



**DIE REISE
DEINES LEBENS**

245
spektakuläre Ziele
weltweit

INHALT

VORWORT VON
GEORGE W. STONE 6

SÜD- UND
MITTELAMERIKA
8

AFRIKA
60

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112

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266

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320

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378

MITWIRKENDE UND
DANK 404

QUELLEN 405

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REGISTER 408

OBEN: Heißluftballons schweben über Tempel der historischen Königsstadt Bagan in Myanmar.
VORHERGEHENDE DOPPELSEITE: Ein Wanderer durchstreift die Canyons der Zion-Narrows im Zion-Nationalpark in Utah.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A Bengal tiger in Ranthambore, India; the Great Arch of Chuzhang Cave; the temples of Bagan in Myanmar; Guangzhou city lit up at night

Kapitel 4

ASIEN

Ein Kontinent reich an Geschichte, majestätischen Landschaften und quirligen Städten





VIETNAM

PADDLING UND RADFAHREN IN VIETNAM

Eine Reise entlang betörender Radwege und alter Wasserwege

Curving more than 1,000 miles (1,610 km) along the Indochina Peninsula, Vietnam entices rafters and bikers to explore its green mountains, terraced rice paddies, and fascinating sea caves.

The country has a strong cycling culture. In Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), the largest city, it's been estimated that there are more than two million bicycles, and millions more motorbikes, so active travelers will be in good company as they explore the country on two wheels. Highway 1, the site of many critical battles during the Vietnam War, runs the length of the country from its northern border with China to Nam Can at the southern tip. A favorite route for cyclists, its scenic sections trace the coastline of the South China Sea. A bike is also the best way to roam historic cities, including the ancient capital of Hanoi, founded in the early 11th century and inhabited since prehistoric times, and the coastal retreat of Hoi An, whose Old Town is a time capsule of a seafaring port from centuries past.

Vietnam's endless waterways offer exploration of a different kind. By canoe or kayak, discover the country's more natural wonders, from the immense Mekong Delta to mountain-shadowed Ba Be Lake to the incredible karst formations in Halong Bay and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park.

This is the land—and sea—of adventure opportunity.

Travel Tips

WHEN TO GO: The best time for cycling and kayaking trips is October through February, when the rainy season has ended and temperatures are cooler.

PLANNING: Vehicles nominally drive on the right side of the road in Vietnam but can converge in all directions when traffic gets heavy. Right of way is determined by the largest vehicle—meaning it's rarely the biker. Operators that offer active trips include National Geographic Expeditions, G Adventures, and World Expeditions.

WEBSITES: vietnam.travel; nationalgeographic.com/expeditions; gadventures.com; worldexpeditions.com

A floating village in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam



WHAT TO DO

Cycle Hanoi

Vietnam's charming capital offers delightful urban bike rides to culture-rich sites, from impressive monuments like the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and 11th-century Temple of Literature to the Old Quarter's fascinating den of narrow alleys, filled with silk and lacquerware shops and street food stalls serving steaming bowls of pho. For a less congested ride, head to the cycling route along the Red River (with separate lanes for bicycles and motorcycles) and wheel along three bridges over picturesque West Lake for a view of Tran Quoc Pagoda, the oldest Buddhist temple in Hanoi.

Kayak Halong Bay

Studded with nearly 2,000 karst pinnacles that rise from jade-green sea, Halong Bay is one of Vietnam's most magical places. Take to the water to examine the limestone islets up close, discovering turquoise lagoons, hidden grottoes, and elegant arches that glow purple at sunset.

Bike Sapa

The area around the town of Sapa, located in the towering peaks of Lao Cai Province at an elevation of 4,920 feet (1,500 m), offers dazzling scenery for intrepid mountain bikers: Wisps of clouds cling to forested peaks and terraced rice paddies cascade down the hill-sides. A selection of rugged trails pass by welcoming hill tribe villages populated by Hmong, Zay, and Yao peoples. Come in September, harvesttime, when the paddies turn a brilliant yellow.

Canoe Ba Be Lake

Known as the "emerald of northern Vietnam,"

OPPOSITE: With tree-lined hills for scenery, a boat glides through Ba Be Lake. RIGHT: Cyclists make their way past lush green rice paddies in the outskirts of Vietnam.

Ba Be is the country's largest natural lake. A peaceful canoe trip along the five-mile (8 km) lake, located in Bac Can Province, shows off the limestone mountains, deep valleys, caves, and waterfalls of the surrounding Ba Be National Park. The richly biodiverse park is home to hundreds of unnamed plant species, as well as ethnic minorities such as the Tay people, who build their homes on stilts near the lake.

Cycle Hoi An

The streets of Hoi An's Old Town—named a UNESCO World Heritage site for its exceptional preservation of a 15th to 19th-century Southeast Asian trading port—are closed to motorized traffic most of the day, allowing for a leisurely ride past ancient bridges, bustling markets, and lantern-lit alleys. Pedal out into the countryside to visit artisan villages such as Cam Thanh, Kim Bong, and Thanh Ha, where you can learn about traditional boat building, woodworking, and pottery making.

Kayak the Cham Islands

Located about 11 miles (18 km) offshore from Hoi An, the eight Cham Islands are a UNESCO

World Biosphere Reserve. The surrounding waters of Cu Lao Cham Marine Park provide a protected habitat for some 135 species of coral, five species of lobster, and more than 200 types of fish, including the endangered (and enormous) six-foot-long (1.8 m) hump-head wrasse. Due to monsoon weather in the winter, the islands are accessible for only seven months of the year, which helps preserve their unspoiled state and variety of wildlife. Paddle or dive the crystal-clear water to uncover its treasures below the surface, pristine beaches, and verdant jungle.

Bike Hai Van Pass

Hai Van, meaning "ocean cloud pass," traverses a spur of the Annamite Range, twisting through 13 miles (21 km) of rugged terrain along the coastal route between Hue and Da Nang. This is for serious bikers only: It's a nearly seven-mile (11 km) climb to the top, much of it at a 7 percent gradient. The breathtaking ascent (literally) will get your blood pumping and thighs burning, but the reward is unparalleled views of misty mountains and azure ocean, followed by an exhilarating descent to the sea.



ENTDECKEN SIE PLÄTZE BEVOR SIE VERSCHWUNDEN SIND



1 DIE GROSSE MAUER IN CHINA

More than 10,000 miles (16,000 km) long and more than 2,000 years old, the Great Wall of China loses bricks to time and tourists every day. Despite recent efforts to survey the damage and reinforce unstable sections, preserving the entire structure seems nearly impossible. Limit your footprint by hiking the less busy Jiankou section or touring via helicopter.

2 DIE GLETSCHER IN NEPAL

Scientists estimate that more than one-third of the glaciers in the Himalaya could disappear by 2100. So even if you don't plan to summit Everest, the 3,000-plus glaciers are worth a visit *now*. An autumn hike across lakes, remote Sherpa villages, ancient stupas, and Ngozumpa—Nepal's longest glacier—promises the most stable and clear weather.

3 STERNENBEOBACHTUNGS-PLÄTZE IN CHINA

Stargazing has become difficult in China: Hong Kong's light pollution may be the worst in the world, Chengdu is building an artificial moon, and Beijing's smoggy ceiling has been dubbed an "airpocalypse." Nevertheless, eager adventurers can still find space to look to the skies. The lush gorges of the Yangtze remain one of the world's top night-sky destinations.

4 ITA THAO UND SUN MOON LAKE, TAIWAN

Taiwan's largest and only natural lake is a fiercely blue, mountain-ringed paradise. Sun Moon Lake's 19-mile (29 km) cycling loop weaves along verdant hills, Buddhist temples, and car-free suspension bridges. Sun Moon is also home to Taiwan's smallest recognized tribe. Like many other indigenous groups, the Thao lose ties to tradition every year. Visit Ita Thao now to see traditional dancing and bamboo fish trap weaving while it's still being practiced.



OPPOSITE: The entire Great Wall of China spans some 5,500 miles (8,850 km) from the Korean border into the Gobi. ABOVE: A brown bear walks along a river in Kamchatka, Russia.

5 KAMCHATKA, RUSSLAND

UNESCO is in love with Kamchatka, designating the peninsula as a "landscape of exceptional natural beauty with its large symmetrical volcanoes, lakes, wild rivers and spectacular coastline." Hikers and fly fishermen are in love with it too, thanks to super-hard-to-get-to fishing holes, pristine scenery, and epic crater hiking. Still, in a land where sometimes four volcanoes erupt at once, it's best to go soon.

6 SUNDABARNS, INDIEN

At almost 346,000 acres (1 million hectares), the Sundarbans is one of the world's largest mangrove networks—home to more than 260 bird species, estuarine crocodiles, king cobras, dolphins, tree-climbing fish, sea turtles, and endangered royal Bengal tigers. Unfortunately, sea levels are rising faster here than anywhere else in the world, threatening endangered species and millions of residents alike. Boats are the best avenue for exploring this endangered place.

7 BAGAN, MYANMAR

As a result of earthquakes, erosion, and irresponsible tourists, fewer than half of Myanmar's famous Bagan temples are still standing. That said, there are still more than 2,000 temples and pagodas to choose from. Con-

sider exploring the area by electric bike, horse cart, or hot-air balloon. (See page 254.) Due to preservation efforts, temple climbing is discouraged.

8 SEE POYANG, CHINA

Situated in the middle of the third longest river in the world, you'd assume Lake Poyang had constant replenishment. But with the dry season starting earlier every year, the freshwater lake has receded more than ever before, shrinking the habitat of rare finless porpoises, endangered Siberian cranes, and thousands of migratory birds. Birding excursions paddle out from Nanchang toward the north shore of Lake Poyang to see egrets, spoonbills, storks, swan geese, and more.

9 DIE SCHWIMMENDEN MÄRKTE AUF DEM MEKONG

Already increasingly dependent on the tourism industry, the Mekong River's spectacular floating markets are quickly disappearing as development alters the interest in local commerce. Whether you navigate the Mekong by kayak, rowboat, glider, or onshore by mountain bike, make time for fresh watermelon, local coffee, and Vietnamese noodles served from a local sampan.

10 SHIRETOKO NATIONAL PARK, JAPAN

One of Japan's last remaining stretches of unspoiled wilderness, eastern Hokkaido's Shiretoko National Park is a hiker's paradise. A boardwalk prevents damage to surrounding wetlands, volcanic lakes, and snowy mountains. Seasonal freezing and thawing of drift ice (a delicate process susceptible to climate change) supports the park's unique ecosystem of phytoplankton, salmon, trout, endangered Blakiston's fish owls, and one of the highest populations of brown bears in the world.

Der Navua Fluss schlängelt sich durch einen der längsten befahrbaren Slot Canyons der Welt.



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