



Travel | Culture | Adventure

# Escape



**GOT 28K?**  
Then stay in the Mustique house that Bowie built

The Hot List: **Page 30** »

**Madrid**

FORMER monk Justo Gallego Martínez – aka Don Justo – has been building his own cathedral in Mejorada del Campo, a one-horse town 12 miles out of Madrid, for the past 55 years. It's quite the sight: 40m high and built primarily from salvage material. Planning permission? Pah – he has God's permission! That said, the 90-year-old could use some assistance. Trip4real has a new three-hour experience allowing tourists to help him, with tours of the cloister and sacristy included. Justo says: 'If you like, you can give me a hand with the construction and help me finish my life's work.'

*Help Me Build My Cathedral costs £8 for a minimum of four people, trip4real.com*

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PICTURE: GETTY

## CITIES TO STEEP YOURSELF IN

Whether you're helping this ex-monk build a cathedral, skating NYC or bicycle-making in Milan, this year is all about immersive, niche experiences. **Richard Mellor** gets stuck in

### THE BEST CITY APPS



**CityButler**

Hand-picks the best businesses, restaurants and attractions in eight cities and allows you to book directly with them.



**FoodMood**

Aptly described as Tinder for food, this app for London allows you to swipe through your nearby culinary options.



**HearPlanet**

Acts as an audio tour guide for thousands of locations worldwide, giving you the spec on buildings and sites.



**Social Cyclist**

One for the Lycra fans, Social Cyclist lets people share their favourite rides and report road conditions.



**Ingress**

Turns touring a city into a game – gain points for visiting landmarks and recapture ground from your enemies.

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**Venice**

ITALIAN Stories runs workshops with skilled craftsmen and women across the country. One of its newest artisans is Elisa, a costume designer who, along with her brother and father, has a tailors in Tuscany and will let you explore her theatrical dress warehouse and teach you how to make a shirt. Other experiences include serving a one-day apprenticeship with a Milanese bicycle-maker, assisting a renowned milliner in Florence or, most unusually, spending an hour learning how to make oars for Venice's top gondoliers. In the latter you'll join one of the city's last few traditional remèri, a craftsman called Paolo Brandolisio, who has been making exquisitely finished rowlocks and oars since he was 16 years old. Great company, he'll share a glass of fine wine with you after the demonstration.

*Workshops from around £20, italianstories.it*

**New York City**

FEW cities are as synonymous with skateboarding as the Big Apple, so what better way to see New York than kickflipping and mongo footing all over it? Local skater Leo Heinert leads daily trips crossing the five



**Curve:** Master oarmaker Paolo Brandolisio at work in his Venice workshop

# Leftfield tours and artisan oars

boroughs - Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island and the Bronx - and reveals each one's best skateparks, ledges, parks and shops, including some truly hidden gems during five hours of fun. It's common to bump into pros and there will be a best trick contest with prizes at the end. Pizza, another city staple, is included in the cost.

*Experience NYC Skateboarding, £28 per person for a minimum four people, vayable.com*



**Prost!** Stop off at the Reingold Bar on a Berlin crawl



**Glad rags:** Take a tour of London's vintage boutiques



**Kit:** Get the inside track on setting up photoshoots

**Berlin**

DEEP, deep, deeper down the rabbit hole we go. Horror-punk temples, squat raves, hip hop parties in abandoned train depots, bars in former toilets and LGBT spaces with pink shagpile

carpets: all are on the agenda during Alternative Berlin's nightly 'Anti Pubcrawl'. The website text is tantalising: 'See where Rammstein and Marilyn Manson hang out, play ping-pong against locals and flirt with transvestites in dive bars.' Be warned, though,

this is not intended as a boozy bender for lads in numbered T-shirts: all-male groups cannot book and the tour aims to be low-key and calm rather than rowdy and rude. The idea is to get to know those most interesting Berliners, not irritate them. The schedule changes frequently and from June a tour focusing on the city's lesser-known green side will launch - highlights include trekking through the wild ruins of a former railway depot that nature has beautifully reclaimed.

*The 666 Anti Pubcrawl costs £8 including six shots and entrance to five venues, alternativeberlin.com*

**Tokyo**

REMEMBER that scene in *Lost In Translation* when Scarlett Johansson scopes out dancing alien-slayers and teen guitar players within a vast computer-game arcade? InsideJapan

Tours now offers a new guided sojourn around that same Tokyo underworld, led by a self-confessed gaming 'obsessive' who knows the scene. You'll frequent famous spots like LIT's Adores arcade and Sega's seven-storey temple, plus themed cafés and jam-packed retro stores like Super Potato, all with plenty of console time included.

*The experience is*

*only available as part of a holiday booking. Combining Tokyo And The Gamers with Kyoto And Hakone National Park costs from £1,470pp for nine nights with B&B, transfers and guiding, insidejapantours.com*

**London**

AS a stylist for the likes of American Vogue and consultant for Vivienne Westwood, Hannah Teare knows her stuff. She is one of the many creative experts behind SideStory, which offers tours of the capital. Hannah will take you on a trawl through Portobello Market's vintage boutiques and help you seek out on-trend accessories, bargain-priced treasure and private collectors. Elsewhere, Benjamin Kempton, interiors director at Wallpaper\* magazine, will show you how to arrange a photoshoot, from setting mood boards to sourcing furnishings and fittings.

*Both tours last three hours and cost £150pp for two, sidestory.co*



**Leaps and bounds:** Explore the skating hot spots of New York's five boroughs



**Super Sonic:** Get lost in Sega's games temple in Tokyo