

BEFORE YOU GO

Inspiration and ideas



MOVIES

Times are obviously a very personal thing, so listen to your inner beast to make some compilations for the planning and the traveling. Perhaps some soothing backdrop music to dusting off the suitcase, an upbeat tempo to tracking down your hiking boots and a singalong soundtrack for your time on the road. Certain genres tap right into that slow travel mood – chill-out and singer-songwriters work for me (John's legends "Ordinary People," "Are you in" from Incubus, "Lost in the Light" by Bahamas and Ziggy Albert's "Stronger" for sure), but if "ethereal wave" and "spilling nectar" take you to that special slow place, go forth and bliss out.

MOVIES

There are plenty of essential movies that transport the willing mind to a faraway place in the press of a play button. If you're heading to France, *Amélie* and *Before Sunset* will make you fall in love with cobble streets and cutesy cafes before you get there. Hunt for the Wildgeese and *The Hobbit* are must-reads for travelers to New Zealand. *The Secret of Gipsy Papa* is a Vietnam classic and do yourself a favor and watch *The Sweet Hereafter* for a snippet of Caribou culture and place.

Delving a bit deeper, iconic films with slow journey themes about wilderness survival and self-discovery include *Tkts.*, a true story about a woman's nine-month

APPS

[illegible]

Even KindleDirect travelers should consider taking an emergency book or two. It's a guaranteed form of relaxation that doesn't rely on batteries or chargers. Here are some titles that will help you get a sense of the history, culture or political climate (at all three) of your destination and creates connections before you land. Some of my contemporary favorites include: *Michael Ondaatje's Englishman in the Sky*, Elena Ferrante's *The Days of Acanth*, *Michael Chabon's The American Dream*, *Michael Kleanthous's Vital Signs* and *Donna Tartt's The Goldfinch* (New York and Amsterdam), anything by *Tim Winton (Australia)*, *Margaret Atwood's The Elegance of Wildcat* (Perth), *Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Girl on the Train* (London), *Michael Ondaatje's Englishman in the Sky* (London), *William Finnegan's Barbarian Days* (Hawaii and the South Pacific). You can't go past the classics either: *Jack Dawson's Old Africa* (Kampé), *Graham Greene's The End of the Affair* (London) and *Jack Kerouac's On the Road* (USA) (all available on Kindle). And, for some comfort a zeligfest full of translations to now.

BREWSTER HUT,
NEW ZEALAND

Wherever you are
in New Zealand,
you can be certain
there's a hut nearby.

When it comes to hikes, New Zealand walks the walk. The Department of Conservation manages a network of more than 950 hut camps catering to peripatetic adventures across the country. Whereas you are in New Zealand, you can be certain there's a hut nearby. The huts vary from newly built, comfortable and cosy little Enchanted huts, heated, toilet facilities and 12 to 20 bunks with en-suite, to unheated wooden huts [providing basic shelter and two facilities]. All of the huts are bookable on a first-come, first-served basis, and they're happily cheap. Breathe! It's a lot better than the old-fashioned Back Track in Ireland. The huts are located on the most beautiful scenery, and, as pointed a little higher up, it's a rare and beautiful sight standing alone on a far ridge overlooking the valley and the endless snow-capped mountain peaks under a trade wind pine forest with 12 bunks, a basic cooking area, a toilet and a shower. The huts are well equipped with a lot of food for you can simply walk from hut to hut. Most visitors will set off early for the following morning climb to Mount Ararangi to see the sun kiss the mountainside pink, red and gold on the snow.

Access via a steep cliff and needed in the kind of zone where a pirate might hide treasure, this hut in South Devon, England, is as romantic as it is secluded. Its built from local rocks and wood and has a shingled roof and heavy wooden shutters so that it snugly into the rugged rocky cliffs either side. Inside, it's a chamber with plenty of light, hammock seats for watching the seagulls, cormorants and gulls, and a kitchenette, a cosy bed and access via a ladder. There's no electricity, just solar-powered light, so on winter weekends you can fire up the wood burner, which doubles as a heater boiler to the wares sold or to keep an eye on alcoholating. If the fog takes you, the local scene is worth exploring. Head to Devon for eateries and shops or Newton Ferris, a hamlet or so away, where you can have a boat. You can also walk along the edge of Plymouth Sound to Cawsand and catch the passenger ferry back. If hiding away is your intention, your boat can make up a boat and leave. Have a good time from nearby Devon. No need to leave. Ever.

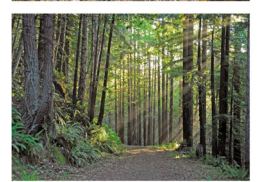


New walks, parks and preserves in nature



The best of these newly opened attractions help to sustain the local communities.

While it might feel like we have the world mapped out in terms of trails, routes, national parks and natural wonders, there are in fact new and inspiring routes and destinations unveiled on a regular basis. For slow travellers this is an opportunity to explore trails less travelled in far corners of the planet (hopefully before the crowds get there). The opening of the Ruta de Los Parques in Chile and Canada's Great Trail unveiled thousands of kilometres of relatively uncharted terrain into public hands. Costa Rica's Poás Volcano National Park provides an integral opportunity to witness a geothermal wonder in safe proximity. The best of these newly opened attractions help to sustain the local communities. They also have uplifting back-stories about their sustainability and contribution to the future of the planet. These aspects enable travellers to maximise their positive impact.



Built from stone and wood, the luxury rooms and villas of this resort in north-western Greece lie with the surrounding traditional village of Anafi. In west Zagori, being a four-hour drive to the nearest airport in Thessaloniki, Zagori is hardly on the tourist radar, but its status as a World Heritage contender is a nod to the stunning organic landscape replete with old arched stone bridges, cobbled streets, picturesque village squares, incredible gorges and alpine lakes.



A trio of remote wilderness properties at the Broadacre resort in Colorado Springs are serviced by a fleet of Cadillac[®], but one of the wilderness properties can also be reached by foot (on a rewarding three-hour trek) or by mule. Cloud Camp is a seven-room wood-and-stone lodge (an additional 11 cabins are nearby) that sits atop Cheyenne Mountain with 360-degree views looking in the plains, Pikes Peak and the Colorado Rocky Mountains. The mules, which come from the Grand Canyon, are huggable shagpas and make for a memorable, unforgettable animal. Rest assured, your luggage is transferred via Cadillac.

India's Kumaon Himalayas is a little-known region of Uttarakhand, residents of its mountain villages still live traditional lives. Amid the wildflowers and terraced slopes sits beautiful Shikri 300 (at a modern property that blends into the wooded surrounds). Far removed from the noise and chaos, this remote mountain-top location has views of the perennially snowcapped peaks of the Great Himalayas range. You can trek through the pretty foothill terrain to one of the four luxuriously tidy lodges or take the next step and join one of the property's multiple village walks.



The curious, immersive and mindful traits that often define slow travel are felt most intensely when you're tapping into a combination of authentic places and the real-life local people who inhabit them. Whether it's in the warmth of a rural kitchen cooking with a nonna, on a national park field trip with a university professor, or on a visit to a refugee camp with a top journalist, immersion brings engagement and connection with it.

One of my favourite slow experiences as a backpacker was a week spent in the languid heat on the Dalmatian coast in Croatia. Our group of five 20-somethings had chanced upon guesthouse accommodation in the simple beachfront home of a woman called Magda. I'd been instantly drawn to her because she reminded me of my mum. Blonde hair swept up on the top of her head in a messy bun and apron permanently around her waist. She also gave us the mum-like hearty welcome of a people-person who is happy when there's food to be cooked and plenty of people around the table.

We planned to be at Magali's for one night but ended up staying for a week. We ventured on life size tips into Dubrovnik to explore the old town, but the real travel experiences happened sitting at Magali's fresco wooden dining table, which was shaded by a fig tree that would purrivate conversations by lending its big, fat, silky fur on one of our dinner plates. Magali's husband, whose name I have forgotten, would push his delfin out each morning, and Magali would slip his catch—a fish or a squid—in a fly pan with a squeeze of lemon pickled from her orchard and serve it with a salad of vegetables drenched in olive oil.

With food as communion and Magda's rather tart homemade wine as the lubricant, we travellers would share stories about each other's countries and cultures, politics and private lives, loves and losses. When we weren't having deep-and-ponderingfuls around the table helping Magda in the kitchen, we'd be sitting in the mezzanine, reading travel books that had drawn us to the hotel community and taking walks as the twilight faded over the Adriatic.

You can rely on the serendipitous nature of travel for these kinds of experiences, but I bow that the slow travel trend sees these kinds of holidays consciously factored into itineraries. The Local Living Croatia experience in this chapter reminded me of my trip. The others touch a chord too.





It can be challenging to travel in the modern world, easily lured by the temptations of fast planes, cheap airlines, last-minute tickets, quick fix travel apps and overzealous tour operators. *Slow Travel* is the antithesis of these overcrowded tourist hot spots and tired checklist experiences; rather, it emerges from our longing to seek connection with ourselves and our lives in more intense and meaningful ways.

Penny Watson's *Slow Travel* is a beautifully designed and practical compendium of places, activities, tours and experiences that will inspire you to get on the road in your own time and on your own terms. Watson explores slow travel as a physical and philosophical endeavour, taking readers off the beaten track and through nature, and unveils journeys that will nurture talent and ignite the inner-self.

Inside you'll discover incredible walks and epic hikes that will take you to mountain peaks, through jungles and across deserts under starlit skies. You will find islands, boltholes and remotes escapes

alongside ways and means of finding calm in big bustling cities. You could decide to cruise slow-mo down Egypt's Nile on a 19th-century steam ship, visit ancient dzongs and temples in Bhutan or learn the art of pizza-making in Italy. In this fast-paced world, it's worth adjusting your vacation time to a pace we can all strive to keep up with.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Award-winning writer, journalist and author Penny Watson has travelled the world, written feature articles for countless magazines and newspapers, and researched a number of guidebooks including *Hong Kong Precincts* and *London Pocket Precincts*. As her career has evolved so has Penny's yearning for slow travel. This book, and one of her upcoming titles, *Ultimate Campsites: Australia*, are a direct response to this need. She is a member of both the British Guild of Travel Writers, and Australian Society of Travel Writers. She currently resides in Melbourne with her partner Pippy and their two children Digby and Etienne.

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