

Currents

Free night’s stay in Bermuda

Visit Bermuda this winter for a golf or spa getaway, or to dig your feet into the island’s pink sand beaches and every third night will be free at participating hotels. Choose from 15 properties, ranging from luxury resorts to boutique hotels to family-run inns, including Cambridge Beaches Resort and Spa, Fairmont’s Hamilton Princess or Southampton hotels, Fourways Inn, Granaway Guest House and Cottage, and Surf Side Beach Club Hotel. Rates are \$125 to \$460 per night. Your free night includes the room rate only, not any resort fees or gratuities. Book now for travel Nov. 15-March 15; some blackout dates apply. 800-237-6832, www.bermudatourism.com/compliments

Explore Borneo’s wild side

Spot orangutans in the rain forest and endangered sea turtles on a remote Indonesian island during Baobab Expeditions’ new Discover the Orangutan adventures, departing Kota Kinabalu, the capital city of Sabah province on Borneo, on Nov. 9, and April 3 and Nov. 9, 2011. You’ll visit the Sepilok Nature Resort, a sanctuary where orangutans are rehabilitated, ride down the Kinabatangan River at dawn in search of Proboscis monkeys, pygmy elephants, and other wildlife, then return on day nine to explore the markets and beaches of Kota Kinabalu. Prices start at \$3,321 per person, based on double occupancy, and include accommodations, some meals, airport transfers, guides, and all park and conservation fees. Ten percent of trip fees go to the Orangutan Appeal, a Britain-based nonprofit that funds orangutan rehabilitation and habitat conservation. 516-622-2279, www.baobabexpeditions.com

Canyons’ new chairlift heats up

Get in more runs and stay warmer in between when you use the new chairlift at The Canyons Resort in Park City, Utah, this winter. The Orange Bubble Express, the first of its kind in North America, has a see-through cover and heated seats. The double-quad chairlift whisks skiers and snowboarders up Sun Peak in just nine minutes, with a mid-station drop en route, and opens access to Silverado Bowl on the resort’s northern end. 888-226-9667, www.thecanyons.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

Destinations

ARTS

Exhibiting expansive ideas

LOS ANGELES
Lynda and Stewart Resnick Pavilion, Los Angeles County Museum of Art: Museum expansions around Boston are in full swing. The Addison Gallery of American Art reopened last month. The Museum of Fine Arts will be unveiling its new American wing next month. And both the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Harvard Art Museums have major projects underway. On the West Coast, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is in the midst of transforming its 20-acre site. Yesterday it opened the \$54 million Lynda and Stewart Resnick Pavilion. It was designed by Renzo Piano, who is also responsible for the last major LACMA addition, the Broad Contemporary Art Museum, in 2008. (He is also architect of the Gardner and Harvard projects.) To link it with the rest of the museum, LACMA turned to one of LA’s best-known artists, Robert Irwin. His “Palm Garden” installation consists of palm trees of various shapes, sizes, and varieties arranged in a grid. 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000, www.lacma.org

THROUGH JAN. 18
SAN FRANCISCO
“Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cezanne and Beyond: Post-Impressionist Masterpieces from the Musee d’Orsay”: This exhibition at the M.H. de Young Museum follows last summer’s show of Impressionist masterpieces from Paris’s Musee d’Orsay. Others in the show include Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Vuillard, Seurat, and Signac. This is the only US venue for the show. 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, 415-750-3600, deyoung.famsf.org

THROUGH MARCH 13
QUEBEC
“RIFF: When Africa Got Us Groovin’”: This multimedia exhibition at the Museum of Civilization looks at the enormous impact of African rhythms on popular music over the past hundred years. On display are such traditional African instruments as talking drums and thumb pianos, as well such



2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

An artist’s rendering of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s Lynda and Stewart Resnick Pavilion.

mainstays of Latin music as maracas and timbales, and early jazz instruments. The exhibition includes items from such popular musicians as Benny Goodman (clarinet), James Brown (cape), and Tito Puente (marimba and mallets). 85 rue Dalhousie, 866-710-8031, www.mcq.org/index_en

OCT. 9-JAN. 23
PARIS
“Serving the Tsars: The Russian Imperial Guard, from Peter the Great to the October Revolution”: This exhibition, the latest offering in the cultural festival France-Russia Year 2010, includes more than 150 objects spanning two centuries. Items on display at the Musee de l’Armee include paintings, uniforms, weapons, personal effects, and such decorative items as tea services. 129 rue de Grenelle, 011-33-810-11-33-99, www.invalides.org

THROUGH APRIL 25
NEW YORK
“Abstract Expressionist New York”: It was Abstract Expressionism that in-

the 1950s made New York the world capital of modern art, a distinction it has held in the decades since. So it’s only appropriate that the Museum of Modern Art should pay tribute to the movement with this mammoth overview. MoMA has given over its entire fourth floor, as well as other galleries, to some 300 artworks — paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, photographs, films, and documentary materials — by and about Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, David Smith, and the rest. 11 West 53d St., 212-708-9400, www.moma.org

OCT. 22-JAN. 30
HOUSTON
“Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage”: This show at the Menil Collection is the first major exhibition devoted to the influential German artist since the 1985 retrospective at MoMA. Emphasizing the role of color and light in Schwitters’s work, it pays particular attention to the highly porous boundary in his art between painting and collage. The show in-

cludes some 100 assemblages, sculptures, and collages executed between 1918 and 1947. 1515 Sul Ross St., 713-525-9400, www.menil.org

PLAN AHEAD

FORT WORTH
“Salvator Rosa: Bandits, Wilderness, and Magic”: Emphasizing quality over quantity, this 36-painting overview of the career of the 17th-century Italian artist at the Kimbell Art Museum is the first US exhibition devoted to Rosa’s work. Among them are self-portraits, landscapes, studies of magic and science, and figure paintings. The exhibition will run Dec. 12 through March 27. 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd., 817-332-8451, www.kimbellart.org

MARK FEENEY

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Mark Feeney can be reached at mfeeney@globe.com.

Heeding the call of wild isolation on a backcountry trek

► TEXAS
Continued from Page M1

speak during my eight-day stay here. Another is a park worker with a handlebar mustache I encounter on a backcountry trail on my second day. He is riding a mule and leading three pack mules behind him. Our conversation is brief; he speaks first: “How you doin’?” “Not bad, and you?” “Ain’t complainin’.” I watch the mules descend with their mount into the valley, and in less than a minute they are tiny cardboard cutouts against the great plain beneath me, without substance or shadow. I will not see another human for the next two days.

But there will be other encounters.

At Pine Top (elevation: around 8,080 feet), a catatonic mountain short-horned lizard has taken up one of the eight campsites. I don’t notice the diurnal reptile right away: It blends in with the gray slab of limestone beneath it. I take another campsite. I hang my sweat-soaked tank top from an alligator juniper tree to dry, unroll my sleeping bag, lie on my back, and watch canyon towhees flirt with each other in the branches. To my left, one juniper tree, the armadillo scales of its bark still on, embraces another, dead and bare, in a desert rendition of Romeo and Juliet.

The slant of the setting sun paints the mountaintops golden. The longer the shadows, the cooler the desert exhales under paper-thin clouds that stretch like streamers suspended horizontally from the paling sky. A buzzard soars in the valley beneath me, catches a stream of warm air drifting off the cooling earth, and rises above. Ravens wheel above misty arroyos.

After the sun sets I hear light footsteps, then sniffing. I sit up: Behind me, three or four feet away, a black bear is checking me out. I call out and, startled, it lopes away, surprisingly spritely for its heavy body, into the dry brush.

Bound some 265 million years ago by lime-secreting algae, the Guadalupes are a composite of silicified fossils weathering out of limestone, the remnants of an ancient reef towering over what



PHOTOS BY ANNA BADKHEN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

From Salt Basin Overlook, gypsum deposits in the Chihuahuan Desert, and a yucca plant.

CANYON ECHOES
Find yourself in the Chihuahuan Desert at www.boston.com/travel.

was a tropical sea that evaporated at the close of the Permian Period, during the greatest mass extinction of all time.

It is easy, at first, to mistake the elevated, saline desert that was left behind for hostile emptiness. Cholla cactus grabs at your shoelaces. Panic grass bleeds your hands. Rattlesnakes coil on your trail up the spine of Guadalupe Peak (at 8,749 feet the tallest mountain in Texas), and the sun burns your skin. On my drive up to the park a tarantula crossed the highway, so large I swerved to avoid collision. I thought it would dent my car.

But stay awhile, and you will find the solace of open spaces you have come here for. Time will slow. You will start noticing the smallest things, although in this vastness they will no longer seem small. You will notice the way a thumb-sized prickly pear pushes through the broken white rock of the arroyo floor, the salt-streaked shoulder of dolomite where a seep dried up some time ago, the conch shell of a snail on a century plant at dawn.

You will find yourself apologizing to prairie lizards that scatter invisibly into the grass at your



footfalls: not out of loneliness, or because you need somebody to talk to, but because in the desert each thing that survives deserves respect.

Study the dolomite for the calligraphy of fossilized mollusks. Scan the canyons for elk feeding on sumac. Imagine the echo of the hoofclaps of John Joel Glanton’s scalping mercenaries of the mid-1800s, or the footsteps of Mescalero Apaches who once roamed this desert — and, one desert legend holds, waylaid travelers in a canyon called Devil’s Hall.

But not all at once. Do one

thing at a time, deliberately, slowly. Watching an ant examine a flick of cigarette ash should take up an hour.

After a while, the expanse around you will clear the space in your mind that has been clogged for so long with deadlines, e-mail, doctors’ appointments, Little League games, bills you hadn’t realized were overdue: the veneer of civilization.

Then — perhaps at night, when you lie in your sleeping bag and watch the Milky Way trawl its entourage of constellations across the sky — you will remember the true reason you have come here: Humans were born in the desert. Our feet are built to walk on hot, dry soil. Our bodies are built to sleep under the stars and rise at sunup. Our brain is built to endure in boundless spaces. You have come to learn from this parsimonious, tough land the way you would learn from a wise grandparent. You have come here to regenerate.

You will learn that the desert is both fragile and strong. Step on the wrong shrub and you have destroyed an ecosystem. But let the desert burn for days and then watch the land recover as though the natural catastrophe were no more than a scratch.

Come here. Do one thing at a time. Do one thing for a very long time. Watch an ant try to rescue a piece of a beetle shell from be-

If you go . . .

Getting there
El Paso International Airport is 110 miles west of the park. There is no public transportation to the park.

What to do
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
400 Pine Canyon Road
Salt Flat, Texas
Visitors center 915-828-3251
Dog Canyon ranger station 575-981-2418
www.nps.gov/gumo/index.htm
Daily year round; adults \$5 for seven days; children ages 15 and under free. Pay at visitors center (closed on Christmas) or, cash only, at all trailheads.

Where to camp
Campsites with toilets, running cold water, and garbage cans are available at Pine Springs and Dog Canyon. Select an unoccupied campsite, then **pay** cash at the self-registration board near the restrooms or by credit card at the visitors center. The fee is \$8 per night per site, or \$4 for Golden Age and Golden Access Passport holders. Two campsites for **groups of 10-20 people** are available at Pine Springs and one at Dog Canyon. **Wheelchair accessible** camping is available, and there are spots for RVs, though no hook-ups. **Checkout** time is noon. Backpackers have **10 backcountry camping grounds** to choose from, each with 5-8 campsites. The nearest to Pine Springs/Visitors Center is a mile below the top of **Guadalupe Peak** (5 sites). Camping allowed on **campsites only**, free with entrance fee, but you must obtain a backcountry **camping permit** beforehand at the visi-

tors center or ranger station. All individual campsites are on a **first come, first serve** basis. Group campsites are available by **reservation** (call 915-828-3251, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. MST daily) up to 60 days in advance. **No fires, wood, or charcoal** allowed in the park.

What to drink, eat
Drink at least **four gallons of water** a day, especially if you are hiking. Water is available at the visitors center, the McKittrick Canyon Contact Station (during the day only), Frijole Ranch, and at base camps in Pine Springs and Dog Canyon. The visitors center and Pine Springs base camp have cold drink machines. The nearest location for **groceries, showers, and lodging** is 35 miles away, in **Whites City, N.M.** (Rodeway Inn, 6 Carlsbad Caverns Hwy., 575-785-2292; \$95 per night). **Gasoline** is available there or 32 miles west, on US 62/180. **Carlsbad, N.M.**, 20 miles east on 62/180, has a wide range of **hotels and restaurants**.

Getting around
There are **no paved roads** in the park. **Roads end** at Pine Springs, McKittrick Canyon Contact Station, Frijole Ranch, Williams Ranch (4x4s only), Dog Canyon, and trailheads. Trails range from **easy to strenuous**. Many trails are **rocky** and often **steep**. Wear **sturdy clothing and footwear**. Desert air is dry, without enough moisture to trap the heat at night. Nights are **surprisingly cool**, even in summer. Expect **high winds** on mountain campsites. Ask a park worker about **lightning, mountain lion, and rattlesnake** safety.

neath a fallen ponderosa pine needle. Or simply look at your nails.

Don’t expect an epiphany; probably, there won’t be any. But you will come away stronger: You have been to your birthplace, you have absorbed its resilience. In

its magnanimous isolation, you have healed.

Anna Badkhen, whose travelogue about war and food, “Peace Meals” (Simon and Schuster), comes out next week, can be reached at badkhen@gmail.com.