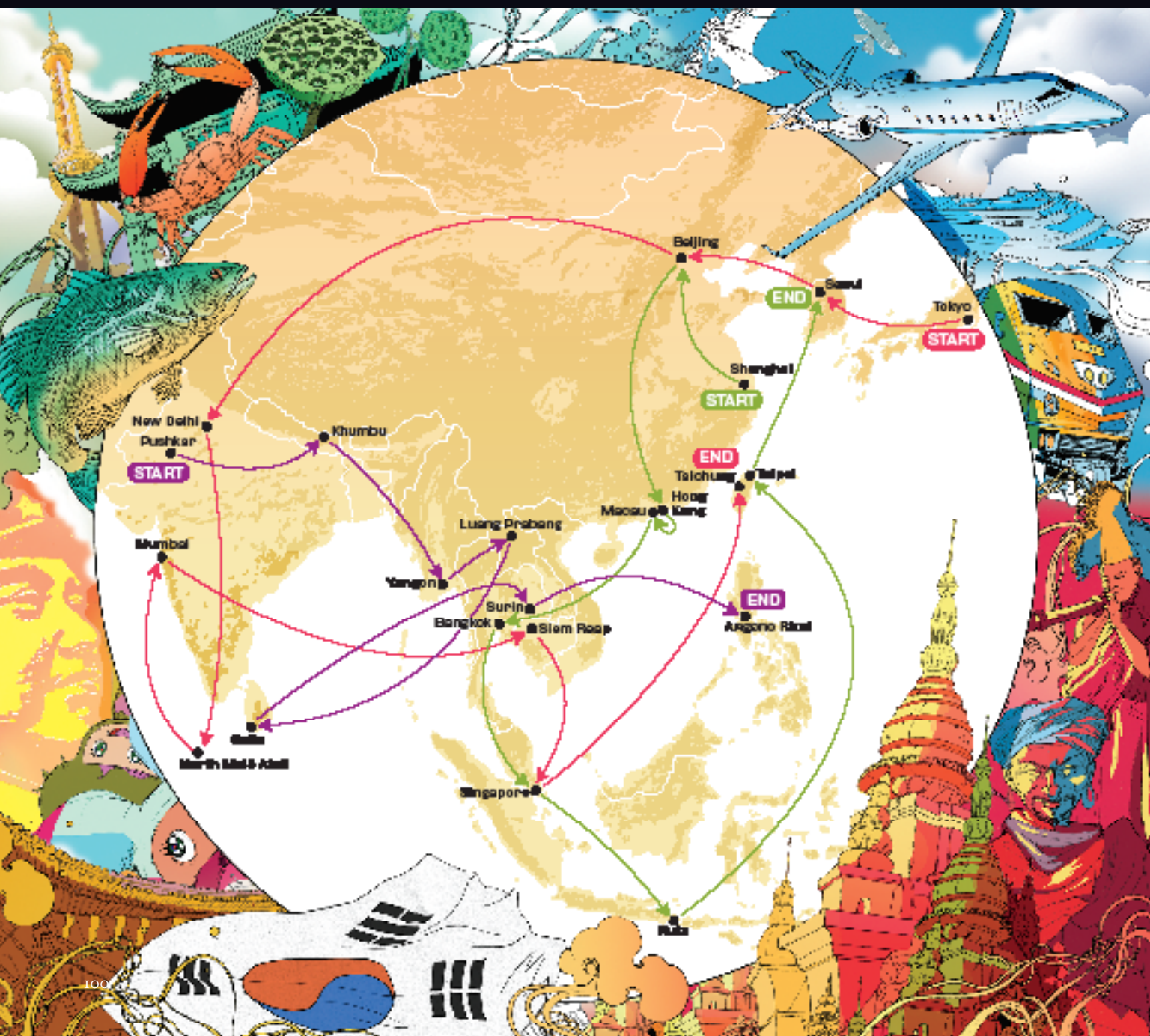


# EAT, PRAY, LOVE

## A CONTINENT IN THREE JOURNEYS

Is there anything more delightful than springtime in Paris? Maybe not. But come autumn, there's no better place to be than Asia, when the continent's at its busy, buzzy best (oh, and the weather's perfect too). We've mapped out three ways to see all the highlights of Asia this fall, whether your passion's food, religious festivals, or fine art. Do one or do a little of all three—just don't blame us if you can't tear yourself away

REPORTED BY CYNTHIA ROSENFELD



# FOOD

## FALL Shanghai

When is food with hair a good thing? When it's hairy crab! Follow the season's foodies to **Xin Guang Restaurant**, whose chefs dismember about 1,000 crustaceans daily. Enjoy the steamed leg flesh with a side of crab roe (512 Tian Jin Rd., Huangpu District; 86-21-6322-3978; entrées, \$6–\$18).

## NEWLY OPENED Beijing

After conquering Shanghai with **M** on the Bund, Michelle Garnaut heads north to Tiananmen Square with **Capital M**. Views take in the imposing facade of the Forbidden City. Save room for Garnaut's signature Pavlova—capitalism was never so sweet (2 Qianmen Pedestrian St., 3rd Fl., Chong-

wen District; 86-10-6702-2727; entrées, \$25–\$35).

## THROUGH NOVEMBER 30 Hong Kong

Vermont can keep its maple leaves; here, nothing says autumn like a flaky mooncake. Local bakery **Wing Wah** has been making the lotus seed— or sweet bean paste—filled cakes since 1950, but its recipe dates to the Ming Dynasty, when anti-Mongol revolutionaries sent messages hidden inside the pastries. *Vive la révolution!* (G/F, 1 Stewart Rd., Wan Chai; 852-2827-7714; four-cake tins, \$20–\$45.)

## NOVEMBER 13–29 Macau

Colonization gets a bad rap—and for good reason. But when the Portuguese settlers arrived in Macau,

they brought the tasty citrus cake called *papo d'anjo*. Scarf them down—but save room for the bounty of Chinese regional cuisines—at the **Macau Food Festival** (853-2857-5765; macau tourism.gov.mo).

## NOVEMBER 1–25 Bangkok

Ah, November: when Thai temperatures drop from unbearable to merely sweltering. Start sweating again at the Blue Elephant Cooking School's **Golden Tamarind Cooking Classes**, which teaches how to prepare the fruit. Tamarinds are said to raise body temperature (66-2-673-9353; blueelephant.com; half-day class, \$82).

## NEWLY OPENED Singapore

Les Amis is one of this

food-obsessed city-state's top tables. Now it's joined with its new (and cheaper) sister joint, **Bistro du Vin**, two doors down. Order the french fries triple-fried in goose fat (1 Scotts Rd., 2-12 Shaw Centre; 65-6733-7763; entrées, \$10–\$24).

## NEWLY OPENED Kuta, Bali

Pan-seared foie gras in raspberry vinegar sauce? Yes please! Indulge away (with views of the paddy fields) at the **Métis Gallery and Restaurant**, run by the team behind Seminyak's hottest restaurant, Kafe Warisan (6 Jalan Petitenget, Kerobokan; 62-361-731-651; entrées, \$13–\$22).

## FALL Taipei

Mainland China and Taiwan may not agree on

most things, but they do share a fondness for spicy snake soup, said to increase circulation and ward off devil possession (hey, you never know . . .). Slurp some up at one of the stalls in the Huaxi Night Market, also known as **Snake Alley** (Huaxi St. between Xiyuan Rd. and Huanhe S. Rd.; open daily until late; snake soup, \$4–\$8).

## FALL Seoul

What's that late-fall smell? It's *hoddeok*, a fried yeast pancake filled with brown sugar, crushed nuts, cinnamon, and honey. They can be found all over South Korea this time of year, but the tastiest can be bought from vendors along Insadong, Seoul's pedestrian shopping promenade (\$1).

# RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

## OCTOBER 25–NOVEMBER 2 Pushkar, India

Once a year, more than 200,000 people—accompanied by some 50,000 cattle—flock to the **Pushkar Festival** in this otherwise sleepy town in the Rajasthan desert. Devotees believe that gods visit the town's lake, where the Hindu god Brahma is said to have dropped a lotus from heaven. The cattle fair also draws camel traders and their bell-festooned charges.

## OCTOBER 23–NOVEMBER 5 Khumbu, Nepal

Mount Everest is the awesome backdrop for the annual **Mani Rimdu Festival** at Tengboche Monastery in the white-capped Himalayas. While lamas chant, monks prepare a sand mandala that

symbolizes beauty and impermanence. The event culminates with a full night of Sherpa song and dance on November 4 (505-266-3878; wildearthjourneys.com/manirimdu.htm; 16 days, \$3,500–\$3,700 per person).

## NOVEMBER 1 Yangon, Myanmar

On the eve of the full moon in the month of Tazaungmone (November), women across the country weave saffron robes called *mathothingan* for the Buddhist monks. (Yangon's Shwedagon Pagoda draws some of the country's speediest weavers.) The results are donated to the monks during the next day's **Tazaunging Festival**, when the streets, homes, and office buildings are il-

luminated with colored lanterns and candles.

## NOVEMBER 1–14 Luang Prabang, Laos

Haven't managed to attain enlightenment? Well, at least you can help others do so by cooking sticky rice soup, steamed Mekong fish, and braised vegetables for the 500 Buddhist monks on their two-week silent Vipassana meditation in the tropical forest outside Luang Prabang. If you're a guest at the new **Amantaka** resort, you'll also get to take a meditation boat up the Mekong River to a small village, where you'll watch post-retreat monks chanting sutras at a forest temple (856-71-860-333; amanresorts.com; doubles, \$600–\$1,200; participation

donations, \$150–\$300).

## NOVEMBER 14–15 Galle, Sri Lanka

Say oh while you're praying for peace at the **Kahanda Kanda Yoga Weekend**, in the palm-covered hills overlooking the Andaman Sea. Workshops are led by Samantha Whybrow, the island's top yoga guru (94-91-228-6717; kahandakanda.com; \$400 per person, all-inclusive).

## NOVEMBER 21–22 Surin, Thailand

When a wild elephant is caught (the Buddha said), she is harnessed to a tame one to learn by example. In the same way, a person new to Buddhism should have a special friendship with a practicing Buddhist. To honor this Buddhist lesson of learning and

friendship, Thais hold the **Surin Elephant Festival**, in which more than 250 painted pachyderms assemble for two days of games, including a tug-of-war with the Royal Thai Army (66-4451-2039; tourismthailand.org).

## NOVEMBER 22–23 Angono Rizal, Philippines

Get wet and wild at the annual **Higantes Festival**, where devotees of Saint Clement parade behind an image of the patron saint of fishermen. The coastal fiesta culminates in a fluvial procession in the lake Laguna de Bay—be warned, water fights are de rigueur. Adventurous foodies should look out for the town's famous lizard dish, *adobong bayawak*.

# ART

## THROUGH NOVEMBER 8 Tokyo

During the Cultural Revolution, Ai Weiwei was exiled to remote Xinjiang. Decades later, he's a beloved native son: He even collaborated with starchitects Herzog & de Meuron on their spectacular Beijing Olympic stadium. Now Tokyo's Mori Art Museum celebrates Ai with his largest solo exhibition yet, **"According to What?"** (81-3-5777-8600; mori.art.museum).

## THROUGH JANUARY 2010 Seoul

It may be called **"Peppermint Candy,"** but there's little sugar in the National Museum of Contemporary Art's show of 23 South Korean artists. The works capture the country's tumultuous transformation, from the political and ide-

ological chaos of the 1980s to the explosion of mass consumerism that defined the 1990s (82-2188-6000; moca.go.kr).

## THROUGH FEBRUARY 2010 Beijing

Curators at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art assemble their dream team of China's eight most promising young artists in the exhibition **"Next Generation."** Look for new works by Liu Wei, best known for his repulsive yet compelling sculptures of monumental turds (798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District; 86-10-8459-9269; ucca.org.cn).

## THROUGH NOVEMBER 21 New Delhi

Seeing is not necessarily believing in the prints and sculptures of Bangalore-based artist Alwar Balasubramaniam. Decide for

yourself when New Delhi's edgy **Talwar Gallery** hosts an exhibition of his latest installations (C-84 Neeti Bagh; 91-11-4605-0307).

## NOVEMBER 7 North Malé Atoll, Maldives

When in Paris, Hôtel Costes resident **DJ Stéphane Pompougnac** spins for the Manolo-shod crowd. But when in the Maldives . . . well, look forward to grooving barefoot with the beautiful people when the mixmaster spins for one night only at the chic Huvaafen Fushi resort (960-6644-222; huvaafenfushi.com; doubles, \$1,480–\$3,450).

## NOVEMBER 9–DECEMBER 9 Mumbai

Mixed-media artist Pushpamala N. trained as a sculptor but soon gravitated toward performance

photography. Head over to **Chemould Prescott Road Gallery** to check out her latest, the centerpiece of which is a 35-minute black-and-white gothic thriller film (Queens Mansion, 3rd Fl., G. Talwatkar Marg Fort; 91-22-2200-0211; gallery chemould.com).

## NOVEMBER 22–28 Siem Reap, Cambodia

During the annual **Angkor Photo Workshops**, renowned photographers from Magnum and the Associated Press offer free workshops for Khmer street children. Pros' and students' images are shown at the McDermott Gallery and in the surrounding garden of the Foreign Correspondents Club (855-23-992-284; apws.wordpress.com).

## OCTOBER 15–NOVEMBER 29 Singapore

Takashi Murakami doesn't just paint, he helps create Japan's hottest new artists—among them 25-year-old **Rei Sato**. Check out Sato's *manga*-inspired works Singapore-side in her show at Hermès (541 Orchard Rd., 1-2A Liat Towers; 65-6734-1353).

## OCTOBER 24–FEBRUARY 28, 2010

## Taichung, Taiwan

Asia: It's not just in Asia anymore! In **"Viewpoints and Viewing Points: 2009 Asian Art Biennial,"** the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts expands the region to comprise Israel and Russia. Artists include Thailand's Jakkai Siributr, recognized for his satirical textiles (2, Section 1, Wu Chuan W. Rd.; 886-4-2372-3553; ntmofa.gov.tw).