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DESTINATIONS

The Best Places to Go in 2026

For quiet coastal paradises, contemporary design cities, and new ways to travel far, far away.

Our list of the Best Places to Go in 2026 is a reminder of the paradox that our world is at once very big, and very small. Every year, we manage to unearth intel on places that many readers have yet to consider visiting; and yet, at the same time, rebirth and reinvention are recurring themes from well-known destinations that always seem to have something new to offer.

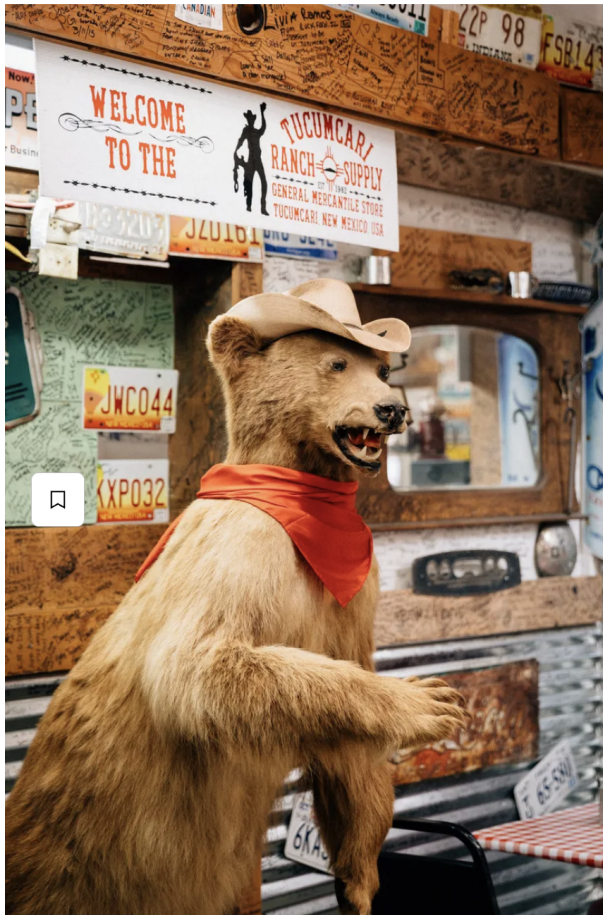
So, in crafting this annual list, which we hope will be a handy guide for choosing where you travel over the next 12 months, you'll notice that we were excited by places that already feel familiar and yet are being imbued with fresh life, like [Hong Kong](#), which has an exciting new cultural center of gravity; we also shine the spotlight on the 16th-century lake city of Udaipur, where a flurry of luxury-hotel openings is ushering in a new era. There are also under-the-radar gems gaining footing on the global stage, like Canada's Prince Edward County, where a wave of indie wineries, new restaurants, and boutique hotels is redefining the weekend escape; or Fès, Marrakech's understated sibling, which is set to shine in 2026 with the historic reopening of its medina following a remarkable 15-year restoration.

As for surprises? There are plenty, even after over a decade of compiling this list. In Bolivia, great expanses of shimmering salt pans have long been a draw, but zoom out on the region of Potosí and you'll find a geological bonanza of lagoons, hot springs, and snowcapped volcanoes that are finally home to some of South America's buzziest hotel openings. And if Rwanda's primates have captured your imagination, then, like us, you'll be excited to read about Gabon, where new eco-lodges open up access to untouched forests that are home to western lowland gorillas and sweeping savannas. If you've been waiting for that once-in-a-lifetime safari trip, this is it. But perhaps few places on earth evoke life's vastness quite like Uluru, the massive sandstone monolith that rises from the heart of the Australian Outback. As the region marks the 40th anniversary of a historic hand-back program, a new chapter of purpose-driven tourism is evolving. In 2026, visitors, guided by Anangu storytellers, can journey along a 33-mile trail, then spend the night in luxurious glamping camps, where the desert sky unfurls like an ancient manuscript—perfect for reflecting on our place in the ever-unfolding story of the universe. These are just some of the places we celebrate below.

This list is for travelers and dreamers alike. So please, use it—[along with the companion lists we created for six continents](#)—to jump-start your travel plans or simply indulge your sense of wonder. In the year ahead, our global team of editors will be exploring many of these places, and we can't wait to share the stories we discover on the ground and, perhaps, even cross paths with some of you along the way. Here's a fantastic year of eye-opening travel. —*Arati Menon & Megan Spurrell*

Route 66, USA

Go for: 100 years of the Mother Road



Route 66 turns 100 this year, and from California to Chicago its famous roadside shops and attractions will be celebrating in style. *Watson's B-B-Q/Rachel Wright*



The road's iconic motel and drive-in signs are a testament to its Americana history—thanks to historic preservation efforts, they're looking better than ever at 100. *Blue Swallow Motel/Rachel Wright*

Neon lights are burning a little brighter along Route 66, the iconic US highway that stretched between **Chicago** and **Santa Monica**, as it celebrates its centennial in 2026. While the contiguous highway was decommissioned in 1985, sections of it have been preserved for historic interest. Along these, vintage motel and diner signs have been restored to their midcentury brilliance, including more than a dozen along Albuquerque's 18-mile (the country's longest) urban stretch. In St. Robert, Missouri, long-abandoned neon signs have been polished and collected in the just-opened **Route 66 Neon Park**. Celebrations are planned along the 2,448-mile route, from Springfield, Missouri, host of the **Route 66 Centennial National Kick-Off** in April, to Tulsa's **Capital Cruise** in May, a world-record attempt for the largest-ever classic-car parade, and Amarillo's 10-day-long **Texas Route 66 Festival** in June.

A trip along the Mother Road invites nostalgia for the past but also consideration of how history has been told. Historically, over 25 [tribal nations](#) lived along the route, but for years their diverse cultures were largely represented through reductive stereotypes, with concrete tipi storefronts and signage adorned with Hollywood-style depictions of Native peoples. Now travelers can get a more realistic view at Indigenous-run institutions including Albuquerque's [Indian Pueblo Cultural Center](#), operated by the 19 Pueblos of [New Mexico](#), which celebrates its 50th year in 2026, and at the [First Americans Museum](#), which opened in Oklahoma City in 2021 to tell the stories of Oklahoma's 39 nations.

How to plan it: Centennial celebrations kick off on April 30 and continue throughout the year. Spring and fall typically promise the most comfortable conditions. While a continuous Route 66 may no longer exist, you can piece it together by following brown "Historic Route 66" signs or downloading a [dedicated navigation app](#)—standard navigation tools will lead you onto interstate highways. Recently spruced up route-side motels along the route include Flagstaff, Arizona's [Americana Motor Hotel](#), where Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper parked while filming *Easy Rider* in 1968. At [Arrive Albuquerque](#), which opened in a historic Route 66 motel this spring, guests get a front-row seat to Sunday's lowrider cruise during which souped-up vehicles roll by, bringing this road's past into contemporary American culture. —[Karen Gardiner](#)