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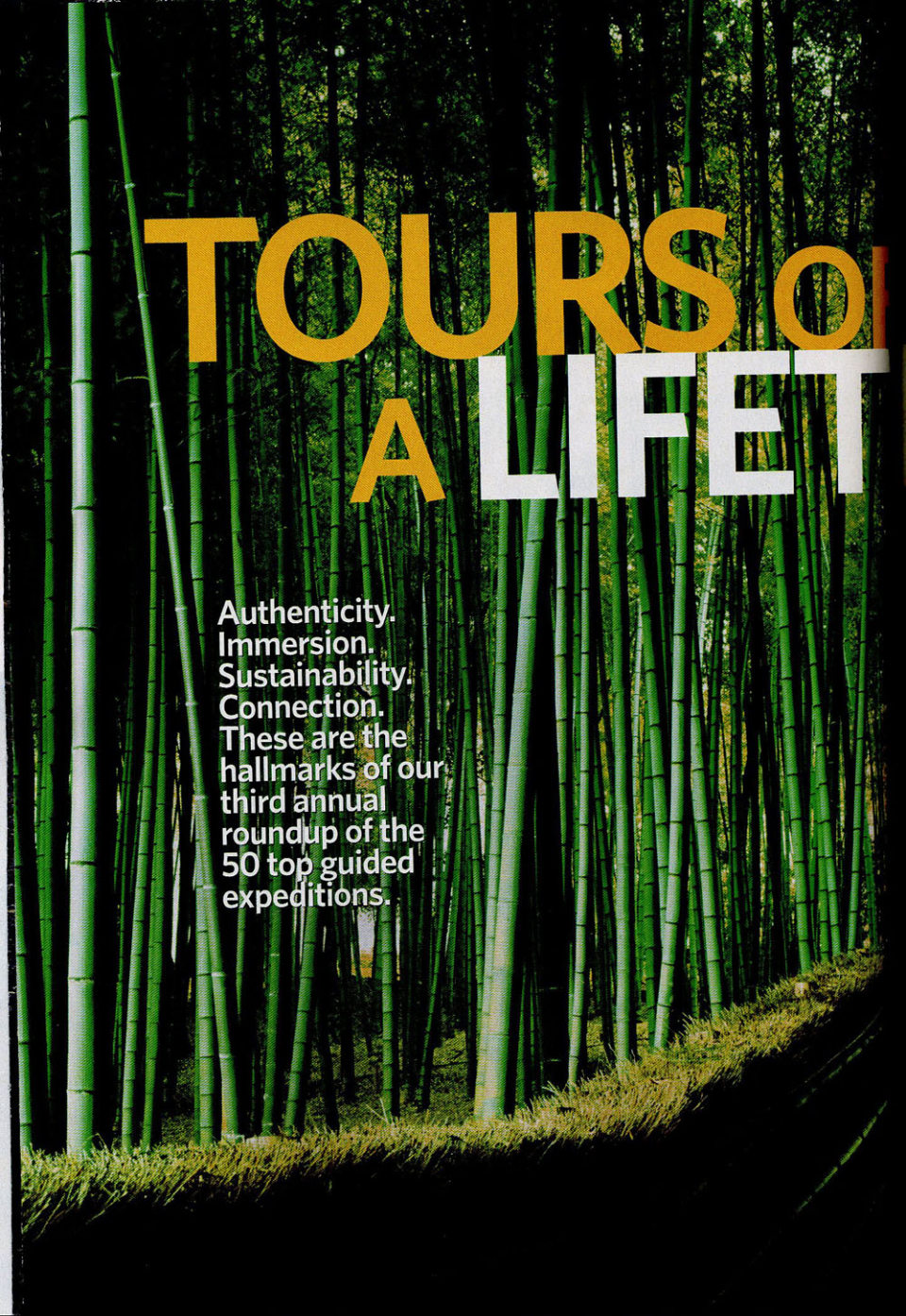
DEEP CULTURE
IN GUATEMALA

TREK TO THE
NORTH POLE

SLOVENIA
IN PICTURES

PLUS: ARMENIA, TANZANIA,
BHUTAN, CAMBODIA, INDIA,
GALÁPAGOS, PATAGONIA,
NAMIBIA, IDAHO, THAILAND,
NEWFOUNDLAND,
TOKYO, AND MORE.





TOURS OF A LIFE

Authenticity.
Immersion.
Sustainability.
Connection.
These are the hallmarks of our third annual roundup of the 50 top guided expeditions.



ME

When we started this annual roundup three years ago, we sought to bring readers 50 of the world's most transformative travel experiences, guided by outfitters that promised to leave no trace—granola-bar wrappers or ugly-American stereotypes—in their wake. To our delight, there's no shortage of travel companies that share our philosophy. Today, many of those pioneers and others are taking that notion further to foster good works through travel, without sacrificing comfort or even luxury in some cases. In a partnership with Globe Aware, for example, G.A.P. Adventures has crafted a classic temple and beach itinerary in Cambodia that includes a four-day stint assembling wheelchairs for land mine victims.

Most goodwill born out of travel, however, is far more subtle. It happens when we've arrived home. "Ultimately, people who are exposed to adventure travel often become advocates. They are the folks who contribute time and money to help with preservation of the environment and cultures," says Richard Bangs, co-founder of Mountain Travel Sobek and author of a new book that explores the ancient Maori concept of stewardship of the Earth. "Travel is fatal to bigotry and prejudice."



We're not talking about the kind of travel that's done from behind the window of a motor coach or even, for that matter, the über-physical endurance tests (skiing all of Colorado's fourteeners in a year, running a marathon in every state) that make up much of the hard-core adventure travel niche. And that's where this year's picks come in. Using our criteria of authenticity, seasoned expertise, sustainability, unprecedented access, and local connections, we've chosen journeys that tap into that transformative power. We set one of our own—contributing editor Margaret Loftus—to the task of assembling and vetting our list. Peruse the following pages—including features on Portugal, Guatemala, and the Arctic, plus a special bonus photo essay on Slovenia—and get inspired. Whether it's staring down a king penguin in Antarctica, sharing *mole* with a Oaxacan family, or watching your kids in a pickup soccer game in Sardinia, this is the sort of travel that will stick with you, and maybe even improve a little corner of the planet. —The Editors

Capture that Zen feeling by strolling the footpaths of the Sagano Bamboo Grove in Sagayashiyama, on the outskirts of Kyoto, Japan.




On an Arctic hike in Norway, children take in the view of the Reinefjord from the top of Reinebringen at the southern end of the Lofoten Islands.

technical climb (or nontechnical—your choice) up Mount Kenya, the second-highest mountain on the continent.


Adventures Within Reach: "Four Volcanoes: Mount Kenya, Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru, Ol Doiyo Lengai," 27 days; \$5,945; www.adventureswithinreach.com  

INTO ECUADOR

No longer just a stopover on the way to the Galápagos, Ecuador's mainland has become a new destination for thrill seekers. Via bike, horseback, raft, inner tube, and feet, this multisport expedition showcases the remarkable diversity of this country at the "Middle of the World," from the misty highlands of the Andes to the Amazon's dense jungle to the volcanic landscape of Cotopaxi National Park. **Bike-Hike Adventures:** "The Andes to the Amazon," 10 days; \$2,199; www.bikehike.com. 

NORDIC RAMBLES

Like an ellipsis on the west coast of Arctic Norway, the Lofoten archipelago is a series of rocky mountains, sheltered inlets,


and stretches of unspoiled seashore. Paddle and hike by day, returning at night to renovated fishing cabins called *rorbuer*. You can also try your hand at rowing a Viking ship. **Crossing Latitudes:** "Lofoten Multi-Adventure, Norway," summer; 8 days; \$3,000; www.crossinglatitudes.com. 

BIRDS AND MORE IN GUYANA

Home to one of the most intact swaths of rain forest in Amazonia, Guyana has been called the next big thing in ecotourism. Amerindian guides lead hikes through some of the world's richest birding habitats. In the area around the Shanklands Rainforest Resort, there are more than 200 avian species, including white wing potoos, guans, tinamous, curassows, tanagers, and trogons. **Journeys International:** "Great Green Guyana," spring and fall; 10 days; \$4,295; www.journeys.travel.

AFRICAN SURF AND TURF

Seacology's unique brand of conservation works this way: Instead of making grants, the Berkeley, Calif.-based nonprofit works

with islanders around the world to protect their environments. You can visit its projects such as this one in Cousin Island in the Seychelles archipelago, where demarcation buoys have been installed to prevent inadvertent poaching. This is hardly roughing it, however. Deluxe digs include La Reserve Resort in the Seychelles and the Mala Mala Game Reserve in South Africa. **Seacology:** "Surf and Turf, Seychelles and South Africa," summer; 8 days; \$7,635; www.seacology.org. 

COPPER CANYON BY TRAIN

Thanks to a joint effort by the Tarahumara Indians and outfitter Canyon Travel, Mexico's Copper Canyon is not succumbing to the advances of large-scale loggers.

THE BOTTOM LINE

All quoted prices are starting rates, per person, based on double occupancy, not including airfare to and from the destination.