

Plus! 48 Hours in Bermuda Driving the Outer Banks Gettysburg Local Color: Bangkok Traveling to Soothe the Soul



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

**CLOSE-UP CRUISING**

Galápagos Islands, Arctic Norway,  
Dalmatian Coast, and More

# TRAVELER

All travel. All the time

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A youth choir hits high notes at the Santuari de Lluç.

region are Paleolithic cave paintings and medieval towns. **Extra blessing:** The monks produce *queso Trapa*, a semi-matured cheese sold locally and internationally. **Rooms:** Doubles with meals from \$66. E-mail: [ocso.viaceli@confer.es](mailto:ocso.viaceli@confer.es); 34-942-72-50-17.

### Convento Santa María de Jesús

**ÁVILA, CASTILLA-LEÓN** The intact walled town of Ávila sits at 3,700 feet, in the shadow of the Sierra de Gradós mountains. Thirty-six-foot walls with nine monumental gates and 88 towers conserve a cache of Renaissance palaces, Romanesque churches, and stone monasteries. Just outside the walls, the Clarisse nuns offer warm hospitality in their convent. Next-door Santo Tomás monastery was once a royal summer residence and now houses a museum of East Asian art. **Extra blessings:** Corazones de Santa Teresa, a dessert specialty, and *turrón*, a typical Spanish Christmas treat made by the sisters, are sold at the convent. **Rooms:** Double rooms with meals from \$48 per person. E-mail: [mtp.jclarisas@planalfa.es](mailto:mtp.jclarisas@planalfa.es); 34-920-22-05-83.

### Abadía de Montserrat

**MONTSERRAT, CATALONIA** Living the Catalan culture is part of the experience at the thousand-year-old Abadía de Montserrat. Adding drama is the breathtaking setting. Looking as if it was carved from the rock, the Benedictine abbey consists of a complex including chapels and ancient caves. Its name means "serrated mountain," which describes the sharp profile of jagged pinnacles that soars over deep gorges, towers, and terraced plazas. There are shops, cafés, and a museum featuring 19th- and 20th-century Catalan paintings. Two funiculars transport you to the Cova

Santa and the nature center at Sant Joan. The abbey holds Gregorian chant and music concerts. **Extra blessing:** The 50-boy choir of the Escolania sings in the basilica. **Accommodations:** Hotel Abat Cisneros has double rooms with private bath from \$64, including breakfast. E-mail: [reserves@larsa-montserrat.com](mailto:reserves@larsa-montserrat.com); 34-938-77-77-01. —Eileen Barish

## under \$150 stays



### Penang, Malaysia CHEONG FATT TZE MANSION

In historic Georgetown, capital of Penang island, this richly restored 19th-century Chinese courtyard house was built on feng shui principles, from the building's orientation facing the rising sun to the furniture arrangement in the 16 poetically named guest rooms. The public areas group around a central courtyard open to the elements, be it soft afternoon rain or filtered morning sun. Room rates include a made-to-order breakfast, a free tour of the mansion, and the services of a valet. From \$66; [www.cheongfattzemansion.com](http://www.cheongfattzemansion.com).



### Philadelphia ALEXANDER INN

A great value in a convenient Center City location (near Independence Hall, Rittenhouse Square), this 48-room boutique hotel keeps fans coming back with its mix of friendly service, cozy decor (oak moldings, stained-glass windows, fresh flowers), and amenities you'd expect in a larger hotel: fitness center, WiFi access, discount indoor parking. The included continental breakfast is fine, but nearby Reading Terminal Market tempts us with baked goods, deli meats, and artisanal cheeses. From \$109; [www.alexanderinn.com](http://www.alexanderinn.com).

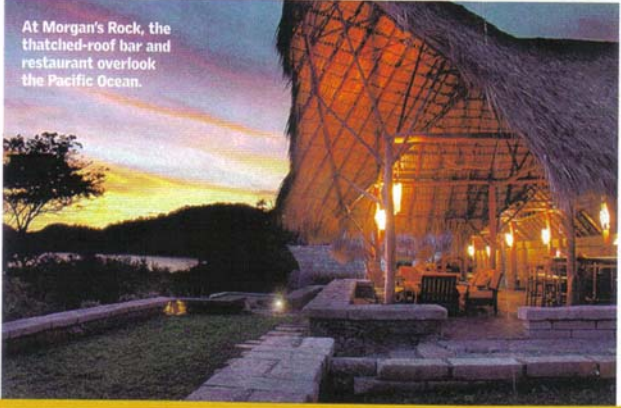


### Istanbul HOTEL DERSAADET

Just a few minutes walk from the heart of Sultanahmet and its many attractions (Topkapi Palace, carpet shops, museums), this reconstructed Ottoman mansion offers 17 guest rooms decorated Turkish-style with kilims and painted ceilings. Owner/manager Deniz Duyar heads a knowledgeable staff. The included breakfast of Turkish *simit* bread, yogurt, cold cuts, cheese, and fruit is served in the rooftop Terrace Cafe, which boasts an idyllic view of the Blue Mosque. From \$85; [www.hoteldersaadet.com](http://www.hoteldersaadet.com).

## Check Out: Comfort and Conservation

**Morgan's Rock** is a hacienda-style ecolodge perched on a 4,447-acre private reserve in Nicaragua. The hotel has planted more than 1.5 million trees as part of its commitment to reforestation. Equally concerned about wildlife, the resort has reintroduced an almost extinct iguana species into the jungle and protects and monitors the sea turtles on its shoreline. Many of the meals served at the lodge feature food grown or farmed on the hacienda, including grains, vegetables, fruits, eggs, and dairy products. Guests go without modern conveniences, like phones and televisions; instead, the 15 guest bungalows, complete with king-size beds and private outdoor showers, face west, offering nature's form of evening entertainment. From \$150 per person, including meals and taxes ([www.morgansrock.com](http://www.morgansrock.com)). —Meghan Yudes



At Morgan's Rock, the thatched-roof bar and restaurant overlook the Pacific Ocean.

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