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THE VOGUE ART REPORT

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Kiara

MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE





7 GET LOST IN THE ART OF WALKING

Efficient, intimate and unexpected, Sarah Khan pays tribute to the original way to travel

Like most frequent fliers, I have an arsenal of measures I've fashioned into a routine over a lifetime of travel: disinfect the tray table, screen, seat belt and armrest the moment I slip into my seat on a plane. Stash a backup credit card in the hotel safe. Pack a set of resistance bands to squeeze in a workout. Decant serums and foundation into contact lens cases for easy transport. But the single most important thing I do when I embark on an adventure in a new city is one I've been doing since before I could talk: I walk.

When is the last time you abandoned all agendas and just roamed—not out of necessity or while robotically thumbing through likes and retweets? En-

sconced in Ubers and Olas, we whizz by cityscapes with our gaze stuck to our phones. But when travel is reduced to a successive series of destinations—hotel to museum, museum to restaurant, restaurant to shop, shop to hotel—we are prone to bypassing the very fabric of a city while coasting along its embroidery. Travel is all about discovery: strolling past a petite cafe that made you double-take or meandering through a colourful neighbourhood just because it's there and not because Yelp told you to. Whenever time or weather allows, I choose to set out on foot, experimenting with new routes to watch the streets unfold. In Zanzibar, at the height of the mon-

WALK THIS WAY

With three boutique tours

NO FOOTPRINTS Nigella Lawson-approved, this Mumbai-based service offers queer trails and dawn walks, among others. Nfpexplore.com

FLASH PACK Londoners Radha Vyas and Lee Thompson curate immersive group tours around the world for like-minded solo travellers in their thirties and forties. Flashpack.com

SHERPA EXPEDITIONS Expert-led, it offers culinary experiences, walks and cycling expeditions across Europe. Sherpaexpeditions.com

soon, I took a deep breath, wielded a hotel umbrella, and spent five days sloshing through the soggy streets. Exploring Stone Town when its intricate doors were almost obscured by curtains of rain felt a lot like navigating Córdoba under an oppressive veil of summer heat, as temperatures approached 45 degrees and everyone retreated for siesta: both involved uncovering moments of magic through discomfort, but allowed me to have two of the world's most atmospheric cities all to myself.

GREAT STRIDES

That's not to say that I've eschewed all other forms of transportation. Island-hopping on a traditional dhow in Mozambique, riding century-old funiculars up steep mountains in Switzerland, horseback riding in Montana, quad biking in the Namibian desert, hot-air ballooning above the phantasmagoric landscape of Cappadocia, zipping around Cape Town's jaw-dropping Chapmans Peak Drive in vintage motorcycle sidecars, or floating down the Rhine clinging to a Wickelfisch to stay afloat. And seaplanes, steam trains and snowmobiles? I've done them all.

At some of India's best hotels, the arrival is part of the experience,

HASHIM BADANI; SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; GETTY IMAGES; STOCKFOOD.IN



whether it's sailing across Lake Pichola to the dreamy Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur or arriving at Hyderabad's Taj Falaknuma Palace in a carriage. But whenever I can find a pedestrian option, I'll always defer to it. In the case of labyrinthine old cities such as Harar in Ethiopia or Fez in Morocco, there is no other way (and unexpected delights wait around every corner). There's no better way to get your bearings in a new place than by striding purposefully in search of coffee while still bleary with jet lag or looking up quirky walking tours to uncover new facets of a city you already know well.

When I spent three months living in Bandra, I braved the traffic and fended off the entreaties of rickshawallahs while hitting the sidewalks. Were there too many close encounters with scooters and erratic drivers, potholes, questionable puddles and projectile paan splatter? Sure. Did my favourite white sneakers eventually become my favourite brown sneakers? Certainly. But there was also the discovery of vivid murals in Ranwar Village and lovingly adorned Catholic altars in Pali Hill that I'd never noticed before. I returned home most days, dusty but delighted—and excited to head back out on foot again.

8 TRACK A TIPPLE

In Singapore, Roshni Bajaj Sanghvi chases the national drink

Legend has it that the Singapore Sling was invented in 1915 by a Hainanese bartender called Ngiam Tong Boon, at Raffles Singapore hotel's Long Bar, as a way to camouflage alcohol for women who wanted to drink. This is unlikely, because *The Straits Times* mentioned this very pink cocktail as far back as 1895, while according to *DRiNK* magazine, the city's first gin sling recipe showed up in the local weekly *Sun* in 1913.

It is most popularly served at Raffles, but reports suggest that the 'original' recipe was scrawled on the back of a Long Bar bill by a curious customer in 1936. What is definitely true, then, is that the drink has as many recipes as it has origin stories. And of course, there are dozens of ways to consume this national drink. While Singapore Airlines fliers can get high on gratis Slings onboard, history buffs can queue up at Long Bar to pay US \$30 (around ₹2,000) and toss peanut shells on the floor as is tradition. Or sip it while cruising around Marina Bay in a doughnut-shaped boat. *Flodoco.com* offers the experience at US\$35 (around ₹2,500). >



Singapore Sling mixes gin with pineapple juice, Dom Benedictine, grenadine, cherry brandy, bitters, Cointreau and lime juice



Cuba Libre (Havana): Literally translating to 'Free Cuba', its story can be traced to the early 1900s, during the American occupation of Cuba. At Havana's touristy El Floridita restaurant and bar, don't miss the

DOWN IT Cocktails and the cities that inspired them

Cubata—a Cuba Libre made with cola and an aged dark local rum—with Hemingway's statue for company.

75 (Paris): The Soixante Quinze (75 in French) was created at the New York Bar in Paris around 1915. Now called Harry's New



York Bar (after its bartender Harry MacElhone), it remains a top spot to try this tipple of gin, champagne, lime juice and sugar.



Piña Colada (San Juan): In 1954, Ramon Marrero, a bartender at the Caribe Hilton, captured the Caribbean flavour by creating a mix of coconut cream, heavy cream, pineapple juice and rum. By 1978, it was Puerto Rico's national drink.