

## News, Apps, Deals, and Gear from New England and Beyond

## HERE



## A CASTLE HILL TOUR

Fans of Downton Abbey know there's a world of difference between upstairs living and the servants' quarters in grand old estates. With the Hot & Cold Tour, the Trustees of Reservations offers a behind-the-scenes look into both worlds at the Great House at Castle Hill, a National Historic Landmark in Ipswich. Offered every other Wednesday at 5 p.m. through Oct. 17, the 1½-hour tour leads participants from cellar to roof of this 59-room English-style summer house designed in the 1920s for plumbing magnate Richard T. Crane Jr. Explore closets, the boilers and coal room, the quirky servants quarters, and ascend a spiral staircase to the roof for panoramic views. Members \$15, nonmembers \$20. Preregistration required. 978-356-4351, [thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/north-east-ma/castle-hill-on-the-crane.html](http://thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/north-east-ma/castle-hill-on-the-crane.html)

## WORK-STAY AT LOCAL FARMS

This fall, city dwellers yearning to reconnect with nature can do so on a number of Massachusetts working farms where visitors are encouraged to participate in activities such as gathering produce and tending to livestock. At Blue Heron Farm in Charlemont, a herd of Boer goats and Norwegian Fjord horses greet guests at the organic farmland property. Visitors can try their hand at milking a goat, grooming horses, picking up bales of hay, and leading animals to and from pastures. At the Warfield House Inn, also in Charlemont, guests are entertained with barnyard tours, llama treks, picnics, gardening clinics, horse-drawn wagon rides, and horseback trail rides. [massvacation.com/blog](http://massvacation.com/blog)



## THERE



## MUSEUM DAY LIVE TICKETS

The best free tickets in town are just a click away. At Smithsonian magazine's Museum Day Live website, you can download free tickets to over 1,400 participating museums and cultural institutions nationwide. For one day only, Saturday Sept. 29, these venues will emulate the Smithsonian Museums, who offer free admission every day. Tickets grant admission for two people per household. Only an official Museum Day Live! ticket is eligible for free entry, and does not include parking or other special exhibits and events. [smithsonianmag.com/museumday/ticket](http://smithsonianmag.com/museumday/ticket)

## BARBADOS GETAWAY

Set on 40 acres on the coast of this eastern Caribbean island, The Crane is Barbados's oldest continuously operating vacation resort. Following extensive restoration and expansion, it celebrates its 125th anniversary with a variety of special offers, including the Crane 125 Package. Book a five-night stay in a two- or three-bedroom suite in the resort's Residences by the Sea, Residences in the Park, or Historical Residences, and get a \$125 spa credit, and \$125 dining credit per room to be used at any of the resort's restaurants or eateries (available through Dec. 22). This year also signals the completion of Crane Village, a 55,000-square-foot guest pavilion perched above the pink sand and turquoise waters of Crane Beach, complete with dining, entertainment, shopping, and a health and wellness center. From \$338 per night. 866-978-5942, [thecrane.com](http://thecrane.com)



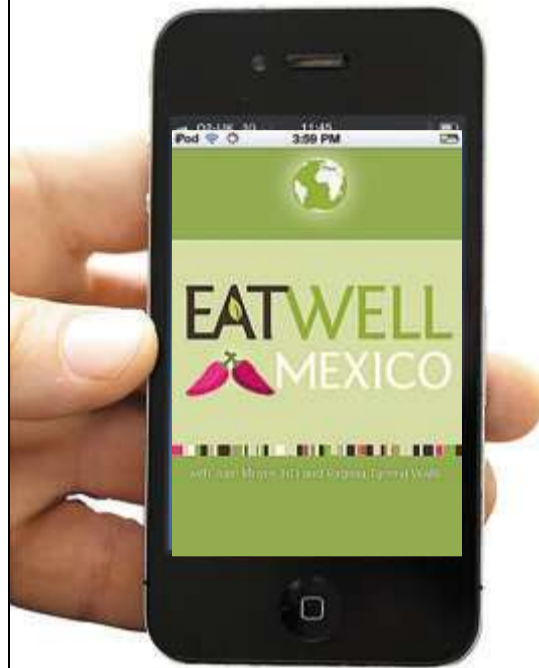
## BUENOS AIRES GRAND OPENING

The boutique-style Buenos Aires Grand opens this month in the chic Recoleta neighborhood, the cultural center of Argentina's capital. This 90-suite modern luxury hotel is steps away from designer shops, museums, restaurants, tango cabarets, botanic gardens, and parks. Serving business and leisure travelers, the hotel has an outdoor dining terrace, rooftop spa and fitness center, and indoor heated swimming pool. Each suite has a 40-inch plasma TV, Nespresso coffee-maker, and free Wi-Fi. Meeting and banquet rooms can accommodate small conferences and intimate weddings. Grand opening rates start at \$189, including breakfast. [buenosairesgrand.com/new/?lang=en](http://buenosairesgrand.com/new/?lang=en)

## EVERYWHERE

## FOLDABLE LUGGAGE

What if you could fold your luggage flat and store it under your bed or on a shelf in your closet? Biaggi, a foldable luggage, converts a full-sized rolling suitcase, duffel bag, or overnight business tote into a super-compact unit. Perfect for spaces where storage is limited, Biaggi's three collections (Contempo, Volo, and Tecno) come with interior and exterior pockets, a telescoping, aircraft-grade aluminum handle system, and two-, four-, or eight-wheel spinner technology. Available at select stores and Internet retailers. From \$79 for fashion tote to \$339 for 30-inch ballistic nylon packing case. 917-702-0566, [biaggi.com/default.aspx](http://biaggi.com/default.aspx)



## EAT WELL GLOBAL APPS

Eating well abroad just got easier. Eat Well Global has launched a new suite of "nutritionist in your pocket" country guide apps to help travelers stay healthy and manage their weight. The apps, available for iTunes and Android, include Eat Well Israel, China, Thailand, Japan, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela. Each features a health snapshot of the host country, including market tour, food safety info, typical dishes, as well as nutritionist-approved listings in major cities for restaurants, markets, delivery services, and cooking schools. Audio files in local languages make ordering easy for those with special needs, such as kosher, vegan, and gluten-free diets. (\$2.99) [eatwellglobal.com](http://eatwellglobal.com)

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## It's long been a cup at a time in Kyoto

But it's coffee, not tea, that these connoisseurs savor

By Merry White  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

KYOTO, Japan — Guidebooks support this city's reputation as the theater of the country's spiritual and aesthetic past: It contains the must-see temples, the must-stroll zen gardens, tea-ceremony-kaiseki restaurants, stealth geisha photo spots — and walks along a lover-lined river. The residence of a thousand years of emperors, the workshop of elegance in painting, ceramics and silk, Kyoto makes us feel like connoisseurs.

Some wonderful connoisseur experiences in Kyoto, however, are under the guidebook radar. And the beverage that flavors scenic paths and hidden hostelry is not green tea. It is, surprisingly, coffee.

Coffee came with Portuguese missionaries and Dutch traders in the 16th and 17th centuries. At first it was medicine to Japanese, but they quickly learned its pleasures and by the 19th century, cafes drew savvy customers. Now there are Ethiopian Yrgacheffes, Brazilian Santos, and Kenyan Kilimanjaro, and performances of brewing far beyond most Americans' experiences.

A Japanese cafe has a finicky coffee "master" devoted to the making of a perfect cup of coffee for a customer whose devotion matches his. The two most "Japanese" of coffee-making methods are pour-over and siphon, which have now come to our shores. Siphon is theater: the two-chambered glass pot sits over a heating element on the counter. The water at the bottom bubbles up through a narrow neck into the upper glass bowl where it meets the grounds, is stirred carefully, and after it is removed from the heat, falls dramatically into the bottom chamber, ready to serve. This method, brought from Europe by the Dutch traders, has remained a particularly "Japanese" way of making coffee, and "siphonistas" rank above espresso baristas in coffee competitions in Japan. In Kyoto, Hanafusa specializes in siphon coffee. Sit at the counter for the experience.

More common is "pour-over." In Noda-san's Otafuku Cafe in central Kyoto, you sit at the counter and watch as Noda spirals a tiny stream of hot water through a pinched spout over freshly roasted and ground coffee, in a filter set over a one-cup pot. Watching and sniffing prepare you for the experience of taste.



MINORU KONDO FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

In his Otafuku Cafe in Kyoto, Noda-san makes pour-over coffee into a one-cup pot. Coffee came to Japan with European traders in the 16th and 17th centuries, and cafes have elegant brewing performances for devotees.

Each cafe is different: There are Viennese style cafes with Mozart playing, bright cafes with mid-century-modern furnishings, cafes where you play with very nice cats while you drink your coffee, gallery cafes with exhibits of local artists' work, and many more.

Kyoto, protected from bombing in World War II, has some older cafes redolent with literary and social history. In the red velvet seats and dark wood of Café Francois you envision the smoky conversations of novelists such as Junichiro Tanizaki. In Shinshindo, near Kyoto University, the political debates of young Marxists took place in the early 1930s before police shut them down. In the minimalist Bauhaus style cafes of the 1930s-1960s, art hung on ceilings and walls, and decorated coffee cups.

Today's cafes are stunningly beautiful or cozily worn at the edges. Everyone needs a cafe: students to study (you won't see many laptops; Wi-Fi is rare and most people read books and write by hand); businessmen to have breakfast before and respite after work; housewives and retired people to meet their friends. Most of all, people go to be alone. In a society where personal space is a luxury, being alone in a public place allows for a welcome moment of urban anonymity.

Here is a small selection of what Kyoto has brewing for you.

Take a walk on the peaceful Philosopher's Path (Tetsugaku no michi). This was philosopher Nishida Kitaro's (1870-1945) favorite walk on the east side of Kyoto, allowing him a meditative stroll on his way to and from the university. It runs along a small canal, where in summer fireflies flit and in season, there is a riot of pink cherry blossoms overhead. It is always 10 degrees cooler on a hot day. The path, lined with temples, stretches for a mile between Nanzenji and Ginkakuji temples. Towards Ginkakuji (to the north) there are crafts shops and the Café Sagan, a cafe with a French feel and windows facing the canal path. The husband and wife who run this cafe are cheerful and attentive. Ask for a delicious egg sandwich or a "soufflé cake" light as air to have with your coffee — made a cup at a time by the owner wearing a bow tie and white shirt. Note the collection of lucky owl figurines to the left of the bar, the gifts of customers over the years.

Mo-An is a cafe in a restored old tea house on the top of a wooded hill. You sit in an upstairs room ringed with windows overlooking hills and the town below, a perfect example of what Japanese call "shakkei" (borrowed

landscape) in which a place is enhanced by nearby scenery. The coffee, lunches, and desserts are served in handcrafted pottery and glass. The hiking paths leading to Mo-An take you through Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, through views of Daimonji, the large hill with the character for "big" emblazoned on it.

Hachihachi Infinity is the most "hidden" of these experiences, surprising in many ways. A traditional house deep in woods but in the middle of Kyoto, this hermitage is a cafe-bakery owned by Yokota-san. He makes only about 10-15 loaves of tightly textured multigrain bread per day, all organic and risen with airborne yeast. The best in Japan — or anywhere — the bread is delicious in lunches he makes with cheeses, tapenades, and prosciutto, accompanied by his own vegetable soup. Sitting at the long wooden table in his cafe space, gazing out the back at the comfortably scrubby garden, you grasp the rustic concept of wabi-sabi, perfect imperfection.

Merry White, a professor of anthropology at Boston University and author of the recently published "Coffee Life in Japan" (University of California Press), can be reached at [corkela2@gmail.com](mailto:corkela2@gmail.com).

## If you go . . .

Kyoto coffee comes high and low in price — and yes, in Japan, price correlates with quality. But you can get a very nice cup for under \$4 at such places as Ogawa (several branches), the UCC cafes, and Cafe de Crie.

At the low end you will be fine with a cup at Doutor, a chain all over Japan that offers takeout where others don't. There a pretty fresh cup of coffee from the urn will run you \$2.30. At the shops mentioned here, coffee will range from \$4-\$10 for a superlative brew. In Tokyo you would pay much more; prices can go up to \$23.

## Mo-An

In northeast Kyoto, on a hiking trail on Yoshidayama  
[mo-an.com](http://mo-an.com)  
Taxi can take you to the foot of the path at Imadegawa. Lunch is served till 2 p.m.

## Otafuku

A block down Shijo doori from the corner of Kawaramachi, just past Takashimaya Department Store going west, turn left — and immediately you will see a sign above with a smiling female Noh mask. This is it. Go down the narrow stairs and find the smiling Noda-san to make your coffee.

## HachiHachi Infinity

[hachihachi.org](http://hachihachi.org)  
This is the one you should devote some time to for bread, coffee, and atmosphere. Trust me: You will write home about it.

## Sagan

Walk south from Ginkakuji Temple along the Philosopher's Path: On your right you will see several craft shops. Continue to the cafe in a white clapboard house on your right, with one table outside in clement weather.

## Hanafusa

Higashioji Nishioji tonangawa, near the corner of Marutamachi and Shirakawa, near a gas station. Friendly, no-nonsense siphon coffee shop. Here you can sit at the counter to watch the serious performance of chem-lab style coffee-making.