

WHERE TO GO NOW ↗

THIS PAGE: The beach at El Secreto in Belize.
OPPOSITE: Crossing the Golden Jubilee Footbridge toward the South Bank in London.

SKY CANVASSED THE WORLD FOR **15 MUST-HIT DESTINATIONS:** FROM CITIES THAT ARE PULSING WITH ENERGY TO HIDDEN-AWAY GEMS THAT WILL LEAVE YOU RESTED AND RESTORED. THE BUZZIEST STOPS IN **LONDON**, NEW MUSEUMS IN **MEXICO CITY**, RETRO-CHIC HOTELS IN **PALM SPRINGS**, CUTTING-EDGE RESTAURANTS IN **STOCKHOLM**, ECOLOGES IN **BELIZE** AND MORE. LET THE GLOBE-HOPPING BEGIN.

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MARK PAREN TAYLOR (LONDON)

SBA

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

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Situated along the Pacific and hugged by the Santa Ynez Mountains,

Santa Barbara is the quintessential California coast town, with a sunny and charming disposition that's infectious. But a crop of new restaurants and hotels, the city's first distillery and a soon-to-open public market are adding fresh new



buzz. Make a beeline for the Funk Zone, an emerging arts district near downtown where artisanal restaurants, winetasting rooms, galleries and a high-end guitar shop, The Guitar Bar, happily coexist. Snag a table at The Lark, opened last year, and dig into Brussel sprouts with medjool dates and mussels with charred pineapple and chili. Finish with rieslings from Austria or pinot noirs from the nearby Santa Maria Valley at Les Marchands Wine Bar and Merchant, a stunning wine bar around the corner. Also nearby, Cutler's Artisan Spirits is a nine-month-old distillery right in the heart of downtown, where you can sample bourbon and vodka. The distillery's spirits are used in cocktails at El Encanto, a historic property reopened by Orient-Express last year after a seven-year restoration. Perched on a hilltop, the 92-room hotel retained several original craftsman-style bungalows that are now outfitted with fireplaces, private patios and clawfoot tubs.

—TANVI CHHEDA



BELIZE

BZE

You've heard about Belize for years. Maybe your friends honeymooned there and praised it as a smaller, quieter Mexico (with better snorkeling and no bars with alcoholic frog mascots). Or perhaps you've heard about the growing number of Americans retiring to its affordable, seaside condos. But why Belize now? Because the tiny but beautiful Central American country finally has the hospitality industry it deserves. In its defense, it got a late start. Belize gained independence from Britain in 1981 and began adding infrastructure to support tourism—paved roads, airports, a few no-frills beach hotels. And then came Francis Ford Coppola, who used his mob money, so to speak, to open the Blancaneaux Lodge in the Maya Mountains in 1993 and Turtle Inn on the Caribbean Sea in 2001. Both set the standard for high-end resorts in Belize and paved the way for the recent wave of luxe hotel openings, including organic farm/ecolodge Belcampo Belize in the southern Punta Gorda region and the seaside villas of El Secreto on the Ambergris Caye. Not that you should ignore the classics: Blancaneaux is a backcountry paradise with spacious cabañas and plenty for the adventurous, including hikes to hidden waterfalls and unspoiled Mayan ruins and the occasional jaguar sighting. Turtle Inn grafts that five-star formula onto a classic beach setting. Time to update your bucket list. —CHRIS CLAYTON

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YYC

CALGARY, CANADA

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With Banff National Park about an hour away and the Calgary Stampede attended by more than 1 million people each summer, this city's no stranger to travelers. But a booming urban scene, fueled by the oil and gas industry, means that Calgary, home to Canada's strongest economy and a young population (the median age is 36), has more to experience than ever.

Cropping up amid construction cranes (more than 20 office towers and condo high-rises are underway) are exciting new eateries such as Charcut, where chef John Jackson and Top Chef Canada runner-up Connie DeSousa get rave reviews for their charbroiled dishes, and National, where more than 80 brews (nearly 70 on tap) are served in buzzing beer halls. Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods such as Kensington Village are walkable, but light rail and a car-share fleet of

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150-plus Smart Cars make it easy to catch a ride. And yet it's still a city at one with nature. Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava's two-year-old pedestrian Peace Bridge spans the Bow River and wetlands of Prince's Island Park just north of downtown. And Calgary's tallest building, Norman Foster's The Bow, is 58 stories high and overlooks its namesake river, one of the world's top waterways for trout fishing.

—SHAWN GILLIAM



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Biking along the Santa Barbara Pier; Lamanai, a Mesoamerican archaeological site in Belize; El Secreto resort; Cork & Cow in Franklin, Tennessee; The pedestrian Calgary Peace Bridge.



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FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

BNA

Franklin, with its boho-meets-Southern-chic vibe, seems to have a magnetic pull on the celebrities who pick, strum and sing their way to fame in Nashville—a range of stars who have made the city their Tennessee home base. Located in the rolling, creek-cut hills less than 30 miles south of Music City, Franklin has a magical combination of shopping, dining and history essential for turning a mere location into a buzzy destination. ¶ Main Street, with its architectural smorgasbord of buildings ranging from antebellum to art moderne, is the logical first stop in town. Goods behind the historic storefronts range from indie-label fashion (Haven stocks the likes of Current Elliot and Elizabeth and James) to au courant home décor (The Iron Gate captures the white-hot timeworn elegance aesthetic) and stationery with a generous dose of gentility (Rock Paper Scissors). A little south of downtown, dive into antiques and architectural salvage at Winchester Antique Mall and City Farmhouse. ¶ This being the South, food is critically important to getting the full Franklin experience. Both upscale and down-home dining traditions are well represented, and you can just as easily get a steak with foie gras butter (at Cork & Cow) as you can turnip greens or meat-and-three (Dotson's and Bishop's, respectively). —GINA CZUPKA

