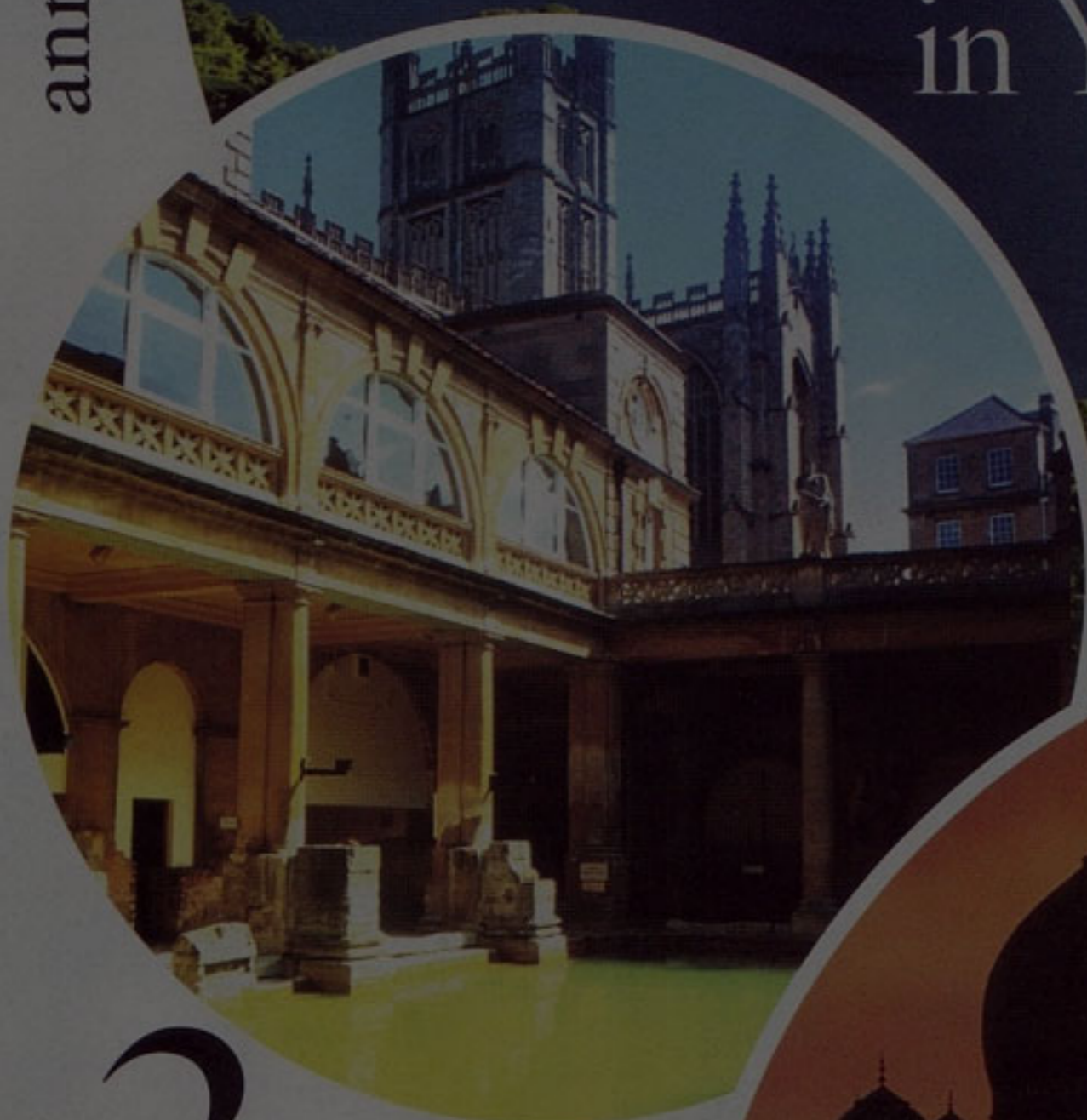


Five Places to See in Your Lifetime

BY KATE SEKULES

1 A True Hot Spot The Pitons, two volcanic spires that shoot out of the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, were named a United Nations World Heritage Site—which puts them in a class with the most spectacular protected ecologies in the world. Untouched coral reefs, tropical forests, and an active geothermal field with bubbling mud and clear hot springs are all accessible on guided hikes that can be arranged through your hotel. Stay at one of many great resorts, which range from the earthy luxury of Anse Chastanet (ansechastanet.com) to the charming colonial Hummingbird Beach Resort (nvo.com/pitonresort).



2

Bath and Beyond The exquisite Georgian city of Bath, England, has in the works the massive Bath Spa Project, a stunning contemporary campus that will include historic sites like the Roman Baths as well as a brand-new spa with an open-air rooftop pool and state-of-the-art treatments (thermaebathspa.com). Several of Bath's great sights—the 15th-century abbey, the gracious Georgian pump rooms—are steps away. And the Queensberry, a family-owned boutique hotel, has just been divinely renovated (www.thequeensberry.co.uk).



3

Libya's Grand Opening The U.S. travel embargo was recently lifted, so for the first time in 23 years, you can see the astonishing Roman ruins of Leptis Magna—temples, baths, marketplaces, 5,000-seat amphitheater, and port. Wilderness Travel offers brilliant tours of Leptis Magna and Tripoli, plus a Saharan camel trek (wildernesstravel.com). Bonus: Central Libya is the best place in the world to see the October 3 annular eclipse of the sun (intense, but no corona) as well as next year's March 29 total eclipse.



4

Taj Mahal: Now Open Nights For the first time in 20 years, you can view the world's most awe-inspiring mausoleum in its best light: beneath a full moon. The monument is now open for five nights a month—when the moon is full, plus two days before and after—to 40 people at a time, for 30 minutes. Admission is \$23 and tickets must be purchased in person 24 hours in advance. (tourismindia.com)

5 Where the Wild Things Are In one visionary swoop, Gabon, the stable West African country often called Africa's Eden, created 13 national parks. See elephants, more than 600 bird species, and one of the world's largest primate gatherings: mandrill troops 1,000 strong, and gorillas so unused to humans, they round up their families to gawk at you. Stay right in Eden at one of the new eco lodges, like Ye-Tsanou in Loango National Park. The experts at exploreafrika.net can arrange your trip. For info: gabonnationalparks.com.