



TRAVEL

## THE EVENT

The Houses of Parliament are running a Suffragette Season for visitors in October to coincide with the release of the film, *Suffragette*. Highlights include themed tours, talks and a banquet (parliament.uk).



## THE LUGGAGE

American Tourister has added to its *Star Wars* luggage range with the Kylo Ren Suitcase for adults and the Star Wars Wonder collection for children. From £10 to £129 (americantourister.co.uk).

## THE HOTEL

Rajbari Bawali, a new palace hotel just outside Kolkata, opens in November. The lakeside building has been restored and converted to offer 30 rooms and suites, some with balconies (therajbari.com).

## STAY THE NIGHT

## Retro rooms that make the grade

Part apartment, part interior-design museum, Yugodom offers a glimpse of the Serbian capital's past. By **Mary Novakovich**



*Ljubav i Moda (Love and Fashion)*; the Seventies bedroom has posters from sexually provocative films that were banned by the communist government; the living room has a playful Eighties theme based on screwball comedies of the era.

Serbian friends chuckled when I told them I was sleeping in a "stay-over museum" that pays homage to life in the old Yugoslavia. Surely it's just like visiting your family in Belgrade, they said. Well, yes and no. Yugodom is the brainchild of 32-year-old interior designer Mario Milakovic, who turned his passion for collecting and restoring mid-century Yugoslav furniture and artefacts into a witty evocation of life during the Tito years – but with modern comforts.

The two-bedroom flat in Belgrade's Dorcol district is on the first floor of a bland-looking low-rise building that housed army families in the 1960s. Inside is a social history of Yugoslavia told through its vintage furniture, decor, artwork, kitsch holiday souvenirs, books and even a display of vintage bathroom products. It's all very stylishly done; its light and airy rooms certainly have much more flair than anything I remember from my first visit to Yugoslavia in the Seventies. In a way, it's also poignant – a visual representation of a country that no longer exists.

## The rooms

While all the rooms have typically mid-century furniture, each one has its own decade and a Yugoslav cinematic theme. The Sixties bedroom is inspired by the 1960 comedy

**FINE VINTAGE**  
Yugodom's living room (above) and Seventies bedroom (top right); bohemian Skadarlija (right)  
ADAM BATTERBEE

busy Strahinjica Bana street, but there's very good soundproofing.

## Out and about

You're in a prime spot for most of Belgrade's sights. Trg Republike (Republic Square) and the lively, pedestrianised Knez Milhalilova are less than 10 minutes' walk away. The vast Kalemegdan Park – which includes the historic Belgrade Fortress, gardens, museums and the city zoo, and overlooks both the Danube and Sava rivers – is less than 15 minutes' walk from the flat. It's right by the corner of Skadarlija, the 19th-century bohemian quarter of pedestrianised streets and traditional restaurants.

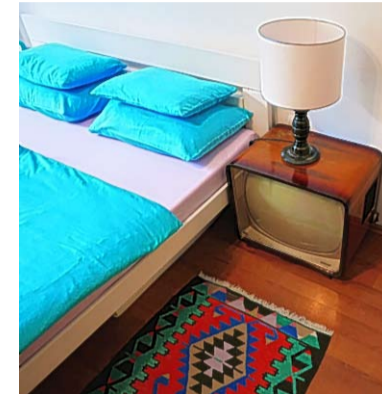
It's about a 25-minute walk to the river Sava and Savamala, the district that's picking itself up after decades of neglect and turning into Belgrade's hippest area. That title had formerly been held by Strahinjica Bana itself in the 1990s and 2000s, when its surgically enhanced client

tele gave it the nickname Silicon Valley. Things have changed since then, but Strahinjica Bana remains an agreeably entertaining street with a bewildering choice of bars.

## The food and drink

Coffee, tea and basic condiments are provided, and the fridge includes an honesty bar. There's a corner shop a minute's walk away on Francuska street, and you can see the large Bajlonijeva food market from Yugodom's balcony.

With Skadarlija so close, it would be a shame not to stroll along its cobbled streets and stop for an old-fashioned Serbian meal. On warm evenings you'll be serenaded by folk musicians. Perennial favourites and neighbours Dva Jelena (00 381 11 7234 885; dvajelena.rs) and Sesir Moj (00 381 11 7228 750; restoransesirmoj.co.rs) are reliable choices for plates of *cevapcici* (grilled meat rissoles) for 690 dinars (£4).



For drinks, pop into the shabby-chic garden terrace of Jazz Bajloni (00 381 69 225 5664; bajloni.com) on Cetinjska street, opposite the market. Cocktails are a very reasonably priced 390 dinars (£2.30).

Walk about five minutes west to Kneginje Ljubice street and look out for the jungle-like garden bar of Blaznavac (00 381 11 328 5857), with its wilfully mismatched rustic furniture and psychedelic murals. It gets busy later in the evening, so arrive early for a tree-shaded seat and a beer for 193 dinars (£1.10).

On Strahinjica Bana, at No 48, Kandahar (00 381 11 291 0311) offers a smoky taste of the east with its exotic interior and hookah pipes for 600 dinars (£3.70).

## The essentials

Yugodom, Strahinjica Bana 80, Belgrade Serbia (00 381 11 984 6366; bit.ly/Yugodom). Prices start at €55 (£40) per night.

## GREAT GETAWAYS

## SLOPE OFF EARLY

Neilson is offering savings on ski holidays booked early. A week for two in Les Deux Alpes in February 2016 costs £335pp. The price includes flights on Norwegian from Gatwick to Grenoble, departing 20 February, plus a week's accommodation at the Hotel Les Lutins with breakfast. Transfers are not included and ski passes and equipment hire are extra (neilson.co.uk).

## DUTCH WEEKEND

Wrap up warm and head off on a city break to Amsterdam in December for £251pp with Jet2 Holidays City Breaks. The price includes flights departing from Manchester on 11 December, plus three nights' B&B accommodation at the Apple Inn Hotel, which is located opposite the Vondelpark (jet2holidays.com).

## CARIBBEAN GETAWAY

Book ahead to get a good deal on some winter sun. Virgin Holidays has a week in St Lucia in February for £695pp. The price includes Virgin Atlantic flights from Gatwick to St Lucia departing on 23 February, plus a week's room-only accommodation at the Bay Gardens Hotel, which is on the south side of Rodney Bay (virginholidays.co.uk).

## OH CANADA

Canadian low-cost airline WestJet is launching its first direct flights from Gatwick next year, serving six cities across Canada: Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and St John's. Currently it is possible to book a return ticket to Toronto, departing 9 May and returning 16 May, for £400 (westjet.com).

## SOMETHING TO DECLARE



**AUTUMN'S PICK**  
Many farmers are opening their doors to guests

Get back to nature and wake up feeling farm fresh



Andy Woodward

There's a growing trend for seeking out farm experiences in our everyday lives. We're ordering farm-fresh vegetable boxes, we're visiting farm parks and shops, and tuning in to programmes such as *Countryfile* and *Lambing Live*. So it's no surprise that VisitEngland figures for 2014 show farms were the fastest-growing visitor attraction category, with tourist numbers up 10 per cent in a year.

As our appetite grows for everything outdoors, there is no better place to connect with how food is produced than at a working farm. Better still, stay on one during the bountiful autumn months to get a really good feel for the harvest season. Farm Stay UK is a good starting point. We are a not-for-profit co-operative of farmers, offering around a 1,000 different farm accommodation options throughout the country.

With so many fluctuating factors in farming, the opportunity for farmers to use the asset of their land has never been greater. Over the years had it not been for the opportunity to offer B&B, self-catering, and more recently "glamping", many farmers, especially tenant farmers, would have needed to leave their land. Fundamentally, tourism helps the farms become sustainable, and helps protect the land for future generations to enjoy.

As the warm weather starts to turn, now is a good time to embrace what the British country-

side has to offer. As well as stunning autumn mists and an excuse to light the fire, hedgerows are laden with blackberries, orchards with apples and plums, and fields and forests hide delicious edible fungi. To celebrate British Food Fortnight – which runs until 4 October – and this year's harvest, we are shouting even louder about what our farm stays can offer with our Forage on a Farm campaign. There are opportunities such as coastal foraging from a converted barn in Cornwall, a farm with its own mushroom school in Scotland, and staying on a hop garden and vineyard in Kent.

Aside from foraging, what child doesn't love the chance to get up close to farm animals, ride in a tractor, or collect eggs from hens? All of these experiences are readily available at farms across the country. And there is plenty for grown-ups in the autumn too, with the chance to disengage from everyday life, enjoy low slung sunsets over meadows, sip a local cider and breathe in lots of fresh air. The only downside will be that your usual boiled egg and soldiers will never taste as good again after tucking into eggs collected from the hen house that very morning.

The standard of farm accommodation has come a long way too – you can now choose to wake up in a farmhouse B&B or cook your own bacon in a self-catering cottage or barn. For those who want to really embrace the rural settings, there are shepherd's huts and yurts. Wherever you choose to stay, the countryside is waiting to give you a big abundant welcome this autumn. And the activity and fresh air that life on the farm brings will ensure a great night's sleep. Cockerel allowing of course...

Andy Woodward is CEO of Farm Stay UK (farmstay.co.uk)

## OFFERS

## The Battle of the Somme centenary

Five nights from only £1,099pp



The Battle of the Somme was one of the bloodiest battles in history during which over one million men were killed or wounded over the four and a half months the battle lasted.

In this Centenary year, this tour will cover the whole of this savage battle but especially remembering the first day when almost 20,000 British troops were killed and over 30,000 wounded – the worst day in the history of the British Army.

Join battlefield expert, Michael How, to explore the battlefields of the Somme while remembering a unique day in history – the 100 year anniversary of the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, with a small memorial service.

Departing 29 June 2016, the price includes:

- Return Eurostar from St Pancras to Lille
- Five nights bed-and-breakfast at the three-star Holiday Inn Express Arras
- Welcome dinner on the first evening and two lunches at the Ocean Villas Guest House
- Transfers and touring itinerary
- Battlefield expert Michael How
- Experienced tour manager throughout

Call: 020 7251 7397 quoting code T20SEP15IND or visit independent.co.uk/traveloffers

Prices are per person based on two sharing and are subject to availability. Single rooms are available at an extra supplement. Holiday insurance is extra. Offer operated by Travel Editions Group Ltd, Abta V3120, Atol 3525, a company wholly independent of Independent Print Ltd.

## ACTIVE TRAVEL SIAN LEWIS

## Forget the swimming pool and go wild instead

A nip in the air is no reason to forgo the wonders of wild swimming. You can still take a dive into the temperate waters of some of the world's most beautiful and unusual swimming spots, from waterfalls and forest pools to bat caves.

Hidden in the hills of Thailand, near the river town of **Kanchanaburi**, the fabled three-headed Hindu elephant god Erawan has taken the form of a

magnificent seven-tiered waterfall. Erawan's Falls, in the national park of the same name, are linked by a steep, mile-long hike, which can take most of the day to complete if you stop for a dip in the crystal clear waters of each of the lagoons. In the first pool little fish nibble harmlessly on your toes, while the fourth and fifth have natural stone slides on which you can whoosh down into the water. The tiny seventh



Cave in: Cenote X'keken EYE UBQUITOUS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

pool is said to resemble the head of Erawan himself. Stay in the park's bungalows from 800 Thai baht (£14.50) for two people, or one of Kanchanaburi's cheap and cheerful guesthouses. Park entrance costs 300 baht (£5.40) and it is easily reached by bus from Kanchanaburi (thainationalparks.com).

Troglobytes should pack their bathers for Mexico's **Yucatán Peninsula** and go in search of Cenote X'keken, a cave full of deep, still water, with a ceiling of limestone arches and stalactites. As you swim in the chilly cenote (sinkhole), shards of light descend through cracks in the roof, where you'll find the cave's other regular visitors

– leathery little bats. X'keken is an easy cycle from the town of Valladolid, where you can rent bikes from La Candelaria hostel (0052 985 856 2267; hostelvalladolidyucatan.com), which will also give you a hand-drawn map. Doubles from 380 Mexican pesos (£15).

If your idea of wild swimming is rather more paradisaical, live out your *Swiss Family Robinson* fantasies on **Espirito Santo**, one of the many islands of Vanuatu, in the South Pacific. In the depths of the forest are the Blue Holes – formed by springs of fresh water rising from limestone, the water is a bizarrely pure, bright crayon blue. Nanda Blue Hole (entry

A\$5/E2.30; nandabluehole.com) is the largest and loveliest.

But there's no need to hop on a plane in search of aquatic thrills. If you've got a thick enough wetsuit you can prove your mettle with a skin-tingling autumn swim in Pembrokeshire's **Blue Lagoon**, hidden in the cliffs above **Abereddy Beach**. Walk up a little path past ruined slate workers' cottages and you'll suddenly stumble upon this man-made sea-water lagoon of deep, sapphire blue. Those brave enough to dive in and swim across are rewarded with jutting slate steps to clamber up for a heart-stopping leap into the depths.