

DESTINATIONS OF A LIFETIME



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225 OF THE WORLD'S MOST AMAZING PLACES

Foreword by Dan Westergren, Director of Photography,
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VATICAN CITY

SISTINE CHAPEL

Michelangelo's enduring masterpiece in the heart of the Vatican



Michelangelo's Creation of Adam (above), centerpiece of the Sistine Chapel ceiling. His vision of the Last Judgment covers the back wall (opposite).

Visitors walk into the Sistine Chapel expecting to be wowed. Indeed, you are entering the legendary holy space of popes through the ages, adorned with a riot of priceless frescoes covering the ceiling as well as the walls. But it's hard to be prepared for the emotion that comes rolling in as you crane your neck, taking in the ceiling's vibrant colors, the multitude of intricate figures depicting age-old stories of the Bible, the complex architectural framework created through trompe l'oeil techniques. This is, after all, the greatest artwork of the High Renaissance, if not of all times, right above your head.

The irony is that its creator, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), had no desire to paint the Sistine Chapel. He felt it was beneath him, preferring to pursue his passion for sculpture. When the formidable Pope Julius II ordered that he paint the ceiling of the small chapel in 1508, Michelangelo had to be dragged back to town by papal soldiers.

And so the artist returned. His revenge: He was going to do it his way. And this decidedly was not to follow the pope's limpid vision of the Twelve Apostles as simplistic single figures and leave it at that. Michelangelo's way was to dramatize the rise and fall and subsequent

TRAVELER'S NOTEBOOK

★WHEN TO GO

The Sistine Chapel, part of the Vatican Museums, is open Mon.–Sat. and the last Sunday of each month.

★PLANNING

To visit the Sistine Chapel, you must purchase an admission ticket to the Vatican Museums. Because lines can be long, consider purchasing tickets online (available up to 60 days before your visit). Tickets include a guided tour.

★WEBSITES

mv.vatican.va

salvation of humankind through the stories of Genesis (the most iconic of which is, of course, the creation of Adam), throwing in depictions of the ancestors of Christ, prophets, and pagan sibyls. His frescoes, painted in a bright rainbow of colors, took more than four years, demonstrating acute skill in foreshortening, perspective, and shading, which, in effect, give an appearance more like sculpture than painting.

Completing the ceiling in 1512, Michelangelo was summoned some three decades later by another pope, Paul III, to depict the Last Judgment on the end wall behind the altar. In it, with a golden-haired Apollo-like Christ in the center, angels push the damned into the dark crevices of hell on one side, the saved toward heaven's glimmering light on the other. It's said that the pope was so moved when he saw this archetype of Mannerism that he fell to his knees.

Others, alas, weren't so impressed. With the Counter-Reformation under way throughout Europe and nudity condemned in religious art, the tortured jumble of naked bodies was declared scandalous. Soon after Michelangelo died, Mannerist artist Daniele da Volterra, "the breeches maker," painted over the objectionable elements with drapery—though no matter what, the power and fury of Michelangelo's paintbrush will never be erased.

"Under the dome of the Sistine Chapel, we are lost, bewildered by the beauty, power and majesty of Michelangelo's genius. Like children, we are enchanted, reading tales of harmony and passion, of a book that is part of us. Thanks, Michelangelo. Thanks, Rome."

— Lucia Leonelli, lecturer

VISIT LIKE A LOCAL

From early on, Michelangelo chose sculpting over painting. His "Pietà" in St. Peter's and "Moses" in San Pietro in Vincoli are exemplary examples of his otherworldly skill. Although crowds in Rome flock to admire those works, few know that hidden inside the blank-fronted Santa Maria sopra Minerva, near the Pantheon, is Michelangelo's powerful statue "Christ the Redeemer," which was sculpted in 1521. Its "knees alone were worthy of more than the whole Rome," according to contemporary artist Sebastiano del Piombo.



UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Michelangelo is the Sistine Chapel's undisputed star, but the chapel's side walls radiate with the works of other gifted Renaissance artists. Ghirlandaio—who apprenticed the young Michelangelo—painted "Vocation of the Apostles." Botticelli, famed artist of "Primavera" and "Birth of Venus," painted three frescoes, including the action-packed "Temptation of Christ." Signorelli, Rosselli, and Perugino all contributed dazzling frescoes that, anywhere else, would be considered the hands-down talk-of-the-town chefs d'oeuvre.



ENGRAVER: Please darken the image a little under the caption for better readability.

The vibrant imagery of Michelangelo's magnificent Sistine Chapel ceiling in the heart of the Vatican brings biblical stories to life.

FRANCE

MARSEILLE

France's new capital of culture



The beacon of Bonne Mère shines above Marseille (above). Along the Vieux-Port, the striped Cathédrale de la Major is doubled by the glass walls of the MuCEM (opposite).

High on a hill overlooking Marseille, Bonne Mère—a neo-Byzantine church officially called Notre-Dame de la Garde—has stood tall for eight centuries (in one form or another), protecting the Marseillais below. And what a proud “Good Mother” she must be. The city began as a seafaring star of the Greek Empire around 600 B.C. and blossomed as a trading and intellectual center during the Roman Empire. After centuries of plague and nefarious, port-related activities, France’s second city is reclaiming its status as a world-class destination.

The best place to take it all in is along the Vieux-Port, where fishing boats putter among gliding yachts. From here you can admire the stunning new architecture rising from its dramatically renovated waterfront. Dominating the far end, the stone ramparts of 17th-century Fort St.-Jean have been interwoven with the glass and steel of the MuCEM, a bold symbol heralding the city’s status as a flourishing pan-Mediterranean hub.

There’s more. The once sketchy Panier neighborhood is now a trendy quarter of cafés and art galleries. Decrepit buildings have become glitzy shopping arcades. Sculpture exhibitions are a regular occurrence. Sandy beaches await nearby.

This is a city whose time has come—and come again. Just ask Bonne Mère.

VISIT LIKE A LOCAL

A seashell’s toss from Marseille’s busy core awaits the lavender-scented landscape of Provence—easily accessible via the extensive SNCF rail network. The charming town of Aix-en-Provence, just 30 minutes north, is a popular destination, with its elegant Cours Mirabeau (considered by some the most beautiful street in all of France) and a lane-laced old town to get lost in. The best time to go is Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday morning, when an extensive flower and produce market unfurls on Place de l’Hôtel de Ville.

TRAVELER’S NOTEBOOK

*WHEN TO GO

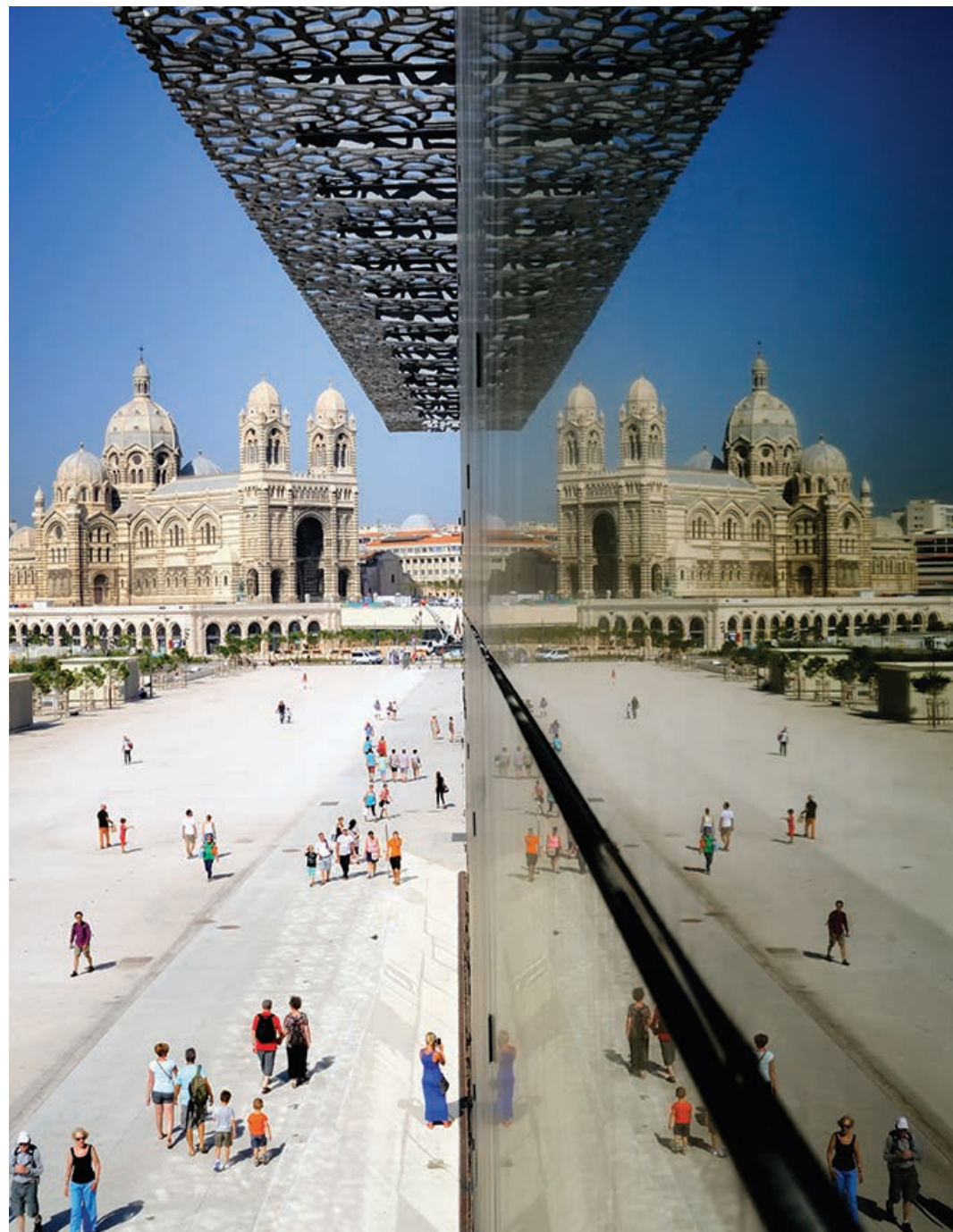
June–Aug. for the beaches, April–May and Sept.–Oct. for comfortable temperatures and lighter tourist traffic, and Dec. for Christmas decorations and the Santons Fair.

*PLANNING

Marseille lies only about three hours away from Paris, thanks to the TGV; several trains depart daily (raileurope.com). Once in town, the Régie des Transports de Marseille public transportation network (rtm.fr) includes metro, bus, and tramway lines. Consider a City-Pass for one, two, or three days’ travel, museum admissions, and tours.

*WEBSITES

marseille-tourisme.com/en, visitprovence.com/en, notredamedelagarde.com



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SARAJEVO

The Balkans' urban phoenix



In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo's old marketplace (above) pulses with life. The rebuilt City Hall (opposite) reopened in 2014 on May 9, officially the Day of Victory over fascism.

At first blush, Sarajevo appears to remain entrenched in the devastation of war, though decades have passed since the last Serbian bomb fell and this resolute town reigned as the "world's most dangerous city." War-year reminders are everywhere, but mostly in its neoclassical buildings, once the darlings of a world-class destination, today still blighted with shrapnel pockmarks, graffiti, and intrusive weeds.

But stroll into the old city's pedestrian Stari Grad, or Old Town, with parts dating back to its Ottoman heyday, and you'll feel the buzz of something new and exciting. Trolleys clickety-clack past café-going coffee drinkers and hookah smokers. Bustling stalls purvey copper pots and Bosnian carpets. Visitors are everywhere—and not just postwar gawkers. And at midday, in this city where three religions coexist side by side, muezzins cry from minarets and rabbis call *minchah* as the ringing bells of neighboring churches echo through the surrounding Dinaric Alps.

There's something truly mesmerizing about Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital. This majestic city traces its roots back to the 15th century, when the Ottoman Empire united a cluster of villages and established a closed market, public bath, hostel, and castle around a central mosque, called the Tsar's Mosque in honor of the sultan Mehmed II. By the end of

VISIT LIKE A LOCAL

Seek out a *kafić* (café) in Sarajevo's Baščaršija, the old Ottoman bazaar, where traditional Bosnian coffee, or *kafa*, is cooked in a copper pot called a *džezva* (pronounced jez-vah) and served with Turkish delight. Take your time to enjoy, but be sure to ask your waiter how to properly spoon the froth and when to dip the sugar cube. Take home a bit of the coffee experience with you: You'll find traditionally handmade coffee sets throughout Baščaršija.

TRAVELER'S NOTEBOOK

*WHEN TO GO

Spring, summer, and fall (April–Oct.) are generally clear and comfortable. The lime trees blossom in June, a splendid sight. Downhill skiing is available in winter at Jahorina Olympic Ski Resort, which hosted the 1984 Winter Olympic events.

*PLANNING

Public transportation (tram, trolleybus, and bus), taxis, and walking are the most convenient ways to navigate the city. Bus and train routes connect Sarajevo to other destinations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During ski season, buses link Sarajevo to Mount Jahorina.

*WEBSITES

sarajevo-tourism.com





A relaxed café scene (opposite) reflects Sarajevo's postwar rejuvenation. The mountains that surround the city (above) lure hikers to their trails.

the 16th century, Sarajevo had bloomed into the most important Balkan Ottoman city after Istanbul, with more than a hundred mosques and a famous marketplace.

Since then, history has dragged it through three devastating wars—including, as every student knows, its starring role as ground zero for World War I, when Austro-Hungarian archduke Franz Ferdinand's 1914 assassination here triggered a whole chain of pent-up events.

After a brief global spotlight as the host of the 1984 Winter Olympics, disaster struck again in 1992 with the arrival of the Bosnian wars. For the next four years, Sarajevo's population of just over 500,000 withstood shelling, tank fire, and sniper attacks by 18,000 Serbian soldiers staked out in the surrounding hills. More than 11,000 people lost their lives, and large swaths of the city were destroyed. Yet the Sarajevans—Christians, Muslims, and Jews united in a single cause—refused to be defeated.

There's a famous photograph of musician Vedran Smajlović, playing his cello in tie and tails amid the City Hall's rubble in 1992, just days after the beautiful, neo-Moorish building was destroyed. His goal: keep making music even in the midst of a four-year siege. No doubt, it's fortitude like this that underlies Sarajevo's ever generating renewal.

"In Sarajevo I enjoy having coffee, hearing distant sounds coming from the city center, and being surrounded with mountains with snowy peaks—which are as cliché as it gets. But cliché sometimes means simple happiness."

— Amra Baksic Camo, film producer

VISIT LIKE A LOCAL

Sarajevo snuggles in the rugged embrace of the Dinaric Alps, beckoning hikers into one of Europe's last remaining virgin forests. Head into its untrammelled beauty along the Via Dinarica (via-dinarica.org), a trail that cuts through seven countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia). *But beware:* Live land mines remain from the 1990s war. Be sure to hire an in-the-know guide; Green Visions (greenvisions.ba) organizes trips for every level of traveler.

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