

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

SUNDAY MORNING

SUN-BATHED OSLO

In summer, the Norwegian capital basks in about 21 hours of sunlight daily and residents seem to enjoy every one. Their favorite new playground for a leisurely Sunday is Tjuvholmen, a promontory along the Oslo fiord where thieves hid out in the 18th century. That reputation only adds to the hip allure of this newly developed district of waterfront walkways, shops, cafes, and a high-design hotel called The Thief — only a short walk from the city center. The architectural standout is the Astrup Fearnley Museum, which displays provocative contempo-



PATRICIA HARRIS FOR THE GLOBE

rary art. The complex of angular wood, glass, and metal buildings was designed by Renzo Piano, who leaped to fame in the '70s after collaborating on the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and recently designed the new wing of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the reboot of the Harvard Art Museums. But Paris and Boston got only great buildings: Oslo got a great building on the beach. The sand is a bit rocky on the pocket beach in the shadow of the museum. But that doesn't deter sunbathers from stretching out on towels as little kids play in the shallows, teenagers flirt along the seawall, and the heartiest take a swim in the sun-warmed waters.

PATRICIA HARRIS



ASK AWAY

Q I'm a college student in Boston and I would love to go to New York with a friend. All the hotels seem to be super-expensive, but we don't want to couch-surf. Any suggestions for a cheap, non-bug-gy, New York hotel?

Jarrett Kelley, Lexington

A Start packing. The Wolcott Hotel, just three blocks from the Empire State Building, is offering a \$110 rate in honor of its 110th anniversary this March. Book by the end of this month, and

you can reserve a room for anytime throughout 2014 at that rate — a discount of more than 50 percent. And this is no fleabag. Located in Murray Hill, the 200-room hotel is an old-school beauty and has hosted guests such as Mark Twain and Buddy Holly. Even at its usual rate, it's a good deal, cropping up on lists of "best bargain hotels in New York" time and again. *4 West 31st St., between Broadway and Fifth Avenue, 212-268-2900, www.wolcott.com* If you'd like something a tad more high tech and modern, try the Pod

Hotels. Rooms are definitely snug (some have bunk beds), but if you're simply looking for a place to crash, they're great. Free social events, such as walking tours and Ping-Pong tournaments, make for fun mingling, and Pod 51 has an on-site gastropub, Pop@Pod, with cheap eats specials. *Pod 51, 230 East 51st St., 212-355-0300, rooms from \$89; or Pod 39, 145 East 39th St., 212-865-5700, rooms from \$119; www.thepodhotel.com*

DIANE BAIR AND
PAMELA WRIGHT



THE TIP

ADD SOME SPICE TO A CAPE COD JAUNT

NORTH TRURO — Need salt? At Atlantic Spice Co. you can choose from sea salt, fleur de sel, Hawaiian, Himalayan pink, and Bolivian rose, among others. Paprika comes in Hungarian, Spanish, and domestic varieties. From allspice to zahtar, the shop offers more than 250 herbs, spices, and essential oils, as well as coffee, tea blends, dried fruits, nuts, seeds, pasta, beans, rice, and grains. But the best reason to visit the industrial-looking (but fragrant) blue building near the tip of Cape Cod is the rock-bottom prices. Because it's a wholesale company, larger packages yield the deepest discounts. Kitchen-friendly sizes of most spices cost an economical \$2.50. But you can buy a pound of oregano (23 times the amount in the spice-jar "refill" size) for \$6.80. Four ounces of pure vanilla extract is \$5.30 (about half the supermarket price), but a pint — 16 ounces — is \$13.45. The trick is to shop with a friend (or two), buy in bulk, and divvy up the goods. Take zipper-lock bags, reuse your old spice containers, or purchase inexpensive plastic jars and bottles at the store. With your savings you can splurge on the funky tableware, teapots, and gourmet kitchen tools and gadgets.

ATLANTIC SPICE CO. 2 Shore Road, North Truro, 800-316-7965, www.atlanticspice.com. ELLEN ALBANESE



HERE

YOGIS GATHER FOR A MAINE EVENT

Join more than 40 yoga instructors and 20 yoga studios at the Maine YogaFest in Portland, July 12 and 13. Tickets went on sale this week. The festival includes workshops, daily guided meditation, and specialty yoga classes such as partner, slack-line, paddleboard, and aerial. Complimentary lectures cover anything from the neuroscience of yoga to the benefits of breath work. Don't miss the black light yoga party with New York-based yogini Halle Becker and a deejay. Tickets: \$90 or \$125 for three- or five-workshop passes; book by April 18 and save 15 percent. \$35 for black light party. 207-232-0054, www.maine-yoga-fest.com

TIPS AND TALES FROM THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

Learn more about good hiking gear and follow two New Englanders as they thru-hike the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine this year. Whitney Silberblatt from Dover, N.H., and Adam Joseph from Chelmsford were selected to hike the 2,200-mile trail while trying out the latest gear from New Hampshire-based NEMO Equipment, Inc. (tents, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads), Vermont-based Darn Tough (socks), Vasque (boots), Osprey

(backpacks), and Leki (hiking poles). Follow the program, called the Thru-Hike Syndicate, for hiker feedback on gear, which may help you plan your upcoming adventures. The solo hikers expect to hit the trail in the next couple of weeks. www.facebook.com/thruhikesyndicate

THERE

LAS VEGAS HOTEL PUTS EMPHASIS ON HEALTHY STAYS

The 14th floor of the Las Vegas MGM Grand Hotel & Casino — all 171 rooms and suites in the main tower — offers a healthier experience. The hotel's Stay Well rooms have advanced air and water purification systems, shower water infused with Vitamin C, and light therapy ranging from blue-shaded lighting that helps increase energy and reduce jet lag to night-lights that guide your way without disturbing melatonin levels. Reach for a snack in the minibar and

you'll find yogurt-covered raisins, raw almonds, and coconut water. Even the 24-hour in-room menu offers healthy options made from natural, organic ingredients. Room rates vary; add an additional \$30 to the going rate to book a Stay Well room or suite. 800-929-1111, www.mgmgrand.com

TRAVEL IN AIRY COMFORT TO YOUR CRUISE SHIP

Book a voyage to explore Northern Europe with Oceania Cruises and qualify for the new \$99 Premium Economy Air Upgrade on select trips. Enjoy a wider seat, extra legroom, and a personal entertainment system in flight, and also get an extra luggage allowance, priority check-in, and priority boarding. The upgrade is available one-way or round-trip from 26 US and Canadian gateways, based on availability. Rates start at \$4,299 for a 10-day trip out of Copenhagen, or \$5,299 for a 12-day cruise from London or Stockholm; add the air upgrade option to any trip for \$99. 855-623-2642, www.oceaniacruises.com

PRACTICE YOUR DANCE MOVES IN TROPICAL SURROUNDINGS

Show off your dance moves on Saint Lucia's sunny shores during Jive June, a dance-a-thon program that runs June 2-29 at The Body Holiday, a health and wellness resort, and its sister property, Rendezvous, a couples-only boutique resort. Choose from 17 weekly dance classes, when you can practice your jive, salsa, cha cha, slow waltz, Argentine tango, rhythm fox-trot, samba, and zumba. You'll practice with a professional choreographer, an international fitness ambassador, and other accomplished instructors. Daily rates start at \$482 (The Body Holiday) per person, single or double occupancy, and \$272 (Rendezvous) per person, double occupancy; includes



fitness classes, food, and drinks. 800-544-2883, www.thebodyholiday.com

EVERYWHERE

HARD DRIVE TRANSPORTS YOUR ENTIRE MEDIA LIBRARY

Lacie's new Fuel wireless hard drive gives you 1TB of storage that you can instantly access from up to five devices at once while traveling (or simultaneously stream up to three HD movies to three devices). Load your entire movie and music collections, photos, or any files you may need using Wi-Fi or USB 3.0 cable and take it all with you. Download the Seagate Media app so

you can browse the hard drive content on the go and make selections. Also upload your vacation photos to the device as backup. The Fuel (pictured above) works with Macs, PCs, and Apple (including Apple TV), Android, and Kindle devices. It measures 4½-by-4½-by-9/10th inches and weighs 9.7 ounces. \$199.99. 971-246-8200, www.lacie.com

DEVICE HELPS YOU STAY ACTIVE WHILE TRAVELING

The Misfit Shine is one of the most lightweight, stylish, and unobtrusive activity monitors on the market. This slim, low-profile device includes a quarter-size monitor that can be attached to a necklace cord, a leather band, a rubber sport band, or a clasp for clipping to your shirt, running shoes, or pocket. Register on the Misfit Shine website and set your activity goals. Then download the app to your Android or Apple device, sync it with your Shine, and track your progress while walking, running, cycling, swimming, and sleeping. Little lights on the face of the waterproof Shine subtly tell you what percentage of your daily activity goal you've reached. \$119.95 including sport band; comes with a replaceable battery. www.misfitwearables.com



KARI BODNARCHUK



COURTNEY ELIZABETH