eastern Anatolian Highland, Lake Van & Mount Ararat

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Turkey*

Ararat, at 5,137 meters, is Turkey's highest mountain, where Noah's Ark is said to have come to rest. Lake Van is the largest soda lake in the world, and on Akdamar Island stands a 10th-century Armenian church. On the border with Armenia lie the ruins of the old capital of Ani.

HIGHLIGHTS Ararat · Akdamar · Ruins of Ani

349 ☐

Southeastern Anatolia

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Upper Tigris & Euphrates Headwaters / TR*

Here stands Göbekli Tepe, around 11,600 years old and thus the oldest known monumental structure of humankind. On Nemrut Dağı, stone heads of gods gaze into the sunrise, Şanlıurfa is the city of Abraham, and Mardin a stone city above the Mesopotamian plain.

HIGHLIGHTS Göbekli Tepe · Nemrut Dağı · Old Town of Mardin

350 ☐

Syrian Steppe & Palmyra Desert

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *Levant Hinterland / SY & JO*

The hinterland of the Levant with the caravan city of Palmyra, badly damaged by IS in 2015, Damascus and Aleppo as some of the oldest cities in the world, and the Crusader castle of Krak des Chevaliers. In Jordan's eastern desert stand the desert castles of the Umayyads. After years of war, Syria is opening up only hesitantly.

HIGHLIGHTS Palmyra · Krak des Chevaliers · Desert castle of Qusayr Amra

351 ☐

Mount Lebanon Range & Beqaa Rift Valley

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Lebanon*

In the Qadisha Valley grow the last cedars of Lebanon, and in the Beqaa Valley stand the Roman temples of Baalbek, with stone blocks weighing over 800 tons. Byblos is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, and Jeita Grotto a dripstone wonder. Despite its crises, Beirut remains a city full of energy.

HIGHLIGHTS Temples of Baalbek · Cedars of God · Jeita Grotto

352 ☐

Levantine Coastal Plain, Galilee & Negev Crater Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

COAST & PENINSULA *Israel*

From the Bauhaus city of Tel Aviv via the Crusader city of Akko and the Bahá'í Gardens of Haifa to the Sea of Galilee, the lowest freshwater lake on Earth. In the south opens the Ramon Crater, a 40-kilometer erosion cirque, and on the Red Sea the reefs of Eilat beckon.

HIGHLIGHTS Bahá'í Gardens in Haifa · Ramon Crater · Akko

353 ☐

West Bank Highlands & Dead Sea Jordan Rift Valley

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

EXTREME POINT *Lowest Land Point*

The shore of the Dead Sea lies around 430 meters below sea level, the lowest point of land on Earth. In the salty water you float like a cork. All around lie Jerusalem, holy to three world religions, Bethlehem, Jericho, Qumran and the rock fortress of Masada.

HIGHLIGHTS Floating in the Dead Sea · Old City of Jerusalem · Masada

354 ☐

Gaza Strip Coastal Enclave

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE

A narrow coastal strip of around 365 square kilometers, home to over two million people — one of the most densely populated areas on Earth. Since the war that began in October 2023, Gaza has been largely destroyed and marked by a humanitarian catastrophe. The territory is not accessible to travelers.

HIGHLIGHTS Not accessible · Mediterranean coastal strip · Rafah border crossing

355 ☐

Wadi Rum Sandstone Desert & Petra Rift Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Jordan*

Red sandstone mountains and sand dunes: Wadi Rum was the setting of "Lawrence of Arabia" and a backdrop for films set on Mars. Next door, the Nabataeans carved Petra into the rock — the Treasury, Al-Khazneh, and the Monastery, Ad-Deir, rank among the wonders of the world. At the Gulf of Aqaba, the Red Sea begins.

HIGHLIGHTS Al-Khazneh · Ad-Deir Monastery · Night in a desert camp

356 ☐

Mesopotamian Alluvial Plain & Marshlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Tigris-Euphrates / Iraq*

Between the Euphrates and Tigris, civilization began: A ziggurat stands in Ur, and in Babylon and Uruk writing and the city were invented. The marshes in the south, home of the Marsh Arabs and their reed houses, are a World Heritage Site. Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf attract millions of pilgrims.

HIGHLIGHTS Ziggurat of Ur · Chibayish marshes · Babylon

357 ☐

Iraqi Kurdistan

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Northern Zagros Mountains / Iraq*

The Citadel of Erbil is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world. Lalish holds the central sanctuary of the Yazidis, Amadiya sits atop a table mountain, and the Hamilton Road leads through the Rawanduz Gorge. A safe, hospitable part of Iraq.

HIGHLIGHTS Citadel of Erbil · Lalish · Rawanduz Gorge

358 ☐

Kuwait Bay & Northern Gulf Alluvial Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA

A wealthy city-state at the end of the Persian Gulf, whose Kuwait Towers have become the symbol of the country. On Failaka Island stood a settlement from the time of Alexander the Great. Modern malls, old souks and memories of the 1991 Gulf War shape the picture.

HIGHLIGHTS Kuwait Towers · Failaka Island · Souk Al-Mubarakiya

359 ☐

Al-Ahsa Oasis & Eastern Arabian Gulf Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Saudi Arabia*

Al-Ahsa is the largest natural oasis in the world, with millions of date palms and World Heritage status. In Jabal Al-Qarah, limestone rocks form cool cave passages. On the coast lie Dammam and Dhahran, where the first Saudi oil was found in 1938. A causeway leads to Bahrain.

HIGHLIGHTS Date groves of Al-Ahsa · Jabal Al-Qarah · King Fahd Causeway

360 ☐

Bahrain Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

An island kingdom in the Gulf with deep roots: Here lay Dilmun, a Bronze Age trading power whose burial mounds and fortress of Qal'at al-Bahrain are World Heritage Sites. The Pearling Path recalls the pearl divers, and the "Tree of Life" has stood alone in the desert for centuries.

HIGHLIGHTS Qal'at al-Bahrain · Pearling Path · Tree of Life

361 ☐

Qatar Karst Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND

A flat limestone peninsula that gas has transformed into a global stage. Doha offers the Museum of Islamic Art and the National Museum in the shape of a desert rose. In the south, at Khor Al Adaid, the desert meets the sea, and in the west Richard Serra's steel plates stand in the emptiness.

HIGHLIGHTS Khor Al Adaid · Museum of Islamic Art · Serra sculpture near Zekreet

362 ☐

Rub' al Khali Coastal Sabkha & Liwa Oasis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *UAE*

The capital of the Emirates shines with the Sheikh Zayed Mosque and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. In the south, at Liwa, begins the Rub' al Khali with Moreeb Dune, one of the highest in the world. The oases of Al Ain are a World Heritage Site, and on the coast lie salt flats, the sabkhas.

HIGHLIGHTS Sheikh Zayed Mosque · Moreeb Dune · Oases of Al Ain

363 ☐

Greater Dubai–Sharjah Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *UAE*

In three generations, a fishing village became a world city: The Burj Khalifa, at 828 meters, is the tallest building in the world, and Palm Jumeirah an artificial island. On the Creek, wooden abra boats still run, and neighboring Sharjah cherishes its museums and old town.

HIGHLIGHTS Burj Khalifa · Abra across the Creek · Heritage of Sharjah

364 ☐

Madha & Nahwa

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Oman/UAE Second-Order Counter-Enclaves*

An enclave within an enclave: Madha is an Omani territory of around 75 square kilometers in the middle of the Emirates — and within it lies Nahwa, a village that belongs to the Emirates again. A border curiosity of the second order, reachable by road from Fujairah or Khor Fakkan.

HIGHLIGHTS Nahwa counter-enclave · New Madha · Hajar Mountains

365 ☐

Musandam Fjord Peninsula

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Omani Exclave on the Strait of Hormuz*

An Omani exclave on the Strait of Hormuz, separated from the rest of Oman by the Emirates. Fjord-like inlets, the khors, cut deep into the mountains — the "Norway of Arabia." On dhow trips, dolphins accompany the boats, and the villages speak a language of their own, Kumzari.

HIGHLIGHTS Dhow trip in Khor Ash Sham · Khasab · Jebel Harim

366 ☐

Al Hajar Mountains & Wahiba Sands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Northern Oman*

The Hajar contains the largest exposed ophiolite sequence in the world — former ocean floor pushed onto Arabia. Jebel Shams reaches around 3,000 meters, and Wadi Ghul is the "Grand Canyon of Arabia." Add the fortresses of Nizwa and Bahla, wadis for swimming and the dunes of the Wahiba Sands. Muscat lies on the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Jebel Shams · Wadi Shab · Wahiba Sands

367 ☐

Dhofar Monsoon Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Oman*

A miracle in the desert: From June to September, the Khareef monsoon brings fog and rain, and the mountains around Salalah turn green. In Wadi Dawkah grow frankincense trees — the "Land of Frankincense" is a World Heritage Site. At Mughsail, blowholes shoot seawater into the air.

HIGHLIGHTS Frankincense trees · Wadi Darbat · Blowholes of Mughsail

368 ☐

Rub' al Khali

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *"The Empty Quarter" Sand Sea / SA, OM, YE*

The largest continuous sand desert on Earth, around 650,000 square kilometers between Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen and the Emirates. Dunes up to 250 meters high, hardly any water, hardly any life. Wilfred Thesiger crossed it on camels in the 1940s; today a road runs through it between Oman and Saudi Arabia.

HIGHLIGHTS Sea of dunes · Oman–Saudi desert road · Shisr (Ubar)

369 ☐

Najd Central Plateau & Tuwaiq Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Saudi Arabia*

The heartland of Saudi Arabia: At the "Edge of the World," the Tuwaiq Plateau breaks off in cliffs down to the plain. In Diriyah stands the mud city of At-Turaif, birthplace of the Saudi state and a World Heritage Site. Near Ha'il, the rock art of Jubbah is thousands of years old.

HIGHLIGHTS Edge of the World · At-Turaif in Diriyah · Rock art of Jubbah

370 ☐

Greater Riyadh Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Saudi Arabia*

The Saudi capital is growing rapidly: An oasis town has become a metropolis with millions of inhabitants, skyscrapers and a new driverless metro. Masmak Fortress tells of the founding of the kingdom, and the Riyadh Season fills the city with concerts and events.

HIGHLIGHTS Masmak Fortress · Kingdom Centre · Riyadh Season

371 ☐

Hejaz & Asir Red Sea Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Al-Ula to Abha / Saudi Arabia*

In AlUla lie the Nabataean tombs of Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first World Heritage Site, among sandstone rocks. Jeddah has an old town of coral stone, and in the Asir Mountains near Abha people live in brightly painted villages such as Rijal Almaa. Mecca and Medina are holy cities — Mecca is closed to non-Muslims.

HIGHLIGHTS Hegra · Al-Balad in Jeddah · Rijal Almaa

372 ☐

Yemeni Sarawat Highlands, Hadhramaut Canyon & Tihamah Coast

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Yemen*

A country of unique architecture: Sanaa with its gingerbread-like tower houses and Shibam in Hadhramaut, the "Manhattan of the Desert," with mud high-rises from the 16th century. Terraces climb into the clouds in the Haraz Mountains. Civil war has raged since 2014 — travel is hardly possible at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Shibam · Old City of Sanaa · Haraz Mountains

373 Socotra Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Endemic Continental Fragment / Yemen*

A fragment of the continent, split off around 20 million years ago: Around a third of its plants exist only here, including the dragon's blood tree with its umbrella crown and the bottle tree. White dunes, turquoise lagoons such as Detwah and Hoq Cave. Usually reached by charter flight from Abu Dhabi.

HIGHLIGHTS Dragon's blood trees · Detwah Lagoon · Hoq Cave

IV · 4 TILES 374–394

IRANIAN PLATEAU, AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

A highland of fold mountains, salt deserts and oases that merges into the highest mountains on Earth in the Hindu Kush and Karakoram. Persian palaces, the Wakhan Corridor and the Indus Valley tell of empires, buffer zones and the oldest cities of South Asia.

374 Qeshm & Hormuz Salt-Dome Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Strait of Hormuz / Iran*

Islands of salt domes on the Strait of Hormuz: Qeshm, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, has the Valley of the Stars, gorges such as Chahkooh and mangrove forests. On Hormuz the earth glows red, yellow and violet — the residents even use the red ocher in cooking.

HIGHLIGHTS Rainbow Island of Hormuz · Valley of the Stars · Hara mangroves

375 Khuzestan Karun Plain

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Iranian Mesopotamia / Iran*

The Iranian Mesopotamia, flat, hot and rich in oil. Darius the Great resided in Susa, and the ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil is one of the best-preserved stepped pyramids of the Elamites. The historic hydraulic system of Shushtar with its mills and canals is a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Chogha Zanbil · Hydraulic system of Shushtar · Palace of Susa

376 Zagros Fold-and-Thrust Belt

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Western & Southern Iran*

Iran's longest mountain range runs like folded cloth from Kurdistan to the Gulf. Every spring and fall, the nomads of the Bakhtiari and Qashqai cross the passes with their herds. At Bisotun, Darius had a trilingual inscription carved into the rock — the key to cuneiform.

HIGHLIGHTS Nomad migration · Bisotun Inscription · Dena Range

377 ☐

Greater Isfahan & Central Plateau Oasis Belt

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Shiraz/Yazd / Iran*

Persia's cultural axis: Isfahan with Naqsh-e Jahan Square, "half the world," Yazd with wind towers and a Zoroastrian fire temple, Shiraz, the city of the poets Hafez and Saadi. Near Shiraz lies Persepolis, the residence of the Achaemenids. Underground qanats have supplied the oases for millennia.

HIGHLIGHTS Naqsh-e Jahan · Persepolis · Wind towers of Yazd

378 ☐

Greater Tehran Metropolitan Area

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Iran*

A megacity of over 15 million people at the foot of the Alborz, where you can ski in the morning in winter and haggle in the bazaar in the afternoon. Golestan Palace is a World Heritage Site, and the Azadi Tower the symbol of the city. Tehran is modern, contradictory and the political heart of Iran.

HIGHLIGHTS Golestan Palace · Grand Bazaar · Tochal cable car

379 ☐

Alborz Mountain Range, Damavand & Caspian Hyrcanian Forests

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Iran*

Damavand, at 5,609 meters, is the highest volcano in Asia and a national symbol of Iran. On the northern slopes facing the Caspian Sea grow the Hyrcanian forests, relics of the Tertiary and a World Heritage Site. In the mountains lie Alamut Castle of the Assassins and the stairway village of Masuleh.

HIGHLIGHTS Damavand · Masuleh · Alamut Castle

380 ☐

Dasht-e Kavir

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Great Salt Desert / Central Iran*

A desert of salt crusts, clay hills and marshy flats in the heart of Iran, whose surface turns a glaring white in summer. Caravanserais such as Maranjab recall old trade routes, and the dunes of Mesr invite you to nights under the starry sky.

HIGHLIGHTS Maranjab Caravanserai · Salt lake · Dunes of Mesr

381 ☐

Dasht-e Lut

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *Kaluts Yardang Desert & Thermal Pole of Earth / Iran*

One of the hottest places on Earth: Satellites have measured surface temperatures of over 70 degrees Celsius here. The wind has shaped the Kaluts, yardang ridges kilometers long that rise from the sand like a sunken city. A World Heritage Site and one of the most hostile landscapes in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Kaluts of Shahdad · Sand dunes · Earth's heat pole

382 ☐

Makran Coastal Desert & Mud Volcanoes

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *Southeastern Iran & Southwestern Pakistan*

A remote desert coast between Iran and Pakistan. Near Chabahar stand the reddish "Martian Mountains," and in Pakistan's Hingol National Park rock formations such as the "Princess of Hope" and a sphinx of clay. Between them bubble mud volcanoes such as Chandragup.

HIGHLIGHTS Martian Mountains near Chabahar · Hingol National Park · Chandragup mud volcano

383 ☐

Hari Rud / Herat Valley & Northwestern Badghis Hills

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Afghanistan*

Herat was a center of Persian culture: The Friday Mosque gleams in faience blue, and the Citadel dates back to Alexander the Great. Wild pistachio forests grow in the hills of Badghis. Afghanistan has been back under Taliban rule since 2021, and travel is risky.

HIGHLIGHTS Friday Mosque of Herat · Citadel · Pistachio forests

384 ☐

Sistan Endorheic Basin, Helmand Valley & Registan Desert

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND *Afghanistan*

The Helmand ends in the Hamun lakes, a landlocked basin on the border with Iran that dries out in drought years. To the south lies the red sand desert of Registan, to the north Kandahar, the city of the Taliban leadership. One of the most inaccessible regions of Asia.

HIGHLIGHTS Hamun lakes · Registan Desert · Kandahar

385 ☐

Greater Kabul Metropolitan Basin

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

URBAN ISLAND *Afghanistan*

A city at 1,800 meters, ringed by mountains, whose history goes back to Babur — the founder of the Mughal Empire lies buried in his garden. The restored Darul Aman Palace, bird markets and life on Chicken Street show a city in a state of emergency.

HIGHLIGHTS Gardens of Babur · Darul Aman Palace · Kabul from TV Hill

386 ☐

Hindu Kush Main Crest & Bamyan Highlands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Central Afghanistan*

In Bamiyan gape the niches where giant Buddha statues stood until 2001. The deep blue lakes of Band-e Amir form Afghanistan's first national park, and the 65-meter Minaret of Jam stands alone in a mountain valley. The Hindu Kush is rough, forbidding and of great beauty.

HIGHLIGHTS Buddha niches of Bamiyan · Band-e Amir · Minaret of Jam

387 ☐

Wakhan Corridor

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *High-Pamir Geopolitical Buffer Panhandle / AF*

A narrow strip of land around 350 kilometers long, drawn by the British and Russians in the 19th century as a buffer between their empires — which is why Afghanistan borders China. Wakhi farmers and Kyrgyz nomads live here at over 4,000 meters, cut off from the rest of the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Little Pamir · Kyrgyz nomads · Border with China

388 ☐

Karakoram Range, K2 & Baltoro Glacier System

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Gilgit-Baltistan / PK*

The greatest concentration of high mountains outside the Himalaya: K2, at 8,611 meters, is the second-highest mountain on Earth, and from Concordia on the Baltoro Glacier four eight-thousanders stand within sight. The Karakoram Highway leads through the Hunza Valley to Khunjerab Pass at over 4,600 meters.

HIGHLIGHTS Concordia · Hunza Valley · Khunjerab Pass

389 ☐

Tarbela Dam, Upper Indus Gorge & Potwar Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Pakistan*

Tarbela Dam holds back the Indus with one of the largest earthen dams in the world. On the Potwar Plateau lies Islamabad with the Faisal Mosque, and at Taxila the ruins of the Gandhara culture, whose Buddhas bear Greek features. In the Salt Range, pink rock salt has been quarried at Khewra for centuries.

HIGHLIGHTS Taxila · Khewra Salt Mine · Faisal Mosque

390 ☐

Greater Lahore Metropolitan Area

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Punjab / Pakistan*

Pakistan's cultural capital and once the residence of the Mughal emperors: The Badshahi Mosque, the Fort and the Shalimar Gardens are World Heritage. At the Wagah border, a martial, theatrical flag ceremony takes place every evening, and the old town smells of grilled food.

HIGHLIGHTS Badshahi Mosque · Lahore Fort · Wagah border ceremony

391 ☐

Indus Alluvial Plain

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Punjab Five Rivers & Sindh Valley / Pakistan*

The Land of Five Rivers and the Indus Valley were home to one of the first high cultures: Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were laid out on a grid plan over 4,500 years ago. Multan is the city of Sufi saints, and the rare Indus river dolphin swims in the river.

HIGHLIGHTS Mohenjo-daro · Sufi shrines of Multan · Uch Sharif

392 ☐ **Cholistan & Thar Western Desert Margin** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Pakistan*

In the middle of the Cholistan Desert rises Derawar Fort with its 40 bastions, visible from many kilometers away. Every year a desert rally races through the sand here. Farther south lies Umarkot, birthplace of the Mughal emperor Akbar.

HIGHLIGHTS Derawar Fort · Cholistan Rally · Umarkot

393 ☐ **Balochistan Sulaiman & Kirthar Arid Highlands** ◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Pakistan*

An arid highland making up almost half of Pakistan. In Mehrgarh, one of the earliest farming cultures of South Asia arose around 9,000 years ago, and the juniper forests of Ziarat are among the oldest in the world. The security situation makes travel hardly possible at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Juniper forest of Ziarat · Quetta · Mehrgarh

394 ☐ **Greater Karachi Metropolitan Area & Indus Delta** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Pakistan*

Pakistan's largest city, around 20 million people, port and economic engine of the country. The mausoleum of the nation's founder Jinnah towers above the traffic, and camels are ridden on Clifton Beach. Mangroves grow in the delta, and near Thatta lies Makli, one of the largest necropolises in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Mazar-e-Quaid mausoleum · Makli Necropolis · Clifton Beach

IV · 5 TILES 395–431

INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, HIMALAYA & THE NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN

From the roof of the world to the coral atolls: The Himalaya separate the rain-shadow deserts of Ladakh and Mustang from the monsoon lands, and the Ganges Plain is one of the most densely populated regions on Earth. To the south lie the Deccan Plateau, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and the closed islands of the Andamans and Nicobars.

395 ☐ **Vale of Kashmir & Pir Panjal Range** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *India*

The Vale of Kashmir with Dal Lake, on which houseboats and shikaras glide, and Mughal gardens such as Shalimar Bagh. In Gulmarg, one of the highest gondolas in the world climbs to almost 4,000 meters. Farther southeast, the Pir Panjal range cuts through Himachal Pradesh with Manali and the Atal Tunnel.

HIGHLIGHTS Houseboat on Dal Lake · Gulmarg gondola · Manali

396 ☐

Ladakh, Zanskar & Nubra Trans-Himalayan High Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *India*

"Little Tibet": Buddhist monasteries such as Thiksey and Hemis cling to the rocks, and Pangong Lake lies at over 4,300 meters and reaches into China. Bactrian camels live in the Nubra Valley, and in winter you walk on the frozen Zanskar River. The high desert continues into the Spiti Valley.

HIGHLIGHTS Thiksey Monastery · Pangong Lake · Chadar Trek

397 ☐

Trans-Himalaya: Upper Mustang, Dolpo & Kali Gandaki Gorge

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *Nepal*

North of the main Himalayan crest lies a desert in the rain shadow: the former Kingdom of Lo with the mud city of Lo Manthang and ancient caves high in the rock walls. Between Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, the Kali Gandaki cuts the deepest gorge on Earth. In Dolpo, Phoksundo Lake gleams turquoise.

HIGHLIGHTS Lo Manthang · Kali Gandaki Gorge · Phoksundo Lake

398 ☐

High Himalaya: Annapurna, Langtang & Everest Massifs

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Nepal*

The highest mountains on Earth, with Mount Everest at 8,849 meters. Whoever looks at the summit pyramid from Kala Patthar at over 5,600 meters has captured the tile by the Visibility Rule. The Annapurna Circuit crosses Thorong La, and the Sherpa villages and Tengboche Monastery lie on the way to Base Camp.

HIGHLIGHTS Kala Patthar · Annapurna Circuit · Tengboche Monastery

399 ☐

Terai Subtropical Alluvial Lowlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Bardia & Chitwan / Nepal*

At the foot of the Himalaya lies a subtropical plain of jungle and grassland. In Chitwan National Park live greater one-horned rhinos, tigers and gharials, and in Bardia tigers roam through the grass. In Lumbini, Siddhartha Gautama, the future Buddha, was born.

HIGHLIGHTS Chitwan National Park · Lumbini · Tigers in Bardia

400 ☐

Bhutan Eastern Himalayan Kingdom

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

A Himalayan kingdom that has made happiness a matter of state and absorbs more CO_2 than it emits. Tiger's Nest Monastery clings to a rock face above the Paro Valley, and the fortress of Punakha stands at the confluence of two rivers. Gangkhar Puensum is considered the highest unclimbed mountain in the world. Travel only with a daily fee.

HIGHLIGHTS Tiger's Nest · Punakha Dzong · Festival in Paro

401 Eastern Himalaya & Indo-Burman Ranges

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland & Mizoram / IN*

The remote northeast of India: In Arunachal Pradesh, Tawang holds the country's largest monastery, and the Apatani live in the Ziro Valley. In Nagaland, tribes such as the Konyak, once headhunters, celebrate the Hornbill Festival. Special permits are required for many areas.

HIGHLIGHTS Tawang Monastery · Hornbill Festival · Ziro Valley

402 Brahmaputra Valley of Assam

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Kaziranga / India*

Kaziranga National Park is home to most of the world's greater one-horned rhinos. Majuli is one of the largest river islands on Earth and a center of Vaishnava monasteries. Around the towns stretch the tea gardens that produce the robust Assam tea.

HIGHLIGHTS Rhinos in Kaziranga · Majuli river island · Tea plantations

403 Meghalaya Karst Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Cherrapunji – Wettest Place on Earth / India*

Mawsynram and Cherrapunji are among the rainiest places on Earth, with over eleven meters of precipitation a year. The Khasi grow rubber tree roots into living bridges, at Nongriat even double-decker ones. In the limestone hills lie the longest caves in India.

HIGHLIGHTS Double-decker root bridge · Mawlynnong · Waterfalls of Cherrapunji

404 Dahagram–Angarpota

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Bangladeshi Enclave in Cooch Behar, India*

A Bangladeshi enclave in India left over after the great enclave exchange of 2015, when 162 enclaves were dissolved, including the world's only third-order enclave. Dahagram is linked to Bangladesh only by the Tin Bigha Corridor, a strip of land 178 meters long leased from India.

HIGHLIGHTS Tin Bigha Corridor · Rice fields on the border · Teesta River

405 Greater Dhaka Metropolitan Area

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Bangladesh*

One of the most densely populated megacities on Earth and the world capital of cycle rickshaws. In Old Dhaka, ferries and boats depart from Sadarghat every minute, and the pink Ahsan Manzil and Lalbagh Fort tell of nawabs and Mughals. Louis Kahn's parliament building is an icon of modernism.

HIGHLIGHTS Sadarghat · Ahsan Manzil · Parliament by Louis Kahn

406 Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta & Sundarbans Mangrove Forest

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *BD & IN*

The largest river delta on Earth ends in the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world. Bengal tigers swim between the islands, and honey collectors risk their lives here. The forest is a World Heritage Site on both sides of the border and can only be reached by boat.

HIGHLIGHTS Boat trip through the mangroves · Bengal tigers · Honey collectors

407 Chittagong Hill Tracts & Cox's Bazar Coast

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

COAST & PENINSULA *Southeastern Bangladesh*

Cox's Bazar has one of the longest natural sand beaches in the world at around 120 kilometers, and offshore lies the coral island of Saint Martin. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts live indigenous peoples such as the Chakma and Marma. Near the border with Myanmar lie the Rohingya camps.

HIGHLIGHTS Beach of Cox's Bazar · Saint Martin's Island · Hills of Bandarban

408 Greater Kolkata Metropolitan Area

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *West Bengal / India*

The former capital of British India is the cultural capital of Bengal: The Howrah Bridge carries hundreds of thousands across the Hooghly every day, and the Victoria Memorial gleams in white marble. In Kumartuli, artists shape the goddesses for the Durga Puja festival, a recognized World Heritage tradition.

HIGHLIGHTS Howrah Bridge · Victoria Memorial · Kumartuli

409 Middle & Lower Gangetic Plain

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Bihar & Eastern UP / India*

The spiritual heart of India: In Varanasi, one of the oldest living cities in the world, the dead are cremated and the living blessed on the ghats. In Bodh Gaya the Buddha attained enlightenment, and Nalanda was a university of world rank. Untold millions of pilgrims gather at the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

HIGHLIGHTS Ghats of Varanasi · Mahabodhi Temple · Kumbh Mela

410 Upper Indo-Gangetic Plain & Doab

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Western UP, Haryana & Punjab / India*

Between the Ganges and Yamuna lies the land of the Mughal emperors: the Taj Mahal in Agra, the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, the Krishna towns of Mathura and Vrindavan. In Punjab gleams the Golden Temple of Amritsar, and at Haridwar and Rishikesh the Ganges leaves the mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS Taj Mahal · Golden Temple · Rishikesh

411 ☐

Greater Delhi National Capital Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *India*

One of the largest metropolitan areas on Earth, in which seven historic cities overlap. The Red Fort, the Qutb Minar and Humayun's Tomb are World Heritage Sites, and in Chandni Chowk rickshaws, traders and food stalls crowd together. Lutyens' New Delhi shows the imperial axis of the British.

HIGHLIGHTS Red Fort · Qutb Minar · Chandni Chowk

412 ☐

Greater Jaipur & Aravalli Range

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Rajasthan / India*

The Aravalli are among the oldest mountains on Earth, and at their feet lie the palaces of Rajasthan. Jaipur is the "Pink City" with the Palace of the Winds and Amber Fort, Udaipur the city of lakes. In Ranthambore tigers hunt among ruins, and the camel fair takes place in Pushkar.

HIGHLIGHTS Amber Fort · Lake Palace of Udaipur · Tigers in Ranthambore

413 ☐

Thar Desert

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Marusthali Dunes of Jaisalmer & Jodhpur / India*

The "Great Indian Desert": Jaisalmer has a golden fort in which people still live, and Jodhpur is the "Blue City" under the mighty fortress of Mehrangarh. Camel safaris set out on the dunes of Sam, and rats are venerated in the temple of Deshnok.

HIGHLIGHTS Jaisalmer Fort · Mehrangarh · Dunes of Sam

414 ☐

Great & Little Rann of Kutch & Kathiawar Peninsula

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Gujarat / India*

The Great Rann stretches into one of the largest salt deserts on Earth, which glows white in the moonlight after the monsoon. In the Little Rann live Asiatic wild asses, and in the Gir Forest the last Asiatic lions in the world. Dholavira was a city of the Indus civilization, and Somnath and Dwarka are holy pilgrimage sites.

HIGHLIGHTS White salt desert · Lions in the Gir Forest · Dholavira

415 ☐

Greater Ahmedabad Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Gujarat / India*

India's first World Heritage City, with winding old quarters, the pols, and elaborate mosques. On the Sabarmati, Gandhi lived in his ashram, and the stepwells of Adalaj and Patan are stone cathedrals of water. In January, the Uttarayan kite festival fills the sky.

HIGHLIGHTS Sabarmati Ashram · Stepwell of Adalaj · Kite festival

416 ☐

Greater Mumbai Metropolitan Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Maharashtra / India*

India's financial capital and home of Bollywood: The Gateway of India and Chhatrapati Shivaji station are icons, and the dabbawalas deliver hundreds of thousands of lunches every day. Dharavi is among the largest slums in Asia — and among the most productive. On Elephanta Island lie cave temples.

HIGHLIGHTS Gateway of India · Marine Drive · Elephanta Caves

417 ☐

Deccan Traps Basalt Plateau & Vindhya-Satpura Ranges

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Central India*

66 million years ago, masses of lava flooded the Deccan Plateau — one of the largest volcanic provinces on Earth. Later, the Ajanta Caves and the Kailasa Temple of Ellora were carved into the basalt, the latter from a single rock. In Kanha and Bandhavgarh, tigers hunt in the world of The Jungle Book.

HIGHLIGHTS Kailasa Temple of Ellora · Ajanta Caves · Tigers in Kanha

418 ☐

Greater Hyderabad Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Telangana / India*

The city of the Nizams, of biryani and of diamonds: The Koh-i-Noor came from the mines near Golconda. The Charminar stands at the heart of the old town, and HITEC City in the west is a global IT hub. Ramoji Film City is considered the largest film studio complex on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Charminar · Golconda Fort · Hyderabadi biryani

419 ☐

Godavari & Krishna River Basins

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Eastern Deccan / India*

In the eastern Deccan lie the ruins of Hampi, capital of the Vijayanagara Empire, amid a sea of granite boulders. Badami and Pattadakal display the temple art of the Chalukyas. The Godavari squeezes through the gorge of Papi Kondalu, and the Krishna feeds huge reservoirs.

HIGHLIGHTS Hampi · Temples of Pattadakal · Papi Kondalu

420 ☐

Eastern Ghats & Chilika Coastal Plain

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Odisha & Andhra / India*

Chilika Lake is India's largest coastal lagoon, home to Irrawaddy dolphins and flamingos. The Sun Temple of Konark is shaped like a stone chariot, and in Puri giant temple chariots roll through the city during the Rath Yatra. In the Araku Valley, coffee grows in the hills of the Eastern Ghats.

HIGHLIGHTS Sun Temple of Konark · Chilika Lake · Rath Yatra in Puri

421 Greater Chennai Metropolitan Area & Coromandel Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *India*

The capital of Tamil Nadu, with Marina Beach, one of the longest city beaches in the world, and the Kapaleeshwarar Temple. On the coast stand the rock temples of Mahabalipuram, and farther south Pondicherry preserves its French quarter. In the Kaveri Delta lie the temple cities of the Chola Empire.

HIGHLIGHTS Mahabalipuram · French Quarter of Pondicherry · Brihadeeswara Temple

422 Greater Bangalore (Bengaluru) Mysore Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Karnataka / India*

India's Silicon Valley lies pleasantly cool at almost 900 meters. Bangalore is a city of gardens, pubs and start-ups. Next door, the Palace of Mysore glitters, especially during the Dasara festival, and in Shravanabelagola stands a 17-meter Jain statue carved from a single block of rock.

HIGHLIGHTS Mysore Palace · Lalbagh Garden · Shravanabelagola

423 Western Ghats Escarpment & Malabar Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Nilgiris & Kerala Backwaters / India*

The Western Ghats are older than the Himalaya and one of the most species-rich places on Earth. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway puffs through tea plantations, houseboats glide through the backwaters of Kerala, and in Kochi Chinese fishing nets hang over the sea. In the north lie Goa's beaches and Portuguese churches.

HIGHLIGHTS Backwaters of Kerala · Nilgiri Mountain Railway · Churches of Goa

424 Lakshadweep Coral Atolls

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Laccadive Islands / India*

India's smallest union territory: 36 coral islands in the Arabian Sea, only about ten of them inhabited. Lagoons in every shade of blue, reefs full of turtles and a Muslim culture with a Malayalam-speaking heritage. Visitors need a permit; flights go to Agatti.

HIGHLIGHTS Agatti Lagoon · Bangaram · Snorkeling with turtles

425 Maldives: Northern & Central Atoll Chains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Around 1,200 islands in 26 atolls, on average barely one and a half meters above the sea — the flattest country in the world. Malé is one of the most densely populated capitals on Earth, and each resort takes up an entire island. In Hanifaru Bay, manta rays gather by the hundreds, and whale sharks roam the South Ari Atoll.

HIGHLIGHTS Mantas in Hanifaru Bay · Whale sharks in Ari Atoll · Malé

426 ☐

Maldives: Southern Equatorial Atolls

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Huvadhu, Fuvahmulah & Addu*

Beyond the Equatorial Channel lie the quietest atolls of the Maldives. Huvadhu is one of the largest atolls in the world, and Fuvahmulah an island that forms an atoll by itself, famous for dives with tiger sharks. Addu was once the site of a British air force base.

HIGHLIGHTS Tiger sharks off Fuvahmulah · Huvadhu Atoll · Addu Atoll

427 ☐

Chagos Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Diego Garcia / BIOT*

Geologically, the southern continuation of the Maldives ridge. The Chagossians were expelled between 1967 and 1973 to make way for the military base on Diego Garcia. In 2025, Britain and Mauritius signed a treaty transferring sovereignty, with the base remaining on lease. Civilians have no access — the Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Diego Garcia · Marine protected area · Visibility Rule

428 ☐

Sri Lanka: Central Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Knuckles & Adam's Peak*

Tea plantations, cloud forests and waterfalls: Believers from four religions make the pilgrimage to the sacred footprint on Adam's Peak. In Kandy a relic of the Buddha is venerated in the Temple of the Tooth, and the train line to Ella over the Nine Arches Bridge is one of the most beautiful in the world. On Horton Plains, the world ends at a cliff.

HIGHLIGHTS Adam's Peak · Train ride to Ella · Temple of the Tooth in Kandy

429 ☐

Sri Lanka: Dry Zone Plains & Coastal Belt

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

In the Cultural Triangle lie the rock of Sigiriya, the old royal cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa and the cave temples of Dambulla. Yala National Park has a high density of leopards, and blue whales pass off Mirissa. Galle preserves a Dutch fort, Jaffna the Tamil culture of the north.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock of Sigiriya · Leopards in Yala · Galle Fort

430 ☐

Andaman Islands Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Bay of Bengal / India*

An island chain in the Bay of Bengal with dream beaches such as Radhanagar on Havelock and clear dive sites. In Port Blair, the Cellular Jail recalls the colonial era, and Barren Island is India's only active volcano. North Sentinel Island is the territory of an uncontacted people and strictly off-limits.

HIGHLIGHTS Radhanagar Beach · Cellular Jail · Barren Island volcano

431 Nicobar Islands Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Sunda Trench Margin / India*

An archipelago on the edge of the Sunda Trench, badly devastated by the 2004 tsunami. The islands are tribal reserves of the Nicobarese and Shompen and closed to visitors. On Great Nicobar lies Indira Point, the southernmost point of India. For most, only the Visibility Rule from a ship remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Indira Point · Tribal reserve · Visibility Rule

IV · 6

TILES 432–466

GREATER CHINA & TAIWAN

From Tibet and the Taklamakan in the west across the Loess Plateau and the Yangtze to the megacities of the east. Hardly any country shows so clearly why great cities deserve tiles of their own: Chongqing, Shanghai and the Pearl River Delta are worlds unto themselves. Then there are disputed atolls and the islands of Taiwan.

432 Mount Kailash, Lake Manasarovar & Ngari Sutlej Gorge

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Western Tibet / China*

Mount Kailash, 6,638 meters high and never climbed, is sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Bön followers. Pilgrims circle it on a 52-kilometer kora. At its feet lies Lake Manasarovar, and in the Sutlej Valley the ruins of the Guge Kingdom and the earth forests of Zanda. Only with a Tibet permit.

HIGHLIGHTS Kailash kora · Lake Manasarovar · Ruins of Tsaparang

433 Tibetan Plateau

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Changtang, Qaidam & Lhasa Valley / China*

The “Roof of the World” averages over 4,500 meters in altitude. In Lhasa, the Potala Palace towers above the city, and the Jokhang Temple is the spiritual center of Tibet. Namtso mirrors the snow peaks, Tibetan antelope and wild yaks roam the Changtang, and in Qinghai lie salt lakes such as Chaka, the “mirror of the sky.”

HIGHLIGHTS Potala Palace · Namtso · Everest North Face at Rongbuk

434 Tarim Endorheic Basin & Taklamakan Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Southern Xinjiang / China*

The Taklamakan is one of the largest sand deserts on Earth — its name is often interpreted as “go in and you won’t come out.” On its edge lie the oases of the Silk Road: Kashgar with its livestock market and the Id Kah Mosque, Hotan with its jade. A desert road now crosses its entire width.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town of Kashgar · Tarim poplar forests · Desert highway

435 Turpan Depression

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

EXTREME POINT *Ayding Lake – Second Lowest Land Point in Asia / China*

Lake Aydingkol lies around 154 meters below sea level, one of the lowest points of land on Earth. Around Turpan glow the Flaming Mountains from "Journey to the West," and karez channels carry meltwater underground to the vineyards. The ruined city of Jiaohe stands on a loess plateau between two rivers.

HIGHLIGHTS Flaming Mountains · Ruins of Jiaohe · Karez wells

436 Dzungarian Basin & Eastern Tian Shan

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Northern Xinjiang / China*

A broad basin of steppe and desert between the Altai and the Tian Shan. Heavenly Lake Tianchi mirrors Bogda Peak, and in the north Kanas Lake lies among larch forests. Ürümqi is considered the large city farthest from the sea in the world, and near Urho the wind has shaped a "ghost city" of rock.

HIGHLIGHTS Heavenly Lake Tianchi · Kanas Lake · Wind city of Urho

437 Hexi Corridor & Qilian Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Gansu Silk Road Passage / China*

The bottleneck of the Silk Road between desert and high mountains. In the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang, monks painted caves for a thousand years, and at Crescent Moon Lake an oasis lies between dunes. Jiayuguan marks the western end of the Great Wall, and near Zhangye glow the Rainbow Mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS Mogao Caves · Crescent Moon Lake · Rainbow Mountains of Zhangye

438 Loess Plateau & Ordos Loop of the Yellow River

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Shaanxi/Shanxi / China*

The yellow loess soil gave the Yellow River its color and China its cradle. In Xi'an, thousands of terracotta warriors guard the tomb of the first emperor, and Pingyao is a completely walled old town. The Yungang Grottoes, the Hanging Monastery and Hukou Waterfall lie on the plateau.

HIGHLIGHTS Terracotta Army · Old Town of Pingyao · Hukou Waterfall

439 North China Plain & Shandong Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Lower Yellow River / China*

The densely populated floodplain of the Yellow River is the core of Chinese culture. Tai Shan is the holiest of the five sacred mountains, and Confucius was born in Qufu. In the Song Mountains lies the Shaolin Monastery, and near Luoyang the Longmen Grottoes with tens of thousands of Buddha figures.

HIGHLIGHTS Tai Shan · Temple of Confucius in Qufu · Shaolin Monastery

440 Greater Beijing–Tianjin Megacity Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *China*

The capital of the People's Republic with the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square and the Temple of Heaven. Old Beijing lives on in the hutongs, and at the gates the Great Wall winds over the mountains. Tianjin preserves the villas of the former European concessions.

HIGHLIGHTS Forbidden City · Great Wall at Mutianyu · Hutongs

441 Greater Qingdao Coastal Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Shandong / China*

A German colony from 1898 to 1914 — as attested by red tile roofs, churches and the brewery where Tsingtao has been brewed since 1903. On Laoshan, Taoist temples stand above the sea, and the Jiaozhou Bay Bridge is among the longest bridges over water.

HIGHLIGHTS Tsingtao Brewery · Laoshan · German Quarter

442 Manchurian Plain, Greater Khingan & Changbai Range

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northeast China*

Northeast China: black-earth fields, the forests of the Greater Khingan and the grasslands of Hulunbuir. On the Changbai range lies Heaven Lake in the crater of Paektu, on the border with North Korea. In Mohe, the northernmost town in China, you can see the northern lights in winter.

HIGHLIGHTS Heaven Lake on Changbai · Hulunbuir grasslands · Mohe

443 Greater Harbin Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Heilongjiang / China*

A city founded by Russians during the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway, with an onion-domed cathedral and a pedestrian zone in tsarist style. At temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees Celsius, the Ice and Snow World rises every year, the largest ice festival on Earth, with entire palaces of ice blocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Ice and Snow World · Saint Sophia Cathedral · Zhongyang Street

444 Greater Shenyang–Dalian Metropolitan Corridor

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Liaoning / China*

In Shenyang stands the Mukden Palace, residence of the Manchu emperors before they moved to Beijing. Dalian is an airy port city on the Yellow Sea, and Lüshun — formerly Port Arthur — was the scene of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/05.

HIGHLIGHTS Mukden Palace · Coastal road of Dalian · Port Arthur

445 ☐

Sichuan Red Basin & Hengduan Eastern Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *China*

Where the Tibetan Plateau breaks off to the Sichuan Basin lie the turquoise lakes of Jiuzhaigou and the travertine terraces of Huanglong. The Leshan Giant Buddha, at 71 meters, is the largest stone statue of the Buddha in the world, and the Dujiangyan irrigation system has been working since 256 BC.

HIGHLIGHTS Jiuzhaigou · Leshan Giant Buddha · Mount Emei

446 ☐

Greater Chengdu Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Sichuan / China*

The city of pandas and teahouses: At the research base, giant pandas play in the bamboo, and mahjong tiles clatter in the parks. Chengdu is famous for spicy Sichuan cuisine, hotpot and the masks of Sichuan opera, which change faces in a flash.

HIGHLIGHTS Panda Research Base · Teahouses in People's Park · Sichuan opera

447 ☐

Greater Chongqing Vertical Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Upper Yangtze Confluence / China*

A vertical megacity at the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing, built on steep slopes: The monorail runs straight through an apartment building, streets lie on top of each other, and the ground floor is sometimes on the tenth story. At night Hongyadong glows like a fairy-tale castle. A setting straight out of cyberpunk.

HIGHLIGHTS Liziba Station · Hongyadong · Yangtze cable car

448 ☐

Three Gorges Dam & Yangtze River Gorges

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *Hubei/Chongqing / China*

The largest power station in the world holds back the Yangtze for hundreds of kilometers. Over a million people were relocated for the reservoir. River cruises pass through the Qutang, Wu and Xiling Gorges, and a ship lift raises entire vessels over the dam.

HIGHLIGHTS Ship lift · Wu Gorge · Yangtze cruise

449 ☐

Greater Wuhan Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Middle Yangtze / China*

Three towns on the middle Yangtze — Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang — grew into a megacity regarded as one of China's "furnaces." The Yellow Crane Tower is a poets' myth, and East Lake a huge urban lake. For breakfast there are hot dry noodles.

HIGHLIGHTS Yellow Crane Tower · East Lake · Yangtze bridges

450 Middle Yangtze Lakes (Poyang/Dongting), Zhangjiajie Pillars & Huangshan Massif

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *China*

Poyang and Dongting are China's largest freshwater lakes. In Zhangjiajie, thousands of sandstone pillars rise from the mist, the model for the floating mountains in "Avatar." Huangshan, with granite peaks, twisted pines and seas of clouds, is the archetype of Chinese landscape painting.

HIGHLIGHTS Pillars of Zhangjiajie · Huangshan · Villages of Hongcun

451 Greater Shanghai & Yangtze River Delta Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *China*

The skyline of Pudong with the Shanghai Tower faces the colonial buildings of the Bund: Shanghai is the showcase of modern China. In the delta lie the classical gardens of Suzhou, water towns such as Zhouzhuang and the old capital of Nanjing.

HIGHLIGHTS The Bund and Pudong · Gardens of Suzhou · Water town of Zhouzhuang

452 Greater Hangzhou & Qiantang Estuary

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Zhejiang / China*

West Lake, with its pagodas, causeways and tea hills, is a World Heritage Site and the epitome of Chinese landscape aesthetics. Here grows Longjing tea, and here the Grand Canal ends. In the mouth of the Qiantang, the world's strongest tidal bore rolls upstream — the "Silver Dragon."

HIGHLIGHTS West Lake · Qiantang tidal bore · Longjing tea plantations

453 Southeastern Wuyi Mountains & Fujian Ria Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *China*

In the Wuyi Mountains you ride bamboo rafts through rocky gorges, and Da Hong Pao tea grows on the slopes. The Hakka built round earthen fortresses, the tulou, in which whole clans lived. Xiamen with the piano island of Gulangyu and Quanzhou, a port of the Maritime Silk Road, are World Heritage Sites.

HIGHLIGHTS Tulou of the Hakka · Bamboo raft in the Wuyi · Gulangyu

454 Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Tiger Leaping Gorge & Three Parallel Rivers

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *China*

The Yangtze, Mekong and Salween flow close together here through deep gorges — a World Heritage Site. Tiger Leaping Gorge is among the deepest on Earth, Lijiang and Dali preserve the culture of the Naxi and Bai, and the rice terraces of Yuanyang glow in the morning light. In Guizhou, the highest bridges in the world span the valleys.

HIGHLIGHTS Tiger Leaping Gorge · Rice terraces of Yuanyang · Old Town of Lijiang

455 ☐

South China Karst

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Guilin/Yangshuo Tower Karst in Guangxi / China*

Limestone towers rising like sugarloaves from rice fields and rivers — the landscape on the 20-yuan note. A trip on the Li River shows it in all its glory, and in Yangshuo you explore it by bike. The rice terraces of Longji run over the hills like dragons' backs.

HIGHLIGHTS Li River · Cycling in Yangshuo · Rice terraces of Longji

456 ☐

Xijiang (West Pearl River) Basin & Nanling Hills

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Southern China*

The hinterland of the Pearl River Delta: In Kaiping, returnees from America built residential towers, the diaolou, in a mix of Chinese and Western styles — a World Heritage Site. Danxia Shan gave its name to red sandstone mountains throughout China, and the Seven Star Crags are mirrored at Zhaoqing.

HIGHLIGHTS Diaolou of Kaiping · Danxia Shan · Seven Star Crags

457 ☐

Pearl River Delta Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Guangzhou, Shenzhen & Dongguan / China*

Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan and Foshan form the largest continuous urban area on Earth, the workbench of the world. In 1980 Shenzhen was a fishing village; today it is a high-tech hub with millions of inhabitants. Cantonese cuisine, dim sum and the Canton Tower define the delta.

HIGHLIGHTS Canton Tower · Dim sum in Guangzhou · Skyline of Shenzhen

458 ☐

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Karst Islands & Victoria Harbour*

Hardly any city on Earth has so many high-rises. Victoria Harbour, the Star Ferry and the Peak Tram are legends, but much of Hong Kong consists of mountains, islands and hiking trails such as the Dragon's Back. In the Sai Kung geopark, hexagonal volcanic columns rise from the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Star Ferry · Victoria Peak · Dragon's Back

459 ☐

Macau Peninsula & Cotai Strip

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Pearl River Estuary West*

Portuguese until 1999, today the gambling capital of the world. Between the Ruins of St. Paul's and Senado Square, a World Heritage Site, the air smells of pastéis de nata, and giant casinos stand on reclaimed land in Cotai. A 55-kilometer bridge links Macau with Hong Kong.

HIGHLIGHTS Ruins of St. Paul's · Senado Square · Bridge to Hong Kong

460 Hainan Tropical Island

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *South China Sea / China*

China's Hawaii: palm beaches at Sanya, rainforest in the highlands of Wuzhishan and the culture of the Li. Hainan is a free trade zone with duty-free shopping, and rockets of the Chinese space program lift off in Wenchang. In winter, millions of Chinese flee here for the warmth.

HIGHLIGHTS Beaches of Sanya · Wuzhishan · Wenchang Space Center

461 Paracel Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Xisha Coral Atolls / Disputed*

Coral atolls in the South China Sea, controlled by China since 1974 and claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan. Woody Island holds the administration of the city of Sansha, with an airport and military post. Cruises from Sanya are reserved for Chinese citizens — for everyone else, the Visibility Rule remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Woody Island · Coral atolls · Visibility Rule

462 Spratly Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Nansha Reefs & Atolls / Disputed*

Over a hundred reefs and islets, claimed by six parties. China has built up several reefs into artificial islands with runways. And right here lies a divers' paradise: On the Malaysian atoll of Layang-Layang there is a resort with sheer walls and hammerhead sharks.

HIGHLIGHTS Layang-Layang · Hammerhead sharks · Disputed reefs

463 Kinmen & Matsu Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *ROC Outposts off the Fujian Coast*

Taiwanese islands just a few kilometers off the Chinese coast: From Kinmen you can see the skyline of Xiamen. In 1958, hundreds of thousands of shells fell here, and knives are still forged from their steel today. On Matsu, "blue tears" glow in the sea in spring, and military tunnels run through the rocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Knife makers of Kinmen · Blue tears on Matsu · Beihai Tunnel

464 Penghu Basalt Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Taiwan Strait*

Around 90 basalt islands in the Taiwan Strait, buffeted by wind. On Qimei, the Twin Hearts, a stone fish trap in the shape of a heart, is the landmark. Columnar basalt, temples, fireworks festivals over the sea and windsurfing make Penghu unique.

HIGHLIGHTS Twin Hearts of Qimei · Columnar basalt · Fireworks festival

465 ☐ **Taiwan Main Island: Central Mountain Range, Taroko Gorge & East Rift** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

More than 200 peaks over 3,000 meters on one island — Yushan, at 3,952 meters, is one of the highest island peaks on Earth. The marble gorge of Taroko was badly hit by the 2024 earthquake, while Sun Moon Lake and Alishan with its tea slopes are classics. Tainan, the old capital, is Taiwan's culinary capital.

HIGHLIGHTS Taroko Gorge · Sun Moon Lake · Yushan

466 ☐ **Greater Taipei Basin Metropolitan Area** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Taiwan*

Taipei 101 was the tallest building in the world until 2010, and the National Palace Museum preserves the treasures of the Chinese emperors. Night markets such as Shilin and Raohe, hot springs in Beitou and the mountain village of Jiufen bring the city to life. On its edge steam the volcanoes of Yangmingshan.

HIGHLIGHTS Taipei 101 · National Palace Museum · Raohe Night Market

IV · 7 TILES 467–485

KOREAN PENINSULA & THE JAPANESE ARCHIPELAGO

A divided peninsula and an island arc on the Pacific Ring of Fire. North Korea forms four of the hardest-to-reach tiles in the world, while Japan stretches from the pack ice of Hokkaido to the subtropical Ryukyu Islands — with Tokyo as the largest metropolitan area on Earth.

467 ☐ **North Korea: Mount Paektu Volcanic Massif & Kaema Plateau** ◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Paektu, at 2,744 meters, is the highest mountain in Korea and a myth of the ruling family — the state is said to have been born at its crater lake. In 946 it experienced one of the most powerful volcanic eruptions in history. The Kaema Plateau is known as the "Roof of Korea." Tourist access is only on state group tours and hardly possible at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater lake of Paektu · Samjiyon · Kaema Plateau

468 ☐ **North Korea: Hamgyong Mountains & Sea of Japan Coast** ◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

A rugged highland on the Sea of Japan with the bizarre rocks of Chilbosan. On the coast near Wonsan, a huge beach resort has opened, for now mainly for Russian guests. In the northeast lies the Rason Special Economic Zone on the border with China and Russia.

HIGHLIGHTS Chilbosan · Wonsan-Kalma · Rason

469 North Korea: Taedong Basin & Western Yellow Sea Lowlands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

North Korea's rice plain on the Yellow Sea. Kaesong was the capital of the Goryeo Kingdom, after which Korea is named. From the north you look across the demarcation line at Panmunjom, and the West Sea Barrage near Nampo is a prestige project of the regime.

HIGHLIGHTS Old town of Kaesong · Panmunjom from the north · West Sea Barrage

470 Greater Pyongyang Metropolitan Area

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

URBAN ISLAND *North Korea*

The capital of staged spectacle: Juche Tower, Kim Il Sung Square, monumental statues and a metro as deep as a bunker. Over it all stands the unfinished pyramid of the Ryugyong Hotel. It can only be visited with state guides, and it has been largely closed to Western tourists for years.

HIGHLIGHTS Juche Tower · Ryugyong Hotel · Pyongyang Metro

471 Greater Seoul–Incheon Capital Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Korea*

Around half of all South Koreans live here, in a city of palaces, hanok alleys and glass towers. Gyeongbokgung Palace, the hanok village of Bukchon and the 555-meter Lotte World Tower stand side by side. An hour to the north begins the Demilitarized Zone.

HIGHLIGHTS Gyeongbokgung · Bukchon · Demilitarized Zone

472 South Korea: Taebaek Mountain Spine & Gangwon Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *East*

The mountainous backbone of Korea with the granite massif of Seoraksan, mountain temples such as Woljeongsa and the long-distance Baekdudaegan trail. On the east coast lie Gangneung and beaches on the Sea of Japan, and Pyeongchang hosted the 2018 Winter Olympics.

HIGHLIGHTS Seoraksan · Woljeongsa Temple · East coast at Gangneung

473 South Korea: Honam Plains & Dadohae Southern Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *West/South*

The fertile southwest of Korea: Jeonju is the home of bibimbap and a large hanok village, and in Boseong green tea terraces run over the hills. Dadohae National Park encompasses thousands of islands, and near Jindo the sea parts twice a year, revealing a path.

HIGHLIGHTS Jeonju Hanok Village · Tea fields of Boseong · Jindo sea parting

474 ☐

Greater Busan–Ulsan Southeastern Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Korea*

South Korea's second-largest city lies between mountains and sea: the colorful Gamcheon Culture Village, the Jagalchi fish market and Haedong Yonggungsa Temple right on the surf. Ulsan has world-class shipyards, and next door Gyeongju, capital of the Silla Kingdom, preserves royal tombs and temples.

HIGHLIGHTS Gamcheon Culture Village · Jagalchi fish market · Gyeongju

475 ☐

Jeju Volcanic Island & Hallasan Shield

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *South Korea*

A shield volcano in the sea: Hallasan, at 1,947 meters, is South Korea's highest mountain, the tuff cone of Seongsan Ilchulbong rises straight from the surf, and the Manjanggul lava tube runs for kilometers underground. The haenyeo, diving grandmothers, have harvested seafood without breathing gear for generations.

HIGHLIGHTS Seongsan Ilchulbong · Hallasan · Haenyeo divers

476 ☐

Japan: Hokkaido

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Shiretoko, Daisetsuzan & Northern Calderas*

Japan's wild north: On the Shiretoko Peninsula brown bears fish for salmon, and in winter pack ice drifts off the coast. Daisetsuzan is the country's largest national park, and the calderas of Akan, Kussharo and Toya steam. In Sapporo, teams build entire buildings of snow at the Snow Festival, and Ainu culture lives on at the Upopoy museum.

HIGHLIGHTS Shiretoko · Sapporo Snow Festival · Powder snow in Niseko

477 ☐

Japan: Honshu Sea of Japan Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *"Snow Country" / Tohoku & Hokuriku*

In hardly any inhabited region on Earth does so much snow fall as here. In Shirakawa-go stand thatched gassho houses, and Kanazawa has one of Japan's most beautiful gardens. In Tohoku glow the lanterns of Nebuta, and the gold mine on Sado Island is a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Shirakawa-go · Kenroku-en in Kanazawa · Sado Island

478 ☐

Japan: Honshu Pacific Coast & Seto Inland Sea Corridor

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Japan's historic corridor: Himeji has the country's most beautiful original castle, on Miyajima the torii appears to float on the sea at high tide, and in Hiroshima the Peace Park stands as a warning. The Inland Sea is an archipelago of art islands such as Naoshima, and the Shimanami Kaido cycle route hops over bridges from island to island.

HIGHLIGHTS Himeji Castle · Itsukushima Shrine · Shimanami Kaido

479 ☐

Greater Tokyo Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Kanto Plain / Japan*

The largest metropolitan area on Earth, with around 37 million people, and yet astonishingly calm and orderly. The Shibuya crossing, Sensō-ji in Asakusa, Meiji Shrine and the 634-meter Skytree are icons. Yokohama and the Great Buddha of Kamakura lie within reach.

HIGHLIGHTS Shibuya Crossing · Sensō-ji · Tokyo Skytree

480 ☐

Japan: Mount Fuji Massif, Izu & Japanese Alps

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Chubu Highlands*

Mount Fuji, at 3,776 meters, is Japan's sacred mountain — in summer, thousands climb it at night to see the sunrise. Hakone and Izu tempt with hot springs, and in the Alps the Tateyama Kurobe Route leads through snow walls meters high and the old Nakasendo road through post towns such as Magome.

HIGHLIGHTS Climbing Mount Fuji · Snow walls of Tateyama · Nakasendo

481 ☐

Greater Osaka-Kyoto-Kobe (Keihanshin) Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Japan*

Kyoto was the imperial city for over a thousand years: Thousands of red torii line Fushimi Inari, and geishas slip through the lanes of Gion. In Nara, tame deer bow before the Great Buddha, Osaka is Japan's kitchen with street food in Dōtonbori, and Kobe gave its name to a famous beef.

HIGHLIGHTS Fushimi Inari · Tōdai-ji in Nara · Dōtonbori

482 ☐

Japan: Shikoku Island

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Iya Valley & Pacific Karst*

The smallest of the main islands is the land of pilgrims: The route to the 88 temples runs around 1,200 kilometers around the island. In the Iya Valley, bridges of vines swing over gorges, and at Naruto mighty whirlpools turn. Dōgo Onsen is considered one of Japan's oldest baths.

HIGHLIGHTS 88 Temple Pilgrimage · Vine bridges of Iya Valley · Naruto whirlpools

483 ☐

Japan: Kyushu Volcanic Island

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Aso Caldera, Sakurajima & Yakushima*

Japan's volcanic island: The caldera of Aso is among the largest in the world, and Sakurajima near Kagoshima erupts almost daily. On Yakushima grow cedars thousands of years old, and in Beppu steam the "hells," colorful hot springs. Nagasaki tells of trade, Christianity and the atomic bomb.

HIGHLIGHTS Sakurajima · Cedar forests of Yakushima · Aso caldera

484 ☐

Japan: Okinawa & Ryukyu Island Arc

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The former Kingdom of Ryukyu has its own culture, cuisine and music. Shuri Castle is being rebuilt after the fire of 2019, and on Okinawa people live to a strikingly old age. Ishigaki, Miyako and Iriomote, with mangroves and wildcats, offer coral reefs, and off Yonaguni lie enigmatic underwater rocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Shuri Castle · Iriomote · Kerama Islands

485 ☐

Japan: Ogasawara (Bonin) & Volcano Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Iwo Jima Oceanic Arc*

The "Galápagos of the East" lies around 1,000 kilometers south of Tokyo and can only be reached by a ferry taking about 24 hours. Endemic species, dolphins and humpback whales surround Chichijima and Hahajima. Iwo Jima saw one of the bloodiest battles of 1945, and off Nishinoshima a new volcanic island has been growing since 2013.

HIGHLIGHTS Ogasawara Maru ferry · Chichijima · New island of Nishinoshima

IV · 8 TILES 486–545

SOUTHEAST ASIA: MAINLAND & THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO

The Mekong, karst mountains and rice terraces on the mainland; beyond them, the largest island realm on Earth. Indonesia and the Philippines form dozens of tiles of volcanoes, rainforests and reefs. Across the Wallace Line, the journey passes from Asia into the world of Australia.

486 ☐

Shan Plateau & Salween Gorge

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Eastern Myanmar*

The highlands of eastern Myanmar: On Inle Lake, fishermen row with one leg and grow tomatoes on floating gardens, and thousands of Buddha figures stand in the caves of Pindaya. The Salween squeezes through deep gorges. Since the 2021 military coup, civil war has raged across much of the area.

HIGHLIGHTS Leg rowers of Inle Lake · Pindaya Caves · Kalaw trek

487 ☐

Irrawaddy River Basin

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Bagan, Mandalay & Delta / Myanmar*

More than 2,000 temples and pagodas stand on the plain of Bagan, with balloons floating above at sunrise. Near Mandalay, the teak U Bein Bridge crosses a lake, and in Yangon the gilded Shwedagon Pagoda gleams. The civil war makes travel difficult at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Temples of Bagan · U Bein Bridge · Shwedagon Pagoda

488 Arakan Mountains & Rakhine Bay of Bengal Coast

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

COAST & PENINSULA *Western Myanmar*

A remote coast on the Bay of Bengal with the temples of Mrauk U, once the capital of a mighty kingdom, and the beach of Ngapali. The region became known worldwide through the expulsion of the Rohingya in 2017 and is today largely in the hands of armed groups.

HIGHLIGHTS Temples of Mrauk U · Ngapali Beach · Arakan Mountains

489 Mergui (Myeik) Archipelago & Tenasserim Coast

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Myanmar*

Around 800 islands in the Andaman Sea, many uninhabited, with jungle reaching down to the beach. Here live the Moken, sea nomads who spend much of their lives on boats. Usually reached by dive safari from Thailand via Kawthaung.

HIGHLIGHTS Moken sea nomads · Dive safari · Untouched islands

490 Northern Thai Highlands & Golden Triangle

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Chiang Mai & Upper Mekong*

Chiang Mai is the city of temples, with Doi Suthep towering above it. In Chiang Rai gleams the White Temple, and Pai is a retreat in the mountains. At the Golden Triangle, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar meet on the Mekong, and Doi Inthanon is Thailand's highest mountain.

HIGHLIGHTS Doi Suthep · White Temple · Golden Triangle

491 Thailand: Khorat Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Isan Mekong Basin*

Thailand's northeast, flat, rural and closely related to the culture of Laos. The Khmer temples of Phanom Rung — on an extinct volcano — and Phimai tell of the Angkor Empire, and at Ban Chiang one of Asia's earliest Bronze Age cultures was found. On the Red Lotus Lake near the Mekong, millions of blossoms bloom.

HIGHLIGHTS Phanom Rung · Red Lotus Lake · Isan cuisine

492 Thailand: Chao Phraya Central Alluvial Plain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Thailand's rice bowl: In Ayutthaya, the old royal city, tree roots entwine a Buddha head, and Sukhothai is considered the cradle of the Thai state. In Lopburi monkeys clamber over temple ruins, and on the western edge the Bridge on the River Kwai crosses the water.

HIGHLIGHTS Ruins of Ayutthaya · Sukhothai · Bridge on the River Kwai

493 ☐

Greater Bangkok Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Thailand*

One of the most visited cities in the world: the Grand Palace with the Emerald Buddha, Wat Arun on the river, food stalls on every corner and markets that never sleep. Ferries and longtail boats link the banks of the Chao Phraya. The city's full name is considered the longest place name in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Grand Palace · Wat Arun · Food stalls in Chinatown

494 ☐

Laos: Luang Prabang Range, Vang Vieng Karst & Mekong Corridor

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Luang Prabang is a World Heritage Site: Every morning, monks in saffron robes walk through the streets and receive alms. The Kuang Si Falls tumble into turquoise pools, and near Vang Vieng karst mountains rise from rice fields. The slow boat on the Mekong takes two days from the Thai border.

HIGHLIGHTS Alms procession · Kuang Si Falls · Slow boat on the Mekong

495 ☐

Laos: Xiangkhouang Plain of Jars, Bolaven Plateau & Western Annamites

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

On the Plain of Jars stand thousands of multi-ton Iron Age stone jars — in the most heavily bombed country per capita in the world. Coffee grows on the Bolaven Plateau, and at the 4,000 Islands the Mekong plunges over the Khone Falls, the most voluminous in Southeast Asia. A river flows through Kong Lor Cave.

HIGHLIGHTS Plain of Jars · Khone Falls · Kong Lor Cave

496 ☐

Vietnam: Red River Delta & Northern Karst Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Ha Giang*

The Ha Giang Loop leads over the Ma Pi Leng Pass through one of the most spectacular mountain landscapes in Asia. Near Sa Pa, the rice terraces of the Hmong climb the slopes, and a cable car goes up Fansipan, the highest peak in Indochina. In the delta lies Ninh Binh, the "dry Ha Long Bay."

HIGHLIGHTS Ha Giang Loop · Fansipan · Trang An at Ninh Binh

497 ☐

Greater Hanoi Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Vietnam*

The capital of Vietnam with its Old Quarter of 36 streets, where each guild once had a street of its own. Mopeds stream around Hoan Kiem Lake, and the Temple of Literature housed the country's first university. Breakfast is pho, lunch bun cha.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Quarter · Temple of Literature · Train Street

498 ☐

Vietnam: Ha Long Bay & Cat Ba Marine Tower Karst

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA

Almost 2,000 limestone islands rise from the emerald Gulf of Tonkin — a World Heritage Site and one of Asia's iconic landscapes. Junks cruise through the bay, and in Lan Ha Bay you paddle through grottoes. On Cat Ba lives the golden-headed langur, one of the rarest primates in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Junk cruise · Lan Ha Bay · Golden-headed langur

499 ☐

Vietnam: Annamite Range

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Central Highlands, Son Doong Cave & Central Coast*

In Phong Nha National Park lies Son Doong, the largest known cave on Earth, with its own jungle and clouds inside. On the coast lie the imperial city of Hue, the lantern town of Hoi An and the Hai Van cloud pass. Coffee and flowers grow in the highlands around Da Lat.

HIGHLIGHTS Son Doong Cave · Old Town of Hoi An · Imperial City of Hue

500 ☐

Cambodia: Tonlé Sap Floodplain Basin & Angkor Lowlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Angkor Wat is the largest religious structure in the world, stone faces smile in the Bayon, and in Ta Prohm trees burst through the walls. During the monsoon, Tonlé Sap Lake reverses its flow and increases its area fivefold. In Phnom Penh, the Royal Palace and memorials to the Khmer Rouge stand close together.

HIGHLIGHTS Angkor Wat · Ta Prohm · Floating villages on Tonlé Sap

501 ☐

Cambodia: Cardamom & Elephant Rainforest Mountains

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

One of the largest contiguous rainforests in Southeast Asia, home to Asian elephants, sun bears and clouded leopards. The abandoned French hill station of Bokor rises from the mist, and famous pepper grows in Kampot. Offshore lie the islands of Koh Rong.

HIGHLIGHTS Bokor Hill Station · Kampot pepper · Chi Phat eco-village

502 ☐

Greater Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Vietnam*

Saigon is Vietnam's pulsating economic metropolis, with millions of mopeds, a French cathedral and central post office. The War Remnants Museum tells of the Vietnam War, and at Cu Chi you crawl through Viet Cong tunnels. From Landmark 81, the tallest building in the country, you look out over the sea of lights.

HIGHLIGHTS Cu Chi Tunnels · Ben Thanh Market · War Remnants Museum

503 Vietnam: Mekong River Delta

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Nine Dragons Plain*

Here the Mekong divides into the "Nine Dragons" and creates a water world of canals, rice fields and orchards. At the floating market of Cai Rang, trade is done from boats, and in Ben Tre coconut candy is boiled. The delta supplies around half of Vietnam's rice.

HIGHLIGHTS Cai Rang floating market · Canals of Ben Tre · Chau Doc

504 Vietnam: Phu Quoc & Con Dao Archipelagos

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Phu Quoc is Vietnam's holiday island, with pepper gardens, fish sauce factories and one of the longest cable cars over the sea. Con Dao was a prison island with the notorious "tiger cages" and is today a natural paradise where sea turtles lay their eggs on the beaches.

HIGHLIGHTS Cable car to Hon Thom · Con Dao Prison · Sea turtles

505 Thailand: Gulf of Thailand Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Ko Samui, Ko Pha Ngan & Ko Tao*

Koh Samui, Koh Pha Ngan with its Full Moon Party, and Koh Tao, where thousands get their diving certificate every year. Ang Thong Marine National Park is an archipelago of limestone islands with an emerald crater lake. Palm beaches, coconut plantations and a warm sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Ang Thong Marine Park · Diving off Koh Tao · Full Moon Party

506 Thailand: Kra Isthmus & Khao Sok Limestone Rainforest

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

At its narrowest point, only around 44 kilometers separate the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. The rainforest of Khao Sok is considered one of the oldest on Earth, and here blooms the rafflesia, with the largest flower in the world. On Cheow Lan Lake, guests sleep in floating bungalows among limestone rocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Cheow Lan Lake · Khao Sok rainforest · Rafflesia

507 Thailand: Andaman Sea Karst Coast & Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Phuket, Krabi & Similan*

Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga: Limestone rocks rise from the turquoise sea, and climbers hang above the beach on the walls of Railay. Maya Bay on Koh Phi Phi became famous through "The Beach," James Bond Island through "The Man with the Golden Gun." The Similan Islands are among Asia's best dive sites.

HIGHLIGHTS Railay Beach · Phang Nga Bay · Similan Islands

508 ☐

Malay Peninsula Titiwangsa Spine & Taman Negara

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Peninsular Malaysia*

The Taman Negara rainforest is said to be over 130 million years old, and a walkway of suspension bridges leads through the treetops. Tea plantations cover the Cameron Highlands, and George Town on Penang and Malacca are World Heritage Sites. Off the east coast, the Perhentian Islands and Tioman beckon.

HIGHLIGHTS Taman Negara canopy walk · George Town · Tea plantations of the Cameron Highlands

509 ☐

Greater Kuala Lumpur & Klang Valley Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Malaysia*

The Petronas Towers were once the tallest building in the world; today they are overshadowed by Merdeka 118, one of the tallest structures on Earth. At the Batu Caves, 272 colorful steps lead to a Hindu temple, and at the Jalan Alor street market, Malay, Chinese and Indian cuisine meet.

HIGHLIGHTS Petronas Towers · Batu Caves · Jalan Alor

510 ☐

Singapore Island City-State

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Johor Strait Hub*

One of the last city-states in the world and a laboratory of the future: the Supertrees of Gardens by the Bay, Marina Bay Sands and an airport with the tallest indoor waterfall in the world. The hawker centers, halls of food stalls, are recognized as intangible World Heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS Gardens by the Bay · Jewel Changi · Hawker centers

511 ☐

Sumatra: Barisan Volcanic Spine, Lake Toba & Leuser Rainforest

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Indonesia*

Around 74,000 years ago, Toba exploded — one of the largest volcanic eruptions of the last two million years. Today the caldera holds the largest volcanic lake on Earth, with Samosir Island. In the Leuser Ecosystem, orangutans, tigers, rhinos and elephants live side by side. Kerinci is Indonesia's highest volcano.

HIGHLIGHTS Lake Toba & Samosir · Orangutans at Bukit Lawang · Kerinci

512 ☐

Sumatra: Eastern Peatland Swamps & Musi-Batanghari Basins

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Indonesia*

Vast peat swamp forests whose fires in dry years send smoke across half of Southeast Asia for weeks. Palembang was the center of the Buddhist Srivijaya Empire; today the red Ampera Bridge spans the Musi, with houses floating on rafts along its banks. Way Kambas National Park is home to Sumatran elephants and critically endangered Sumatran rhinos.

HIGHLIGHTS Ampera Bridge · Way Kambas · Musi river landscape

513 ☐

Nias & Simeulue Forearc Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *West Sumatra / Indonesia*

On Nias, young men leap over stone towers two meters high, an old warrior tradition, and megaliths stand in villages such as Bawomataluo. Perfect waves break at Sorake Bay. On Simeulue in 2004, inherited knowledge of the "smong" saved nearly all the inhabitants from the tsunami.

HIGHLIGHTS Stone jumping on Nias · Bawomataluo · Waves of Sorake

514 ☐

Mentawai & Enggano Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *West Sumatra / Indonesia*

The Mentawai Islands are among the best surf spots in the world. On Siberut, the Mentawai people still live largely traditionally, with tattoos and shamans, the sikerei. Enggano, farther south, is one of the most remote islands in Indonesia.

HIGHLIGHTS Surfing in the Mentawais · Sikerei on Siberut · Enggano

515 ☐

Bangka & Belitung Granite Tin Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Karimata Strait / Indonesia*

Granite islands in the Karimata Strait with huge, smoothly rounded boulders on white beaches. For centuries tin was mined here, leaving behind turquoise kaolin lakes in an almost surreal landscape. The film "Laskar Pelangi" made Belitung a place of longing in Indonesia, and the lighthouse on Lengkuas Island offers a panorama over the archipelago.

HIGHLIGHTS Tanjung Tinggi Beach · Kaolin lake · Lengkuas Island

516 ☐

Java: Western Sunda Volcanic Highlands & Krakatoa

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Ujung Kulon / ID*

In 1883, Krakatoa exploded — the bang could still be heard nearly 5,000 kilometers away. Its child, Anak Krakatau, has been growing out of the sea since 1927. Ujung Kulon is home to the last Javan rhinos, and around Bandung tea plantations and the Kawah Putih crater lake gleam.

HIGHLIGHTS Anak Krakatau · Ujung Kulon · Kawah Putih

517 ☐

Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Java / Indonesia*

One of the largest metropolitan areas on Earth — and a city that is sinking: Parts of Jakarta sink by many centimeters every year. The capital function is therefore due to move to Nusantara on Borneo. The old town of Kota Tua recalls Batavia, and the Istiqlal Mosque is the largest in Southeast Asia.

HIGHLIGHTS Kota Tua · Istiqlal Mosque · Monas

518 ☐

Java: Central Volcanic Plain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mount Merapi, Dieng & Borobudur / ID*

Borobudur is the largest Buddhist monument in the world, Prambanan a forest of Hindu temples — both World Heritage Sites. Above them steams Merapi, one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes. Yogyakarta is the seat of a sultan and a center of batik, and on the Dieng Plateau lie colorful crater lakes.

HIGHLIGHTS Borobudur at sunrise · Prambanan · Merapi

519 ☐

Java: Eastern Tengger Caldera

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mount Bromo, Semeru & Ijen Crater / ID*

At sunrise, Bromo rises from a sea of sand and mist, with smoking Semeru, Java's highest mountain, behind it. In the crater of Ijen, blue sulfur flames burn at night above an acid lake, and workers carry sulfur up in baskets. In Baluran National Park, bantengs graze on the savanna.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise at Bromo · Blue flames of Ijen · Baluran

520 ☐

Bali Volcanic Island

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mount Agung & Wallace Line West / Indonesia*

The Island of the Gods: Hindu temples such as Besakih and Uluwatu, rice terraces of the Subak culture, Ubud as the cultural heart. Agung is Bali's sacred volcano. Between Bali and Lombok runs the Wallace Line, an invisible boundary between Asian and Australian fauna.

HIGHLIGHTS Rice terraces of Jatiluwih · Uluwatu Temple · Sunrise at Batur

521 ☐

Lombok (Rinjani) & Sumbawa (Tambora)

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *West Nusa Tenggara / Indonesia*

Rinjani on Lombok guards Segara Anak Lake in its crater. In 1815, Tambora exploded on Sumbawa, the most powerful volcanic eruption in recorded history, which gave the world a "Year Without a Summer" in 1816. Off Lombok lie the car-free Gili Islands.

HIGHLIGHTS Rinjani trek · Crater of Tambora · Gili Islands

522 ☐

Sumba Sandstone & Megalithic Island

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Savu Sea / Indonesia*

An island of limestone and savanna with a living megalithic culture: The dead are still laid to rest in stone tombs today, and villages such as Ratenggaro have tall peaked roofs. At the Pasola festival, horsemen battle with spears. The Weekuri Lagoon is a natural pool by the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Pasola festival · Ratenggaro village · Weekuri Lagoon

523 ☐

Flores Volcanic Arc, Kelimutu & Komodo Dragon Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Indonesia*

Only here live the Komodo dragons, the largest lizards in the world. From the top of Padar Island you overlook three bays with sand of different colors, and the three crater lakes of Kelimutu change color. In a cave on Flores, the remains of the "hobbit" human Homo floresiensis were found.

HIGHLIGHTS Komodo dragons · View from Padar · Crater lakes of Kelimutu

524 ☐

West Timor & Alor Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Nusa Tenggara East / Indonesia*

Alor offers crystal-clear water and dives along sheer walls, and in the mountain villages of the Abui bronze drums, the moko, are guarded as treasures. In West Timor, the village of Boti preserves its old religion, and on Rote you surf and tap sap from lontar palms.

HIGHLIGHTS Diving off Alor · Takpala village · Lontar palms on Rote

525 ☐

Oecusse

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Timor-Leste Coastal Exclave inside Indonesian West Timor*

An exclave of Timor-Leste on the north coast of West Timor, completely surrounded by Indonesia. At Lifau, the first Portuguese landed on Timor in 1515 — the country's history began here. Reachable by ferry from Dili or by Indonesian roads.

HIGHLIGHTS Lifau landing site · Pante Macassar · Ferry from Dili

526 ☐

Timor-Leste Main Territory & Ramelau Massif

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Independent since 2002 and a member of ASEAN since 2025. At sunrise on Ramelau, almost 3,000 meters high, pilgrims stand at a statue of the Virgin Mary above the clouds. The waters off Atauro Island are among the most species-rich reefs in the world, and a statue of Christ watches over Dili.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise on Ramelau · Reefs of Atauro · Cristo Rei

527 ☐

Kalimantan: Mahakam, Kapuas & Heart of Borneo Rainforest

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Indonesia*

The Heart of Borneo is one of the largest rainforests in Asia. In Tanjung Puting National Park you glide on klotok boats to orangutans, and Dayak live in longhouses along the Mahakam. In Kakaban Lake, offshore, you swim among stingless jellyfish.

HIGHLIGHTS Klotok trip in Tanjung Puting · Dayak longhouses · Kakaban jellyfish lake

528 ☐

Sarawak: Rajang Basin & Gunung Mulu Giant Caves

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Malaysian Borneo*

In Gunung Mulu National Park lies the Sarawak Chamber, one of the largest known cave chambers in the world. In the evening, millions of bats leave Deer Cave, above which razor-sharp limestone pinnacles rise. Iban live in longhouses on the Rajang, and in Bako proboscis monkeys snort through the mangroves.

HIGHLIGHTS Caves of Mulu · Iban longhouse · Proboscis monkeys in Bako

529 ☐

Brunei Darussalam Main Enclave

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Brunei-Muara, Tutong & Belait*

A wealthy sultanate on the coast of Borneo, split into two parts. The golden Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque is mirrored in the lagoon, and thousands of people live in stilt houses in the water village of Kampong Ayer. The Sultan's palace is considered the largest residence of a head of state.

HIGHLIGHTS Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque · Kampong Ayer · Istana Nurul Iman

530 ☐

Temburong

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Brunei Rainforest Exclave separated by Sarawak*

The smaller part of Brunei, separated from the rest of the country by the Malaysian district of Limbang. Since 2020, a bridge around 30 kilometers long has connected it across the bay to the capital. In Ulu Temburong National Park, a canopy walkway leads over untouched rainforest.

HIGHLIGHTS Temburong Bridge · Canopy walkway · Longboat trip

531 ☐

Sabah: Mount Kinabalu Massif, Kinabatangan & Sipadan Reefs

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Malaysian Borneo*

Kinabalu, at over 4,000 meters, is the highest mountain in Borneo. Pygmy elephants and proboscis monkeys live along the Kinabatangan, and orangutans are rehabilitated in Sepilok. Sipadan is considered one of the best dive sites in the world, with turtles and barracuda schools — only a limited number of divers may descend each day.

HIGHLIGHTS Climbing Kinabalu · Boat trip on the Kinabatangan · Diving off Sipadan

532 ☐

Sulawesi: Central & Southern Highlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Tana Toraja & Lore Lindu / ID*

In the land of the Toraja, the dead are sent off with days-long festivals and laid to rest in cliff tombs, watched over by wooden ancestor figures. In the karst caves of Maros, some of the oldest cave paintings in the world were found. Makassar is the port of the Bugis and their pinisi sailing ships.

HIGHLIGHTS Cliff tombs of the Toraja · Cave paintings of Maros · Pinisi shipyards

533 ☐

Sulawesi: Northern Minahasa Peninsula, Togean & Bunaken

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Indonesia*

Off Manado, the reef walls of Bunaken drop vertically into the deep, and the Lembeh Strait is the world capital of macro diving. The Tangkoko Reserve is home to tarsiers and crested macaques, and in the Togian Islands lies a lake with harmless jellyfish.

HIGHLIGHTS Reef walls of Bunaken · Lembeh Strait · Tarsiers in Tangkoko

534 ☐

Northern Maluku: Halmahera, Ternate & Tidore Volcanic Arc

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Indonesia*

The original Spice Islands: On Ternate and Tidore grew the clove, fiercely fought over by the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch. Gamalama volcano dominates Ternate, and old forts line the coast. On Halmahera dances the standardwing bird of paradise.

HIGHLIGHTS Gamalama volcano · Forts of the spice wars · Birds of paradise on Halmahera

535 ☐

Central & Southern Maluku: Seram, Ambon, Banda & Kei Spice Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *ID*

For centuries, the Banda Islands were the only source of nutmeg. The Dutch traded for tiny Run with the English in 1667 — who received Manhattan in return. Beneath the Gunung Api volcano lie colorful reefs, and the Kei Islands have the finest white sand.

HIGHLIGHTS Nutmeg gardens of the Banda Islands · Gunung Api · Beaches of the Kei Islands

536 ☐

Raja Ampat Marine Karst Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Coral Triangle Apex / Indonesia*

The apex of the Coral Triangle and the most species-rich marine area on Earth, with around three-quarters of all known coral species. From the viewpoints of Piaynemo and Wayag you gaze over a labyrinth of karst islands; underwater glide mantas, and in the forest birds of paradise dance.

HIGHLIGHTS View from Piaynemo · Mantas · Wilson's bird of paradise

537 ☐

West Papua: Bird's Head Peninsula (Vogelkop), Cenderawasih & Triton Bay

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

COAST & PENINSULA *ID*

In Cenderawasih Bay, whale sharks swim beneath the fishing platforms of the locals. Triton Bay glows with soft corals of every color, and in the Arfak Mountains bowerbirds build elaborate huts. One of the wildest coasts in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale sharks at the bagans · Soft corals of Triton Bay · Arfak Mountains

538 ☐

West Papua: Maoke Mountains (Puncak Jaya / Carstensz Pyramid & Baliem Valley) & Asmat Swamps

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *ID*

Carstensz Pyramid, at 4,884 meters, is the highest island peak in the world and one of the Seven Summits, and its equatorial glaciers have almost vanished. The Dani live in the Baliem Valley, and in the mangroves of the south coast the Asmat carve their famous ancestor poles.

HIGHLIGHTS Carstensz Pyramid · Baliem Valley · Asmat woodcarving

539 ☐

Philippines: Sulu Archipelago & Tawi-Tawi Coral Chain

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The southernmost island chain of the Philippines, close to Borneo. Here live the Bajau, sea nomads in stilt houses over the water, and the heirs of the once-mighty Sultanate of Sulu. From Bongao Peak you look out over coral reefs. The security situation requires careful planning.

HIGHLIGHTS Bajau stilt villages · Bongao Peak · Reefs of Tawi-Tawi

540 ☐

Philippines: Mindanao Island

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mount Apo, Siargao & Agusan Basin*

Mount Apo, at almost 3,000 meters, is the highest mountain in the Philippines, and the Philippine eagle lives in its forests. Siargao is a surf paradise with the Cloud 9 wave, and in the Agusan Marsh communities live in floating houses. Davao is the home of the durian.

HIGHLIGHTS Cloud 9 on Siargao · Mount Apo · Philippine eagle

541 ☐

Philippines: Palawan Calamian Karst Corridor & Tubbataha Reefs

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

El Nido is a labyrinth of karst lagoons, and off Coron lie Japanese shipwrecks from World War II. At Puerto Princesa, a river flows for kilometers through a cave into the sea. The Tubbataha Reefs are a World Heritage Site and can only be reached on a dive safari.

HIGHLIGHTS Lagoons of El Nido · Wrecks off Coron · Underground River

542 ☐

Philippines: Visayas Central Archipelago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Bohol, Cebu, Panay & Samar*

An island realm at the center of the archipelago: On Bohol rise the Chocolate Hills and live the tarsiers, and off Moalboal millions of sardines swim in swarms. Boracay has one of the most famous beaches in Asia, and Magellan fell on Mactan in 1521.

HIGHLIGHTS Chocolate Hills · Sardine run of Moalboal · White Beach on Boracay

543 ☐

Greater Manila (Metro Manila) & Taal Caldera Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Philippines*

Manila is a megacity of jeepneys, malls and Spanish heritage in the walled city of Intramuros. To the south lies Taal, a volcano in a lake on an island — with a crater lake that in turn holds an island. At sunset over Manila Bay, the city turns golden.

HIGHLIGHTS Intramuros · Taal Volcano · Sunset on Manila Bay

544 ☐

Philippines: Luzon Central Cordillera, Sierra Madre & Mayon Volcano

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The rice terraces of Banaue were built by the Ifugao around 2,000 years ago and are a World Heritage Site. In Sagada coffins hang on rock faces, and Vigan preserves a Spanish colonial town. In the south stands Mayon, one of the most perfectly shaped volcanic cones in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Rice terraces of Banaue · Hanging coffins of Sagada · Mayon

545 ☐

Philippines: Batanes & Babuyan Luzon Strait Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The northernmost province lies closer to Taiwan than to Manila. The Ivatan build their stone houses to withstand typhoons, and green hills fall away to cliffs as in Scotland. In the waters of the Babuyan Islands, humpback whales give birth to their young.

HIGHLIGHTS Stone houses of the Ivatan · Hills of Batan · Humpback whales at Babuyan

V

TILES 546–630 · 85 REGIONS

OCEANIA

Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific Islands

A continent of red rock, an island nation of volcanoes and glaciers, and an ocean strewn with thousands of islands. Oceania is the part of the Earth where distance determines everything: Many tiles can only be reached by supply ship, bush plane or sailboat.

GREAT1001 divides Australia by deserts, reefs and mountain ranges rather than states, follows New Zealand from north to south and, in the Pacific, bundles what belongs together ecologically — while true island worlds such as Pitcairn or the Marquesas keep a tile of their own.

51 Island & Archipelago	**8** Urban Island	**6** Mountains & Highlands
6 Volcano & Geothermal	**5** Desert & Arid Land	**4** Plain, River & Steppe

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **2.9** OF 5

Australia & Eastern Indian Ocean Outposts	546–571
New Zealand (Aotearoa)	572–584
Melanesia, Micronesia & Polynesia	585–630

V · 1 TILES 546–571

AUSTRALIA & EASTERN INDIAN OCEAN OUTPOSTS

From the Cocos Islands in the west to Lord Howe Island in the east: Australia's tiles span the oldest rock on Earth, the largest coral reef, endless deserts and the great coastal cities where almost all Australians live.

546 Cocos (Keeling) Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Indian Ocean Atolls / Australia*

Two atolls with 27 coral islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean, an Australian external territory with around 600 inhabitants. The Cocos Malays have lived here since the 19th century, when the Clunies-Ross family ruled as "Kings of Cocos." The lagoon is a dream in turquoise, and Cossies Beach on Direction Island one of the most beautiful beaches in Australia.

HIGHLIGHTS Cossies Beach · Cocos Malay culture · Lagoon by kayak

547 Christmas Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Indian Ocean Phosphate Seamount / Australia*

An island atop a submarine volcano, famous for its natural spectacle: With the first rains of the wet season, untold millions of red land crabs migrate from the forest to the sea to spawn. Sheer walls underwater, endemic seabirds and phosphate mining define this Australian external territory.

HIGHLIGHTS Red crab migration · Wall diving · Abbott's booby

548 Australia: Kimberley Plateau & Bungle Bungle Range

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Northwest WA*

One of the last great wildernesses on Earth: The beehive domes of the Bungle Bungle Range are a World Heritage Site, and at the Horizontal Falls the tidal current forces the sea through rock clefts. The Gibb River Road runs for hundreds of kilometers of dirt track to gorges and waterfalls, and the Wandjina rock paintings are thousands of years old.

HIGHLIGHTS Bungle Bungle · Horizontal Falls · Gibb River Road

549 Australia: Top End, Arnhem Land Escarpment & Kakadu Wetlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *NT*

In Kakadu National Park, a World Heritage Site for nature and culture, the rock art of Ubirr and Nourlangie displays tens of thousands of years of history. Saltwater crocodiles lurk in the billabongs, and in the wet season Jim Jim Falls thunder over the escarpment. Arnhem Land is Aboriginal land and may only be entered with a permit.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock art of Ubirr · Crocodiles at Yellow Water · Litchfield

550 ☐

Australia: Cape York Peninsula & Daintree Tropical Rainforest

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *QLD*

The Daintree is considered the oldest tropical rainforest on Earth — at Cape Tribulation it meets the Great Barrier Reef. Cassowaries roam the undergrowth. The Old Telegraph Track, with four-wheel drive and river crossings, leads to Cape York, the northern tip of the Australian mainland.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Tribulation · Old Telegraph Track · Cassowaries

551 ☐

Australia: Great Barrier Reef & Whitsunday Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Coral Sea Margin*

The largest coral reef system on Earth stretches around 2,300 kilometers along the coast of Queensland. In the Whitsundays gleams the silica sand of Whitehaven Beach, and from the air Heart Reef is a heart. Coral bleaching threatens this World Heritage Site, which makes a dive here all the more striking.

HIGHLIGHTS Whitehaven Beach · Diving on the outer reef · Heart Reef

552 ☐

Australia: K'gari

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Fraser Island – Largest Sand Island on Earth / QLD*

The largest sand island in the world — and rainforest grows on the sand. Freshwater lakes such as Lake McKenzie lie among the dunes, and 75 Mile Beach is an official road for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Dingoes, the wreck of the Maheno and clear creeks make K'gari unique.

HIGHLIGHTS Lake McKenzie · 75 Mile Beach · Wreck of the Maheno

553 ☐

Greater Brisbane & Gold Coast Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South East Queensland / AU*

Brisbane is a relaxed river city with a lagoon pool right in the center, the Gold Coast a high-rise coastline with surf beaches. In the hinterland grow the Gondwana rainforests of Lamington, a World Heritage Site from the time when Australia was still joined to Antarctica. The 2032 Olympic Games will be held here.

HIGHLIGHTS Surfers Paradise · Lamington National Park · Story Bridge

554 ☐

Australia: Blue Mountains, Snowy Mountains & Great Dividing Range

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *NSW/VIC*

The mountains that separate Australia's coast from the interior: In the Blue Mountains, a bluish eucalyptus haze hangs over the rocks of the Three Sisters. Mount Kosciuszko, at 2,228 meters, is the highest mountain on the mainland, and you ski in the Snowy Mountains. The Jenolan Caves are among the oldest open caves in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Three Sisters · Mount Kosciuszko · Jenolan Caves

555 ☐

Greater Sydney Basin Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Australia*

The Opera House is a World Heritage Site, the Harbour Bridge can be climbed, and the ferry to Manly is one of the most beautiful commutes in the world. Sydney lives by the water: Bondi Beach, the coastal walk to Coogee and countless bays. Add a national park right on the city limits.

HIGHLIGHTS Opera House · Harbour Bridge Climb · Bondi–Coogee coastal walk

556 ☐

Australia: Murray-Darling River Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Interior Plains / NSW, VIC, SA*

Australia's breadbasket between Queensland and South Australia. Paddle steamers still ply the Murray, and in Mungo National Park 42,000-year-old burials were found, surrounded by the clay walls of the "Walls of China." Broken Hill is a silver city and gateway to the Outback.

HIGHLIGHTS Paddle steamers in Echuca · Mungo National Park · Broken Hill

557 ☐

Greater Melbourne & Port Phillip Bay Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Victoria / AU*

Australia's cultural capital, with coffee culture in hidden lanes, street art and the legendary MCG cricket stadium. In the evenings, little penguins waddle ashore on Phillip Island, and at the gates begins the Great Ocean Road with the Twelve Apostles.

HIGHLIGHTS Laneways · Penguin parade on Phillip Island · Great Ocean Road

558 ☐

Australia: Tasmania Island Wilderness & Bass Strait Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

An island like a continent of its own: The Overland Track leads from Cradle Mountain through high moors, Wineglass Bay is a perfect crescent, and in the southwest lies one of the last temperate wildernesses on Earth. Here lives the Tasmanian devil, the ruins of the convict colony stand at Port Arthur, and in Hobart the MONA museum provokes.

HIGHLIGHTS Cradle Mountain · Wineglass Bay · MONA in Hobart

559 ☐

Australia: Kangaroo Island

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *South Australia*

"Australia's Galápagos": Sea lions rest on the beach at Seal Bay, fur seals doze beneath Admirals Arch, and the Remarkable Rocks have been sculpted by the wind. Kangaroos, koalas and wallabies are everywhere. The bushfires of 2019/20 burned half the island — nature is recovering.

HIGHLIGHTS Remarkable Rocks · Seal Bay · Admirals Arch

560 ☐

Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Australia*

The "City of Churches" was laid out to a plan with a green belt and is the gateway to Australia's wine regions of the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale. The Fringe Festival is among the largest arts festivals in the world, and the tram runs all the way to Glenelg Beach.

HIGHLIGHTS Barossa Valley · Central Market · Glenelg Beach

561 ☐

Australia: Flinders Ranges & Lake Eyre Endorheic Salt Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *SA*

Wilpena Pound is a natural amphitheater of rock, and in the Ediacara Hills some of the oldest animal fossils on Earth were found — an entire geological period is named after them. The salt lake Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre lies 15 meters below sea level and fills only every few years.

HIGHLIGHTS Wilpena Pound · Ediacaran fossils · Flight over Lake Eyre

562 ☐

Australia: Simpson, Strzelecki & Sturt Stony Deserts

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *Channel Country*

More than a thousand parallel red dunes run through the Simpson Desert, the highest of them called Big Red. The Birdsville Track leads through stony desert, and in the Channel Country rains turn dry riverbeds into a web of waterways. The horse races in Birdsville are the ultimate Outback event.

HIGHLIGHTS Big Red · Birdsville Track · Stony desert of the Sturt

563 ☐

Australia: Red Centre, Uluru-Kata Tjuta & MacDonnell Ranges

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *NT*

Uluru rises 348 meters above the plain and is a sacred place of the Anangu; since 2019 it may no longer be climbed. The domes of Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon and the gorges of the MacDonnell Ranges form the red heart of Australia. Alice Springs is the gateway to the wilderness.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunset at Uluru · Kata Tjuta · Kings Canyon

564 ☐

Australia: Eyre Peninsula & Gawler Ranges

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

COAST & PENINSULA *South Australia*

A rugged peninsula between two gulfs: Near Port Lincoln you swim with sea lions and tuna, and at the Neptune Islands you descend in cages to great white sharks. Inland, volcanic rocks form "organ pipes," and speed records have been set on the salt flat of Lake Gairdner.

HIGHLIGHTS Great white shark cage diving · Sea lions at Baird Bay · Lake Gairdner

565 ☐

Australia: Nullarbor Karst Plain & Great Australian Bight Cliffs

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *SA/WA*

"No tree": The Nullarbor is one of the largest contiguous limestone surfaces on Earth. On the Eyre Highway you drive 146 kilometers dead straight, and the Indian Pacific train runs along the longest straight stretch of railway in the world. At the Bunda Cliffs, the land breaks off vertically into the sea, where right whales calve in winter.

HIGHLIGHTS 90 Mile Straight · Bunda Cliffs · Right whales at the Head of Bight

566 ☐

Australia: Western Shield

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND *Great Victoria, Gibson & Great Sandy Deserts / WA*

The Great Victoria, Gibson and Great Sandy Deserts form a sea of sand and spinifex larger than many countries. The Canning Stock Route, at around 1,850 kilometers, is considered the toughest four-wheel-drive track in the world. Here live the Martu and Pintupi; in 1984 a group of Pintupi made contact with the outside world for the first time.

HIGHLIGHTS Canning Stock Route · Wolfe Creek Crater · Spinifex plains

567 ☐

Greater Perth Metropolitan Area & Southwest Forests

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Western Australia*

One of the most remote large cities in the world, with beaches, Kings Park and Fremantle. On Rottnest Island the quokkas smile for the camera, and in Margaret River wine and surf waves combine. In the Valley of the Giants, a treetop walk leads through huge tingle trees.

HIGHLIGHTS Quokkas on Rottnest · Margaret River · Valley of the Giants

568 ☐

Australia: Ningaloo Reef, Shark Bay & Coral Coast

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

COAST & PENINSULA *Western Australia*

At Ningaloo Reef you swim straight from the beach to the corals and, from March to July, with whale sharks. In Shark Bay grow stromatolites, living fossils of the oldest form of life on Earth, and at Monkey Mia dolphins come to the shore. Farther south, the Pinnacles rise from the desert.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale sharks at Ningaloo · Stromatolites of Hamelin Pool · Pinnacles

569 ☐

Australia: Pilbara Kraton & Karijini Gorges

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Western Australia*

A piece of the oldest crust on Earth: The rock of the Pilbara is over 3.5 billion years old and holds some of the earliest traces of life on Earth. In Karijini you climb through red gorges to rock pools, and on the Burrup Peninsula lie over a million rock engravings, a World Heritage Site since 2025. The ore trains are among the longest in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Gorges of Karijini · Rock art of Murujuga · Iron ore trains

570 ☐ **Lord Howe Island & Ball's Pyramid** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Tasman Sea Volcanic Remnant / AU*

A World Heritage Site in the Tasman Sea, with never more than 400 guests allowed at one time. The southernmost coral reef in the world, Mount Gower and beside it Ball's Pyramid — the highest volcanic sea stack on Earth, where a stick insect long believed extinct was rediscovered in 2001.

HIGHLIGHTS Ball's Pyramid · Climb of Mount Gower · Southernmost coral reef

571 ☐ **Norfolk Island** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *South Pacific Ridge / Australia*

A green island in the South Pacific, famous for its Norfolk pines. In Kingston stand the Georgian buildings of the convict colony, a World Heritage Site. Many inhabitants descend from the Bounty mutineers, who were resettled from Pitcairn in 1856, and still speak Norf'k.

HIGHLIGHTS Kingston · Norfolk pines · Descendants of the Bounty

V · 2 TILES 572–584

NEW ZEALAND (AOTEAROA)

A young country on the boundary of two plates: volcanoes in the north, glaciers and fjords in the south, and cities on the water in between. Far offshore lie the Kermadecs, the Chatham Islands and the sub-Antarctic islands with their albatrosses.

572 ☐ **Kermadec Islands & Trench** ◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Subtropical Volcanic Arc / NZ*

Subtropical volcanic islands far to the northeast of New Zealand, including active Raoul. To the east, the Kermadec Trench drops to over 10,000 meters, and the marine reserve is one of the largest in the world. Inhabited only by a small station — reachable on rare expeditions.

HIGHLIGHTS Raoul Island · Kermadec Trench · Marine reserve

573 ☐ **New Zealand: Northland Peninsula & Bay of Islands** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA

On the beach at Waitangi, the treaty that founded New Zealand was signed in 1840. At Cape Reinga, in Māori belief, souls leave the land, and Ninety Mile Beach stretches endlessly to the south. In the Waipoua Forest stands Tāne Mahuta, the largest known kauri tree.

HIGHLIGHTS Waitangi · Cape Reinga · Tāne Mahuta

574 ☐

Greater Auckland Isthmus Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *New Zealand*

The "City of Sails" lies between two harbors on a volcanic field with around 50 cones. Rangitoto Island rose from the sea only around 600 years ago, and wine grows on Waiheke. The Sky Tower looms over a city that opens toward the Pacific.

HIGHLIGHTS Rangitoto · Waiheke · Mount Eden

575 ☐

New Zealand: Whakaari / White Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Active Marine Stratovolcano*

New Zealand's most active volcano lies in the sea off the Bay of Plenty. In 2019, an eruption killed 22 people on the island; landings have been banned ever since. The Visibility Rule applies to Whakaari: Whoever sees the steaming crater clearly from a boat has the tile.

HIGHLIGHTS Steaming crater · Boat trip from Whakatāne · Visibility Rule

576 ☐

New Zealand: Taupo Volcanic Zone, Rotorua Geothermal Field & Tongariro

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Lake Taupō fills the caldera of a supervolcano, and Rotorua steams and bubbles with geysers such as Pōhutu. The Tongariro Alpine Crossing leads past "Mount Doom," Ngauruhoe, and emerald crater lakes. Rotorua is a center of Māori culture, and in Waitomo glowworms shine in caves.

HIGHLIGHTS Tongariro Alpine Crossing · Pōhutu Geyser · Waitomo Glowworm Caves

577 ☐

New Zealand: North Island East Cape, Taranaki Cone & Wairarapa

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

The East Cape is one of the first places in the world to see the sunrise. The perfect cone of Taranaki has been a legal person with rights of its own since 2025. Napier was rebuilt in Art Deco style after the 1931 earthquake, and Pinot Noir grows in the Wairarapa.

HIGHLIGHTS Taranaki · Art Deco in Napier · Seal colony at Cape Palliser

578 ☐

Greater Wellington Metropolitan Area & Cook Strait

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *New Zealand*

The windiest capital in the world, wedged between hills and harbor. The Te Papa national museum, the Cable Car and the Weta Workshop of "The Lord of the Rings" make it a creative hub. The ferry across Cook Strait to the South Island is one of the most beautiful crossings in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Te Papa · Ferry through Cook Strait · Zealandia

579 ☐

New Zealand: South Island Marlborough Sounds, Kaikoura & Canterbury Plains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA

The drowned valleys of the Marlborough Sounds, vineyards full of Sauvignon Blanc and Abel Tasman National Park with its golden bays. Off Kaikōura, sperm whales surface from the deep, and dolphins leap in pods. Behind it stretch the Canterbury Plains with their braided rivers.

HIGHLIGHTS Sperm whales off Kaikōura · Queen Charlotte Track · Abel Tasman

580 ☐

Greater Christchurch & Banks Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Island / NZ*

The "Garden City" was badly hit by an earthquake in 2011 and has been reinventing itself ever since, with a cathedral made of cardboard tubes. Banks Peninsula consists of two eroded volcanoes, and in Akaroa, with its French heritage, swim the tiny Hector's dolphins.

HIGHLIGHTS Cardboard Cathedral · Akaroa · Hector's dolphins

581 ☐

New Zealand: Southern Alps Main Divide, Aoraki / Mount Cook & Westland Glaciers

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Aoraki / Mount Cook, at 3,724 meters, is New Zealand's highest mountain, and the Hooker Valley Track leads to its glacial lake. On the west coast, the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers reach almost into the rainforest, and at Lake Tekapo lies one of the darkest starry skies in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Hooker Valley Track · Franz Josef Glacier · Stars at Lake Tekapo

582 ☐

New Zealand: Fiordland (Milford & Doubtful Sounds) & Otago Lakes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Milford Sound with Mitre Peak is New Zealand's icon, and the Milford Track is considered one of the most beautiful hiking trails in the world. Queenstown is the adventure capital — commercial bungee jumping began at the Kawarau Bridge in 1988. Central Otago tempts with gold-rush towns and vineyards.

HIGHLIGHTS Milford Sound · Milford Track · Bungee at Kawarau Bridge

583 ☐

New Zealand: Stewart Island / Rakiura

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

New Zealand's southernmost large island is 85 percent national park. Here you can see kiwis in the wild, even during the day, and the southern lights glow over the sea. The bird sanctuary of Ulva Island is a paradise for rare species, and Oban is the only village.

HIGHLIGHTS Kiwis in the wild · Ulva Island · Southern lights

584 New Zealand: Chatham Islands & Sub-Antarctic Outposts

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Auckland, Campbell & Antipodes Islands*

The Chatham Islands have their own time zone, 45 minutes ahead of New Zealand, and were home to the Moriori. Here the black robin was saved when only five birds remained. Far to the south lie the Auckland, Campbell and Antipodes Islands with megaherbs and albatrosses — a World Heritage Site, by permit only.

HIGHLIGHTS Black robin · Megaherbs of Campbell · Albatrosses

V · 3 TILES 585–630

MELANESIA, MICRONESIA & POLYNESIA

Thousands of islands scattered across a third of the Earth's surface: the highlands of New Guinea, the lava lakes of Vanuatu, the atolls of Micronesia and the vastness of Polynesia as far as Pitcairn. Here lie some of the smallest states, the site of the first sunrise and islands that can only be reached by ship.

585 Papua New Guinea: Fly River Basin & Trans-Fly Savanna

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *South*

By volume of water, the Fly is one of the largest rivers in Oceania, meandering through swamp and savanna. On Lake Murray, the country's largest lake, communities live with almost no contact to the outside world. One of the most remote corners of the planet, reachable only by bush plane or boat.

HIGHLIGHTS Lake Murray · Meanders of the Fly · Tonda savanna

586 Papua New Guinea: Central Range Highlands, Mount Wilhelm & Kokoda Track

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Only in the 1930s did outsiders discover that around a million people lived in the highlands of New Guinea. At the sing-sings of Mount Hagen and Goroka, tribes show off their feather finery, and the Huli wear wigs of their own hair. Mount Wilhelm reaches 4,509 meters, and the Kokoda Track recalls the war of 1942.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Hagen sing-sing · Huli wigmen · Kokoda Track

587 Papua New Guinea: Sepik & Ramu River Floodplains

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *North*

The Sepik is one of the great rivers of the Earth without a dam, lined with villages with tall spirit houses. In initiation rituals, crocodile scales are cut into the skin of young men. The woodcarving of the Sepik is world-famous, and travel is by dugout canoe.

HIGHLIGHTS Spirit houses · Crocodile ceremonies · Dugout canoe trip

588 ☐

Papua New Guinea: Milne Bay, D'Entrecasteaux & Trobriand Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On the Trobriand Islands, people have exchanged shell jewelry in the Kula ring for centuries, and the harvest is celebrated at the yam festival. Milne Bay is a paradise for macro divers, and the D'Entrecasteaux Islands carry hot springs and volcanoes.

HIGHLIGHTS Kula ring · Yam festival · Macro diving

589 ☐

Papua New Guinea: Bismarck Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *New Britain, Rabaul & New Ireland*

In 1994, Rabaul was buried under ash by the volcanoes Tavurvur and Vulcan, and smoke still rises from the caldera. Japanese tunnels and wrecks tell of World War II, and Kimbe Bay on New Britain has magnificent reefs. Among the Baining, masked men dance through fire.

HIGHLIGHTS Rabaul caldera · Baining fire dance · Reefs of Kimbe Bay

590 ☐

Bougainville Autonomous Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Northern Solomon Arc / PNG*

An autonomous region of Papua New Guinea whose people voted by almost 98 percent for independence in 2019. The dispute over the Panguna copper mine led to civil war, and in the jungle lies the wreck of Admiral Yamamoto's plane. A country in the making.

HIGHLIGHTS Panguna Mine · Wreck of Yamamoto's plane · Buka

591 ☐

Solomon Islands: Western & Choiseul Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *New Georgia & Marovo Lagoon*

Marovo Lagoon is one of the largest saltwater lagoons in the world, enclosed by a double barrier reef. Near Gizo, John F. Kennedy washed ashore in 1943 after the sinking of his patrol boat. Woodcarvers and skull shrines on the islands bear witness to old traditions.

HIGHLIGHTS Marovo Lagoon · Kennedy Island · Skull shrines

592 ☐

Solomon Islands: Guadalcanal (Honiara), Savo & Florida Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On Guadalcanal raged one of the decisive battles of the Pacific War in 1942/43, and dozens of sunken warships lie in "Iron Bottom Sound." At Bonegi you dive from the shore to wrecks. On Savo, megapode birds bury their eggs in warm volcanic sand.

HIGHLIGHTS Wrecks of Bonegi · Iron Bottom Sound · Megapodes on Savo

593 ☐

Solomon Islands: Malaita, Makira, Rennell & Santa Cruz Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

In the Lau Lagoon of Malaita, people live on artificial islands of coral blocks, and shell money is still legal tender. Lake Tegano on Rennell is the largest lake in the Pacific islands. The Santa Cruz Islands lie so remotely that visitors here are a rarity.

HIGHLIGHTS Artificial islands of Lau Lagoon · Shell money · Lake Tegano

594 ☐

Vanuatu: Northern Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Espiritu Santo, Malekula & Banks Islands*

Off Espiritu Santo lies the SS President Coolidge, one of the largest diveable wrecks in the world, and at Million Dollar Point the Americans sank their equipment in 1945. Champagne Beach and blue holes are natural wonders. Traditional communities live on Malekula, and on the Banks Islands women play "water music."

HIGHLIGHTS SS President Coolidge · Champagne Beach · Water music

595 ☐

Vanuatu: Central Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Efate, Port Vila & Ambrym Lava Lakes*

Port Vila on Efate is the gateway to Vanuatu. On Ambrym, lava lakes seethe in the craters of Marum and Benbow, and after a strenuous climb you stand at their edge. On Pentecost, men leap from wooden towers with vines tied to their feet at the Naghol — the origin of bungee jumping.

HIGHLIGHTS Marum lava lake · Land diving on Pentecost · Mele Cascades

596 ☐

Vanuatu: Southern Tafea Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Tanna / Mount Yasur & Aneityum*

Yasur on Tanna is one of the most accessible active volcanoes in the world: You stand at the crater rim while lava explodes below you. The cargo cult around John Frum lives on in the villages, and many communities cultivate their "kastom." Aneityum with Mystery Island is the southernmost outpost.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater rim of Yasur · Kastom villages · Mystery Island

597 ☐

New Caledonia: Grande Terre & Barrier Reef Lagoon

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *FR*

The lagoon of New Caledonia is one of the largest on Earth and a World Heritage Site. Nouméa is a piece of France in the Pacific, and Renzo Piano's Tjibaou Cultural Center honors the Kanak. The island is one of the largest nickel producers in the world, and at Voh mangroves form a heart.

HIGHLIGHTS Tjibaou Cultural Center · Heart of Voh · Lagoon

598 ☐ **New Caledonia: Loyalty Islands & Isle of Pines** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *FR*

On the Isle of Pines, columnar araucarias rise above white beaches, and the Piscine Naturelle is a natural pool. Ouvéa is considered the "island closest to paradise," Lifou an island of vanilla and cliffs. The Kanak tribes preserve their traditions here.

HIGHLIGHTS Piscine Naturelle · Beaches of Ouvéa · Cliffs of Lifou

599 ☐ **Fiji: Viti Levu, Mamanuca & Yasawa Islands** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Fiji's main island with Nadi, Suva and the dunes of Sigatoka; offshore lie the Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands, with Monuriki, where "Cast Away" was filmed. Off Beqa you dive with bull sharks, and on the island men walk over glowing stones. Kava ceremonies are part of every visit.

HIGHLIGHTS Kava ceremony · Bull sharks off Beqa · Yasawa Islands

600 ☐ **Fiji: Vanua Levu, Taveuni & Lomaiviti Archipelago** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Taveuni, the "Garden Island," is cut by the 180th meridian — a sign shows where today meets yesterday. The Rainbow Reef with the Great White Wall is a world-class dive site. Levuka, the first capital, is a World Heritage Site, and Savusavu a quiet sailors' harbor.

HIGHLIGHTS 180th meridian · Rainbow Reef · Levuka

601 ☐ **Fiji: Lau Coral Archipelago, Kadavu & Rotuma** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The remote fringes of Fiji: The Lau Islands lie closer to Tonga than to Suva, and the Great Astrolabe Reef stretches around Kadavu. Rotuma is a Polynesian island with its own language that belongs politically to Fiji, reachable only by infrequent flights or ships.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Astrolabe Reef · Rotuma · Lau Islands

602 ☐ **Palau: Babeldaob, Rock Islands Lagoon & Peleliu** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The Rock Islands are hundreds of mushroom-shaped limestone islands in a turquoise lagoon, a World Heritage Site. In Jellyfish Lake you swim among golden jellyfish, at Blue Corner among sharks. In 2009 Palau established the world's first shark sanctuary, and every visitor signs an environmental pledge on arrival.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock Islands · Jellyfish Lake · Blue Corner

603 ☐

Guam

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Mariana Arc / US*

The US territory in the south of the Marianas, where "America's day begins." Chamorro culture shows itself in stone latte pillars, and from Two Lovers Point you look out on Tumon Bay. Off the coast begins the Mariana Trench — no inhabited place lies closer to the deepest point on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Latte stones · Two Lovers Point · Tumon Bay

604 ☐

Northern Mariana Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Saipan, Tinian & Pagan Volcanic Arc / US*

On Saipan in 1944, hundreds of people threw themselves from the cliffs of Suicide and Banzai Cliff, and from Tinian the Enola Gay took off with the atomic bomb for Hiroshima. Today the Grotto attracts divers, along with the islet of Managaha. Pagan volcano in the north has been evacuated since 1981.

HIGHLIGHTS The Grotto · North Field on Tinian · Managaha

605 ☐

Federated States of Micronesia: Yap & Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On Yap stand stone money disks up to four meters across, once fetched by canoe from Palau and still valid currency today. In Chuuk Lagoon lies the "Ghost Fleet": dozens of Japanese ships sunk in 1944, the best wreck diving in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Stone money of Yap · Ghost Fleet in Chuuk · Mantas off Yap

606 ☐

Federated States of Micronesia: Pohnpei (Nan Madol) & Kosrae

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On Pohnpei lies Nan Madol, a city of basalt columns on around a hundred artificial islands — the "Venice of the Pacific" and a World Heritage Site. The island is among the rainiest places on Earth. Kosrae is quiet and green and preserves the ruins of Lelu.

HIGHLIGHTS Nan Madol · Waterfalls of Pohnpei · Ruins of Lelu

607 ☐

Nauru

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Raised Phosphate Coral Island*

The third-smallest state in the world: a raised coral island whose interior resembles a moonscape after phosphate mining. In the 1970s, Nauru was among the richest countries per capita. A ring road circles the island in just under half an hour, and there is no official capital.

HIGHLIGHTS Moonscape of Topside · Anibare Bay · Island tour

608 Marshall Islands: Ralik Chain

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Bikini, Enewetak & Kwajalein Atolls*

On Bikini Atoll, the USA detonated atomic bombs between 1946 and 1958, including the most powerful in its history in 1954. The lagoon holds sunken warships, Kwajalein is a missile test base, and on Enewetak nuclear waste is stored under the Runit Dome. Large parts are off-limits — the Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Bikini Atoll · Runit Dome · Visibility Rule

609 Marshall Islands: Ratak Chain

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Majuro & Arno Atolls*

Majuro is a capital on a narrow band of coral, in many places only a few hundred meters wide and barely two meters high. Here sea-level rise is no theory. On Arno and the neighboring atolls, people still build traditional outrigger canoes.

HIGHLIGHTS Laura Beach · Outrigger canoes · Lagoon of Arno

610 Kiribati: Gilbert Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Tarawa & Abemama Atolls*

On Betio in Tarawa Atoll, one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific War raged in 1943, and bunkers and guns still lie on the beach. On Abemama, Robert Louis Stevenson lived with a king in 1889. In the maneaba, the meeting houses, community life is regulated.

HIGHLIGHTS Battlefield of Betio · Maneaba · Abemama

611 Kiribati: Phoenix Islands Protected Area

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Kanton Atoll*

One of the largest marine protected areas on Earth, a World Heritage Site and almost deserted — only on Kanton Atoll do a handful of families live. On neighboring Nikumaroro, some researchers suspect the end of the aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart. Reachable only by sailboat or rare expedition.

HIGHLIGHTS Kanton Atoll · Marine protected area · Nikumaroro

612 Kiribati: Line Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Kiritimati, Tabuaeran & Millennium Atoll*

Here the day begins: The Line Islands lie in the UTC+14 time zone and are the first in the world to celebrate the new year. Kiritimati is the largest coral atoll on Earth by land area, a paradise for fly fishers and seabirds. On Millennium Atoll, the sun rose first on January 1, 2000.

HIGHLIGHTS First sunrise of the year · Fly fishing on Kiritimati · Seabird colonies

613 ☐

US Minor Outlying Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Wake, Midway, Johnston, Palmyra & Kingman Cluster*

Wake, Midway, Johnston, Palmyra, Kingman, Baker, Howland and Jarvis — eight scattered atolls and islands, bundled here into one tile. On Midway breed most of the world's Laysan albatrosses, Palmyra is a research station, and Howland was the destination of Amelia Earhart's last flight. Civilians have almost no access — the Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Albatrosses on Midway · Palmyra · Visibility Rule

614 ☐

Tuvalu

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Funafuti & Eight Polynesian Atolls*

The fourth-smallest state in the world, nowhere higher than a little over four meters. On Funafuti, the runway serves as a soccer field and promenade outside flight times. The .tv internet domain brings the country income, and a treaty with Australia allows its citizens to migrate because of climate change.

HIGHLIGHTS Runway of Funafuti · Marine protected area · Fongafale

615 ☐

Wallis & Futuna

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *French Polynesian Collectivity*

A French overseas territory with three traditional kings who still share in governing today. Polynesian culture, crater lakes such as Lalolalo and hardly any tourism: Wallis and Futuna are among the least visited territories in the Pacific. Flights only via Nouméa or Fiji.

HIGHLIGHTS Lalolalo crater lake · Kingdom of Uvea · Churches of Futuna

616 ☐

Tokelau

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Atafu, Nukunonu & Fakaofo Atolls / NZ*

Three atolls without an airport, reachable only by ship from Samoa after more than a day at sea. Around 1,500 people live here under New Zealand administration — Tokelau was the first country to generate all its electricity from solar energy.

HIGHLIGHTS Ship from Apia · Atafu · Solar island

617 ☐

Samoa: Upolu & Savai'i Volcanic Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The To Sua Ocean Trench is a swimming hole in the lava rock with a ladder down into turquoise water, and Robert Louis Stevenson lies buried on Mount Vaea. On Savai'i, blowholes shoot seawater into the air. In 2011, Samoa skipped December 30 to change sides of the date line.

HIGHLIGHTS To Sua Ocean Trench · Villa Vailima · Alofaaga Blowholes

618 ☐

American Samoa

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Tutuila, Manu'a & Rose Atoll / US*

The harbor of Pago Pago is one of the deepest natural harbors in the world, and the National Park of American Samoa the only US national park south of the equator. On the Manu'a Islands lies the dream beach of Ofu. This is the last inhabited place on Earth where the sun sets.

HIGHLIGHTS Ofu Beach · Pago Pago Harbor · National Park

619 ☐

Tonga: Vava'u, Ha'apai & Niuas Northern Volcanic Arc

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Off Vava'u, you swim with humpback whales and their calves from July to October. In the Ha'apai group, Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai exploded in 2022, the most powerful volcanic eruption in over a hundred years. On Niuafo'ou, mail used to arrive floating in tin cans.

HIGHLIGHTS Swimming with humpback whales · Ha'apai · Tin Can Mail of Niuafo'ou

620 ☐

Tonga: Tongatapu & 'Eua Southern Group

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The only kingdom in the Pacific that was never colonized. On Tongatapu stands the Ha'amonga 'a Maui trilithon, and the Mapu'a 'a Vaca blowholes shoot in rows. 'Eua is the oldest island in Tonga, with rainforest and cliffs.

HIGHLIGHTS Ha'amonga 'a Maui · Blowholes · Cliffs of 'Eua

621 ☐

Niue

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *"The Rock of Polynesia" Raised Coral Atoll*

"The Rock": one of the largest raised coral islands in the world, with caves, rock arches and swimming holes such as Matapa Chasm. Around 1,600 people live here in free association with New Zealand. In 2020, Niue became the first entire country to be declared a Dark Sky Place.

HIGHLIGHTS Matapa Chasm · Talava Arches · Dark Sky Nation

622 ☐

Cook Islands: Northern Atoll Group

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Aitutaki, Palmerston & Suwarrow*

The lagoon of Aitutaki is considered one of the most beautiful in the world, with sandbanks such as One Foot Island. On Palmerston live almost exclusively descendants of a single man, William Marsters. Suwarrow is a national park where the hermit Tom Neale lived alone for years.

HIGHLIGHTS Aitutaki Lagoon · Palmerston · Suwarrow

623 ☐

Cook Islands: Southern Volcanic Group

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Rarotonga, Atiu & Mangaia*

On Rarotonga, a 32-kilometer ring road circles the island, and the Cross Island Track leads to the rock needle of Te Rua Manga. In the caves of Atiu nest swiftlets that navigate by echolocation, and Mangaia is surrounded by a raised coral ring.

HIGHLIGHTS Cross Island Track · Caves of Atiu · Muri Lagoon

624 ☐

French Polynesia: Society Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Tahiti, Moorea & Bora Bora*

Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora: Overwater bungalows were invented here, and off Teahupo'o breaks one of the most dangerous waves in the world, an Olympic surf spot in 2024. The Marae Taputapuātea on Raiatea was the religious center of Polynesia and is a World Heritage Site. Paul Gauguin painted his most famous pictures here.

HIGHLIGHTS Lagoon of Bora Bora · Teahupo'o · Marae Taputapuātea

625 ☐

French Polynesia: Tuamotu Atoll Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Rangiroa & Fakarava*

The largest chain of atolls on Earth, with over 70 atolls. In the passes of Fakarava stands a "wall of sharks" of hundreds of gray reef sharks, and Rangiroa is one of the largest atolls in the world. Black pearls are cultivated in the lagoons; France tested atomic bombs on Moruroa until 1996.

HIGHLIGHTS Shark wall of Fakarava · Lagoon of Rangiroa · Pearl farms

626 ☐

French Polynesia: Marquesas Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Nuku Hiva & Fatu Hiva Spire Islands*

Jagged basalt spires rise from the Pacific with no protective reef. The Marquesas are the origin of Polynesian tattoo art and have been a World Heritage Site since 2024. Gauguin and Jacques Brel lie buried on Hiva Oa, and the freighter Aranui links the islands.

HIGHLIGHTS Bay of Virgins on Fatu Hiva · Tikis · Freighter Aranui

627 ☐

French Polynesia: Austral Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Rurutu & Tubuai*

The southernmost islands of French Polynesia: Off Rurutu, humpback whales give birth to their young, and the island is riddled with limestone caves. Tubuai and Raivavae have turquoise lagoons, and on Rapa Iti stand fortified mountain villages. Hardly any tourism, a great deal of authenticity.

HIGHLIGHTS Humpback whales off Rurutu · Lagoon of Raivavae · Rapa Iti

628 ☐

French Polynesia: Gambier Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mangareva Lagoon*

A lagoon with volcanic islands on the southeastern edge of Polynesia. In Rikitea on Mangareva stands a huge 19th-century cathedral, built at the instigation of a missionary. The Gambier Islands are a center of black pearl farming — and a stepping stone to Pitcairn.

HIGHLIGHTS Cathedral of Rikitea · Pearl farms · Lagoon of Mangareva

629 ☐

Pitcairn Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Isolated Volcanic Outpost / UK*

The Bounty mutineers hid on this island with Tahitians in 1790, and their descendants still live in Adamstown today. With around 35 inhabitants, Pitcairn is one of the smallest communities in the world, with no airport. A supply ship takes about 32 hours from Mangareva.

HIGHLIGHTS Adamstown · Bounty anchor · Supply ship from Mangareva

630 ☐

Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Uninhabited Pitcairn Atolls / UK*

The uninhabited atolls of the Pitcairn group: Henderson is a raised coral island, a World Heritage Site and home to flightless birds — and also a sad example of plastic waste washed up by currents from around the world. Ducie and Oeno are lonely atolls. Usually only the Visibility Rule remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Henderson crake · Plastic beaches · Visibility Rule

VI

TILES 631–768 · 138 REGIONS

NORTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

From Greenland Across the Caribbean to the Darién

A continent that almost every list carves up by states and provinces — even though nothing changes between North and South Dakota except a sign. Here GREAT1001 follows the great natural regions: the Arctic, the Canadian Shield, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains, deserts and coasts, along with the metropolises that dominate entire regions.

The journey begins on the Greenland ice, leads through the Arctic of Canada and Alaska down the continent to Mexico and across the Central American land bridge to the Darién — and then jumps back to Bermuda to follow the arc of the Caribbean islands.

34 Island & Archipelago
23 Urban Island
14 Volcano & Geothermal
12 Mountains & Highlands
10 Polar & Ice
8 Plain, River & Steppe

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **1.8** OF 5

Greenland, the Canadian Arctic & Alaska	631–656
Eastern Canada & the Eastern USA: East Coast, Midwest & South	657–685
Western USA, the Pacific Coast & Hawaii	686–705
Mexico & the Central American Isthmus	706–733
Bermuda & the Caribbean Island Arc	734–768

VI · 1 TILES 631–656

GREENLAND, THE CANADIAN ARCTIC & ALASKA

The largest island on Earth, an archipelago of ice and the Arctic half of Alaska: Here lie fjords, glaciers and the route of the Northwest Passage. Farther south follow the wildernesses of the Yukon, the rainforests of the Pacific coast, the Rocky Mountains and, with Point Roberts, one of the most curious borders in the world.

631 Greenland: Northeast Fjord System, Scoresby Sund & Peary Land

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

❄ POLAR & ICE

Scoresby Sund is the largest fjord system on Earth, cut around 350 kilometers into the land. The Northeast Greenland National Park is the largest national park in the world, with musk oxen, Arctic wolves and polar bears. In Peary Land lie the northernmost land points on Earth. Ittoqqortoormiit is one of the most remote villages in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Icebergs in Scoresby Sund · Ittoqqortoormiit · Musk oxen

632 Greenland: Southeast Coast

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

❄ POLAR & ICE *Ammassalik / Tasiilaq Alpine Fjords*

Alpine fjords, glaciers and sharp peaks: East Greenland is wilder and more original than the west. In Tasiilaq and Kulusuk live East Greenlanders with their own language and dog-sled tradition, and in Sermilik Fjord icebergs drift before walls of rock. Reachable by flight via Iceland.

HIGHLIGHTS Sermilik Fjord · Dog sleds · Tasiilaq

633 Greenland: Interior Ice Sheet

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

❄ POLAR & ICE *Inlandis*

The second-largest mass of ice on Earth, up to three kilometers thick and around three times the size of France. Fridtjof Nansen was the first to cross it, on skis, in 1888. Near Kangerlussuaq a track leads to the edge of the ice at Point 660 — so you don't need an expedition to set foot on the ice sheet, but you very much do to cross it.

HIGHLIGHTS Point 660 · Ice edge at Kangerlussuaq · Crossing on skis

634 Greenland: West Coast & Disko Bay

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

❄ POLAR & ICE *Ilulissat Icefjord to Nuuk*

The Ilulissat Icefjord is a World Heritage Site: The Sermeq Kujalleq glacier is among the fastest in the world, pushing icebergs the size of houses into Disko Bay. Nuuk is the smallest capital with big-city flair and has been reachable by direct long-haul flight since 2024. Humpback whales move among the icebergs.

HIGHLIGHTS Ilulissat Icefjord · Nuuk · Whales in Disko Bay

635 Ellesmere, Axel Heiberg & Devon Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

❄ POLAR & ICE *Queen Elizabeth High Arctic / CAN*

Canada's far north: Grise Fiord is the country's northernmost civilian community, and Alert the northernmost permanently staffed settlement in the world. Devon Island is the largest uninhabited island on Earth, and its Haughton Crater serves as a Mars test site. On Axel Heiberg stand petrified forests.

HIGHLIGHTS Grise Fiord · Haughton Crater · Fossil forest of Axel Heiberg

636 Baffin Island & Bylot Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

❄ POLAR & ICE *Eastern Canadian Arctic / Nunavut*

In Auyuittuq National Park rises Mount Thor, with one of the highest vertical rock faces on Earth. Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut, and near Pond Inlet narwhals pass along the floe edge. Kinngait produced some of the most famous works of Inuit art.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Thor · Narwhals at the floe edge · Inuit art of Kinngait

637 Western & Central Canadian Arctic Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

❄ POLAR & ICE *Victoria, Banks & Northwest Passage Islands*

Here runs the Northwest Passage, which Roald Amundsen was the first to sail, from 1903 to 1906. Off King William Island, the wrecks of Franklin's ships Erebus and Terror were found in 2014 and 2016. Cambridge Bay and Gjoa Haven are Inuit communities on the legendary route.

HIGHLIGHTS Northwest Passage · Gjoa Haven · Franklin wrecks

638 Canada: Mackenzie River Delta, Tuktoyaktuk Pingos & Nahanni Karst

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

❄ POLAR & ICE *NWT*

Since 2017, a road has led to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean, the first year-round road in Canada to reach this ocean. In the delta bulge pingos, ice hills of permafrost. In the south, the Virginia Falls of the Nahanni plunge almost twice as far as Niagara Falls.

HIGHLIGHTS Road to Tuktoyaktuk · Pingos · Virginia Falls

639 Alaska: Brooks Range & Arctic North Slope Tundra

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

❄ POLAR & ICE *USA*

Gates of the Arctic National Park does not have a single road, and huge caribou herds move through the Arctic Refuge. The Dalton Highway follows the Trans-Alaska Pipeline to Prudhoe Bay. In Utqiaġvik, the northernmost town in the USA, the sun does not rise for two months in winter.

HIGHLIGHTS Dalton Highway · Caribou herds · Utqiaġvik

640 ☐

Alaska: Interior Yukon Flats, Alaska Range & Denali Massif

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *USA*

Denali, at 6,190 meters, is the highest mountain in North America, rising mightily above the tundra. Grizzlies, moose and wolves live in the national park, and from Fairbanks you can see the northern lights on some 200 nights a year. The Yukon flows wide and sluggish through the wilderness.

HIGHLIGHTS Denali · Northern lights in Fairbanks · Chena Hot Springs

641 ☐

Aleutian Islands Volcanic Arc & Pribilof Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Alaska / USA*

A volcanic arc 1,900 kilometers long between Alaska and Kamchatka. In Dutch Harbor lie the crab boats from "Deadliest Catch," and on Attu and Kiska Japanese troops landed in 1942 — the only World War II battle on US soil. On the Pribilofs, fur seals and seabirds live in vast numbers.

HIGHLIGHTS Dutch Harbor · Fur seals on St. Paul · Shishaldin volcano

642 ☐

Kodiak Archipelago, Katmai (Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes) & Kenai Peninsula

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *USA*

At Brooks Falls, brown bears stand in the water and catch leaping salmon in midair. In 1912 Novarupta produced the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century, leaving behind the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. On Kodiak live the largest brown bears in the world, and in the Kenai Fjords glaciers calve into the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Bears at Brooks Falls · Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes · Kenai Fjords

643 ☐

Canada: Yukon River Basin, Klondike & Kluane Icefields

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Yukon*

In 1896, the great gold rush broke out on the Klondike, and Dawson City still looks like a gold-digger town today. In Kluane National Park stands Mount Logan, Canada's highest mountain, surrounded by the largest non-polar ice field on Earth. Prospectors once hauled their gear over the Chilkoot Trail.

HIGHLIGHTS Dawson City · Kluane icefields · Chilkoot Trail

644 ☐

Alaska: Inside Passage, Glacier Bay & Tongass Fjords

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Southeast Alaska / USA*

The Tongass is the largest national forest in the USA, a temperate rainforest on a labyrinth of fjords. In Glacier Bay, glaciers calve into the sea, and humpback whales hunt with bubble nets. Juneau is a capital with no road access, and the ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway link the towns.

HIGHLIGHTS Glacier Bay · Humpback whales · White Pass Railway in Skagway

645 ☐

Haida Gwaii Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Queen Charlotte Islands / BC, Canada*

The "Galápagos of the North" is home to the Haida, whose totem poles at SGang Gwaay, a World Heritage Site, are slowly sinking back into the forest. Gwaii Haanas National Park protects rainforest, coast and sea all at once. Reachable by ferry from Prince Rupert or by flight.

HIGHLIGHTS SGang Gwaay · Gwaii Haanas · Haida culture

646 ☐

Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Pacific Temperate Rainforest / BC, Canada*

In Tofino you surf in the Pacific and watch storms in winter, and the West Coast Trail is one of the toughest coastal hikes in the world. Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, seems more British than England. Orcas roam the Johnstone Strait, and ancient Douglas firs stand in Cathedral Grove.

HIGHLIGHTS Tofino · Orcas in Johnstone Strait · West Coast Trail

647 ☐

Canada: Coast Mountains & Fraser River Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *British Columbia*

The Sea-to-Sky Highway leads past the granite monolith of Stawamus Chief to Whistler, the largest ski area in North America. In the Great Bear Rainforest lives the white spirit bear, a color variant of the black bear. The Fraser squeezes through a narrow gorge at Hell's Gate.

HIGHLIGHTS Sea-to-Sky Highway · Spirit bears · Whistler

648 ☐

Greater Vancouver Lower Mainland Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Canada*

Mountains, sea and glass towers: Vancouver's setting is as spectacular as that of hardly any other large city. Stanley Park is larger than Central Park, and markets and artists crowd Granville Island. Because of its many film productions, the city is known as "Hollywood North."

HIGHLIGHTS Stanley Park · Granville Island · Capilano Suspension Bridge

649 ☐

Point Roberts

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *US Pene-Exclave on the Tsawwassen Peninsula below 49° N*

A tip of the USA south of the 49th parallel on the Tsawwassen Peninsula, reachable by land only through Canada. Anyone going from Point Roberts to an American school passes two borders twice a day. Canadians come to fill up and collect parcels, and orcas swim past the lighthouse park.

HIGHLIGHTS Border crossing · Lighthouse Marine Park · Orcas

650 Canada: Okanagan Semi-Arid Valley & Columbia Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *BC*

Near Osoyoos lies Canada's pocket desert with cacti and rattlesnakes, grapevines grow along Okanagan Lake, and the lake monster Ogopogo is said to dwell in it. The Columbia Mountains with the Selkirks are a heli-skiing paradise, and at Rogers Pass snow piles up meters high.

HIGHLIGHTS Wineries on Okanagan Lake · Osoyoos Desert · Rogers Pass

651 Canadian Rocky Mountains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Banff, Jasper, Yoho & Robson / AB & BC*

Banff became Canada's first national park in 1885, and Lake Louise and Moraine Lake gleam in an unreal turquoise. The Icefields Parkway is considered one of the most beautiful roads in the world, and at the Columbia Icefield you can walk on the Athabasca Glacier. The Burgess Shale in Yoho holds world-famous fossils.

HIGHLIGHTS Moraine Lake · Icefields Parkway · Athabasca Glacier

652 Greater Calgary Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Alberta / Canada*

The city of cowboys and oil billions at the foot of the Rockies. Every July, the Calgary Stampede transforms the city into the "Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth," with rodeo and chuckwagon races. In winter, warm chinook winds can raise the temperature by 20 degrees within hours.

HIGHLIGHTS Calgary Stampede · Calgary Tower · 1988 Olympic Park

653 Canadian Prairies & Badlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Saskatchewan Basin & Dinosaur Provincial Park*

Wheat fields to the horizon, grain elevators and an endless sky. Dinosaur Provincial Park holds some of the richest dinosaur fossil sites in the world, and in Drumheller the Royal Tyrrell Museum displays their skeletons. In Grasslands National Park, prairie dogs live beneath one of the darkest night skies in Canada.

HIGHLIGHTS Dinosaur Provincial Park · Royal Tyrrell Museum · Grasslands National Park

654 Churchill & Western Hudson Bay Polar Bear Tundra

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

POLAR & ICE *Manitoba / Canada*

The polar bear capital of the world: In October and November, hundreds of bears wait on the shore for Hudson Bay to freeze. In summer, thousands of belugas swim in the river mouth, and in winter the northern lights dance. Churchill can only be reached by train or plane — there is no road.

HIGHLIGHTS Polar bear tundra buggy · Belugas in the Churchill River · Northern lights

655 ☐ **Hudson Bay Lowlands & James Bay Muskeg Wetlands** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Canada*

One of the largest wetlands on Earth, an endless muskeg of bog and peat. Polar Bear Provincial Park is the most remote park in Ontario. The Polar Bear Express train takes you to Moosonee and the Cree community of Moose Factory on James Bay.

HIGHLIGHTS Polar Bear Express · Moose Factory · Muskeg

656 ☐ **Canadian Shield** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Laurentian Boreal Forest & Thousands of Lakes / ON & QC*

The ancient heart of North America, polished smooth by glaciers and strewn with millions of lakes. In Algonquin Park you paddle by canoe from lake to lake, with loons calling at dusk. The Laurentians with Mont-Tremblant and the Saguenay Fjord show the wild side of Québec.

HIGHLIGHTS Canoeing in Algonquin Park · Saguenay Fjord · Indian summer

VI · 2 TILES 657–685

EASTERN CANADA & THE EASTERN USA: EAST COAST, MIDWEST & SOUTH

From Newfoundland to the Florida Keys and from the Atlantic to the Great Plains. Here lie the old cities of the East Coast, the Appalachians, the great rivers and swamps of the South — and several pieces of the USA that can only be reached overland through Canada.

657 ☐ **Newfoundland & Labrador** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Gros Morne & Torngat Mountains / Canada*

In Gros Morne National Park, rock from the Earth's mantle lies exposed at the surface, and at L'Anse aux Meadows the Vikings landed around the year 1000, long before Columbus. Icebergs from Greenland drift through "Iceberg Alley," and in St. John's Marconi received the first transatlantic radio signal in 1901. Newfoundland has its own time zone.

HIGHLIGHTS L'Anse aux Meadows · Tablelands in Gros Morne · Iceberg Alley

658 ☐ **Saint-Pierre and Miquelon** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *French Overseas Collectivity off Newfoundland*

The last remnant of New France: two small islands off Newfoundland that belong to France — with the euro, baguettes and French gendarmes. The ferry from Fortune takes around an hour and a half. On Île aux Marins stands an abandoned fishing village.

HIGHLIGHTS Île aux Marins · French bakeries · Ferry from Fortune

659 ☐

Canadian Maritimes & Gulf of St. Lawrence

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Nova Scotia, PEI, Bay of Fundy & Campobello*

In the Bay of Fundy, the tides rise up to 16 meters, the highest in the world. The Cabot Trail circles the highlands of Cape Breton, the lighthouse of Peggy's Cove defies the Atlantic, and the red earth glows on Prince Edward Island. Campobello Island is linked to Canada only by ferry and to the USA by bridge.

HIGHLIGHTS Hopewell Rocks · Cabot Trail · Peggy's Cove

660 ☐

Greater Montreal & St. Lawrence River Valley

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Quebec / Canada*

Montréal is one of the largest French-speaking cities in the world, with an underground city of passages and shops and Mont Royal at its center. Québec is the only walled city north of Mexico, and near Tadoussac belugas and blue whales surface in the St. Lawrence.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Québec · Mont Royal · Whales at Tadoussac

661 ☐

Alburgh Tongue & Province Point

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *US Lake Champlain Pene-Exclaves via Canada*

Two curiosities on Lake Champlain: The Alburgh peninsula belongs to Vermont but by land is attached only to Canada — only bridges across the lake lead to Vermont and New York. Province Point is a tiny tip of the USA that can only be reached overland from Québec.

HIGHLIGHTS Boundary stone on the 45th parallel · Lake Champlain · Province Point

662 ☐

Greater Boston & Eastern New England Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Massachusetts / USA*

Here the American Revolution began with the Boston Tea Party of 1773, and the Freedom Trail leads to its sites. Harvard and MIT lie in Cambridge. Along the coast lie Cape Cod, Salem and, in Maine, Acadia National Park; in the fall the forests blaze in flame colors.

HIGHLIGHTS Freedom Trail · Harvard · Acadia National Park

663 ☐

Greater New York Tri-State Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *USA*

The city that never sleeps: Manhattan's skyline, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park and a subway that runs around the clock. Hardly any city in the world speaks so many languages. From the Brooklyn Bridge to Times Square, New York is the center of gravity of the Western world.

HIGHLIGHTS Brooklyn Bridge · Statue of Liberty · Central Park

664 ☐

Greater Washington D.C.–Baltimore (Chesapeake) Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *USA*

The Capitol, the White House and the Lincoln Memorial stand on the National Mall, where the museums of the Smithsonian are free to enter. Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the USA, famous for its blue crabs. Baltimore and Annapolis bring harbor flair.

HIGHLIGHTS National Mall · Smithsonian museums · Crabs in Baltimore

665 ☐

Appalachian Mountains Spine

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *White Mountains, Shenandoah & Great Smoky Mountains / USA*

An ancient range, older than the Atlantic. The Appalachian Trail runs around 3,500 kilometers from Georgia to Maine, and the Great Smoky Mountains are the most visited national park in the USA. On Mount Washington, wind gusts of over 370 km/h were measured in 1934. Bluegrass and the Blue Ridge Parkway define the picture.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Smoky Mountains · Blue Ridge Parkway · Mount Washington

666 ☐

Outer Banks Barrier Islands & Atlantic Coastal Plain

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Carolinas to Georgia / USA*

On the dunes of Kitty Hawk, the Wright brothers achieved the first powered flight in 1903. The Outer Banks are a chain of barrier islands with wild horses and lighthouses on the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." Charleston and Savannah preserve their old squares, and on the Sea Islands lives the culture of the Gullah.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Hatteras · Wild horses of Corolla · Old Town of Savannah

667 ☐

Greater Atlanta Piedmont Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Georgia / USA*

The capital of the South and the cradle of the civil rights movement — Martin Luther King was born here. Atlanta has one of the busiest airports in the world and the headquarters of Coca-Cola and CNN. On the edge of the city rises the granite monolith of Stone Mountain.

HIGHLIGHTS Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park · World of Coca-Cola · Stone Mountain

668 ☐

Florida Peninsula Karst Springs & Everglades Sawgrass Marshes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *USA*

The Everglades are a "River of Grass," the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles live side by side. Manatees winter in the crystal-clear karst springs, and rockets lift off into space from Cape Canaveral. Orlando is the theme park capital of the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Airboat in the Everglades · Manatees in Crystal River · Kennedy Space Center

669 ☐

Greater Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Florida / USA*

In Ybor City, cigars were once rolled by Cuban workers, and St. Petersburg has one of the largest Dalí museums in the world. The Sunshine Skyway Bridge soars over the bay, and white sand gleams on Clearwater Beach.

HIGHLIGHTS Dalí Museum · Ybor City · Sunshine Skyway Bridge

670 ☐

Greater Miami & Gold Coast Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Florida / USA*

South Beach has the largest collection of Art Deco buildings in the world, and in Little Havana people play dominoes and drink café cubano. The Port of Miami is the cruise capital of the world, and the Wynwood Walls are an open-air museum of street art.

HIGHLIGHTS Art Deco District · Little Havana · Wynwood Walls

671 ☐

Florida Keys Coral Cay Chain & Dry Tortugas

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *USA*

The Overseas Highway hops across 42 bridges from island to island to Key West, from where it is only 145 kilometers to Cuba. In Hemingway's house live cats with six toes. Far out lies Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, one of the largest brick structures in the Americas.

HIGHLIGHTS Seven Mile Bridge · Key West · Fort Jefferson

672 ☐

Greater Toronto & Golden Horseshoe Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Ontario / Canada*

One of the most multicultural cities in the world — around half of its residents were born abroad. The CN Tower rises 553 meters, and on its EdgeWalk you walk around the outside on a harness. The Toronto Islands offer beaches with skyline views.

HIGHLIGHTS CN Tower · Distillery District · Toronto Islands

673 ☐

Niagara Falls & Niagara Escarpment

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *US/Canada Border*

The Horseshoe Falls plunge over 50 meters, with more water pouring over them than at any other waterfall in North America. The boat trip into the spray is a must. The Niagara Escarpment runs as a limestone ridge to the Bruce Peninsula, accompanied by Canada's oldest long-distance trail.

HIGHLIGHTS Boat trip into the spray · Ice wine of Niagara-on-the-Lake · Bruce Trail

674 ☐

Greater Detroit-Windsor Automotive Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Michigan / USA*

The "Motor City," where Ford, General Motors and Chrysler shaped the automobile age and Motown supplied the soundtrack. After its decline, Detroit is experiencing a renaissance. A curiosity: Windsor lies south of Detroit — here Canada is to the south of the USA.

HIGHLIGHTS Henry Ford Museum · Motown Museum · Ambassador Bridge

675 ☐

Ohio River Basin & Mammoth Cave Karst System

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Midwest/South / USA*

Mammoth Cave is the longest known cave system in the world, with over 680 surveyed kilometers. Bourbon matures in Kentucky, and the fastest horses gallop at the Kentucky Derby. Nashville on the Cumberland is the capital of country music.

HIGHLIGHTS Mammoth Cave · Bourbon Trail · Honky-tonks in Nashville

676 ☐

Greater Chicago Lakefront Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Illinois / USA*

The skyscraper was invented here, and the architecture boat tour on the Chicago River shows the history of high-rises. The river has flowed backward since 1900 — engineers reversed it. Deep-dish pizza, blues and beaches on Lake Michigan make the city a powerhouse of the Midwest.

HIGHLIGHTS Architecture boat tour · Cloud Gate · Blues clubs

677 ☐

Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul (Twin Cities) & Upper Mississippi Headwaters

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *USA*

The Twin Cities in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes" have the Mall of America and a network of glazed bridges that keep you dry in winter. In Itasca State Park the Mississippi rises, so narrow you can walk across on stones. In the north begins the canoe wilderness of the Boundary Waters.

HIGHLIGHTS Source of the Mississippi · Boundary Waters · Mall of America

678 ☐

Northwest Angle

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *US Exclave on Lake of the Woods via Manitoba*

The northernmost point of the contiguous USA lies on Lake of the Woods, and it can only be reached by land through Manitoba. The curiosity arose in 1783 through a faulty map. Around a hundred people live here, and at the border you report in by video phone.

HIGHLIGHTS Border check by video phone · Lake of the Woods · Northernmost point of the Lower 48

679 ☐

Missouri River Basin, Black Hills & Badlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Dakotas to Missouri / USA*

At Mount Rushmore, four presidents gaze out of the granite, and next door the giant Crazy Horse Memorial has been under construction since 1948. The Badlands are a labyrinth of striped rocks, and bison herds roam Custer State Park. Lewis and Clark followed the Missouri on their expedition west.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Rushmore · Badlands National Park · Bison in Custer State Park

680 ☐

North American Great Plains & Flint Hills Tallgrass Prairie

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Tornado Alley / USA*

The heart of North America: endless prairie through which tornadoes tear in spring — storm chasers call it "Tornado Alley." The Flint Hills hold the largest remaining remnant of the tallgrass prairie that once covered half the continent. Settler wagon trains on the Oregon Trail passed Chimney Rock.

HIGHLIGHTS Storm chasing · Tallgrass Prairie Preserve · Chimney Rock

681 ☐

Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Ozarks & Mississippi River Delta

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Louisiana Bayou / USA*

New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz, Mardi Gras is celebrated in the French Quarter, and Cajun culture and alligators live in the bayous. Memphis has Graceland and the blues, and the Mississippi Delta is the origin of both. In the Ozarks, the Buffalo River winds through rocky gorges.

HIGHLIGHTS French Quarter · Bayou tour · Graceland

682 ☐

Greater Houston & Galveston Bay Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Texas / USA*

"Houston, we have a problem": Moon landings were controlled from the Johnson Space Center. Houston is the energy capital of the world and home to the largest medical center on Earth. In Galveston, a hurricane in 1900 claimed the most lives of any natural disaster in US history.

HIGHLIGHTS Space Center Houston · Museum District · Galveston

683 ☐

Greater Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Texas / USA*

John F. Kennedy was shot at Dealey Plaza in 1963, as the museum on the sixth floor recounts. In the Stockyards of Fort Worth, cowboys drive longhorn cattle through the streets twice a day. DFW Airport is larger than Manhattan.

HIGHLIGHTS Sixth Floor Museum · Fort Worth Stockyards · AT&T Stadium

684 Edwards Plateau (Texas Hill Country) & Llano Estacado

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Texas / USA*

The Texas of hills, springs and music: Austin is the live music capital of the world, San Antonio has the Alamo and the River Walk. Fredericksburg cherishes its German heritage, and the pink granite dome of Enchanted Rock rises above the land. On the Llano Estacado opens Palo Duro Canyon.

HIGHLIGHTS Live music in Austin · The Alamo · Palo Duro Canyon

685 Rio Grande Basin, Big Bend Canyons & White Sands Gypsum Dunes

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *TX & NM / USA*

In Big Bend National Park, the Rio Grande cuts Santa Elena Canyon into the border with Mexico. White Sands is the largest gypsum dune field in the world, and in Carlsbad Caverns an underground hall the size of a cathedral opens up. Santa Fe is an adobe art city, and Taos Pueblo has been inhabited for around a thousand years.

HIGHLIGHTS White Sands · Santa Elena Canyon · Taos Pueblo

VI · 3 TILES 686–705

WESTERN USA, THE PACIFIC COAST & HAWAII

The West is the America of great landscapes: Yellowstone, the Colorado Plateau, the deserts of the Southwest, the Sierra Nevada and the volcanoes of the Cascades. Then there are the metropolises of the West Coast and the islands of Hawaii in the middle of the Pacific.

686 Greater Yellowstone Supervolcano & Grand Teton Ecosystem

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *WY, MT, ID / USA*

In 1872, Yellowstone became the first national park in the world. It is home to around half of all the geysers on Earth, including Old Faithful, and the rainbow-colored Grand Prismatic Spring — all above a huge magma chamber. Bison, wolves and grizzlies roam the valleys, and the Tetons rise without foothills.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Faithful · Grand Prismatic Spring · Bison in Lamar Valley

687 Southern Rocky Mountains

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Colorado Fourteeners & Continental Divide / USA*

Colorado has 58 peaks over 14,000 feet, and Mount Elbert is the highest in the Rockies. Trail Ridge Road crosses the Continental Divide above 3,700 meters, and Aspen and Telluride are legendary mountain towns. In Great Sand Dunes National Park, the highest dunes in North America pile up before snowy mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS Trail Ridge Road · Great Sand Dunes · Pikes Peak

688 ☐

Colorado Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *Grand Canyon, Zion, Moab Arches & Monument Valley / UT & AZ*

The Grand Canyon is almost two kilometers deep and exposes two billion years of Earth's history. Zion, Bryce with its hoodoos, the more than 2,000 rock arches of Arches National Park, the buttes of Monument Valley and Antelope Canyon form the greatest stone landscape on Earth. Mesa Verde holds the cliff dwellings of the ancestors of the Pueblo peoples.

HIGHLIGHTS Grand Canyon · Monument Valley · Arches National Park

689 ☐

Great Basin Endorheic Desert & Bonneville Salt Flats

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Nevada & Western Utah / USA*

A basin with no outlet to the sea, crossed by mountain ranges. Speed records are set on the Bonneville Salt Flats, and the Great Salt Lake is the largest salt lake in the Western Hemisphere. In the White Mountains and Great Basin National Park grow bristlecone pines, among the oldest trees on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Bonneville Salt Flats · Bristlecone pines · Loneliest Road

690 ☐

Death Valley Tectonic Graben

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

EXTREME POINT *Badwater Basin – Lowest & Hottest Point in North America*

At Badwater Basin lies the lowest point in North America, 86 meters below sea level. In 1913, 56.7 degrees Celsius was measured at Furnace Creek, the highest air temperature ever officially recorded. On the Racetrack Playa stones wander across the ground, and after rare rains the desert blooms.

HIGHLIGHTS Badwater Basin · Zabriskie Point · Sailing stones

691 ☐

Mojave Desert & Joshua Tree Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *Southeastern California & Southern Nevada / USA*

Joshua trees stretch their arms into the desert sky, and granite boulders pile up in Joshua Tree National Park. The Mojave is also home to Las Vegas, a city of light in the desert. The Kelso Dunes hum in the wind, and ghost towns line Route 66.

HIGHLIGHTS Joshua Tree National Park · Kelso Dunes · Route 66

692 ☐

Lower Colorado River Corridor & Salton Sink

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Imperial Valley / USA*

The Salton Sea was created by a canal breach in 1905 and is today California's largest lake — surrounded by abandoned beach towns such as Bombay Beach. Salvation Mountain and Slab City are places for dropouts. Because of water withdrawals, the Colorado now hardly reaches the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Salvation Mountain · Bombay Beach · Imperial Valley

693 ☐

Sonoran Desert

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

DESERT & ARID LAND *Saguaro Forests of Southern Arizona / USA*

Only here grows the saguaro, the giant cactus of Western movies. They stand by the tens of thousands in Saguaro National Park near Tucson, and metropolitan Phoenix lies in the middle of the desert. Tombstone recalls Wyatt Earp, Biosphere 2 an experiment with an artificial world.

HIGHLIGHTS Saguaro National Park · Organ Pipe Cactus · Tombstone

694 ☐

Greater San Diego Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *California / USA*

A perfect climate, beaches and Balboa Park with one of the most famous zoos in the world. In La Jolla, sea lions doze on the rocks, and the aircraft carrier USS Midway is a museum. The border crossing to Tijuana is among the busiest in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Balboa Park · Sea lions in La Jolla · USS Midway

695 ☐

Greater Los Angeles Basin Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Southern California / USA*

The dream factory of Hollywood, Griffith Observatory above the sea of lights, beaches from Santa Monica to Malibu and freeways without end. Around 18 million people live in the metropolitan area, which was hit by devastating wildfires in 2025 and will host the Olympic Games in 2028.

HIGHLIGHTS Griffith Observatory · Getty Center · Venice Beach

696 ☐

Sierra Nevada Granite Fault Block

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Yosemite, Sequoia, Lake Tahoe & Mt. Whitney / USA*

In Yosemite Valley rise El Capitan and Half Dome, and waterfalls plunge hundreds of meters. In the groves of giant sequoias stands General Sherman, the largest tree on Earth by volume. Mount Whitney is the highest summit in the Lower 48, and Lake Tahoe one of the clearest lakes in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Yosemite Valley · Giant sequoias · Lake Tahoe

697 ☐

California Central Coast, Big Sur Cliffs & Channel Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *USA*

Highway 1 clings to the cliffs of Big Sur, and Bixby Bridge spans a gorge. In Monterey Bay sea otters float on their backs in the kelp, and elephant seals lie on the coast. The Channel Islands are known as the “Galápagos of North America.”

HIGHLIGHTS Bixby Bridge · Sea otters in Monterey · Channel Islands

698 ☐

San Francisco Bay Area & Silicon Valley Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *California / USA*

The Golden Gate Bridge in the fog, cable cars on steep hills, the prison island of Alcatraz. To the south lies Silicon Valley, where garage companies changed the world. In the north stand the redwoods of Muir Woods, and behind them the vineyards of Napa and Sonoma.

HIGHLIGHTS Golden Gate Bridge · Alcatraz · Muir Woods

699 ☐

Northern California & Oregon Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Coastal Redwoods & Lost Coast / USA*

Here grow the tallest trees on Earth: coast redwoods of over 110 meters. The Avenue of the Giants leads right through them, and the Lost Coast is so steep that no road opens it up. On the Oregon coast, Haystack Rock rises from the surf, and at Thor's Well the sea seems to pour into a hole.

HIGHLIGHTS Redwood National Park · Lost Coast · Haystack Rock

700 ☐

Cascade Volcanic Arc

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mt. Shasta, Crater Lake, Mt. Hood & Mt. Rainier / USA*

A chain of volcanoes from California to Canada: Mount Rainier is the most heavily glaciated peak in the Lower 48, and Mount St. Helens exploded in 1980. Crater Lake fills the caldera of Mount Mazama and, at 594 meters, is the deepest lake in the USA.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater Lake · Mount St. Helens · Mount Rainier

701 ☐

Columbia River Basalt Plateau, Gorge, Palouse & Snake River Plain

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *WA, OR, ID / USA*

A landscape of basalt floods, gouged out by Ice Age megafloods: The Channeled Scablands with Dry Falls once held the largest waterfall on Earth. In the Columbia Gorge plunge the Multnomah Falls, and Hells Canyon is the deepest gorge in North America. The Palouse rolls in gentle wheat hills.

HIGHLIGHTS Multnomah Falls · Hells Canyon · Craters of the Moon

702 ☐

Greater Seattle–Puget Sound & Olympic Peninsula Rainforest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Washington / USA*

Seattle with the Space Needle and Pike Place Market, where the first Starbucks opened in 1971. Ferries crisscross Puget Sound, and orcas hunt off the San Juan Islands. On the Olympic Peninsula, the Hoh Rain Forest is a temperate jungle of moss and giant trees.

HIGHLIGHTS Pike Place Market · Hoh Rain Forest · Orcas of the San Juan Islands

703 ☐ **Hawaii: Big Island Active Shield Volcanoes** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mauna Loa, Mauna Kea & Kilauea / USA*

Mauna Kea, measured from the seabed, is the highest mountain on Earth, with world-class telescopes on its summit. Mauna Loa is one of the largest volcanoes on Earth by volume, and Kīlauea keeps hurling lava fountains into the sky. Off Kona, mantas dance at night in divers' lights.

HIGHLIGHTS Kīlauea · Observatories on Mauna Kea · Mantas off Kona

704 ☐ **Hawaii: Oahu, Maui (Haleakala), Molokai & Lanai Central Group** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *USA*

Waikīkī, Pearl Harbor and the monster waves of the North Shore on Oʻahu. On Maui, the sun rises above the clouds over the crater of Haleakalā, and the Road to Hāna winds through rainforest. Lahaina burned down in 2023, and on Molokaʻi the highest sea cliffs in the world drop into the ocean.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise on Haleakalā · Pearl Harbor · North Shore

705 ☐ **Hawaii: Kauai (Na Pali Coast & Waimea Canyon) & Niihau** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *USA*

The oldest of the main islands is the "Garden Isle": the Nā Pali Coast with its green pleated cliffs, Waimea Canyon as the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific" and one of the rainiest places on Earth. Next door lies Niʻihau, the privately owned "Forbidden Island," where Hawaiian is the everyday language — usually only the Visibility Rule remains.

HIGHLIGHTS Nā Pali Coast · Waimea Canyon · View of Niʻihau

VI · 4 TILES 706–733

MEXICO & THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ISTHMUS

Deserts, canyons and volcanoes in Mexico, Maya ruins in the rainforest and a narrow land bridge between two oceans. The journey ends in the Darién, the only gap in the Pan-American Highway — and one of the most dangerous tiles on the entire list.

706 ☐ **Mexico: Baja California Peninsula & Sea of Cortez Islands** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA

Jacques Cousteau called the gulf the "Aquarium of the World": Sea lions play around Espíritu Santo Island, and in San Ignacio Lagoon gray whale mothers let themselves be stroked from boats. At the rock arch of Cabo San Lucas the peninsula ends, and in the Sierra de San Francisco rock paintings are a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Gray whales of San Ignacio · Sea lions at Espíritu Santo · El Arco

707 Mexico: Revillagigedo Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Socorro Pelagic Seamounts*

The "Galápagos of North America" lies around 400 kilometers offshore. Giant mantas seek out contact with divers here, humpback whales sing underwater, and sharks circle at Roca Partida. Reachable only by dive safari after about a day at sea — one of the largest marine protected areas in North America.

HIGHLIGHTS Giant mantas · Roca Partida · Humpback whale song

708 Mexico: Sonoran Desert South

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Pinacate Volcanic Shield & Altar Dunes*

A volcanic field with mighty explosion craters such as El Elegante, alongside the largest active dune field in North America, the Gran Desierto de Altar — together a World Heritage Site. Apollo astronauts trained here for the Moon landing, so alien is the landscape of black lava and pale sand. On the Gulf of California lies the resort of Puerto Peñasco.

HIGHLIGHTS El Elegante crater · Star dunes of the Altar · Puerto Peñasco

709 Mexico: Copper Canyon System

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Barrancas del Cobre / Chihuahua*

A system of six canyons, in places deeper than the Grand Canyon. The El Chepe train runs from Chihuahua to the Pacific through 86 tunnels and over 37 bridges. The Rarámuri are famous as runners who cover enormous distances barefoot or in sandals.

HIGHLIGHTS El Chepe train · Rarámuri villages · Divisadero cable car

710 Mexico: Sierra Madre Occidental & Chihuahuan Desert Bolsón de Mapimí

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND

The largest desert in North America, with the mysterious "Zone of Silence" in the Bolsón de Mapimí. In the spring pools of Cuatro Ciénegas, stromatolites live as they did billions of years ago, and in the Naica mine the largest crystals on Earth grew.

HIGHLIGHTS Pozas of Cuatro Ciénegas · Zona del Silencio · Crystal Cave of Naica

711 Greater Monterrey & Sierra Madre Oriental

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Nuevo León / Mexico*

Mexico's industrial capital lies before the spectacular backdrop of Cerro de la Silla. In Huasteca Canyon and at Potrero Chico, people from around the world climb limestone walls, and the Grutas de García are dripstone palaces inside the mountain. To eat there is cabrito, grilled kid goat.

HIGHLIGHTS Cerro de la Silla · Climbing at Potrero Chico · Grutas de García

712 Mexico: Central Altiplano

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Bajío Silver Highlands & Huasteca Potosina*

The silver cities of Guanajuato and Zacatecas, San Miguel de Allende and Querétaro are colonial treasure chests. In the Huasteca Potosina turquoise waterfalls tumble, and from the Sótano de las Golondrinas swarms of swifts fly out of a 370-meter shaft each morning. In Xilitla, an eccentric built a surreal jungle garden.

HIGHLIGHTS Guanajuato · Tamul Waterfall · Las Pozas in Xilitla

713 Greater Guadalajara & Tequila Jalisco Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Mexico*

The home of mariachi, charrería and tequila: The blue agave fields around the town of Tequila are a World Heritage Site. Guadalajara has its cathedral, markets and the frescoes of Orozco, and artisans work in Tlaquepaque. Lake Chapala is the largest lake in Mexico.

HIGHLIGHTS Agave fields of Tequila · Hospicio Cabañas · Plaza de los Mariachis

714 Greater Mexico City

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Valley of Mexico & Teotihuacan Basin*

One of the largest cities on Earth, built on the lakebed of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan — and it sinks a little every year. The Zócalo, the Templo Mayor, Frida Kahlo's Blue House and the canals of Xochimilco lie in the city, the pyramids of Teotihuacan in the same basin.

HIGHLIGHTS Teotihuacan · Xochimilco · Casa Azul

715 Greater Puebla–Tlaxcala Basin & Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Popocatépetl & Pico de Orizaba*

Pico de Orizaba, at 5,636 meters, is the highest volcano in North America, and Popocatépetl constantly smokes above the highlands. In Cholula stands the largest pyramid in the world by volume, crowned by a church. Puebla is the home of Talavera tiles and mole poblano.

HIGHLIGHTS Pyramid of Cholula · Popocatépetl · Talavera in Puebla

716 Mexico: Sierra Madre del Sur, Oaxaca Valleys & Pacific Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Guerrero/Oaxaca*

Oaxaca is Mexico's culinary heart, with seven kinds of mole, mezcal and the Zapotec city of Monte Albán. At Hierve el Agua, limestone deposits look like petrified waterfalls, and on the Day of the Dead the cemeteries glow. On the coast you surf in Puerto Escondido, and in Acapulco cliff divers leap into the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Monte Albán · Hierve el Agua · Día de Muertos

717 ☐

Mexico: Chiapas Highlands, Sumidero Canyon & Lacandon Jungle

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Palenque*

The Sumidero Canyon cuts up to a thousand meters deep into the highlands. In San Cristóbal de las Casas and San Juan Chamula, Maya traditions live on. In the rainforest lie Palenque, Yaxchilán and Bonampak, the latter two reachable only by boat on the Usumacinta.

HIGHLIGHTS Palenque · Sumidero Canyon · San Juan Chamula

718 ☐

Mexico: Yucatán Peninsula Cenote Karst Ring & Campeche Calakmul Forest

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Around the Chicxulub crater lies a ring of thousands of cenotes, limestone sinkholes with crystal-clear groundwater. Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and the ruins of Tulum on the cliff are Maya wonders of the world, and Calakmul hides deep in the jungle. Mérida and Valladolid are colonial gems.

HIGHLIGHTS Cenote diving · Chichén Itzá · Calakmul

719 ☐

Mexico: Cozumel, Isla Mujeres & Holbox

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Mesoamerican Reef North*

The north of the Mesoamerican Reef: Off Cozumel, divers drift with the current along sheer walls, and off Isla Mujeres lies an underwater museum with hundreds of sculptures. From June to September whale sharks pass off Holbox, a car-free island with glowing plankton.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale sharks off Holbox · Palancar Reef · MUSA underwater museum

720 ☐

Belize: Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, Great Blue Hole, Cayes & Maya Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA

The Great Blue Hole is a perfectly round underwater sinkhole more than 300 meters across, the centerpiece of the second-largest barrier reef on Earth. On Caye Caulker the motto is “go slow.” In the Actun Tunichil Muknal cave lie Maya sacrifices encased in limestone, and the Cockscomb Basin became the world’s first jaguar reserve.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Blue Hole · Actun Tunichil Muknal · Caye Caulker

721 ☐

Guatemala: Petén Lowland Rainforest Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Tikal & El Mirador*

The temples of Tikal rise above the canopy of a rainforest alive with howler monkeys and toucans. El Mirador with the La Danta pyramid can only be reached after a multi-day jungle trek. Flores is a small island town in Lake Petén Itzá.

HIGHLIGHTS Tikal at sunrise · Trek to El Mirador · Flores

722 ☐

Guatemala: Sierra Madre Volcanic Highlands & Lake Atitlán Caldera

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Lake Atitlán lies in a caldera framed by three volcanoes — for Aldous Huxley, the most beautiful lake in the world. Antigua is a colonial pearl, and from Acatenango you can watch Fuego spew lava at night. Maya textiles glow at the market of Chichicastenango, and turquoise limestone pools at Semuc Champey.

HIGHLIGHTS Acatenango & Fuego · Lake Atitlán · Antigua

723 ☐

El Salvador: Fonseca Gulf & Santa Ana–Izalco Volcanic Chain

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

The smallest country in Central America is full of volcanoes: The crater lake of Santa Ana gleams green, and Izalco was active for almost two centuries, serving sailors as the "Lighthouse of the Pacific." Joya de Cerén is a Maya village preserved by ash. The Pacific waves of El Tunco attract surfers.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater lake of Santa Ana · Joya de Cerén · Surfing in El Tunco

724 ☐

Honduras: Bay Islands Coral Reefs

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Roatán, Utila & Guanaja*

Roatán, Utila and Guanaja lie on the Mesoamerican Reef. Utila is one of the cheapest dive schools in the world and a meeting place for whale sharks, while Roatán tempts with West Bay and sheer walls. On the islands, Caribbean English mixes with the culture of the Garifuna.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale sharks off Utila · West Bay on Roatán · Cayos Cochinos

725 ☐

Honduras: Mosquitia Río Plátano Biosphere & Central Highlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

The Mosquitia is one of the largest rainforests in Central America. Laser scans revealed a lost city here, the legend of the "White City." In the western highlands lies Copán, with the most elaborate stelae and the longest hieroglyphic stairway in the Maya world.

HIGHLIGHTS Ruins of Copán · Río Plátano Biosphere · Lago de Yojoa

726 ☐

Nicaragua: Lake Nicaragua, Ometepe Twin Volcanoes & Masaya Caldera

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Bull sharks live in the fresh water of Lake Nicaragua, and the island of Ometepe consists of two volcanoes. In the crater of Masaya you can see the lava lake glowing at night, and at Cerro Negro you slide down the ash on boards. Granada and León are colorful colonial cities.

HIGHLIGHTS Lava lake of Masaya · Ometepe · Volcano boarding at Cerro Negro

727 ☐

Nicaragua: Corn Islands & Miskito Cays

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Caribbean Shelf*

Nicaragua's Caribbean side is another world: On Big and Little Corn Island people speak Creole English, and healthy reefs lie underwater. The Miskito Cays with their stilt houses in the sea are among the most remote places in the Caribbean.

HIGHLIGHTS Little Corn Island · Stilt houses of the Miskito · Pearl Lagoon

728 ☐

Costa Rica: Central Volcanic Cordillera, Arenal & Monteverde Cloud Forests

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

A country with no army, but with around five percent of the Earth's biodiversity. Arenal is a perfect volcanic cone, and in the cloud forest of Monteverde suspension bridges lead through the treetops and the quetzal puts in an appearance. The Río Celeste glows sky blue, and an acid lake seethes on Poás.

HIGHLIGHTS Hanging bridges in Monteverde · Arenal · Río Celeste

729 ☐

Costa Rica: Osa Peninsula (Corcovado) & Talamanca La Amistad Crest

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

National Geographic called Corcovado National Park the "most biologically intense place on Earth": tapirs, macaws and four species of monkey in a small space. From Cerro Chirripó, Costa Rica's highest mountain, you can see both oceans on a clear day. La Amistad Park reaches all the way into Panama.

HIGHLIGHTS Corcovado · Summit of Chirripó · Bahía Drake

730 ☐

Cocos Island (Costa Rica) & Malpelo Island (Colombia) Pelagic Shark Ridge

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Two rocks in the Pacific that fill divers with awe: Schools of hundreds of hammerhead sharks pass Cocos Island, which Cousteau called "the most beautiful island in the world." Malpelo, a barren basalt rock of Colombia, is a shark hotspot. Both are World Heritage Sites, reachable only by dive safari.

HIGHLIGHTS Hammerhead schools · Dive safari from Puntarenas · Malpelo

731 ☐

Panama: Gulf of Chiriquí, Coiba Island, Barú Volcano & Azuero Peninsula

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA

Coiba was a prison island and is today a marine national park, a World Heritage Site. From Volcán Barú you can see both oceans, and around Boquete grows Geisha coffee, one of the most expensive in the world. The folklore of Panama lives on the Azuero Peninsula, and humpback whales leap in the Gulf of Chiriquí.

HIGHLIGHTS Coiba National Park · Summit of Barú · Coffee in Boquete

732 ☐ **Panama: Guna Yala (San Blas Archipelago) & Bocas del Toro Caribbean Coast** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Around 365 islands in the autonomous territory of the Guna, who cherish their culture and their colorful molas. Sailboats carry travelers from here to Colombia. In Bocas del Toro, stilt houses stand over the water, and red poison dart frogs glow in the forest.

HIGHLIGHTS San Blas Islands · Molas of the Guna · Bocas del Toro

733 ☐ **Panama / Colombia: Darién Gap** ◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Serranía del Darién Roadless Jungle Barrier*

The only gap in the Pan-American Highway: around a hundred kilometers of trackless jungle between Panama and Colombia. Emberá and Guna live here, and harpy eagles hunt in the treetops. In recent years, hundreds of thousands of migrants have crossed the Darién in life-threatening conditions. One of the most dangerous tiles on the list.

HIGHLIGHTS Darién National Park · Emberá villages · Harpy eagles

VI · 5 TILES 734–768

BERMUDA & THE CARIBBEAN ISLAND ARC

From Bermuda across the Bahamas and the Greater Antilles to the Lesser Antilles and the islands off South America. Politically, the Caribbean is a mosaic of states and overseas territories; GREAT1001 gives every true island world its place without artificially inflating it.

734 ☐ **Bermuda Coral Seamount Archipelago** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *North Atlantic / UK*

An archipelago of around 180 islands on an extinct seamount in the Atlantic. Pink sand from crushed foraminifera, turquoise bays and over 300 shipwrecks on the reefs. St. George's is the oldest continuously inhabited English town in the New World — and those so inclined wear Bermuda shorts with knee socks.

HIGHLIGHTS Horseshoe Bay · Crystal Caves · St. George's

735 ☐ **Bahamas: Northern & Central Banks** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Grand Bahama, Bimini, Nassau, Andros & Exuma*

In the Exumas, pigs swim in turquoise water, and off Andros lies one of the largest barrier reefs in the world with dozens of blue holes. Bimini was Hemingway's fishing ground, and Nassau is the capital and a cruise port. The shallow water of the Bahama Banks gleams even from space.

HIGHLIGHTS Swimming pigs · Blue holes of Andros · Thunderball Grotto

736 ☐

Bahamas: Southern Out Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *San Salvador, Acklins & Great Inagua*

Columbus probably landed on San Salvador in 1492. Great Inagua is home to the largest flamingo colony in the Caribbean, and off Long Island lies Dean's Blue Hole, one of the deepest blue holes in the world. Acklins and Crooked Island are grounds for fly fishers — hardly any tourists.

HIGHLIGHTS Flamingos on Great Inagua · Dean's Blue Hole · Columbus Monument

737 ☐

Turks and Caicos Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Lucayan Archipelago South / UK*

Grace Bay is considered one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Off Grand Turk a sheer wall drops into the deep, and from January to April humpback whales pass Salt Cay. On Middle Caicos lie caves in which traces of the Taíno were found. A British overseas territory using the US dollar.

HIGHLIGHTS Grace Bay · Humpback whales at Salt Cay · Wall of Grand Turk

738 ☐

Greater Havana Metropolitan Area

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Cuba*

Habana Vieja is a World Heritage Site, and 1950s street cruisers roll along the Malecón. Rum, cigars and son, Hemingway's Finca Vigía and in the evening the cannon shot at La Cabaña fortress. The economic crisis with its power cuts shapes daily life, and makes Havana a city in a state of emergency.

HIGHLIGHTS Habana Vieja · Malecón · Cañonazo at La Cabaña

739 ☐

Cuba: Western Viñales Mogote Karst, Guanahacabibes & Isla de la Juventud

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

In the Viñales Valley, forested limestone cones, the mogotes, rise from tobacco fields. On the Guanahacabibes Peninsula sea turtles lay their eggs, and at María la Gorda you dive along sheer walls. On the Isla de la Juventud, Fidel Castro was held in the Presidio Modelo prison.

HIGHLIGHTS Viñales Valley · Diving at María la Gorda · Presidio Modelo

740 ☐

Cuba: Central Escambray, Jardines de la Reina & Eastern Sierra Maestra

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Trinidad is a colonial sugar town, a World Heritage Site like the Valley of the Sugar Mills. The Jardines de la Reina are among the healthiest reefs in the Caribbean, full of sharks. In the Sierra Maestra stands the headquarters of the revolutionaries, and Santiago de Cuba is the cradle of son and carnival.

HIGHLIGHTS Trinidad · Reefs of the Jardines de la Reina · Comandancia de la Plata

741 Cayman Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac & Little Cayman Trench Wall / UK*

At Stingray City, visitors stand on a sandbank in the sea among stingrays. Off Little Cayman, the Bloody Bay Wall drops vertically into the Cayman Trough, and Grand Cayman has a dream beach in Seven Mile Beach. Here lives the rare blue iguana.

HIGHLIGHTS Stingray City · Bloody Bay Wall · Seven Mile Beach

742 Jamaica: Blue Mountains, Cockpit Country Karst & Pedro Cays

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

In the Blue Mountains grows one of the finest coffees in the world, and the karst of the Cockpit Country was home to escaped slaves, the Maroons. Bob Marley's birthplace of Nine Mile and Trench Town are places of pilgrimage, and Port Royal sank in an earthquake in 1692. At Dunn's River you climb waterfalls.

HIGHLIGHTS Blue Mountain coffee · Nine Mile · Dunn's River Falls

743 Navassa Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Uninhabited US Caribbean Anomaly in the Jamaica Channel*

An uninhabited limestone island in the Jamaica Channel, administered by the USA and claimed by Haiti. Guano was once mined here; today it is a closed nature reserve with an abandoned lighthouse. Only Haitian fishermen occasionally come by — for everyone else, the Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Abandoned lighthouse · Nature reserve · Visibility Rule

744 Haiti: Massif de la Hotte, Gonâve Island & Northern Citadelle Highlands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The Citadelle Laferrière is the largest fortress in the Americas, built after independence in 1804, when Haiti became the first free Black republic. In the cloud forest of Pic Macaya live numerous endemic frogs, and Jacmel celebrates a carnival of papier-mâché. The violence of armed gangs makes travel almost impossible at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Citadelle Laferrière · Sans-Souci Palace · Bassin Bleu

745 Dominican Republic: Cordillera Central (Pico Duarte), Lake Enriquillo Rift & Samaná

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Pico Duarte, at over 3,000 meters, is the highest mountain in the Caribbean, and Lake Enriquillo lies 46 meters below sea level and is home to crocodiles. In the Bay of Samaná, humpback whales give birth to their young. The Zona Colonial of Santo Domingo is the oldest European city in the Americas.

HIGHLIGHTS Pico Duarte · Humpback whales of Samaná · Zona Colonial

746 ☐

Puerto Rico

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *El Yunque Karst, Mona Island, Vieques & Culebra / US*

El Morro fort guards Old San Juan, and El Yunque is the only tropical rainforest in the US National Forest System. Mosquito Bay on Vieques is considered the brightest bioluminescent bay in the world, and Flamenco Beach on Culebra one of the most beautiful beaches. Isla de Mona is the "Galápagos of the Caribbean."

HIGHLIGHTS Bio bay of Vieques · El Yunque · Old San Juan

747 ☐

US Virgin Islands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *St. Thomas, St. John & St. Croix*

Danish until 1917, then sold to the USA — people still drive on the left. Two-thirds of St. John is national park, and in Trunk Bay an underwater trail leads through the reef. St. Thomas tempts with duty-free shopping, St. Croix with Danish colonial architecture in Christiansted.

HIGHLIGHTS Trunk Bay · Christiansted · Buck Island

748 ☐

British Virgin Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Tortola, Virgin Gorda Baths & Anegada Reef*

The sailing capital of the Caribbean: Yachts cruise from bay to bay between the islands. At The Baths on Virgin Gorda you clamber between mighty granite blocks, and Anegada is flat as a board and surrounded by a huge reef. Norman Island is said to have inspired "Treasure Island."

HIGHLIGHTS The Baths · Horseshoe Reef of Anegada · Soggy Dollar Bar

749 ☐

Anguilla & Sombrero Coral Bank

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *UK*

A flat coral island with over 30 beaches, including Shoal Bay. Thanks to the AI boom, the .ai internet domain now brings Anguilla a large share of its state revenue. The offshore island of Sombrero with its lighthouse is a protected area for seabirds.

HIGHLIGHTS Shoal Bay · Meads Bay · Sombrero Lighthouse

750 ☐

Saint-Martin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Northern French Collectivity*

The smallest island in the world divided between two states. The north belongs to France and the EU: Marigot with its market and fort, Grand Case as the gourmet capital of the Caribbean, Orient Bay with Caribbean beach life. You cross the border to the Dutch south without any checks.

HIGHLIGHTS Grand Case · Orient Bay · Border monument

751 Sint Maarten

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Southern Dutch Constituent Country*

The south of the divided island is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. At Maho Beach, jets thunder so low over the bathers that you can almost touch their landing gear. Philipsburg is a cruise port and shopping strip.

HIGHLIGHTS Maho Beach · Philipsburg · Border crossing without checks

752 Saint-Barthélemy

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *St. Barts Volcanic Island / FR*

The most glamorous island in the Caribbean was Swedish for almost a hundred years — hence the capital's name, Gustavia. The approach to the airport over a hill is among the most spectacular in the world. Shell Beach and the bay of Colombier are the jewels of the island.

HIGHLIGHTS Approach to Gustavia · Colombier · Shell Beach

753 Saba (Mount Scenery Volcanic Cone) & Sint Eustatius

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Statia / Caribbean NL*

On Saba, "The Road" was built by hand after engineers declared it impossible. Mount Scenery is the highest mountain in the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the runway one of the shortest in the world. On Statia, they were the first to salute the flag of the young USA in 1776.

HIGHLIGHTS The Road · Mount Scenery · The Quill crater

754 Saint Kitts and Nevis

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Liamuiga & Nevis Peak Volcanic Pair*

A two-island state with two volcanoes: Brimstone Hill Fortress on St. Kitts is a World Heritage Site, and an old sugarcane railway circles the island. On Nevis, Alexander Hamilton, the US founding father, was born. Liamuiga volcano offers a crater trail.

HIGHLIGHTS Brimstone Hill · Sugarcane railway · Nevis Peak

755 Antigua, Barbuda & Redonda

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Antigua is said to have a beach for every day of the year, and Nelson's Dockyard is the only Georgian naval dockyard still in use in the world. Barbuda hosts the largest frigatebird colony in the Caribbean, and Redonda is an uninhabited rock whose ecosystem is flourishing after the eradication of introduced animals.

HIGHLIGHTS Nelson's Dockyard · Frigatebirds on Barbuda · Redonda

756 ☐

Montserrat

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Soufrière Hills Active Volcanic Exclusion Zone / UK*

Soufrière Hills has been erupting since 1995 and buried the old capital of Plymouth under ash — a modern Pompeii. The south of the island is an exclusion zone, shown from a safe distance by the volcano observatory. Montserrat has Irish roots and, as the only country besides Ireland, celebrates St. Patrick's Day as a public holiday.

HIGHLIGHTS View of Plymouth · Volcano Observatory · St. Patrick's Day

757 ☐

Guadeloupe

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Basse-Terre Volcano, Grande-Terre, Les Saintes & Marie-Galante / FR*

A butterfly of two islands: Basse-Terre with La Soufrière volcano and the Carbet Falls, Grande-Terre with beaches and sugarcane. The bay of Les Saintes ranks among the most beautiful in the world, and on Marie-Galante ox carts haul sugarcane to the rum distilleries.

HIGHLIGHTS La Soufrière · Les Saintes · Cousteau Reserve

758 ☐

Dominica

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Boiling Lake & Morne Trois Pitons Volcanic Rainforest*

The "Nature Island" of the Caribbean: Boiling Lake is one of the largest boiling lakes in the world, and Morne Trois Pitons is a World Heritage Site. Sperm whales live off the coast year-round, and a protected area was established for them in 2023. In the Kalinago Territory live descendants of the original inhabitants.

HIGHLIGHTS Boiling Lake · Sperm whales · Champagne Reef

759 ☐

Martinique

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mount Pelée & Caravelle Peninsula / FR*

In 1902, Mont Pelée destroyed the city of Saint-Pierre in minutes — one of the few survivors sat in a prison cell. Today the volcano and Pitons are a World Heritage Site, and Martinique distills rhum agricole under its own appellation. Diamond Rock was once a "warship" of the Royal Navy.

HIGHLIGHTS Ruins of Saint-Pierre · Mont Pelée · Rum distilleries

760 ☐

Saint Lucia

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Gros & Petit Piton Volcanic Plugs*

The two Pitons, steep volcanic plugs, rise straight from the sea and are a World Heritage Site. At Soufrière you drive almost into a volcano, to the Sulphur Springs. Marigot Bay is a picture-book natural harbor.

HIGHLIGHTS Gros & Petit Piton · Sulphur Springs · Marigot Bay

761 ☐

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *La Soufrière, Bequia, Mustique & Tobago Cays*

La Soufrière erupted on St. Vincent in 2021, and to the south the Grenadines line up like pearls: Bequia with its boatbuilding tradition, exclusive Mustique and the Tobago Cays, where you snorkel with sea turtles — a backdrop for "Pirates of the Caribbean."

HIGHLIGHTS Tobago Cays · Bequia · La Soufrière volcano

762 ☐

Barbados

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Raised Coral Accretionary Prism Island*

A coral island on an accretionary wedge, not volcanic like its neighbors. Rum was invented here, and Mount Gay has been distilling since 1703. Bridgetown and its Garrison are a World Heritage Site, Harrison's Cave is a dripstone wonder, and surf breaks on the east coast at Bathsheba. Barbados has been a republic since 2021.

HIGHLIGHTS Harrison's Cave · Bathsheba · Mount Gay Distillery

763 ☐

Grenada & Carriacou

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Grenadines*

The "Spice Isle" bears a nutmeg on its flag. Off the coast, the world's first underwater sculpture park was created in 2006, and Grand Anse is a dream beach kilometers long. On Carriacou men still build wooden ships by hand, and the undersea volcano Kick 'em Jenny seethes nearby.

HIGHLIGHTS Underwater Sculpture Park · Grand Anse · Boatbuilding on Carriacou

764 ☐

Trinidad (Northern Range & Pitch Lake Asphalt Deposit) and Tobago

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The Pitch Lake is the largest natural asphalt deposit on Earth, the steelpan was invented here, and the Carnival is among the largest in the world. In the Caroni Swamp, scarlet ibises return home at dusk, and leatherback turtles lay their eggs at Grande Riviere. Tobago has the oldest forest reserve in the Western Hemisphere.

HIGHLIGHTS Pitch Lake · Carnival · Scarlet ibises in the Caroni Swamp

765 ☐

Bonaire & Klein Bonaire

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Leeward Antilles Reef Margin / NL*

The license plates read "Diver's Paradise," and rightly so: The entire coast has been a marine park since 1979, and you dive straight from the shore. Flamingos stand in the salt pans next to old slave huts, and Klein Bonaire is uninhabited. Add kitesurfing and a donkey sanctuary.

HIGHLIGHTS Shore diving · Flamingos at the salt lake · Klein Bonaire

766 ☐

Curaçao

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Christoffelberg & Leeward Limestone Terraces / NL*

The colorful facades of the Handelskade in Willemstad are a World Heritage Site, and the Queen Emma Bridge floats on pontoons and swings aside for every ship. The Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue is the oldest still in use in the Americas. Blue Curaçao is made from the peel of the laraha orange.

HIGHLIGHTS Handelskade · Queen Emma Bridge · Christoffelberg

767 ☐

Aruba

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Western Leeward Antilles / NL*

“One Happy Island”: Outside the hurricane belt, the trade wind blows steadily and bends the divi-divi trees. Eagle Beach is among the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean, and Arikok National Park holds caves with Arawak rock paintings and the natural pool of Conchi.

HIGHLIGHTS Eagle Beach · Arikok National Park · Natural Pool

768 ☐

San Andrés, Providencia & Santa Catalina

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Colombian Western Caribbean Reefs*

Colombian islands that lie closer to Nicaragua than to their own mainland. The “Sea of Seven Colors” surrounds the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, one of the largest in the Caribbean. The Raizal maintain an English Creole culture, and Providencia was badly hit by Hurricane Iota in 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS Sea of Seven Colors · Morgan’s Head · Bridge to Santa Catalina

VII

TILES 769–843 · 75 REGIONS

SOUTH AMERICA

From the Caribbean Coast to Cape Horn

The continent of extremes: the largest rainforest, the driest desert, the longest mountain range and the highest waterfall on Earth. Here it becomes especially clear why watersheds make better borders — whoever crosses the Andes passes from the wettest river system in the world into its driest desert.

The journey follows the continent from the northern Andes and the Guiana Shield through the Amazon Basin, the Central Andes and the Southern Cone to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn — and ends on the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic.

16 Mountains & Highlands
14 Forest & Rainforest
12 Plain, River & Steppe
9 Island & Archipelago
8 Urban Island
5 Desert & Arid Land

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **2.4** OF 5

Northern Andes, the Orinoco & the Guiana Shield	769–785
Amazon Basin & the Brazilian Highlands	786–802
Central Andes: Ecuador, Peru & Bolivia	803–818
The Southern Cone: Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina & Chile	819–843

VII · 1 TILES 769–785

NORTHERN ANDES, THE ORINOCO & THE GUIANA SHIELD

Colombia and Venezuela unite a Caribbean coast, three Andean ranges, savannas and the table mountains of the Guiana Shield with the highest waterfall on Earth. To the east lie the Guianas, one of the most heavily forested areas in the world, and a piece of Europe in South America.

769 Colombia: Chocó Pacific Rainforest Coast & Gorgona Island

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

One of the rainiest regions on Earth, with over ten meters of precipitation a year. Between July and October, humpback whales give birth off Bahía Solano and Nuquí, and the jungle reaches down to the beach. The former prison island of Gorgona is today a marine national park.

HIGHLIGHTS Humpback whales off Nuquí · Gorgona · Afro-Colombian culture

770 Colombia: Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Highest Coastal Massif on Earth) & La Guajira Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The highest coastal range on Earth climbs to almost 5,700 meters just 42 kilometers from the sea. In the jungle lies the Ciudad Perdida, centuries older than Machu Picchu, still home to the Kogi today. Tayrona Park links jungle and Caribbean, and in the desert of La Guajira the Wayuu live out to Punta Gallinas, the northern tip of South America.

HIGHLIGHTS Trek to Ciudad Perdida · Tayrona National Park · Punta Gallinas

771 Colombia: Magdalena & Cauca Inter-Andean Valleys & Tatacoa Desert

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

Between the Andean ranges lie Colombia's great river valleys. In the Tatacoa Desert, red and gray labyrinths glow beneath one of the country's clearest starry skies, and enigmatic stone statues stand near San Agustín. On the lower Magdalena lie the colonial towns of Mompox and Cartagena.

HIGHLIGHTS Tatacoa Desert · Statues of San Agustín · Old Town of Cartagena

772 Greater Medellín Aburrá Valley Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Antioquia / Colombia*

Once the most dangerous city in the world, today a model of urban renewal: Cable cars link the hillside neighborhoods with the center, and in Comuna 13 escalators run through an open-air museum of street art. The "eternal spring" climate and Botero's sculptures define the city. From the rock of El Peñol near Guatapé you overlook a landscape of lakes.

HIGHLIGHTS Metrocable · Comuna 13 · El Peñol

773 Colombia: Central & Eastern Andean Cordilleras

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Los Nevados, Cocuy & Páramos*

In the Cocora Valley, wax palms, the tallest palms in the world, rise from green pastures, in the middle of the World Heritage coffee landscape. Above them lie the glaciers of Los Nevados and El Cocuy and the páramos, high moors that store much of the country's water. Villa de Leyva and Barichara are colonial jewels.

HIGHLIGHTS Wax palms of the Cocora Valley · Coffee finca · El Cocuy

774 Greater Bogotá Sabana High-Altitude Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Colombia*

A capital at 2,640 meters: The Gold Museum preserves over 30,000 gold objects, and from Monserrate you look out over a sea of houses. Street art glows in La Candelaria, and on Sundays more than a hundred kilometers of streets are closed to cars for cyclists. In Zipaquirá stands a cathedral deep inside the salt mountain.

HIGHLIGHTS Museo del Oro · Monserrate · Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá

775 Colombia: Llanos Orientales & Serranía de la Macarena

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Caño Cristales*

The Caño Cristales is considered the "most beautiful river in the world": From July to November, an aquatic plant turns its bed red, along with yellow, green and blue — the "River of Five Colors." In the Llanos, cattle herders ride across endless savannas, and capybaras and anacondas live in the wetlands.

HIGHLIGHTS Caño Cristales · Llanero culture · Capybaras

776 Colombia: Western Guiana Shield

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Chiribiquete Tepuis & Cerros de Mavecure in Guainía*

Chiribiquete National Park is a World Heritage Site of table mountains and rainforest with tens of thousands of rock paintings, closed to visitors and visible only from the air. The Cerros de Mavecure, dark granite monoliths, rise hundreds of meters from the jungle near Inírida, and close by several rivers merge in the "River Star" confluence.

HIGHLIGHTS Cerros de Mavecure · Estrella Fluvial de Inírida · Chiribiquete from the air

777 Venezuela: Cordillera de Mérida (Pico Bolívar), Lake Maracaibo (Catatumbo) & Coro Dunes

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Pico Bolívar is Venezuela's highest mountain, with one of the highest and longest cable cars in the world running almost to the top. Over the Catatumbo River mouth on Lake Maracaibo, lightning flashes on up to 260 nights a year, like nowhere else. Near Coro, sand dunes wander next to a colonial World Heritage town.

HIGHLIGHTS Catatumbo lightning · Mukumbarí cable car · Dunes of Coro

778 ☐

Greater Caracas & Central Coastal Range

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

URBAN ISLAND *Venezuela*

Caracas lies in a valley beneath the Ávila massif, reached by cable car. Carlos Raúl Villanueva's University City is a World Heritage Site of modernism, and the tradition of German settlers lives on in the mountain village of Colonia Tovar. The political and economic crisis shapes the city.

HIGHLIGHTS Ávila cable car · Ciudad Universitaria · Colonia Tovar

779 ☐

Venezuela: Los Roques, La Blanquilla & Las Aves Caribbean Atolls

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

The Los Roques archipelago is a national park of around 350 islands and sandbanks in turquoise, a paradise for fly fishers and sailors. Farther out lie La Blanquilla and the bird islands of Las Aves. The larger Isla Margarita is the tourist center of the Venezuelan Caribbean.

HIGHLIGHTS Gran Roque · Bonefishing · Isla Margarita

780 ☐

Venezuela: Orinoco River Delta & Venezuelan Llanos

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

In the Orinoco Delta, the Warao live in stilt houses over a labyrinth of waterways. In the rainy season, the Llanos are a flooded paradise with caimans, anacondas, river dolphins and capybaras. The culture of the cattle herders lives on at large hatos.

HIGHLIGHTS Warao stilt villages · Caimans in the Llanos · River dolphins

781 ☐

Venezuela: Gran Sabana Tepuis, Mount Roraima & Angel Falls

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Canaima Guiana Shield*

Angel Falls plunges 979 meters from Auyán-tepui, the highest waterfall on Earth. Roraima, a table mountain on the border of three countries, inspired Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost World" and can be climbed on a multi-day trek. In the Gran Sabana, savanna stretches between the tepuis.

HIGHLIGHTS Angel Falls · Roraima trek · Canaima Lagoon

782 ☐

Guyana: Kaieteur Falls, Potaro Gorge & Rupununi Savanna

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

The Kaieteur Falls plunge 226 meters in a single drop, one of the most powerful waterfalls on Earth, surrounded by untouched rainforest. Jaguars, giant otters and arapaimas live in the Rupununi savanna, and in the Iwokrama forest a canopy walkway leads above the treetops.

HIGHLIGHTS Kaieteur Falls · Rupununi savanna · Iwokrama canopy walkway

783 ☐ **Suriname: Central Suriname Nature Reserve (Voltzberg Granite Dome) & Sipaliwini** ◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST

Suriname is one of the most heavily forested countries on Earth. In the Central Suriname Nature Reserve, a World Heritage Site, the granite dome of the Voltzberg rises from the jungle, and the Raleighvallen rush over rock steps. On the upper Suriname River live the Maroons, descendants of escaped slaves. Paramaribo has an old town of wood.

HIGHLIGHTS Voltzberg · Maroon villages · Wooden old town of Paramaribo

784 ☐ **French Guiana: Guiana Amazonian Park & Maroni-Oyapock Rainforest** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *FR*

The Guiana Amazonian Park is the largest national park in the European Union — rainforest with EU law and the euro. Pirogues travel up the Maroni border river to villages of Maroons and indigenous peoples. The Ariane rockets of European spaceflight lift off from Kourou.

HIGHLIGHTS Pirogue trip on the Maroni · Kourou Space Center · Saül

785 ☐ **French Guiana: Salvation's Islands** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Devil's Island / Îles du Salut / FR*

From 1852 to 1953, a notorious penal colony stood here: Alfred Dreyfus was held on Devil's Island, and Henri Charrière described the escape in "Papillon." Today squirrel monkeys and agoutis inhabit the ruins on Île Royale — and from here you can watch rockets launch from Kourou.

HIGHLIGHTS Devil's Island · Prison ruins of Île Royale · Rocket launches

VII · 2 TILES 786–802

AMAZON BASIN & THE BRAZILIAN HIGHLANDS

The Amazon Basin is divided here by its river systems: Blackwater, whitewater and clearwater shape completely different worlds. Then come the dunes of Maranhão, the savanna of the Cerrado, the Pantanal and the great metropolises of the Atlantic coast.

786 ☐ **Amazon River Delta, Marajó Island & Pororoca Tidal Bore** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Pará & Amapá / Brazil*

Marajó Island is almost the size of Switzerland, the largest island in the world between river and sea water; the police patrol here on water buffalo. At spring tide the Pororoca, a tidal bore, rolls upstream through the river mouth. In Belém, host of the 2025 World Climate Conference, the Ver-o-Peso market smells of açaí and fish.

HIGHLIGHTS Water buffalo on Marajó · Ver-o-Peso market · Pororoca

787 ☐

Tocantins-Araguaia River Basin & Bananal Island

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Brazil*

Bananal Island is the largest inland island in a river in the world, home to the Karajá. Orange dunes glow in Jalapão, and in the fervedouros, bubbling spring pools, you cannot sink — the rising water carries you like a cork.

HIGHLIGHTS Fervedouros of Jalapão · Bananal Island · Dunes of Jalapão

788 ☐

Tapajós (Alter do Chão) & Xingu Clear-Water Basins

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Southern Amazon / Brazil*

Alter do Chão on the Tapajós is known as the "Caribbean of the Amazon": white sand beaches on a crystal-clear river. The Xingu Park was Brazil's first large indigenous protected area in 1961, and the Belo Monte Dam the most controversial construction project in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS Beaches of Alter do Chão · Xingu Park · Clear-water rivers

789 ☐

Main Amazon (Solimões) Floodplain Corridor & Meeting of Waters

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Manaus / Brazil*

Off Manaus, the black Rio Negro and the muddy brown Solimões flow side by side for kilometers without mixing. The Teatro Amazonas opera house bears witness to the wealth of the rubber boom, and in the flooded forests of Mamirauá live pink river dolphins and uakaris.

HIGHLIGHTS Meeting of Waters · Teatro Amazonas · Flooded forest of Mamirauá

790 ☐

Rio Negro Blackwater Basin, Anavilhanas & Pico da Neblina

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Northwestern Brazil*

The Rio Negro is jet black and so acidic that there are hardly any mosquitoes. The Anavilhanas Archipelago comprises around 400 river islands, and Pico da Neblina on the Venezuelan border, at almost 3,000 meters, is Brazil's highest mountain — in the land of the Yanomami. São Gabriel da Cachoeira is Brazil's most indigenous municipality.

HIGHLIGHTS Anavilhanas Archipelago · Pico da Neblina · Blackwater river trip

791 ☐

Madeira, Purus & Juruá Southwestern Amazon Basins

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Acre & Rondônia / Brazil*

The southwest of the Amazon: The Madeira-Mamoré railway was called the "Devil's Railway" because of the many deaths during its construction, and in Xapuri Chico Mendes fought for the rubber tappers. Where forest was cleared in Acre, giant geoglyphs came to light — earthworks of a forgotten civilization.

HIGHLIGHTS Geoglyphs of Acre · Chico Mendes House · Madeira-Mamoré Railway

792 ☐

Lençóis Maranhenses Flooded Coastal Dunes & Parnaíba Delta

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Northeastern Brazil*

A sea of white dunes among which turquoise lagoons fill after the rainy season — a World Heritage Site since 2024. In Atins, kitesurfers meet desert and ocean, and the Parnaíba Delta is a labyrinth of mangroves and islands. Farther east lies Jericoacoara with its dunes.

HIGHLIGHTS Lagoons of the Lençóis · Kitesurfing in Atins · Parnaíba Delta

793 ☐

Fernando de Noronha, Rocas Atoll & Saint Peter and Saint Paul Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Brazil*

Fernando de Noronha is an archipelago with a visitor limit, Baía do Sancho is considered Brazil's most beautiful beach, and spinner dolphins frolic in the bay. Atol das Rocas is the only atoll in the South Atlantic, and the rocks of São Pedro e São Paulo consist of mantle rock on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

HIGHLIGHTS Baía do Sancho · Spinner dolphins · Rocks of São Pedro e São Paulo

794 ☐

Caatinga Semi-Arid Thorny Scrublands & Serra da Capivara

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Northeastern Brazil*

The Caatinga is the only biome found exclusively in Brazil, a thorn-scrub land of the sertão, home of cowboys in leather and of Lampião's cangaceiros. In Serra da Capivara National Park, thousands of rock paintings cover the walls, a World Heritage Site and testimony to the early settlement of the Americas.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock art of Serra da Capivara · Sertão · Forró

795 ☐

Chapada Diamantina Tablelands & Espinhaço Range

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Bahia & Minas Gerais / Brazil*

Table mountains, caves and waterfalls in Bahia: The Cachoeira da Fumaça plunges over 300 meters, and at Poço Encantado sunlight falls into a blue cave pool. Lençóis was a diamond town, and in Minas Gerais lie the gold town of Ouro Preto and the Inhotim art park.

HIGHLIGHTS Cachoeira da Fumaça · Poço Encantado · Ouro Preto

796 ☐

São Francisco River Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Eastern Brazil*

The "River of National Unity" crosses the arid northeast and supplies it with water. Near Petrolina, wine grows in a semi-desert climate, and the Xingó Canyon is a reservoir among red rocks. The carved figureheads, the carrancas, were once meant to drive away river spirits.

HIGHLIGHTS Xingó Canyon · Wineries of Petrolina · Carrancas

797 ☐

Cerrado Tropical Savanna Highlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Chapada dos Veadeiros & Guimarães / Central Brazil*

The most species-rich savanna in the world is the "water tower of Brazil." In the Chapada dos Veadeiros, quartz crystals sparkle in riverbeds, and the Chapada dos Guimarães lies near the geographic center of South America. In the middle of the Cerrado rose Brasília, Oscar Niemeyer's modernist planned city. Here live the maned wolf and the giant anteater.

HIGHLIGHTS Chapada dos Veadeiros · Brasília · Maned wolf

798 ☐

Pantanal Megawetland

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *World's Largest Tropical Flooded Grasslands / BR, BO, PY*

The largest tropical wetland on Earth and the best place in the world to see wild jaguars, especially at Encontro das Águas near Porto Jofre. Hyacinth macaws, caimans by the thousand and giant otters line the Transpantaneira road. In nearby Bonito you snorkel in crystal-clear rivers.

HIGHLIGHTS Jaguars at Porto Jofre · Transpantaneira · Snorkeling in Bonito

799 ☐

Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), Serra do Mar & Ilha Grande Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Southeastern Brazil*

The Mata Atlântica is one of the most species-rich forests on Earth, of which only a fraction remains. The former prison island of Ilha Grande is car-free, and Paraty is a colonial town with World Heritage status. In the Serra dos Órgãos, the "Finger of God" points into the sky.

HIGHLIGHTS Lopes Mendes on Ilha Grande · Old Town of Paraty · Dedo de Deus

800 ☐

Greater Rio de Janeiro & Guanabara Bay Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Brazil*

Christ spreads his arms over Corcovado, a cable car glides up Sugarloaf Mountain, and the city shows itself on the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema. The Tijuca Forest is one of the largest urban forests in the world, and every year the most famous carnival on Earth parades through the Sambadrome.

HIGHLIGHTS Christ the Redeemer · Sugarloaf Mountain · Carnival in the Sambadrome

801 ☐

Greater São Paulo Megacity Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Brazil*

The largest city in the Southern Hemisphere, a sea of high-rises on a plateau. The Liberdade district is home to the largest Japanese community outside Japan, Avenida Paulista is a stage and banking mile, and the MASP floats above it. São Paulo is Brazil's economic engine and culinary capital.

HIGHLIGHTS Avenida Paulista · Liberdade · Ibirapuera Park

802 Iguazu Falls & Upper Paraná Basalt Escarpment

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *Brazil / Argentina Border*

Around 275 individual falls across almost three kilometers: Iguazú Falls on the border between Brazil and Argentina are one of the natural wonders of the world. At Devil's Throat, the masses of water thunder into a cauldron, and boats ride right into the spray. The rim is formed by one of the largest flood basalt provinces on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Devil's Throat · Boat trip under the falls · Coatis

VII · 3

TILES 803–818

CENTRAL ANDES: ECUADOR, PERU & BOLIVIA

Volcanoes, glaciers, high plains and the legacy of the Inca. The Central Andes reach from the Pacific with its cold Humboldt Current across the high desert down into the rainforest — and far out in the ocean lie the Galápagos Islands, Darwin's laboratory.

803 Galápagos Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Wolf, Darwin, Isabela & Fernandina Volcanic Hotspot / Ecuador*

Darwin's laboratory: giant tortoises, marine iguanas — the only lizards that feed in the sea — and fearless sea lions. Isabela and Fernandina are the youngest and most active volcanoes of the archipelago, and off Wolf and Darwin swim the most sharks per area in the world. Entry to the national park costs a high fee.

HIGHLIGHTS Giant tortoises · Hammerhead sharks off Darwin · Marine iguanas on Fernandina

804 Ecuador: Pacific Coastal Lowlands, Guayas Basin & Machalilla Cloud Forest

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA

Guayaquil is Ecuador's largest city, with a redesigned riverfront promenade. In Machalilla National Park lies Isla de la Plata, the "poor man's Galápagos," and from June to September humpback whales leap off the coast. Panama hats come from Montecristi — and are actually Ecuadorian.

HIGHLIGHTS Isla de la Plata · Humpback whales · Panama hats from Montecristi

805 Ecuador: Avenue of the Volcanoes

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Cotopaxi, Chimborazo & Quito Sierra*

The summit of Chimborazo is the point on the Earth's surface farthest from its center, and Cotopaxi is one of the highest active volcanoes in the world. In 1978 Quito was among the first World Heritage cities, a crater lake gleams at Quilotoa, and Otavalo hosts one of the largest markets in South America.

HIGHLIGHTS Chimborazo · Quilotoa · Old Town of Quito

806 ☐

Ecuador: Oriente Amazon Headwaters

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Yasuní & Cuyabeno Flooded Forests*

Yasuní National Park is among the most species-rich places on Earth — more tree species grow on one hectare here than in all of North America. In 2023, Ecuador voted in a referendum against oil production in part of the park. In the flooded forest of Cuyabeno you paddle among pink river dolphins.

HIGHLIGHTS Yasuní · Canoe in Cuyabeno · Parrots at the clay lick

807 ☐

Peru: Loreto Lowland Amazonia

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Iquitos, Pacaya-Samiria & Marañón-Ucayali Confluence*

Iquitos is the largest city in the world that cannot be reached by road. In the Belén district, houses float on the river. Near Nauta, the Marañón and Ucayali unite to form the Amazon, and the Pacaya-Samiria Reserve is a huge flooded forest with pink dolphins.

HIGHLIGHTS Belén Market · Confluence forming the Amazon · Pacaya-Samiria

808 ☐

Peru: Cordillera Blanca (Huascarán), Huayhuash & Northern Cloud Forests

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Kuelap*

The highest tropical mountain range in the world with Huascarán, Peru's highest mountain. Laguna 69 gleams turquoise beneath glaciers, and the Huayhuash Trek is considered one of the most beautiful in the world. In the north, the Chachapoya fortress of Kuelap towers above the clouds, and on the coast near Trujillo lies the mud city of Chan Chan.

HIGHLIGHTS Laguna 69 · Huayhuash Trek · Kuelap Fortress

809 ☐

Greater Lima Coastal Desert Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Peru*

A city of millions in the desert, the second-largest desert city in the world after Cairo. From the cliffs of Miraflores, paragliders take off above the Pacific, and the restaurant Central was named the best in the world in 2023. Ceviche, the colonial buildings of the Plaza Mayor and the adobe pyramid of Huaca Pucllana define the city.

HIGHLIGHTS Ceviche · Plaza Mayor · Cliffs of Miraflores

810 ☐

Peru: Paracas Peninsula & Ballestas Upwelling Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Humboldt Current*

The cold Humboldt Current makes this desert coast one of the richest fishing seas in the world. Humboldt penguins, sea lions and millions of seabirds live on the Ballestas. The giant Candelabra is etched into the sandy slope, and a red beach glows in the Paracas desert.

HIGHLIGHTS Ballestas Islands · Candelabra · Playa Roja

811 ☐

Peru: Ica Huacachina Dunes & Nazca–Palpa Pampas Desert

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND

The oasis of Huacachina lies among mighty dunes where people ride buggies and sandboards. On the plain of Nazca, people drew a hummingbird, monkey and spider into the ground 2,000 years ago, visible only from the air. Around Ica, pisco is distilled.

HIGHLIGHTS Flight over the Nazca Lines · Sandboarding in Huacachina · Pisco bodegas

812 ☐

Peru: Colca Canyon, Cotahuasi Canyon & Arequipa Volcanic Arc

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Misti*

Colca Canyon is more than twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, and at Cruz del Cóndor Andean condors glide on the updrafts. Cotahuasi Canyon is deeper still. Arequipa, the "White City" of volcanic stone, lies at the foot of Misti, and the museum holds the ice mummy Juanita.

HIGHLIGHTS Condors at Cruz del Cóndor · Santa Catalina Monastery · Misti volcano

813 ☐

Peru: Cusco, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu & Ausangate

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Southern Andes*

Machu Picchu sits on a ridge above the Urubamba, one of the New Seven Wonders. Cusco rests on Inca walls whose stones fit seamlessly without mortar. In the Sacred Valley lie the salt terraces of Maras and the circular terraces of Moray, and Rainbow Mountain Vinicunca and Ausangate beckon above 5,000 meters.

HIGHLIGHTS Machu Picchu · Inca Trail · Rainbow Mountain Vinicunca

814 ☐

Bolivia / Peru: Madidi & Manú Amazonian Piedmont Cloud-to-Lowland Forests

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

Nowhere else does the Earth fall so steeply from glaciers to rainforest: Manú and Madidi span cloud forest and Amazon lowlands over a short distance and are among the most species-rich protected areas in the world. At the clay walls of Tambopata, hundreds of macaws gather each morning.

HIGHLIGHTS Macaw clay licks · Cloud forest of Manú · Pampas tour from Rurrenabaque

815 ☐

Bolivia: Llanos de Moxos Flooded Savanna (Beni) & Chiquitania Noel Kempff Tablelands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

The Moxos savanna stands under water for months — among it lie the mounds and fields of a vanished culture. In the Chiquitania stand the Jesuit missions, whose Baroque churches are still in use and a World Heritage Site. In Noel Kempff Mercado National Park, table mountains rise from the jungle.

HIGHLIGHTS Jesuit churches of Chiquitos · Noel Kempff Mercado · River dolphins in the Beni

816 ☐

Bolivia: Cordillera Real (Illimani), La Paz Canyon & Yungas Cloud Forest Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

La Paz lies in a bowl at over 3,600 meters, and a cable car network links the city with El Alto, where cholitas fight in the ring. Behind the city rise Illimani and Huayna Potosí, and the "Death Road" plunges over 3,000 meters by mountain bike into the Yungas.

HIGHLIGHTS Mi Teleférico cable car · Death Road · Huayna Potosí

817 ☐

Bolivia: Central Altiplano, Sajama Volcano & Lake Poopó Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Sajama is Bolivia's highest mountain, and one of the highest forests in the world grows on its slopes. Thermal springs and geysers steam in the highlands, and Oruro celebrates a carnival with devil dances that is World Heritage. Silver has been mined in the Cerro Rico of Potosí since colonial times, and one of the great Andean cultures stood at Tiwanaku.

HIGHLIGHTS Sajama · Carnival of Oruro · Mines of Potosí

818 ☐

Bolivia: Salar de Uyuni (World's Largest Salt Flat) & Sud Lípez Colored Lagoons

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND

The largest salt flat on Earth — over 10,000 square kilometers of white salt that becomes a mirror of the sky in the rainy season. Giant cacti grow on Isla Incahuasi, flamingos stand in the red water of Laguna Colorada, and beneath Licancabur gleams Laguna Verde. Add geysers at almost 5,000 meters.

HIGHLIGHTS Mirror of the Salar · Laguna Colorada · Sol de Mañana geysers

VII · 4 TILES 819–843

THE SOUTHERN CONE: PARAGUAY, URUGUAY, ARGENTINA & CHILE

From the Chaco and the Pampas across the Atacama to the ice fields of Patagonia and the end of the world in Tierra del Fuego. Then there are the most remote islands of the Pacific — Rapa Nui and the Juan Fernández Archipelago — and river islands in the middle of foreign waters.

819 ☐

Gran Chaco Dry Forest Lowland

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Paraguay, Northern Argentina & Southeastern Bolivia*

After the Amazon, the largest forest region in South America, a hot dry forest between Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia. Mennonites have founded German-speaking settlements here such as Filadelfia, and uncontacted groups of the Ayoreo still live deep in the forest. Jaguars roam the thorn thicket.

HIGHLIGHTS Mennonite colony of Filadelfia · Trans-Chaco Highway · Chaco War memorials

820 Argentina: Esteros del Iberá Marshlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Corrientes Closed Wetland System*

The second-largest wetland in South America is the setting of one of the most ambitious rewilding projects in the world: Since 2021, jaguars, which had nearly vanished from Argentina, have roamed here again. Marsh deer, capybaras, caimans and hundreds of bird species populate the floating islands, which you explore by boat from Colonia Carlos Pellegrini.

HIGHLIGHTS Jaguar rewilding · Colonia Carlos Pellegrini · Marsh deer

821 Argentina: Mesopotamia

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Paraná–Uruguay Interfluve & Misiones Rainforest*

Between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers lies Argentina's green center. In Misiones stand the ruins of the Jesuit mission of San Ignacio Miní, and the red earth bears mate plantations. At the Moconá Falls, the river plunges sideways into a trench over a length of three kilometers.

HIGHLIGHTS San Ignacio Miní · Moconá Falls · Mate plantations

822 Argentine River Exclaves

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Martín García Island in Uruguayan Waters & Apipé in Paraguay*

Martín García Island lies in Uruguayan waters but belongs to Argentina — once a prison for presidents, today a nature reserve with boat trips from Tigre. Apipé Island in the Paraná is a piece of Argentine land surrounded by Paraguayan water.

HIGHLIGHTS Boat trip from Tigre · Prison of Martín García · Apipé Island

823 Uruguay: Cuchilla Grande Rolling Pampas & Tacuarembó Tablelands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

Uruguay's gaucho country, with gentle hills, estancias and almost twice as many sheep as people. Tacuarembó celebrates the Fiesta de la Patria Gaucha and claims Carlos Gardel as a son of the city. Near Salto hot springs bubble, and the Quebrada de los Cuervos is a green gorge.

HIGHLIGHTS Fiesta de la Patria Gaucha · Estancia stay · Hot springs of Salto

824 Uruguay: Río de la Plata Estuary & Atlantic Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Montevideo to Punta del Este & Cabo Polonio*

Montevideo has a 22-kilometer rambla, and Colonia del Sacramento a Portuguese old town that is a World Heritage Site. In Punta del Este a hand rises from the sand, and Cabo Polonio is a village without road or power grid, with sea lions and a lighthouse. Candombe drums define the nights.

HIGHLIGHTS Colonia del Sacramento · Cabo Polonio · Rambla of Montevideo

825 Greater Buenos Aires (AMBA) & Paraná Delta Megacity

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Argentina*

The city of tango, protected as intangible World Heritage, with colorful La Boca, Recoleta Cemetery, where Evita lies, and the Teatro Colón with its legendary acoustics. Avenida 9 de Julio is among the widest streets in the world. In the delta of Tigre, boats glide between island houses.

HIGHLIGHTS Tango in San Telmo · Recoleta Cemetery · Delta of Tigre

826 Humid & Dry Pampas Grasslands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Buenos Aires Province to La Pampa / Argentina*

A sea of grass to the horizon, home of the gauchos and of the cattle that make Argentina's asado famous. In San Antonio de Areco the gaucho tradition lives on, and the estancias welcome guests. On the edge rise the Sierras de Córdoba, and the city preserves its Jesuit Block as a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Estancia asado · San Antonio de Areco · Jesuit Block of Córdoba

827 Argentina: Quebrada de Humahuaca, Calchaquí Valleys & Yungas of Salta/Jujuy

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The Hill of Seven Colors at Purmamarca and the Hornocal with fourteen colors glow in the Quebrada de Humahuaca, a World Heritage Site. In Cafayate, Torrontés grows at high altitude, and the Salinas Grandes are a white salt plain. The Tren a las Nubes climbs to over 4,200 meters.

HIGHLIGHTS Cerro de los Siete Colores · Hornocal · Wineries of Cafayate

828 Argentina / Chile: Puna de Atacama

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Antofalla, Arizaro Cono de Arita & Ojos del Salado*

A high desert above 3,500 meters with Ojos del Salado, the highest volcano on Earth. In the Salar de Arizaro rises the Cono de Arita, a perfect cone, and Campo de Piedra Pómez is a labyrinth of white pumice. It hardly gets lonelier or more hostile on this continent.

HIGHLIGHTS Ojos del Salado · Cono de Arita · Campo de Piedra Pómez

829 Chile: Atacama Desert Core

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Valle de la Luna, El Tatio Geysers & Tamarugal Pampa*

The driest non-polar desert on Earth — some stations have never measured rain. In the Valle de la Luna the Earth looks like another planet, and the El Tatio geysers steam at 4,300 meters. The clear sky makes the Atacama the site of the largest telescopes in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Valle de la Luna · El Tatio geysers · Starry sky

830 Chile: Easter Island

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Rapa Nui & Salas y Gómez Southeastern Polynesian Outpost*

One of the most remote inhabited islands on Earth, around 3,500 kilometers off the Chilean coast. Almost a thousand moai gaze inland, and unfinished figures lie in the quarry of Rano Raraku. The birdman cult was celebrated at Orongo. Uninhabited Salas y Gómez lies within the vast marine protected area.

HIGHLIGHTS Ahu Tongariki · Rano Raraku · Orongo

831 Chile: Juan Fernández (Robinson Crusoe) & Desventuradas Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

On Robinson Crusoe Island, the sailor Alexander Selkirk lived alone from 1704 to 1709, the model for Daniel Defoe's novel. Here lives the endemic Juan Fernández firecrown hummingbird, and lobsters are caught in the sea. The Desventuradas are naval outposts in a huge marine protected area.

HIGHLIGHTS Selkirk's Lookout · Juan Fernández firecrown · Lobsters

832 Greater Santiago Metropolitan Basin

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Chile*

Behind the city rise the snow-capped Andes, within reach on clear days. The Gran Torre Santiago is the tallest building in South America, and from Cerro San Cristóbal you overlook the basin. Within an hour you are at the wineries of the Maipo Valley or in the ski areas.

HIGHLIGHTS Cerro San Cristóbal · Gran Torre Santiago · Wineries of the Maipo Valley

833 Chile: Central Valley

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Norte Chico to Maule Mediterranean Wine & Coastal Ranges*

Valparaíso climbs the hills with colorful houses and old funiculars, a World Heritage Site. In the Elqui Valley pisco is distilled and the starry sky admired, and in the Colchagua Valley Carménère matures. A Mediterranean climate makes the Central Valley Chile's garden.

HIGHLIGHTS Valparaíso · Elqui Valley · Wineries of the Colchagua Valley

834 Argentina: Cuyo High Andes, Mount Aconcagua (6,961 m), Talampaya & Ischigualasto

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Aconcagua, at 6,961 meters, is the highest mountain outside Asia. At its feet lies Mendoza, the world capital of Malbec. In Ischigualasto and Talampaya, together a World Heritage Site, some of the oldest dinosaurs on Earth were found among bizarre sandstone formations.

HIGHLIGHTS Aconcagua · Wineries in Mendoza · Valle de la Luna in Ischigualasto

835 North Patagonian Lake District & Araucanía Volcanoes

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Villarrica, Osorno, Bariloche & Villa La Angostura / CL & AR*

A lava lake seethes in the crater of Villarrica, and Osorno is a perfect cone above Lake Llanquihue, where German settlers left their mark. On the Argentine side lie Bariloche and the Route of the Seven Lakes. Araucarias and the culture of the Mapuche define the land.

HIGHLIGHTS Villarrica volcano · Ruta de los Siete Lagos · Osorno

836 Chile: Chiloé Archipelago & Guaitecas Channels

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Chiloé is an island of myths and wooden churches, many of them World Heritage Sites. In Castro, stilt houses stand at the water's edge, and in the curanto, mussels, meat and potatoes cook in an earth pit. At Puñihuil, Humboldt and Magellanic penguins breed side by side.

HIGHLIGHTS Wooden churches of Chiloé · Palafitos in Castro · Penguins of Puñihuil

837 Argentina: Península Valdés, Golfo Nuevo & Atlantic Patagonian Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Puerto Madryn to Monte León*

Off the Valdés Peninsula southern right whales calve, and at Punta Norte orcas hurl themselves onto the beach to catch young sea lions, a behavior unique in the world. Punta Tombo hosts one of the largest colonies of Magellanic penguins, and in Gaiman descendants of Welsh settlers serve tea and cake.

HIGHLIGHTS Southern right whales · Orcas at Punta Norte · Penguins of Punta Tombo

838 Chile: Carretera Austral, Northern Patagonian Ice Field & Chilean Fjordland

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The Carretera Austral runs over 1,200 kilometers through rainforest, fjords and glaciers, much of it gravel. In Lago General Carrera, the water has washed the Marble Chapels out of the rock, and the Queulat Glacier hangs above an abyss. The Futaleufú rushes with some of the best white water in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Marble Chapels · Queulat Hanging Glacier · Futaleufú

839 Argentina: Southern Patagonian Ice Field, Mount Fitz Roy (El Chaltén), Perito Moreno & Patagonian Steppe

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The third-largest ice field on Earth after Antarctica and Greenland: The Perito Moreno Glacier pushes into Lago Argentino until its front collapses with a roar. El Chaltén is the trekking capital beneath Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre. In the Cueva de las Manos, people left their handprints 9,000 years ago.

HIGHLIGHTS Perito Moreno · Laguna de los Tres · Cueva de las Manos

840 Chile: Torres del Paine Granite Massif & Última Esperanza Fjords

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Three granite towers, the Cuernos and the Grey Glacier form one of the most beautiful national parks in the world — on the W Trek or the O Circuit. This is the best place to observe wild pumas. In Milodon Cave, remains of a giant sloth were found.

HIGHLIGHTS Mirador Las Torres · W Trek · Pumas

841 Tierra del Fuego Archipelago, Strait of Magellan, Darwin Range & Beagle Channel

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Ushuaia / AR & CL*

Ushuaia calls itself the "End of the World," and Puerto Williams on the Chilean side is the southernmost town on Earth. In the Beagle Channel stands the Les Éclaireurs Lighthouse, and penguins breed on Isla Martillo. Ferries cross the Strait of Magellan, and the Darwin Range bears glaciers that calve straight into the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Beagle Channel · Dientes de Navarino · Strait of Magellan

842 Cape Horn (Isla Hornos) & Diego Ramírez Islands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

EXTREME POINT *Sub-Antarctic Terminus of the Americas / CL*

The sailors' graveyard: At Cape Horn, the Atlantic and Pacific collide in the storms of the westerlies, and an albatross monument commemorates the dead. A lighthouse keeper's family lives on the island, and landings succeed only in calm seas. The Diego Ramírez Islands farther south are a breeding ground for albatrosses.

HIGHLIGHTS Albatross monument · Lighthouse at the Cape · Rounding Cape Horn

843 Falkland Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Islas Malvinas / Patagonian Shelf Moorland Archipelago / UK*

A British overseas territory on the Patagonian shelf, claimed by Argentina as the Islas Malvinas, and the scene of the war of 1982. King penguins stand at Volunteer Point, and on Steeple Jason breeds the largest black-browed albatross colony in the world. Stanley is a British village at the end of the world.

HIGHLIGHTS King penguins at Volunteer Point · Albatrosses · Stanley

VII

TILES 844–1001 · 158 REGIONS

AFRICA

From the Maghreb and Sahara to the Cape and the Indian Ocean

Africa was divided up by colonial powers with a ruler — hardly any continent shows so many straight borders running through deserts, peoples and river basins. GREAT1001 divides it by Sahara and Sahel, rainforest and savanna, rift and highland — and by the megacities shaping the Africa of the 21st century.

The journey begins in Morocco, crosses the Sahara to the Nile, follows the coast of West Africa, passes through the Congo Basin and the East African Rift to the Cape — and ends on the islands of the western Indian Ocean, with Rodrigues as tile number 1001.

27 Desert & Arid Land
24 Mountains & Highlands
24 Urban Island
20 Plain, River & Steppe
15 Island & Archipelago
13 Forest & Rainforest

AVERAGE EXPEDITION GRADE: **2.8** OF 5

North Africa, the Maghreb, Egypt & the Saharan Belt	844–886
West Africa & the Gulf of Guinea	887–915
Central Africa & the Congo Basin	916–923
Horn of Africa & the East African Rift System	924–954
Southern Africa	955–989
Madagascar & the Western Indian Ocean	990–1001

VIII · 1 TILES 844–886

NORTH AFRICA, THE MAGHREB, EGYPT & THE SAHARAN BELT

The largest hot desert on Earth with its sand seas, volcanic massifs and oases, along with the mountains and coasts of the Maghreb and the Nile Valley. Here lies Bir Tawil, one of the last no-man's-lands in the world — and many tiles currently closed by conflict.

844 Morocco: Rif Mountains & Mediterranean Coast

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Chefchaouen is bathed entirely in blue and clings to the slope of the Rif. The medina of Tétouan is a World Heritage Site, and in the Akchour gorge a trail leads to "God's Bridge," a natural rock arch. Tangier looks across the strait to Europe, and on the coast near Al Hoceima lies a national park of cliffs and coves.

HIGHLIGHTS Chefchaouen · God's Bridge at Akchour · Caves of Hercules near Tangier

845 Greater Casablanca–Rabat Atlantic Coastal Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Morocco*

The Hassan II Mosque stands right on the Atlantic, with a minaret among the tallest in the world. Rabat, the capital, is a World Heritage Site with the Kasbah of the Udayas. The Al Boraq high-speed train links Casablanca with Tangier at up to 320 km/h, the fastest train in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Hassan II Mosque · Kasbah of the Udayas · Al Boraq

846 Morocco: High Atlas (Toubkal) & Middle Atlas Cedar Ranges

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Toubkal, at 4,167 meters, is the highest mountain in North Africa, and the climb begins in the Berber villages around Imlil. At the foot of the ranges lie Marrakech with Djemaa el-Fna square and Fez, whose medina is the largest car-free urban zone in the world. Barbary macaques live in the cedar forests of the Middle Atlas.

HIGHLIGHTS Climbing Toubkal · Djemaa el-Fna · Medina of Fez

847 Morocco: Anti-Atlas, Souss Valley & Draa Oasis Corridor

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND

In the Souss, goats climb argan trees, whose oil is world-famous. Tafraoute lies among painted granite rocks, and the Draa Valley is a chain of palm groves and mud fortresses. The Ksar of Aït Ben Haddou and the film studios of Ouarzazate made the region a Hollywood backdrop. In Zagora, a sign reads: "Timbuktu 52 days."

HIGHLIGHTS Aït Ben Haddou · Goats in argan trees · Palm groves of the Draa Valley

848 ☐

Morocco: Erg Chebbi & Erg Chigaga Saharan Dune Seas

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Tafilalt*

The dunes of Erg Chebbi near Merzouga rise up to 150 meters above the plain, the classic Sahara setting for camel rides and nights in a desert camp. In the village of Khamlia, Gnawa musicians play, and Erg Chigaga beyond M'Hamid is more remote and quiet.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise on the dunes · Desert camp · Gnawa music in Khamlia

849 ☐

Western Sahara Atlantic Coastal Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Laayoune & Dakhla Peninsula*

A disputed territory: Morocco controls most of it, while the Polisario claims it as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. A sand wall around 2,700 kilometers long divides the land. In the lagoon of Dakhla, kitesurfers meet flamingos, and Laâyoune is the administrative center.

HIGHLIGHTS Dakhla Lagoon · Laâyoune · Atlantic coast

850 ☐

Mauritania: Banc d'Arguin Coastal Mudflats & Adrar Sandstone Plateau

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Atar*

In the Banc d'Arguin, a World Heritage Site, millions of migratory birds winter, and the Imraguen fishermen work together with dolphins. From Nouadhibou, one of the longest freight trains in the world runs inland, and brave travelers ride on top of the ore wagons. On the Adrar Plateau lies the palm oasis of Terjit.

HIGHLIGHTS Riding the iron ore train · Bird migration at Banc d'Arguin · Terjit Oasis

851 ☐

Mauritania: Richat Structure

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND *"Eye of the Sahara" / Guelb er Richât Geological Dome*

A circular dome around 40 kilometers across that looks from space like a giant eye in the Sahara. It was long thought to be a meteorite crater; in fact it is an uplift exposed by erosion. Some even place Atlantis here. Reachable by four-wheel drive from Ouadane.

HIGHLIGHTS Rings of the structure · 4x4 from Ouadane · View from the plane

852 ☐

Mauritania: Chinguetti, Ouadane & Oualata Saharan Erg Dunes

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND

Old caravan towns, World Heritage Sites half swallowed by dunes. In Chinguetti, families guard libraries of medieval manuscripts, and Ouadane clings to the slope as a ruined city. In Oualata, the houses are painted with red ornaments.

HIGHLIGHTS Desert libraries of Chinguetti · Ruins of Ouadane · Painted houses of Oualata

853 ☐

Algeria: Tell Atlas, Kabylie Mountains & Constantine Gorges

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Mediterranean Belt*

Constantine towers above the Rhumel Gorge, linked by dizzying bridges. The Roman cities of Djemila and Timgad are so well preserved that Timgad is called the "Pompeii of Africa." In the Djurdjura range of Kabylie lives the culture of the Amazigh, and Tlemcen preserves Moorish architecture.

HIGHLIGHTS Bridges of Constantine · Timgad · Djurdjura

854 ☐

Greater Algiers Metropolitan Bay

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Algeria*

"Alger la Blanche": The white city falls from the hill of the Casbah to the sea, and the Casbah is a World Heritage Site. The Great Mosque, opened in 2024, has the tallest minaret in the world. Notre-Dame d'Afrique looks out over the bay, and to the west lie the Roman ruins of Tipasa right on the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Casbah of Algiers · Great Mosque · Tipasa

855 ☐

Tunisia: Northern Kroumirie Hills, Dorsal Atlas & Cap Bon Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The ruins of Carthage, blue-and-white Sidi Bou Said and the medina of Tunis lie close together. Dougga is the best-preserved Roman town in North Africa, and the Bardo Museum displays mosaics of world rank. In the cork oak forests of Kroumirie and on Cap Bon, Tunisia shows its green side.

HIGHLIGHTS Carthage · Sidi Bou Said · Dougga

856 ☐

Tunisia: Chott el Djerid Salt Pan & Dahar Matmata Troglodyte Escarpment

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND

Chott el Djerid is the largest salt pan in the Sahara, with mirages flickering above it. In Matmata, people live in cave dwellings around round courtyards — one of them was Luke Skywalker's childhood home. Tozeur and the mountain oases of Chebika and Tamerza lie on the edge of the desert.

HIGHLIGHTS Cave dwellings of Matmata · Chott el Djerid · Chebika mountain oasis

857 ☐

Tunisia: Djerba & Kerkennah Gulf of Gabès Islands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO

Djerba is an island with one of the oldest synagogues in the world, El Ghriba, and has been a World Heritage Site since 2023. In Houmt Souk you haggle in the souk, and the village of Erriadh is an open-air museum of street art. On the flat Kerkennah Islands, fishermen use palm-frond traps, a technique recognized as intangible World Heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS El Ghriba Synagogue · Djerbahood · Fish traps of Kerkennah

858 ☐

Grand Erg Oriental & Grand Erg Occidental Sand Seas

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Algeria & Southern Tunisia*

Two mighty sand seas of the northern Sahara. On their edge lie oases such as Ksar Ghilane with its hot spring, the red oasis city of Timimoun and Taghit beneath high dunes. In the M'zab Valley stand the 11th-century towns of Ghardaïa, whose architecture inspired Le Corbusier.

HIGHLIGHTS Ksar Ghilane · Timimoun · M'zab Valley

859 ☐

Algeria: Tassili n'Ajjer & Tadrart Rouge Sandstone Arches

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Southeast*

A plateau of sandstone forests with around 15,000 rock paintings that tell of a green Sahara with giraffes and cattle — a World Heritage Site. In Sefar the rocks look like a city of stone, and in the Tadrart Rouge red dunes glow among rock arches. The starting point is Djanet.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock art of Sefar · Tadrart Rouge · Djanet

860 ☐

Algeria: Ahaggar (Hoggar) Volcanic Massif

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Assekrem / Central Sahara*

A volcanic range in the heart of the Sahara with eroded basalt columns. On the Assekrem, Charles de Foucauld lived in his hermitage, and sunrise over the volcanic plugs is one of the great moments of the desert. Here live the Tuareg, the "blue men," with Tamanrasset as their center.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise on the Assekrem · Foucauld's Hermitage · Tamanrasset

861 ☐

Libya: Tripolitania Coast, Nafusa Escarpment & Ghadames Oasis

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Leptis Magna is one of the greatest Roman cities in the world, and Sabratha has a theater by the sea. Ghadames, the "Pearl of the Desert," has covered lanes that protect against the heat. In the Nafusa Mountains stand the fortified granaries of the Amazigh. Libya is politically divided, and travel is only possible with restrictions.

HIGHLIGHTS Leptis Magna · Old Town of Ghadames · Qasr al-Hajj granary

862 ☐

Libya: Fezzan Basin, Ubari Sand Sea Lakes, Acacus Mountains & Waw an Namus Caldera

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND

Among the dunes of the Ubari Sand Sea lie salt lakes with palms, and the Acacus Mountains hold rock art of world rank. Waw an Namus is a volcanic crater with black sand and colorful lakes in the middle of the desert. In Germa the Garamantes once ruled. Hardly reachable at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Lakes of Ubari · Rock art in the Acacus · Waw an Namus

863 ☐

Libya: Cyrenaica Jabal al Akhdar (Green Mountain) & Gulf of Sidra

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

In the Green Mountain, the Jebel Akhdar, Greeks founded the city of Cyrene with its sanctuary of Apollo, a World Heritage Site. Apollonia and Ptolemais lie on the coast. Benghazi is the center of the east, and oil ports line the Gulf of Sidra.

HIGHLIGHTS Cyrene · Apollonia · Green Mountain

864 ☐

Libyan Desert & Great Sand Sea

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND *Gilf Kebir & Kufra / Eastern Sahara in LY, EG, SD*

In the Gilf Kebir lies the “Cave of Swimmers” from “The English Patient,” and at Jebel Uweinat Egypt, Libya and Sudan meet. In the Great Sand Sea you find Libyan desert glass, from which a scarab in the tomb of Tutankhamun was cut. Only with an expedition and a permit.

HIGHLIGHTS Cave of Swimmers · Libyan desert glass · Jebel Uweinat

865 ☐

Egypt: Siwa Oasis & Qattara Depression

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *-133 m below sea level*

In the Siwa Oasis, Alexander the Great consulted the Oracle of Amun in 331 BC. The mud-brick fortress of Shali is slowly crumbling, and in the salt lakes you float as in the Dead Sea. The Qattara Depression lies 133 meters below sea level, and on its northern edge at El Alamein a decision of World War II was reached.

HIGHLIGHTS Oracle Temple of Amun · Salt lakes of Siwa · Shali Fortress

866 ☐

Egypt: White Desert Chalk Formations, Black Desert & Bahariya–Farafra Oases

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND

In the White Desert, the wind has shaped chalk rocks into mushrooms and chickens that glow in the moonlight. The Black Desert is covered in basalt, and Crystal Mountain glitters with quartz. In Bahariya, a valley full of golden mummies was found. A night in a tent under the stars is a must.

HIGHLIGHTS Chalk rocks of the White Desert · Crystal Mountain · Valley of the Golden Mummies

867 ☐

Greater Alexandria & Nile River Delta

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Lower Egypt*

Alexandria was the city of Cleopatra and of the great library, whose modern successor now stands by the sea. The Citadel of Qaitbay rises where the Lighthouse of Pharos once stood. Near Rosetta, the stone that deciphered the hieroglyphs was found. The Delta is one of the most fertile regions on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Bibliotheca Alexandrina · Citadel of Qaitbay · Catacombs of Kom el-Shoqafa

868 Greater Cairo Megacity & Giza Plateau

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Egypt*

The Pyramids of Giza are the only surviving one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, guarded by the Sphinx. The new Grand Egyptian Museum is among the largest archaeological museums in the world. Islamic Cairo with its mosques and the Khan el-Khalili bazaar is a World Heritage Site, and at Saqqara stands the Step Pyramid of Djoser.

HIGHLIGHTS Pyramids of Giza · Grand Egyptian Museum · Khan el-Khalili

869 Egypt: Sinai Peninsula

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Mount Sinai Granite Core & Gulf of Aqaba Coast*

Pilgrims climb Mount Sinai at night to see the sunrise, and at its foot stands St. Catherine's Monastery, one of the oldest inhabited monasteries in Christendom. On the Gulf of Aqaba, the Blue Hole of Dahab and the reefs of Ras Mohammed beckon. Bedouins guide you through colored canyons.

HIGHLIGHTS Sunrise on Mount Sinai · St. Catherine's Monastery · Blue Hole of Dahab

870 Egypt: Upper Egypt Nile Valley Corridor (Luxor to Aswan) & Faiyum Oasis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Luxor is the largest open-air museum in the world: the Temple of Karnak, the Valley of the Kings with the tomb of Tutankhamun, the Temple of Hatshepsut. At dawn, balloons float over the West Bank, and feluccas and dahabiyas sail to Aswan. In Wadi el-Hitan, fossilized ancient whales lie in the desert.

HIGHLIGHTS Karnak · Valley of the Kings · Nile trip by dahabiya

871 Egypt: Eastern Desert & Red Sea Mountains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Hurghada to Ras Banas*

Between the Nile and the Red Sea lie jagged mountains with Roman quarries such as Mons Claudianus. St. Anthony's Monastery is considered the oldest monastery in the world. On the coast from Hurghada to Marsa Alam, visitors dive on reefs, and dugongs graze off Abu Dabbab.

HIGHLIGHTS St. Anthony's Monastery · Dugongs at Abu Dabbab · Mons Claudianus

872 Bir Tawil

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Unclaimed Terra Nullius Trapezoid between Egypt and Sudan*

A trapezoid of desert of around 2,060 square kilometers claimed by neither Egypt nor Sudan, because both want the neighboring Hala'ib Triangle instead. This makes Bir Tawil one of the last true no-man's-lands on Earth. Adventurers have raised flags here and proclaimed fantasy states. The journey is difficult and requires permits.

HIGHLIGHTS Terra nullius · Hala'ib Triangle · Desert expedition

873 ☐

Sudan: Nubian Desert, Bayuda Volcanic Field & Nile Cataracts

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND *Meroë/Dongola*

Sudan has more pyramids than Egypt: Near Meroë, around 200 steep burial pyramids of the Kushites rise from the sand. The sacred mountain of Jebel Barkal is a World Heritage Site, and painted doors glow in the villages of Nubia. War has raged since April 2023, and the country cannot currently be visited.

HIGHLIGHTS Pyramids of Meroë · Jebel Barkal · Nubian villages

874 ☐

Greater Khartoum–Omdurman

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

URBAN ISLAND *Blue & White Nile Confluence / Sudan*

At the confluence of the White and Blue Nile lies the capital of Sudan. In Omdurman, dervishes danced on Fridays at the tomb of Hamed el-Nil, and people haggled at the camel market. The war since 2023 has badly destroyed the city.

HIGHLIGHTS Confluence of the Niles · Dervish dance in Omdurman · Mahdi's Tomb

875 ☐

Sudan: Darfur Highlands & Jebel Marra Volcanic Caldera

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL

Jebel Marra is a volcanic massif with crater lakes, the green island in the Sahel and the highest point in Sudan. For two decades, Darfur has stood for war, displacement and humanitarian catastrophe. The region is closed to travelers.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater lakes of Deriba · Jebel Marra · Sahel

876 ☐

South Sudan: The Sudd (Bahr al Jabal Papyrus Megawetland) & Boma-Badingilo Plains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

The Sudd is one of the largest wetlands on Earth, where the White Nile loses itself in papyrus. In the cattle camps of the Mundari, people live closely with their long-horned cattle. Through Boma and Badingilo moves one of the largest mammal migrations in the world, with millions of antelope.

HIGHLIGHTS Mundari cattle camps · Antelope migration · Papyrus swamps

877 ☐

Chad: Ennedi Sandstone Plateau, Guelta d'Archei & Ounianga Saharan Lakes

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

DESERT & ARID LAND

In the Ennedi Massif, mighty sandstone arches span the sky, and in the Guelta d'Archei live some of the last desert crocodiles of the Sahara, while dromedaries drink at the water. The lakes of Ounianga lie in the middle of the hyper-arid desert — a World Heritage Site of blue and salt.

HIGHLIGHTS Aloba Arch · Guelta d'Archei · Lakes of Ounianga

878 ☐

Chad: Tibesti Volcanic Mountains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Emi Koussi – Highest Peak in the Sahara*

A volcanic range in the north of Chad with Emi Koussi, the highest mountain in the Sahara. The Trou au Natron is a huge crater with a white crust of soda. Here live the Toubou. Mines and insecurity make the Tibesti one of the hardest regions in Africa to reach.

HIGHLIGHTS Emi Koussi · Trou au Natron · Toubou nomads

879 ☐

Lake Chad Endorheic Basin & Bodele Depression

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon*

Since the 1960s, Lake Chad has shrunk by around 90 percent, and the Buduma live on floating islands. The nearby Bodélé Depression is the dustiest place on Earth — its dust still fertilizes the Amazon rainforest today. Armed groups make the region unsafe.

HIGHLIGHTS Floating islands · Dust storms of the Bodélé · Sahel landscape

880 ☐

Chari-Logone River Basin & Zakouma Savanna

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Southern Chad & Northern CAR*

Zakouma National Park is one of the great success stories of African conservation: After years of poaching, the elephant herds are growing again, and lions, red-fronted gazelles and Kordofan giraffes are back. In the rainy season, the Chari and Logone turn the plains into swamps full of birds. N'Djamena lies at the confluence of the two rivers.

HIGHLIGHTS Elephants in Zakouma · Red-fronted gazelles · N'Djamena

881 ☐

Niger: Ténéré Desert & Bilma Erg Dunes

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND

The "desert within the desert": In the Ténéré once stood the loneliest tree in the world, until a truck ran it down in 1973. Salt caravans, the azalai, still travel to Bilma, and abandoned desert fortresses stand in the Djado. The security situation makes travel hardly possible at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Salt caravan to Bilma · Ksar of Djado · Site of the Tree of Ténéré

882 ☐

Niger: Aïr Massif Granite Ring-Dikes & Agadez Sahel

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

The mud mosque of Agadez with its 27-meter minaret is a World Heritage Site, and its old town a hub of the Sahara. In the Aïr, granite rings form bizarre mountains, and at the Cure Salée, Tuareg and Wodaabe celebrate with beauty contests. Since the 2023 coup, the region has been practically closed.

HIGHLIGHTS Mud mosque of Agadez · Aïr granite rings · Cure Salée

883 ☐

Mali: Timbuktu Azawad Desert Margin & Niger River Northern Bend

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

DESERT & ARID LAND

Timbuktu was a center of Islamic scholarship, and its mud mosques and manuscripts are world heritage. Gao preserves the Tomb of the Askia, and the bend of the Niger borders the desert. Armed conflicts have made the region inaccessible for years.

HIGHLIGHTS Djinguereber Mosque · Manuscripts of Timbuktu · Tomb of the Askia

884 ☐

Mali: Bandiagara Escarpment (Dogon Country) & Hombori Mountains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Dogon live along a rock escarpment 150 kilometers long, in whose walls earlier peoples built their dwellings. Masks, dances and a cosmology of their own make Dogon Country unique. At Hombori, the Hand of Fatima rises as a rock tower. The security situation currently prevents travel.

HIGHLIGHTS Dogon villages · Mask dances · Hand of Fatima

885 ☐

Mali: Inner Niger Delta

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Macina Flooded Plains around Mopti & Djenné*

In the rainy season, the Niger transforms into a vast inland delta. The Great Mosque of Djenné is the largest mud-brick building in the world and is replastered by the whole town every year. In Mopti, colorful pinasses lie in the harbor, and Fulani herders drive their herds through the floods.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Mosque of Djenné · Port of Mopti · Cattle crossing at Diafarabé

886 ☐

Greater Bamako & Upper Niger Manding Hills

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

URBAN ISLAND *Mali*

The capital of Mali on the Niger is one of Africa's music capitals, home to Salif Keita, Amadou & Mariam and many griots. Colorful bustle fills the markets, and in the Manding Mountains near Siby stands a natural rock arch.

HIGHLIGHTS Music scene · Grand Marché · Rock arch of Siby

VIII · 2 TILES 887–915

WEST AFRICA & THE GULF OF GUINEA

From Cape Verde across the coasts of Senegal and the rainforests of Upper Guinea to the megacities on the Gulf of Guinea. Here the Niger, Senegal and Gambia rivers rise; here stand slave forts, voodoo shrines and islands of volcanic origin.

887 Cape Verde: Barlavento

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Windward Islands – Santo Antão, São Vicente, Sal & Boa Vista*

Santo Antão offers green valleys and hiking trails on steep slopes, and Mindelo on São Vicente is the city of morna and Cesária Évora. On Sal you float in the salt crater of Pedra de Lume, and on Boa Vista loggerhead turtles lay their eggs on broad beaches.

HIGHLIGHTS Hiking on Santo Antão · Mindelo · Pedra de Lume salt crater

888 Cape Verde: Sotavento

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Leeward Islands – Santiago, Fogo Active Volcano & Brava*

Fogo is a volcano of almost 2,900 meters that buried the village in its crater under lava in 2014 — and yet wine grows there again. Cidade Velha on Santiago was the first European colonial town in the tropics, a World Heritage Site. Brava is the quiet island of flowers.

HIGHLIGHTS Summit of Fogo · Crater wine of Chã das Caldeiras · Cidade Velha

889 Senegal: Cap-Vert Peninsula, Lac Rose & Ferlo Sahel

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE

Lac Rose glows pink thanks to algae, workers harvest salt from its bottom, and the Paris–Dakar Rally once ended here. In the Ferlo, herders roam the Sahel, where the “Great Green Wall” is being planted. In the north lie the colonial island of Saint-Louis and the bird paradise of Djoudj.

HIGHLIGHTS Lac Rose · Saint-Louis · Djoudj bird park

890 Greater Dakar Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Senegal*

The westernmost city of the African mainland at Pointe des Almadies. The African Renaissance Monument towers over the city, and in the evening mbalax blares from the clubs. Pirogues land at the Soumbédioune fish market, and in N’Gor you surf against the city’s backdrop.

HIGHLIGHTS African Renaissance Monument · Soumbédioune fish market · Pointe des Almadies

891 ☐

Gorée Island

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Offshore Basalt Island in Dakar Bay / Senegal*

A small, car-free basalt island off Dakar with colorful colonial houses — and a dark legacy: The House of Slaves with its "Door of No Return" is a symbol of the transatlantic slave trade. Gorée is a World Heritage Site and a place of remembrance.

HIGHLIGHTS House of Slaves · Castel Hill · Ferry from Dakar

892 ☐

The Gambia River Estuarine Corridor & Sine-Saloum Delta

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *GM & SN*

The Gambia is the smallest country on the African mainland, a narrow strip along the river. Kunta Kinteh Island and the Wassu stone circles are World Heritage Sites. In Senegal's Sine-Saloum Delta, mangroves alternate with shell islands, and in Joal-Fadiouth even the streets are made of shells.

HIGHLIGHTS Kunta Kinteh Island · Wassu stone circles · Shell island of Fadiouth

893 ☐

Senegal: Casamance Tropical River Basin & Niokolo-Koba

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

The green Casamance with rice fields, mangroves and the mud houses of the Jola, with long beaches on the coast at Cap Skirring. Lions and chimpanzees live in Niokolo-Koba National Park, and in the land of the Bassari the Dindéfelo waterfall plunges.

HIGHLIGHTS Cap Skirring · Niokolo-Koba · Dindéfelo Falls

894 ☐

Guinea-Bissau: Bijagós Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Biosphere Tidal Delta Islands*

Around 88 islands in a delta of tides and mangroves, home to a matriarchal culture. On Orango, hippos swim in salt water, and on Poilão thousands of green sea turtles lay their eggs. The archipelago has been a World Heritage Site since 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS Saltwater hippos · Turtles on Poilão · Bijagó culture

895 ☐

Guinea: Fouta Djallon Sandstone Highlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *"Water Tower of West Africa" – Source of Niger, Senegal & Gambia*

The "water tower of West Africa": In this sandstone highland rise the Niger, Senegal and Gambia. Waterfalls such as the "Bridal Veil" plunge over rock steps, and the Fulani drive their cattle across green plateaus. A cool, rarely visited hiking paradise.

HIGHLIGHTS Voile de la Mariée waterfall · Source of the Niger · Dalaba

896 ☐

Upper Guinean Rainforest & Coastal Mangroves

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Sierra Leone & Liberia*

The rainforests of Sierra Leone and Liberia are a biodiversity hotspot. On Tiwai Island live pygmy hippos and eleven primate species, and forest elephants roam Sapo National Park. On the coast, the beaches of the Freetown Peninsula and the surf of Robertsport beckon.

HIGHLIGHTS Tiwai Island · Beaches of the Freetown Peninsula · Robertsport

897 ☐

Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve Range

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Guinea, Liberia & Ivory Coast Tri-Border*

A range on the tri-border of Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast, a World Heritage Site and strict nature reserve. Here lives a toad that gives birth to live young, and near Bossou chimpanzees crack nuts with stones. A visit requires permits and luck.

HIGHLIGHTS Chimpanzees of Bossou · Nimba toad · Mountain forests

898 ☐

Ivory Coast: Taï Primary Rainforest & Comoé Savanna

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

Taï National Park preserves the largest remnant of primary forest in West Africa, where chimpanzees crack nuts with stone tools. Comoé Park is the largest protected area in the region. In Yamoussoukro stands the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, one of the largest churches in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Chimpanzees in Taï · Comoé National Park · Basilica of Yamoussoukro

899 ☐

Greater Abidjan & Ébrié Lagoon Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Ivory Coast*

The “Paris of West Africa,” with the skyline of Le Plateau mirrored in the lagoon and the Banco rainforest in the middle of the city. The old colonial capital of Grand-Bassam is a World Heritage Site. Coupé-décalé music and attiéké shape the way of life.

HIGHLIGHTS Grand-Bassam · Banco National Park · St. Paul’s Cathedral

900 ☐

Greater Kumasi & Ashanti Forest Uplands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Ghana*

The capital of the Ashanti Kingdom with the Manhyia Palace and Kejetia Market, one of the largest in West Africa. Kente is woven in Bonwire, and Lake Bosumtwi fills a meteorite crater. At the Akwasidae festival, the king appears beneath umbrellas and gold.

HIGHLIGHTS Manhyia Palace · Kente weaving in Bonwire · Lake Bosumtwi

901 ☐

Greater Accra Coastal Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Ghana*

Ghana's capital with Independence Arch, the Jamestown Lighthouse and the workshops where coffins in the shape of fish, cars or airplanes are made. Trade pulses at Makola Market. On the coast to the west stand the slave forts of Cape Coast and Elmina, a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Fantasy coffins · Jamestown · Cape Coast Castle

902 ☐

Lake Volta Basin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

INLAND WATERS *World's Largest Reservoir by Surface Area / Ghana*

The largest reservoir on Earth by area was created in 1965 behind the Akosombo Dam. Dead trees of a drowned forest rise from the water. On the eastern shore plunge the Wli Falls, the highest in West Africa, and sacred monkeys live in Tafi Atome. It counts with a boat trip across the lake.

HIGHLIGHTS Akosombo Dam · Wli Falls · Tafi Atome monkey sanctuary

903 ☐

W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) Savanna Complex & Burkina Mossi Plateau

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *NE, BF, BJ*

The transboundary park complex is the largest intact savanna ecosystem in West Africa, home to the region's last large lion and elephant populations. On the Mossi Plateau lies Ouagadougou with the FESPACO film festival, and in Tiébélé the houses are painted. Islamist violence makes the region dangerous at present.

HIGHLIGHTS Pendjari National Park · Painted houses of Tiébélé · FESPACO

904 ☐

Atakora (Togo) Mountains & Mono-Ouémé Basins

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Togo & Benin*

In Koutammakou and the Atakora, the Batammariba build mud castles with little towers. Ouidah is the center of voodoo, celebrated with a great festival in January, and Ganvié is a stilt village in the middle of Lake Nokoué. In Abomey stand the palaces of the Kings of Dahomey.

HIGHLIGHTS Stilt village of Ganvié · Voodoo festival in Ouidah · Tata castles of Koutammakou

905 ☐

Greater Lagos Lagoon Megacity

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Nigeria*

One of the largest and most dynamic cities in Africa, home of Nollywood and Afrobeats. The canopy walkway in the Lekki Conservation Centre is among the longest in Africa, the Third Mainland Bridge runs for kilometers across the lagoon, and in Makoko houses stand on stilts in the water. Loud, chaotic and full of energy.

HIGHLIGHTS Lekki canopy walkway · Makoko · Afrobeats live

906 ☐

Greater Kano & Hausa Sahelian Plains

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Northern Nigeria*

Kano is an ancient city of Hausa trade with mud walls and the dye pits of Kofar Mata, in operation for over 500 years. At the Durbar festival, splendidly adorned horsemen ride before the emir. The security situation in northern Nigeria calls for caution.

HIGHLIGHTS Dye pits of Kofar Mata · Durbar festival · Emir's Palace

907 ☐

Jos Plateau & Niger–Benue Confluence

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Central Nigeria*

A cool high plateau on which the Nok culture created masterly terracottas over 2,000 years ago. Near Lokoja, the Niger and Benue flow together, and in the capital of Abuja rises Zuma Rock. In Yankari Park, warm springs bubble among elephants.

HIGHLIGHTS Zuma Rock · Confluence at Lokoja · Warm springs of Yankari

908 ☐

Niger River Delta Mangroves & Cross River Rainforest

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Southern Nigeria*

The Niger Delta is one of the largest mangrove areas on Earth, and scarred by oil pollution. Cross River National Park is home to the rarest gorillas in the world, and on the Obudu Plateau a cable car runs above the forest. The Calabar Carnival is considered the biggest street party in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Cross River gorillas · Obudu Plateau · Calabar Carnival

909 ☐

Cameroon Volcanic Line

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Mount Cameroon, Bamenda Highlands & Lake Nyos*

Mount Cameroon, at over 4,000 meters, is the highest mountain in West Africa and an active volcano, with the "Race of Hope" mountain marathon held every year. In 1986, Lake Nyos released a cloud of carbon dioxide that killed almost 1,750 people. The Sultan of the Bamum resides in Foumban.

HIGHLIGHTS Mount Cameroon · Sultan's Palace of Foumban · Black beaches of Limbe

910 ☐

Greater Douala Wouri Estuary Metropolis

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Cameroon*

Cameroon's largest city and most important port, at the mouth of the Wouri. Colonial buildings stand in the Bonanjo district, and the Doual'art project brings art into public space. Douala is hot, humid, loud and the economic heart of Central Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Doual'art · Bonanjo · Mouth of the Wouri

911 Greater Yaoundé Central Plateau Metropolis

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Cameroon*

Cameroon's capital lies on seven hills on the cooler central plateau. From Mont Fébé you overlook the city, and the Reunification Monument recalls the union of the English- and French-speaking parts of the country. Rescued primates live in the nearby Mefou sanctuary.

HIGHLIGHTS Mont Fébé · Reunification Monument · Mefou primates

912 Bioko Volcanic Island

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Pico Basilé / Equatorial Guinea*

Equatorial Guinea's island with the capital of Malabo lies off the coast of Cameroon. Pico Basilé reaches over 3,000 meters, in the south lies the crater lake of Moka, and sea turtles lay their eggs on the beaches of Ureca. Drills and colobus monkeys live in the forests.

HIGHLIGHTS Pico Basilé · Turtles of Ureca · Malabo

913 Río Muni Continental Rainforest & Monte Alén

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Equatorial Guinea Mainland*

The mainland part of Equatorial Guinea is covered in dense rainforest. Gorillas, chimpanzees and forest elephants live in Monte Alén National Park. Inland, a new capital, Ciudad de la Paz, is being built, and offshore lies the island of Corisco.

HIGHLIGHTS Monte Alén National Park · Bata · Corisco Island

914 São Tomé and Príncipe

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Pico Cão Grande Volcanic Plug Islands*

Pico Cão Grande rises like a needle from the rainforest, a volcanic plug. In the old cocoa plantations, the roças, one of the finest cocoas in the world is still grown today. On Príncipe in 1919, Arthur Eddington confirmed Einstein's theory of relativity during a solar eclipse.

HIGHLIGHTS Pico Cão Grande · Roça Agua Izé · Equator on Ilhéu das Rolas

915 Annobón Island

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southernmost Gulf of Guinea Volcanic Outpost / Equatorial Guinea*

A tiny volcanic island far out in the Gulf of Guinea, 340 kilometers from São Tomé, where a Creole language of Portuguese origin is spoken. A crater lake lies in its interior, and whales pass by. Visits require permits and plenty of patience.

HIGHLIGHTS Lago a Pot crater lake · Fa d'Ambô · Whales

VIII · 3 TILES 916–923

CENTRAL AFRICA & THE CONGO BASIN

The second-largest rainforest on Earth, home to forest elephants, gorillas and bonobos. Eight tiles, many so remote they can only be reached by riverboat or bush plane — along with Kinshasa and Brazzaville, facing each other across the Congo.

916 Sangha Trinational Rainforest

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Dzanga-Sangha Bai Clearings / CAR, Cameroon, Congo*

In the forest clearing of Dzanga Bai, dozens of forest elephants gather every day. In the rainforests on the tri-border of the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Congo, you can visit habituated lowland gorillas and go net hunting with the BaAka. A World Heritage Site in one of the most remote corners of Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Forest elephants at Dzanga Bai · Gorilla tracking · BaAka net hunt

917 Ogooué River Basin, Loango Coast & Lopé Forest-Savanna

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Gabon*

In Loango National Park, elephants walk along the beach, hippos splash in the surf and humpback whales pass offshore — "Africa's last Eden." In Lopé Park, mandrills move through the forest in groups of hundreds. In Lambaréné, Albert Schweitzer founded his hospital.

HIGHLIGHTS Elephants on Loango beach · Mandrills in Lopé · Hospital in Lambaréné

918 Batéké Plateau & Northern Congo Swamp Forests

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Republic of the Congo*

In Odzala-Kokoua National Park you can visit western lowland gorillas, and forest elephants graze in the clearings. The swamp forests of the Cuvette Centrale form the largest tropical peatland on Earth, and according to legend a dinosaur lives in Lac Télé.

HIGHLIGHTS Gorillas in Odzala · Forest clearings · Lac Télé

919 Cabinda Exclave

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Angolan Coastal Exclave north of the Congo River Mouth*

An exclave of Angola north of the mouth of the Congo, separated from the rest of the country by a narrow coastal strip of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A large share of Angola's oil is extracted off the coast, and gorillas live in the Mayombe Forest. A separatist movement has been demanding independence for decades.

HIGHLIGHTS Mayombe Forest · City of Cabinda · Oil coast

920 Greater Kinshasa–Brazzaville Twin Megacity & Livingstone Falls

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

URBAN ISLAND *Lower Congo*

Two capitals gaze at each other across the Congo — apart from Rome and the Vatican, no two capitals lie so close together. Kinshasa is one of the largest French-speaking cities on Earth, home of rumba and of the sapeurs in elegant suits. Below the cities, the river plunges over Livingstone Falls, the most voluminous rapids in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Sapeurs · Congolese rumba · Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary

921 Central Congo Basin

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Cuvette Centrale Rainforest, Salonga & Lomami / DR Congo*

Salonga National Park is the largest tropical rainforest reserve in Africa and home to the bonobos, which live only south of the Congo. In Lomami Park, a new species of monkey was described in 2012. Getting here means traveling for weeks by riverboat or bush plane.

HIGHLIGHTS Bonobos · Riverboat on the Congo · Lomami National Park

922 Virunga Volcanic Chain (Nyiragongo Lava Lake), Kahuzi-Biega & Lake Kivu

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Albertine Rift / DRC*

In the crater of Nyiragongo seethed one of the largest lava lakes in the world, and mountain gorillas live on its slopes. Eastern lowland gorillas live in Kahuzi-Biega Park, and Lake Kivu holds huge amounts of methane in its depths. Since the M23 advance of 2025, eastern Congo has been a war zone.

HIGHLIGHTS Lava lake of Nyiragongo · Mountain gorillas · Lake Kivu

923 Katanga (Shaba) Miombo Plateau, Upemba & Lualaba Headwaters

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Southeastern DRC*

The copper and cobalt country of the world: Much of the planet's cobalt is mined around Lubumbashi and Kolwezi. In Kundelungu National Park, the Lofoi Falls drop as some of the highest in Africa, and the Lualaba is the upper course of the Congo. Miombo woodlands cover the highlands.

HIGHLIGHTS Lofoi Falls · Upemba National Park · Miombo woodlands

VIII · 4 TILES 924–954

HORN OF AFRICA & THE EAST AFRICAN RIFT SYSTEM

Here the continent is tearing apart: From the Afar Triangle, the rift runs through Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. On its edges stand the highest mountains in Africa, across its savannas moves the greatest animal migration on Earth — and here humankind was born.

924 ☐

Eritrea: Red Sea Coastal Escarpment & Asmara Central Highlands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Asmara is an open-air exhibition of Italian modernism, a World Heritage Site since 2017, with cinemas, cafés and a gas station in the shape of an airplane. A steam railway winds from the highlands through tunnels down to the port city of Massawa with its coral-stone houses. The country is one of the most closed in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Fiat Tagliero · Asmara–Massawa railway · Old Town of Massawa

925 ☐

Dahlak Coral Archipelago

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Red Sea / Eritrea*

Around 200 coral islands in the southern Red Sea, surrounded by nearly untouched reefs. On Dahlak Kebir lie old cisterns and medieval Islamic gravestones. Visits require permits from the Eritrean authorities — a dive ground hardly anyone knows.

HIGHLIGHTS Untouched reefs · Cisterns of Dahlak Kebir · Dive safari from Massawa

926 ☐

Danakil Depression (Erta Ale Lava Lake & Dallol Hydrothermal Field) & Afar Triangle

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

EXTREME POINT *Ethiopia*

One of the most hostile places on Earth and also one of the most spectacular: A lava lake seethes at Erta Ale, acid pools glow neon yellow and green at Dallol, and caravans cut slabs of salt from the plain. The highest average temperatures of any inhabited place have been recorded here.

HIGHLIGHTS Lava lake of Erta Ale · Colored pools of Dallol · Salt caravans

927 ☐

Lake Assal (-155 m – Lowest Land Point in Africa) & Gulf of Tadjoura Rift

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

EXTREME POINT *Djibouti*

Lake Assal lies 155 meters below sea level — the lowest point in Africa — and is saltier than the Dead Sea. At Lac Abbé, limestone chimneys rise from the plain, a backdrop for “Planet of the Apes.” From November to February, whale sharks swim in the Gulf of Tadjoura.

HIGHLIGHTS Salt shore of Lake Assal · Limestone chimneys at Lac Abbé · Whale sharks

928 ☐

Ethiopian Northwestern Highlands, Simien Mountains & Lake Tana

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Blue Nile Source*

In the Simien Mountains, geladas graze at the edge of precipices, and Ras Dashen reaches over 4,500 meters. In Lalibela, eleven churches were carved from the rock, imperial castles stand in Gondar, and ancient monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana. Where the lake drains, the Blue Nile plunges over the Tis Abay Falls.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock churches of Lalibela · Geladas in the Simien · Tis Abay Falls

929 ☐

Greater Addis Ababa Entoto Highland Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Ethiopia*

One of the highest capitals in the world and the seat of the African Union. The National Museum holds "Lucy," the skeleton of a hominin over three million years old. Merkato is one of the largest open-air markets in Africa, and the coffee ceremony here becomes a ritual.

HIGHLIGHTS Lucy in the National Museum · Merkato · Coffee ceremony

930 ☐

Bale Mountains Afro-Alpine Plateau & Omo River Valley

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Ethiopia*

The Sanetti Plateau is the largest Afro-alpine area in Africa and home to the Ethiopian wolf, the rarest canid in the world. In the Omo Valley live peoples such as the Mursi with lip plates and the Hamar with their bull jumping. Some of the oldest fossils of modern humans were found here.

HIGHLIGHTS Ethiopian wolves · Hamar bull jumping · Harenna Forest

931 ☐

Ogaden & Haud Semi-Arid Plateau

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Eastern Ethiopia*

On the edge of the highlands lies Harar, the walled city with over 80 mosques, where Rimbaud lived. At night the "hyena men" feed wild hyenas before the city gates. Beyond stretches the arid Ogaden, land of Somali nomads.

HIGHLIGHTS Hyena feeding in Harar · Jugol Old Town · Camel market

932 ☐

Golis Escarpment, Laas Geel & Gulf of Aden Coast

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE *Somaliland*

An internationally unrecognized but astonishingly stable state. In the rock shelters of Laas Geel, paintings of cattle and people thousands of years old glow as fresh as if painted yesterday. Hargeisa has a huge camel market, and Berbera Ottoman coral houses by the sea.

HIGHLIGHTS Rock art of Laas Geel · Hargeisa camel market · Berbera

933 ☐

Cape Guardafui (Ras Asir) & Karkaar Mountains of Puntland

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

COAST & PENINSULA *Horn of Africa Tip / Somalia*

The tip of the Horn of Africa, where the Gulf of Aden meets the Indian Ocean, guarded by an old lighthouse. In the Karkaar Mountains grow frankincense trees, whose resin has been traded since antiquity. Insecurity and piracy make the region hard to access.

HIGHLIGHTS Guardafui Lighthouse · Frankincense trees · Bosaso

934 ☐

Greater Mogadishu & Shebelle–Jubba Alluvial Plains

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

URBAN ISLAND *Somalia*

Somalia's capital on the Indian Ocean is experiencing a cautious rebirth despite ongoing attacks: Families swim at Lido Beach, and new restaurants are opening. The old town of Hamar Weyne and the ruins of the cathedral recall more glorious times. Behind the city, the Shabelle and Jubba irrigate the farmland.

HIGHLIGHTS Lido Beach · Hamar Weyne Old Town · Fish market

935 ☐

Jubaland Coast & Bajuni Coral Islands

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

COAST & PENINSULA *Southern Somalia*

A chain of coral islands off the coast of southern Somalia, home to the Bajuni with their Swahili culture, dhows and fishing traditions. The coast around Kismayo and Lag Badana National Park are among the wildest and most untouched coastal landscapes in East Africa — and because of the security situation, currently almost unreachable.

HIGHLIGHTS Bajuni Islands · Kismayo · Lag Badana

936 ☐

Lake Turkana (Jade Sea) & Chalbi Desert

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

INLAND WATERS *Northern Kenyan Rift*

The "Jade Sea": the largest permanent desert lake on Earth, shimmering green amid lava and sand. Thousands of Nile crocodiles live on Central Island, and at Koobi Fora the "Turkana Boy" and many fossils of our ancestors were found. At the festival in Loiyangalani, the peoples of the north come together.

HIGHLIGHTS Central Island · Fossils of Koobi Fora · Turkana Festival

937 ☐

Murchison Falls, Lake Albert Rift & Kidepo Valley

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern & Western Uganda*

At Murchison Falls, the entire Nile forces its way through a rock cleft only seven meters wide. Boat tours lead past hippos and crocodiles to the foot of the falls, and the shoebill lurks on Lake Albert. Remote Kidepo Valley is considered one of the most beautiful national parks in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Murchison Falls · Shoebill · Kidepo Valley

938 ☐

Rwenzori Mountains ("Mountains of the Moon" Equatorial Glaciers) & Queen Elizabeth Channel

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *UG/DRC*

The Mountains of the Moon bear equatorial glaciers, and Margherita Peak, at over 5,100 meters, is the third-highest summit in Africa. Giant lobelias and tree groundsels grow as if from another world. In Queen Elizabeth Park, lions climb trees, and hippos crowd the Kazinga Channel.

HIGHLIGHTS Margherita Peak · Tree-climbing lions in Ishasha · Kazinga Channel

939 ☐

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest & Northern Lake Victoria Shore

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST *Southern Uganda*

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is home to almost half of all the mountain gorillas in the world — an hour with a gorilla family is among the greatest experiences on Earth. Lake Bunyonyi is surrounded by terraces, and in the Mabamba Swamp you search for the shoebill.

HIGHLIGHTS Gorilla tracking in Bwindi · Lake Bunyonyi · Shoebill in the Mabamba Swamp

940 ☐

Greater Kampala–Entebbe Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Uganda*

Uganda's capital lies on seven hills, with boda-bodas, motorcycle taxis, buzzing through the streets. The Kasubi Tombs of the Buganda kings are a World Heritage Site, and millions make the pilgrimage to the Martyrs' Shrine at Namugongo. Entebbe lies on Lake Victoria, with its Botanical Gardens and the airport of the legendary 1976 rescue raid.

HIGHLIGHTS Kasubi Tombs · Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine · Entebbe Botanical Gardens

941 ☐

Rwanda Central Highlands

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *"Land of a Thousand Hills", Nyungwe & Volcanoes NP*

Mountain gorillas and golden monkeys live in Volcanoes National Park, and a demanding hike ends at the grave of Dian Fossey. In Nyungwe Forest, a canopy walkway leads over the chimpanzees. The memorial in Kigali recalls the genocide of 1994, and the city itself is considered one of the cleanest in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Mountain gorillas · Nyungwe canopy walkway · Memorial in Kigali

942 ☐

Burundi Highlands & Rusizi Tanganyika Rift Margin

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

A small, densely populated highland on Lake Tanganyika. The royal drummers of Gishora are intangible World Heritage, hippos live in the Rusizi Delta, and a small pyramid marks the southernmost source of the Nile. Bujumbura has sandy beaches on the lake.

HIGHLIGHTS Drummers of Gishora · Southernmost source of the Nile · Beaches on Lake Tanganyika

943 Kenyan Gregory Rift Valley

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Lakes Nakuru, Bogoria, Naivasha & Hell's Gate*

The East African Rift in its purest form: Rhinos live at Lake Nakuru, and at Lake Bogoria geysers erupt among flamingos. In Hell's Gate you cycle among zebras through gorges, and on Crescent Island in Lake Naivasha you walk among giraffes. Longonot is a walkable volcanic crater.

HIGHLIGHTS Cycling in Hell's Gate · Flamingos at Lake Bogoria · Crater of Longonot

944 Mount Kenya Massif, Aberdare Range & Laikipia–Samburu Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Central Kenya*

Mount Kenya is the second-highest mountain in Africa, and Point Lenana is within reach of trekkers. At the Treetops Hotel in the Aberdares, Princess Elizabeth became queen in 1952. Ol Pejeta is home to the last two northern white rhinos, and Samburu to the "Special Five" of the north.

HIGHLIGHTS Point Lenana · Ol Pejeta · Samburu Special Five

945 Greater Nairobi Metropolitan Area

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Kenya*

The only capital in the world with a national park inside its city limits — lions hunt before the skyline. At the Sheldrick orphanage, baby elephants are raised, and at the Giraffe Centre you feed Rothschild's giraffes. Karen Blixen's house recalls "Out of Africa."

HIGHLIGHTS Nairobi National Park · Elephant orphanage · Giraffe Centre

946 Maasai Mara & Loita Plains

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Southwestern Kenya*

From July to October, herds of wildebeest plunge into the Mara River, where crocodiles await them — the most spectacular chapter of the Great Migration. Lions, cheetahs and leopards in great numbers, the culture of the Maasai and balloon rides at dawn make the Mara legendary.

HIGHLIGHTS Wildebeest river crossing · Balloon safari · Maasai villages

947 Serengeti Plains & Lake Natron Soda Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Tanzania*

The "endless plain": Around one and a half million wildebeest migrate in a circle through the Serengeti, and in February hundreds of thousands of calves are born in the south. At Lake Natron, lesser flamingos breed in a caustic soda lye, overlooked by Ol Doinyo Lengai, the only active volcano with natrocarbonatite lava.

HIGHLIGHTS Calving season in Ndutu · Lake Natron · Ol Doinyo Lengai

948 ☐

Ngorongoro Crater Highlands & Olduvai Gorge

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Tanzania*

The largest intact caldera on Earth is an ark full of wildlife, with black rhinos and lions in a tight space. In Olduvai Gorge, the Leakeys found traces of the earliest humans, and at Laetoli the footprints of hominins 3.7 million years old.

HIGHLIGHTS Floor of Ngorongoro Crater · Olduvai Gorge · Empakaai Crater

949 ☐

Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m – Highest Peak in Africa), Mount Meru & Amboseli Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *TZ/KE*

At 5,895 meters, the highest mountain in Africa and the highest free-standing mountain in the world — from rainforest to glacier, you pass through every climate zone. Meru is its small, steep brother, and in Kenya's Amboseli elephants with mighty tusks parade before Kibo.

HIGHLIGHTS Uhuru Peak · Machame Route · Elephants in Amboseli

950 ☐

Lamu Archipelago, Tana Delta & Kenyan Coral Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *Mombasa/Diani / Kenya*

Lamu is the oldest inhabited Swahili town, without cars, with donkeys and dhows — a World Heritage Site. In Mombasa, Portuguese Fort Jesus towers over the harbor, and the beaches of Diani and Watamu are among the most beautiful in Africa. Dolphins leap off Wasini, and at Gede the ruins of a Swahili town lie in the forest.

HIGHLIGHTS Old Town of Lamu · Fort Jesus · Dolphins at Wasini

951 ☐

Zanzibar

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Unguja Island / Tanzania*

Stone Town is a labyrinth of carved doors and lanes, a World Heritage Site and the birthplace of Freddie Mercury. On spice tours you smell cloves, cinnamon and vanilla, and the endemic Zanzibar red colobus lives in Jozani Forest. At sunset, dhows sail off the coast.

HIGHLIGHTS Stone Town · Spice tour · Zanzibar red colobus

952 ☐

Pemba & Mafia Coral Islands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Swahili Coast / Tanzania*

Pemba is the "green island" of clove plantations, with untouched reefs and a hotel room underwater. Off Mafia, whale sharks swim from October to March, and the marine park is among the most beautiful on the Swahili Coast. Hardly any mass tourism, a great deal of authenticity.

HIGHLIGHTS Whale sharks off Mafia · Clove plantations on Pemba · Misali Island

953 ☐ **Greater Dar es Salaam Metropolitan Coast** ◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *Tanzania*

Tanzania's largest city on the Indian Ocean, with the huge Kariakoo Market, the fish market on the harbor and the colorful Tingatinga paintings that originated here. Offshore lies Bongoyo Island, and to the north the old caravan town of Bagamoyo.

HIGHLIGHTS Kariakoo Market · Kivukoni fish market · Bagamoyo

954 ☐ **Nyerere (Selous) Rufiji Basin, Ruaha & Eastern Arc Mountains (Udzungwa/Usambara) & Mahale/Katavi** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Tanzania*

Nyerere National Park, formerly Selous, is the largest national park in Africa, with boat safaris on the Rufiji and wild dogs. Ruaha is home to large lion prides, and the Eastern Arc Mountains of Usambara and Udzungwa are known as the "Galápagos of Africa." On Lake Tanganyika, chimpanzees live on the beach at Mahale.

HIGHLIGHTS Boat safari on the Rufiji · Lions in Ruaha · Chimpanzees in Mahale

VIII · 5 TILES 955–989

SOUTHERN AFRICA

From Lake Malawi and Victoria Falls across the deserts of Namibia and the Okavango Delta to the Drakensberg and the Cape. Here too lie Lesotho and Eswatini, two kingdoms, one of them completely surrounded by another state.

955 ☐ **Lake Malawi (Nyasa) Rift Trench & Nyika Plateau** ◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

INLAND WATERS *Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania*

The "Lake of Stars" holds more fish species than any other lake on Earth, especially colorful cichlids, which you admire while snorkeling at Cape Maclear. The Nyika Plateau is a cool high plain full of orchids, zebras and antelopes.

HIGHLIGHTS Snorkeling at Cape Maclear · Nyika Plateau · Livingstonia

956 ☐ **Likoma & Chizumulu Islands** ◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Malawian Lacustrine Exclaves inside Mozambican Waters*

Two islands that belong to Malawi but lie in Mozambican waters of Lake Malawi. On Likoma stands the Anglican Cathedral of St. Peter, as large as an English bishop's church. Reachable on the historic lake steamer MV Ilala or by boat from Mozambique.

HIGHLIGHTS Cathedral of St. Peter · MV Ilala · Baobabs on the beach

957 ☐

Mount Mulanje Granite Inselberg & Shire Valley

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Southern Malawi*

The granite massif of Mulanje rises like an island from the tea plantations, and Sapitwa reaches over 3,000 meters. Here grows the endemic Mulanje cedar. On the Shire in Liwonde National Park live elephants and hippos, and Majete is once again home to the Big Five.

HIGHLIGHTS Sapitwa summit · Tea plantations of Thyolo · Liwonde National Park

958 ☐

Bangweulu Swamps & Kasanka Wetlands

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Zambia*

In November and December, around ten million straw-colored fruit bats gather in Kasanka, the largest mammal migration on Earth. In the Bangweulu Swamps lives the shoebill, and black lechwe roam in huge herds. The manor house of Shiwa Ng'andu looks like an English country estate in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Fruit bat migration · Shoebill · Shiwa Ng'andu

959 ☐

Luangwa Rift Valley

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *North & South Luangwa / Eastern Zambia*

In South Luangwa, Norman Carr invented the walking safari, in which you encounter wildlife on foot. The park is famous for its leopards, and Thornicroft's giraffe exists only here. Black rhinos have been reintroduced in North Luangwa.

HIGHLIGHTS Walking safari · Leopards · Carmine bee-eaters

960 ☐

Greater Lusaka & Kafue Flats

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Central Zambia*

Zambia's capital is a young, fast-growing city with lively markets and a relaxed café scene. It is the gateway to Kafue National Park, one of the largest in Africa, whose flooded Busanga Plains are among the best places for lions and cheetahs. On the Kafue Flats, lechwe move through the grassland by the tens of thousands.

HIGHLIGHTS Kafue National Park · Busanga Plains · Markets of Lusaka

961 ☐

Upper Zambezi River, Barotse Floodplain & Liuwa Plain

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Western Zambia & Eastern Angola*

At the Kuomboka festival, the royal barge of the Lozi carries the king to safety from the flood. On the Liuwa Plain, the second-largest wildebeest migration in Africa takes place, accompanied by hyena clans. At the Ngonye Falls, the Zambezi plunges over a broad rock step.

HIGHLIGHTS Kuomboka ceremony · Wildebeest migration in Liuwa · Ngonye Falls

962 ☐

Greater Luanda Coastal Metropolis

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Angola*

Angola's capital with the Marginal waterfront, the Fortress of São Miguel and the Mussulo Peninsula. Luanda is among the most expensive cities in the world. South of the city, the cliffs at Miradouro da Lua are eroding into a moonscape, and elephants live once more in Kissama Park.

HIGHLIGHTS Miradouro da Lua · Fortaleza de São Miguel · Ilha do Mussulo

963 ☐

Bié Plateau (Cuanza/Cubango Headwaters), Kalandula Falls & Pungo Andongo Black Rocks

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Angola*

The Kalandula Falls are among the most voluminous waterfalls in Africa. At Pungo Andongo, black rocks rise from the savanna, said to bear the footprints of Queen Nzinga. On the plateau rise the Kwanza and Okavango, and the giant sable antelope lives in Cangandala Park.

HIGHLIGHTS Kalandula Falls · Black Rocks of Pungo Andongo · Giant sable antelope

964 ☐

Serra da Leba Escarpment & Iona Coastal Desert

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Southwestern Angola*

The Serra da Leba pass road winds down the escarpment in spectacular hairpins, and at the Tundavala Gap the rock falls away a thousand meters. In Iona National Park grows the welwitschia, a plant that can live for over a thousand years. Here live the Mucubal.

HIGHLIGHTS Hairpins of the Serra da Leba · Tundavala Gap · Welwitschia

965 ☐

Kaokoveld, Kunene River (Epupa Falls) & Damaraland

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Brandberg/Spitzkoppe / Northwestern Namibia*

In the Kaokoveld live the Himba, whose women rub themselves with red ocher paste. At the Epupa Falls, the Kunene plunges into palm gorges, and desert elephants and black rhinos roam Damaraland. The rock engravings of Twyfelfontein are a World Heritage Site, and Spitzkoppe is the "Matterhorn of Namibia."

HIGHLIGHTS Himba villages · Rock engravings of Twyfelfontein · Spitzkoppe

966 ☐

Etosha Salt Pan & Waterberg Plateau

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Namibia*

The Etosha Pan is a salt desert visible from space, and elephants, rhinos and lions crowd its waterholes, floodlit at night at Okaukuejo. The Waterberg Plateau is a table mountain with a dramatic history, and near Grootfontein lies Hoba, the largest known meteorite on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Okaukuejo waterhole · Waterberg · Hoba Meteorite

967 ☐

Skeleton Coast Fog Desert & Cape Cross

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Namibia*

A fog desert where the cold Benguela Current meets the Namib, lined with shipwrecks and whale bones. Up to 200,000 Cape fur seals live at Cape Cross, where Diogo Cão raised a stone cross in 1486. Swakopmund preserves German colonial flair.

HIGHLIGHTS Seal colony at Cape Cross · Shipwrecks · Swakopmund

968 ☐

Namib Erg Dune Sea

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Sossusvlei, Deadvlei & Sandwich Harbour / Namibia*

The Namib is considered the oldest desert on Earth. Near Sossusvlei, red dunes tower over 300 meters, and in Deadvlei dead acacias have stood on white clay for centuries. At Sandwich Harbour, dunes fall straight into the Atlantic, and the NamibRand Reserve offers one of the darkest starry skies in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Deadvlei · Big Daddy · Sandwich Harbour

969 ☐

Fish River Canyon, Sperrgebiet & Lower Orange River Richtersveld

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Namibia & South Africa*

The Fish River Canyon is one of the largest canyons on Earth, with a five-day hike along its floor. In the ghost town of Kolmanskop, sand fills the villas of the diamond diggers, and the former Sperrgebiet is today a national park. Succulents such as the "half-mens" grow in the Richtersveld.

HIGHLIGHTS Fish River Canyon · Kolmanskop · Half-mens trees

970 ☐

Okavango Inland Delta, Moremi & Chobe Riverfront

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northern Botswana & Caprivi Strip*

The Okavango seeps away into the Kalahari and forms the largest inland delta on Earth — by mokoro you glide among water lilies, elephants and hippos. Along the Chobe lives one of the largest elephant populations in Africa. Namibia's Caprivi Strip reaches as far as the Zambezi.

HIGHLIGHTS Mokoro trip · Elephants on the Chobe · Moremi

971 ☐

Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, Central Kalahari & Kgalagadi Transfrontier Dunes

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Botswana, SA, NA*

The salt pans of Makgadikgadi are among the largest in the world; in the rainy season herds of zebras pass through, and on their edges stand the Baines' Baobabs and tame meerkats. In the Central Kalahari live the San, and in the Kgalagadi black-maned lions hunt among red dunes.

HIGHLIGHTS Makgadikgadi salt pans · Meerkats · Black-maned lions

972 ☐

Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya) & Batoka Basalt Gorge

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

INLAND WATERS *Zambia / Zimbabwe Border*

"The Smoke That Thunders": Across 1,700 meters, the Zambezi plunges over 100 meters into the deep — the largest curtain of falling water on Earth. At Devil's Pool you sit right at the edge in the dry season, bungee jumpers leap from the bridge, and top-class rapids roar in the Batoka Gorge.

HIGHLIGHTS Devil's Pool · Rafting in the Batoka Gorge · Lunar rainbow

973 ☐

Lower Zambezi Valley, Mana Pools Floodplain & Cahora Bassa

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique*

In Mana Pools, a World Heritage Site, you may travel on foot, and elephants here stand on their hind legs to reach acacia pods. Canoe safaris run along the Zambezi, and on the Zambian side lies Lower Zambezi Park. Farther downstream, Cahora Bassa dams the river into a huge lake.

HIGHLIGHTS Canoe safari · Elephants on their hind legs · Cahora Bassa

974 ☐

Greater Harare & Mashonaland Highveld

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

URBAN ISLAND *Zimbabwe*

Zimbabwe's capital lies pleasantly high on the Highveld. At Domboshawa, rock paintings adorn the granite, and in the Chinhoyi Caves a deep blue lake gleams. Farther south lie the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the stone city that gave the country its name.

HIGHLIGHTS Great Zimbabwe · Chinhoyi Caves · Domboshawa

975 ☐

Matobo Granite Balancing Rocks, Hwange & Eastern Highlands

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Chimanimani / Zimbabwe*

In the Matobo Hills, granite boulders balance on one another, and rhinos live among the rock paintings. Hwange National Park is home to tens of thousands of elephants. In the Eastern Highlands plunge the Mutarazi Falls, among the highest waterfalls in Africa, and the Chimanimani Mountains are a hiking paradise.

HIGHLIGHTS Balancing rocks · Elephants in Hwange · Mutarazi Falls

976 ☐

Quirimbas Coral Archipelago & Niassa Inselbergs

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

COAST & PENINSULA *Northern Mozambique*

On Ibo Island in the Quirimbas Archipelago, silversmiths work in crumbling colonial houses, and Ilha de Moçambique was the country's first capital and is a World Heritage Site. The Niassa Reserve is one of the largest wildernesses in Africa. An insurgency in Cabo Delgado has made the north unsafe since 2017.

HIGHLIGHTS Ilha de Moçambique · Ibo Island · Niassa Reserve

977 ☐

Zambezi Delta & Mozambican Coastal Lowlands

◆◆◆◆◇ EXPEDITION

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Central Mozambique*

Where the Zambezi flows into the sea lies a labyrinth of mangroves and grassland with herds of buffalo. Beira was devastated by Cyclone Idai in 2019, and the former Grand Hotel is an inhabited ruin. One of the least visited coasts in Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS Mangroves of the delta · Grande Hotel Beira · Marromeu

978 ☐

Mount Gorongosa Massif & Southern Rift Termination

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Mozambique*

In the civil war, almost all the large animals of Gorongosa were killed — today, thanks to one of the most successful conservation projects in the world, over a hundred thousand large mammals live here again. Mount Gorongosa bears rainforest and waterfalls, and the East African Rift ends in the Urema Graben.

HIGHLIGHTS Gorongosa National Park · Murombodzi Falls · Lake Urema

979 ☐

Bazaruto Archipelago & Inhambane Barrier Dunes

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Southern Mozambique*

Around the Bazaruto Islands lives the last large dugong population in East Africa, and the islands' migrating dunes gleam above turquoise water. Off Tofo and Inhambane, whale sharks and giant mantas swim almost year-round, and from Vilankulo multi-day dhow safaris set out for lonely beaches. One of the most beautiful coasts on the Indian Ocean.

HIGHLIGHTS Dugongs · Whale sharks off Tofo · Dhow safari

980 ☐

Maputaland Coastal Plain, iSimangaliso (St. Lucia Estuary) & Sodwana Reefs

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

COAST & PENINSULA *SA & Southern MZ*

iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a World Heritage Site: hippos and crocodiles in the St. Lucia estuary, leatherback turtles on the beaches. In the underwater canyons off Sodwana live coelacanths, living fossils. Beyond the border lie Maputo and the dolphins of Ponta do Ouro.

HIGHLIGHTS St. Lucia Estuary · Coelacanths of Sodwana · Maputo

981 ☐

Kruger Lowveld Savanna & Blyde River Canyon Escarpment

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

PLAIN, RIVER & STEPPE *Northeastern South Africa*

Kruger National Park is the size of Israel and home to the Big Five, and in the private reserves of the Sabi Sand you can see leopards up close. Above it, the Blyde River Canyon, one of the largest canyons on Earth, breaks off steeply, with God's Window and the Three Rondavels.

HIGHLIGHTS Big Five in Kruger · Three Rondavels · Bourke's Luck Potholes

982 ☐

Kingdom of Eswatini

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *Swaziland Lebombo & Highveld*

One of the last absolute monarchies in the world. At the Umhlanga Reed Dance, tens of thousands of young women dance before the king, and rhinos live in Hlane and Mkhaya. The Ngwenya Mine is considered one of the oldest mines of humankind, and the granite dome of Sibebe one of the largest monoliths on Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS Umhlanga Reed Dance · Mkhaya · Sibebe Rock

983 ☐

Greater Johannesburg–Pretoria (Gauteng Witwatersrand) Conurbation

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Africa*

On the Witwatersrand, a large share of all the gold ever produced has been mined. In Soweto, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, two Nobel Peace Prize winners, lived on the same street, and the Apartheid Museum tells the country's story. The Cradle of Humankind with the Sterkfontein Caves is a World Heritage Site.

HIGHLIGHTS Vilakazi Street in Soweto · Apartheid Museum · Cradle of Humankind

984 ☐

Kingdom of Lesotho

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ANOMALY & EXCLAVE *Enclaved Maloti–Drakensberg "Kingdom in the Sky"*

The only country in the world lying entirely above 1,000 meters, and completely surrounded by South Africa. A 4x4 track climbs Sani Pass to the highest pub in Africa. Basotho in wool blankets ride ponies, and the Maletsunyane Falls plunge almost 200 meters in a single drop.

HIGHLIGHTS Sani Pass · Maletsunyane Falls · Thaba Bosiu

985 ☐

uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Escarpment, Amphitheatre & Wild Coast

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS *KwaZulu-Natal & Eastern Cape / SA*

The Amphitheatre is a rock wall five kilometers long, over which the Tugela Falls plunge. The San left behind tens of thousands of rock paintings in the Drakensberg. On the Wild Coast lie the Hole in the Wall and Mandela's home village, and in winter the Sardine Run attracts dolphins, sharks and whales.

HIGHLIGHTS Amphitheatre · San rock art · Hole in the Wall

986 ☐

Greater Durban (eThekwini) Indian Ocean Metropolis

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Africa*

A city on the warm Indian Ocean with the largest community of Indian descent in Africa — bunny chow is curry in a hollowed-out loaf of bread. The Golden Mile is a paradise for surfers and beachgoers, and above Moses Mabhida Stadium you swing on a giant swing.

HIGHLIGHTS Bunny chow · Golden Mile · Victoria Street Market

987 ☐

Great Karoo, Little Karoo & Namaqualand Semi-Desert Basin

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

DESERT & ARID LAND *Interior South Africa*

The Karoo is a semi-desert full of fossils of the ancestors of mammals. Oudtshoorn is the ostrich capital of the world, the Cango Caves are a dripstone palace, and in Sutherland stands one of the largest telescopes in the Southern Hemisphere. In spring, Namaqualand transforms into a sea of flowers.

HIGHLIGHTS Namaqualand flower carpet · Swartberg Pass · Cango Caves

988 ☐

Cape Floristic Region

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

COAST & PENINSULA *Fynbos Mountains, Cederberg, Cape Agulhas & Garden Route / South Africa*

The smallest of the Earth's six floral kingdoms is the richest in species: Thousands of plants grow only here. In the Cederberg stand sandstone arches, and at Cape Agulhas the Atlantic and Indian Oceans officially part. The Garden Route, the wineries of Stellenbosch and the whales off Hermanus belong here too.

HIGHLIGHTS Cape Agulhas · Garden Route · Whale watching in Hermanus

989 ☐

Greater Cape Town & Table Mountain Peninsula

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

URBAN ISLAND *South Africa*

Table Mountain is one of the New7Wonders of Nature, with a rotating cable car gliding up. Nelson Mandela spent 18 years in prison on Robben Island, and penguins waddle on Boulders Beach. Colorful Bo-Kaap, Chapman's Peak Drive and the Cape of Good Hope make Cape Town one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS Table Mountain · Robben Island · Cape of Good Hope

VIII · 6 TILES 990–1001

MADAGASCAR & THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

Madagascar is a continent in miniature and is divided into its five ecological zones. Around it lie the Comoros, the Seychelles, France's scattered islands and the Mascarenes — Réunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues, the last of the 1001 tiles.

990 ☐

Comoros Archipelago

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Grande Comore / Karthala, Mohéli & Anjouan*

An archipelago of volcanic islands between Africa and Madagascar. Karthala on Grande Comore has one of the largest craters of any active volcano, and the Comoros are among the largest producers of ylang-ylang for the perfume industry. The coelacanth lives in their waters, and turtles lay their eggs off Mohéli.

HIGHLIGHTS Crater of Karthala · Ylang-ylang plantations · Mohéli Marine Park

991 ☐

Mayotte

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Grande-Terre & Petite-Terre Barrier Reef Lagoon / FR*

A French department since 2011, surrounded by one of the largest lagoons in the world with a double barrier reef. In 2018 a new undersea volcano formed off the coast, the largest underwater eruption ever observed. At the end of 2024 the island was badly devastated by Cyclone Chido. Dugongs and humpback whales live in the lagoon.

HIGHLIGHTS Lagoon of Mayotte · Dziani Lake on Petite-Terre · Humpback whales

992 ☐

Madagascar: Northern Diana, Ankarana & Nosy Be Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

In the Ankarana Massif, razor-sharp limestone needles, the tsingy, rise above caves and crowned lemurs. Tiny chameleons live in the cloud forest of Montagne d'Ambre, and off Diego Suarez gleams the Emerald Sea. Nosy Be is the perfume island of ylang-ylang, with whale sharks passing off its coast.

HIGHLIGHTS Tsingy of Ankarana · Emerald Sea · Nosy Be

993 ☐

Madagascar: Western Dry Forests, Tsingy de Bemaraha & Baobab Avenue

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

The Tsingy de Bemaraha are a stone forest of limestone needles, crossed on suspension bridges and via ferratas — a World Heritage Site. Near Morondava, centuries-old baobabs line the famous avenue, and in Kirindy Forest hunts the fossa, Madagascar's largest predator.

HIGHLIGHTS Tsingy de Bemaraha · Avenue of the Baobabs · Fossa in Kirindy

994 ☐

Madagascar: Central Highlands, Andringitra & Isalo Massif

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

MOUNTAINS & HIGHLANDS

Antananarivo lies on hills above rice fields, and the Royal Hill of Ambohimanga is a World Heritage Site. In the Andringitra Massif you climb Pic Boby, and in Isalo National Park sandstone gorges lead to natural pools. In the Anja Reserve, ring-tailed lemurs live among the rocks.

HIGHLIGHTS Isalo canyons · Pic Boby · Ring-tailed lemurs in Anja

995 ☐

Madagascar: Eastern Rainforest Escarpment & Masoala Peninsula

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

FOREST & RAINFOREST

In Andasibe, the indris, the largest lemurs, sing their eerie songs through the mist. Masoala is Madagascar's largest protected area, where the rainforest meets the sea, and on Nosy Mangabe lives the nocturnal aye-aye. Off Île Sainte-Marie, humpback whales pass a pirate cemetery.

HIGHLIGHTS Indris in Andasibe · Masoala · Whales off Sainte-Marie

996 ☐

Madagascar: Southern Spiny Forest & Mahafaly Plateau

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

DESERT & ARID LAND

A forest as if from another planet: The octopus trees of the spiny forest grow only here. The Mahafaly adorn their tombs with carved posts and zebu horns, sifakas dance across the ground in the Berenty Reserve, and flamingos stand at Lake Tsimanampetsotsa.

HIGHLIGHTS Octopus trees · Dancing sifakas · Mahafaly tombs

997 ☐

Îles Éparses

◆◆◆◆◆ EXTREME

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Scattered Islands: Europa, Bassas da India, Juan de Nova, Glorioso & Tromelin / FR*

Europa, Bassas da India, Juan de Nova, the Glorioso Islands and Tromelin: French coral islands around Madagascar, occupied only by military personnel and researchers. On Tromelin, slaves were abandoned in 1761 and survived for 15 years. On Europa, thousands of green sea turtles lay their eggs. The Visibility Rule applies.

HIGHLIGHTS Turtles on Europa · Tromelin · Visibility Rule

998 ☐

Seychelles Archipelago

◆◆◇◇◇ MODERATE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Inner Granitic Islands Mahé/Praslin/La Digue & Aldabra Outer Atoll*

The inner Seychelles are granite islands, remnants of a microcontinent, with the rocks of Anse Source d'Argent on La Digue. In the Vallée de Mai grows the coco de mer, with the largest seed in the world. Aldabra Atoll is a World Heritage Site and home to around a hundred thousand giant tortoises.

HIGHLIGHTS Anse Source d'Argent · Vallée de Mai · Aldabra

999 ☐

Réunion

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

VOLCANO & GEOTHERMAL *Piton de la Fournaise & Cirques Volcanic Island / FR*

Piton de la Fournaise is among the most active volcanoes in the world, and Piton des Neiges the highest peak in the Indian Ocean. The three cirques are mighty valley basins — Mafate can only be reached on foot or by helicopter. A piece of France and the EU, with Creole cuisine and world-class canyoning.

HIGHLIGHTS Piton de la Fournaise · Cirque de Mafate · Canyoning

1000 ☐

Mauritius Main Island

◆◇◇◇◇ EASY

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Black River Gorges & Le Morne*

Le Morne Brabant was a refuge for escaped slaves and is a World Heritage Site, and off its coast an underwater waterfall seems to plunge into the deep — an optical illusion made of sand. In Chamarel the earth shimmers in seven colors, and the gorges of Black River hold the last primeval forests. The dodo lived here.

HIGHLIGHTS Le Morne Brabant · Seven Colored Earth · Black River Gorges

1001

☐

Rodrigues Island

◆◆◆◇◇ ADVENTURE

ISLAND & ARCHIPELAGO *Isolated Mascarene Ridge Lagoon / Mauritius*

The final tile: a quiet island 560 kilometers east of Mauritius, whose lagoon is twice the size of the island itself. In the François Leguat Reserve, giant tortoises live again among limestone caves, women fish for octopus in the lagoon, and kitesurfers glide across the reef. A worthy end to a journey across the entire planet.

HIGHLIGHTS Lagoon of Rodrigues · Caves in the François Leguat Reserve · Kitesurfing

AFTERWORD

A LIFE'S WORK FOR SOVEREIGN EXPLORERS

Who can complete the GREAT1001? The honest answer is: perhaps no one. And that is precisely the point.

Conventional country lists — "all 193 UN nations" — are now ticked off in a few years by hundreds of people rushing from airport to airport. The GREAT1001, by contrast, demands a lifetime of relentless curiosity, logistical mastery, physical resilience and true personal freedom.

To fill this map, you must cross open oceans, break through Arctic pack ice, drive 4x4 tracks across the most remote deserts and mountain passes, dive isolated seamounts, push deep into rainforest basins and feel the pulse of humanity's greatest megacities. You will freeze, sweat, wait, fail and set off again.

> *GREAT1001 is not a bureaucratic scorecard for people seeking applause from the herd. It is the ultimate blueprint for all those who want to experience our planet in all its raw, unfiltered greatness.*

Every one of the 1001 tiles tells a story of how the Earth was forged — by plates drifting apart, glaciers carving valleys, rivers draining continents and people building cities and drawing borders. Whoever travels them reads this book of the Earth chapter by chapter.

GREAT1001 // SOVEREIGN EXPLORERS

The project includes a community for all who love true travel and exploration: uncompromisingly individualistic, free in thought and focused on what really matters — experiencing the world in all its greatness with your own eyes. No raised fingers, no morality police and no sitting in a circle.

You can find the complete Masterlist, project news and access to the community through Staatenlos. If you see yourself as a free spirit and a true explorer, you are warmly invited.

WHICH TILE ARE YOU CONQUERING NEXT?

APPENDIX I
THE CHECKLIST OF ALL 1001 TILES

Check off what you have set foot on, sailed across or, where the Visibility Rule applies, seen with your own eyes. Ten tiles are a beginning, a hundred a journey, five hundred a lifetime.

I · THE HYDROSPHERE

- 1 ☐ Geographic North Pole
- 2 ☐ Arctic Ocean
- 3 ☐ North Atlantic Ocean
- 4 ☐ North Sea & Wadden Sea Basin
- 5 ☐ Baltic Sea
- 6 ☐ Sargasso Sea
- 7 ☐ Gulf of Mexico
- 8 ☐ Caribbean Sea
- 9 ☐ Panama Canal
- 10 ☐ Mediterranean Sea
- 11 ☐ Corinth Canal
- 12 ☐ Suez Canal
- 13 ☐ Red Sea
- 14 ☐ South Atlantic Ocean
- 15 ☐ Drake Passage & Scotia Sea
- 16 ☐ Southern Ocean
- 17 ☐ Indian Ocean
- 18 ☐ Arabian Sea
- 19 ☐ South China Sea
- 20 ☐ Torres Strait & Arafura Sea
- 21 ☐ Coral Sea
- 22 ☐ Tasman Sea
- 23 ☐ South Pacific Ocean
- 24 ☐ Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility
- 25 ☐ North Pacific Ocean
- 26 ☐ Mariana Trench
- 27 ☐ Bering Sea
- 28 ☐ Great Bear Lake
- 29 ☐ Great Slave Lake
- 30 ☐ Lake Superior
- 31 ☐ Lake Michigan–Huron
- 32 ☐ Hoover Dam & Lake Mead
- 33 ☐ Lake Titicaca
- 34 ☐ Guri Dam & Reservoir
- 35 ☐ Itaipu Dam
- 36 ☐ Aswan High Dam & Lake Nasser
- 37 ☐ Lake Victoria
- 38 ☐ Lake Tanganyika
- 39 ☐ Kariba Dam & Reservoir
- 40 ☐ Caspian Sea

II · ANTARCTICA & THE SUB-ANTARCTIC

- 41 ☐ Geographic South Pole
- 42 ☐ Karman Line Space
- 43 ☐ Vostok Station Region
- 44 ☐ Queen Maud Land
- 45 ☐ Amery Ice Shelf Region
- 46 ☐ Wilkes Land
- 47 ☐ Ross Ice Shelf & Victoria Land
- 48 ☐ Mount Erebus
- 49 ☐ McMurdo Dry Valleys
- 50 ☐ Marie Byrd Land
- 51 ☐ Vinson Massif & Ellsworth Mountains
- 52 ☐ Antarctic Peninsula & South Shetland Islands
- 53 ☐ South Sandwich Islands
- 54 ☐ South Georgia
- 55 ☐ Bouvet Island
- 56 ☐ Gough Island
- 57 ☐ Tristan da Cunha
- 58 ☐ St. Helena
- 59 ☐ Ascension Island
- 60 ☐ Crozet Islands
- 61 ☐ Kerguelen Islands
- 62 ☐ Heard Island & McDonald Islands
- 63 ☐ Amsterdam & Saint-Paul Islands
- 64 ☐ Macquarie Island

III · EUROPE

- 65 ☐ Vestmannaeyjar / Heimaey
- 66 ☐ Iceland: Southwest Rift & Reykjanes
- 67 ☐ Iceland: Westfjords Peninsula
- 68 ☐ Iceland: Northern Volcanic Zone & Highlands
- 69 ☐ Iceland: Vatnajökull & Eastern Glacier Zone
- 70 ☐ Faroe Islands
- 71 ☐ Jan Mayen
- 72 ☐ Bear Island / Bjørnøya
- 73 ☐ Svalbard: Spitsbergen
- 74 ☐ Svalbard: Nordaustlandet & Eastern Ice Caps
- 75 ☐ Franz Josef Land
- 76 ☐ Novaya Zemlya
- 77 ☐ Shetland Islands
- 78 ☐ Orkney Islands
- 79 ☐ Hebrides
- 80 ☐ Scottish Highlands & Cairngorms
- 81 ☐ Scottish Lowlands & Southern Uplands
- 82 ☐ Northern Ireland: Causeway Coast & Antrim Plateau
- 83 ☐ Ireland: Wild Atlantic Way
- 84 ☐ Ireland: Central Plains & East Coast
- 85 ☐ Isle of Man
- 86 ☐ British Pennines, Lake District & Northern Uplands
- 87 ☐ Greater Manchester Metropolitan Area
- 88 ☐ Wales: Snowdonia & Cambrian Mountains
- 89 ☐ Greater Birmingham & West Midlands Conurbation
- 90 ☐ English Lowlands, Cotswolds & Fens
- 91 ☐ Greater London Metropolitan Area
- 92 ☐ Cornwall, Devon & Isles of Scilly Peninsula
- 93 ☐ Channel Islands

94 ☐ Arctic Finnmark & North Cape Tundra
95 ☐ Lofoten & Vesterålen Archipelago
96 ☐ Central Norway / Trøndelag
97 ☐ Norwegian Alpine Highlands
98 ☐ Western Norwegian Fjordland
99 ☐ Southern Norway
100 ☐ Swedish Lapland
101 ☐ Scandinavian Taiga & Bothnian Coast
102 ☐ Svealand Great Lakes Basin
103 ☐ Greater Stockholm Metropolitan Area
104 ☐ Gotland & Öland
105 ☐ Småland Highlands
106 ☐ Scania (Skåne) & Swedish West Coast
107 ☐ Bornholm
108 ☐ Danish Straits Archipelago
109 ☐ Jutland Peninsula
110 ☐ Hans Island (Tartupaluk) & Märket Reef
111 ☐ Åland Islands
112 ☐ Finnish Lapland
113 ☐ Finnish Lakeland Plateau
114 ☐ Finnish Coastal Plains & Archipelago Sea
115 ☐ Estonian West Coast Islands
116 ☐ Estonian Coastal Plain, Peipus & Taiga
117 ☐ Livonia & Courland Lowlands
118 ☐ Lithuanian Highlands & Nemunas Basin
119 ☐ Curonian Spit
120 ☐ Kaliningrad Exclave
121 ☐ Frisian Islands Chain
122 ☐ Veluwe Heathlands & Northeastern Geest
123 ☐ Randstad Megacity Conurbation
124 ☐ Rhine–Meuse–Scheldt Delta
125 ☐ Baarle-Hertog / Baarle-Nassau
126 ☐ Flanders Coastal Plains & Marshes
127 ☐ Greater Brussels Metropolitan Area
128 ☐ Vennbahn Counter-Exclaves
129 ☐ Ardennes Forest Massif
130 ☐ Luxembourg Gutland & Moselle Valley
131 ☐ Normandy Chalk Coast & Cotentin Peninsula
132 ☐ Armorican Massif
133 ☐ Paris Basin & Loire Valley Lowlands
134 ☐ Greater Paris Metropolitan Area
135 ☐ Vosges Mountains & Alsace Rhine Rift West
136 ☐ Franco-Swiss Jura Fold Belt
137 ☐ Massif Central Volcanic Highlands
138 ☐ Aquitaine Basin & Landes Coast
139 ☐ Languedoc-Roussillon Mediterranean Plain
140 ☐ Rhône–Saône Tectonic Corridor
141 ☐ Greater Lyon Metropolitan Area
142 ☐ French Alps & Mont Blanc Massif
143 ☐ Provence, Verdon & Côte d'Azur
144 ☐ Greater Marseille Metropolitan Area
145 ☐ Principality of Monaco
146 ☐ Corsica
147 ☐ Pyrenees Main Crest
148 ☐ Llívia
149 ☐ Principality of Andorra
150 ☐ Os de Civís
151 ☐ Catalan Coastal Ranges
152 ☐ Greater Barcelona Metropolitan Area
153 ☐ Ebro River Basin & Bardenas Reales
154 ☐ Cantabrian Mountains & Picos de Europa
155 ☐ Galician Massif & Rías Baixas Coast
156 ☐ Douro River Basin & Northern Portugal
157 ☐ Tagus (Tejo) Estuary & Central Portugal
158 ☐ Greater Lisbon Metropolitan Area
159 ☐ Alentejo Plains & Algarve Cliffs
160 ☐ Extremadura & Middle Tagus Basin
161 ☐ Northern Castilian Meseta
162 ☐ Greater Madrid Metropolitan Area
163 ☐ Southern Castilian Meseta & La Mancha Plains
164 ☐ Levante Mediterranean Coast
165 ☐ Greater Valencia Metropolitan Area
166 ☐ Balearic Islands: Mallorca & Menorca
167 ☐ Balearic Islands: Pityusic Group
168 ☐ Guadalquivir Basin & Andalusian Lowlands
169 ☐ Baetic System & Sierra Nevada
170 ☐ Gibraltar
171 ☐ Ceuta
172 ☐ Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera & Alhucemas
173 ☐ Melilla
174 ☐ Canary Islands: Eastern Desert Group
175 ☐ Canary Islands: Central Shield Volcanoes
176 ☐ Canary Islands: Western Steep Islands
177 ☐ Madeira & Porto Santo Archipelago
178 ☐ Azores: Eastern & Central Group
179 ☐ Azores: Western Group
180 ☐ Heligoland
181 ☐ Rügen, Usedom & German Baltic Lagoons
182 ☐ North German Plain, Lüneburg Heath & Coastal Marshes
183 ☐ Greater Berlin Metropolitan Area
184 ☐ Harz, Thuringian Forest & Central German Uplands
185 ☐ Rhine-Ruhr Megacity Conurbation
186 ☐ Rhenish Massif
187 ☐ Greater Frankfurt Rhine-Main Metropolitan Area
188 ☐ Black Forest, Odenwald & Upper Rhine Rift East
189 ☐ Swabian & Franconian Jura Karst Escarpment
190 ☐ Bavarian Alpine Foreland & Lake Constance Basin
191 ☐ Greater Munich Metropolitan Area
192 ☐ Büsingen am Hochrhein
193 ☐ Swiss Plateau
194 ☐ Swiss High Alps & Pennine Crest
195 ☐ Campione d'Italia
196 ☐ Principality of Liechtenstein
197 ☐ Samnaun
198 ☐ Livigno
199 ☐ Kleinwalsertal
200 ☐ Jungholz
201 ☐ Northern Limestone Alps
202 ☐ Austrian Central Alps
203 ☐ Austrian Danube Basin, Wachau & Vienna Woods
204 ☐ Greater Vienna Metropolitan Area
205 ☐ Dolomites & South Tyrol
206 ☐ Po Valley Alluvial Plain & Venetian Lagoon
207 ☐ Greater Milan Metropolitan Area
208 ☐ Ligurian Coast & Apuan Alps
209 ☐ Tuscany Hills & Tiber River Basin
210 ☐ Tuscan Archipelago
211 ☐ Republic of San Marino
212 ☐ Central Apennines & Gran Sasso Massif
213 ☐ Greater Rome Metropolitan Area

214 ☐ Vatican City
215 ☐ Campania Volcanic Arc, Vesuvius & Amalfi
216 ☐ Greater Naples Metropolitan Area
217 ☐ Apulia Karst Plateau & Salento Peninsula
218 ☐ Calabria & Aspromonte Massif
219 ☐ Aeolian Islands
220 ☐ Sicily & Mount Etna
221 ☐ Sardinia
222 ☐ Pelagie Islands & Pantelleria
223 ☐ Malta & Gozo Archipelago
224 ☐ Pomeranian Lakeland & Polish Baltic Coast
225 ☐ Greater Poland Lowland
226 ☐ Masovia, Masurian Lakes & Białowieża Primeval Forest
227 ☐ Greater Warsaw Metropolitan Area
228 ☐ Silesian Lowland & Upper Oder Basin
229 ☐ Sudetes & Giant Mountains
230 ☐ Bohemian Basin
231 ☐ Greater Prague Metropolitan Area
232 ☐ Moravian Corridor & Karst
233 ☐ Lesser Poland & Northern Carpathian Foothills
234 ☐ High Tatras Alpine Massif
235 ☐ Slovak Ore Mountains & Danubian Lowland
236 ☐ North Hungarian Mountains
237 ☐ Greater Budapest Metropolitan Area
238 ☐ Transdanubian Hills & Lake Balaton Basin
239 ☐ Great Hungarian Plain
240 ☐ Apuseni Mountains
241 ☐ Transylvanian Plateau & Southern Carpathians
242 ☐ Western Moldavia & Eastern Carpathian Foreland
243 ☐ Wallachian Plain & Iron Gates Gorge
244 ☐ Danube Delta & Dobruja Steppe
245 ☐ Moldovan Central Plateau
246 ☐ Gagauzia
247 ☐ Transnistria
248 ☐ Slovenian Karst, Julian Alps & Soča Valley
249 ☐ Istrian Peninsula
250 ☐ Kvarner Gulf Islands
251 ☐ Dalmatian Mainland Coast & Velebit Karst
252 ☐ North & Central Dalmatian Islands
253 ☐ South Dalmatian Islands & Dubrovnik Exclave
254 ☐ Dinaric Alps Core
255 ☐ Herzegovinian Neretva Karst & Poljes
256 ☐ Montenegrin Durmitor Massif, Tara Canyon & Bay of Kotor
257 ☐ Accursed Mountains
258 ☐ Albanian Coastal Lowlands & Ionian Riviera
259 ☐ Ohrid & Prespa Tectonic Lakes Basin
260 ☐ Vardar River Basin & Šar Mountains
261 ☐ Danubian Plain of Northern Bulgaria
262 ☐ Balkan Mountains Main Crest
263 ☐ Rila, Pirin & Rhodope Massifs
264 ☐ Thracian Plain & Maritsa Basin
265 ☐ East Thrace
266 ☐ Istanbul: European Side & Golden Horn
267 ☐ Greek Macedonia, Chalkidiki & Mount Olympus
268 ☐ Autonomous Monastic State of Mount Athos
269 ☐ Epirus, Vikos Gorge & Pindus Mountains
270 ☐ Ionian Islands
271 ☐ Thessalian Plain & Meteora Monoliths
272 ☐ Greater Athens & Attica Basin
273 ☐ Peloponnese Peninsula & Taygetus Range
274 ☐ North Aegean Islands, Sporades & Euboea
275 ☐ East Aegean Islands
276 ☐ Cyclades Archipelago
277 ☐ Dodecanese Archipelago
278 ☐ Crete
279 ☐ Cyprus: Southern Troodos & Coast
280 ☐ Cyprus: Northern Kyrenia Range & Karpas
281 ☐ Cyprus: British Sovereign Base Areas & UN Buffer Enclaves
282 ☐ Ukrainian Eastern Carpathians
283 ☐ Podolian Upland & Dniester Canyon
284 ☐ Dnieper Upland & Central Forest-Steppe
285 ☐ Greater Kyiv Metropolitan Area
286 ☐ Pontic Steppe & Black Sea Lowland
287 ☐ Crimean Peninsula & Crimean Mountains
288 ☐ Donets Ridge & Donbas Steppe
289 ☐ Pripyat Marshes
290 ☐ Belarusian Ridge & Neman-Dvina Lowlands
291 ☐ Greater Saint Petersburg & Neva Delta
292 ☐ Kola Peninsula, Khibiny Tundra & White Sea Coast
293 ☐ Upper Volga Basin, Valdai Hills & Golden Ring
294 ☐ Greater Moscow Metropolitan Area
295 ☐ Middle & Lower Volga Steppe & Volga Delta
296 ☐ Ciscaucasia & Kuban Steppe
297 ☐ Greater Caucasus Northern Flank
298 ☐ Polar & Subpolar Ural Mountains
299 ☐ Central Ural Mountains
300 ☐ Southern Ural Mountains

IV · ASIA

301 ☐ Western Siberian Lowland
302 ☐ Taymyr Peninsula
303 ☐ Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago
304 ☐ Putorana Plateau
305 ☐ Central Siberian Plateau
306 ☐ Lake Baikal Rift Basin
307 ☐ Yakutia / Lena River Basin & Verkhoyansk Range
308 ☐ New Siberian Islands
309 ☐ Wrangel Island
310 ☐ Kolyma Basin & Magadan Highlands
311 ☐ Chukotka Peninsula
312 ☐ Kamchatka Peninsula
313 ☐ Commander Islands
314 ☐ Kuril Islands Volcanic Arc
315 ☐ Sakhalin Island
316 ☐ Amur River Basin & Zeya-Bureya Plains
317 ☐ Sikhote-Alin Mountain Range
318 ☐ Kazakh Steppe & Turgai Valley
319 ☐ Mangystau Karst Plateau & Ustyurt Escarpment
320 ☐ Aral Sea Basin
321 ☐ Lake Balkhash Endorheic Basin & Charyn Canyon
322 ☐ Kazakh Altai & Irtysh Headwaters
323 ☐ Mongolian Altai Mountains
324 ☐ Khangai Mountains, Orkhon Valley & Khövsgöl Basin
325 ☐ Gobi Desert
326 ☐ Northern Tian Shan Foothills & Ili Valley
327 ☐ Issyk-Kul High-Altitude Endorheic Basin
328 ☐ Central Tian Shan High Peaks

329 ☐ Greater Tashkent Metropolitan Area
330 ☐ Fergana Valley Intermontane Basin
331 ☐ Sokh
332 ☐ Shohimardan
333 ☐ Vorukh
334 ☐ Pamir Mountains
335 ☐ Vakhsh & Panj River Lowlands
336 ☐ Kyzylkum Desert & Zarafshan Oasis Corridor
337 ☐ Karakum Desert & Kopet Dag Foothills
338 ☐ Darvaza Gas Crater
339 ☐ Southern Greater Caucasus & Colchis Lowland
340 ☐ Armenian Volcanic Highland & Lake Sevan
341 ☐ Nakhchivan Exclave
342 ☐ Kura-Aras Lowland & Absheron Mud Volcanoes
343 ☐ Istanbul: Asian Side
344 ☐ Aegean Coast & Sea of Marmara Basin
345 ☐ Pontic Mountains
346 ☐ Central Anatolian Plateau & Cappadocia Tuff Cones
347 ☐ Taurus Mountains & Lycian Coast
348 ☐ Eastern Anatolian Highland, Lake Van & Mount Ararat
349 ☐ Southeastern Anatolia
350 ☐ Syrian Steppe & Palmyra Desert
351 ☐ Mount Lebanon Range & Beqaa Rift Valley
352 ☐ Levantine Coastal Plain, Galilee & Negev Crater Desert
353 ☐ West Bank Highlands & Dead Sea Jordan Rift Valley
354 ☐ Gaza Strip Coastal Enclave
355 ☐ Wadi Rum Sandstone Desert & Petra Rift Escarpment
356 ☐ Mesopotamian Alluvial Plain & Marshlands
357 ☐ Iraqi Kurdistan
358 ☐ Kuwait Bay & Northern Gulf Alluvial Coast
359 ☐ Al-Ahsa Oasis & Eastern Arabian Gulf Coast
360 ☐ Bahrain Archipelago
361 ☐ Qatar Karst Peninsula
362 ☐ Rub' al Khali Coastal Sabkha & Liwa Oasis
363 ☐ Greater Dubai–Sharjah Metropolitan Area
364 ☐ Madha & Nahwa
365 ☐ Musandam Fjord Peninsula
366 ☐ Al Hajar Mountains & Wahiba Sands
367 ☐ Dhofar Monsoon Escarpment
368 ☐ Rub' al Khali
369 ☐ Najd Central Plateau & Tuwaiq Escarpment
370 ☐ Greater Riyadh Metropolitan Area
371 ☐ Hejaz & Asir Red Sea Escarpment
372 ☐ Yemeni Sarawat Highlands, Hadhramaut Canyon & Tihamah Coast
373 ☐ Socotra Archipelago
374 ☐ Qeshm & Hormuz Salt-Dome Islands
375 ☐ Khuzestan Karun Plain
376 ☐ Zagros Fold-and-Thrust Belt
377 ☐ Greater Isfahan & Central Plateau Oasis Belt
378 ☐ Greater Tehran Metropolitan Area
379 ☐ Alborz Mountain Range, Damavand & Caspian Hyrcanian Forests
380 ☐ Dasht-e Kavir
381 ☐ Dasht-e Lut
382 ☐ Makran Coastal Desert & Mud Volcanoes
383 ☐ Hari Rud / Herat Valley & Northwestern Badghis Hills
384 ☐ Sistan Endorheic Basin, Helmand Valley & Registan Desert
385 ☐ Greater Kabul Metropolitan Basin
386 ☐ Hindu Kush Main Crest & Bamyan Highlands
387 ☐ Wakhan Corridor
388 ☐ Karakoram Range, K2 & Baltoro Glacier System
389 ☐ Tarbela Dam, Upper Indus Gorge & Potwar Plateau
390 ☐ Greater Lahore Metropolitan Area
391 ☐ Indus Alluvial Plain
392 ☐ Cholistan & Thar Western Desert Margin
393 ☐ Balochistan Sulaiman & Kirthar Arid Highlands
394 ☐ Greater Karachi Metropolitan Area & Indus Delta
395 ☐ Vale of Kashmir & Pir Panjal Range
396 ☐ Ladakh, Zanskar & Nubra Trans-Himalayan High Desert
397 ☐ Trans-Himalaya: Upper Mustang, Dolpo & Kali Gandaki Gorge
398 ☐ High Himalaya: Annapurna, Langtang & Everest Massifs
399 ☐ Terai Subtropical Alluvial Lowlands
400 ☐ Bhutan Eastern Himalayan Kingdom
401 ☐ Eastern Himalaya & Indo-Burman Ranges
402 ☐ Brahmaputra Valley of Assam
403 ☐ Meghalaya Karst Plateau
404 ☐ Dahagram–Angarpota
405 ☐ Greater Dhaka Metropolitan Area
406 ☐ Ganges–Brahmaputra Delta & Sundarbans Mangrove Forest
407 ☐ Chittagong Hill Tracts & Cox's Bazar Coast
408 ☐ Greater Kolkata Metropolitan Area
409 ☐ Middle & Lower Gangetic Plain
410 ☐ Upper Indo-Gangetic Plain & Doab
411 ☐ Greater Delhi National Capital Region
412 ☐ Greater Jaipur & Aravalli Range
413 ☐ Thar Desert
414 ☐ Great & Little Rann of Kutch & Kathiawar Peninsula
415 ☐ Greater Ahmedabad Metropolitan Area
416 ☐ Greater Mumbai Metropolitan Region
417 ☐ Deccan Traps Basalt Plateau & Vindhya-Satpura Ranges
418 ☐ Greater Hyderabad Metropolitan Area
419 ☐ Godavari & Krishna River Basins
420 ☐ Eastern Ghats & Chilika Coastal Plain
421 ☐ Greater Chennai Metropolitan Area & Coromandel Coast
422 ☐ Greater Bangalore (Bengaluru) Mysore Plateau
423 ☐ Western Ghats Escarpment & Malabar Coast
424 ☐ Lakshadweep Coral Atolls
425 ☐ Maldives: Northern & Central Atoll Chains
426 ☐ Maldives: Southern Equatorial Atolls
427 ☐ Chagos Archipelago
428 ☐ Sri Lanka: Central Highlands
429 ☐ Sri Lanka: Dry Zone Plains & Coastal Belt
430 ☐ Andaman Islands Archipelago
431 ☐ Nicobar Islands Archipelago
432 ☐ Mount Kailash, Lake Manasarovar & Ngari Sutlej Gorge
433 ☐ Tibetan Plateau
434 ☐ Tarim Endorheic Basin & Taklamakan Desert

435 ☐ Turpan Depression
436 ☐ Dzungarian Basin & Eastern Tian Shan
437 ☐ Hexi Corridor & Qilian Mountains
438 ☐ Loess Plateau & Ordos Loop of the Yellow River
439 ☐ North China Plain & Shandong Peninsula
440 ☐ Greater Beijing–Tianjin Megacity Region
441 ☐ Greater Qingdao Coastal Metropolis
442 ☐ Manchurian Plain, Greater Khingan & Changbai Range
443 ☐ Greater Harbin Metropolitan Area
444 ☐ Greater Shenyang–Dalian Metropolitan Corridor
445 ☐ Sichuan Red Basin & Hengduan Eastern Escarpment
446 ☐ Greater Chengdu Metropolitan Area
447 ☐ Greater Chongqing Vertical Megacity
448 ☐ Three Gorges Dam & Yangtze River Gorges
449 ☐ Greater Wuhan Metropolitan Area
450 ☐ Middle Yangtze Lakes (Poyang/Dongting), Zhangjiajie Pillars & Huangshan Massif
451 ☐ Greater Shanghai & Yangtze River Delta Megacity
452 ☐ Greater Hangzhou & Qiantang Estuary
453 ☐ Southeastern Wuyi Mountains & Fujian Ria Coast
454 ☐ Yunnan–Guizhou Plateau, Tiger Leaping Gorge & Three Parallel Rivers
455 ☐ South China Karst
456 ☐ Xijiang (West Pearl River) Basin & Nanling Hills
457 ☐ Pearl River Delta Megacity
458 ☐ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
459 ☐ Macau Peninsula & Cotai Strip
460 ☐ Hainan Tropical Island
461 ☐ Paracel Islands
462 ☐ Spratly Islands
463 ☐ Kinmen & Matsu Islands
464 ☐ Penghu Basalt Archipelago
465 ☐ Taiwan Main Island: Central Mountain Range, Taroko Gorge & East Rift
466 ☐ Greater Taipei Basin Metropolitan Area
467 ☐ North Korea: Mount Paektu Volcanic Massif & Kaema Plateau
468 ☐ North Korea: Hamgyong Mountains & Sea of Japan Coast
469 ☐ North Korea: Taedong Basin & Western Yellow Sea Lowlands
470 ☐ Greater Pyongyang Metropolitan Area
471 ☐ Greater Seoul–Incheon Capital Region
472 ☐ South Korea: Taebaek Mountain Spine & Gangwon Coast
473 ☐ South Korea: Honam Plains & Dadohae Southern Archipelago
474 ☐ Greater Busan–Ulsan Southeastern Metropolis
475 ☐ Jeju Volcanic Island & Hallasan Shield
476 ☐ Japan: Hokkaido
477 ☐ Japan: Honshu Sea of Japan Coast
478 ☐ Japan: Honshu Pacific Coast & Seto Inland Sea Corridor
479 ☐ Greater Tokyo Megacity
480 ☐ Japan: Mount Fuji Massif, Izu & Japanese Alps
481 ☐ Greater Osaka–Kyoto–Kobe (Keihanshin) Conurbation
482 ☐ Japan: Shikoku Island
483 ☐ Japan: Kyushu Volcanic Island
484 ☐ Japan: Okinawa & Ryukyu Island Arc
485 ☐ Japan: Ogasawara (Bonin) & Volcano Islands
486 ☐ Shan Plateau & Salween Gorge
487 ☐ Irrawaddy River Basin
488 ☐ Arakan Mountains & Rakhine Bay of Bengal Coast
489 ☐ Mergui (Myeik) Archipelago & Tenasserim Coast
490 ☐ Northern Thai Highlands & Golden Triangle
491 ☐ Thailand: Khorat Plateau
492 ☐ Thailand: Chao Phraya Central Alluvial Plain
493 ☐ Greater Bangkok Metropolitan Area
494 ☐ Laos: Luang Prabang Range, Vang Vieng Karst & Mekong Corridor
495 ☐ Laos: Xiangkhouang Plain of Jars, Bolaven Plateau & Western Annamites
496 ☐ Vietnam: Red River Delta & Northern Karst Highlands
497 ☐ Greater Hanoi Metropolitan Area
498 ☐ Vietnam: Ha Long Bay & Cat Ba Marine Tower Karst
499 ☐ Vietnam: Annamite Range
500 ☐ Cambodia: Tonlé Sap Floodplain Basin & Angkor Lowlands
501 ☐ Cambodia: Cardamom & Elephant Rainforest Mountains
502 ☐ Greater Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) Metropolitan Area
503 ☐ Vietnam: Mekong River Delta
504 ☐ Vietnam: Phu Quoc & Con Dao Archipelagos
505 ☐ Thailand: Gulf of Thailand Islands
506 ☐ Thailand: Kra Isthmus & Khao Sok Limestone Rainforest
507 ☐ Thailand: Andaman Sea Karst Coast & Islands
508 ☐ Malay Peninsula Titiwangsa Spine & Taman Negara
509 ☐ Greater Kuala Lumpur & Klang Valley Metropolis
510 ☐ Singapore Island City-State
511 ☐ Sumatra: Barisan Volcanic Spine, Lake Toba & Leuser Rainforest
512 ☐ Sumatra: Eastern Peatland Swamps & Musi-Batanghari Basins
513 ☐ Nias & Simeulue Forearc Islands
514 ☐ Mentawai & Enggano Islands
515 ☐ Bangka & Belitung Granite Tin Islands
516 ☐ Java: Western Sunda Volcanic Highlands & Krakatoa
517 ☐ Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) Megacity
518 ☐ Java: Central Volcanic Plain
519 ☐ Java: Eastern Tengger Caldera
520 ☐ Bali Volcanic Island
521 ☐ Lombok (Rinjani) & Sumbawa (Tambora)
522 ☐ Sumba Sandstone & Megalithic Island
523 ☐ Flores Volcanic Arc, Kelimutu & Komodo Dragon Archipelago
524 ☐ West Timor & Alor Archipelago
525 ☐ Oecusse
526 ☐ Timor-Leste Main Territory & Ramelau Massif
527 ☐ Kalimantan: Mahakam, Kapuas & Heart of Borneo Rainforest
528 ☐ Sarawak: Rajang Basin & Gunung Mulu Giant Caves
529 ☐ Brunei Darussalam Main Enclave
530 ☐ Temburong
531 ☐ Sabah: Mount Kinabalu Massif, Kinabatangan & Sipadan Reefs
532 ☐ Sulawesi: Central & Southern Highlands
533 ☐ Sulawesi: Northern Minahasa Peninsula, Togean & Bunaken
534 ☐ Northern Maluku: Halmahera, Ternate & Tidore Volcanic Arc

535 ☐ Central & Southern Maluku: Seram, Ambon, Banda & Kei Spice Islands

536 ☐ Raja Ampat Marine Karst Archipelago

537 ☐ West Papua: Bird's Head Peninsula (Vogelkop), Cenderawasih & Triton Bay

538 ☐ West Papua: Maoke Mountains (Puncak Jaya / Carstensz Pyramid & Baliem Valley) & Asmat Swamps

539 ☐ Philippines: Sulu Archipelago & Tawi-Tawi Coral Chain

540 ☐ Philippines: Mindanao Island

541 ☐ Philippines: Palawan Calamian Karst Corridor & Tubbataha Reefs

542 ☐ Philippines: Visayas Central Archipelago

543 ☐ Greater Manila (Metro Manila) & Taal Caldera Region

544 ☐ Philippines: Luzon Central Cordillera, Sierra Madre & Mayon Volcano

545 ☐ Philippines: Batanes & Babuyan Luzon Strait Islands

V · OCEANIA

546 ☐ Cocos (Keeling) Islands

547 ☐ Christmas Island

548 ☐ Australia: Kimberley Plateau & Bungle Bungle Range

549 ☐ Australia: Top End, Arnhem Land Escarpment & Kakadu Wetlands

550 ☐ Australia: Cape York Peninsula & Daintree Tropical Rainforest

551 ☐ Australia: Great Barrier Reef & Whitsunday Islands

552 ☐ Australia: K'gari

553 ☐ Greater Brisbane & Gold Coast Conurbation

554 ☐ Australia: Blue Mountains, Snowy Mountains & Great Dividing Range

555 ☐ Greater Sydney Basin Metropolitan Area

556 ☐ Australia: Murray–Darling River Basin

557 ☐ Greater Melbourne & Port Phillip Bay Metropolis

558 ☐ Australia: Tasmania Island Wilderness & Bass Strait Islands

559 ☐ Australia: Kangaroo Island

560 ☐ Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area

561 ☐ Australia: Flinders Ranges & Lake Eyre Endorheic Salt Basin

562 ☐ Australia: Simpson, Strzelecki & Sturt Stony Deserts

563 ☐ Australia: Red Centre, Uluru–Kata Tjuta & MacDonnell Ranges

564 ☐ Australia: Eyre Peninsula & Gawler Ranges

565 ☐ Australia: Nullarbor Karst Plain & Great Australian Bight Cliffs

566 ☐ Australia: Western Shield

567 ☐ Greater Perth Metropolitan Area & Southwest Forests

568 ☐ Australia: Ningaloo Reef, Shark Bay & Coral Coast

569 ☐ Australia: Pilbara Kraton & Karijini Gorges

570 ☐ Lord Howe Island & Ball's Pyramid

571 ☐ Norfolk Island

572 ☐ Kermadec Islands & Trench

573 ☐ New Zealand: Northland Peninsula & Bay of Islands

574 ☐ Greater Auckland Isthmus Metropolitan Area

575 ☐ New Zealand: Whakaari / White Island

576 ☐ New Zealand: Taupo Volcanic Zone, Rotorua Geothermal Field & Tongariro

577 ☐ New Zealand: North Island East Cape, Taranaki Cone & Wairarapa

578 ☐ Greater Wellington Metropolitan Area & Cook Strait

579 ☐ New Zealand: South Island Marlborough Sounds, Kaikoura & Canterbury Plains

580 ☐ Greater Christchurch & Banks Peninsula

581 ☐ New Zealand: Southern Alps Main Divide, Aoraki / Mount Cook & Westland Glaciers

582 ☐ New Zealand: Fiordland (Milford & Doubtful Sounds) & Otago Lakes

583 ☐ New Zealand: Stewart Island / Rakiura

584 ☐ New Zealand: Chatham Islands & Sub-Antarctic Outposts

585 ☐ Papua New Guinea: Fly River Basin & Trans-Fly Savanna

586 ☐ Papua New Guinea: Central Range Highlands, Mount Wilhelm & Kokoda Track

587 ☐ Papua New Guinea: Sepik & Ramu River Floodplains

588 ☐ Papua New Guinea: Milne Bay, D'Entrecasteaux & Trobriand Islands

589 ☐ Papua New Guinea: Bismarck Archipelago

590 ☐ Bougainville Autonomous Island

591 ☐ Solomon Islands: Western & Choiseul Archipelago

592 ☐ Solomon Islands: Guadalcanal (Honiara), Savo & Florida Islands

593 ☐ Solomon Islands: Malaita, Makira, Rennell & Santa Cruz Islands

594 ☐ Vanuatu: Northern Archipelago

595 ☐ Vanuatu: Central Archipelago

596 ☐ Vanuatu: Southern Tafea Archipelago

597 ☐ New Caledonia: Grande Terre & Barrier Reef Lagoon

598 ☐ New Caledonia: Loyalty Islands & Isle of Pines

599 ☐ Fiji: Viti Levu, Mamanuca & Yasawa Islands

600 ☐ Fiji: Vanua Levu, Taveuni & Lomaiviti Archipelago

601 ☐ Fiji: Lau Coral Archipelago, Kadavu & Rotuma

602 ☐ Palau: Babeldaob, Rock Islands Lagoon & Peleliu

603 ☐ Guam

604 ☐ Northern Mariana Islands

605 ☐ Federated States of Micronesia: Yap & Chuuk (Truk) Lagoon

606 ☐ Federated States of Micronesia: Pohnpei (Nan Madol) & Kosrae

607 ☐ Nauru

608 ☐ Marshall Islands: Ralik Chain

609 ☐ Marshall Islands: Ratak Chain

610 ☐ Kiribati: Gilbert Islands

611 ☐ Kiribati: Phoenix Islands Protected Area

612 ☐ Kiribati: Line Islands

613 ☐ US Minor Outlying Islands

614 ☐ Tuvalu

615 ☐ Wallis & Futuna

616 ☐ Tokelau

617 ☐ Samoa: Upolu & Savai'i Volcanic Islands

618 ☐ American Samoa

619 ☐ Tonga: Vava'u, Ha'apai & Niuas Northern Volcanic Arc

620 ☐ Tonga: Tongatapu & 'Eua Southern Group

621 ☐ Niue

622 ☐ Cook Islands: Northern Atoll Group

623 ☐ Cook Islands: Southern Volcanic Group

624 ☐ French Polynesia: Society Islands

625 ☐ French Polynesia: Tuamotu Atoll Archipelago

626 ☐ French Polynesia: Marquesas Islands

627 ☐ French Polynesia: Austral Islands

628 ☐ French Polynesia: Gambier Islands

629 ☐ Pitcairn Island

630 ☐ Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands

VI · NORTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

631 ☐ Greenland: Northeast Fjord System, Scoresby Sund & Peary Land

632 ☐ Greenland: Southeast Coast

633 ☐ Greenland: Interior Ice Sheet

634 ☐ Greenland: West Coast & Disko Bay

635 ☐ Ellesmere, Axel Heiberg & Devon Islands

636 ☐ Baffin Island & Bylot Island

637 ☐ Western & Central Canadian Arctic Archipelago

638 ☐ Canada: Mackenzie River Delta, Tuktoyaktuk Pingos & Nahanni Karst

639 ☐ Alaska: Brooks Range & Arctic North Slope Tundra

640 ☐ Alaska: Interior Yukon Flats, Alaska Range & Denali Massif

641 ☐ Aleutian Islands Volcanic Arc & Pribilof Islands

642 ☐ Kodiak Archipelago, Katmai (Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes) & Kenai Peninsula

643 ☐ Canada: Yukon River Basin, Klondike & Kluane Icefields

644 ☐ Alaska: Inside Passage, Glacier Bay & Tongass Fjords

645 ☐ Haida Gwaii Archipelago

646 ☐ Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands

647 ☐ Canada: Coast Mountains & Fraser River Basin

648 ☐ Greater Vancouver Lower Mainland Metropolitan Area

649 ☐ Point Roberts

650 ☐ Canada: Okanagan Semi-Arid Valley & Columbia Mountains

651 ☐ Canadian Rocky Mountains

652 ☐ Greater Calgary Metropolitan Area

653 ☐ Canadian Prairies & Badlands

654 ☐ Churchill & Western Hudson Bay Polar Bear Tundra

655 ☐ Hudson Bay Lowlands & James Bay Muskeg Wetlands

656 ☐ Canadian Shield

657 ☐ Newfoundland & Labrador

658 ☐ Saint-Pierre and Miquelon

659 ☐ Canadian Maritimes & Gulf of St. Lawrence

660 ☐ Greater Montreal & St. Lawrence River Valley

661 ☐ Alburgh Tongue & Province Point

662 ☐ Greater Boston & Eastern New England Coast

663 ☐ Greater New York Tri-State Megacity

664 ☐ Greater Washington D.C.–Baltimore (Chesapeake) Conurbation

665 ☐ Appalachian Mountains Spine

666 ☐ Outer Banks Barrier Islands & Atlantic Coastal Plain

667 ☐ Greater Atlanta Piedmont Metropolitan Area

668 ☐ Florida Peninsula Karst Springs & Everglades Sawgrass Marshes

669 ☐ Greater Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area

670 ☐ Greater Miami & Gold Coast Metropolitan Area

671 ☐ Florida Keys Coral Cay Chain & Dry Tortugas

672 ☐ Greater Toronto & Golden Horseshoe Conurbation

673 ☐ Niagara Falls & Niagara Escarpment

674 ☐ Greater Detroit–Windsor Automotive Metropolis

675 ☐ Ohio River Basin & Mammoth Cave Karst System

676 ☐ Greater Chicago Lakefront Megacity

677 ☐ Greater Minneapolis–Saint Paul (Twin Cities) & Upper Mississippi Headwaters

678 ☐ Northwest Angle

679 ☐ Missouri River Basin, Black Hills & Badlands

680 ☐ North American Great Plains & Flint Hills Tallgrass Prairie

681 ☐ Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Ozarks & Mississippi River Delta

682 ☐ Greater Houston & Galveston Bay Metropolis

683 ☐ Greater Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex

684 ☐ Edwards Plateau (Texas Hill Country) & Llano Estacado

685 ☐ Rio Grande Basin, Big Bend Canyons & White Sands Gypsum Dunes

686 ☐ Greater Yellowstone Supervolcano & Grand Teton Ecosystem

687 ☐ Southern Rocky Mountains

688 ☐ Colorado Plateau

689 ☐ Great Basin Endorheic Desert & Bonneville Salt Flats

690 ☐ Death Valley Tectonic Graben

691 ☐ Mojave Desert & Joshua Tree Highlands

692 ☐ Lower Colorado River Corridor & Salton Sink

693 ☐ Sonoran Desert

694 ☐ Greater San Diego Metropolitan Area

695 ☐ Greater Los Angeles Basin Megacity

696 ☐ Sierra Nevada Granite Fault Block

697 ☐ California Central Coast, Big Sur Cliffs & Channel Islands

698 ☐ San Francisco Bay Area & Silicon Valley Conurbation

699 ☐ Northern California & Oregon Coast

700 ☐ Cascade Volcanic Arc

701 ☐ Columbia River Basalt Plateau, Gorge, Palouse & Snake River Plain

702 ☐ Greater Seattle–Puget Sound & Olympic Peninsula Rainforest

703 ☐ Hawaii: Big Island Active Shield Volcanoes

704 ☐ Hawaii: Oahu, Maui (Haleakala), Molokai & Lanai Central Group

705 ☐ Hawaii: Kauai (Na Pali Coast & Waimea Canyon) & Niihau

706 ☐ Mexico: Baja California Peninsula & Sea of Cortez Islands

707 ☐ Mexico: Revillagigedo Archipelago

708 ☐ Mexico: Sonoran Desert South

709 ☐ Mexico: Copper Canyon System

710 ☐ Mexico: Sierra Madre Occidental & Chihuahuan Desert Bolsón de Mapimí

711 ☐ Greater Monterrey & Sierra Madre Oriental

712 ☐ Mexico: Central Altiplano

713 ☐ Greater Guadalajara & Tequila Jalisco Highlands

714 ☐ Greater Mexico City

715 ☐ Greater Puebla–Tlaxcala Basin & Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt

716 ☐ Mexico: Sierra Madre del Sur, Oaxaca Valleys & Pacific Coast

717 ☐ Mexico: Chiapas Highlands, Sumidero Canyon & Lacandon Jungle

718 ☐ Mexico: Yucatán Peninsula Cenote Karst Ring & Campeche Calakmul Forest

719 ☐ Mexico: Cozumel, Isla Mujeres & Holbox

720 ☐ Belize: Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, Great Blue Hole, Cayes & Maya Mountains

721 ☐ Guatemala: Petén Lowland Rainforest Basin

722 ☐ Guatemala: Sierra Madre Volcanic Highlands & Lake Atitlán Caldera

723 ☐ El Salvador: Fonseca Gulf & Santa Ana–Izalco Volcanic Chain

724 ☐ Honduras: Bay Islands Coral Reefs

725 ☐ Honduras: Mosquitia Río Plátano Biosphere & Central Highlands

726 ☐ Nicaragua: Lake Nicaragua, Ometepe Twin Volcanoes & Masaya Caldera

727 ☐ Nicaragua: Corn Islands & Miskito Cays

728 ☐ Costa Rica: Central Volcanic Cordillera, Arenal & Monteverde Cloud Forests

729 ☐ Costa Rica: Osa Peninsula (Corcovado) & Talamanca La Amistad Crest

730 ☐ Cocos Island (Costa Rica) & Malpelo Island (Colombia) Pelagic Shark Ridge

731 ☐ Panama: Gulf of Chiriquí, Coiba Island, Barú Volcano & Azuero Peninsula

732 ☐ Panama: Guna Yala (San Blas Archipelago) & Bocas del Toro Caribbean Coast

733 ☐ Panama / Colombia: Darién Gap

734 ☐ Bermuda Coral Seamount Archipelago

735 ☐ Bahamas: Northern & Central Banks

736 ☐ Bahamas: Southern Out Islands

737 ☐ Turks and Caicos Islands

738 ☐ Greater Havana Metropolitan Area

739 ☐ Cuba: Western Viñales Mogote Karst, Guanahacabibes & Isla de la Juventud

740 ☐ Cuba: Central Escambray, Jardines de la Reina & Eastern Sierra Maestra

741 ☐ Cayman Islands

742 ☐ Jamaica: Blue Mountains, Cockpit Country Karst & Pedro Cays

743 ☐ Navassa Island

744 ☐ Haiti: Massif de la Hotte, Gonâve Island & Northern Citadelle Highlands

745 ☐ Dominican Republic: Cordillera Central (Pico Duarte), Lake Enriquillo Rift & Samaná

746 ☐ Puerto Rico

747 ☐ US Virgin Islands

748 ☐ British Virgin Islands

749 ☐ Anguilla & Sombrero Coral Bank

750 ☐ Saint-Martin

751 ☐ Sint Maarten

752 ☐ Saint-Barthélemy

753 ☐ Saba (Mount Scenery Volcanic Cone) & Sint Eustatius

754 ☐ Saint Kitts and Nevis

755 ☐ Antigua, Barbuda & Redonda

756 ☐ Montserrat

757 ☐ Guadeloupe

758 ☐ Dominica

759 ☐ Martinique

760 ☐ Saint Lucia

761 ☐ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

762 ☐ Barbados

763 ☐ Grenada & Carriacou

764 ☐ Trinidad (Northern Range & Pitch Lake Asphalt Deposit) and Tobago

765 ☐ Bonaire & Klein Bonaire

766 ☐ Curaçao

767 ☐ Aruba

768 ☐ San Andrés, Providencia & Santa Catalina

VII · SOUTH AMERICA

769 ☐ Colombia: Chocó Pacific Rainforest Coast & Gorgona Island

770 ☐ Colombia: Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Highest Coastal Massif on Earth) & La Guajira Desert

771 ☐ Colombia: Magdalena & Cauca Inter-Andean Valleys & Tatacoa Desert

772 ☐ Greater Medellín Aburrá Valley Metropolis

773 ☐ Colombia: Central & Eastern Andean Cordilleras

774 ☐ Greater Bogotá Sabana High-Altitude Metropolis

775 ☐ Colombia: Llanos Orientales & Serranía de la Macarena

776 ☐ Colombia: Western Guiana Shield

777 ☐ Venezuela: Cordillera de Mérida (Pico Bolívar), Lake Maracaibo (Catatumbo) & Coro Dunes

778 ☐ Greater Caracas & Central Coastal Range

779 ☐ Venezuela: Los Roques, La Blanquilla & Las Aves Caribbean Atolls

780 ☐ Venezuela: Orinoco River Delta & Venezuelan Llanos

781 ☐ Venezuela: Gran Sabana Tepuis, Mount Roraima & Angel Falls

782 ☐ Guyana: Kaieteur Falls, Potaro Gorge & Rupununi Savanna

783 ☐ Suriname: Central Suriname Nature Reserve (Voltzberg Granite Dome) & Sipaliwini

784 ☐ French Guiana: Guiana Amazonian Park & Maroni-Oyapock Rainforest

785 ☐ French Guiana: Salvation's Islands

786 ☐ Amazon River Delta, Marajó Island & Pororoca Tidal Bore

787 ☐ Tocantins–Araguaia River Basin & Bananal Island

788 ☐ Tapajós (Alter do Chão) & Xingu Clear-Water Basins

789 ☐ Main Amazon (Solimões) Floodplain Corridor & Meeting of Waters

790 ☐ Rio Negro Blackwater Basin, Anavilhanas & Pico da Neblina

791 ☐ Madeira, Purus & Juruá Southwestern Amazon Basins

792 ☐ Lençóis Maranhenses Flooded Coastal Dunes & Parnaíba Delta

793 ☐ Fernando de Noronha, Rocas Atoll & Saint Peter and Saint Paul Archipelago

794 ☐ Caatinga Semi-Arid Thorny Scrublands & Serra da Capivara

795 ☐ Chapada Diamantina Tablelands & Espinhaço Range

796 ☐ São Francisco River Basin

797 ☐ Cerrado Tropical Savanna Highlands

798 ☐ Pantanal Megawetland

799 ☐ Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), Serra do Mar & Ilha Grande Coast

800 ☐ Greater Rio de Janeiro & Guanabara Bay Metropolis

801 ☐ Greater São Paulo Megacity Plateau

802 ☐ Iguazu Falls & Upper Paraná Basalt Escarpment

803 ☐ Galápagos Islands

804 ☐ Ecuador: Pacific Coastal Lowlands, Guayas Basin & Machalilla Cloud Forest

805 ☐ Ecuador: Avenue of the Volcanoes

806 ☐ Ecuador: Oriente Amazon Headwaters

807 ☐ Peru: Loreto Lowland Amazonia

808 ☐ Peru: Cordillera Blanca (Huascarán), Huayhuash & Northern Cloud Forests

809 ☐ Greater Lima Coastal Desert Metropolis

810 ☐ Peru: Paracas Peninsula & Ballestas Upwelling Islands

811 ☐ Peru: Ica Huacachina Dunes & Nazca–Palpa Pampas Desert

812 ☐ Peru: Colca Canyon, Cotahuasi Canyon & Arequipa Volcanic Arc

813 ☐ Peru: Cusco, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu & Ausangate

814 ☐ Bolivia / Peru: Madidi & Manú Amazonian Piedmont Cloud-to-Lowland Forests

815 ☐ Bolivia: Llanos de Moxos Flooded Savanna (Beni) & Chiquitania Noel Kempff Tablelands

816 ☐ Bolivia: Cordillera Real (Illimani), La Paz Canyon & Yungas Cloud Forest Escarpment

817 ☐ Bolivia: Central Altiplano, Sajama Volcano & Lake Poopó Basin

818 ☐ Bolivia: Salar de Uyuni (World's Largest Salt Flat) & Sud Lípez Colored Lagoons

819 ☐ Gran Chaco Dry Forest Lowland

820 ☐ Argentina: Esteros del Iberá Marshlands

821 ☐ Argentina: Mesopotamia

822 ☐ Argentine River Exclaves

823 ☐ Uruguay: Cuchilla Grande Rolling Pampas & Tacuarembó Tablelands

824 ☐ Uruguay: Río de la Plata Estuary & Atlantic Coast

825 ☐ Greater Buenos Aires (AMBA) & Paraná Delta Megacity

826 ☐ Humid & Dry Pampas Grasslands

827 ☐ Argentina: Quebrada de Humahuaca, Calchaquí Valleys & Yungas of Salta/Jujuy

828 ☐ Argentina / Chile: Puna de Atacama

829 ☐ Chile: Atacama Desert Core

830 ☐ Chile: Easter Island

831 ☐ Chile: Juan Fernández (Robinson Crusoe) & Desventuradas Islands

832 ☐ Greater Santiago Metropolitan Basin

833 ☐ Chile: Central Valley

834 ☐ Argentina: Cuyo High Andes, Mount Aconcagua (6,961 m), Talampaya & Ischigualasto

835 ☐ North Patagonian Lake District & Araucania Volcanoes

836 ☐ Chile: Chiloé Archipelago & Guaitecas Channels

837 ☐ Argentina: Península Valdés, Golfo Nuevo & Atlantic Patagonian Coast

838 ☐ Chile: Carretera Austral, Northern Patagonian Ice Field & Chilean Fjordland

839 ☐ Argentina: Southern Patagonian Ice Field, Mount Fitz Roy (El Chaltén), Perito Moreno & Patagonian Steppe

840 ☐ Chile: Torres del Paine Granite Massif & Última Esperanza Fjords

841 ☐ Tierra del Fuego Archipelago, Strait of Magellan, Darwin Range & Beagle Channel

842 ☐ Cape Horn (Isla Hornos) & Diego Ramírez Islands

843 ☐ Falkland Islands

VIII · AFRICA

844 ☐ Morocco: Rif Mountains & Mediterranean Coast

845 ☐ Greater Casablanca–Rabat Atlantic Coastal Conurbation

846 ☐ Morocco: High Atlas (Toubkal) & Middle Atlas Cedar Ranges

847 ☐ Morocco: Anti-Atlas, Souss Valley & Draa Oasis Corridor

848 ☐ Morocco: Erg Chebbi & Erg Chigaga Saharan Dune Seas

849 ☐ Western Sahara Atlantic Coastal Desert

850 ☐ Mauritania: Banc d'Arguin Coastal Mudflats & Adrar Sandstone Plateau

851 ☐ Mauritania: Richat Structure

852 ☐ Mauritania: Chinguetti, Ouadane & Oualata Saharan Erg Dunes

853 ☐ Algeria: Tell Atlas, Kabylie Mountains & Constantine Gorges

854 ☐ Greater Algiers Metropolitan Bay

855 ☐ Tunisia: Northern Kroumirie Hills, Dorsal Atlas & Cap Bon Coast

856 ☐ Tunisia: Chott el Djerid Salt Pan & Dahar Matmata Troglodyte Escarpment

857 ☐ Tunisia: Djerba & Kerkennah Gulf of Gabès Islands

858 ☐ Grand Erg Oriental & Grand Erg Occidental Sand Seas

859 ☐ Algeria: Tassili n'Ajjer & Tadrart Rouge Sandstone Arches

860 ☐ Algeria: Ahaggar (Hoggar) Volcanic Massif

861 ☐ Libya: Tripolitania Coast, Nafusa Escarpment & Ghadames Oasis

862 ☐ Libya: Fezzan Basin, Ubari Sand Sea Lakes, Acacus Mountains & Waw an Namus Caldera

863 ☐ Libya: Cyrenaica Jabal al Akhdar (Green Mountain) & Gulf of Sidra

864 ☐ Libyan Desert & Great Sand Sea

865 ☐ Egypt: Siwa Oasis & Qattara Depression

866 ☐ Egypt: White Desert Chalk Formations, Black Desert & Bahariya–Farafra Oases

867 ☐ Greater Alexandria & Nile River Delta

868 ☐ Greater Cairo Megacity & Giza Plateau

869 ☐ Egypt: Sinai Peninsula

870 ☐ Egypt: Upper Egypt Nile Valley Corridor (Luxor to Aswan) & Faiyum Oasis

871 ☐ Egypt: Eastern Desert & Red Sea Mountains

872 ☐ Bir Tawil

873 ☐ Sudan: Nubian Desert, Bayuda Volcanic Field & Nile Cataracts

874 ☐ Greater Khartoum–Omdurman

875 ☐ Sudan: Darfur Highlands & Jebel Marra Volcanic Caldera

876 ☐ South Sudan: The Sudd (Bahr al Jabal Papyrus Megawetland) & Boma-Badingilo Plains

877 ☐ Chad: Ennedi Sandstone Plateau, Guelta d'Archei & Ounianga Saharan Lakes

878 ☐ Chad: Tibesti Volcanic Mountains

879 ☐ Lake Chad Endorheic Basin & Bodele Depression

880 ☐ Chari–Logone River Basin & Zakouma Savanna

881 ☐ Niger: Ténéré Desert & Bilma Erg Dunes

882 ☐ Niger: Aïr Massif Granite Ring-Dikes & Agadez Sahel

883 ☐ Mali: Timbuktu Azawad Desert Margin & Niger River Northern Bend

884 ☐ Mali: Bandiagara Escarpment (Dogon Country) & Hombori Mountains

885 ☐ Mali: Inner Niger Delta

886 ☐ Greater Bamako & Upper Niger Manding Hills

887 ☐ Cape Verde: Barlavento

888 ☐ Cape Verde: Sotavento

889 ☐ Senegal: Cap-Vert Peninsula, Lac Rose & Ferlo Sahel

890 ☐ Greater Dakar Metropolitan Area

891 ☐ Gorée Island

892 ☐ The Gambia River Estuarine Corridor & Sine-Saloum Delta

893 ☐ Senegal: Casamance Tropical River Basin & Niokolo-Koba

894 ☐ Guinea-Bissau: Bijagós Archipelago

895 ☐ Guinea: Fouta Djallon Sandstone Highlands

896 ☐ Upper Guinean Rainforest & Coastal Mangroves

897 ☐ Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve Range

898 ☐ Ivory Coast: Taï Primary Rainforest & Comoé Savanna

899 ☐ Greater Abidjan & Ébrié Lagoon Metropolis

900 ☐ Greater Kumasi & Ashanti Forest Uplands

901 ☐ Greater Accra Coastal Metropolis

902 ☐ Lake Volta Basin

903 ☐ W–Arly–Pendjari (WAP) Savanna Complex & Burkina Mossi Plateau

904 ☐ Atakora (Togo) Mountains & Mono-Ouémé Basins

905 ☐ Greater Lagos Lagoon Megacity

906 ☐ Greater Kano & Hausa Sahelian Plains

907 ☐ Jos Plateau & Niger–Benue Confluence

908 ☐ Niger River Delta Mangroves & Cross River Rainforest

909 ☐ Cameroon Volcanic Line

910 ☐ Greater Douala Wouri Estuary Metropolis

911 ☐ Greater Yaoundé Central Plateau Metropolis

912 ☐ Bioko Volcanic Island

913 ☐ Río Muni Continental Rainforest & Monte Alén

914 ☐ São Tomé and Príncipe

915 ☐ Annobón Island

916 ☐ Sangha Trinational Rainforest

917 ☐ Ogooué River Basin, Loango Coast & Lopé Forest-Savanna

918 ☐ Batéké Plateau & Northern Congo Swamp Forests

919 ☐ Cabinda Exclave

920 ☐ Greater Kinshasa–Brazzaville Twin Megacity & Livingstone Falls

921 ☐ Central Congo Basin

922 ☐ Virunga Volcanic Chain (Nyiragongo Lava Lake), Kahuzi-Biega & Lake Kivu

923 ☐ Katanga (Shaba) Miombo Plateau, Upemba & Lualaba Headwaters

924 ☐ Eritrea: Red Sea Coastal Escarpment & Asmara Central Highlands

925 ☐ Dahlak Coral Archipelago

926 ☐ Danakil Depression (Erta Ale Lava Lake & Dallol Hydrothermal Field) & Afar Triangle

927 ☐ Lake Assal (-155 m – Lowest Land Point in Africa) & Gulf of Tadjoura Rift

928 ☐ Ethiopian Northwestern Highlands, Simien Mountains & Lake Tana

929 ☐ Greater Addis Ababa Entoto Highland Metropolis

930 ☐ Bale Mountains Afro-Alpine Plateau & Omo River Valley

931 ☐ Ogaden & Haud Semi-Arid Plateau

932 ☐ Golis Escarpment, Laas Geel & Gulf of Aden Coast

933 ☐ Cape Guardafui (Ras Asir) & Karkaar Mountains of Puntland

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935 ☐ Jubaland Coast & Bajuni Coral Islands

936 ☐ Lake Turkana (Jade Sea) & Chalbi Desert

937 ☐ Murchison Falls, Lake Albert Rift & Kidepo Valley

938 ☐ Rwenzori Mountains ("Mountains of the Moon" Equatorial Glaciers) & Queen Elizabeth Channel

939 ☐ Bwindi Impenetrable Forest & Northern Lake Victoria Shore

940 ☐ Greater Kampala–Entebbe Metropolitan Area

941 ☐ Rwanda Central Highlands

942 ☐ Burundi Highlands & Rusizi Tanganyika Rift Margin

943 ☐ Kenyan Gregory Rift Valley

944 ☐ Mount Kenya Massif, Aberdare Range & Laikipia–Samburu Plateau

945 ☐ Greater Nairobi Metropolitan Area

946 ☐ Maasai Mara & Loita Plains

947 ☐ Serengeti Plains & Lake Natron Soda Basin

948 ☐ Ngorongoro Crater Highlands & Olduvai Gorge

949 ☐ Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m – Highest Peak in Africa), Mount Meru & Amboseli Basin

950 ☐ Lamu Archipelago, Tana Delta & Kenyan Coral Coast

951 ☐ Zanzibar

952 ☐ Pemba & Mafia Coral Islands

953 ☐ Greater Dar es Salaam Metropolitan Coast

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955 ☐ Lake Malawi (Nyasa) Rift Trench & Nyika Plateau

956 ☐ Likoma & Chizumulu Islands

957 ☐ Mount Mulanje Granite Inselberg & Shire Valley

958 ☐ Bangweulu Swamps & Kasanka Wetlands

959 ☐ Luangwa Rift Valley

960 ☐ Greater Lusaka & Kafue Flats

961 ☐ Upper Zambezi River, Barotse Floodplain & Liuwa Plain

962 ☐ Greater Luanda Coastal Metropolis

963 ☐ Bié Plateau (Cuanza/Cubango Headwaters), Kalandula Falls & Pungo Andongo Black Rocks

964 ☐ Serra da Leba Escarpment & Iona Coastal Desert

965 ☐ Kaokoveld, Kunene River (Epupa Falls) & Damaraland

966 ☐ Etosha Salt Pan & Waterberg Plateau

967 ☐ Skeleton Coast Fog Desert & Cape Cross

968 ☐ Namib Erg Dune Sea

969 ☐ Fish River Canyon, Sperrgebiet & Lower Orange River Richtersveld

970 ☐ Okavango Inland Delta, Moremi & Chobe Riverfront

971 ☐ Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, Central Kalahari & Kgalagadi Transfrontier Dunes

972 ☐ Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya) & Batoka Basalt Gorge

973 ☐ Lower Zambezi Valley, Mana Pools Floodplain & Cahora Bassa

974 ☐ Greater Harare & Mashonaland Highveld

975 ☐ Matobo Granite Balancing Rocks, Hwange & Eastern Highlands

976 ☐ Quirimbas Coral Archipelago & Niassa Inselbergs

977 ☐ Zambezi Delta & Mozambican Coastal Lowlands

978 ☐ Mount Gorongosa Massif & Southern Rift Termination

979 ☐ Bazaruto Archipelago & Inhambane Barrier Dunes

980 ☐ Maputaland Coastal Plain, iSimangaliso (St. Lucia Estuary) & Sodwana Reefs

981 ☐ Kruger Lowveld Savanna & Blyde River Canyon Escarpment

982 ☐ Kingdom of Eswatini

983 ☐ Greater Johannesburg–Pretoria (Gauteng Witwatersrand) Conurbation

984 ☐ Kingdom of Lesotho

985 ☐ uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Escarpment, Amphitheatre & Wild Coast

986 ☐ Greater Durban (eThekwini) Indian Ocean Metropolis

987 ☐ Great Karoo, Little Karoo & Namaqualand Semi-Desert Basin

988 ☐ Cape Floristic Region

989 ☐ Greater Cape Town & Table Mountain Peninsula

990 ☐ Comoros Archipelago

991 ☐ Mayotte

992 ☐ Madagascar: Northern Diana, Ankarana & Nosy Be Archipelago

993 ☐ Madagascar: Western Dry Forests, Tsingy de Bemaraha & Baobab Avenue

994 ☐ Madagascar: Central Highlands, Andringitra & Isalo Massif

995 ☐ Madagascar: Eastern Rainforest Escarpment & Masoala Peninsula

996 ☐ Madagascar: Southern Spiny Forest & Mahafaly Plateau

997 ☐ Îles Éparses

998 ☐ Seychelles Archipelago

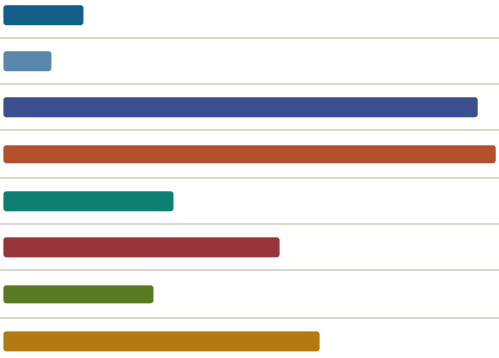
999 ☐ Réunion

1000 ☐ Mauritius Main Island

1001 ☐ Rodrigues Island

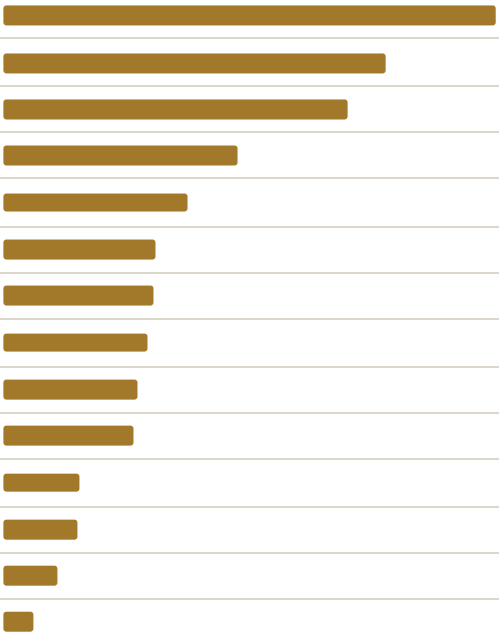
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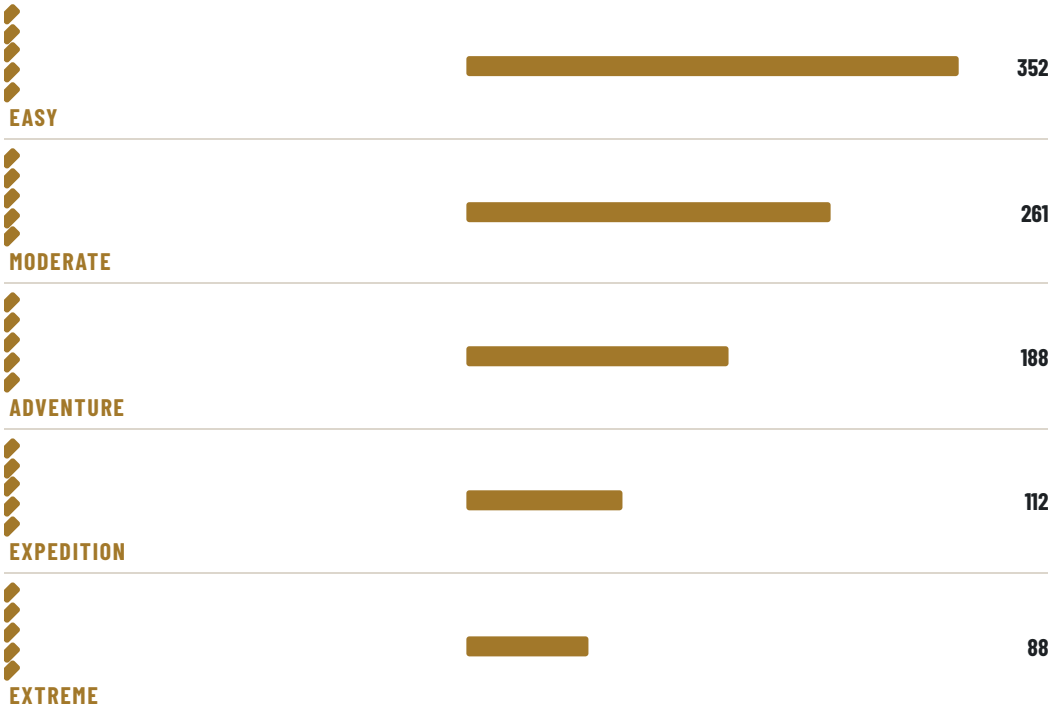
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