

LETTERS



Highland Springs Ranch & Inn

HIGHLAND SPRINGS Ranch & Inn in Cherry Valley has a lavender festival at its 123 Farm in June.

Flowers not too far afield

You don't have to go to Washington state for a celebration of lavender as the Sequim, Wash., story suggested ["They Just Love Their Lavender," by Sara Lessley, May 21].

Highland Springs Ranch & Inn in Cherry Valley, north of Beaumont, has an annual Lavender Festival (hsresort.com/thelavenderfestival). This year it's June 9-11 and 16-18, and you can stay on the property.

TOM KEISER
Pasadena

T-shirts or clothes. The back streets of Paris and San Francisco have small shops with inexpensive, beautiful clothes. This will save on laundry.

LAURA R. NORRIS
San Diego

Try this eatery

In the Weekend Escape about Santa Maria, ("Sear Pleasures," April 30), writer Irene Lechowitzy recommended Jocko's in Nipomo.

Jocko's is good but the best in the north Santa Barbara County area is the Hitching Post in Casmalia (www.hitchingpost1.com), not the one in Buellton.

That one is good, but the Hitching Post in Casmalia offers all-inclusive dinners with great portions and good drinks. It's authentic, filled with ranchers and locals. Its historic building is out of the Old West.

Of interest is a Japanese garden and koi pond to the rear of the building.

Hard to find and hard to get to, but it's the best. If I lived in the Santa Ynez Valley, I'd be a regular.

BILL PARTRIDGE
Torrance

Travel tips too

Re: "Readers' Thrifty Vacation Advice." On the Spot, by Catharine Hamm, May 21: Here are two of my favorite travel tips:

Take an extra cloth bag with a zipper that you can use on the return trip as a carry-on to contain all the souvenirs you bought.

Wear old clothes for a few days; then throw (or give) them away and wear new

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TOURS & CRUISES

CALIFORNIA

Women's backpacking getaway

If you prefer a hearty hike to a scenic drive, grab your mountain boots and head for Northern California for a new women's vacation experience organized by REI Adventures. The four-day tour, Yosemite Women's Backpacking, Half Dome, is designed for fit women backpackers looking for a challenging adventure in one of America's most popular national parks. Participants, traveling five to 12 miles per day, will hike from the valley floor of Yosemite National Park to the summit of Half Dome on a trail that will take them through high-country meadows, by waterfalls and to the edge of alpine lakes. Female guides lead the way, sharing Yosemite lore, preparing meals and helping guests hone their backcountry skills.

Dates: Aug. 31-Sept. 3

Price: From \$949 per person, double occupancy. Includes guides, meals, tents, campsite and permit fees. Transportation not included.

Info: REI Adventures, (800) 622-2236, www.rei.com/adventures

— ROSEMARY McCLURE

ISRAEL AND JORDAN

L.A. World Affairs Council

Meet political leaders, artists, academics and business leaders on a 15-day tour of Israel and Jordan organized by the Los Angeles World Affairs Council. Highlights in Israel include meetings with Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Knesset. A swim in the Dead Sea, an excursion to a winery in the Golan Heights and a visit to the West Bank and several Palestinian towns are also on the itinerary. In Jordan, participants will meet with a U.S. Embassy official, tour Amman, visit Petra and Wadi Rum, and experience



RAAD ADAYLEH Associated Press

A TOUR of Israel and Jordan includes a stop in Petra, an ancient Jordanian city.

a Bedouin dinner.

Dates: Oct. 16-30

Price: \$6,785 per person, double occupancy, based on 15 participants. \$1,710 single supplement. Includes accommodations, most meals and all sightseeing and excursion fees. International airfare to and from Tel Aviv not included.

Info: Los Angeles World Affairs Council, (424) 258-6160, www.lat.ms/israelandjordan

— ANNE HARNAGEL

FRANCE

Cruise the Seine

Be one of the first to set sail on Uniworld's new ship, Joie de Vivre, on an eight-day cruise on the Seine River through Paris and Normandy. The riverboat will dock in Paris, where it will spend two days. The Joie de Vivre, which launched in March, will also visit Richard the Lionheart's Château Gaillard overlooking the Seine in Les Andelys, Monet's home in Giverny, the medi-

eval city of Rouen and the famed Normandy beaches, site of the D-Day invasion of World War II. A choice of excursions, including biking and other recreational activities, are included in the fare.

Dates: Weekly sailings are available through early November.

Price: \$3,549 per person, double occupancy. Includes accommodations, excursions, tips and beverages, including wine and spirits. International airfare not included.

Info: Uniworld, (866) 883-7230, www.uniworld.com/en

— ROSEMARY McCLURE

ITALY

Fast cars, slow food

Get behind the wheel of Italy's luxury vehicles on Zicasso's 10-day tour of Emilia-Romagna's "Motor Valley." Highlights include Modena, home to Maserati and Pagani; Bologna, home to Lamborghini and Ducati motorbikes; and Maranello, home to Ferrari. Participants will tour the factories and museums of the five brands; experience a Maserati, Lamborghini and Ferrari on private drives and on a race track, and test their skill as a Formula 1 pit crew member during a simulation. Once they roll to a stop, participants can savor fresh Parmesan on a dairy farm, sample fresh Parma ham and aged balsamic vinegars, and learn to craft specialty pastas.

Dates: Available year round

Price: From \$4,129 per person, double occupancy. Includes nine nights' accommodations, breakfast included; most meals, five test drives, guided factory and museum tours, cooking class and tastings. International airfare not included.

Info: Zicasso, www.lat.ms/carsandcuisine

— ANNE HARNAGEL

COOL DEALS AT HOT SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ., SPAS

When Arizona sizzles, prices plummet. That's why some posh resorts in the Scottsdale area offer deep summer room discounts. Here's your chance to sample the good life — at a fraction of the high-season cost. And the triple-digit heat? Relax, there's always the pool or indoor spa to keep you cool.

The deals: I found rooms for random dates in July and August at the Royal Palms Resort and Spa for \$199 a night and up. Info: www.royalpalmsresort.com. Rooms at the Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia start at \$129 a night using code SUMFUN1 for stays June 1 to Sept. 30. Info: www.lat.ms/montelucia. And the Stay More, Save More deal at the Andaz Scottsdale Resort & Spa had rates as low as \$112 a night. Info: www.lat.ms/scottsdaleandaz

— MARY FORGIONE



DON RIDDLE

SUMMER heat results in price cuts at the Andaz and other resorts in Scottsdale, Ariz.

YOUR SCENE

EDITOR'S CHOICE



IN THE CHIPS ON A SUNNY GIBRALTAR DAY

Gregory Moran and his wife, Cindy, in April took a 16-day Atlantic cruise. At their port call in Gibraltar, they were taking in the scene by a small café near St. Michael's Cave. Gregory saw another traveler purchase some chips, which the nifty Barbary macaque snatched and ate. The Manhattan Beach resident used an iPad to capture the thief.

— DENISE FLOREZ

TO SUBMIT A PHOTO

Send unaltered original files to yourscene-travel@latimes.com or post them at latimes.com/yourscene. Photographers agree that The Times may reproduce photos in any format.

WEB BUZZ

Wander off beaten path with this duo

Uncover the day-to-day life (and the actual cost) as a couple backpack on less traveled roads through Afghanistan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia and Iran.

Name: Lostwithpurpose.com
What it does: A twentysomething couple encourage cross-cultural understanding and inspire travel through sharing experiences and tips on visas, budgeting, transportation and more.

What's hot: The first thing you'll notice is the large, almost cinematic quality of the photos. Dig into the "Guides" section and you'll find detailed info such as, "Here's exactly how much it costs to backpack in Kyrgyzstan," or "Over land from Armenia to Iran via the Agarak/Norduz border cross-

ing." Blogs by global backpackers are not new, but Alex and Sebastian have mastered online travel content. Even if your adventures won't take you to these remote destinations, check out their general tips such as "essential camera advice for beginner travel photographers."

What's not: Adult language is sometimes used. It's not a big deal, considering their audience is mostly twentysomethings, but parents looking to expand their children's travel horizons should exercise caution.

— JEN LEO

CALIFORNIA BUCKET LIST

Lake Tahoe

Feeling blue? Head to Lake Tahoe, where that color has so many shades — from dark Levi to pale baby blanket — that it is sure to cheer you. Better yet, rent a kayak or a canoe and dip your toes in one of the loveliest lakes in the world.

What: The north shore is anchored by Tahoe City, a bustling resort town with restaurants, inns and marinas with boat rentals. Boat rental shops also dot the lake. On the southwest shore, Emerald Bay State Park contains the 1929 Nordic-style mansion Vikingsholm, and the "Tea House" on Fannette Island, the only island in all of Lake Tahoe. Summer temps are in the 70s, but the chill waters often make it feel cooler. All in all, it makes for a refreshing adventure.

Info: www.visitinglaketahoe.com. Kayak and canoe rentals from about \$40, www.tahoeboating.com.

— CHRIS ERSKINE

In 2017, Travel has created a California bucket list. We'll feature one experience each Sunday. For the full list, go to latimes.com/cabucketlist.

GEO QUIZ



NEALE CLARK Getty Images

Valletta is the principal port city of which Mediterranean country?

Portugal

Malta

Spain

Answer below. Source: National Geographic Bee

Malta

AIRFARES

ATLANTA	
LAX	\$338 American, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, United
SNA	416 American, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, United
BUR	406 American, Delta, Southwest, United
ONT	396 American, Delta, Southwest, United

CHICAGO	
LAX	\$388 American, Frontier, United, Virgin America
SNA	398 American, United
BUR	408 American, United
LGB	366 American, Delta
ONT	408 American, Delta, United

DENVER	
LAX	\$284 American, Frontier, Southwest, United, Virgin America
SNA	306 Frontier, Southwest, United
BUR	306 American, Southwest, United
ONT	282 Delta, Southwest, United

HONOLULU	
LAX	\$752 American, Delta, Hawaiian, United, Virgin America
SNA	868 United
BUR	886 United
ONT	854 United

LAS VEGAS	
LAX	\$88 American, Southwest, United, Virgin America
SNA	98 American, Southwest, United
BUR	98 American, Southwest, United
LGB	98 American, JetBlue
ONT	98 American, United

NEW YORK-NEWARK, N.J.	
LAX	\$398 American, Delta, United, Virgin America
SNA	398 American, Delta, Southwest, United
BUR	398 American, Southwest, United
LGB	384 American, Delta, JetBlue
ONT	389 American, Southwest, United

PHOENIX	
LAX	\$166 American, Delta, Southwest, United
SNA	166 American, Southwest
BUR	166 American, Southwest
LGB	166 American, Delta
ONT	166 Southwest, American

SAN FRANCISCO	
LAX	\$108 American, Delta, United, Virgin America
SNA	165 American, United, Southwest
BUR	196 American, United
LGB	116 American, Delta, JetBlue
ONT	138 American, Southwest, United

SEATTLE	
LAX	\$216 Alaska, Delta, Virgin America
SNA	238 Alaska, United
BUR	224 Alaska, United
LGB	178 JetBlue, Southwest
ONT	248 Alaska, United

WASHINGTON, D.C.	
LAX	\$416 American, Delta, JetBlue, United, Virgin America
SNA	459 American, Delta, United
BUR	469 American, United
LGB	448 American, Delta, JetBlue
ONT	431 American, Delta, Southwest, United



SORINCOLAC Getty Images/Stockphoto
TROPICAL serenity awaits on Rarotonga in the Cook Islands.

COOK ISLANDS FOR \$795

Visit the Cook Islands for \$795 round trip from LAX on Air New Zealand. The fare is for departures on Saturdays from Aug. 26-Sept. 24, Oct. 21-Dec. 15 and Jan. 20-March 31. Returns are on Fridays. You must stay at least six days but not more than 20. Buy your ticket by June 10.

Info: (800) 262-1234, www.airnewzealand.com

Source: Airfarewatchdog.com

INTERNATIONAL		
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND*		
LAX	\$1,112-\$1,495	Air New Zealand, Air Pacific, Air Tahiti Nui, American, Fiji, Hawaiian, Qantas, Virgin Australia
CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO		
LAX	\$313	Alaska, Aeromexico, American, Delta, United, Virgin America
LONDON*		
LAX	\$1,134-\$1,384	American, Air N.Z., British, Delta, KLM, Lufthansa, Norwegian, United, Virgin Atlantic
PARIS*		
LAX	\$1,106-\$1,353	Aer Lingus, Air France, Air Tahiti Nui, Am'can, British, Delta, KLM, Lufthansa, Norwegian, Swiss, United
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA*		
LAX	\$1,377-\$1,647	Air N.Z., American, Delta, Fiji, Korean, Qantas, United, Virgin Australia
TOKYO*		
LAX	\$926-\$1,461	All Nippon, American, Delta, JAL, Korean, Malaysian, Singapore, United
VANCOUVER, CANADA		
LAX	\$349	Air Canada, Alaska, Delta, United, WestJet

Restricted round-trip airfares as researched on Thursday, the day before the travel section goes to press. Fares change daily, and availability is not assured. Fares, which may involve a change of planes, are for airlines serving Los Angeles International (LAX), Orange County/John Wayne (SNA), Burbank/Bob Hope (BUR), L.A. Ontario (ONT) and Long Beach (LGB). Domestic fares and international airfares include taxes and fees. *These international fares vary because of differing fuel surcharges on different airlines. Sources: Sabre reservation system, airlines and Web

MORE DEALS ONLINE

Find bargains on hotels, airfares and packages on the daily deal blog at latimes.com/travelblog.