



“Trips you’ll talk about”

We guarantee these 10 trips will give you vacation stories worth telling. The theme is immersion—in a new skill, a new place or even history. And because great stories need pictures to match, we even show you how to capture the moment in photos.



CAPTURE IT!

To shoot interiors, Bob Stefko recommends investing in a tripod. Skip the flash, and use your camera's manual settings to pick a longer exposure time. The beautiful, naturally lit shots will gain drama and depth.

TORNADO WATCH

It is late afternoon, and the cotton-ball clouds of midday have turned into a maelstrom of rain, hail and lightning. A row of camera-wielding tourists faces the dark sky with a single question: "Is this the storm that will produce a tornado?" Todd Thorn has led Texas- and Colorado-based Storm Chasing Adventure Tours for 11 years. Participants, many of them foreigners curious to see a real twister, spend six days driving—and driving and driving—across storm-prone states such as Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. Todd can't promise tornadoes, but their only-slightly-less-fascinating precursors, supercells, are almost guaranteed. Guided by satellites, Todd's SUVs get as close as safely possible to the action. How close is too close? That depends, but he assures you'll hear, smell and feel the storm.

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The Wright stuff

When architectural icon Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park, Illinois, studio is empty, and sunlight slants through the window, the room's rich woods and elegant lines sing in silent harmony. The space feels like a sanctuary. But four times each year, when the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust hosts its Architecture Fantasy Camp, the place hums with activity. Pencils scratch, pages turn, and dreams turn into blueprints.

At each session, a dozen Wright-loving, nonarchitects (sorry, no pros allowed) from around the country gather to try their hands at design. They probably won't produce the next Guggenheim or Fallingwater, but they might come away with a garage or tool shed. The workshop, led by Chicago architects, lasts just four evenings, and everyone goes home with a blueprint.

But despite all the drawing, doodling and daydreaming, producing a workable design isn't the real goal. Nor is becoming an architecture expert, though the class does provide a thorough introduction to the drafting process, bubble diagrams and Froebel blocks (think Rubik's Cube meets Jenga). This is about designing a building in the

very same room where Wright conceived many of his 100-plus designs. For architecture junkies, it's the equivalent of swinging Ernie Banks' bat at Wrigley Field.

"Just to be in this space, it's an incredible feeling," says Rick Michel, of Mequon, Wisconsin, whose family enrolled him in the camp as a Christmas gift. "I'd done some remodeling projects before. How could I pass up a chance to work here? It's a dream come true."

Working on such hallowed ground inspires quests for perfection, however unattainable. Students engage the architects for guidance, and there's a lot of scribbling—and even more erasing. Jan Kieckhefer, director of education at the trust, says, "The emphasis of the camp is process, not product." And she warns people that this is not a 21st-century college drafting course: "There are no computers here. It's just tables, pencils and rulers. And most of all, the space."

Written by Jerry Soverinsky.

Photograph by Bob Stefko

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