

REASONS  
TO

FEBRUARY 2019

# TRAVEL NOW

T+L'S MONTHLY SELECTION OF TRIP-WORTHY PLACES, EXPERIENCES, AND EVENTS.



The library at the St. Regis Rome, which recently completed a \$45 million renovation.

## 1 Head-turning hotels are making the Eternal City feel brand-new.

Rome has long been dominated by a few storied grande dames. But recently, the landscape has shifted, favoring stylish livability over pomp and circumstance. Unconventional spaces—a girls' boarding school, a 17th-century papal palazzo—have been remade into design-centric stays, and today's travelers can find contemporary comforts and a historic feel in a single package.

The newest kid on the block is the **First Roma Dolce Hotel** ([thefirsthotel.com](http://thefirsthotel.com); doubles from \$399) on Via del →

Corso, which takes *la dolce vita* seriously: guests can sate their sweet teeth with pastries from the second-floor *pasticceria*. The 23 plush rooms and suites have a lived-in feel, with modish chaises, well-stocked bookshelves, and pops of orange and red amid the black-and-white palette. Just around the corner, the **Elizabeth Unique Hotel** ([ehrome.com](http://ehrome.com); doubles from \$313) feels like a gallery that happens to have 33 bedrooms. The nearby Galleria Russo curated the property's collection of contemporary art, all of which is for sale. The clean, modern design features nods to a bygone era, like wallpaper printed with reproductions of antique landscape paintings.

Head past the Ara Pacis and down a cobblestoned street to land at the 18-room **Hotel Vilòn** ([slh.com](http://slh.com); doubles from \$500), which lies behind a discreet entrance on the grounds of the 16th-century Palazzo Borghese. Evocative images by Florentine photographer Massimo Listri grace the lobby lounge. Set designer Paolo Bonfini gave the rooms and suites a cinematic flair, with dramatic lighting and massive botanical prints. Each room has a distinct look—gray with

a pop of burgundy here, slate blue and earthy neutrals with a gold side table there.

When a hotel suite won't cut it, the **Holy Deer San Lorenzo City Lodge** ([sanlorenzolodges.com](http://sanlorenzolodges.com); from \$11,340) is the ultimate single-family hideaway. Former Escada executives Giorgia and Stefano Barbini spared no expense in restoring the two-bedroom apartment of Pope Innocent X in Borromini's 17th-century Palazzo Pamphili. They handpicked every extravagant detail, from an antique table inlaid with semiprecious stones in the kitchen to the cashmere-wrapped armoires inspired by Brioni suits in the dressing room.

Rome's grande dames are keeping pace with the changing scene. The **St. Regis Rome** ([marriott.com](http://marriott.com); doubles from \$740), opened by César Ritz in



From top: A suite at the Elizabeth Unique Hotel; Holy Deer San Lorenzo City Lodge; Adelaide, the restaurant at the Hotel Vilòn.



1894, is fresh off a \$45 million renovation. Designer Pierre-Yves Rochon lightened up the space with a silver-and-blue color scheme and large-scale sculptures by contemporary artists, but the traditional grandeur remains: the 138 rooms and 23 suites still have their crystal chandeliers and crown moldings, and the original ceiling frescoes have been restored. The most inviting space is the sapphire-blue library, where you can cozy up by the fireplace and savor tea or something stronger amid leather-bound books.

Still to come are two spots from the Rocco Forte hotel group: the **Hotel de la Ville** ([roccofortehotels.com](http://roccofortehotels.com); doubles from \$750), a 104-key property slated to open in May near the Spanish Steps, and the five-suite **Rocco Forte Place**, a private palazzo nearby debuting in September. If you're not a guest, it's worth stopping by the hotel for a drink—the rooftop bar promises postcard views of the city. — Laura Itzkowitz



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF DESIGN HOTELS; GIOVANNI DE SANDRE/COURTESY OF SAN LORENZO LODGES; COURTESY OF HOTEL VILÒN

NO. **2**

**Manhattan restaurants showcase the diversity of modern Korean cooking.**

Korean-American and expat chefs are living up New York dining with spots that put a deeply personal spin on the culinary trends of the moment.



**ATOMIX**

On the heels of their first restaurant, **Atoboy** (*atoboynyc.com*; *prix fixe* \$42), J. P. and Ellia Park opened this more intimate, and much more experimental, space in NoMad last year. In the subterranean dining room, the 10-course tasting menu is a reverent exploration of Korean culture and ingredients, with dishes such as sea bream with mustard-leaf kimchi and *uni*. Upstairs is a minimalist bar with snacks and Korean-ish

cocktails, like the Three Kingdoms, with vermouth, soju, and banana liqueur. *atomixnyc.com*; *tasting menu* \$175.

**NOTED TRIBECA**

The casual, all-day restaurant craze goes Korean at this Hudson Street spot, whose menu transitions from coffee and light lunch to a cocktail-driven dinner spread. Executive chef Steve Song applies his Japanese training to Korean flavors, turning out plates like



From top: Sea bream with mustard-leaf kimchi and *uni* at Atomix, in NoMad; the bar at Cote, an upscale Korean-style steak house in the Flatiron District.

purple sweet potato toast; bite-size *jumeokbap*, or rice balls; and a family-style *ssam*. *notedtribeca.com*; *entrées* \$15–\$22.

**COTE**

This carnivore heaven has been among the sexiest tables in the Flatiron District since it opened in 2017, thanks to lavish tableaux with piles of meat, colorful pickles, and lush trays of lettuce and *shiso*. In a way, it's a quintessential New York steak house—wine flows freely, and you can get caviar with your rib eye—but one with grill tables and waitstaff who ensure a perfect medium rare on the brazier. Snag a seat at basement bar Undercote for *Alice in Wonderland*-style drinks in a jungly space. *coteny.com*; *entrées* \$14–\$85, *tasting menus* from \$52.

**JEJU NOODLE BAR**

On a corner in the West Village, Jeju is one of the hottest (and most affordable) additions to New York's 2019 Michelin list. The specialty is *ramyun*, or Korean ramen, with toppings such as pork belly, plankton oil, and truffle duxelles. Order the *prix fixe* to slurp your noodles with soy-butter-roasted corn and tuna seaweed wraps. Wash

it all down with *makgeolli*, an unfiltered rice beer that's hard to find stateside. *jejunoodlebar.com*; *entrées* \$16–\$35, *prix fixe* \$42.

**RECEPTION BAR**

Soju is the backbone of this bar, which sits at the convergence of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Proprietor Katie Rue explores Korean-American identity through her cocktails, born from home infusions she first tested on willing friends. In addition to mixed drinks like the Matcha Meadow (matcha soju, jasmine, Korean-pear shrub), Rue offers five nuanced booze-free options. *receptionbar.nyc*.

**HWABAN**

A word that translates, roughly, to "beautiful as a flower" is a fitting sobriquet for this Flatiron fine-dining restaurant. It's a pleasingly moody space, with light fixtures reminiscent of petals and water droplets. The recipes are traditional, and you can easily build yourself a dinner of bibimbap and fried rice cakes. But the delicate, often surprising treatment is a testament to the possibilities of contemporary Korean cuisine. *hwaban.com*; *tasting menus* from \$55. —*Hannah Walhout*



NO. **3** **Private camps take you to faraway corners of Chile.**

Patagonia's vast wilderness spans 260,000 square miles—yet in high season, places like Tierra del Fuego can feel less than remote. Enter Upscape's Outpost pop-up camps (*upscapetravel.com*; *four nights* from \$3,950 per person), launching on the Jeinemeni River this month. The two-room tents are modest but comfortable, and Upscape will handle meals and guided outings. You'll spend your days in luxurious seclusion, fishing mountain streams, hiking rocky mountainsides, and enjoying outdoor feasts with local gauchos. —*Jen Salerno*

## NO. 4

## Morocco's free-spirited northern port is shining anew.

In a French Deco building in Tangier, not far from where William S. Burroughs wrote much of *Naked Lunch*, textile artist Nina Mohammad-Galbert led me through the stacks of vintage Beni Ourain and *boucherouite* rugs that line her studio. Mohammad-Galbert runs **Artisan Project** ([artisanprojectinc.com](http://artisanprojectinc.com)), a textile brand and sourcing company for Moroccan wares. She recently relocated to Tangier after seven years in Fez. “This city constantly draws in new perspectives,” she said. “The vibe here invites creativity.”

Tangier’s notoriety peaked in the years following World War II, when it was a demilitarized zone that seduced spies, artists, and the jet set.



Tangier's historic medina.



Galerie Conil, a contemporary art venue in Tangier.

But by the 1980s, the flow of foreign visitors and the money they brought with them had dried up. Now, after decades of neglect, the city is showing signs of renewal. Morocco’s King

Mohammed VI mandated a cleanup of the historic medina, commissioned a tree-lined waterfront promenade, and installed a modern port fit for cruise ships and yachts. An ambitious

high-speed railway to Casablanca started running in December, slashing travel time between the cities from five hours to two. Tangier at last seems poised for another heyday.

On my visit, I strolled the medina and admired the Art Deco buildings along the boulevards of Ville Nouvelle. Everywhere, I found Tangier doing what it does best: giving newcomers and natives room to create. A prime example is **Atelier Kissaria** ([atelier-kissaria.com](http://atelier-kissaria.com)), a workshop and gallery where printmakers collaborate with traditional weavers, ceramists, and embroiderers, applying a modern design sensibility to classic Moroccan crafts. “Tangier is moving forward fast,” artistic director Hicham Bouzid told me. “We want to show that the slow, old-fashioned approach is still relevant.”

Getting lost in the casbah’s bougainvillea-strewn lanes led me →

to more retail discoveries, including **Au Fil de Tanger** (26 Rue Ben Abbou; 212-61067-7213), where artisans embroider handmade linen caftans. At **KMcouleurs** (19 Rue Ben Ajiba; 212-5399-39505), Senegalese designer Karim Legros sells kaleidoscopic African wax-print djellabas, babouches, and accessories. A few alleys over, a new addition, **Galerie Conil** ([fb.com/galerieconil](http://fb.com/galerieconil)), deals in avant-garde artwork that reflects on the country's migrant crisis.

A short walk south brought me to **Mimi Calpe** ([mimicalpe.com](http://mimicalpe.com); doubles from \$107), a 19th-century French-style villa that was transformed into a hotel two years ago. Its high walls conceal a verdant garden and swimming pool; inside, the six sun-soaked rooms have verandas that overlook the Strait of Gibraltar. It's an understated alternative to ornate properties like **Hotel Nord-Pinus Tanger** ([nord-pinus-tanger.com](http://nord-pinus-tanger.com); doubles from \$215), which draws the modern beau monde with its whitewashed terraces, refined Maghrebi interiors, and potent cocktails. You can find traces of an earlier Tangier at **Aux 3 Portes**

([aux3portes.com](http://aux3portes.com); doubles from \$160), the home turned hotel of a French interior designer. With its kidney-shaped pool and hodgepodge of textiles and curios, the nine-room hideaway feels like a throwback to the boho salons of the 1940s.

Tangier's old-school haunts still draw a crowd. Tourists and Tanjawi alike flock to the 98-year-old **Gran Café de Paris** (1 Place de France; 212-5399-38444) and the nearby **Librairie des Colonnes** ([librairie-des-colonnes.org](http://librairie-des-colonnes.org)), a onetime favorite of literary giants like Jean Genet and Truman Capote. Near Bab Haha, the casbah's northern gate, I wedged myself into **Les Fils du Détroit** ([fb.com/lesfilsdudetroittanger](http://fb.com/lesfilsdudetroittanger)), a tiny music venue where I sipped mint tea as the septuagenarian house band belted traditional Andalusian ballads, a routine its members have kept up for 30 years.

At dusk one evening, I followed the lead of the locals, many of whom make a nightly ritual of walking toward the sultan's old palace to watch the sun set before strolling to the medina for a bite. At Syrian diner **Abou Tayssir** (11 Rue d'Italie; 212-645-811-609; entrées \$6–\$11), soft, smoky, tandoor-fired pitas were a perfect foil to crispy falafel and tangy hummus. Well-heeled Tanjawi slunk into the piano bar at **El Morocco Club** ([elmoroccoclub.ma](http://elmoroccoclub.ma); entrées \$13–\$20) for aperitifs followed by saffron couscous and *chermoula*-stuffed sardines; the menu was developed in part by chef Meryem Cherkaoui, the matron of Moroccan ancestral gastronomy. The most talked-about arrival is **Macondo Tanger** ([fb.com/macondotanger](http://fb.com/macondotanger); entrées \$6–\$13), a Mediterranean spot with house-made pastas and 360-degree views.

"Tanjawi are less about the bottom line and more about *joie de vivre*," Mohammad-Galbert told me. It's true. Tangier is still a place that indulges romantics and rebels, where innovation and tradition are embraced in equal measure. The high-speed train may be pushing the city into the future, but Tangier's spell is timeless. — *Rachna Sachasinh*



## NO. 5 This boundary-pushing megaship has finally set sail.

Any good cruise needs crowd-pleasing restaurants, a pool or two, and daily essentials—gym, casino, a place to get a mai tai at 11 a.m. The \$1 billion, 2,900-passenger **Celebrity Edge** ([celebritycruises.com](http://celebritycruises.com); seven-night sailings from \$1,499 per person) has all that, but everything else has been taken to the next level, starting with the rooms: mine featured the new Infinite Veranda, a floor-to-ceiling window that retracts to turn indoor seating into an open-air balcony. Black Skull Creative, whose staffers have conceived shows for Kesha and Dua Lipa, created immersive nightlife, theater, and dining experiences like Eden, a three-story space you enter through a trippy mirrored room. Inside, performers in elaborate attire straight out of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* enact a wordless story to accompany an equally fanciful meal. The spa, too, is over-the-top. In addition to a steam room, hammam, and infrared sauna, there's a salt cave, rainfall therapy, and a crystal room, plus a group of hanging chairs facing the sea, just made for zoning out. — *Lila Battis*



El Morocco Club, a restaurant and bar in Tangier.