

25

Things to Do, Eat & See

WHETHER IT'S AN ESCAPE TO THE BIG CITY OR TO WIDE-OPEN SPACES,
THESE DESTINATIONS WILL INSPIRE YOUR NEXT GREAT ADVENTURE

By **SONAL DUTT**

1

Bask in a Sunflower Superbloom

In late summer, fields and prairies all over North Dakota are blanketed with millions of cheery sunshine-yellow flowers. Visit in August when they're at their peak, and the golden blooms can be seen from miles away.

2

TASTE THE ORIGINAL VIRAL PASTRY

It's been 10 years since chef Dominique Ansel introduced the Cronut—a buttery, flaky croissant and fried, filled donut in one—and people are still lining up at his New York City and Las Vegas bakeries for the treat that started the hybrid craze and inspired a legion of imitators.

3

CARRY A WATERMELON AT THE *DIRTY DANCING* RESORT

Nestled within Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, the Mountain Lake Lodge is the real shooting location for Kellerman's—the fictional resort featured in the 1987 movie. Dance on the same lush grounds as Jennifer Grey and Patrick Swayze, and practice lifts in the nearby lake.



4

Dine at a Celebrity Hot Spot

Everything you need to know about Bad Bunny and restaurateur David Grutman's Miami steakhouse is in the name: Gekkō, which means "moonlight" in Japanese. Every element in the space—sleek jewel-toned booths, plush velvet drapery and moody gold lighting—enhances the sexy nighttime vibe, including the menu. Choose from decadent options like olive-fed filet mignon, chilled oysters with watermelon granita, wagyu dumplings and lobster fried rice, which is one of the Grammy-winning musician's favorites.

Lobster Fried Rice

- ½ cup vegetable oil
 - 6 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 - 1 cup fresh snow peas
 - ½ cup shelled frozen edamame, thawed
 - 1 large (5-oz.) carrot, finely chopped
 - 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
 - 4 cups cold cooked white long-grain rice
 - 3 Tbsp. light soy sauce
 - 2 Tbsp. XO sauce or hoisin sauce
 - 6 oz. cooked lobster (from 3 [4-oz.] uncooked lobster tails), chopped
 - ½ cup fresh bean sprouts
 - ½ cup thinly sliced scallions
- Chile oil or chile crisp

1. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium. Carefully add garlic, spreading slices into an even layer. Reduce heat to medium low, and cook, stirring constantly, until garlic is golden brown and crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove skillet from heat, and transfer garlic to a paper-towel-lined plate using a slotted spoon. Carefully pour garlic oil into a heatproof container.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon garlic oil in a large skillet or wok over medium high. Add snow peas, edamame and carrot; cook, stirring constantly, until vegetables are warm but still have a bite, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer vegetables to a plate.

3. Add 1 tablespoon garlic oil to skillet. Add beaten eggs; cook, stirring constantly, until eggs are scrambled, about 1 minute. Transfer eggs to a separate bowl.

4. Add 2 tablespoons garlic oil to skillet. Add cold rice; using a wooden spoon to separate grains, cook until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Add cooked eggs and vegetables to skillet; stir to combine. Add soy sauce and XO sauce, stirring to coat; cook until heated through, about 1 minute. Add lobster and bean sprouts; stir until warmed through, 1 to 2 minutes.

5. Transfer fried rice to a large platter. Sprinkle with crispy garlic slices and scallions. Serve immediately with chile oil or chile crisp.

Serves: 4

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes



Puerto Rican star Bad Bunny chose Miami because "the culture reminds me of home."



Snack Around the Mushroom Kingdom

Inside Super Nintendo World at Universal Studios Hollywood, the immersive Toadstool Cafe offers a gold-star menu made for gamers and foodies. Try the Mario burger topped with a plumber's hat and edible-ink printed mustache or sugar cookie question-mark blocks filled with creamy tiramisu (right).

5



6

HIKE A WAVE OF SANDSTONE

It may look like the surface of Mars, but this park is definitely on Earth—and is only accessible by foot. In the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument on the Arizona-Utah border, the dunes of twisted, contoured rock have been eroded over time to resemble an ocean wave.



12-14

FIND YOUR NEXT GOOD READ

12. One of the largest indie bookstores in the country, Powell's City of Books in Portland, Ore. (above), is home to more than 1 million titles. **13.** In New Orleans, the charming Faulkner House Books is located in the townhouse where William Faulkner once lived and wrote. **14.** The Key West, Fla., branch of Books & Books hosts author readings and events moderated by co-owner Judy Blume.

7

Snooze Soundly

You're getting sleepy! At Miraval Berkshires in Massachusetts, guests learn how to have a peaceful night's rest through sleep workshops, meditation classes and a relaxing Sweet Slumber massage.



Rock Out at Sea

A tropical vacation and music festival combined, these cruises sail to the Caribbean with popular acts and their superfans on board.

8 to 11

8. Soul Train
Catch sets by Boyz II Men, En Vogue and the Temptations, and take lessons with the original Soul Train dancers. Jan. 27-Feb. 3, 2024

9. Patti LaBelle & Michael McDonald

The R&B legends headline their first joint cruise, which includes a tribute concert to the late Luther Vandross. April 10-13, 2024

10. Days of Summer

Hosted by DJ Khaled, the trip features Lil Baby and Future, a hip-hop comedy show and pajama party. July 2-5

11. NKOTB

Calling all Blockheads! The five-day sail is packed with concerts, late-night deck parties and the boy-band beach Olympics on a private island. Oct. 12-16

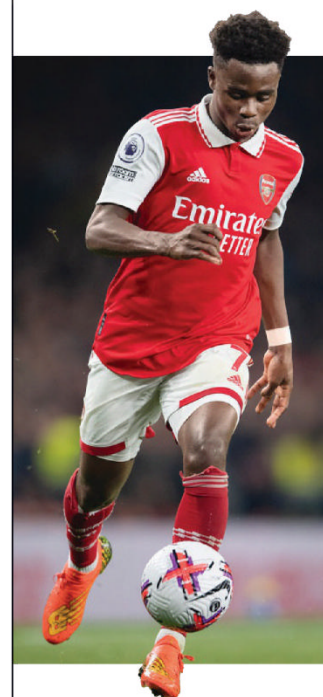
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15

CHEER AT A PREMIERE LEAGUE SOCCER MATCH

Thirteen-time English league champs Arsenal take to the pitch in Washington, D.C., to play in the annual MLS All-Star Game. July 19



16

LIVE IN YOUR FAVORITE TV SHOW

Could we be more impressed?! No detail was overlooked when the owners of the Sitcom Suites in Cincinnati decorated four apartments (available to rent on Airbnb) to resemble the homes on *Friends*, *Seinfeld*, *Schitt's Creek* and *The Golden Girls*.

17

Grab a Seat at Reba's Place



You'll feel like family at Reba McEntire's new southern-style restaurant, bar and concert venue in Atoka, Okla. While browsing through the country star's personal memorabilia and watching live music performances onstage ("I'll do some singing!" McEntire promises.), dig into comforting meals like the "Fancy" steak dinner, Reba's crispy smashed potatoes and this spin on the towering BLT sandwich.

BLT With Bacon Aioli

- 1 garlic head, peeled
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste or double-concentrate tomato paste
- 1 large egg yolk, at room temperature
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 9 slices cooked thick-cut applewood-smoked bacon, crisply cooked and divided
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- ½ tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 4 (½-in.-thick) whole-grain bread slices, toasted
- 4 green leaf lettuce leaves
- 1 large (12-oz.) heirloom tomato, cut into 6 slices
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 250°. Place garlic and olive oil in a small

ovenproof saucepan, adding more oil as needed until cloves are submerged. Cover; bake until garlic is golden and tender, 1 hour to 1 hour, 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Let garlic confit cool, uncovered, 30 minutes.

2. Remove 3 cooled garlic cloves from oil, and place in a food processor. Add tomato paste and egg yolk; pulse until smooth, about 5 pulses. Pour canola oil and 6 tablespoons oil from garlic confit into a liquid measuring cup. With food processor running, gradually pour oil mixture in 2 batches through food chute; scrape down sides and bottom of bowl after each addition. Process until mixture resembles the consistency of mayonnaise, 2 to 3 minutes, adding 1 tablespoon of water at a time if mixture is too thick. Transfer aioli to a medium bowl.

3. Finely chop 1 bacon slice; add chopped bacon, basil and ¼ teaspoon salt to aioli in bowl, stirring until combined.

4. Spread each piece of toasted bread with 1 tablespoon aioli. Top 2 bread slices each evenly with lettuce and tomato slices. Season tomatoes with pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt. Top with 4 bacon slices each. Cover with remaining 2 bread slices; serve.

Serves: 2

Active time: 35 minutes

Total time: 2 hours, 10 minutes

The third-floor library includes books owned by McEntire's late mother, Jacqueline. "They were her treasure," she says.



18



INDULGE IN A WINE BODY SCRUB

A true happy hour! The antioxidant-rich Vineyard Scrub at the Four Seasons Napa Valley includes an exfoliating rub made with Cabernet Sauvignon grape seeds from the on-site Elusa Winery.



19

WATCH THE SUNSET AT DRIFTWOOD BEACH

On Georgia's Jekyll Island, stroll along the soft white sand dotted with stunning, sun-bleached trees and logs that have washed ashore.

20



CHANNEL YOUR INNER BOB ROSS

Explore the former *Joy of Painting* studio, see Ross's art on display, and sign up for painting workshops at the Bob Ross Experience in Muncie, Ind.

21

Catch a Concert in a Cave

With its natural acoustics and celestial lighting, the Caverns—a subterranean hall within a 25,000-year-old cave system in Pelham, Tenn.—is a venue unlike any other. This year musicians like Christopher Cross and Bruce Hornsby will perform under the jagged rock canopy.



22

HAVE BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

The Blue Box Cafe inside the Tiffany & Co. store in New York City has undergone a makeover. While the restaurant is still decorated top-to-bottom in that signature shade of blue, the menu is now in the hands of chef Daniel Boulud, who offers elegant French dishes, afternoon tea and, in a nod to the 1961 film, a *Breakfast at Tiffany's* special.



23

See the Northern Lights

You don't have to travel abroad to catch this light show. The dazzling aurora borealis is visible from many areas along the shores of Lake Superior in northern Michigan, with peak viewing in April, October and November.



24

PLAN A SHELTER PET SLEEPOVER

At Best Friends Roadhouse in Kanab, Utah, travelers can bunk with their own pets or host an adoptable dog, cat or rabbit from the animal sanctuary for the night. Guests are given an overnight bag with food, treats, blankets and other supplies.



25

SIP LIKE A STAR

Overlooking Hawaii's Pauoa Bay, the Fairmont Orchid's new oceanfront pop-up bar is serving tropical cocktails inspired by Bruno Mars's *Selva* rum. Try the Cold Brewno espresso martini and Uptown Punch—a blend of coconut rum, orange and pomegranate.



The Mojito Royale is a mix of white rum, mint and lime and topped with champagne.

