

TravelTrendz

International

August / September 2025

a travel lifestyle publication

Korea

Kindred and Kinetic

Graubunden

Family Wonder

Malta

Military Heritage

Austria

Carinthia



ISSN 1752-6256



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Impeccably Plush

A magical experience awaits you at Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel managed by HMMH - Hospitality Management Holding.

Set on a private beach, this alluring hideaway is a heritage retreat with a modern spirit. Offering captivating views of the Arabian Gulf, the resort is a destination unto itself. Boasting 254 beautiful rooms and suites, superb restaurants and lounges, an array of leisure options and personalized services in a tranquil atmosphere to make your stay memorable.

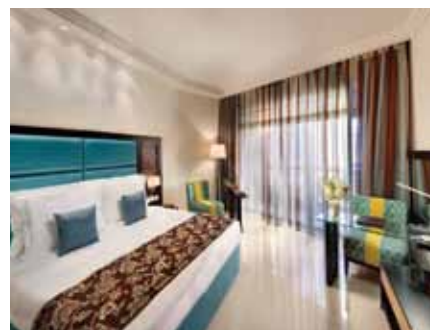
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The summer season is here and the industry is fully geared up for the travel season. There are some geo-political issues which are causing issues in the robust and smooth growth. However, the industry is as always resilient and ready to work through all hurdles.

As always, we are ready to provide insight to our readers about the destinations and hotels from around the globe. Please read our informative and first-hand account about Malta and its Military Heritage. Read about the Enchanting Korea and the amazing Pakistan. The articles about Carinthia and the City of Moscow are not to be missed. Staying in Europe we have covered Graubunden in Switzerland.

We have highlighted some amazing hotels and Resorts in this issue like Moscow Marriott Imperial Palace. We have an interesting piece on vovo Dubai The Palm. There are two must read articles on Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel and Double Tree By Hilton Sharjah.

As always, read about the news and views relating to the hospitality industry plus learn about what is happening in the Airlines and Aviation Industry.

So, have a good time reading...



Ken Chapman
Editor

Contents

05 Korea
Kindred and Kinetic

16 Pakistan
Rich Tapestry

21 Malta
Military Heritage

24 Graubunden
Family Wonder

26 Moscow
Heart Of Russia

28 Northern California
Waterfall Trekking

31 Austria
Carinthia





by Fouzia Sohail

Kindred and Kinetic Korea

Korea has paved its name amongst the cities that are the top in luxury travel in today's world. The deep cultural aspects offer century-old history, tradition and philosophy while its modern side is at par with its globally integrated practices, especially in the field of advanced technology and entertainment.

Korea does not stop to please its visitors – From the varied wellness centers, spas, resorts, heritage areas, ponds, trails (tree, cycling, walking), seaside/ beaches, forests, museums, embankments and parks to stays in hanok (Traditional Korean House) renovated guesthouses, costume rental shops, open air baths, caravans/ glamping (readymade tents or cabins offering varied amenities), auto camping resorts and even 'upcycled' rooms in some hotels (recycled materials used for furniture and amenities). The journey continues further with innumerable exciting offers of night markets, peaks, (formed after hydrovolcanic eruptions) with exhilarating sunset/ sunrise views, fireworks throughout the night over the ocean and heart touching wish balloons that are released in the hope of achieving spiritual and mental 'calmness' and 'relaxation' – These two aspects are held in very high regard in Korean hospitality and culture.

The blessings of the four seasons in Korea only enhance the country's varied scenic pleasures such as the enchanting 'Spring' (March - May) flower blooms festivals and butterfly/ insects festivals as well, cycling and trekking trails lead the visitor across the beautiful and colourful display of nature.

'Summer' (June- August) takes the visitors onto the many splendid beaches/ coasts – Boryeong Mud Festival is very popular during this season, as are the fireworks, concerts, surfing and water games. Summer ends with heavy rainfall.

Then 'Fall' (September – November) has clear skies and lower temperature bringing about the fall foliage as evident in the glorious red, yellow and orange forests. Trekking, jazz festivals and more fireworks are in store during this season.



Last but not least, 'Winter', these are quite cool and winter sports at the various ski- resorts become the theme under the breathtaking snow-capped mountains. Ice Festivals, which include ice fishing, mountain trekking and sightseeing only manifest the abundance of climate, scenery and vibrant colour schemes that Korea offers throughout the year.

Few of the truly lavish sites that offer extravagant experience are as follows:

1.The Forest Resom in Jecheon, Chungcheongbuk do, is set in a forest with glamping villas and private decks. Since glamping is the modern form of exuberant camping, The Forest Room offers outdoor jacuzzis, forest trails, wellness programs and natural hot spring that enhances calmness and spa luxury.

2.Namhae Island has a coastal golf resort 'Ananti Namhae' that provides infinity pools facing the South Sea, hot spring baths, spa features and standalone penthouses. Here an extraordinary year-round indoor 'Water House' pool and Jjimjilbang (Public Bathhouse) style spas with an array of dining venues prevail. These are set across two peninsulas that are connected by a scenic footbridge leading visitors through lush hillsides to the ocean. A National Park (Hallyeohaesang), a Bori Temple and other attractions like a German Village (a cultural project born out of Korean- German history) and an Oktoberfest are seen. Namhae Island sits on a hillside with the sea on one side and the Windbreak Forest and coastal drive on its other side, inducing a European meets Korean landscape feature.

3.Jeu Island is a very popular destination too and is a short flight from Busan or Wonju. It raises attention by being a volcanic island and has UNESCO heritage status. The JW Marriott Jeu serves breathtaking ocean view suites, private yacht or island cruises, sunset





beach walks, horseback rides, private tea ceremony and renders a volcanic stone spa to further dwell into its geographical wonders (it contains Hallasan National Park, Geomunoreum Lava Tube System, Korea's highest peaks, craters, long coastline and elite golf courses.

4. Another UNESCO site is Gyeongju. Proudly hosting the Bulguksa Temple and the Seokguram Grotto (a stunning granite cave built in the 8th century housing the Seokgamon Buddha). This is a highly treasured Buddhist artwork and spiritual haven as well. Private guided cultural tours and ethnic hanok (old Korean house) dinners are available on request.

5. Jirisan in the southern part of Korea boasts of being the first national park, it reaches into three provinces, has the second highest peak in mainland Korea plus three sacred mountains, hermitage and historical temples and home to the famous Hwaeomsa Temple. The visitor is presented with forest healing, Zen meditation and organic dining in one of the most calm and stunning environments that include natural waterfalls, cherry blossoms in Spring, mists in Summer, forest foliage in Autumn and the captivating snow capped mountains during Winter.

With the rise of South Asian travel awareness and information, not to forget the best airport protocol facility offered i.e. Luxury / Business/ Medical/Family and Tailor- made Tours, Korea encompasses history, culture and nature added with spiritual wellness for those searching for an authentic travel destination adventure. Korea not only sets itself apart with world class dining and spectacular scenic settings based on its four-season climate, but its healing and wellness theme engulfs the definition of luxury service extended in the form of genuine, gracious gifts that are acknowledged worldwide.





DOUBLETREE BY HILTON SHARJAH

Impact Beyond Hospitality

Leading with Heart, Driven by Purpose

At DoubleTree by Hilton Sharjah Waterfront Hotel & Residences, hospitality is not confined to warm cookies and comfortable stays. It's a responsibility to enrich lives, uplift communities, and protect the world we share. As part of Hilton's Travel with Purpose commitment, the hotel continues to be a driving force for social responsibility and sustainability in the heart of Sharjah.

This year, the team took bold strides to lead by example. During the Holy Month of Ramadan, the property partnered with the UAE Food Bank in support of the 1 Billion Meals campaign. The hotel's team members actively participated in preparing and distributing meals to those in need — a powerful expression of generosity and unity.

In a collaboration with GEMS Education, the hotel launched Art from Waste, an initiative that encouraged schoolchildren to transform discarded everyday materials into meaningful art. This project blended creativity with environmental awareness, reinforcing the message that sustainability can begin with the smallest hands.

Continuing its community outreach, the hotel visited the Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, where team members spent a day planting flowers alongside children with autism. The team also partnered with the Red Crescent to deliver clothing and daily essentials to underserved families.

More recently, the hotel hosted a Career Discovery Day tailored for young Emirati high school girls. Through behind-the-scenes workshops and mentoring sessions, students gained firsthand exposure to the world of hospitality — empowering the next generation of industry leaders.

A Word from the General Manager, Ligia Brasoveanu

Q: How do you align commercial success with community purpose?

Ligia: "At DoubleTree by Hilton Sharjah, our purpose is key to what we do. The stronger our community, the stronger we are.."

Q: What inspires your CSR approach?

Ligia: "It's part of our DNA. Every team member feels connected to the impact we create — whether it's mentoring, planting, or giving. We create opportunities whilst strengthening existing ones."

Q: What's next?

Ligia: "We're looking to expand collaborations with schools and non-profits, especially in areas tied to youth development and environmental education. For us, giving back it's a culture and something we are proud of."



voco® Dubai The Palm



Welcome to a boutique-styled premium hotel at an iconic lifestyle destination by the beach. Ideally located on the trendy Palm West Beach, on the Palm Jumeirah, voco® Dubai The Palm offers contemporary-style hotel living with direct beach access, overlooking the stunning views of the Arabian Gulf and Ain Dubai. Combining traditional local hospitality with contemporary convenience. All the rooms are furnished with voco™ care, quality bed linens, and spacious and cosy rooms with the state of the art amenities.

Memorable Meetings



Host meetings in our interactive high-tech meeting room with teams across the globe or in person. Choose to work with clients, teammates or independently within this private space. Experience premium coffee breaks that keep you going through the day.

The meeting room features state-of-the-art facilities, natural daylight, and versatile seating. Select from the DDR packages comprise business lunches at Maison Mathis, coffee breaks, and post-meeting drinks.

Maison Mathis at voco Dubai The Palm, West Beach, offers an unforgettable European dining experience. Enjoy freshly baked sourdough, stone-baked pizzas from an open kitchen, and flavorful dishes. Delight in a family-friendly Saturday Brunch with live music and kids' activities, a traditional Sunday Roast, or a Monday Ribs Feast. Don't miss their bar's extended happy hour from 12 PM to 8 PM, featuring great discounts on beers, spirits, and cocktails. Also, watch out for our festive season celebrations for the whole family. Website : www.maisonmathisvocopalm.com



Head up to our rooftop bar, Frenia, right beside our fabulous infinity pool for a sundowner. Snack on some delicious Mediterranean tapas and unwind over refreshing Signature cocktails while you soak in the magical sunset over the stunning Dubai Marina skyline, the Ain Dubai, and the waters of the Arabian Gulf. Get ready for a magical New Year's Eve night with live entertainment and fireworks show.

Summer Staycation Experiences

Soak up the sun at voco Dubai The Palm, where sunkissed days unfold on a private beach and rooftop pool vibes meet panoramic views of the Arabian Gulf, Dubai Marina, and Ain Dubai. Whether it's a romantic retreat or a fun-filled family escape, our summer getaways are crafted for every kind of traveler. Think endless ocean horizons, chilled rooftop moments, and memories made under the Dubai sun—all in one unforgettable stay.

Kids Stay and Eat Free



The ultimate family escape is here. Enjoy a sun-soaked getaway at voco Dubai The Palm, where kids enjoy a complimentary stay, all-day meals from the kids' menu, unlimited ice cream by the pool and beach, and free-flow soft drinks at MM, Frenia Pool & Beach. More fun, more treats, more memories—because they deserve it.

Inclusions:

- Breakfast at Maison Mathis
- Kids eat free all day from the kid's menu at Maison Mathis, and unlimited free ice cream by the pool and beach.
- Free flow of soft beverages at Maison Mathis, Frenia, Pool and Beach.

Terms and Conditions:

- In-room dining & Mini bar is not included for the free flow of soft beverages.
- A kid is considered a child below 12 years of age.
- A maximum of two children are permitted per room. One child will be accommodated on a rollaway bed
- While the other will share the existing bedding with the parents.
- Must book 1 day in advance
- Non-Refundable

Stay valid period: 1st June to 31st August 2025.

Special Occassions

Surprise your special someone with a dreamy beachfront escape, where romance meets breathtaking views. From the moment you arrive, step into a world of love and indulgence with early check-in giving you more time to soak in every magical moment together.

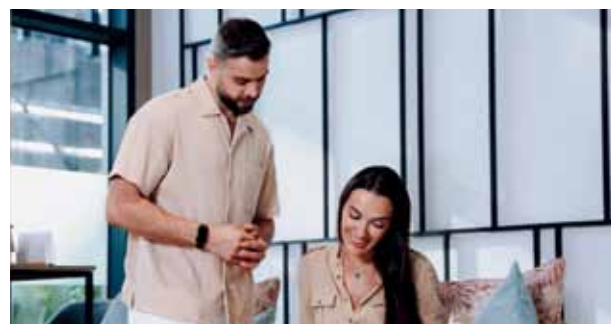
Set the scene for romance with thoughtful touches - a beautifully crafted towel art, flowers, and a delectable cake to celebrate your love.

your perfect romantic getaway has never been easier.

Terms and Conditions:

- Must book 1 day in advance
- Early check-in is subject to availability
- Not available on Christmas (Eve/Day) and New Year

Stay valid until 30th December 2025.



Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel and Alleem Group Drive Strategic Collaboration

MoU Aims to Drive Event Excellence,
Market Reach and Mutual Growth



Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel, a distinguished 5-star heritage hotel renowned for blending Emirati cultural charm with modern luxury, has solidified a strategic partnership with Alleem Group, a diversified conglomerate with expertise in sustainability, technology and community development. The two entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) designating Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel as the official hospitality partner for Alleem Group's upcoming initiatives, marking a milestone in cross-sector collaboration.

The strategic alliance aims to enhance brand visibility, unlock mutual growth and create synergies through joint promotional efforts and high-profile event hosting. As part of the agreement, Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel will be the preferred venue for Alleem Group's corporate events, conferences, product launches, and CSR-driven gatherings including their Annual Sustainability Summit, while the company will promote the hotel's services and offers across its network. The collaboration amplifies joint marketing efforts across digital platforms, print media, and social channels, highlighting curated hospitality packages for Alleem Group's clients and Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel's guests.

The collaboration aligned with UAE's Vision 2030, such as heritage preservation workshops and eco-friendly event practices, reinforcing both entities' commitment to sustainability. Leveraging Alleem Group's regional and international showcase Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel's premium offerings to a global audience.

Mr. Iftikhar Hamdani, Area General Manager of Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel, emphasized the partnership's strategic value – "This collaboration is a catalyst for elevating Ajman's hospitality sector. By hosting Alleem Group's events, we anticipate a 10% increase in corporate bookings while delivering immersive experiences that reflect our Emirati heritage. Partnerships like this are pivotal to positioning Ajman as a hub for cultural and business tourism."

Dr. Rashid Alleem, Founder & Chairman at Alleem Group, added: "Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel's iconic waterfront location and dedication to excellence align perfectly with our ethos. This partnership enables us to offer stakeholders a unique blend of innovation and tradition, whether through international conferences or community initiatives we will launching later this year."

The UAE's hospitality sector is projected to grow by 7% annually, driven by rising MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) tourism. This partnership taps into Ajman's emergence as a destination for travellers seeking authenticity and luxury. Over the next 12 months, the collaboration will roll out phased activations, including sustainability events, CSR events and cultural festivals, art exhibitions to involve community through culture and art.



Coral Beach Resort Sharjah

Where Sustainability Meets Hospitality Excellence Innovative Green Practices That Make Every Stay More Responsible

Coral Beach Resort Sharjah believes that true hospitality extends beyond guest comfort, it embraces responsibility for the environment we all share. With a firm commitment to sustainable practices, the resort continues to lead the way in eco-conscious hospitality through impactful initiatives that protect and preserve our surroundings.

One of the proudest achievements is the implementation of advanced water filtration technology, which purifies and bottles drinking water on-site. Served in reusable glass bottles, this initiative is available in all the restaurants and guestrooms, preventing approximately 300,672 plastic bottles from entering the environment annually. While the pool and beach areas are gradually transitioning from plastic bottles, Coral Beach Resort Sharjah took a proactive step by installing Renie Smart Bins to ensure proper collection and waste tracking of single-use plastic bottles in these areas. This AI-powered reinforces the hotel's commitment to responsible waste disposal.

In collaboration with non-government organizations, the resort actively participates in the proper segregation and disposal of recyclable materials such as aluminum cans, cartons, newspapers,

and the end-of-life linens & uniforms – ensuring every effort is made to reduce environmental impact and support national recycling initiatives.

Coral Beach Resort Sharjah is also home to an in-house compost machine that efficiently processes organic waste, including food scraps, converting them into nutrient-rich compost. This technology significantly reduces landfill waste and supports a zero-waste approach within Coral Beach Resort Sharjah's operations. This aligns seamlessly with our broader sustainability goals.

Coral Beach Resort Sharjah is more than just a destination, it's a movement toward conscious living and responsible travel. Every stay supports a journey of sustainability, where comfort and environmental care go hand in hand.







PAKISTAN

Exploring the Rich Tapestry

A Journey of Culture, History, and Natural Beauty

Pakistan offers an opportune moment to explore the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and warm hospitality. For Turkish travelers, Pakistan presents a treasure trove of experiences that are as varied as they are enchanting. From the towering peaks of the Himalayas to the historical remnants of ancient civilizations, Pakistan is a land waiting to be discovered.

Majestic Mountains and Serene Valleys

Pakistan's geographical diversity is unparalleled. The northern regions boast some of the world's highest peaks, including K2, the second-highest mountain on earth. This area, known as Gilgit-Baltistan, is a paradise for adventure enthusiasts, offering trekking, mountaineering, and skiing opportunities. The serene valleys of Hunza and Swat are not only renowned for their breathtaking beauty but also for their rich cultural traditions and hospitality.

Moving towards the south, the lush green landscapes of Azad Jammu and Kashmir offer stunning natural beauty, with pristine lakes and rivers that invite tranquility and reflection. The Punjab region, with its fertile plains, is the heartland of Pakistan, known



for its vibrant culture, music, and cuisine. The city of Lahore, often referred to as the cultural capital of Pakistan, is a must-visit for its historical sites, including the Badshahi Mosque, Lahore Fort, and the bustling bazaars of the old city.

The province of Sindh, home to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, offers a glimpse into the rich history and cultural heritage of the region. The UNESCO World Heritage site of Mohenjo-Daro is a testament to one of the world's earliest urban settlements. The port city of Karachi, Pakistan's largest metropolis, offers a blend of modernity and tradition, with its bustling markets, beautiful beaches, and a vibrant arts scene.

In the west, the rugged terrain of Balochistan offers unique landscapes and a rich cultural tapestry. The province is home to the historic city of Quetta and the natural wonder of the Hingol National Park, which features the iconic Princess of Hope rock formation and the vibrant Hingol River.

A Melting Pot of Cultures

Pakistan's cultural diversity is as rich as its landscapes. The country is home to numerous ethnic groups, each with its own unique traditions, languages, and cuisines. From the Pashtun regions in the northwest to the Sindhi and Baloch cultures in the south, the diversity of the people is a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage.

Festivals such as Eid, Basant, and Nowruz are celebrated with great enthusiasm across the country, offering visitors a chance to experience the local culture firsthand. The traditional music and dance forms, such as Qawwali and Sufi dance, provide a deep connection to the spiritual and cultural roots of the region.

Hospitality That Warms the Heart

Pakistani hospitality is renowned worldwide. The concept of "Mehmaan Nawazi" (hospitality) is deeply ingrained in the culture, where guests are treated with utmost respect and generosity. Whether in the bustling cities or remote villages, visitors are often invited into homes and treated to traditional meals, offering a genuine taste of Pakistani culture.



DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali Hilton Debuts in Pakistan

Hilton today announces the opening of DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali, marking the company's first hotel in Pakistan. Nestled in the heart of the scenic Galiyat region – one of Pakistan's most iconic hill stations and just 85 kilometers from Islamabad – the newly opened property blends DoubleTree by Hilton's signature warm hospitality with the area's natural alpine landscapes, offering unforgettable stays for business and leisure travelers alike.

DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali is owned and managed by The Baron Pakistan (Pvt) Limited, a well-established hospitality company with properties in Kabul, Afghanistan, Karbala, Iraq, and Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan.

Ideally located just steps from Lalazar Park, DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali sets a new benchmark for hospitality in one of Pakistan's most cherished destinations. The hotel offers convenient access to some of the region's most iconic natural and cultural landmarks including Mushkpuri Top, Miranjani Peak, Ayubia National Park, Dunga Gali Pipeline Track, and the historic St. Matthew's Church – all within five kilometres – making it an ideal base for adventure seekers and cultural travellers.

Imtiaz Muslim, Managing Director, The Baron Pakistan (Pvt) Limited, said, "Bringing the award-winning DoubleTree by Hilton brand to Nathiagali marks a proud milestone in Pakistan's hospitality sector. Our partnership with Hilton reinforces our



commitment to boosting regional tourism while providing lasting value to guests and the local community. We look forward to welcoming guests coming from around the world."

DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali features 110 thoughtfully designed guest rooms, including 14 spacious suites with uninterrupted views of the surrounding Mushkpuri and Miranjani Hills. Perfect for families and those traveling with loved ones, each room offers comfortable accommodations, and the surrounding pine forests, rolling meadows, and snow-blanketed winter landscapes position the hotel as an elegant mountain retreat year-round.

Guests can enjoy a variety of dining experiences with stunning mountain views. The lobby-level Coffee Shop offers freshly brewed coffee and gourmet snacks, while Shogun presents a refined Pan-Asian menu featuring Thai, Chinese, and Japanese dishes. On the third floor, Zareen serves a globally inspired menu across breakfast, lunch, and dinner. At Lalazar Terrace Café, guests can savour gourmet snacks, specialty teas and coffees, and enjoy a memorable high tea or barbecue buffet under the sky.

For relaxation and wellness, the hotel offers a curated selection of facilities, including a spa with a wide range of treatments –

from soothing massages to holistic therapies – alongside a fully equipped fitness centre, and an indoor infinity pool with floor-to-ceiling panoramic views.

DoubleTree by Hilton Nathiagali will also soon unveil Pakistan's first-ever mountain padel court along with a dedicated lounge housing a private cinema, children's zone, and beauty salon services. In addition, an on-site helipad provides effortless arrivals and departures amid the breathtaking mountain landscape.

The hotel also houses flexible event spaces for all types of gatherings. Whether hosting an elegant banquet, a corporate meeting, or an intimate celebration, all event spaces are supported by a dedicated team, tailored catering options, complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi, and in-house audiovisual support.

The property features two signature banquet halls – Mushkpuri and Miranjani – each accommodating up to 200 guests, making it ideal for weddings, receptions, conferences, and special events. Two smaller meeting rooms – Sohni and Nouri – are available for more intimate gatherings.

www.doubletree.com/nathiagali



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A romantic couple is walking hand-in-hand across a cobblestone street in Madrid. The woman is wearing a green patterned dress and carrying a tan bag, while the man is in a dark blue t-shirt and light-colored trousers. They are walking past a row of potted plants and a building with a 'QUINTIN' sign. In the background, there are more buildings, including one with a 'PETIT PALACE' sign, and trees with autumn foliage. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Madrid.

*The soul of Spain
in the heart of Europe.*

ONLY IN
Madrid



By Tehzeeb Huda

Malta

Military Heritage

Bastions, Baroque & Blood-Stained Legends

Despite being one of the smallest countries in the world, Malta is a melting pot of cultures, an archipelago of sun-drenched coastlines and sleepy medieval charm, yet what truly sets Malta apart from other postcard-worthy destinations is its military heritage. I recently joined a curated four-day military heritage tour by Visit Malta, guided by Vincent Zammit—historian, author, and the human equivalent of a Maltese encyclopaedia. We explored prehistoric ruins, medieval bastions, UNESCO-protected sites, and even got a taste of Maltese gastronomy that still bears Roman influence.

We began at Borg in-Nadur, where Bronze Age ruins overlook St. George's Bay. Though worn and weathered, these stones tell stories of Malta's earliest fortifications. Then came the Tarxien Temples, a UNESCO-listed site dating back more than 5,000 years making them older than both the Egyptian Pyramids and Stonehenge. The stone carvings and sacrificial altars hinted at a Neolithic society who had already mastered defence and ritual.

In Rabat, we descended into St. Paul's Grotto, where the apostle is believed to have taken refuge after his shipwreck in 60 AD. From there, we entered Mdina, Malta's ancient capital and aptly nicknamed "The Silent City." Time seemed to pause inside its fortified gates. We wandered through narrow alleys and visited the Cathedral of St. Paul, a baroque masterpiece where the apostle met the Roman governor.

We then headed for a breezy walk across the fortifications of Mdina. These stone walls have protected Malta for over 3,000 years. Originally built by the Phoenicians and later reinforced by the Romans, Arabs, and the Knights of St. John, these massive walls encircle the Silent City like a timeless guardian and offer panoramic views of Malta.

That evening ended with a tasting at Meridiana Wine Estate, where Malta's arid land continues to produce surprisingly elegant wines, a nod to its Roman vinification legacy.

The next morning brought us to Tas-Silg, an archaeological site atop a Roman temple overlooking Marsaxlokk Bay. There, expert beekeepers from Golden Island led us through a honey-harvesting session. Malta's name, after all, is believed to come from the Latin *melita*, meaning honey.

We spent the afternoon in Birgu (Città Vittoriosa), the first home of the Knights of St. John after their arrival in 1530. On the Hospitallers Walking Tour, we visited the Church of St. Lawrence, where Mattia Preti's powerful Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence hangs. At the Vittoriosa Museum, we saw Grand Master La Valette's actual hat and sword, relics from the 1565 siege, offered in thanks to the Virgin of Damascus.

After a hearty seafood lunch, we crossed to Fort Saint Angelo, the



Knights' wartime headquarters during that same siege. Standing atop its restored bastions, we looked out over the Grand Harbour, the very waters that once braced for Ottoman invasion.

That evening, we were treated to a magical open-air feast under the stars at Ta'Xmun Olive Grove. Between platters of game, Gbejna cheese, and rabbit stew, we sampled local olive oil and heard how these very groves once fed Malta through medieval wars and Arab preservation techniques.

The next day, we took the ferry to Gozo and visited the haunting fortifications of Citadella which was brutally attacked by the Ottomans in 1551 and nearly the entire population was taken

into slavery. Rebuilt by new settlers from Malta and Sicily, Gozo's Cittadella still carries the scars of war.

On our final day, we explored Valletta, Malta's glorious capital founded after the Great Siege. Designed as a fortified city by the Order of St. John, Valletta has withstood Ottoman attack, Napoleonic occupation, and WWII bombings, yet remains a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

At Upper Barrakka Gardens, once a private retreat for Italian knights, we enjoyed sweeping views of the Grand Harbour. Just below lies Fort St. Elmo, where the Knights made their legendary last stand in 1565. The National War Museum, housed within,





is an incredible walk through Malta's military chapters from medieval swords to WWII Spitfires.

We stopped briefly for Malta's beloved pastizzi, flaky pastries filled with ricotta or curried peas, before heading to the Grandmaster's Palace. Built in the late 16th century, it was once the seat of the Knights and later became the Governor's Palace under British rule. Today, it houses the Office of the President and a stunning collection of arms and armour in the Palace Armoury.

But the true showstopper in Valletta was St. John's Co-Cathedral. Modest on the outside, its interior explodes in Baroque

opulence. Dedicated to different Langues of the Order, its floor is paved with the tombs of 400 knights, and in the Oratory hangs Caravaggio's "Beheading of Saint John the Baptist", a chilling masterpiece signed in blood.

In short, Malta is a dream! This sun-drenched archipelago is a living museum that feeds your curiosity and your palate in equal measure. Every alleyway whispers a tale, every vista begs to be photographed, but what truly sets Malta apart is its people; warm, welcoming, and deeply proud of their heritage. Whether you come for history, food, or just to gaze at the honey-gold coastlines, know this: Malta has more stories to tell than can ever be captured in four days.



Graubunden

A Swiss Alpine Escape of Quiet Luxury, Deep Wellness, and Hidden Family Wonder

by Naushad Hussain

In an era of fast-paced travel and oversaturated tourist trails, the discerning traveller is yearning for something quieter. More meaningful. Enter Graubunden, the largest and perhaps most enchanting canton of Switzerland — where snow-dusted peaks cradle emerald lakes, heritage whispers through stone alleys, and nature isn't just a backdrop, but a way of life.

Tucked away in the country's eastern corner, Graubunden is a world apart. Here, the Swiss Alps unfold in cinematic grandeur, yet without crowds. Days stretch slowly with clean air, scenic rail journeys, and spa rituals passed down for centuries. It's an alpine region that favours elegance over opulence, silence over spectacle — the perfect answer for travellers from the UAE and GCC who crave authenticity, luxury, and rejuvenation.

Where Tranquillity Meets Five-Star Excellence

Perched just above the sparkling lake of St. Moritz lies the legendary Kulm Hotel St. Moritz. A name synonymous with the origins of winter tourism, this 5-star jewel offers panoramic lake views, a championship golf course, and one of the region's finest wellness sanctuaries. From summer sailing to alpine picnics and discreet spa rituals, the Kulm is where luxury whispers rather than shouts.

Just 6 kilometres away in the peaceful village of Pontresina stands her sister property, the Grand Hotel Kronenhof. A neo-Baroque palace set against the Bernina Massif, the Kronenhof offers not

only aesthetic splendour but also a 2,000 m² spa sanctuary, complete with floating pools, steam grottoes, saltwater caverns, and glacier views. It is a setting where history, health, and haute cuisine live in perfect balance.

Alpine Design and Family Adventure in Laax

For families seeking alpine excitement with contemporary comfort, rocksresort in Laax offers a radically different Graubunden experience. This member of Design Hotels™ is a bold modular retreat built of native stone and sustainable timber. But it's not just about architecture — it's a lifestyle hub. Situated beside the LAAX cable car station, it transforms in summer into a launching point for hiking, lake swimming, mountain biking, and trail adventures.

Children can conquer tree-top rope parks and indoor freestyle academies, while parents unwind in minimalist apartments or cafés that look out to pine forests and peaks. It is a true alpine village with urban flair — grounded in nature, designed for today.

The Bernina and Glacier Express: Railways Through a Dream

No visit to Graubunden is complete without boarding the Bernina Express or the Glacier Express — not simply trains, but theatrical experiences in motion. These panoramic journeys pass through UNESCO World Heritage landscapes, spiraling viaducts,





turquoise lakes, and icy summits. For couples and families alike, they offer an immersive way to explore the region without the need to rush — just sit, sip a drink, and watch the mountains tell their story.

Thermal Bliss in Vals and Bad Ragaz

Graubunden's identity is tied closely to water — especially the healing kind. In the secluded village of Vals, architecture and wellness merge in dramatic harmony at 7132 Hotel. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Peter Zumthor, the stone-carved thermal baths are a place to float between silence and sky, particularly at night when stars reflect in the water.

For a more classical experience, the Tamina Therme in Bad Ragaz draws from thermal springs known since Roman times. Its refined modern spa complex offers rituals for detox, balance, and restoration — ideal for wellness travellers or couples seeking a long exhale.

For the Curious Mind and Restless Soul

History lovers can wander through Chur, the oldest city in Switzerland, with its narrow alleys, medieval façades, and vibrant street cafés. More than a postcard town, Chur reveals centuries of human story through its cathedral, art museums, and market culture — all delivered with characteristic Swiss order and charm.

Fashion and Elegance in the Mountains

GCC travellers in search of luxury retail without the city crowds will feel at home at the Fashion Outlet Landquart. This open-air shopping village offers over 160 international and Swiss designer brands — from Hugo Boss to Bally — all with tax-free benefits for visitors from outside the EU. Dining terraces, children's play zones, and relaxed ambiance make it ideal for a full day of leisurely indulgence.

www.visitgraubunden.com/en



Fall in love in MOSCOW

Ideas for an unforgettable date in the heart of Russia

Moscow is good not only for business trips, but also for unforgettable romantic experiences. It has a rich history, amazing architecture, luxurious restaurants and plenty of ideas for a journey with your beloved one.

What first comes to your mind while thinking about the best place for a date? A restaurant, of course. In Moscow you can choose a treat for every taste. The connoisseurs of fine cuisine can visit one of the restaurants listed in the Michelin guide: Artest Chef's table, Twins Garden, Beluga, Biologie, Grand Cru, Savva, Selfie, White Rabbit and Sakhalin. Those who like to enjoy a beautiful view of the city during a romantic dinner should pay attention to the stylish restaurant O2 Lounge (Carlton Hotel) or restaurant Buono in the famous Stalinist high-rise (Radisson Royal). Lovers of exquisite interiors will also appreciate the restaurant "Boat" reminding an expensive yacht, elegant "White" with references to the Silver Age, two-story "Mansard" with panoramic windows and the atmosphere of "The Great Gatsby" and luxurious "Parisien" with royal spirit.

If you happen to be in Moscow during spring or summer seasons, visiting parks and estates is a "must" for couples to enjoy outdoor romance.

Kuskovo estate with its neoclassical architecture has preserved the atmosphere of a holiday with a swing. The Arkhangelskoye estate, a great example of Russian manor art of the XVIII-XIX centuries, is a wonderful place for walks or romantic photo sessions. Dubrovitsy estate is a hidden gem near Moscow: quiet and peaceful location with an old church in a baroque style.

Tsaritsyno is well-known for its magnificent palace complexes and huge park with ponds, bridges and sculptures which you can explore. Kolomenskoye is the oldest manor with a unique park ensemble and a church of the 16th century included in the UNESCO heritage list. In May the park becomes a place of tourist pilgrimage as more than 1000 trees bloom simultaneously.

Already feeling blown away by a romantic atmosphere and

ready for a wedding ceremony? In Moscow there are plenty of professional wedding agencies with a high level of service, which will help to organize your once-in-a-lifetime celebration. Despite the stereotypical view of Moscow as the cold capital in every way possible, in reality it has one of the most favorable atmospheres for a romantic date or even a wedding trip thanks to its architecture, nature and open-hearted people!. If you dream of saying "yes" in an old mansion or cable car, on a football stadium or in a dim metro station, why not do it in Moscow?





Northern California

Discover Waterfall Trekking in Siskiyou

Take a hike in Siskiyou County in California's north and you'll often find a mesmerizing waterfall just waiting for you. Nestled between towering peaks and verdant valleys, Siskiyou pairs nature's grandeur with intimate boutique lodges and cosy mountain cabins—welcoming havens that offer warm hospitality and seamless access to the great outdoors. For discerning travelers seeking family-oriented escapes, Siskiyou's cool summer climate promises the perfect retreat. There's nothing more invigorating for trepid explorers than turning the corner to encounter magical water flows.

Five favorite waterfalls in Siskiyou, California that are easily accessible for all fitness types

Faery Falls

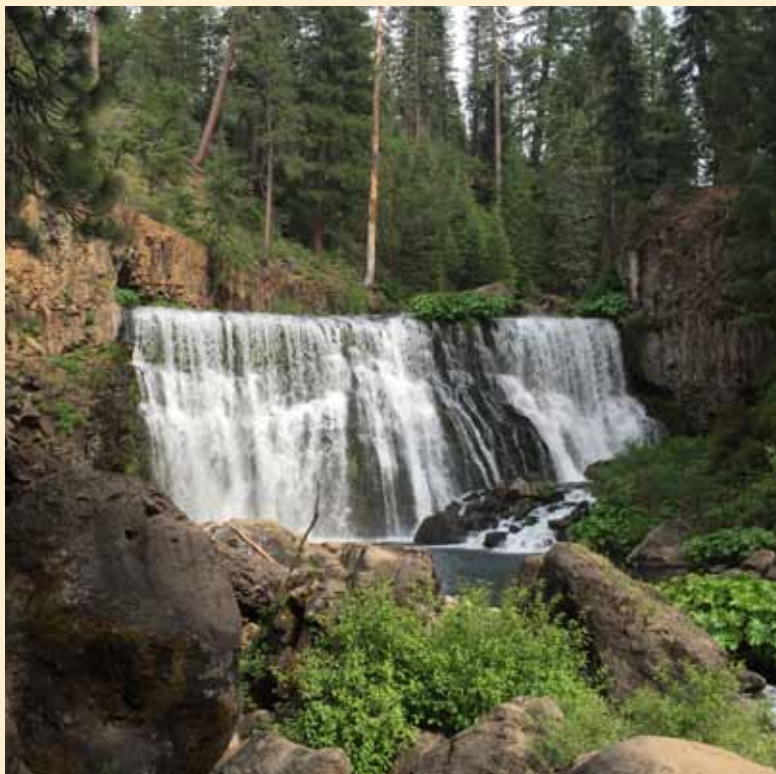
Hidden within the enchanting forests near Mount Shasta, Faery Falls feels like a secret sanctuary. This 50-foot cascade, framed by lush greenery, creates a fairytale backdrop ideal for quiet reflection, family portraits, or simply soaking in nature's tranquility.

McCloud Falls

McCloud Falls is a three-tiered masterpiece that promises adventure and tranquility in equal measure. The Middle Falls steals the show with its sweeping cascades and dramatic viewpoints, perfect for capturing breathtaking photos. Below, the Lower Falls beckons families with its deep swimming hole—an ideal spot for picnics and sunny afternoons.

Hedge Creek Falls

Just a short stroll from the road, Hedge Creek Falls is a hidden gem that delights visitors with its unexpected charm. A secret trail leads behind the 35-foot cascade, offering a magical, walk-behind-the-waterfall experience perfect for memorable photos. Shaded and serene, with nearby river views, it's an ideal stop for families seeking a little adventure or couples looking for a peaceful retreat.

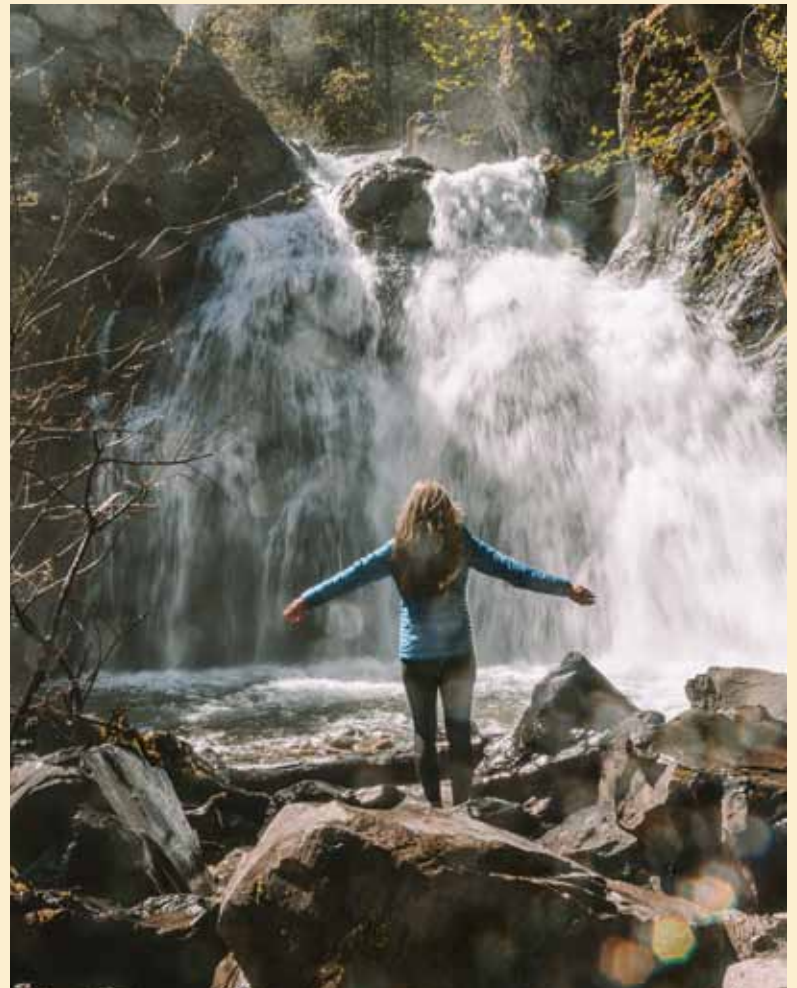


Ukonom Falls

Tucked away in the heart of Klamath National Forest, Ukonom Falls is a secluded treasure for those seeking a deeper connection with nature. This dramatic, multi-tiered cascade rewards adventurous souls with breathtaking scenery, tranquil rock pools, and the soothing soundtrack of rushing water.

Shackleford Falls

Set amidst alpine meadows and framed by sweeping mountain vistas, Shackleford Falls is a serene hideaway perfect for families. Its gentle 14-foot cascade feeds a tranquil pool, inviting quiet moments of relaxation, playful exploration for children, and the soothing sounds of water carried on a crisp mountain breeze. Less frequented than other spots, it offers a sense of seclusion and natural elegance—an ideal setting to unwind and reconnect in Northern California's high country.





Places to stay

Basecamp Lodge - Mount Shasta

A family favorite, Basecamp Lodge, blends rustic elegance and adventure in a setting as breathtaking as the region itself. Each cabin features vaulted cedar ceilings, panoramic windows, fully equipped kitchens, and inviting living spaces with fireplaces and smart TVs. Private decks, hammocks, and a shared backyard set the stage for outdoor dining and cherished family moments.

Mount Shasta Resort – Mount Shasta

The chalets at Mount Shasta Resort provide a luxurious escape nestled in the forest near Lake Siskiyou. Designed in a warm Craftsman style with filtered lake views, the resort also boasts a full-service spa, an 18-hole golf course, and access to year-round outdoor activities.

Cave Springs Resort – Dunsmuir

Blending modern comfort, natural beauty, and thoughtful design, Cave Springs Resort is tucked along the Sacramento River and just off Interstate 5. The resort boasts a tranquil setting ideal for relaxation or adventure and offers a selection of unique accommodations including Airstreams, tiny homes, and mid-century hotel give the property a boutique, high-end experience that feels both private and upscale.

For GCC travelers seeking privacy, curated outdoor experiences, and family-friendly comfort, Siskiyou is a rare gem where every moment feels effortlessly elevated.

Visit: Discover Siskiyou



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Carinthia, AUSTRIA

A Wellness Escape Between Mountains, Lakes and Myth

by Tehzeeb Huda



Sometimes, the best kind of escape is the one where nature, wellness, and legend collide. I traded the sweltering heat of Dubai for the lush, alpine calm of Carinthia, Austria's southernmost state, and what awaited was a soul-refreshing week of healing waters, mythical stories, and scenic landscapes painted in lake blues and mountain greens.

Carinthia's prime location lets travellers explore Austria, Italy, and Slovenia in one trip, just minutes from each border. Carinthia is home to over 1,200 lakes and rolling mountain ranges, many of which transform into ski havens by winter. But in summer, the region glows even brighter, offering breezy weather, crystal-clear waters, and endless nature trails. The kind of place where you can swim in a lake so clear and pure, its waters are drinkable!

We landed in Ljubljana, Slovenia on a 6-hour Fly Dubai flight, and took a scenic drive into Klagenfurt, Carinthia's capital, where cobbled streets, charming cafes, and centuries-old legends await. At the heart of town stands the Lindwurm Fountain, a monumental dragon carved from slate in 1583. The locals believe this mythical creature once roamed the marshes until slain by knights who lured it with a booby-trapped bull. Klagenfurt, derived from "wailing crossing," was said to be built in its wake.

Other local legends are just as captivating. In the town centre, we found the Wörtherseemandl, a bronze figure of a little man with his finger raised in warning. According to lore, this little man flooded a wealthy, arrogant city that refused to attend Christmas mass, creating today's Lake Wörthersee, the largest and clearest in the region.

At Lake Wörthersee, we dined at Maria Loretto, watching the sun melt into turquoise waters. The next morning, we boarded a nostalgia bus to the ferry and glided across the lake to Maria Wörth, a quaint village framed by mountains and wildflower meadows. The panoramic views of Carinthia from Pyramidenkogel, the world's tallest wooden lookout tower, was breathtaking, and for thrill-seekers like me, you can opt to slide down the tower instead of taking the elevator!





Lunch at Linde restaurant was an absolute treat with lakefront views, and the freshest seafood. We then drove to Velden, Carinthia's shopping and casino capital, where tradition and glamour coexist with ease, and had a tea-party by the lake at the elegant Schlosshotel.

From here, we shifted into full wellness mode at the luxurious Hotel Warmbaderhof in Warmbad-Villach. For over 200 years, this 5-star spa resort has been a sanctuary for wellness seekers. My room overlooked lush gardens and came with a scent of lavender and fresh fruit, an invitation to slow down.

Each morning, I soaked in the hotel's Healing Thermal Water Pool, which sits directly above a natural thermal spring. Said to alleviate pain, improve circulation, and reduce inflammation, this healing water replenishes itself every three hours. It's no wonder Warmbaderhof has a loyal international following.

The spa's VIBE facial introduced me to a skincare line inspired by the goddess of thermal springs. But the boldest moment came in the -110°C Cryo Suite. For three icy minutes, I stood in a freezing chamber, and emerged recharged. Cryotherapy has benefits ranging from pain relief and muscle recovery to better circulation and boosted mood.

Wellness in Carinthia isn't limited to spas. We hiked through Monkey Affenberg (Monkey Mountain), an outdoor enclosure where we





encountered adorable Japanese macaques with a trained guide and got a glimpse of their daily antics and wittiness in their natural habitat.

Another highlight was the drive through Nockberge Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-listed haven of biodiversity. Along the way, we explored a museum dedicated to trees and wood sustainability and even sipped on local schnapps made from tree saplings. For lunch, we dined at a local restaurant, and feasted on traditional homemade Austrian ricotta dumplings, an absolute treat!

For those dreaming of an alpine escape with rustic charm, Carinthia doesn't disappoint. Gipfelhaus Magdalensberg offers panoramic views, regional cuisine, and cozy lodge-style comfort over 1,000 meters above sea level, perfect for hikers and history lovers alike. Meanwhile, Trattler's Hofchalets in Bad Kleinkirchheim combine luxury with nature: think private saunas, fireplaces, and direct access to ski slopes and hiking trails.

I headed home with a glowing body, mind, and spirit. Carinthia's healing waters, crisp air, and charming folklore had worked their magic. The weather in late spring was just right: warm sun, cool breeze, and food so fresh it tastes like summer. I am already dreaming of going back with a few friends in tow to swim in its crystal-clear lakes and soak up the lush, vivid beauty all over again.



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