

# INTO THE WILD

**EVERYONE NEEDS SOME TIME OFF THE GRID—OR AT LEAST OUT OF CELL RANGE. HERE ARE 10 TRIPS THAT WILL TAKE YOU OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND INTO THE GREAT OUTDOORS, ALL IN THE UNITED STATES.**

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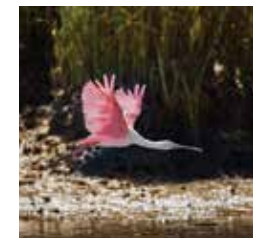
lose your eyes and listen: Water tumbles over stream-smoothed stones. A breeze rustles tall meadow grasses. Waves break against a cragged shoreline. Katydid chirp in an endless round of call and response. This isn't an app designed for relaxation. This is nature. IRL.

We jokingly use the language of addiction when we talk about our attachment to our devices, denying electronic dependence with euphemisms like “multitasking” when we check email or pop onto Instagram just one more time.

Throughout history, great thinkers have taken to the outdoors to refresh their minds and nurture their creative spirits. When the grind of industrialization became overpowering, the Romantics touted the virtues of the natural world. Today, technology's incessant tug on our attention and its culture of instant gratification places significant burden on the prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain that handles tasks such as problem solving and critical thinking. That repeated brain drain takes its toll, leading to distraction and reduced motivation.

Fortunately, an antidote exists, and it's right outside. Research shows that frontal lobe activity slows down when people are out in a natural environment. And with so many of our country's wildest spaces under fire, it's more important than ever to get out and enjoy their beauty. The more we love them, the more we'll strive to protect them for future generations.

For those times when we need more than just a walk in the park, here are 10 U.S. destinations that offer everything from rough and tumble off-grid adventure to plush, unplugged rejuvenation—no Wi-Fi required.







The Eagle Pencil Company acquired Little St. Simons in 1908 for its proliferation of red cedar trees. Upon learning that the sea air had bent the trees beyond the shape needed for respectable pencils, Eagle owner Philip Berolzheimer purchased the island for his personal hunting retreat. The family's love for the island lay the groundwork for its present-day environmental stewardship: Little St. Simons' current owners placed the island in

a conservation easement with the Nature Conservancy to ensure that its coastal ecosystems will be protected.

Delve into the island's abundant beauty with talented naturalists, who describe the day's outings at mealtimes. Mornings mean paddling tidal creeks, touring the organic garden or spying on wood storks from the Myrtle Pond bird blind. After lunch, grab a single-speed cruiser and pedal beneath live oaks festooned with silvery Spanish moss. The path leads to the island's seven-mile beach, where you can comb for sand dollars, surf cast or seine with a naturalist or just relax in the sun. Then enjoy predinner cocktails in the Main Lodge—a great time to swap stories from your day. [littlestsimonsisland.com](http://littlestsimonsisland.com)

## RETREAT TO A PRIVATE ISLAND IN COASTAL GEORGIA

Two boats per day ferry guests along the Hampton River's marshy bends to Little St. Simons Island, a privately owned, 11,000-acre pocket of land about two hours south of Savannah, Georgia. Home to a century-old hunting lodge and five low-country chic cottages welcoming just 32 visitors each night, Little St. Simons is a boon for nature lovers who relish pairing outdoor adventures with rustic luxury.

## SAIL ABOARD A HISTORIC WINDJAMMER IN MAINE



owered by the wind with an itinerary determined by the whims of the breeze and the tide, sailing aboard a historic windjammer makes for a memorable—and environmentally friendly—escape. Enter the Maine Windjammer Association, which offers nautical adventures out of Camden and Rockland in and around Maine's unspoiled Penobscot Bay. Distinct personalities infuse each of the eight vessels in the fleet, owed in part to the charismatic cast of captain and crew keeping them afloat.

At sea, internet usage is kept to a minimum. Phones and computers forgotten, savor a banquet of analog

activities instead—watching lobstermen haul their traps, lounging on the wooden deck with a sketchpad and singing along to a bawdy shanty or two. Aspiring old salts try their hand at seafaring by hoisting sails or walking the boom, while warm summer days beg for swim calls in secluded coves.

Penobscot Bay's wildlife includes harbor seals, osprey, eagles and porpoises—and even the occasional minke whale. In May, the state's first restored colony of puffins returns to Eastern Egg Rock; some itineraries may sail past its shores.

A traditional lobster bake,



often on an uninhabited island, is a ritual on every sailing. Watch the sun drop low while the crew piles steaming crustaceans onto a bed of seaweed. Back onboard, stargaze beneath dark skies before tucking into cozy berths and rocking to sleep on gentle seas. [sailmainecoast.com](http://sailmainecoast.com)

PREVIOUS SPREAD: JUSTIN BALLE (KAYAK); CASSIE WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY (BEACH + BIRD)  
THIS SPREAD: CASSIE WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY (GA); BLAINE HARRINGTON II / ALAMY (ME)



## Take an Old-School Road Trip in WASHINGTON STATE

Cue the Allman Brothers and hit the road in a vintage Volkswagen Westfalia Vanagon, affectionately known as a Westy. In 2013, former Seattle techpreneur Harley Sitner acquired Peace Vans, a soon-to-fold neighborhood repair shop, when searching for a reliable mechanic for his classic VW camper van. Now, Peace Vans fixes, upgrades and restores hundreds of vans each year while hosting a rental fleet of 18 expertly refurbished vehicles for folks seeking that archetypal road trip.

The Peace Vans team devised a banner collection of itineraries to lead drivers around the Pacific Northwest, but folks are welcome to take their trusty Westies farther afield, especially during the quieter fall and winter months. For what Sitner calls the "Pacific Northwest's greatest hits," you can't beat the roughly 630-mile loop around the Olympic Peninsula. The route explores one of the most pristine areas in the lower 48, providing ample opportunities to get way off the grid.

Ease into the adventure onboard the Washington State Ferry to Bainbridge Island before traveling counterclockwise on Highway 101, dipping in and out of Olympic National Park. Along the way, glacier-fed Lake Crescent, Sol Duc's bubbling hot springs and tide pools at Ruby Beach invite pit stops. Set up camp on remote riverfront parcels or wind-swept bluffs overlooking shores full of giant tree trunks salt-smoothed by the Pacific's churning surf.

All the while, you'll be rambling along in a virtual memory-making machine—what the Westy lacks in aerodynamics, it recoups in charm. Strangers wave and flash the universal peace sign while campground neighbors, intrigued by the retro wheels, stop by to share camper van stories of their own. [peacevansrentals.com](http://peacevansrentals.com)



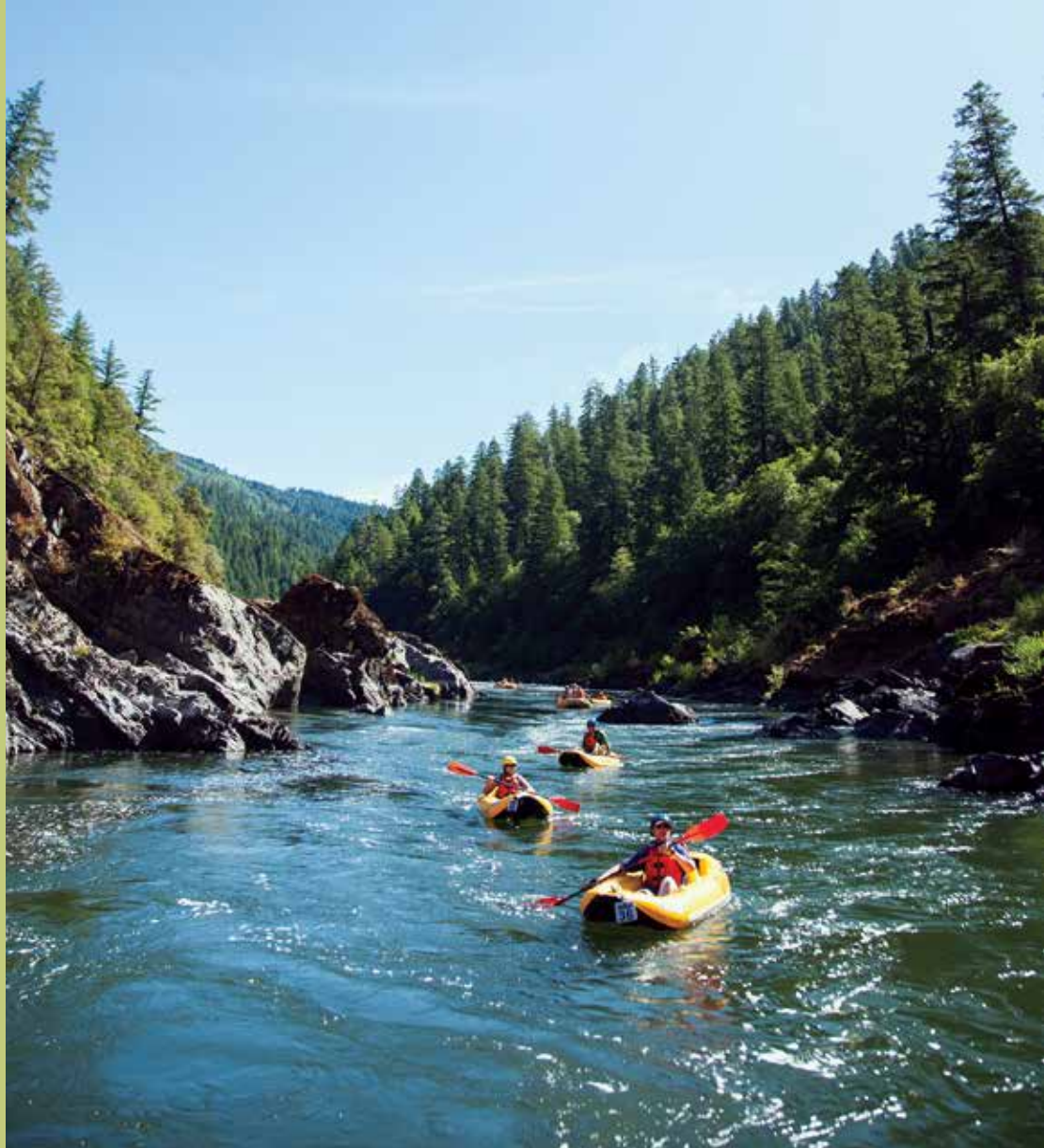
## Ride a Wild and Scenic River in OREGON

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, legislation that protects 12,754 miles of rivers in 40 states and Puerto Rico. Cascading 215 miles from Crater Lake to the Pacific, southern Oregon's famed Rogue River was one of the first to receive wild and scenic designation. The river's protected stretch tumbles through towering canyons surrounded by dense pine forest spilling with whitewater thrills and glimpses into the valley's 19th-century mining days along the way.

Trace the gold rush story back to 1851, when two men delivering supplies from California to the Willamette Valley unearthed a scattering of gold nuggets from a Rogue River tributary. That discovery ramped up settlement, and a stream of pioneers soon flooded the Rogue River Valley. The population uptick plus 150 years of industrialization have endangered wildlife on the Rogue, namely its wild Chinook salmon.

In recent years, however, attempts to tame the Rogue have given way to rewilding efforts—dams have been torn down, native plants bloom on its banks and salmon spawn in once-fragmented tributaries. Plunge into the Rogue's remote wilderness with a veteran outfitter such as OARS, award-winning rafting gurus lauded for combining flawless navigational skills with gourmet campfire cooking, impromptu evening jam sessions and insider knowledge of the best swimming holes.

Trips jockey through class III rapids sporting names like Slim Pickins and Wildcat. In between whitewater runs, scramble up wooded trails, cast a line for a few silver-scaled steelhead or slide down a rock chute into a waterfall-fed pool. Come late afternoon, river guides lay camp on secluded sandbars, leaving time before dinner to lounge with a book or spy some of the Rogue's abundant wildlife, a menagerie that includes bald eagles, river otters and black-tailed deer. [oars.com](http://oars.com)



## SEE SYNCHRONOUS FIREFLIES IN TENNESSEE

Depending on where you live, the fleeting glimmers of fireflies often appear at dusk as singular sparks of light. Imagine, then, the almost spiritual experience of being surrounded by thousands of summer's incandescent critters as they glow in synchronized, luminous waves. This display takes place every year for about two weeks between late May and early June in the Elkmont section of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Beginning around 9:30 in the evening, thousands of *Photinus carolinus* fireflies illuminate the dark woods.

With the help of lifelong naturalist Lynn Faust and entomologist Dr. Rebecca Nichols, park officials announce predicted peak firefly viewing dates in late April. Aspiring fireflyers can enter a lottery for a chance to board a shuttle to Elkmont Campground for a front-row seat.

Scoring an Elkmont campsite provides an alternative ticket to the light show. The caveat? Campground reservations open long before the annual predicted dates, so it can be tough to time reservations with the fireflies' actual appearance. If all else fails, there are 12 other species of fireflies that display across the Smokies during the summer months. Though you won't witness the full-fledged firefly extravaganza, the effects are similarly mesmerizing. Those fortunate enough to gain Elkmont access should find a spot along either the Little River or Jake's Creek trails—both areas offer a good vantage point for viewing the action. [nps.gov/grsm](http://nps.gov/grsm)



## PADDE A WATERY WILDERNESS IN MINNESOTA

Push off from shore and head into 1.1 million acres of untrammeled hinterland in northeastern Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Well known among paddle enthusiasts, the area stretches for 150 miles along the Canadian border and delivers epic adventure to anyone looking to get semilost in nature's solitude.

In 1978, Congress passed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act, which aimed to return the region closer to the pristine backcountry it was when Paleo-Indians hunted megafauna such as now-extinct mammoths and bison. The act closed roads, restricted motorboat use, banned logging and mining and prohibited planes from flying below 4,000 feet. The resulting swath of wilderness hosts more than 1,200 miles of interconnected waterways that wind among glacier-carved lakes, plus 2,000 primitive campsites that dot unspoiled islands with superb fishing. Moose, porcupines, otters and timber wolves have replaced their prehistoric ancestors.

Everyone from nature novices to backcountry experts can explore the Boundary Waters. Newbies looking to wet their feet can set up housekeeping in a lakeside cabin at one of the many historic lodges along the Gunflint Trail. Most, such as Rockwood, Clearwater and Bearskin, rent lightweight canoes for

guests to practice their paddling and portaging skills on daytrips. Ready to move beyond B-Dub 101? Guided journeys abound, and setting out with a knowledgeable navigator provides hesitant paddlers with a sense of security. A slew of regional outfitters stand ready with packages that include itineraries, maps, boats, tents, camping gear and even full meal plans. [bwca.com](http://bwca.com)

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Whitewater rafting on the Rogue River in Oregon; Canoeing in Minnesota's Boundary Waters; Synchronous fireflies in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.**



JUSTIN BAILE (OR); CHRISTIAN HEEB/AHEEPHOTO.COM (MN); RADIM SCHREIBER (TN)



## PEDAL A RAIL TRAIL IN PENNSYLVANIA

Chug through verdant valleys and over railroad trestles spanning rushing rivers on the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile rail trail linking Cumberland, Maryland, and Pittsburgh. Rail trails convert miles of abandoned train track into recreational greenways, creating traffic-free routes through the country's richest history and prettiest scenery.

As the longest rail trail east of the Mississippi, the GAP's smooth pavement and crushed limestone makes pedaling almost effortless. Start a trip at mile-marker zero in Cumberland—cyclists can ride in either direction, but traveling east to west with Pittsburgh at the finish line offers more options for postadventure R&R. The first 23 miles deliver a gradual but steady incline on the approach to the eastern continental divide—the trail's highest point. After that it's smooth sailing. Prefer to bypass part of the hill? The 90-minute excursion aboard the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad's Frostburg Flyer shaves the climb by 16 miles.

Along the way, short detours lead to historic trail towns—



Rockwood, Confluence, West Newton—that dot Pennsylvania's coal and steel corridor. The GAP's popularity has revitalized many former industrial strongholds, with new businesses popping up to serve the influx of tourists: Former railroad stations house new visitor centers, an old coal mine becomes studio space for a mosaic artist, pubs provide refreshment after long hours of pedaling and refurbished inns offer a cozy night's rest for the weary. [gaptrail.org](http://gaptrail.org)

## HIKE HUT TO HUT IN YOSEMITE



ucked along a 49-mile loop surrounded by spectacular wilderness, Yosemite's High Sierra Camps offer an unencumbered pathway to some of the most stunning backcountry in the United States. Up here, towering granite peaks and domes frame mountain lakes, ancient pine forests and wildflower-filled meadows flaunting a highlight reel of Yosemite scenery.

Established in the early 20th century as a means to lure parkgoers into the Sierra Nevada high country, the fledging trailside oases underwent multiple incarnations until about 1961, when Sunrise Camp completed the circuit. Today, five camps spaced 7 to 10 miles apart

house hikers in rustic tent-cabins outfitted with cots, warm woolen blankets and solar lanterns. Wood stoves keep things snug on nights when mountain temperatures drop into the 30s, and three of the camps even have hot showers.

As soon as snowmelt allows, the camps are pitched and outfitted, ready to welcome guests sometime between mid-June and early July. Mule trains pack in food and supplies throughout the summer—overnight guests relish the abundant, family-style dinners and breakfasts served in a communal dining tent—and the whole shebang usually wraps up by early to mid-September.

All of this means hikers need to carry little more on the trail than a daypack. Arrange for those same hardworking mules to sch-



lep extra gear—sweaters, long johns, camp chairs—from camp to camp. For a few more bucks (and with advance notice), you can even have them deliver your wine.

Although only a fraction of visitors venture beyond Yosemite Valley, hiking the High Sierra loop long has been a coveted adventure. Secure camp reservations through the annual lottery system. Unsuccessful? Starting March 1, the "free booking" period opens, allowing folks to reserve remaining available tent spaces—and being flexible with dates gives you the best shot to score a bunk. [travelyosemite.com](http://travelyosemite.com)



TOWUHLMAN / ALAMY (PA); STUART THURKILL (MT BOTTOM); YOSEMITE HOSPITALITY

## Go Home on the Range in MONTANA

Getting off the grid doesn't always equate to roughing it, and few places embody that spirit like The Resort at Paws Up. Plunked among 37,000 acres of majestic "Big Sky" country 35 miles from Missoula, Paws Up is a working cattle ranch-turned-luxury resort. Though "glamping" has come to suggest anything fancier than your classic pop-up, Paws Up has the concept down. In fact, it claims to have invented the term back in 2005. These days, ranch guests can bunk in spacious, safari-style tents spread among six distinct camps, each outfitted with lavish furnishings, chandeliers and a smattering of cowboy-chic accouterments.

Pass the long daylight hours immersed in Montana's rugged wilderness. The resort's engaging activity guides lead everything from fly-fishing and rafting on the legendary Blackfoot River to guided archery lessons, water-skiing on Salmon Lake at the resort's Island Lodge or viewings of the 80 head of resident bison.

But the real stars at Paws Up are the horses, cared for and educated by resident horse whisperer Jackie Kecskes. Last winter, the resort adopted five mustangs from the Bureau of Land Management, a move that is something of an anomaly in the ranching world: Many ranchers shun wild horses because their protected status allows them to graze on public lands. Kecskes hopes to shift that ethos, proving that harmonious relationships between mustangs and ranchers are not only possible, but also beneficial.

The goal is to gentle the mustangs and eventually integrate them into the resort's guest horse program. Until then, saddle up one of the many other gorgeous ranch horses and lope along sage-scented trails through pine forest and sweeping meadows. To fully expel your inner city slicker, join the three-hour cattle drive. [pawsup.com](http://pawsup.com)

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## CLAIRE FOY

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### role in *The Crown*, but was it intimidating to play the reigning queen?

I was more concerned about whether people would care, you know? Whether people who take someone who they feel is quite distant from themselves and they feel is very privileged—why should we think of them as a human being? I was more worried that people wouldn't go along with it. I had full confidence in it and I loved her and loved the character and always did, and everyone who made the show felt that way about it. But you just don't know whether people would say, "Yeah, that touched me and I understand why someone would do that," you know? But other than that, no. I wasn't playing the queen, I

was playing Elizabeth Mountbatten. I wasn't playing the icon. So that was pretty easy for me; I knew that distinction pretty early on, so I felt quite lucky.

### Do you think the show has made the monarch more relatable to people?

[Co-creator of *The Crown*] Peter Morgan is very clever. He did that with *The Queen*, as well—he lets people in. She's not allowed to, really, she can't. And so he made it possible in a way to have a voice—albeit not her voice—but to have people put themselves in her shoes, which I don't think many people have ever done before.

### Did you hear any reaction to the show from the British royal family?

It's a simple answer: No. ▼

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## CRUISE THROUGH THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Mark Twain once referred to Hawaii as the "loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean." Though hopper flights crisscross the verdant volcanic chain, traveling by boat delivers a more vibrant aloha spirit. Known for providing a transformative travel experience spotlighting wildlife, conservation and responsible cultural connections, UnCruise Adventures hops from the Big Island to Molokai on seven-night voyages with stops on Maui and Lanai along the way.

Unlike on traditional cruises, the boutique *Safari Explorer's* 36 guests spend far more time off the ship than on it. Whether that means hiking Lanai's rocky sea stacks, searching for *honu* (sea turtles) amid the colorful reef fringing Olowalu Beach or floating above giant

manta rays during a nighttime swim off the Kona coast, engaging with nature is paramount throughout the journey.

Though every sailing has a general itinerary, scheduled stops don't really jibe with an UnCruise adventure. So if a whale suddenly starts breaching in the waters of the Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary? By all means, linger.

At the same time, the yacht's smaller size allows it to explore hidden bays and coves where larger vessels aren't permitted. Take a skiff to unspoiled Molokai for an expedition into historic Halawa Valley, where a trumpeting conch announces the arrival of visitors. In the evening, tuck into a traditional *pa'ina* (feast) complete with music and dancing. [uncruise.com](http://uncruise.com) ▼