

You won't need to fight for space to appreciate the beauty of the Victoria Falls

# 50 NEW TRAVEL SECRETS

Whether you've never heard of them, they've fallen off the travel radar, or there's a hidden side to a familiar destination, we bring you this year's secrets

## 50 Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Until 2002, anyone going to Victoria Falls would usually head to Zimbabwe. But President Mugabe's land-reform programme changed everything. As white farmers were removed, the economy went into meltdown, hyperinflation followed and the tourist industry collapsed along with everything else. The Zimbabwean Victoria Falls quickly became one of the least-visited wonders in the natural world.

Things have changed. Last year, Morgan Tsvangirai became prime minister in a unity deal with President Mugabe, and now Zimbabwe is a country waiting for visitors to return. I'd wanted to go for years, and finally visited recently. From the entrance into Mosi-oa-Tunya, the Victoria Falls National Park, I heard the deep resonant rumble of the falls long before I saw them. After passing David Livingstone's statue, I started to feel the mist wrapping around me in the lush green bush and stopped to view a group of red lechwe antelope peacefully grazing. Finally, as I climbed down slippery steps at the furthest viewpoint, a rainbow opened up to reveal the falls. It literally took my breath away as I saw the full magnificence of the Zambezi pouring down. I spent more than three hours viewing one of the most spectacular natural phenomena on earth and in that time I saw just a handful of other people. But as long as the political situation improves, this place will not remain the best-known secret in the world for long.

*Dale Templar, producer, BBC wildlife and travel documentaries*

An earlier version of the Stars and Stripes flag reflects Boston's and the USA's rich history

## 49 Boston, USA

Since the first settlers came ashore in 1630, English adventurers have been coming to Boston, Massachusetts. So it's strange that the city isn't visited by more British tourists today. Here, every street corner offers a history lesson. Among my favourites: at a busy downtown intersection, an innocuous bronze plaque commemorates the Boston Massacre, the first violent clash of the American Revolution; in a nearby suburb, a stone tower sits atop Prospect Hill, where George Washington raised the first American flag. Recently, Boston has rediscovered its connection to the sea. The dramatic new Institute of Contemporary Art is the centrepiece of the revitalised waterfront ([icaboston.org](http://icaboston.org)). A ferry ride from the downtown docks, the Boston Harbor Islands are strewn with forts, lighthouses, walking trails and beaches ([bostonislands.com](http://bostonislands.com)). Savour Boston's seaside setting by indulging in a steamed lobster or fried clams, along with a pint of local beer, Samuel Adams. Named for a celebrated patriot (and ironically a failed brewer), even the beer has a history lesson.

*Mara Vorhees, Lonely Planet author*

## 48 Munzur Valley, Turkey

The Munzur Valley is like a Turkish Shangri-La, giving visitors the sense of arriving in a fabulous, secret mountain land. Not mentioned in any of the guidebooks I'd read and rarely visited by foreigners, I was drawn there by the intriguing topography I'd spied on an aeronautical chart. The map didn't lie. Flanked to the north by a snow-crowned massif that blasts a mile straight into the sky, the basin's southern edge is cradled by rolling forested hills. Home to lynx, wolves, bear and other rare creatures, Turkey's first national park was established here in 1971. Arriving in October, I was too late to hike the high alpine meadows where shepherds camp during summer, but strolling through the Kurdish hamlets along the valley floor was a dream. Villagers extended invites to share tea in their homes, offering an unguarded glimpse of local life. The friendly town of Ovacik, with a couple of hotels (with guide services) and restaurants, is a perfect base. But better do it soon: the Munzur Valley is slated to be drowned behind a series of eight dams, and construction has already begun.

*Michael Benanav, Lonely Planet author*