

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

THE LIST

CONVERTING DOLLARS WITH SOME SENSE

When you travel abroad, converting dollars to local currencies can be expensive. To find the best deals, personal finance website CardHub.com released a study comparing the dollar-to-euro conversion rates and fees from Visa, MasterCard, the country's 15 largest banks, and Travel-ex.
www.cardhub.com/edu/currency-exchange-study/

- 1** Of 35 of the 50 largest credit unions, only four offer currency conversion services: State Employees, First Tech Federal, Citizens Equity First, and ESL Federal.

2 On average, the cost of currency conversion varies little between banks and credit unions, with the latter being 1.65 percent less expensive.

3 The cheapest way to convert currency is to do so with a no-foreign-transaction-fee credit or debit card on the Visa or MasterCard network. The average bank and Travel-
- ex location charge 6.73 percent and 10.17 percent more, respectively.

4 While the currency conversion cost between major card networks and financial institutions remains substantial, it has declined 17 percent for banks and 37 percent for Travelex since 2012.

5 The two major banks with the worst currency conversion deals are SunTrust (\$1.4813 for 1 euro and \$10 fee), and US Bank (\$1.4936 exchange rate and \$9.95 fee).
- NECEE REGIS



THE TIP

KITTERY ROLL THE COLOSSUS OF THE CONTEST

Finding the best lobster roll as you drive up the coast of Maine just got easier. At the 5th annual Tasting Table's Lobster Rumble 2014 event in New York, a team of editors and 2,000 guests sampled lobster rolls from 23 competitors from around the country and declared Robert's Maine Grill in Kittery the winner of its "Editor's Choice Award." Robert's serves up a buttery hot dog roll filled with fresh tail, knuckle, and claw meat from Maine lobsters, mixed with a bit of mayonnaise, secret seasoning, and a squeeze of lemon. The sibling restaurant to nearby Bob's Clam Hut, Robert's is open year round to satisfy all your lobster cravings, while also offering an updated spin on classic seafood dishes. Regular lobster roll \$22, jumbo \$27.

ROBERT'S MAINE GRILL 326 Route 1, Kittery. 207-439-0300, www.robertsmainegrill.com

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SHERATON HUZHOU

CHECK IN

A HORSESHOE MIRROR OF CHINA

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Critics are calling the recently-opened Sheraton Huzhou Hot Spring Resort, designed by Chinese architect Ma Yansong and his design team, an architectural marvel.

The 27-story hotel on the banks of Taihu Lake in Huzhou, China, about 2½ hours from Shanghai, rises out of the water in the shape of a glowing horseshoe. Its two connecting curved towers soar more than 300 feet above the lake (at night, flashing LED lights illuminate the façade). The hotel's reflection in the water looks like the moon, an important symbol in Chinese culture.

The hotel is just as striking inside. The lobby is lighted by about 20,000 Swarovski and European crystal lamps, floating like waves from the ceiling. In the center of the lobby is a 28-ton piece of rough Persian jade. The ceiling is inlaid with citrine jade, symbolizing wealth, and the desk is decorated with Silk Road cryolite.

On the lobby level, Feast is a huge dining space with indoor and outdoor seating and multiple cooking stations featuring Western and Eastern cuisine. YUE on the 26th floor, specializing in Cantonese cuisine, has an open kitchen and a series of private dining rooms overlooking the lake. The Lobster Tank, located on the resort's small, sandy beach, features lobsters from around the world. At the top of the arch, Starlight Kaiseki-Chuan serves modern Sichuan hot pot and sophisticated Japanese dishes.

The 321 rooms and villas have all the modern bells and whistles. But don't spend too much time in your room. Instead head to the Shine Spa, a quiet oasis on the lower level. Or meander through the rose garden on your way to the resort's Mystic Spa and Hot Spring Village, with 101 hot spring pools. Rates start at \$350.

SHERATON HUZHOU HOT SPRING RESORT No. 5858 Taihu Road, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province. 1-86-572-2299-999, www.sheraton.com/huzhou

DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT

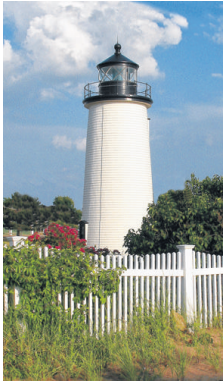


HERE

PLYMOUTH'S NEW FRENCH-STYLE INN

The Mirbeau Inn & Spa at The Pinehills officially opens its doors in Plymouth Sunday, offering guests a peaceful spot to relax and recharge 45 minutes south of Boston and 8 miles from Cape Cod. The 50-room retreat (depicted above) is reminiscent of a French country manor house with its Monet-inspired pond gardens, Parisian-style bistro, and luxury guest rooms with French decor. Visit the full-service spa where you can experience massages and wraps to facials with a French Kiss Anti-Aging Lip Treatment. Enjoy casual meals at Le Bistrot, or a fine dining experience at Henri-Marie, which serves bouillabaisse, squab consume, and local oysters cooked on a French-style yakatori grill. Summer rates start at \$260, double occupancy. 877-647-2328, www.mirbeau.com/pinehills

OPEN HOUSE: TOP VIEWS FROM A LIGHTHOUSE TOWER



Bring your sneakers and climb to the top of the 1898 Newburyport Harbor Light at Plum Island Point during one of several open houses coming up. The still-operational lighthouse opens to the public for tours from 1-4 p.m., weather permitting, on July 6 and 27, Aug. 17, Sept. 7 and 28, and Oct. 12. You must be at least 5 years old and 42 inches tall to climb the short ladder to the viewing deck, with its views stretching from Cape Ann to the south to Maine's Mount Agamenticus to the north. Tours and parking are free, but

donations are welcome to support the Friends of Plum Island Light, a non-profit organization that preserves and protects this piece of North Shore history. 978-973-6935, newenglandlighthouses.net/plum-island.html

THERE

RIDING HIGH IN HELSINKI ON A NEW FERRIS WHEEL
Swoop up to 130 feet above the ground on Finland's new observation wheel and you can see from the islands of the Helsinki Archipelago to Uspenski Cathedral, the central railway station, and other landmarks on the city skyline. The Finnair SkyWheel (pictured below) opened this month in Katajanokka Harbour in central Helsinki, not far from where the country's national airline, Finnair, first based its flight operations in the 1920s. The wheel's 30 climate-controlled gondolas run year-round, each holding up to four people. Or choose the VIP cabin, which has a glass floor, leather seats for the four passengers, and Veuve Clicquot champagne service. A standard cabin ride is 15 minutes, a VIP



cabin ride about 25. Admission about \$16.40; VIP cabin, flat rate of \$266, including the champagne. 011-358-44-301-83-63, www.finnair-skywheel.com/en

SWEET ADDITION TO THE STRIP
Visit Hershey's new Chocolate World on the Las Vegas Strip and you can walk through a 74-foot-tall milk chocolate bar, see an 800-pound chocolate replica of the Statue of Liberty, and wander around an Empire State Building created out of 1,800 chocolate bars. The new flagship store in the New York-New York Hotel and Casino offers two stories of pure chocolate delight, where you can sample new treats and lose yourself among 800 varieties of Hershey's creations. Customize your own candy wrappers and choose your favorite Hershey's Kisses and Jolly Ranchers flavors. Then star in your own Reese's TV ad and post it online for friends and family to see. The retail store-attraction opened this month. 702-740-6969, www.hersheyschocolateworldlasvegas.com

EVERYWHERE

FIND HOTEL DEALS . . . OR SELL YOUR UNUSED BOOKING
Check out Roomer if you're looking for a great hotel deal or have already booked a room that you can no longer use. The online marketplace, which just launched a new app for Apple and Android users, helps travelers sell their nonrefundable unused hotel bookings to those looking for discounted lodging worldwide. The app lets you search, view, and book hotel reservations posted by sellers. Narrow

your search based on your preferences, from top-rated popular hotel to independent boutique. Each listing includes images, maps, and reviews of the hotel. Once you book, Roomer transfers the reservation to your name and sends confirmation. The buyer gets reimbursed by means of PayPal, Western Union, or wire transfer after you successfully check out of the hotel. 646-571-2170, www.roomertravel.com

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