



PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS STANKIEWICZ, LOOK-FOTO/GETTY IMAGES

READ CAPTION

TRAVEL

10 acts of kindness by strangers around the world

From Australia to Morocco, readers share heartwarming travel tales of rescue, generosity, and surprise serenades.

5 MINUTE READ

BY KELLY BARRETT

ADVERTISEMENT

WHETHER IT'S A flat tire, a missed train, or a lost wallet, an unexpected mishap can foil even the best-laid travel plans. Fortunately it seems there are plenty of kind souls

the world over who are willing to help a stranger out of a jam or just brighten someone's day.

We were curious though: Are these do-gooders mostly in small towns, where popular thinking asserts the friendliest folks live, or do big cities also foster generosity? So we asked our community where they had experienced random acts of kindness. After thousands weighed in, we found that there are just as many places to find kind people as there are places to visit. Here are a few of the stories our readers shared.

Roadside assistance in Ireland

After reader Becky Corbin's car broke down while she was driving the Ring of Kerry in Ireland, many locals stopped to offer help. "I have never met kinder people anywhere than the amazing people in Ireland!" Corbin wrote.



Along Ireland's Ring of Kerry route, drivers discover magical landscapes like this one atop Moll's Gap.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIAMH RONANE, GETTY IMAGES

Travel tips: Technically you could circle the Ring of Kerry, also known as the Iveragh Peninsula, in a day, but with its dramatic landscapes, seaside villages, and Iron Age forts, why rush? Take a week and savor the journey. Find the Emerald Isle's endangered red deer and other rare species in Killarney National Park, which conserves more than 26,000 acres of natural wonder.

TODAY'S
POPULAR STORIES

SCIENCE

These are the top 20 scientific discoveries of the decade

SCIENCE

New kind of alien 'mineral' created on Earth

ANIMALS

Are you a cat whisperer? A few special people can read feline expressions.

An unexpected gift in Australia

If you go to [Australia](#), be sure to visit Cairns for its laidback vibe and natural beauty—as well as its generous residents. Reader Rachel Tara took her son to a local market and was delighted when the store owner gave him a toy turtle as a keepsake. The catch? “He had to pay it forward and do a random act of kindness for someone else,” she wrote.

Travel tips: While the defining attraction of this region is of course the [Great Barrier Reef](#), check out the [Cairns Esplanade](#) and the Pier Marina too. National Geographic Journeys’ 12-day “[Explore Australia](#)” trip includes a visit to Cairns with a behind-the-scenes tour of the James Cook University research aquarium and opportunities to investigate the area’s tropical rainforests and reefs.

A home-cooked meal in Morocco

Reader Sonia Thai won’t forget the night when a family in [Marrakech](#) invited her home for a traditional Moroccan meal. “After a delicious dinner, the woman and her dad drove us around the city to see the night views and to visit Djemaa el Fna.”

Djemaa el Fna has been a trade and social center of Marrakech's medina (Arab quarter) since medieval times.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAVLIHA, GETTY IMAGES



Travel tips: The main square of Djemaa el Fna is an entrancing introduction to the sights, sounds, flavors, and aromas of the city. Venture just outside Marrakech to Toubkal National Park, home of North Africa's highest peak, for trekking or skiing in the cool mountain air.

A creative tire change in Albania

When reader Magdalena Polikarska got a flat tire in the remote village of Lin, Albania, “amazing local men changed it using a big rock and chiseling the dirt road underneath it.”

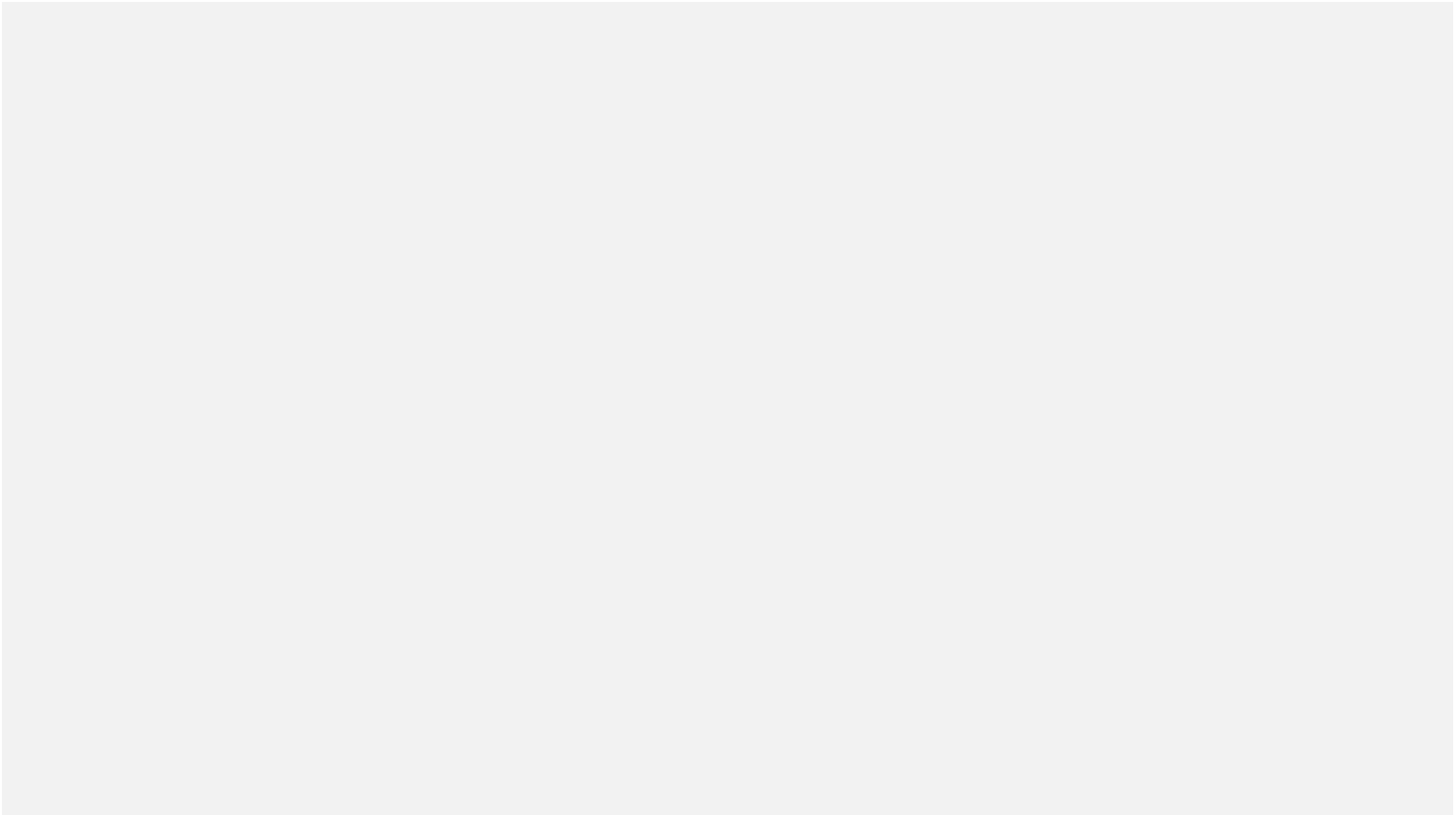
Travel tips: Don't miss the Balkan wine, beautiful rocky coastlines, and intriguing military bunkers that dot Albania's countryside. The estimated number of these abandoned structures varies, but you'll see them everywhere. Some have been turned into museums or cafés.

Saved from a soaking in Greece

In Meteora, Greece, visiting the monasteries perched precariously atop megalithic mountains is usually a dreamy experience. Reader Sara Betler, however, was having more of a nightmare when she got caught between buildings in an epic downpour. A

“nice local guy gave us a lift,” she wrote. It “could have been a recipe for disaster, but it all worked out.”

Travel tip: Hiking through Meteora isn’t as difficult as it may seem. You can do it in a couple of hours on your own, or join one of the many local tours.



RELATED: TOP 5 OF THE WORLD'S HAPPIEST COUNTRIES

What makes a country happy? The United Nations considers the answer with its annual World Happiness Report, ranking a total of 156 countries. Key ingredients for well-being include longer healthy years of life, more social support, trust in government, higher GDP per capita, and generosity. See the [full list here](#).



Friendly first aid in Taiwan

With its mountainous terrain, Hualien is one of the less-populated regions of [Taiwan](#). The number of people may be small, but their compassion seems to be great. When reader Virginia Shaffer had a scooter accident while exploring the area, two Taiwanese women came to her aid. “We could barely communicate, but their concern for me as a young traveler was so heartwarming and I’ll never forget their kindness,” she wrote.

Travel tip: Majestic Taroko National Park, with its impressive gorge and abundant hiking trails, is a major draw for travelers who visit this off-the-radar region. You can access the park via a tourist shuttle bus from the Hualien train station.

Chauffeured to the sights in France

The City of Lights sometimes gets a reputation for throwing shade. But plenty of readers responded to our prompt with tales of kindness in Paris, such as Avril Houston, who told us that two locals drove her and a friend “to the best place in all of Paris to take a picture of the Eiffel Tower, before dropping us at the Metro.”

From the top of the Eiffel Tower, travelers can savor panoramic views over Paris along with a glass of champagne.

PHOTOGRAPH BY THIERRY RAMBAUD, ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Travel tip: If you’ve already visited Versailles, head to another nearby UNESCO site:

the Basilica of Saint-Denis, a gothic masterpiece that's built on the grave of its namesake.

A shared picnic in Turkey

With diverse influences from Central Asia, the Middle East, and Greece, the cuisine in Istanbul, Turkey, is a high point for travelers. Reader Kendall Fayle got to experience it like a local when she was in a public park and a family “waved me over [and] insisted I join them for a delicious homegrown salad. We didn’t share a language but we shared a meal, smiles, and kindness.”

Travel tip: In the Eminönü neighborhood, along the Golden Horn, order a fish sandwich from one of the boats where fishermen grill their fresh catch.

Accommodations offered in Germany

More than 7 million visitors flock to Munich for Oktoberfest, which is the time of year that one of our readers, Katharine Irvina, found herself and her family without a place to spend the night. A German family overheard their plight and sprang into action. “They found places for us all to sleep, went to the bakery in the morning, and fixed us a wonderful breakfast,” she shared.

Travel tip: For a visit without the crowds—but still plenty of beer—take a springtime road trip along Bavaria’s Crystal Route to discover the works of master glass makers.

A surprise serenade in Italy

Italy’s Cinque Terre is about as romantic as it comes. Reader Jenny Clauson and her new husband were in a café during their honeymoon in Vernazza when they discovered that the owner’s wife sang Italian opera at the local church. Before they knew it, she was serenading them with songs from their wedding, such as “O Mio Babbino Caro” and “Ave Maria.” For Clauson, “it was absolutely amazing.” Can you feel the love already?

Travel tip: All the villages here are connected by footpaths, and you can get around easily by boat, rail, and trail. The destination attracts lovebirds but is also a good fit for families (think outdoor activities and kid-pleasing gelato at every turn). 🟡

Kelly Barrett is a freelance writer, yoga teacher, and former senior producer for National Geographic who’s currently exploring the landscapes around Tucson, Arizona. Follow her adventures on [Instagram](#).



NAT GEO EXPEDITIONS

Danube River Cruise: Budapest to Nuremberg

8 DAYS

SEE TRAVEL DATES

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 4, 2019

| MORE ON THIS TOPIC

Discover why this stunning region is Spain's best-kept secret

How to see the wonders of the West Coast—without a car

Why the Central Coast is California's next great wine destination

| READ THIS NEXT

TRAVEL

How to see the Virginia Piedmont? Just follow Thomas Jefferson

Find rolling foothills, orchards, and wineries on a road trip beside the Blue Ridge Mountains.

TRAVEL

Here are the best trips to take in 2020

TRAVEL

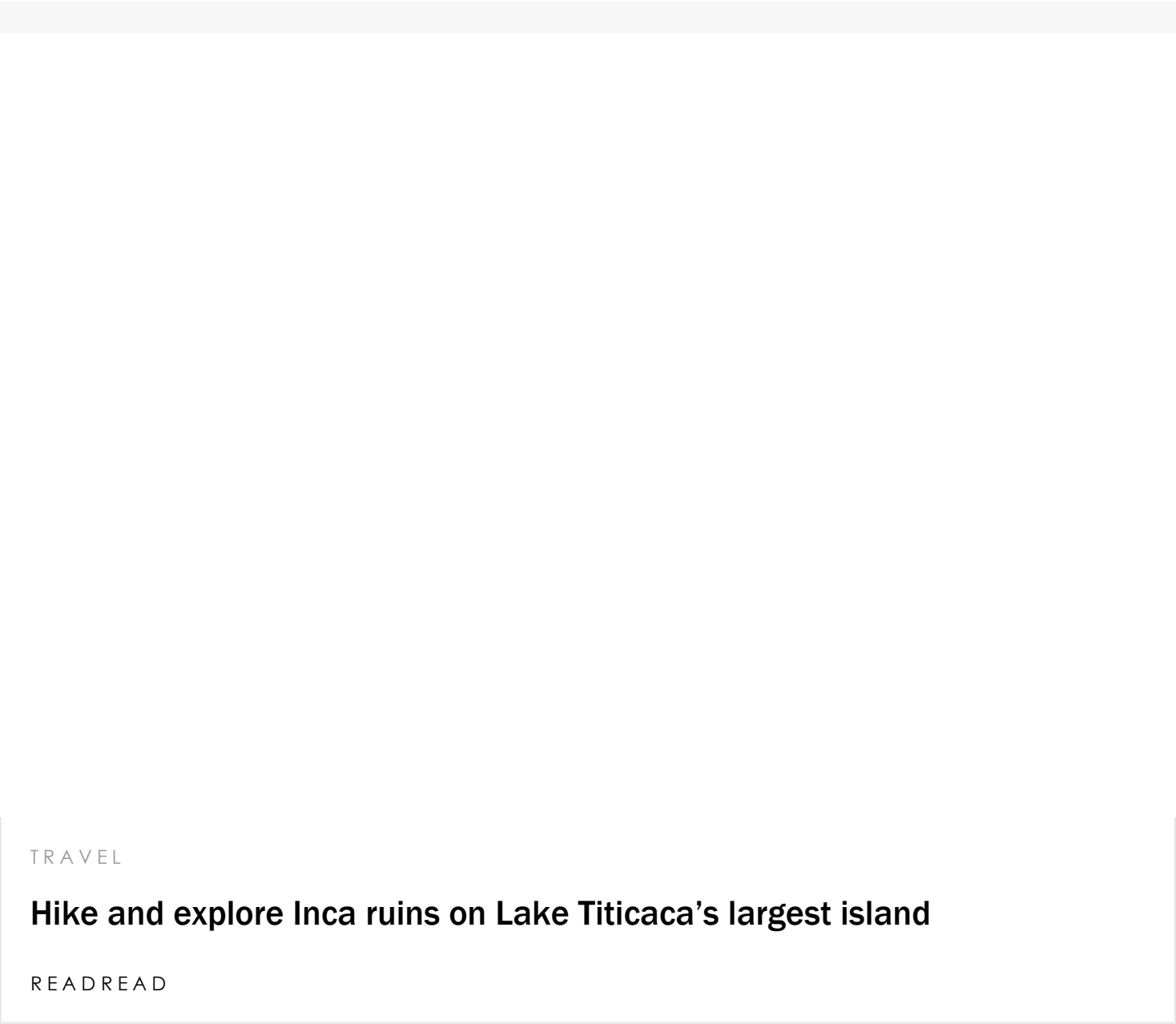
Looking to escape the cold? Head to South Africa

TRAVEL

These former industrial sites in the Midwest will surprise you

LATEST IN
TRAVEL





TRAVEL

Hike and explore Inca ruins on Lake Titicaca’s largest island

READ READ



TRAVEL

How to see the wonders of the West Coast—without a car

READREAD

TRAVEL

These African lodges lead the way in wildlife conservation

READREAD

PARTNER CONTENT

Mexico City: Going beyond the surface

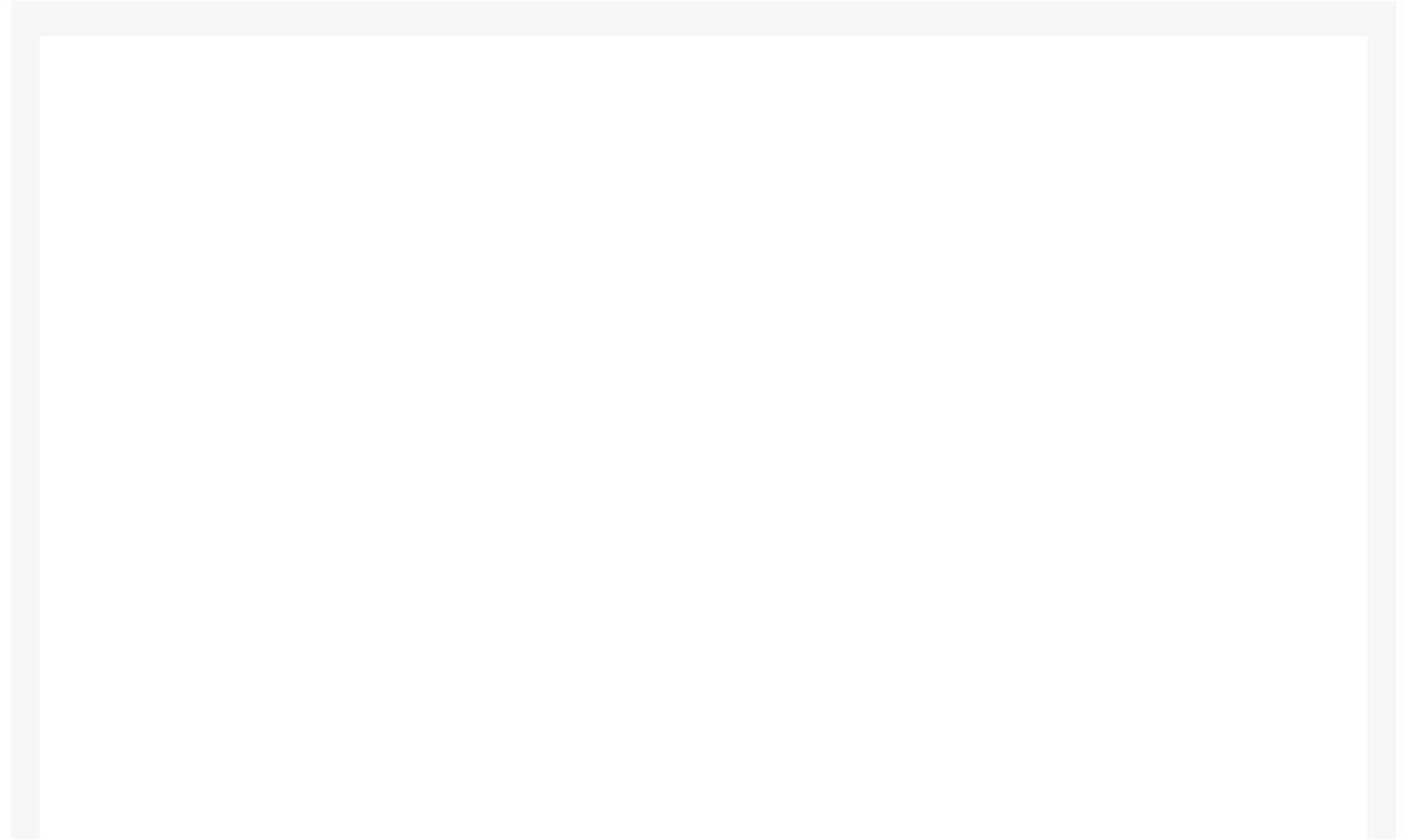
READ READ

LOAD MORELOAD MORE

FROM THE MAGAZINE

LATEST IN

HISTORY



HISTORY

Why the Ottoman Empire rose and fell

READREAD

■ MAGAZINE ■

How does the shoemaker love his work? Heart and sole

READREAD

HISTORY MAGAZINE

Alexander the Great's warrior mom wielded unprecedented power

READREAD

HISTORY

The U.S. cranberry harvest explained in four charts

READREAD

LOAD MORELOAD MORE

LATEST IN
SCIENCE



■ MAGAZINE ■

Why do we get annoyed? Science has irritatingly few answers.

READ READ

SCIENCE

Why the New Zealand volcano eruption caught the world by surprise

READ READ

SCIENCE PERPETUAL PLANET

The world's supply of fresh water is in trouble as mountain ice vanishes

READREAD

SCIENCE

How to live with mega-fires? Portugal’s feral forests may hold the...

READ READ

LOAD MORELOAD MORE

POPULAR SCIENCE STORIES

LATEST IN

ANIMALS



ANIMALS

Veterinary drugs are wreaking havoc on wildlife worldwide

READ READ

ANIMALS PLANET OR PLASTIC?

Why do ocean animals eat plastic?

READ READ

ANIMALS DOMESTICATED

Are you a cat whisperer? A few special people can read feline...

READ READ



ANIMALS DOMESTICATED

Where cats get their own staircases

READREAD

LOAD MORELOAD MORE

DECEMBER 6, 2019

IMAGINE FLIGHT

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLE SOBECKI

PHOTO OF THE DAY

SEE THE FULL
ARCHIVE

*Our editors' favorite photos
from 2009 to today*

ABOUT US

National Geographic Partners

National Geographic Society

Ad Choices

Advertise With Us

Contact Us

Cookie Policy

GDPR FAQs

Press Room

OUR SITES

Attend a Live Event

Book a Trip

Buy & License Photos

Buy Maps

Geno DNA Ancestry Kit

Inspire Your Kids

Shop the Store

Visit the D.C. Museum

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/...il::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=Travel_20191210&rid=F652B047C001F6CFE94119B5DB763F3F[11.12.2019 08:55:40]