

SPECIAL ISSUE



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELER



Far & Away

19 SPECTACULAR EXPERIENCES

12 Naoshima, Japan

AVANT-GARDE ART

There's nothing like an entire island for a canvas. Naoshima, a small island just off Japan's coast in the Seto Inland Sea, is peppered with contemporary paintings and sculpture by cutting-edge artists, housed inside museums or gracing the landscape. Sculptor Yayoi Kusama's giant black-dotted pumpkin greets travelers disembarking at the port. Tour a few of the houses, shrines, and former stores—some 200 years old—that have been transformed into contemporary art spaces, then head to the cool, underground galleries of the Chichu Art Museum.

13 Mekong River, Vietnam & Cambodia

RIVERBOAT RAMBLE

Pelicans and painted storks flap past temples that are clad in gold and scarlet. The farmers' markets smell of lotus blossoms, catfish, and sandalwood. The banks of the Mekong are a showcase for the senses, and a river cruise between Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and Phnom Penh, Cambodia, delivers Indochina in all its fabled, fabulous variety. Consider these three lines: Aqua Mekong, Viking River Cruises, and National Geographic Expeditions. Their ships offer shore excursions, and some vessels carry bikes or kayaks onboard, but the vastness of the sky and the forever spooling café-au-lait waters tempt even the most stressed-out traveler to lay back in a deck chair and watch the passing scene.

14 Borobudur, Indonesia

ANCIENT WONDERS

Covered by volcanic ash, jungle, and mystery, the ninth-century Buddhist temple complex at Borobudur slumbered for hundreds of years until 1814, when British colonial bigwig Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles ordered it saved and restored. Today it's a 90-minute car trip from Yogyakarta airport to Amanjiwo, an Aman resort near the temple site where local children shower you with orchid petals. Rise before dawn for a temple tour to watch the sun's rays illuminate its spires and the peaks of surrounding volcanoes. Afterward, make your way home through the dreamlike landscape of rivers and rice paddies.

*** GO WITH NAT GEO:** Travel around the world, and to many of the destinations in this feature story, with National Geographic Expeditions. natgeoexpeditions.com

MATTHEW MCCAW; MISHKIBRETT; MARIS ADRIEN; PLAKET M. ADIS

