



## What's hot in...? Barcelona

### THE SIGHT

Don't be put off by the recent independence-related political upheaval: for tourists it's business as usual, only quieter — so there's no better time to visit. The new must-see is Gaudí's Casa Vicens ([casavicens.org](http://casavicens.org); £14). The first house built by the iconic architect, and until now privately owned, it was the landmark building that gave rise to the Catalan Modernism movement. As well as spectacular interiors, it displays Gaudí's notebooks and offers a fascinating insight into the lifestyle of the new bourgeoisie in the early 20th century.

### THE HOTEL

The first large-scale hotel to open in the fashionable El Born district in years is

the Edition, slated to open mid-2018 next to foodie Santa Caterina Market. The 100-room establishment is pitching itself as a 'microcosm' of the city, with its own contemporary art club, visiting DJs, daredevil chefs and craft cocktail bar ([editionhotels.com](http://editionhotels.com); prices not available yet, but you can expect doubles from about £250, B&B).

### THE DISTRICT

East of the city centre, the former textile-factory quarter, Poble Nou, is now a post-industrial enclave gaining popularity among artists and designers. Start with the fashion exhibits at the Museu del Disseny ([ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny](http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/museudeldisseny); £5.50), then stroll into the *barrio* proper for a coffee from specialist roasters Nomad ([nomadcoffee.es](http://nomadcoffee.es)). Hit Brutus de Gaper ([brutusdegaper.com](http://brutusdegaper.com)) for Mid-century modern homeware, and Brava Fabrics ([bravafabrics.com](http://bravafabrics.com)) for Fairtrade-print shirts and dresses.

**Graphic design:** above, Gaudí's first house, Casa Vicens; left, the two-Michelin starred Disfrutar; fashion exhibits at Museu del Disseny

### THE RESTAURANT

Yes, it opened at the end of 2014, but, three years on, Disfrutar is in the spotlight again, having just received its second Michelin star. It's consistently voted the best in town by the local press, for its light-flooded, lacy-screen decor as much as for its molecular food from three El Bulli alumni. Dinner here is theatrical and fun, and worth the splurge ([en.disfrutarbarcelona.com](http://en.disfrutarbarcelona.com); 20-course tasting menu £105).

### THE TREND

Just about every neighbourhood has its own groovy weekend market these days, some groovier than others. On the first weekend of the month, Palo Alto ([paloaltomarket.com](http://paloaltomarket.com)) is hipster heaven, with live music and DJs, superb street food, and locally crafted accessories and clothing. Or take a 45-minute train ride to Mercantic ([mercantic.com](http://mercantic.com)), in Sant Cugat, for pre-lunch *vermut*, vintage homewares and books.

## Hot for 2018

### ARGENTINA

**Because:** Norwegian's new flights to Buenos Aires, starting on February 14, are direct and keenly priced, challenging BA's former monopoly on the route and saving you up to £400 per return. They go four times a week from Gatwick, from £299 one way ([norwegian.com](http://norwegian.com)).

**Fill me in:** Argentina's spoilt for urban flavour with its edgy, foodie capital, Buenos Aires — get on-trend at the new Presidente, with its secret bar-within-a-bar ([presidentebar.com.ar](http://presidentebar.com.ar)). But the buzz for 2018 is all about the unexplored northern landscapes, especially the Ibera Wetlands. On KE Adventure's new 14-day expedition, you'll sail past

caimans and armadillos, but very few tourists ([keadventure.com](http://keadventure.com); from £4,675pp, with flights and most meals). And you wouldn't go all that way without seeing Iguazu's Falls (pictured) — easier to reach from June with new budget airline Flybondi ([flybondi.com](http://flybondi.com); from Buenos Aires from £43, one way). Stay at one of Iguazu's new hotels: conservation-focused Awasi Lodge ([awasiiguazu.com](http://awasiiguazu.com); doubles from £570, full board), or the more family-friendly Meliá Iguazú, opening in December ([melia.com](http://melia.com); doubles from £245, B&B).

**Get there this year:** Journey Latin America ([journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://journeylatinamerica.co.uk)) has seven nights, staying in Buenos Aires (B&B) and at Awasi Iguazú (full board), from £3,782pp, with Heathrow flights.



## Hot for 2018

### SOUTH KOREA

**Because:** The Korean Peninsula has good news stories, too! Prepare to be inspired this February with the Winter Games in Pyeongchang, east of Seoul — the capital that gets more dynamic by the day.

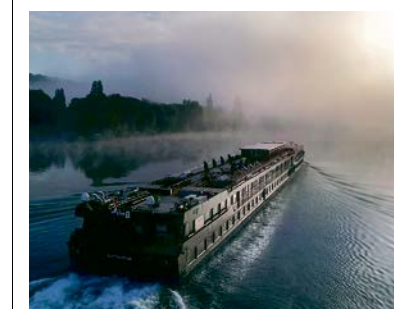
**Fill me in:** True, it's big and built up, but in between the high-rises, Seoul (pictured) is a higgledy-piggledy maze with great foodie and cultural finds, and friendly locals. It's also an increasingly green city, thanks to the opening of Seoullto 7017, a former flyover near Seoul Station transformed into a kilometre-long arboretum in the sky. At its eastern exit is one of Seoul's best markets, Namdaemun — for food, clothes, homeware, you name it. Hop on the speedy KTX train line from Incheon airport to Pyeongchang for the Olympic ski resorts of Alpensia and Yongpyeong — and the sprawling

Woljeongsa Temple, nestled in forest in Odaesan National Park. Stay overnight to learn about Korean Buddhism ([eng.templestay.com](http://eng.templestay.com); £41pp, half board). Continue on the KTX to the port city of Gangneung, with its cultural sights: visit one of South Korea's oldest wooden buildings, Ojukheon (and spot it on the 5,000 won note).

**Get there this year:** Bamboo Travel ([bambootravel.co.uk](http://bambootravel.co.uk))'s new 16-day 'Adventure Korea' tour includes Seoul and Pyeongchang, from £4,295pp, B&B, with flights, transfers, private tours and guides.



## What's hot in...? Cruise



### THE SHIP

Royal Caribbean, NCL and Celebrity Cruises all launch wow-y megaships in 2018. Top spot goes to the 2,900-passenger *Celebrity Edge*, with chic Kelly Hoppen interiors, a rooftop garden and gorgeous split-level 'villas'. From £2,641pp for a nine-night Caribbean trip, with flights ([celebritycruises.co.uk](http://celebritycruises.co.uk)).

### THE TREND

As river-cruise passengers get younger, upmarket Uniworld launches a new line just for 21- to 45-year-olds. U by Uniworld (ship pictured) will offer beer-tasting, bike rides and city nightlife tours. From £1,119pp for a week from Amsterdam ([ubyuniworld.com](http://ubyuniworld.com); flights extra).

### THE ROUTE

We know Iceland's star is rising (see page 124), and a flurry of new sailings makes it easier than ever to get there. Luxury line Silversea and family-friendly P&O Cruises are among those sailing there this summer: P&O visits Reykjavík, Akureyri and Ísafjörður on a 14-night cruise from Southampton, from £1,399pp ([pocruises.com](http://pocruises.com)).

### THE NOVELTY

Expedition line Ponant launches *Le Laperouse* with cruising's first multi-sensory underwater lounge, so you can watch turtles and listen to live whalesong from passing cetaceans in the Indian Ocean; from £4,100pp for seven nights, departing Reykjavík; flights extra ([en.ponant.com](http://en.ponant.com)).

### THE BARGAIN

Cultural immersion is all the rage in cruising, and a new Aegean minibreak, running all summer, packs it in with five ports in three days. Meals, drinks, crew tips and Ephesus tours are thrown in, making this incredibly affordable; from £351pp, departing Athens; flights extra ([celestialcruises.com](http://celestialcruises.com)).

## WHAT'S HOT 2018 HOT HOTEL Amanyangyun, Shanghai

Take a peaceful Ming village shaded by 10,000 ancient camphor trees, fill its villas with soft white furnishings, sun-dappled through antique wood screens — and move it 640km, trees and all, from a precarious floodplain to just outside Shanghai. This is the latest property from five-star design resort group Aman, just one of several hot Shanghai hotels due this year ([aman.com](http://aman.com); doubles from £781, B&B).





# What's hot in...? Prague

## THE EVENT

Not only is 2018 the centenary of Czechoslovakia's birth (expect a host of celebrations, from art exhibits to live concerts), it's also 200 years since Prague's iconic National Museum opened. Shuttered since mid-2011 for a £60m renovation, the Neo-Renaissance building that looms over Wenceslas Square will reopen in October with a major exhibition on the country's

often-turbulent history, from Kingdom of Bohemia highs to Nazi and Communist lows ([nm.cz](http://nm.cz); £8.60).

## THE DISTRICT

Prague's newest up-and-coming neighbourhood is Holešovice, a few kilometres upriver from the Old Town. Visit the former meatpacking district for artisan coffee shops (including Bitcoin-only Paralení Polis; [paralenipolis.cz](http://paralenipolis.cz)), fine-dining restaurants (try Asian-fusion favourite SaSaZu; [sasazu.com/en](http://sasazu.com/en)) and modern art galleries (such as the airship-topped DOX Centre for Contemporary Art; [dox.cz/](http://dox.cz/)

en; pictured) — and, at weekends, Prague's coolest fashion market, Mint: Pop Up Hall 13 ([mintmarket.cz](http://mintmarket.cz)).

## THE HOTEL

In a city of medieval bridges, Gothic churches and Baroque squares, the recent arrival of Modernist Hotel Sax was a real breath of fresh air. On a side street below the castle, this great-value stay is a shrine to 20th-century pop culture, complete with vintage furniture and offbeat wallpaper. Best bit? Its rooftop spa, with majestic city views ([hotelsax.cz](http://hotelsax.cz); doubles from £58, B&B).

## THE RESTAURANT

Low-key-luxe newcomer Field has redrawn the boundaries of Bohemian fare with its Scandi-twisted, high-end Czech cuisine. Decor is minimalism incarnate — beige walls, wooden floors and unadorned tables — but look up to see the street art projected onto the ceiling. Dishes such as heifer with kohlrabi and shallots, and suckling pig with beetroot and mead, are saucy, but delicate ([fieldrestaurant.cz/en](http://fieldrestaurant.cz/en); mains about £20).

## THE TREND

Prague's dining scene has really raised its game in the last few years. The city has always guaranteed a hearty, low-cost goulash or sausage, but quality new options include high-end vegan diner Etnosvět ([etnosvet.cz/en](http://etnosvet.cz/en)), best-of-the-hipster-coffee-shops Cafefin ([cafefinvpraze.com](http://cafefinvpraze.com)), and farm-to-fork butchers, including Maso a Kobliha — 'meat and doughnuts' ([masoakobliha.cz](http://masoakobliha.cz)).



## HOT SPOTLIGHT LOCATION VACATIONS

New cinematic versions of kids' classics this year will have you itching to explore the real thing. Get in the groove for the latest *Jungle Book* film (out in October) at India's Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge; its new private conservancy will cut red tape and make spotting Shere Khan easier ([tigertrailstadoba.com](http://tigertrailstadoba.com); doubles from £140, full board). Closer to home, *Peter Rabbit*, out in March, will push more fans to Beatrix Potter's Lake District house, Hill Top ([nationaltrust.org.uk/hill-top](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/hill-top); £10.40), while a new *Robin Hood* movie, starring Jamie Foxx and Dornan, is out in September. Follow them to Sherwood Forest for the August Robin Hood festival, or to Nottingham for the October Robin Hood Pageant ([nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://nottinghamshire.gov.uk); free).

## Hot for 2018

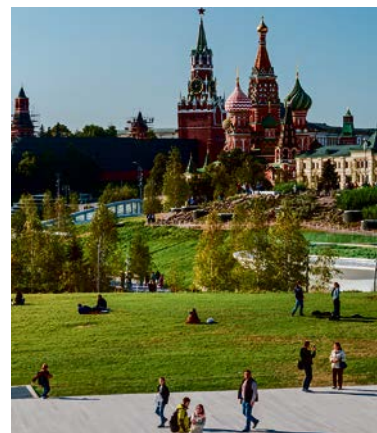
### MOSCOW

**Because:** Russia is sprucing itself up ready to host football's World Cup in June and July — not least in the capital, where Red Square just turned a bit greener.

**Fill me in:** Russia hopes to outshine its own Sochi Winter Olympics spectacular of 2014, and has built 11 smart new stadiums — including biggies in Moscow, St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Sochi and Volgograd. (The red-carpet treatment for fans with tickets includes free train travel between World Cup host cities.) In Moscow, the hideous Soviet-era Rossiya Hotel that once sat next to Red Square has been flattened to make way for riverside Zaryadye Park, the first public park to be built in

Moscow in 50 years. You'll enjoy the scent of spruce on winding paths through 13 hectares that represent Russia's tundra, steppe, forest and wetlands. Instant Instagramability comes from the boomerang-shaped 'floating bridge' levitating over the river. Facelifted in time for the footie, Moscow's boulevards and monolithic buildings are looking mightier than ever, but it's down side streets you'll find the real confidence. These days, glitzy boutiques line up alongside impressive, diverse places to dine — such as the Siberian restaurant Expedition ([expedicia-restaurant.ru](http://expedicia-restaurant.ru); mains about £17), where you can sit amid oversized polar bears and an antique helicopter to try *pelmeni* (Russian ravioli) filled with Kamchatka crab.

**Get there this year:** BA ([ba.com](http://ba.com)) has a four-night break, staying at the four-star Novotel Moscow Centre, from £535pp, room only, including return flights from Heathrow.





## Hot for 2018

### ICELAND

**Because:** With a surge of new routes to Reykjavik, the bucket-list destination is now as accessible — and cheap to reach — as the continent, for long weekends or (free) stopovers en route to the US. What's more, new domestic flights to Akureyri are opening up the country's icy untrodden north for whale-watchers and *Aurora*-seekers.

**Fill me in:** The contrast between Iceland's *Star Wars* landscapes and sophisticated culture is thrillingly stark — and best experienced amid the lava fields of the Blue Lagoon ([bluelagoon.com](http://bluelagoon.com); from £50). This year the famous spa's milky-blue geothermal pools double in size to 7,000sq m, adding secluded nooks to sink into — plus a modern, new on-site hotel called Silica (doubles from £459, B&B; pictured). With its own private hot springs, it's pricey even for Iceland, but worth it for the therapeutic luxury. From here, it's 40 minutes to the dinky Lego-look capital, Reykjavik, then just 45 minutes on one of those new flights to arty Akureyri. Here, on the misty, mountain-ringed fjord of Eyjafjörður, whale-watching expeditions guarantee humpback sightings ([whalewatchingakureyri.is](http://whalewatchingakureyri.is); £80). Afterwards, soak in a wood tub filled with hot, yeasty ale — the new 'beer spa' at Björböðin has triggered a local wellness trend ([bjorbodin.com](http://bjorbodin.com); £15).

**Get there this year:** Icelandair ([icelandair.co.uk](http://icelandair.co.uk)) flies to Reykjavik from Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Gatwick, Glasgow and Manchester, from £137 return. Air Iceland Connect ([airicelandconnect.com](http://airicelandconnect.com)) flies from Reykjavik to Akureyri from £118 return. Hotel Akureyri ([icelandairhotels.com](http://icelandairhotels.com)) has doubles from £83, B&B.



### HOT HOTEL Nyungwe House, Rwanda

Branching out from its ultra-luxury beach hotels into the primate-filled jungles of Rwanda, One&Only Resorts recently opened the 22-room Nyungwe House, and Gorilla's Nest is also set to open later this year ([oneandonlyresorts.com](http://oneandonlyresorts.com); doubles from about £860, full board). Top-end hotels are booming here, helped by Rwandair's speedy new non-stop flights between Gatwick and Kigali ([rwandair.com](http://rwandair.com); from £368 return).



## What's hot in...?

# The Caribbean

### GRENADA

Things don't change too quickly on the Spice Island (pictured), so there's huge excitement about the March debut of minimal-luxe Silversands, the first major hotel to open on gorgeous Grand Anse beach in 25 years ([silversandsgrenada.com](http://silversandsgrenada.com); doubles from £595, B&B). Beyond the lounge, you'll spot mona monkeys from the new forest-canopy high wire ([grenadahighwire.com](http://grenadahighwire.com); £36), and fresh statues are set to expand the Underwater Sculpture Park.

### BARBADOS

New direct Heathrow flights from Virgin and Thomas Cook will make the A-list island more accessible in 2018, while in May, Virgin Holidays opens a 'Departure Beach': its customers will be able to check in for their flight home, drop bags and kick back until a transfer whisks them to the airport. There's a blingy new resort, too: Sandals Royal Barbados ([sandals.co.uk](http://sandals.co.uk); seven nights from £2,025pp, all-inclusive, with Gatwick flights).

### CUBA

After a rough 2017, Cuba is back on its feet and looking perkier than ever. The Irma-bashed beaches in the north have been cleared up, while Raúl Castro's

vow to step down in February has put a spring in the island's step. In Havana, hot new bars, shops and the soon-to-open retro-chic boutique hotel Malecón 663 ([malecon663.com](http://malecon663.com); doubles from £130, B&B) all herald a bright future.

### ANTIGUA

It's all new looks and newbies: island favourites Blue Waters ([bluewaters.net](http://bluewaters.net); doubles from £265, B&B) and Curtain Bluff ([curtainbluff.com](http://curtainbluff.com); doubles from £642, all-inclusive) have just emerged from multi-million-dollar facelifts. And mid-2018, villa complex Tamarind Hills unveils 46 one-bed suites ([tamarindhills.com](http://tamarindhills.com); from £448, room only) — about the same time the new Hodges Bay resort ([elegant-hotels.com](http://elegant-hotels.com); rates not yet available) opens on the north coast.

### JAMAICA

Here's one for the grown-ups: Jamaica's first adults-only, five-star all-inclusive, Excellence Oyster Bay, opens in the first half of this year. Set on its own private peninsula, surrounded by the mint-green waters of Montego Bay, this all-suite resort comes with 3km of private white-sand beaches ([excellence-resorts.com](http://excellence-resorts.com); prices not available yet). ■