

# WORD OF MOUTH

SAUDI ARABIA | SINGAPORE | IRAN | LONDON

Overlooking the water  
in Phuket, Thailand.  
**Opposite, from top:**  
An onsen in Japan;  
Portugal's São  
Lourenço do Barrocal



# What Travel Means to Us Now

As we enter the new year, these are the post-pandemic places we most want to visit, who we'll go with and how we'll get there

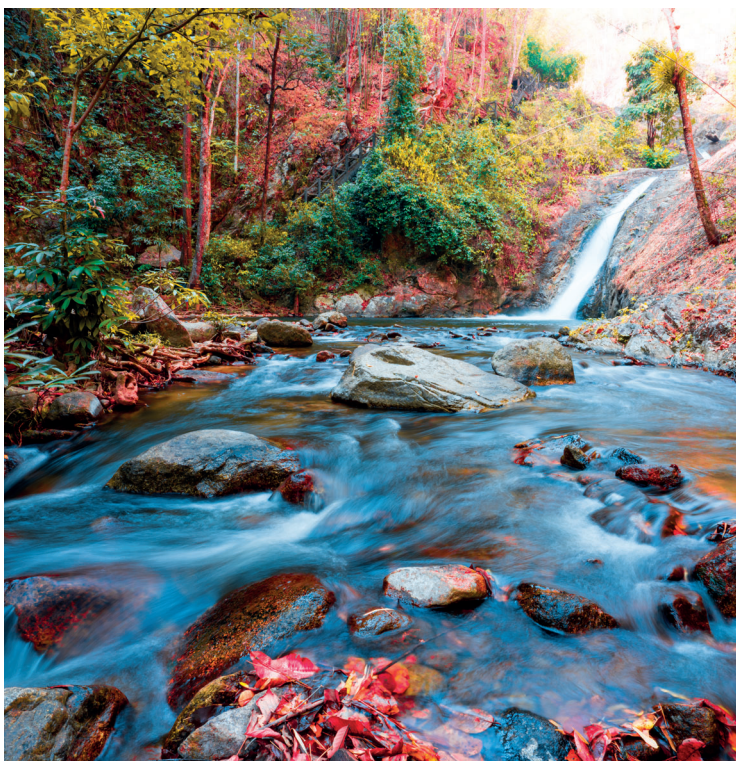
Over these past two years, we've all had our own pandemic experiences, but one thing has been the same everywhere: travel – at least the kind we're used to – has been on hold. For the editors at *Condé Nast Traveller's* seven global offices, in New York, London, Madrid, Milan, Dubai, Mumbai and Shanghai, being deprived of this shared passion provided some new common ground. Like so many people, we did our best to approximate some of what we most love about travel by cooking, reading, watching TV, exploring our home cities and uploading Zoom backgrounds depicting where we wished we could be. We also reconsidered what we most yearned for in travel, and thought about the ways the pandemic made us re-evaluate our priorities as travellers.

As we enter 2022, the circumstances remain markedly different in each place *Traveller* is published. But a return to a more normal style of travel is tantalisingly close for all of us. As we book flights, buy new luggage, make plans to meet up with aunts and uncles we've been seeing only through screens, it's worth taking a moment to reflect on how this time has changed us as travellers. Our editors have been doing just that, on periodic group video calls over the last few months, and we thought we'd share some of that conversation here. Think of these next several pages as a window into our future travel plans. May they inspire your own 2022 trip. Here's to a new year of new discoveries.

–The global editors of *Condé Nast Traveller*

## Escape to Calm

The Great Indoors has made me pay more attention to my interior life. And yet all the Zoom nature backgrounds, meditation apps, herbal teas and smudging sage cannot replace these pleasures:



- Relaxing on a hot-springs tour in Kurokawa Onsen, a village in the crater of Japan's largest active volcano, Mount Aso.
  - Seeing Varanasi's Hindu priests perform the flamboyant Ganga aarti with flaming lamps, cymbals and conches, from a small boat on the gentle river.
  - Strolling through England's Arthurian past in Glastonbury, with stops at Glastonbury Abbey, St. Margaret's Chapel and Glastonbury Tor, King Arthur's alleged burial site.
  - Walking among the ancient redwoods of California's Pacific Coast to reconnect with the earth.
- Saumya Ancheri, India

"My first trip will be to Phuket, Thailand, to visit my family. I can't wait to wake up and go for a swim and then lunch on pad kra pow before heading over to the Dibuk House in Old Town for drinks."

– Pallavi Kumar, U.S.



"I'm longing for sunset in Alentejo, Portugal. To return to the hotel São Lourenço do Barrocal, where there's nothing but silence and olive trees, and talk with good friends over local drinks and cheese."

– David Moralejo, Spain



## Netflix Inspired My Next Trip



Just before lockdown, I bought my first TV; within a month, it became a more reliable ticket to far-flung adventures than my passport. My goal was to use my sudden surfeit of downtime to make my way through 448 episodes of the Turkish blockbuster *Ertuğrul*, but I soon tired of swashbuckling period exploits and longed to wax nostalgic over a more 21st-century trip to Istanbul. The series *Black Money Love* and *Ethos* did the trick, transporting me to that alluring city that was, at that point, out of reach. Then Netflix introduced me to a world I was considerably less familiar with: the Korean romance *Crash Landing On You* whisked me between the high-tech tableau of Seoul and the pastoral countryside near Pyongyang. I was hooked; I blazed through it in a week, then gorged on 15 more K-dramas, keeping Google close at hand to annotate my newfound learnings about Korean culture. K-dramas became my guide to Korean food, slang, nightlife, pop culture and etiquette. This three-month crash course moved Seoul to the top of my travel wish list. Chapaguri and bungeo-ppang await.

– Sarah Khan, Middle East

## The Best Gift You Can Give

Especially this holiday season, it's travel



“Counting down the days till we can all see each other again, I gave relatives up and down the West Coast some gift cards for Alaska Airlines. I figured that when they're ready to fly, all they'd have to do is go online and book a trip (hopefully to see me).”

– Rebecca Misner, U.S.

“For my dad's 60th birthday, long before the pandemic, I told him to pick the destination and I'd pay for the vacation. Looking at a picture of him from that trip to Egypt, jumping off a felucca boat into the Nile with a giant smile on his face, I realise how overdue we are for a return engagement.”

– Jesse Ashlock, U.S.

“My sister and brother-in-law turned 40 under lockdown in London, at home with their three kids. So when it lifted, I gifted them a stay at Thyme, an idyllic rural retreat where the grounds are primed for strolling, the spa offers exceptional massages and the pub is around the corner.”

– Erin Florio, U.S.



“On trips past, I spent a lot of time getting the perfect Instagram shot. After a year of screens, I want to go on safari in Kenya and just leave my phone in my suitcase.”

– Shradha Shahani, India



## Just Get Me to a Hotel!!!



After a year in my apartment in Milan with my husband and our two boys, with time spent cooking and cleaning in between Zoom meetings, I'm longing to go someplace where I will be taken care of. I know that there's a growing trend of renting a house while on vacation, but meal prep and tidying up in some other home is the last thing I want right now. I'd much rather go to a classic hotel like The Carlyle in New York City and have someone else fix me a strong drink at its moodily lit Bemelmans Bar. Or visit the charming Hôtel Amour in Paris where I'd sleep late. And to Sicily with my family to check into the new Villa Igiea in Palermo, one of the island's historic palaces, which Rocco Forte has turned into a luxury hotel and where Fulvio Pierangelini, one of the best Italian chefs of all time, heads up the restaurant. I dream of waking early and driving to visit the seaside village of Scopello. Of ducking into one of the bakeries where the old woman behind the counter slips your children cannoli, at no charge, just because they are lovely bambini. And then heading to the lido for a dip in the deep-blue Tyrrhenian Sea. – *Maddalena Fossati, Italy*



## Putting Myself First

My post-pandemic travel fantasy has been a fairly simple one: it's 6 a.m. and I'm drifting alone through an airport terminal, oversized iced coffee in hand, waiting for a flight to just about anywhere. Part of this is driven by an obvious need to take a vacation, but it also captures another motivation – my intense desire to travel on my own terms. Already, my calendar has filled up with family reunions, rescheduled destination weddings and last-minute bachelorettes; all signifiers of our gradual return to normalcy, and ones that I am deeply grateful for. But after what feels like a lost year, I can't help but want to be a little selfish too.

A few ways I plan to channel my innermost Veruca Salt? Playing hooky midweek for a repeat visit to the Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica; ditching my home office and hopping on United's new direct flight from Newark to Maui; powering down my laptop (or hurling it into the sea) and going off-grid at Under Canvas Acadia, a new luxury campsite near Maine's Acadia National Park. Time is precious, and the prospect of compromising my own travel plans for the demands of regular life feels almost too much to bear right now. Especially when there are so many alluring alternatives. – *Lale Arikoglu, U.S.*

**Clockwise from opposite, top left:** Seoul's cityscape; the Thyme in the Cotswolds; Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica; Villa Igiea in Sicily; Kenya's annual migration with Asilia Africa's Rekero Camp



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**From top:** La Donaira farm in Spain; Subko's kulfi-stuffed croissant; the black dal from Dishoom in London

## The Grass Is Greener

I sprouted a green thumb during the past year, growing cherry tomatoes and salad greens as a welcome distraction from the outside world. But this made me realise how much I missed picnicking in gardens with farm-fresh produce. Here are a few experiences I've bookmarked for once things open up more:

- The two-week course on permaculture at Peter Fernandes and Rosie Harding's farm located in Assagao in Goa.
- The organic certified Titi Eco Farm in Malaysia, with founder Mr. Lim, an organic-farming pioneer.
- Picking porcinis at Ebbio, a 13th-century farm in the middle of an evergreen forest in Tuscany.
- A visit to La Donaira, a biodynamic farm near Serranía de Ronda in Spain, for feasts full of fresh produce.

– Smitha Menon, India

## Will Fly for Food

Re-creating our favourite restaurant dishes at home could never quite compete with the real deal

"One of the most inspiring success stories I've heard during the pandemic is of tiny Subko, a café and bakehouse in Mumbai that opened three days before lockdown began in 2020 – and despite endless challenges, grew such a loyal following that they managed to open a second outpost this year. I've been eyeing their innovative pastries made with regional ingredients on my Instagram for nearly two years, and when I make it back to Mumbai I'll be heading straight there from the airport for a haleem quiche, kulfi-stuffed croissant and Kashmiri walnut chocolate chip cookie."

– Sarah Khan, Middle East



"In Vienna I always go to Meissl & Schadn at the Grand Ferdinand Vienna for schnitzel, a dish I'd no sooner prep at home than I would form my own oompah band. I want to enjoy it with views of the Ringstrasse."

– Rick Jordan, U.K.

"On month 10 of quarantine, my need for black dal grew so intense that I considered the two-day recipe. Half a day in, I adjusted my ambitions. No one does it like London's Dishoom anyway. I'll have to manage my cravings till I can get back."

– Erin Florio, U.S.

"It's easy, they said, as I wrangled with my new pasta machine clogged with glutinous dough. It's not, and I can't wait for unctuous cacio e pepe on the cobbles of Rome."

– Isabella Sullivan, Middle East

PHOTOGRAPH: HELEN CATHCART (DISHOOM)