

## Best Places to Travel in 2016

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by Travel + Leisure Staff December 1, 2015

To compile our annual list of the best places to travel in the upcoming year, T+L editors thoroughly and meticulously consider a variety of factors. Which under-the-radar gems are most exciting to our network of contributing writers and global correspondents? Which destinations are our [A-List travel specialists](#) fielding requests for? Which classic vacation spots are starting to emerge—but for entirely new and compelling reasons? Which global events and changes in travel restrictions have made certain destinations easier to get to?

This year's list ranges from the Andaman Islands, off India (which impressed even the most discerning ocean-lover, Jacques Cousteau), to an unspoiled stretch of the Caribbean, and nine other beach destinations with sun, sand, and beautiful views. For food lovers, we've got everything from Ghent, Belgium (where a group of young chefs is leading the culinary revolution and plans for a massive food hall are under way), to the canal town of Aarhus, Denmark, which is stepping out of Copenhagen's shadow with three Michelin-starred restaurants of its own.

Closer to home, once-overlooked spots have proven themselves worthy of another glance. The bike-friendly town of Richmond, Virginia, has standout architecture, a burgeoning art and food scene, and a brand-new design hotel. Detroit's renewal has been on our radar for a while, and with signs of life springing up in its abandoned buildings—including a hotel that set up shop in a historic fire-department headquarters—it's finally earned a much-deserved spot on this list. And in San Antonio, the Roman and Williams-designed Hotel Emma, in a former brewhouse, sits at the heart of the restaurant- and shopping-packed Pearl district.

In the geopolitical sphere, the recently signed nuclear deal between Iran and the UN security council has opened up opportunities for Americans to more readily visit the cosmopolitan capital of Tehran and the mosques of Kashan. And while Cuba was on [last year's list](#), a [spate of new cruises](#) that dock in Havana—all thanks to eased travel restrictions for Americans—mean the destination is continuing to blossom. Cruise ships are also heading to Batumi, in Georgia, with its gorgeous botanical garden. It's a Black Sea port that's gaining attention from the big cruise brands given the safety concerns in Ukraine.

Whether you're looking for a weekend getaway close to home, a farther-flung bucket-list trip—or even a multi-stop tour that combines, say, the art- and design-filled Taipei, the classic Chinese retreat of Hangzhou, and the hip surf community of Canggu, Bali—consider the 50 incredible destinations on this list a road map for your planning and inspiration in 2016.

Flip through the slideshow for the full list, and share your thoughts (and travels) with us on social media with the hashtag [#TLBestPlaces](#). —*Stephanie Wu*



Andrew Hetherington

## 45. Okanagan Valley, British Columbia

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With rolling hills dotted with sagebrush and ponderosa pine—and thousands of acres of vineyards—the Okanagan Valley can no longer be considered a nascent [Napa](#). Lying between two mountain ranges and stretching roughly 125 miles north from the U.S.-Canada border, the geography varies from the desert-like conditions in the south to the green plateau of the Naramata Bench and Okanagan Lake's sandy beaches. While the area's stark beauty and hot, dry summers have always drawn outdoorsy types, there's now an increasingly sophisticated scene revolving around food and local wine. Wine-focused restaurants like the Sonora Room at [Burrowing Owl](#) and Miradoro at [Tinhorn Creek Winery](#) serve up spectacular views and farm-to-table specialties, along with Pinot Gris and Meritage (a Bordeaux-style blend). For accommodations, the best options are the [Sparkling Hill Resort](#) (owned by the patriarch of the Swarovski jewelry dynasty, the design includes millions of crystals) or the more traditional, 1908 Mission-style [Naramata Heritage Inn & Spa](#). It's easy to spend a few days roaming around the countryside, hopping from winery to winery (there are over 130), but one place in particular is worth a special trip: the exquisitely modern [Black Hills](#) tasting room, where you can sample a glass of Nota Bene, one of the area's big reds. Last year was even hotter than usual, which is good news for those planning a visit: many of the 2015 vintage wines, predicted to be the best in a century, will be ready for tasting in 2016. —*Guy Saddy*