

# THE TRAVEL ISSUE

29 Life-Changing Trips.  
Pick One NOW.



**National Parks Made Better**  
Fresh Escapes in Our Most Spectacular Places

**> The Best Worst Trip of My Life**  
By Wells Tower

**> Air Travel Made Easy: How to Avoid Delays & Fly Hassle-Free**

Actor Paul Walker heads for open water

## Your Next Great Adventure

**> The Outside Travel Awards**  
Our Favorite Getaways, Luggage, Headphones, Hotels...



→ OUTSIDE TRAVEL AWARDS



phone, audio player, and camera all rolled into one. Unlike the iPhone, though, the N95 is also a video camera. Plus it takes better pictures (with a 5.0-megapixel sensor and Carl Zeiss optics), and with its integrated GPS receiver, you won't get lost. \$780; nseries.com

how to make local specialties like stewed and roasted wild boar, courtesy of chef Chicca Maione. Base camp is a family-run hotel in Castagneto Carducci, a hill-top village overlooking the

**READERS' CHOICE**  
**Your Travel Guide**  
Lonely Planet (37%) wins, followed by "a compass and my sense of smell" (15%).

**BEST TRAVEL SUNGLASSES**  
**Oakley Hijinx**  
Of course they look cool. But we picked the Polarized Hijinx because they dish up distortion- and glare-free vision wherever you go—be it on water, snow, or the road. \$145; oakley.com

**BEST SECURITY SYSTEM**  
**KenaKai DataSafe Passport Wallet**  
Theoretically, the new radio-frequency-ID-equipped e-passports will speed passage through immigration queues. But the micro-chipped passport is also vulnerable to anyone holding a portable RFID scanner. Your best defense: KenaKai's DataSafe Passport Wallet wraps nine sheer layers of nickel-impregnated mesh—which blocks radio-wave transmission—inside a classic, unassuming Italian-leather exterior. Slim enough for a back pocket, it fits a passport, seven credit cards, cash, and a boarding pass. \$80; kenakai.com

**BEST EXCUSE TO CARBO-LOAD**  
**Cycling in Tuscany**  
Giro d'Italia winner Andy Hampsten and his crew lead this eight-day cyclepalooza, a perfect combo of hard riding and serious eating. Pedal 300-plus miles and learn

Mediterranean. \$3,500; cinghiale.com

**BEST PLACE TO HABLA ESPAÑOL**  
**La Mariposa Language School and Eco-Hotel**

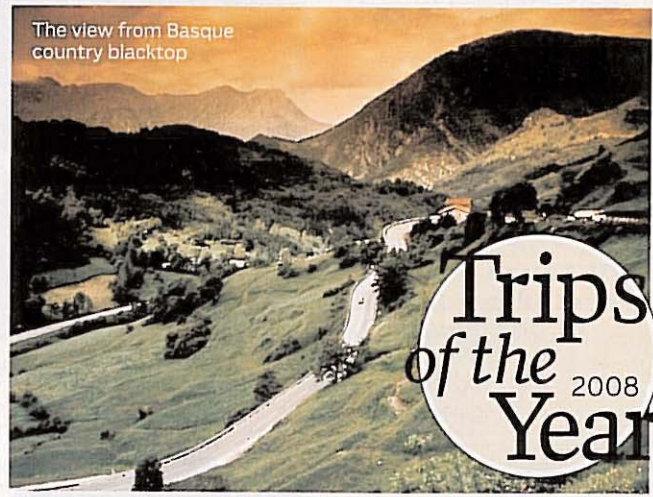
Set off the twisting road between Ticuantepe and La Concha in Nicaragua, this inland hotel/school feels more remote than it actually is. Tropical trees and birdsong are the backdrop for one-on-one Spanish lessons and meals harvested from Mariposa's four organic gardens. When you're not conjugating verbs, volunteer for community projects in nearby villages. Hotel facilities are powered by the sun—which is in no short supply here. All-inclusive Spanish-school packages, \$260 a week; spanishschoolnica.com

**BEST FARE POLICE**  
**YAPTA**  
Your Amazing Personal Travel

**READERS' CHOICE**  
**Island Fever**  
The tropical island you most want to visit is Fiji (16%), ahead of Tahiti (9%) and Hawaii (6%).

Agent tracks fares for you—and follows the price after you've purchased a ticket. Should the fare drop, you can get the difference refunded from the airline, provided you purchased directly from its site. yapta.com

**BEST USE OF COCONUTS**  
**Cocona Fabrics**  
By using activated carbon from coconut shells (a waste product of the water-filter industry), clothing made from Cocona fabrics absorbs moisture, reduces odor, and diffuses UV light. Check it out for yourself—everyone from Marmot to Royal Robbins to Izod uses the stuff. coconafabrics.com



### WESTERN EUROPE France and Spain: Cycling Through Basque Country

Dozens of pros in the Euro peloton—and an obscene number of Michelin-starred chefs—call the Basque region home. On this eight-day trip, pedal along the snaking mountain roads of the western Pyrenees, past pine forests, remote villages, and cherry orchards, pumping up for Indurain-worthy climbs, like a five-mile ride up Monte Jaizkibel, the highest point on the Cantabrian coast, and a 13-mile haul up Col Bagargui—known locally as the "Col du Sinistre," or "Evil Mountain." Feed-zone snacks include nutty Ossau-Iraty cheese and gâteau Basque (sweet cake with cherries). At night, sip Armagnac in white-stucco villas and historic inns, including a tenth-century castle, and dine on regal fare like wood pigeon and txipirones (baby squid). For cross-training, there's the txikiteo (tapas crawl) in San Sebastian and surfing in Biarritz. OUTFITTER: Velo Classic Tours; veloclassic.com PRICE: \$5,000 DIFFICULTY: Challenging WHEN TO GO: June

**BEST WEEKEND BAG**  
**Osprey Slipstream 20"/40L**

The wheeled Slipstream is the compact SUV of the luggage world. Its 2,400 cubic inches of compartment space makes it versatile enough for extended trips, and with the included Glide laptop case, which can be stowed inside or outside the pack, the Slipstream is equally versatile when

CONTINUED INSIDE →

