



MAINE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS VINTAGE VEHICLES, PLANES
Go for a ride in a Model T Ford, enter an auction to win a bi-plane ride, see car demonstrations, and wander amid pre-1992 vehicles from around the world at the Foreign Auto Festival and Antique Aeroplane Show. The event runs 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 6-7 at the Owls Head Transportation Museum in Owls Head, Maine (three miles south of Rockland on ME-73). Show up between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. either day to see World War I-era biplanes in flight, weather permitting. Adults \$12, free under 18. 207-594-4418, owlshead.org



GET COZY IN A RHODE ISLAND SEASIDE INN
Escape to the Ocean State's shore and stay at the Weekapaug Inn, an 1899 property that reopens Oct. 7 after a \$20 million transformation. The Cape Cod-style building overlooks Quonochontaug Pond and the Atlantic Ocean. It has 27 new guest rooms and four suites, all with heated bathroom floors. Relax in front of a wood-burning fireplace in a public lounge, swim in the 75-foot lap pool, or meet with a naturalist for bird-watching and constellation viewing. The inn, located in the town of Weekapaug, will have three dining venues that serve modern New England coastal cuisine. Rooms from \$255 through Oct. 31, and \$147 Nov. 1 to April 15, based on double occupancy. 401-322-0301, weekapauginn.com

News, Apps, Deals, and Gear from New England and Beyond

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TAKE OFF FOR TROPICAL WEATHER
Just in time for winter, JetBlue will launch a new direct service from Boston to the Cayman Islands. Beginning Nov. 17, a flight departs Boston every Saturday at 10:25 a.m. and arrives in Grand Cayman at 2:35 p.m. The return flight leaves Grand Cayman at 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays, so you can squeeze in a morning swim or excursion, and arrives in Boston at 7:25 p.m. Passengers will travel by Airbus A320 and receive complimentary snacks and drinks, one free checked bag, and lots of legroom in coach class. Tickets from \$409. 800-538-2583, jetblue.com



TRY OUT FOR THE PEACE CORPS FOR TWO WEEKS
The National Peace Corps Association has launched a global service program called Next Step Travel that gives people a chance to work on small grass-roots projects and learn about nongovernment organizations worldwide for two weeks at a time. The new program lets people get a sense of Peace Corps work without a two-year commitment. The trips are geared to returned Peace Corps volunteers and anyone who wants to help other people, is curious about the world, and has a sense of adventure. The organization's first trips launch in October, when groups of up to 20 people travel to the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. 202-293-7728, peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/next-step-travel



KIDS ARE SPECIAL IN SAN DIEGO
For the month of October, children can get freebies and special deals at more than 105 San Diego hotels, restaurants, and attractions, as part of a city-wide Kids Free San Diego promotion. For instance, kids can gain free entry into The New Children's Museum downtown, LEGOLAND California Resort, which has 128 acres of LEGO-themed exhibits and interactive displays, and the world-renowned San Diego Zoo, which is home to 3,700 rare and endangered birds, mammals, and reptiles. Then they can enjoy complimentary cheese pizza and pasta dishes at Viglucci's Ristorante Coronado, and Ben & Jerry's hot fudge sundaes at Hard Rock Cafe San Diego. Age restrictions apply for some deals. 619-236-1212, sandiego.org

News, Apps, Deals, and Gear from New England and Beyond

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INVISIBLE PROTECTION FOR YOUR DEVICES' SCREENS
Your gadgets can take a beating when you travel. Dynaflo's Liquid-Armor invisible spray coats the screen of your cell-phone, tablet, portable game, and laptop, or even a camera lens to create an anti-scratch protective surface that is supposedly twice as strong as traditional peel-and-stick protectors. The liquid screen protector comes in a 3-ounce bottle with two microfiber cloths or in a kit with single-use wipes. Just apply the product, and the device will ready to use in about 10 minutes and fully dry after a day. I tried it on an old iPod Touch: The protective seal held up well, showing no dings or scratches after multiple drops and spills in the hands of a toddler. It also created a noticeably anti-static, water-repellent surface. Liquid-Armor sells for \$19.99 through Dynaflo. 909-598-2222, dynaflousa.com



DREAM STROLLER FOR MOMS AND DADS
The Origami, made by 4moms, is the Lamborghini of strollers, complete with swoopy lines and high-tech features that draw curious glances and double takes. The tricked-out baby stroller has daytime running lights, pathway lights that automatically turn on in low-light situations, and an LCD screen on the handlebars that tells the temperature, your speed, and your trip and lifetime mileage. The stroller opens and closes with the push of a (lockable) button so you can handle setup and breakdown with one hand, and it charges itself while you are walking using generators in its rear wheels. The Origami comes with two cup holders on the handlebars and a storage pouch near the "undercarriage." The Origami tips the scales at 29 pounds, and will lighten your wallet: It sells for \$829 at Amazon.com. 888-614-6667, 4moms.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

Mexico full of pacific pleasures

At sea and on land, its hospitality, cuisine, natural beauty still reign

By Stephen Jermanok
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

PUERTO VALLARTA, Mexico — In the sleepy seaside village of Quimixto chihuahuas snooze on dirt roads dotted with fallen avocados. On the opposite shores of vast Banderas Bay from the cruise-ship port of Puerto Vallarta, Quimixto is best reached by boat, such as the high-speed inflatable speedboat that had my kids shrieking with delight. The ridge of the Sierra Madres became a blur as we cruised atop the Pacific waters and soon were welcomed by pelicans on the docks.

Back on land, we each selected a horse and made our way through a thick forest overgrown with banana plants, guava, and pomegranate trees. After crossing a small bridge, we looked up to see a waterfall plummeting into a natural pool surrounded by wild bougainvillea. We hopped off the horses and went for a dip in the refreshing water, only to be greeted with a plate of hot chips and freshly made guacamole when we dried off.

"Mexico gets a bad reputation in the news," said our guide, Poncho. "Where are all the mean men in big sombreros carrying guns? Instead, you are in paradise."

There is no denying that the surge of drug war-related violence has had an impact on the Mexican Riviera cruise industry. In 2008, the number of cruise passengers leaving from the port of San Diego topped out at 917,000 on some 254 sailings. In 2011, the numbers fell to 307,000 passengers on 104 sailings. Early reports for 2012 show more declines. Port cities such as Mazatlan and Acapulco have been cut from most itineraries because of the violence, leaving only Puerto Vallarta and Cabo San Lucas as major stops.

Holland America Line receives the bulk of the business



LISA LEAVITT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Swimming at the falls in Quimixto, a fishing village outside Puerto Vallarta.



LISA LEAVITT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

El Arco, one of the ancient granite rock formations at Land's End in Cabo San Lucas.

If you go . . .

Holland America Line
300 Elliott Ave. West
Seattle
877-932-4259
hollandamerica.com
The seven-day cruise this winter will leave Dec. 1 aboard the MS Zaandamthis. Prices start at \$1,099 per person. The Hidden Beaches by Sea and Horseback shore excursion is \$144 per person.

down with one of Poncho's strong margaritas. We relaxed in the sand and hammocks and took in the expansive vista of the bay.

That evening, we walked the wide pedestrian-only boardwalk called the Malecon, stopping to see the sand sculptures on the beach and the historic Guadalupe Church that stands tall atop one of the city's main squares. Unlike the high-end stores and restaurants on the Malecon, the narrow cobblestone streets of Old Town have a more authentic Mexican feel, with small shops selling leather goods, tequila, candy, rugs, and jewelry.

On the drive to the Margarita Grill for dinner our taxi driver said that he came to Puerto Vallarta in 1968, when there were 12,000 people in town. Today, the population is over 400,000, with many US expats living in the exclusive hillside community of Conchas Chinas.

Occupying a corner lot in Old Town, Margarita Grill is an al fresco restaurant that serves some of the finest Mexican fare in town. We grabbed a long table and listened to the sounds of Flamenco guitarists. Guacamole is made tableside, and margaritas come oversized. Entrees include pork tacos, fajitas, and the restaurant's specialty, molcajetes, a thick bowl brimming with roasted beef, chorizo sausage, shrimp, chile relleno, sliced cactus, and salsa verde, with a side of warm tortillas.

Upon arriving at our next port, Cabo San Lucas, we boarded a catamaran and went snorkeling in one of the protected coves. Winds were strong as we headed out into the Sea of Cortez past the sandstone sculptures that line the coastline, including the celebrated

Lover's Arch. Cabo's shores have a much more desolate look than Puerto Vallarta, with an occasional house popping up from the rugged hillside and sea lions lounging on the rocks.

The sea was rough due to strong winds and the water was surprisingly chilly for snorkeling, but I braved the weather and jumped in to view the neon-colored fish. On the boat ride back, we danced to old-school R&B as the catamaran rocked to the not-so-placid waters. Then, out of nowhere, a pair of whale tails rose above the whitecaps in unison, less than 10 feet from the boat. That one sight was worth the price of admission aboard the Oosterdam and could very well tempt me to make a return trip.

Stephen Jermanok can be reached at www.activetravels.com.

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All rates include non stop air, round trip transfers all air & hotel taxes. Rates are based on Tues, Wed, Thurs, other days available at a slightly higher price. Rates are per person based on double occupancy. Travel dates now - Dec 15, 2012. Some blackout dates apply.