

# trips of a LIFETIME

Ride down a glacial waterfall, dive the Great Barrier Reef, take a midnight safari – experience your dream vacation.

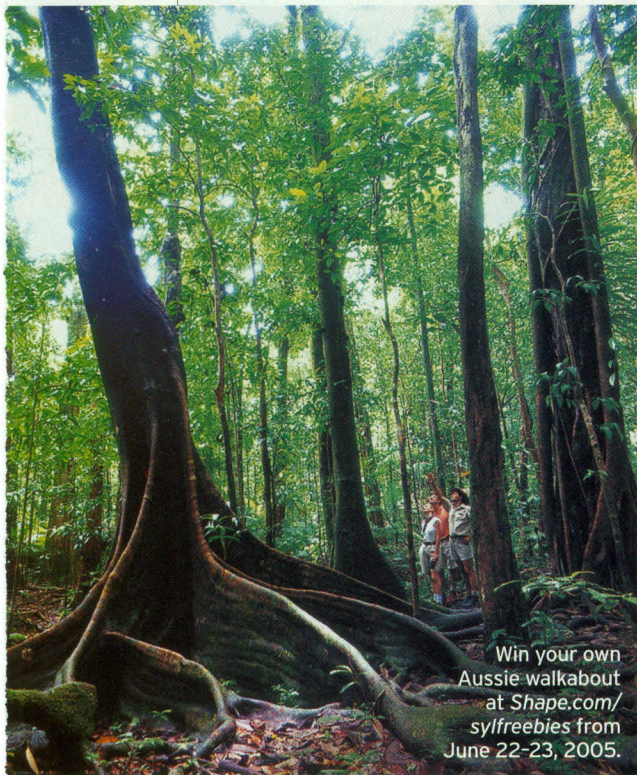
We've all got a fantasy destination: a place that our minds retreat to when stress seeps in. More often than not, we don't seriously entertain the thought of making that exotic daydream a reality. But you can make that trip of a lifetime happen: *Shape* showcases three thrilling destinations that offer active, energizing experiences, yet still feel like home.

All rates are in U.S. dollars and subject to change. Lodging is double occupancy unless stated otherwise.

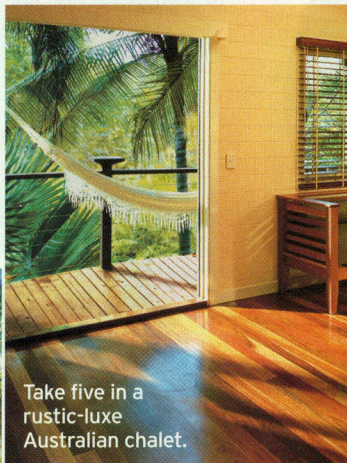
## AUSTRALIA: A MIND-BODY WALKABOUT

Rare treats await in Australia's North Queensland – home of the planet's largest natural structure (the Great Barrier Reef) of the South Pacific and the longest continually surviving rain forest (Wet Tropics World Heritage Area).

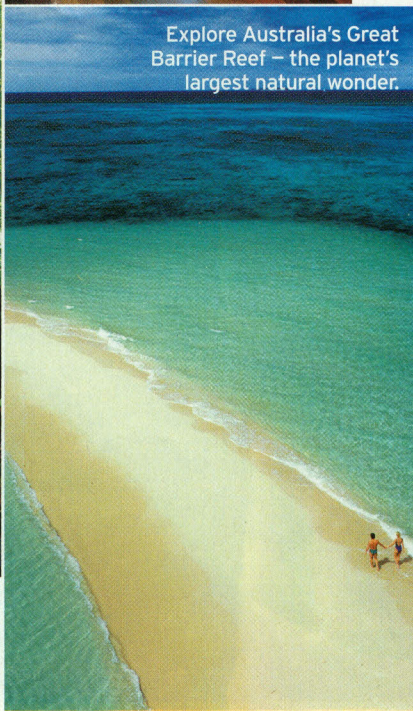
Australia's North Queensland boasts two World Heritage sites: the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree National Park.



Win your own Aussie walkabout at [Shape.com/sylffreebies](http://Shape.com/sylffreebies) from June 22-23, 2005.



Take five in a rustic-luxe Australian chalet.



Explore Australia's Great Barrier Reef – the planet's largest natural wonder.

**Portal** Fly into Cairns Airport in North Queensland.

**Globetrot** Earn your scuba certification in the company of the enormous potato cod and large green sea turtles, diving the Great Barrier Reef, where the water is so warm that divers only need to wear half wet suits. Oz Horizons offers a three-day PADI package on the lush Fitzroy Island Resort, a 45-minute boat ride from Cairns. Led by professional divers, you'll search for small sharks, manta rays and other sea creatures in the crystal-clear waters just off the reef before gathering for a continental breakfast and burgers or salads for lunch and dinner (less than \$10 per meal). In the evenings, retire to your cozy bunkhouse just steps from the sparkling Welcome Bay (from \$308, includes accommodations, boat transfers, PADI certification and equipment; [ozhorizons.com.au](http://ozhorizons.com.au)).

Or, giddyap with Blazing Saddles for a horseback tour of the tropical Daintree National Park to encounter the blue *quandong* (aka desert peach) tree and the iridescent Ulysses butterfly (from \$70 per person for half-day rides, includes helmet, a barbecue meal and tea; [blazingsaddles.com.au](http://blazingsaddles.com.au)).

**Feast** Typical Australian cuisine is anything but healthy (think fish and chips), but more wholesome options are easily obtained. While in Cairns, visit the Red Ochre Grill (dinner entrees from \$22-\$25; [redochregrill.com.au](http://redochregrill.com.au)) that features such savory dishes as macadamia- and herb-encrusted chicken served with roasted veggies, shredded phyllo and tahini yogurt sauce (\$22).

**Dream** Book a stay at rustic-luxe Silky Oaks Lodge & Healing Waters Spa, perched on the rain-forested banks of Cairns' Mossman River. Retreat to peaceful meditative chalets hidden within groves of enormous indigenous palms

and oaks, and then snuggle up in a woven hammock on your private balcony. All-inclusive stays feature breakfast, a four-course dinner and lodge activities, including canoeing along neighboring Mossman Gorge and guided rain-forest walks (2½ hours on average) to spy pademelons (a small marsupial similar to kangaroos), tree snakes and geckos (from \$270 per night, all-inclusive; [silkyoaks.lodge.com.au](http://silkyoaks.lodge.com.au)).

**Travel tip** Book your visit in the summertime (winter in Australia), when there are fewer tourists and the weather is breezy and less humid.

**More info** [australia.com](http://australia.com) – Melissa B. Williams ➤



## BURN CALORIES & CHILL OUT IN ICELAND

If you're a smorgasbord type of traveler – you want to see and do a little bit of everything – Iceland more than delivers: Black lava-rock fields, natural hot springs, glaciers, geysers, waterfalls and rolling, grassy hills all converge in an island no bigger than Kentucky. Combine these natural wonders with friendly, English-speaking locals, a vibrant club scene and 20-plus hours of summertime daylight, and you have an unrivaled island getaway that's a mere five-hour flight from Boston.

**Portal** Fly into Reykjavik, Iceland's capital and home to 64 percent of the Scandinavian nation's population.

**Globetrot** Don't be surprised if you drop a couple of pounds while in Iceland – to experience its diverse landscape, you've got to keep moving. Walking is one of the best ways to see the moss-carpeted countryside. Exploring the hills on Icelandic horses (Word to the wise: These short, stocky purebreds are a source of national pride – calling them ponies is asking for trouble.) will give your glutes and abs a fierce workout (from \$134 for a five-hour ride, including lunch; [www.eldhestar.is](http://www.eldhestar.is)). See playful puffins and seals face to face on sea-kayak expeditions (from \$80 for three hours, includes safety gear; [ute.is](http://ute.is)) or take in the rugged scenery as you raft deep in glacier-made gorges along Iceland's longest river, the Thjorsa (from \$93 for three hours with helmet and flotation vest, plus post-kayak hot-tub soak; [arcticrafting.is](http://arcticrafting.is)). While you can easily view dozens of waterfalls along the main road, Route 1, canyoning gives you a rare peek inside: After donning a wet suit and bundling up with numerous other neoprene accessories (this is melted glacier water, after all), you'll climb ladders and ropes to the top of a roaring 21-foot waterfall, then swim and "ride" down for the ultimate rush (\$123; [arcticrafting.is](http://arcticrafting.is) for more info).

Or kick back and mingle with Icelanders on the cheap at one of the local geothermal swimming holes. The Blue Lagoon – a robin's-egg-blue mineral-rich saltwater pool – is the most famous (and most likely to be filled with tourists). Even the smallest towns boast a naturally heated public swimming pool and "hot pot"; visit [spacity.is](http://spacity.is) for the seven pools in Reykjavik.

**Feast** It is doubtful that all of Iceland's delicacies (e.g., dried haddock

and putrefied shark meat) will entice you. One Icelandic treat you *won't* want to miss: *skyr*, a tasty, creamy cheese product that resembles yogurt and is deceptively low in fat and calories. While fine dining carries a hefty price tag, the new Sjavarkjallarinn Seafood Cellar's inventive seafood selections, such as cod and scallop ravioli, are well worth the splurge (entrees from \$41-\$77; [sjavarkjallarinn.is](http://sjavarkjallarinn.is)).

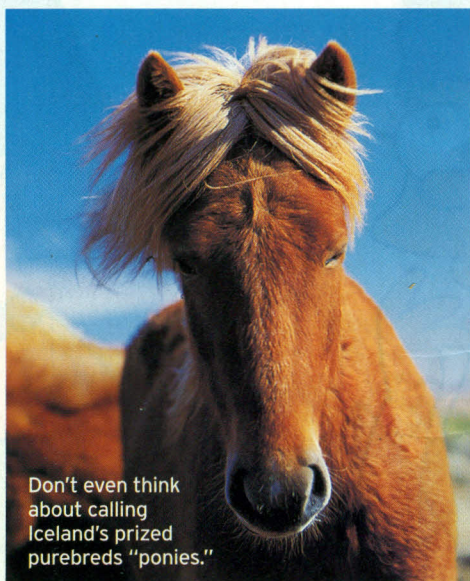
**Dream** There is a solid network of hostels throughout Iceland ([hostel.is](http://hostel.is)), where you can expect to pay about \$31 a night for a bunk bed in a shared room and facilities down the hall (bring your sleeping bag and towel). For about twice as much, look for homes or farms displaying a bed sign ([farmholidays.is](http://farmholidays.is)).

For an upscale escape, head two hours northwest to the newly rebuilt Hotel Budir perched on a remote peninsula and surrounded by lava fields, grazing sheep, and mountains. The 28-room hotel – with its rich earth tones, antique photos and hardwood floors – is refined but not over the top; after an

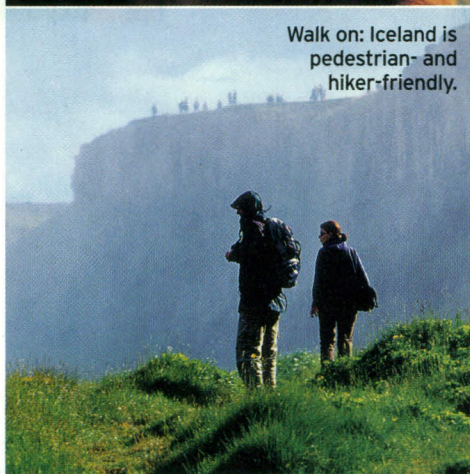
adventurous day, happiness is sinking into the plush red sofas and humming along to the Johnny Cash covers playing on the stereo (\$281 a night, breakfast included; [budir.is](http://budir.is)).

**Travel tip** Skip the car rental. Iceland's bus service is safe and reliable, and many adventure outfitters will pick you up at your Reykjavik hotel for day trips.

**More info** [goiceland.org](http://goiceland.org) – Kim Acosta



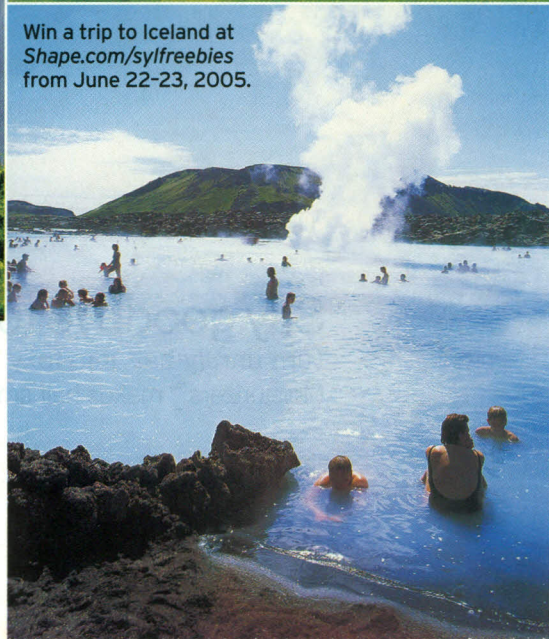
Don't even think about calling Iceland's prized purebreds "ponies."



Walk on: Iceland is pedestrian- and hiker-friendly.



Amble through Reykjavik's pastoral countryside.



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