

# Seven Wonders

Let your grand tour this summer start with these cultural capitals where luxury still reigns and the dollar is almighty. **By Chantal Gordon**

## Bangkok

**Where to stay:** Sleekly designed by Katherine Khn (Issey Miyake and Dior boutiques), **The Metropolitan** in Sathorn is still this city's ultimate hipster magnet. Spotted here: Kylie Minogue, Keira Knightley, Mariah. *Rates from \$260; 011.66.02.625.3322, metropolitan.como.bz.*

**Top table:** Two of the finest restaurants in town, **La Scala** and **Celadon**, are literally next door at The Sukhothai (*thesukhothai.com*). Dinner for two, \$70

**Street bite:** Sun-dried pork marinated in coriander, cumin and star-anise powder, Chinatown. Less than \$1

**Happy hour:** **The Met Bar** at the Metropolitan serves bespoke cocktails made by London-trained bartenders. Tom Yumtini, \$9

**Art pick:** **The Museum of Siam**, \$9

**Hot ticket:** Thai boxing, ringside, \$56

**Style steal:** Gauzy, fashion-forward tops at vintage-inspired boutique **It's**

**Happened to Be a Closet**, \$36

**Spa splurge:** One-hour Thai massage at **The Oriental Spa** (*mandarinoriental.com/bangkok*), \$75

**Taxi budget:** \$1 for the first 2 km. Or hire a tuktuk for "Cheap, cheap!"

## Buenos Aires

**Where to stay:** A former residence of aristocracy, the **Palacio Duhau Park Hyatt** mixes Belle Époque glam with contemporary cool in the chichi Recoleta nabe. Spotted here: Sir Elton John, Radiohead and Coldplay. *Rates from \$435; 888.591.1234, buenosaires.park.hyatt.com.*

**Top table:** **La Cabrera**, in Palermo Soho, serves the best steaks (they're the size of footballs). Dinner for two, \$55

**Street bite:** Empanadas, less than \$1

**Happy hour:** A glass of local Malbec at the Palacio's old-money **Oak Bar**, \$8

**Art pick:** Frida Kahlo exhibit at

MALBA, \$5

**Hot ticket:** Tango show at **Café**

**Tortoni** (*cafetortoni.com.ar*), \$50

**Style steal:** **Mishka**, whose 100 percent handmade shoes kick it with major whimsy, from \$80

**Spa splurge:** 50-minute purifying "Ragiantü Ceremony" at Park Hyatt's **Ahin Spa**, \$120

**Taxi budget:** \$1 to start, plus 50¢/km

## Rio de Janeiro

**Where to stay:** The sex appeal of Copacabana Beach—plus two pools: one for morning sun, one for afternoon—is maximized at the **Sofitel**. Spotted here: Liza Minnelli, Matt Dillon, Michael Jackson and Pelé. *Rates from \$231; 800.763.4835, softel.com.*

**Top table:** Feast on seafood stew with coconut milk at **Siri Mole** (*sirimole.com.br*) in Copacabana. Dinner for two, \$70

**Street bite:** Fresh coconut water, \$2

**Happy hour:** A Caipirinha at **Bar D'Hotel** in Leblon, which boasts ample

spottings of famous footballers, actors and other *bon ton*, \$7

**Art pick:** National Fine Arts Museum for a mix of African, European, Brazilian and folk works, \$2 (free on Sundays)

**Hot ticket:** Soccer match, \$13

**Style steal:** **Bum Bum** in Ipanema sells the ultimate Brazilian bikinis, \$52

**Spa splurge:** Toning, hydrating mud wrap at **Nirvana Spa at the Jockey Club** (*enirvana.com.br*), \$50

**Taxi budget:** About 60¢/km. Or hire Sofitel's private drivers, \$35/hour

## Sydney

**Where to stay:** The Asian-modern **Shangri-La** offers picture-perfect views of the harbor and Opera House. Spotted here: Cindy Crawford, Sophia Loren, Lily Allen and the Strokes. *Rates from \$171; 866.565.5050, shangri-la.com.*

**Top table:** In Bondi Beach at **Sean's Panaroma** (*seanspanaroma.com.au*), you

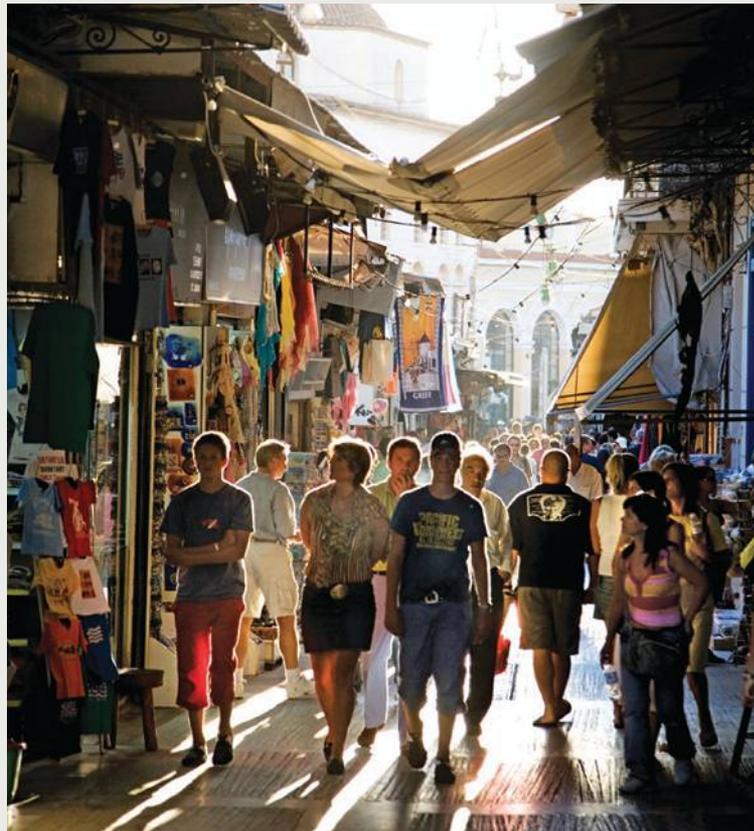


URBAN LEGENDS  
Clockwise from left:  
The magnificent Palacio Duhau Park Hyatt in Buenos Aires; the best Italian restaurant in Bangkok, La Scala at The Sukhothai; the famous Copacabana Beach as seen from the Sofitel in Rio de Janeiro.





**TOURISTS DE FORCE!**  
Clockwise from top: The lobby living room at The Opposite House in Beijing; shopping in downtown Athens; Wine Gallery restaurant at the Life Gallery Athens hotel.



## Luxuries We Still Love

The signature suites at most **Rocco Forte** hotels ([roccofortecollection.com](http://roccofortecollection.com)) come with complimentary mobile phones pre-programmed with speed-dial for all the hot restaurants, bars, shops and taxi services!

can't beat the tartare of freshly caught kingfish. Dinner for two, \$75  
**Street bite:** Chunky meat pie, \$2  
**Happy hour:** Glass of Shiraz at Shangri-La's 36th-floor  
**Blu Horizon Bar**, \$10  
**Art pick:** Art Gallery of New South Wales, the ultimate in boundary-pushing international and aboriginal works, free  
**Hot ticket:** Opera House ballet, \$47  
**Style steal:** Find bargains aplenty on independent fashion brands at **Paddington Market**. Summer dress by a rising-star designer, \$20  
**Spa splurge:** Sodashi treatment using ancient healing stones at **The Spa at Four Seasons** ([fourseasons.com/sydney](http://fourseasons.com/sydney)), \$135  
**Taxi budget:** About 86¢/minute

## Athens

**Where to stay:** In the of-the-moment suburb of Ekali, **Life Gallery Athens** is a multi-culti mash-up of styles (airy 1960s mod meets Latin American cantina meets Asian-inspired spa). Spotted here: Brit-pop band Muse. *Rates from \$310; 800.337.4685, [designhotels.com/lifegallery](http://designhotels.com/lifegallery).*  
**Top table:** Nosh on Crete-style lamb with spiny chicory at **Alatsi** ([alatsi.gr](http://alatsi.gr)) in the neighborhood of Ilissia.

Dinner for two, \$103  
**Street bite:** Sausage or chicken *vromiko* sandwiches, \$4  
**Happy hour:** Submarine cocktail (Mythos beer with a shot of tequila dropped inside) at **Roya** in Psyrri, \$12  
**Art pick:** The glass-and-steel **New Acropolis Museum** ([newacropolismuseum.gr](http://newacropolismuseum.gr)), 300 meters from the actual Acropolis, opens in June  
**Hot ticket:** Soccer match, \$13  
**Style steal:** The legendary, unisex, calfskin sandals by **Melissinos Art**, made famous by Jackie O., \$27  
**Spa splurge:** An hour of Greece's famed thalassotherapy (seawater, mud and seaweed) at **Divani Spa** ([divanis.com](http://divanis.com)) in Vouliagmeni on the Athenian Riviera, \$103  
**Taxi budget:** \$2 to start, plus 36¢/km. Or the metro is just five minutes from the hotel

## Beijing

**Where to stay (chic):** Walking distance from the Forbidden City, **Peninsula Beijing** mixes traditional Chinese architecture with modern, streamlined style. House cars include two customized Rolls-Royce Phantoms. Spotted here: Nicolas Cage and Chinese

movie star Gong Li. *Rates from \$461; 866.382.8388, [peninsula.com](http://peninsula.com).*  
**Where to stay (hip):** In the Village at Sanlitun, the outrageously cool **Opposite House** is an emerald glass jewel box filled with Chinese contemporary art and a steel-clad pool. The house cars? Maserati Quattroporte and an Audi Q7. Spotted here: Vivienne Tam and Taiwanese rock star Xin. *Rates from \$286; 800.323.7500, [theoppositehouse.com](http://theoppositehouse.com).*  
**Top table:** Famed foodie destination **Quan Ju De Peking Roast Duck** ([quanjudu.com.cn](http://quanjudu.com.cn)) near Tiananmen Square. Feast for two, \$40  
**Street bite:** Jianbing crêpe, 50¢  
**Happy hour:** **No Name Bar** in Houhai. Lychee Martini, \$9  
**Art pick:** The **Ullens Center for Contemporary Art**, housed in a Bauhaus-style former factory in the white-hot 798 District, \$2  
**Hot ticket:** Soccer match, \$30  
**Style steal:** The **Pearl Market**, where the stalls are chaotic and jam-packed and haggling is essential. Freshwater pearl necklace, \$29  
**Spa splurge:** Chi-balancing meridian massage at **The Peninsula Spa**, \$102  
**Taxi budget:** \$1.40 to start, plus 30¢/km

## Hanoi

**Where to stay:** **InterContinental Hanoi Westlake**, on the edge of Hanoi's tranquil Westlake. Nguyen Dynasty-inspired furniture mingles with quirky lampshades resembling fishing traps. Celeb guests: President of Singapore, Duke of York, King of Malaysia. *Rates from \$160; 888.424.6835, [intercontinental.com/hanoi](http://intercontinental.com/hanoi).*  
**Top table:** The glam **Club de L'Oriental** in the Old Quarter for grilled seabass wrapped in banana leaves and lemongrass-infused chicken satay. Dinner for two: \$60  
**Street bite:** Beef pho, \$3  
**Happy hour:** **Toilet Pub** in the Westlake district, where the bar is an inverted bathtub, with drinks for about \$3  
**Art pick:** **Museum of Ethnology**, an interactive look into Vietnam's 54 distinct ethnic groups, \$1  
**Hot ticket:** Hanoi's famous opera, \$18  
**Style steal:** Local "It" boutique **Ipa-Nima** peddles avant-garde silk and leather handbags starting at \$70  
**Spa splurge:** Mani-pedi at the cushy Santal spa ([santalgroup.com](http://santalgroup.com)) in Westlake, one hour, \$25  
**Taxi budget:** \$1/km. Rickshaws are just \$3/hour