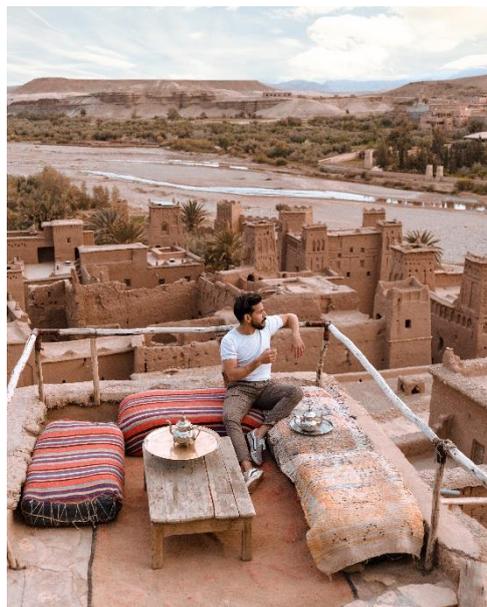


Weird Travel Destinations

- Do you like travelling? Why/why not?
- Do you have any dream destinations?
- What are some of the pros and cons of tourism?
- Do you know anyone who has done a world trip?
Where did they go?
- Do you prefer backpacking or travelling more luxuriously?
- Do you have any good travel stories?
- What is a travel destination that really doesn't appeal to you?



1. You are going to read about 6 of the weirdest travel destinations around the world. First, match the phrases and vocabulary (which are all found in the article) to their definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| a. At first glance | 1. I don't like that, but it's ok if you do. |
| b. It goes without saying | 2. Something that is very dramatic or impressive |
| c. It's not my cup of tea | 3. Letting out stress or frustration |
| d. Venting | 4. Something that is very obvious |
| e. Hideous | 5. The first, quick look at something |
| f. A hell of a..... | 6. Something particularly ugly |



2. Read about the weird travel destinations below and discuss.



Market Theatre Gum Wall, Seattle, USA.

An alley completely covered in used chewing gum makes for a strange attraction for some, but definitely isn't everyone's cup of tea. The alley started when bored theatre patrons, waiting in line for the theatre, decided to do a little decorating with their chewing gum. Since then it has grown into a weird, colourful, and most definitely disgusting tradition and landmark. People have been known to travel from all over the world just to add their gum.

Cat Island (Tashirojima), Japan

Cats were originally brought to the island of Tashirojima to hunt mice, but these days the felines have become more of a tourist attraction. The island has thousands of cats, a shrine to cats, and tourists can even stay in cat-shaped cabins. The local fishermen believe the cats are good luck. It goes without saying that there are no dogs allowed. But if you're not a cat person? Japan has a rabbit island too.



Wang Saen Suk (Hell Garden), Thailand

If you're looking for a peaceful stroll, Hell Garden in Thailand is probably not for you. The garden is filled with sculptures of sinners being tortured by demons in basically every way imaginable. The gory garden serves as a reminder of what happens if you have bad karma, and parents in the area will sometimes take their children for a walk in the garden to convince them to behave. It may not be for everyone, but it's a hell of a landmark.

Lake Natron, Tanzania

At first glance this lake may appear to be full of creepy but oddly realistic statues. But these are not statues, these are real animals, preserved by the unusual and extremely toxic waters of Lake Natron. Lake Natron is close to a large volcano which constantly oozes an unusual type of lava into the lake. This means the lake has the same alkaline levels as ammonia, and the waters often reach temperatures of 60 degrees. Any animals unlucky enough to die in the lake are quickly calcified, giving them a statue-like appearance.

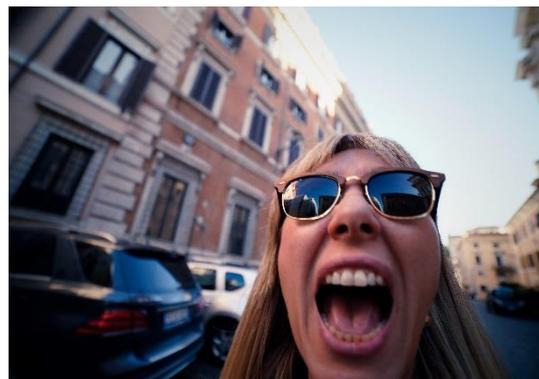


Museum of Bad Art, United States

Art is probably the best example there is of the old saying "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." What's beautiful to one person, may be hideous to another. But the Museum of Bad Art in Massachusetts, USA, is dedicated to finding and displaying art that is undeniably horrible. The number one rule? It can't be art that is deliberately bad, the creator had to be really trying to make art.

The Flogsta Scream

Flogsta is a neighbourhood in the Swedish city of Uppsala which is mostly populated by university students. What makes this neighbourhood special? Every evening at around 8pm students can be heard venting their frustration by shouting and screaming out their windows. Around exam time is when the screams are loudest, and now hundreds of tourists gather there to listen to the sweet sweet music of hundreds of frustrated students.



3. Pairwork: Ask and answer the following questions with a partner:

- Which of these destinations would you most like to go to, and why?
- Which of these destinations would you least like to go to, and why?
- Do you know of any strange tourist attractions in your own country?
- What's the strangest place you have ever been?



4. Match the travel idioms with their definitions.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| a) Off the beaten track | 1. Everything you need or use is in your bags |
| b) Travel light | 2. A flight that leaves very late at night |
| c) Hit the road | 3. Very close |
| d) Living out of a suitcase | 4. A place where other tourists usually don't go |
| e) Just around the corner | 5. To travel very cheaply |
| f) A red eye flight | 6. To not carry much with you when you travel |
| g) Travel on a shoestring | 7. To leave |



5. Extra task/Homework: Go to Atlas Obscura (www.atlasobscura.com) and search for a country or city that you have always wanted to visit. Find one of the "unusual attractions" in that place that interests you and read about it. Make a short presentation to your class describing:

- What the unusual destination is.
- Where the unusual destination is.
- What makes it so interesting/unusual.
- Any interesting phrases or vocabulary you learned from the description of the destination.