



# Condé Nast Traveler

THE WORLD MADE LOCAL

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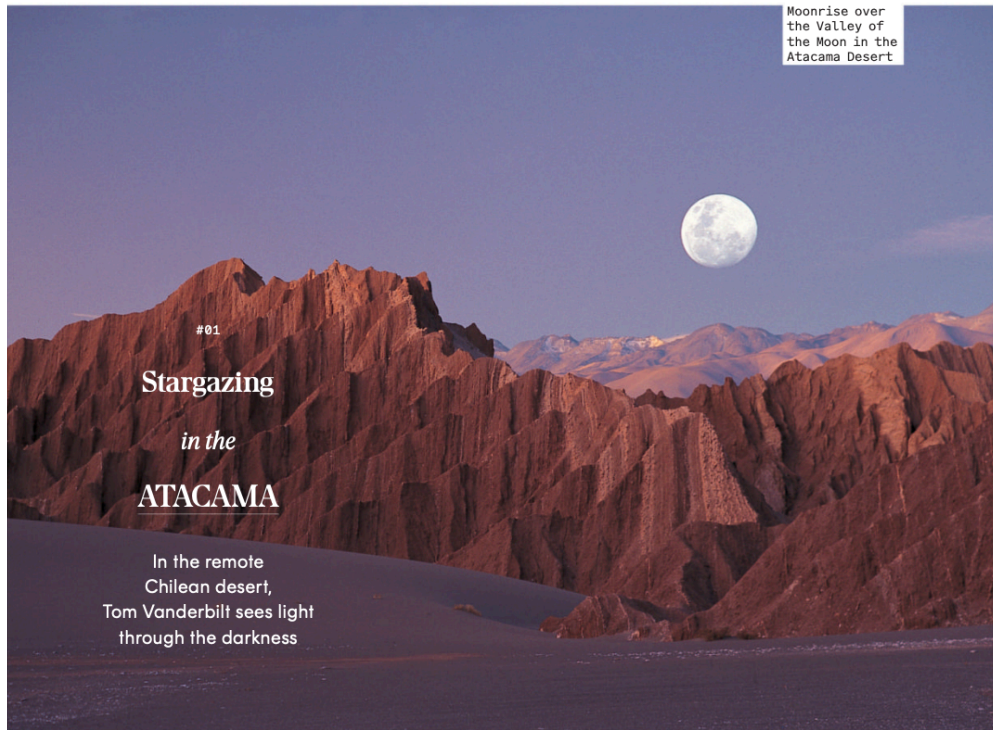
## hidden wonders

Ladakh  
New Zealand  
Budapest  
Cairo  
Newport

PLUS

**8** ways to  
slow down  
the next time  
you travel

slow travel



**THERE IS BATHING**, there is sunbathing, and there is shinrin-yoku, the recently trendy Japanese concept of “forest bathing.” On a typically cloudless night in Chile’s Atacama Desert, as my family and I reclined on metal chaise longues, looking up at the wildly expansive southern sky, I experienced something totally new: starbathing.

When Pia Urbano Mena, the astronomy guide at the Nayara Alto Atacama, turned off the ambient lights at the hotel’s small observatory, there was a magic, neck-tingling moment as the inky blackness absolutely enveloped us. “It’s going to take around 15 minutes for our

eyes to adjust to darkness,” Urbano Mena said. “At first, you’ll hardly see anything. But then you’ll see everything.”

Just before, I’d been drinking a pisco sour in the hotel bar while watching the Chilean national soccer team take on Brazil. Now Urbano Mena beamed a laser point skyward, taking us on an exhilarating tour of the heavens. There was Sirius, there was Betelgeuse—or, technically, the memory of those stars, as the light reaching us had emanated years before. The Indigenous people of the Atacama gave the name *mayu* to the riverlike band of celestial objects that dominates

» **PLAN IT**  
For a one-of-a-kind astronomical itinerary, **Black Tomato’s** seven-day Atacama experience includes guided stargazing as well as adventures like private trekking along the Rio Salado and flamingo-spotting at Laguna Chaxa. **From \$19,500; blacktomato.com**



## MORE CELESTIAL ADVENTURES

### » Norway

Torunn Transvang, the founder of **Up Norway**, says now is the perfect moment to glimpse the northern lights in the town of Alta. NASA is predicting a bumper few years of solar activity, which means the aurora borealis will be more intense and more frequent than ever, reaching a climax in 2025. **Five days from \$2,800; upnorway.com**

### » South Korea

Yeongyang Firefly Eco Park, the first park in Asia designated as a Silver-tier International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark-Sky Association, is 175 miles from Seoul. **Abercrombie & Kent’s** Gerald Hatherly can plan a two-night excursion to gaze at the Milky Way, or—for those who want a soundtrack with their planet-spotting—attend a night concert. **From \$1,300; akdmc.com**

### » Utah

Due to its dry weather, high elevation, and vast empty spaces, the southern area of the state offers unparalleled nighttime visibility. Melissa Wu of **Woodlyn Travel** suggests Bryce Canyon National Park as an ideal base camp, which allows visitors to partake in daytime activities like hiking and ATV tours. **Four days from \$2,000; woodlyntravel.com**

PHOTOGRAPHS: NAYARA RESORTS