

# WHERE TO GO IN 2020



Where will 2020 take you? Over the following pages, you'll find 28 destinations to kick-start your travel dreaming and scheming. We've surfaced emerging places. We've highlighted unexpected spots. And we've blown out a handful of classic destinations—the places we return to again and again, such as Italy and Japan—with alternatives to the big cities and the most crowded seasons. Turn the page to begin your 2020 journey, and find more tips and news at [afar.com/wtg2020](https://www.afar.com/wtg2020).

## WHERE TO GO IN 2020

### ● GREENLAND

Unburdened by mass tourism, this arctic island is an outdoor enthusiast's dream destination.

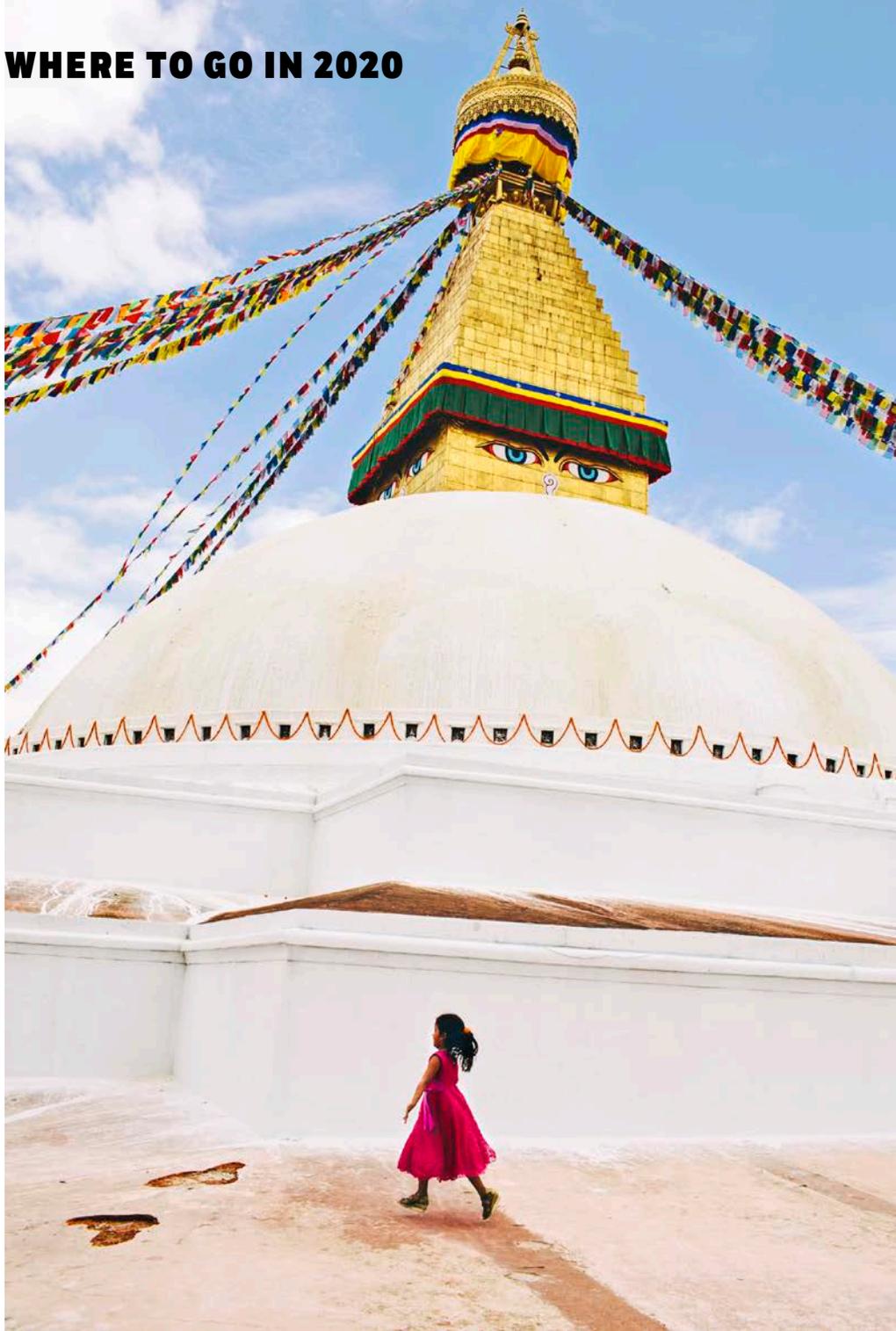
**When to go:** From June until September, summer temperatures hover at an agreeable 50 degrees, and long days mean more time to soak in the scenery. Travelers can join locals as they celebrate Greenland's National Day on June 21 with traditional music, folk dancing, and patriotic ceremonies in town squares.

**Why go:** As Iceland struggles with its popularity, Greenland has become an alluring option for travelers who want polar adventures without the crowds. Travelers can explore the planet's largest national park and test their mettle with a trek on the 100-mile Arctic Circle Trail. Clocking in at just over 836,000 square miles, Greenland is the world's biggest island—nearly 80 percent of which is covered in ice. These attributes mean that the country feels the effects of climate change more starkly, and two new trips in 2020 from the

Norwegian company 50 Degrees North are putting the issue front and center. Led by Greenlander Lykke Geisler Yakaboylu, the five- to six-day tours include these highlights: Travelers cruise to the 656-foot tall Eqi Glacier by boat, go whale-watching in Disko Bay, and visit such UNESCO World Heritage sites as the Ilulissat Icefjord. Yakaboylu puts the sites in context for travelers by discussing the effect of climate change on the country's melting ice sheet. —NORA WALSH



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**NEED TO KNOW**  
In 2020, two new airports will open in Nepal in Pokhara and Lumbini.

## ● NEPAL

Nearly five years after a massive earthquake, community-minded tourism is on the rise.

**When to go:** Autumn (September through November) offers mild weather, clear mountain views, and festivals such as Tihar, the Nepali festival of lights (November 15–17).

**Why go:** The five-year anniversary of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that devastated parts of the country in April 2015 is a good time to invest in ongoing reconstruction efforts and local livelihoods. Visitors can start in the Kathmandu Valley, with its seven UNESCO World Heritage zones, including Patan Durbar Square, a complex of ornate temples, a former palace, and the Patan Museum, which have all been painstakingly restored. Thanks to the women-run Community Homestay Network, travelers can now stay with local families in 19 rural areas across Nepal, from the beautifully preserved town of Panauti to the indigenous Tharu village of Barauli. To trek for a good cause, consider Sasane Sisterhood Trekking and Travel, a new outfitter from the nonprofit Sasane, which is run by survivors of sex-trafficking and human-trafficking. G Adventures' new Himalaya Highlights tour offers a cultural immersion that supports local guides, craftspeople, and environmentalists, and includes a talk with one of the Sasane survivors. —SERENA RENNER

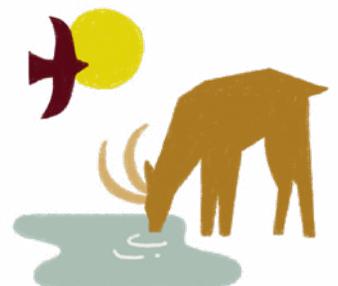
## ● MOZAMBIQUE

Experience the revival of Gorongosa National Park via the stylish new lodges slated to open this year.

**When to go:** During the dry season from June through September, temperatures rarely rise past the mid-80s, and it's the prime time to view game: Animals cluster around the few watering holes that remain.

**Why go:** More than 15 years after the end of a brutal civil war that stripped Gorongosa National Park of most of its large mammals, Mozambique's rehabilitation efforts got a \$40 million boost from American philanthropist Greg Carr. In 2008, his foundation partnered with the Mozambique government on a long-term restoration project to reintroduce wildlife and lift local communities through ecotourism. We're

starting to see the results. Come July, travelers can check into one of six stylish tented suites on the banks of the Mussicadzi River at Muzimu Tented Camp. The highly anticipated Royal Gorongosa from hotelier Liz Biden will have eight well-appointed tents, each featuring a plunge pool. Both properties will offer game drives, boating safaris, and bushwalks to see the park's flourishing lions, hippos, and elephants. —N.W.



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### ● DUBAI

Dive into a heady mix of creativity and innovation at the first World Expo to be hosted in the Middle East.

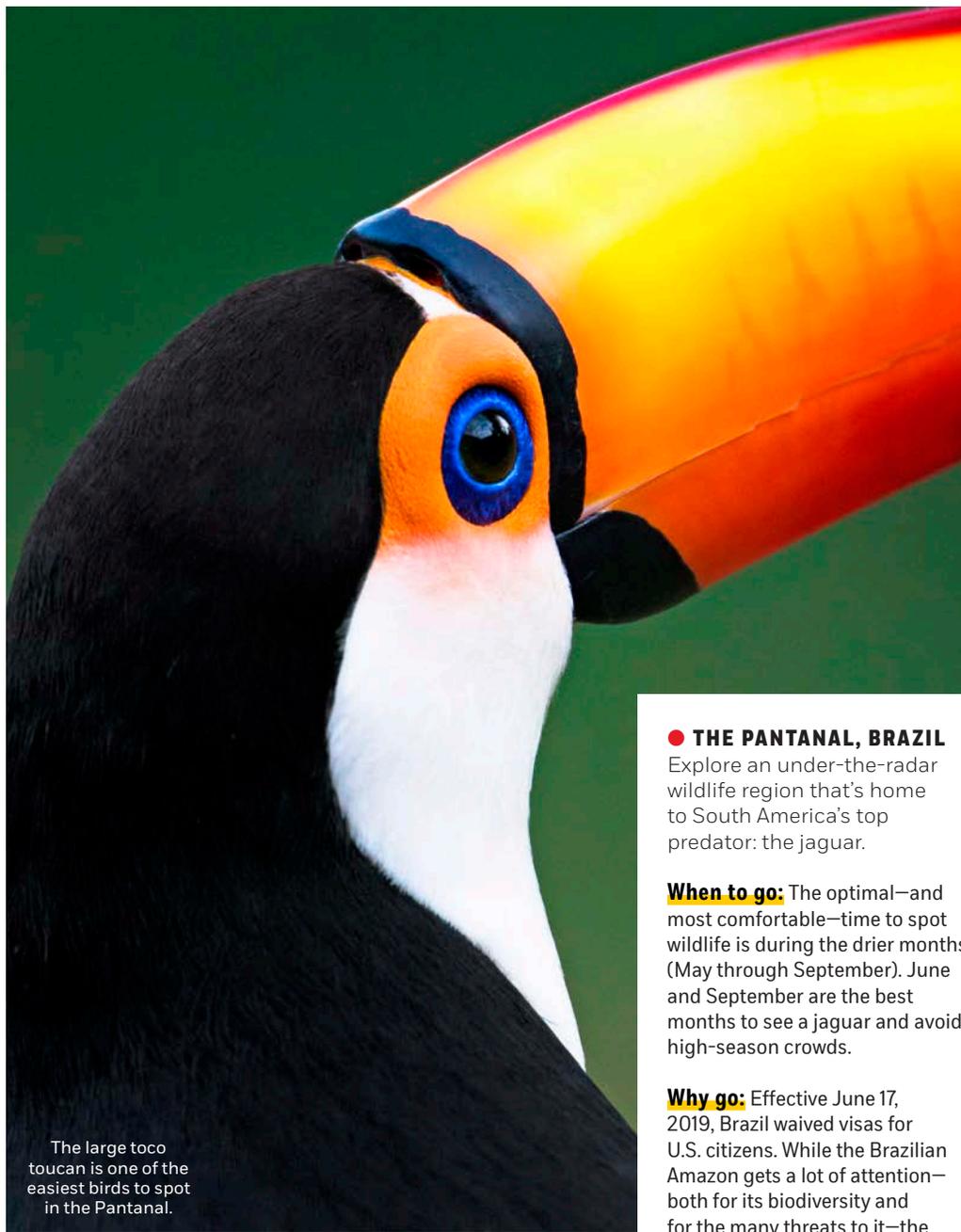
**When to go:** Travelers can time a visit with the launch of Expo 2020 Dubai on October 20, or with Diwali, the over-the-top, five-day festival of lights that begins on November 14.

**Why go:** This year, Dubai will host the Expo, a six-month exhibition that brings together 192 nations to showcase human ingenuity as it's applied to three themes: opportunity, mobility, and sustainability.

At the 1,080-acre Expo site in the Dubai South district, travelers will be able to engage with the themes through global fare (from street food to haute cuisine), VR and AI experiences, 60 live performances per day (including music, comedy, and dance), large-scale art installations, and the world's largest 360-degree projection dome. The innovation won't stop there. Dubai's Museum of the Future, slated to open in 2020, will house

**NEED TO KNOW**  
Emirates and Etihad Airways are expected to add flights from major cities around the world during the Expo.

groundbreaking inventions and function as an interdisciplinary incubator. At least seven hotels are opening (or reopening) in 2020, including the Royal Atlantis Resort & Residences and ME by Meliá Dubai, designed by the late Iraqi British architect Zaha Hadid. —N.W.



The large toucan is one of the easiest birds to spot in the Pantanal.

### ● THE PANTANAL, BRAZIL

Explore an under-the-radar wildlife region that's home to South America's top predator: the jaguar.

**When to go:** The optimal—and most comfortable—time to spot wildlife is during the drier months (May through September). June and September are the best months to see a jaguar and avoid high-season crowds.

**Why go:** Effective June 17, 2019, Brazil waived visas for U.S. citizens. While the Brazilian Amazon gets a lot of attention—both for its biodiversity and for the many threats to it—the

Pantanal region, 1,500 miles south, is the world's largest freshwater wetland and has the highest density of wildlife on the continent. Spanning more than 68,000 square miles, this UNESCO World Heritage site encompasses floodplains and rivers, grasslands and forests, and lakes and mountains. A staggering number of endemic species live in the region, including jaguars, hyacinth macaws, giant anteaters, marsh deer, capybaras, caimans, and tapirs, to name just a few. The Pantanal's northern section, more famous for jaguar sightings, attracts more people. To escape the crowds, travelers can book a cabin on the recently refurbished 10-suite *Peralta* luxury expedition ship, which offers four-day sailings on the Paraguay River as well as excursions to donate toys, jackets, and other supplies to local schoolchildren. The southern region is more remote and gives travelers a chance to experience traditional *Pantaneiro* (cowboy) culture at former cattle ranches transformed into ecolodges. Guests staying at the Caiman Eco-Lodge, a 131,000-acre working farm and ecological refuge, can observe research activities at the Onçafari Project, Brazil's innovative environmental initiative to protect jaguars. —N.W.

# WHERE TO GO IN 2020



**NEED TO KNOW**  
United Airlines and Qantas recently launched direct flights from SFO to Melbourne.

## ● THE GRAMPIANS, AUSTRALIA

Drink in dramatic views on a hike in Grampians National Park, then drink in the region's top-notch wines.

**When to go:** The spring months, September through November, are great for trekking. September brings the Seriously Shiraz wine festival.

**Why go:** Many hikers set their sights on the Blue Mountains outside Sydney. But the less-trodden Grampians range in Grampians National Park—three hours northwest of Melbourne—offers more dramatic topography, as well as the most Aboriginal rock art of any park in southern Australia. Now, thanks to the multimillion-dollar Grampians Peaks Trail, it's a backpackers' paradise. The first stage, a 22-mile loop, is already complete. Once finished at the end of 2020, the roughly 99-mile trail will span the length of the park. After hiking, travelers can pay homage to Aboriginal Australians at Brambuk, the cultural center in the gateway village of Halls Gap. Brambuk's Aboriginal guides also offer tours of the park's five rock art sites. Also worth a stop: the Grampians' lesser-known wine region, just 30 minutes east. Best's Great Western winery makes sparkling shiraz and cabernet sauvignon from some of the oldest vines in the country. —N.W.

Autumn in Paris means art, culture, and picnics along the Seine.

## ● PARIS

The French capital welcomes a wave of haute hotels and cultural centers.

**When to go:** The mild days between September and October are ideal for checking out new museum exhibits, such as the Botticelli retrospective at the Musée Jacquemart-André (September 2020–January 2021).

**Why go:** “New” and “novel” could define Paris any year, but the terms are especially apropos in 2020. La Samaritaine, the century-old department store that closed in 2005, will shine once more on its perch on the Seine when it reopens as a multipurpose complex. Expect new boutiques, a fine-dining restaurant with Michelin

ambitions, and Cheval Blanc, the 72-room marquee hotel project from luxury group Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy. Equally grand in scale—though a few miles outside the city—is Le Grand Contrôle. The new boutique hotel from the Airelles Collection will occupy a trio of 17th-century buildings on the grounds of the Château de Versailles. But it's Les Halles that will get one of the city's biggest cultural landmarks. The 130-year-old Bourse de Commerce is slated to reopen in June as the Bourse de Commerce–Pinault Collection, a contemporary art museum featuring nearly 5,000 pieces, including work from such greats as Cindy Sherman and Cy Twombly, all sourced from Kering fashion group founder François Pinault's personal collection. —LINDSEY TRAMUTA



# WHERE TO GO IN 2020



## ● SOUTHERN ENGLAND

An extensive new touring route makes it easier than ever to explore the region's villages and towns.

**When to go:** The summer months (June through August) attract the most travelers. They also bring some of southern England's most worthwhile festivals and events, including the Royal Ascot horse races in Berkshire (June 16–20).

**Why go:** In late 2018, the Great West Way, a touring route based on one of the first Great Roads commissioned by the monarchy in the early 20th century, made its debut. The 125-mile route stretches from London to

Bristol, connecting small towns in between. Travelers can drive the Great West Way end to end, hop from town to town via the Great Western Railway, or cruise along the Thames and regional canals by boat. Bike paths and walking trails are ideal for travelers who want to explore the route's natural landscapes over the course of a day, a week, or more. In spring 2019, the bucolic Monkey Island Estate opened just minutes from Bray, a village with three Michelin-starred restaurants. Farther west, in the town of Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage site, new areas of the ancient baths, including a *laconicum* (Roman sauna) will open to the public in 2020, as will a new visitor's center. —L.L.D.

Snowshill is one of the English villages along the Great West Way.

## ● THE FINGER LAKES, NEW YORK

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of U.S. women's right to vote in the birthplace of the suffrage movement.

**When to go:** The Finger Lakes shine when the days (and the waters) are warm. On August 26, 2020, the region—250 miles northwest of New York City—will honor the centennial of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

**Why go:** Largely known for its 11 shimmering lakes and 100-plus wineries, the region is also where the women's rights movement was born. To celebrate the centennial, the Finger Lakes region created a list of 100 ways to fete female empowerment throughout 2020, starting with the three-day Women March (January 17–19). Come summer, outdoor enthusiasts can hop on WomanTours' women-only cycling trip (July 9–12). The route includes visits to major historical sites in Seneca Falls and Rochester, including the courthouse where Susan B. Anthony was tried for the crime of voting (commemorations for her 200th birthday will also take place in 2020), and the Women's Rights National Historical Park, home to the Wesleyan Chapel, the site of the first women's rights convention. Travelers can also support the many women-owned and -operated businesses in the Finger Lakes, such as Lucas Vineyards, Silver Waters Sailing, and Firelight Camps, a glamping site. —N.W.



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## ● SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA

The world's largest salt desert is becoming a luxury outpost.

**When to go:** Come May, thanks to a mix of sunny and rainy days, travelers may be able to see the salt flats—located in southwest Bolivia—both dry and when they're flooded, which creates a surreal mirror effect.

**Why go:** The Swiss outfitter Amazing Escapes recently partnered with Bolivia's indigenous Jirira community to open Kachi Lodge, the region's first permanent luxury lodge. The sustainable camp, located at the foot of the Tunupa volcano, comprises six solar-powered geodesic domes. Reclaimed wood furniture, traditional *bayeta* textiles, and artwork from Gastón Ugalde (considered the Andean Andy Warhol)

decorate the lodge. Claus Meyer, the Michelin-starred chef behind the destination restaurant Gustu in La Paz, oversees the menu. In May, the classic journey across the flats from Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia, to Chile's Atacama Desert will also get a luxury upgrade. Explora will offer three high-end Bolivian camps with minimalist, wood-paneled guest rooms for its trips. Travelers can embark on 8- to 11-day expeditions, which combine driving and hiking. —N.W.

## ● SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The flourishing city is now a cosmopolitan arts hub, food haven, and thriving green space.

**When to go:** In April, the wildflower fields outside the city burst with color. San Antonio's annual 11-day Fiesta (April 16–26) pays homage

to the city's storied revolutionaries with the Battle of Flowers Parade, live music, and regional fare.

**Why go:** In October 2019, the hotly anticipated contemporary art center Ruby City joined a roster of world-class art galleries and museums, including the upgraded Witte Museum. Designed by British architect Sir David Adjaye, the striking crimson Ruby City presents selected works from the Linda Pace Foundation's private collection of more than 900 paintings, sculptures, and installations. Another addition to the cityscape: a retrospective exhibit (through May 2020) that features the large-scale works of acclaimed Mexican sculptor Sebastián throughout the city. San Antonio's close ties to Mexico are perhaps most keenly experienced on the plate, at such restaurants as Carnitas Lonja, Lala's Gorditas,



and a new restaurant from local chef Johnny Hernandez. Travelers can also explore San Antonio's new outdoor spaces, notably the Mission Reach, an eight-mile extension of the city's famous River Walk promenade that connects four UNESCO-listed Spanish colonial missions. The expanded botanical garden, new ecofriendly Confluence Park, and the developing San Pedro Creek Culture Park are also worth a stroll. —N.W.

In Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni, salt is raked from the desert and left in piles to dry.

# WHERE TO GO IN 2020



## NEED TO KNOW

In late 2020, American Airlines will introduce a direct flight from LAX to Christchurch, the first ever nonstop flight from North America to the South Island.

### ● CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Almost a decade after two earthquakes devastated the city, Christchurch is buzzing once again—and showcasing its deep Māori roots.

**When to go:** Christchurch earns its “Garden City” nickname September through November, when daffodils awaken and cherry and magnolia trees are in bloom. Spring is also a great time to score discounts on the TranzAlpine and Coastal Pacific train routes.

**Why go:** Founded in 1856, Christchurch is the oldest city in New Zealand—but in many ways, it’s also the newest. The city center has been largely rebuilt, and travelers who want to explore the revived district can stay at the glossy new Sudima Hotel, snack at the new Riverside Market, and take yoga classes and eat organic food at the Welder, a large-scale wellness center—the first of its kind in New Zealand. More recent rebuilding efforts have placed a spotlight on the country’s historically overlooked indigenous Māori heritage. The Te Pae civic center, launching in October on the banks of the Avon River, will host cultural events in its 1,400-seat auditorium. And Puari Village, a 2,690-square-foot riverside attraction scheduled to open in late 2020, will feature indigenous art, exhibitions, and cuisine, as well as river tours in *waka* (canoes) that touch on the aquatic traditions of the Māori people. —N.W.

The nine-room Firehouse Hotel occupies a former fire station built in 1927.

### ● LOS ANGELES

Hospitality gets a boost thanks to a hotel boom and the return of the Michelin Guide.

**When to go:** There’s really no bad time to visit Los Angeles. But in September and October, the temperature is in the mid-70s most days and the chance of rain is slim to none.

**Why go:** Over the last year, the city has welcomed a flood of new hotels—and the development shows no signs of abating. The growing downtown district (DTLA) now has a Hoxton hotel, with the Downtown L.A. Proper Hotel set to open just across the street. About two miles east, the Soho Warehouse and the Firehouse Hotel are energizing the once-desolate Arts District.

In Century City, the Fairmont will open come summer in the former Century Plaza Hotel, staying true to the Plaza’s midcentury roots. But a trip to L.A. this year isn’t only about where to stay—it’s also about where to eat and what to do. The return of the Michelin Guide to Los Angeles (part of the first-ever all-California guide) after a 10-year hiatus, celebrates the vibrancy of the city’s fine-dining scene. N/naka and Vespertine are among six L.A. restaurants that received two Michelin stars. The slated 2020 opening of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures and the designation of the area’s first UNESCO World Heritage site (Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House in East Hollywood) are among the cultural highlights. —L.M.

