



The monastic region of Meteora offered spectacular views and hiking, as well as the chance for getting to know some fellow travelers.

Déjà vu

ALL OVER AGAIN Most of us don't think much about where our outdoor clothing comes from, and even fewer consider where it goes once we're finished with it. But the new R4 jacket from Patagonia just might change that. As the company's warmest fleece garment, the jacket is an ideal cold-weather companion, either all by itself or under a waterproof shell for wet-weather activities.

The twist? The R4 jacket is 100 percent recyclable under Patagonia's Common Threads recycling program (which, in a move of stunning magnanimity, even



accepts its competitors' products). Get ready for a strong sense of déjà vu: after you wear it out, that old winter fleece just might return for a warm-weather encore as one of Patagonia's Capilene T-shirts, which are now made from 100 percent recycled polyester. Price: 390 dollars.

www.patagonia.com

Should I stay or should I go?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU It's a classic traveler's dilemma: stay where you are and really get to know a place, or leave and possibly discover something even better somewhere up the road. I was in Meteora with Blandie, a young English traveler I'd just met. We were walking through one of Greece's great monastic regions. And then we rounded the corner of a narrow mountain trail and found Jason.

He fell in with us immediately, much like a stray cat, and the three of us started climbing up to one of the monasteries together. Blandie was in the middle of a cycle trip around the world. Jason was visiting relatives in Galaxidi. I was taking a break from my classes in Paris. We seemed to have little in common, and yet we soon fell into an easy friendship, the quick camaraderie of the fellow traveler, enjoying a wonderfully drawn-out conversation before heading off on our separate journeys.

And yet when it came time to head out, we all came to the same decision: to stay in Meteora a little longer. I postponed my trip to Athens, Blandie pushed back his departure for Asia, and Jason called his cousins and said he'd be there in a few days.

To be honest, I'm not sure we did get much more out of the place, though I'm certain we made the right decision. We continued our long conversation and then had several new ones. Later, Blandie would send dozens of lengthy e-mails from his voyage around the world before couch-surfing at Jason's house in Berkeley. And eight years after that chance meeting in Meteora, Jason remains one of my closest friends today.

Of course, there's always the possibility of something better just up the road. But given the chance, I'd much rather really get to know someplace – or someone.

READ IT!

Travel tales to keep you entertained at home or away



SIGN-SPOTTING 2

Doug Lansky
LONELY PLANET

Former *Scanorama* travel editor Lansky returns with a new volume of the world's funniest signs, from the placard marking the George Bush Center for Intelligence to the logo for the Curry Prevention Services in Oregon.



THE RUSH TO HERE

George Murray
NIGHTWOOD EDITIONS

This poetry collection from the editor of the excellent

Book Ninja site comprises 96 pages of sonnets that transcend the traditional limitations of formal verse. Highly imaginative, and yet surprisingly approachable and accessible.



UNDISCOVERED AMERICA

Don and Betty Martin
DISCOVER GUIDES

If you think you've seen it all, wait until

you see the oddball destinations in this offbeat guide, from unknown islands in the Great Lakes to Nevada's best cowboy towns. Keep a copy in the glove box for your next big road trip.



THE NEW TRAVELER'S ATLAS

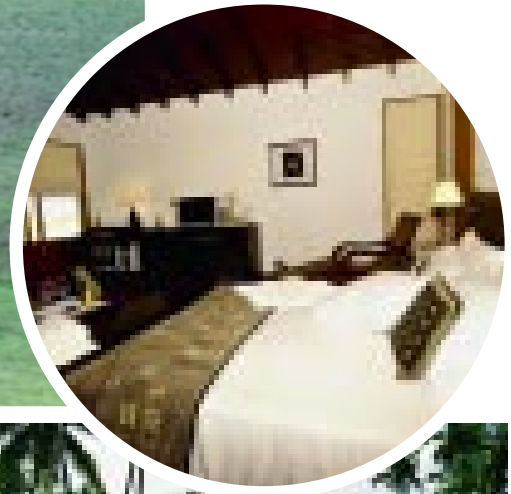
John Man et al.
BARRON'S

EDUCATIONAL SERIES
From Kyoto to the

Galápagos Islands, this guide covers just about every facet of the world's greatest destinations, complete with tons of photos, insider tips, and lists of sights and must-sees on seven continents.



Situated directly on the beach, the Weligama Bay Resort in Sri Lanka offers a native look in both its interior and exterior design, as well as stunning views of the bay.



GOING NATIVE

HOTEL It's rare for a hotel to achieve world-class luxury status and still manage to seem like part of its surroundings, but that's exactly what's happening at the new Weligama Bay Resort in Sri Lanka. Instead of imposing Western-style architecture, the 24 rooms, suites and bungalows are built and decorated in the local manner, with loads of dark, tropical woods, natural stone tiles and handwoven fabrics.

Each room has its own terrace overlooking Weligama Bay, where

guests can enjoy a traditional Ceylon high tea. Plus, the hotel's spa is based on local traditional medicine and ingredients that are native to the region. Although they sound more like meals than spa therapies – there's a coconut-salt body scrub, a papaya facial and a black-pepper back treatment – you can bet they feel delicious.

Weligama Bay Resort, Weligama, Sri Lanka, Tel: +94 799 818 147, www.weligamabayresort.com



IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE IN ...

KUNMING, CHINA

After several years in Italy, the BigScreen Festival of Chinese and Italian cinema moves east for a celebration of films, videos, art and music from the two countries that truly love noodles.

November 27–December 1



MONTERREY, MEXICO

Musicians, artists and an army of top chefs from around the globe arrive for the Universal Forum of Cultures, a celebration of ethnic diversity, music, art and great eats.

Through December 8

MELBOURNE

The inaugural Human Rights Arts and Film Festival kicks off with multi-cultural movies, performances, workshops and discussions with artists from all around the world.

Through December 15

NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND

Sing out against the evil tripods and the ever-spreading red weed at the return of *War of the Worlds: The Musical*.

December 15

LEEDS, ENGLAND

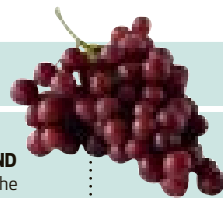
One of the world's best-known amateur choruses, the Leeds Festival Chorus hits its annual high point with a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, in concert with the Northern Sinfonia.

December 8

NIAGARA, CANADA

Sample the many selections from North America's best producers of dessert wine at the Niagara Ice Wine Festival.

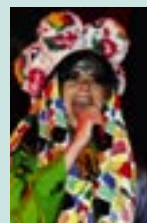
January 18–27



AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Rage Against the Machine, Björk, Arcade Fire, Billy Bragg and Dizzee Rascal kick off this year's Big Day Out before the concert does five more shows in Australia.

January 18



AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Get ready for heavy bass beats, "hoover" sounds and extremely distorted lyrics at Thunderdome XV, a celebration of gabber and techno music.

December 15

SINGAPORE

A.k.a. "Swingapore," the coolest city in Asia gets extra funky at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, a showcase of theater and art focusing on the intertwined history of art and history.

January 16–27

PARK CITY, USA

The most famous film festival in the Rocky Mountains brings in tons of Hollywood heavy hitters for the 30th edition of Robert Redford's Sundance.

January 17–27

TAMWORTH, AUSTRALIA

Join Adam Brand and some 800 other performers, many of whom will take a turn busking on pedestrian-friendly Peel Street at the Tamworth Country Music Festival.

January 18–27



LONDON

A massive party and open house celebrates the Inner and Middle Temple's 400-year-old history of legal education and the global promotion of common law: music, theater, opera, drama and more.

January 19–20



BELGRADE

CITY GUIDE One of the most streetwise cities in southeast Europe, Belgrade combines urban club life with Balkan brass bands and upscale fine dining with ancient taverns. Evan Rail takes us through the Serbian capital's high points.



FRESH GRIND Take a break at the very cool **Bread & Co.** cafe, located just around the corner from bustling Trg Republike. They serve excellent coffee, fresh juices and a killer cherry turnover as well as a variety of other delectables.

Dečanska 5.
Tel: +381 11 3226 185

FISH FIX The old neighborhood of Zemun is a great place for a night out, with several restaurants lining the banks of the Danube. The favorite is **Saran**, a rustic tavern specializing in freshwater-fish dishes, like the amazing roast perch in tomato-herb sauce.

Kej Oslobođenja 53.
Tel: +381 11 618 235

PIE IN THE SKY No one does Italian quite like **Donna Klara**, a new pizzeria. Cozy tables and elegant spotlighting set the scene for excellent wood-fired pies and hearty pasta plates.

Kralja Petra 70.
Tel: +381 11 2621 238

IT'S CALLED ? When a priest took umbrage to a restaurant sharing his church's name, the restaurant name was changed to the ? symbol. Now, more than 100 years later, ? is one of the most popular traditional eateries in Belgrade, with excellent *cevapcici* (small grilled sausages) and *pljeskavica* (a Balkan-style burger).

Kralja Petra 6.
Tel: +381 11 635 421

OH SO FINE But it's not all sausages and grilled meats down south: **Langouste** largely redefined fine dining in Belgrade with its contemporary Mediterranean menu and regal wine list. The atmosphere, blessed by expansive views over the water, makes it a favorite.

Kosančićev venac 29.
Tel: +381 11 3283 680

SUBTERRANEAN HOMESICK Spelling aside, **Anderground** is a grade-A dance club by any standard, with a three-level outdoor seating area and several sleek rooms built into a cave below the Kalemegdan fortress.

Pariska 1a.
Tel: +381 11 625 681



PINT YOURSELF UP The oldest hotel in Belgrade, 1856's **Hotel Kasina**, recently revealed a microbrewery that serves a fantastic Pilsner. With room for 200 and a central location, **Beer House** is an ideal meeting spot, though with beer this good, it's unlikely you'll ever leave.

Terazije 25.
Tel: +381 11 3235 575

UPSCALE APARTMENTS The finest quarters in Old Town are at **Aleksandar Palas Hotel**, a sleek five-star of just nine suites with a level of service seldom seen in local lodgings.

Kralja Petra 13-15.
Tel: +381 11 3305 300

CHARACTER TO SPARE No hotel in Belgrade is better known than **Hotel Moskva**, a charmer from 1906 with 124 rooms and six suites. The slightly run-down decor is surprisingly *au courant*, and the central location can't be beat.

Balkanska 1.
Tel: +381 11 2686 255



SHOCKINGLY SCIENTIFIC The **Tesla Museum** has a hands-on approach at its demonstrations. When the giant Tesla coil fires up, you'll watch a fluorescent bulb in your hands start to glow, illuminated by the current traveling through your body.

Krunska 51.
Tel: +381 11 2433 886

GET GREEN The **Kalemegdan fortress** has stood watch over the city since Roman times. Today, it's a sprawling park with outstanding views in all directions. On a Sunday afternoon, a seat on a park bench will put you at the very heart of Belgrade's social life.

ROOM WITH A VIEW The **Temple of Saint Sava**, the largest Orthodox church in the world, is finally close to completion, creating a skyline-defining sight. Gawk at the amazing amount of space, capped by an awesome, 4,000-ton central dome standing some 70 meters tall.

Krušedolska 2a. No telephone.