



ANDREW SCRIVANI/THE NEW YORK TIMES

With a nutty taste and firm texture, farro once fed the Roman Legion.

Encounter

Garfagnana Valley, Italy

Going with the grain

Il Vecchio Molino, a shop full of hanging hams, fresh cheese, and idle banter, is nearly lost in the Garfagnana Valley of Italy's Alpi Apuane. At this outpost, Andrea Bertucci, Il Vecchio's round-faced, warm-hearted owner, has long guarded closely many culinary traditions, but none so carefully as farro. Farro is one of the oldest cultivated grains, famous for feeding the Roman Legion and in contemporary times championed as a healthy course when cooked with such things as olive oil and mushrooms.

"Many people grow farro, all around," Bertucci said. "But the 'grand cru' is in high Garfagnana."

TOM HAINES

Globe-trotting

Notes from our blog

Southwest pares down

Southwest says that it will trim three flights each at Manchester Boston in New Hampshire and Bradley International outside Hartford, and two at T.F. Green near Providence. The carrier says the cuts are part of a plan to trim its schedule by 190 flights, or 6 percent of its 3,400 daily total, starting Jan. 11.

Car rentals \$1 a day

CityFlitz, an auto-sharing start-up, will make vehicles available for use in Greater Toronto for \$1 per day starting tomorrow. How are they managing to do this? CityFlitz wraps their Mini Coopers and Clubmans and Smart cars in advertising — charging companies about \$400 a day. How does it work? You must be older than 23 and a licensed driver, pay a \$30 one-time administrative fee to join, a \$350 fully-refundable security deposit, and a \$7 monthly usage fee. Users must agree to drive at least 19 miles a day and can get cars for as long as a week at a time.

PAUL MAKISHIMA

News, Deals, Dispatches

Boston.com/travel is where to go no matter where you want to go.

Gearing up

Before you're well done

Whether you are close to home or traveling to an unfamiliar destination, it's hard to gauge the strength of the sun's



harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Oregon Scientific's Personal UV Monitor measures those rays' intensity and tells you how long you can be in the sun before your skin begins to cook. Enter your skin type and the SPF level of the sunscreen you're

using, and then expose the palm-sized device to the sky. The digital monitor measures UV intensity and calculates your recommended exposure time. It has a countdown timer with an alarm, a digital clock, and a strap so you can secure it to your wrist or bag.

The monitor sells for \$29.95 at oregonscientific.com (enter EDDDISC08 at checkout for 20 percent off).

KARI J. BODNARCHUK

Destinations

Night Life



ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

The Colosseum at Caesars Palace bears witness to the return of Cher, who is scheduled for 200 shows over three years.

OK, so maybe you can't turn back time

Through 2010

Las Vegas

Cher: Celine Dion may have had the theater built at Caesars Palace to hold her titanic voice and narcissistic stage show, but it's a pleasure to see that her Cirque de Self Celebration has left town after five long years of "Because You Loved Me" night after night. Some real showgirls are now occupying the Colosseum at the casino — namely Bette Midler, Elton John, and Cher. The former Mrs. Bono is custom-made for Las Vegas. She loves big, campy Bob Mackie costumes; her well-main-tained appearance appeals to everyone from frumpy Midwestern hausfrau to well-coiffed gay men; and she has hits that span more than 30 years. Some may find \$250 a bit steep to hear Cher sing "Dark Lady" and "If I Could Turn Back Time" in the flesh, but what fine, leather-clad flesh it is. *\$95 to \$250. Colosseum at Caesars Palace, 3570 Las Vegas Blvd. South, 866-227-5938, harrahs.com.*

Oct. 21-25

New York

CMJ Music Marathon and Film Festival: It is intended to be a showcase for industry insiders and journalists to hear the latest in popular music, but this event is also a prime week for everyday music nerds to hit as many shows as their festival passes will allow. Hundreds of bands play clubs throughout the city. So far, the lineup includes Beach House, Lykke Li, Minus the Bear, Roisin Murphy, Gang Gang Dance, the Dears, Crystal Castles, Broken Social Scene, and Yo Majesty. Register before Sept. 23 and the all-access pass for the marathon and film festival is \$450, \$275 for students. *cmj.com/marathon.*

Oct. 24-26

New Orleans

Voodoo Music Festival: These three days deftly blend local Louisiana musicians with top-notch international acts in City Park behind the New Orleans Museum of Art. Acts you probably know include R.E.M., Nine Inch Nails, Death Cab For Cutie, Dashboard Confessional, Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings, Thievery Corporation, Wyclef Jean, and Panic at the Disco. Local New Orleans bands you probably don't know include Tin Men, New Orleans Jazz Vipers, and Crimes Against Nature. *\$115 for all three days, thetenthritual.com.*

Oct. 17-31

Marseille

Fiesta des Suds: World music festivals tend to group like-minded musicians, or favor one region of the world over another in their programming. All of which makes the Fiesta des Suds stand out from the usual international gatherings. This year's concerts, which take place in a former dockyard, feature unique pairings such as Herbie Hancock on the same bill as Buena Vista Social Club singer Omara Portuondo, and Rokia Traore of Mali alongside Brazilian pop singer Vanessa da Mata. Tickets to shows range from \$38 to \$70 and are sold individually. *12 rue Urbain, dock-des-suds.org.*

Plan Ahead

Nov. 5-9

New York

New York Comedy Festival: Tickets have yet to go on sale, but they are likely to disappear quickly for stand-up shows by Sarah Silverman, Craig Ferguson, B.J. Novak, and Tracy Morgan. There's also a panel discussion with writers from "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." *nycomedyfestival.com.*

Christopher Muther

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; call or check online to confirm. Christopher Muther can be reached at muther@globe.com.

Where they went

Bahamas

WHO: Russ Haims, 46, of Wayland.

WHERE: Bahamas.

WHEN: 10 days in May.

WHY: To volunteer on his fourth "Collecting Trip" conducted by the New England Aquarium. Haims returns because, "I love marine life, I'm an avid scuba diver, and the thought of helping out the aquarium and then taking my young children there and saying, look at what Daddy caught, what more could I want?"

GO FISH: "There are three crew, three aquarium staff members, and nine participants. Our job is to collect fish and marine life for the aquarium. Of course they're very conscientious about handling the fish and protecting the reef," Haims said. Usually the volunteers are hobbyists from around the country. But, aside from a Dutch couple, this outing comprised several aquarium staff members, including president and CEO Howard "Bud" Ris and his wife, Margaret. (Another Collecting Trip leaves Sept. 14, at a cost of about \$3,500, excluding airfare.)

SITES AND FINDS: "The trips originate from Miami, and we always go through Bimini, but the itinerary changes depending on what dive sites we go to," Haims said. "We're on a research vessel, a 25-year-old dive boat." The volunteers would dive three or four times daily for 45-minute intervals. On this trip they netted about 400 specimens for the aquarium. They also conduct scientific surveys of the reef life.

WISH LIST: "The New England Aquarium has a very detailed wish list of species, quantity, and sometimes gen-



Russ Haims on a collecting dive in Bimini.

der. This time, for example, they wanted a yellow stringray of a certain size, but not a female so you don't take babies." They caught several, which are now part of the new touch-tank exhibit. "Before every dive we have what's called a chalk talk where they explain where the boat is, what reefs are around it, what fish you might find, whether there's a current, and they demonstrate on the boat how to catch the fish."

NET GAINS: The divers use several methods of catching fish, usually a net handled by two people or the whole group. "Every time you identify and capture them you put them in your catch bag. Then you bring them on board and not imagine a more rewarding," The fish are brought up slowly in order to acclimate and some even go into a decompression chamber. On "pack day," the group awakens at 2 a.m. to painstakingly prepare the fish for the airplane ride home. "If people knew how much care goes into all the fish at the aquarium, they'd have such an appreciation for them."

ON PURPOSE: Of the aquarium trips, Haims said, "I cannot imagine a more rewarding, purposeful, and enjoyable activity. I'm not interested in diving to see something that's just pretty anymore."

See Where They All Went

For more photos and to share yours, visit boston.com/travel/wheretheywent. Send your suggestions within two weeks of your return to diane@bydianedaniel.com.

Rave

Shop like a Southerner

Marietta, Ga. — Historic Marietta Square, about 20 miles northwest of Atlanta, is home to well-preserved late-19th and early-20th-century buildings that house

specialty boutiques, restaurants, coffee shops, and antiques stores. Last year, Felecia Prezzano and Tina Sivadon bought the thriving Vineyard Gift Shop, which sells vintage clothing, gifts, costume jewelry, ceramics, and tea products. About 20 vendors are represented in the sprawling space, making it feel like an indoor community yard sale.

Prezzano and Sivadon also have breathed new life into a former tea parlor on the vacant second floor. Today, the rambling series of fancifully decorated rooms operates as the Vineyard Café. Open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., the cafe serves homemade soups, salads, and other light and tasty treats like quiche, parmesan-spinach bites, and grilled panini and pizzettes. A local favorite is their signature oversized flaky croissant filled with piquant chicken and dried cranberry and almond salad.

Tea service is available. Sit in one of the large bay windows overlooking Glover Park and enjoy fresh baked scones, cookies, breads, and fruit spreads served with your choice of black, green, or herbal teas.

Vineyard Gift Shop and Café, 21 West Park Square, Marietta, Ga. Gift shop 678-581-3777; cafe 678-581-3771. Basic tea service \$12.99 includes baked goods; for \$17.95 add a cup of soup and assorted tea sandwiches.

NECEE REGIS



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Was your summer a bust? Make up for it with a fall getaway

By Richard P. Carpenter

Globe Correspondent

Autumn is a glorious time to travel, with its moderate temperatures, smaller crowds, sometimes lower prices, and splendid colors. Here are some opportunities that await the autumn traveler:

■ Nordic Village Resort in Jackson, N.H., suggests you get lost — in a maze, that is.

The Sherman Farm Maize package includes accommodations for two nights in a suite and passes for a family of four to the maze, which has an intricate network of twists and turns carved into eight acres of corn stalks. Families also can ride on the Moo Express, pick their own pumpkins, and pet the farm animals. Rates start at \$302 for a family of four, and the offer is available Sept. 20-Oct. 26.

Visit lmgnh.com.

■ With a walking vacation in Italy from Cross Country International, the first person pays \$2,695 and the second pays

nothing. The Rome Coast Walk, with five departures through December, includes six nights' lodging, four days of guided hiking, museum entrance fees, and most meals. The trip explores the towns of Barbarano Romano, Canale Monterano, and San Giovenale, and includes a visit to the Etruscan necropolis of Norchia. Daily walking distance is 4-7 miles. The price includes taxes but not airfare.

Visit walkingvacations.com or call 800-828-8768.

■ Kimpton's Hotel Marlowe in Cambridge has a Fall Foliage Package designed for families. Featured are two nights at the hotel, an all-day trip to Boston Hill Farm in North Andover or Brooksby Farm in Peabody for wagon rides, honey fresh from hives, and apple picking or pumpkin choosing. In addition, you can watch the leaves change on the Charles River with complimentary use of a kayak and take a family-friendly Urban AdvenTours City View Tour for four on bicycle. Prices start at \$999.

Call 800-825-7040 and ask for rate code PFOL or visit hotelmarlowe.com.

■ An Angler's Dream Package at the Teton Mountain Lodge and Spa in Jackson Hole, Wyo., starts at \$780 per person, with three nights' accommodations for two, and two full days of private guided fly fishing for two on the Snake River, with boxed lunches both days.

Visit tetonlodge.com or call 800-631-6271.

■ If you're contemplating a day trip from Boston to Salem, try the Salem Ferry, a high-speed catamaran that shuttles between the two cities. Each way takes under an hour. Round trip for adults is \$22, and there are several departure times.

Visit salemferry.com or call 978-741-0220.

■ Another day trip worth taking is to the Topsfield Fair, the oldest continually running country fair in America. As its promoters say, "Where else can you see the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and a pumpkin as big as a Volkswagen?" The

fair runs Oct. 3-13 off Route 1 in Topsfield. Adult admission is \$10-\$12.

Visit topsfieldfair.org or call 888-781-3247 (RT1-FAIR).

■ As the leaves come into glorious fall bloom, prices drop as much as 50 percent in the Atlantic Canada provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Travelers can download guides and find information about fall packages, accommodations, and events by going to: tourismnewbrunswick.ca, newfoundlandandlabrador.com, novascotia.com/fall, and mygentleisland.com.

■ Once school is in session, Martha's Vineyard may seem like your own private preserve. The Winnetu Oceanside Resort in Edgartown says September and October guests can take advantage of bike trails, tennis, and seasonal sales in downtown Edgartown with complimentary shuttles to town. With a 25 percent discount for three-night stays, rates range from \$222 to \$274 per night for two. A

buffet breakfast is included. Visit winnetu.com or call 866-335-1133.

■ Among things I will never forget is my first view of Santorini, with its little whitewashed homes on the cliffsides. A boutique property named Astra Apartments and Suites is offering a fall special Oct. 1-31: Guests who stay for three nights get a fourth night free. The Fall in Love at Astra package starts around \$1,100 and includes a traditional Greek breakfast daily, champagne and chocolates served at sunset on the second day, and taxes, for a savings of about \$360. Visit astra-apartments.com.

When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can add significantly to the price of a trip. Most prices quoted are for double occupancy; solo travelers will usually pay more. Offers are subject to availability and there may be blackout dates. Richard P. Carpenter can be reached at carpenter@globe.com.