

# ENSEMBLE® HOT LIST

## Top Picks in the Americas



Here are some of my personal recommendations for the best and most interesting experiences that the Americas have to offer, from our own Northwest Territories to the tangos of Argentina – plan on seeing at least one in the next year!

Chris Robinson

### COLOMBIA: CARTAGENA - SOUTH AMERICA MEETS THE CARIBBEAN

Looking to venture to South America for the first time? Look no further than the magnificent colonial city of Cartagena - perched between the Andean foothills of Colombia and the pristine beaches of the southernmost Caribbean. It's safe, the people are warm and welcoming and their culture is vibrant. Snorkel off the Rosario Islands or tour to dazzling Santa Marta and frolic in warm, volcanic mud springs.



Go with **nolitours** from Toronto and Montreal

### CALIFORNIA: PALM SPRINGS - DESERT SANDS AND MOUNTAIN SNOWS



Can't choose between heat and cold? Find both within minutes outside of Palm Springs, a south-central Californian oasis town with a star-studded past. The desert landscape and flora of Joshua Tree National Park is other-worldly with huge cacti and house-sized boulders scattered like marbles. Then take the world's largest rotating tramcars to 8,500 feet up Mount Jacinto and rent snow shoes or cross country skis to explore the mountain wilderness.

Go with **WESTJET vacations** from most gateways

### PERU: TOUR - THE INCAS FOR SOFTIES

Machu Picchu, the "Lost City of the Incas", should be on every traveller's bucket list. But touring Peru can be tough and daunting work. So let Transat Discoveries' Mysteries of Peru tour do all the hard work for you while you relax and revel in the unique wonders of Peru. Visit Colonial Arequipa; awe-inspiring Colca Canyon; my favourite - lofty and ethereal Lake Titicaca; the Incan capital of Cuzco; and of course the utterly breathtaking Machu Picchu.

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### MEXICO: CLIMB A VOLCANO



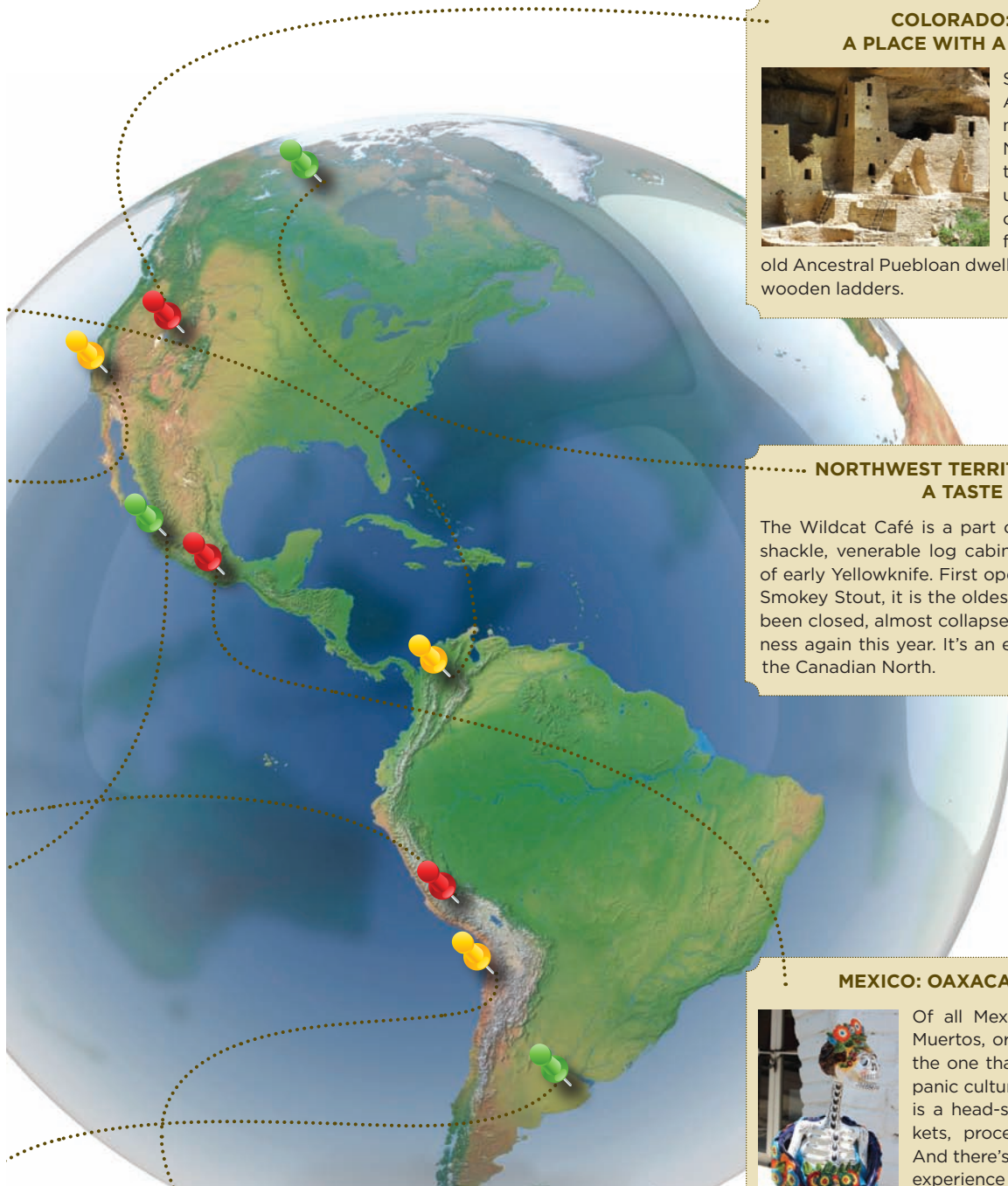
You don't have to be a mountaineer or have a death-wish to stand atop a volcanic peak! Starting from the Pacific coastal resort destination of Manzanillo it's possible to drive to the trailhead near Colima. Then hike to the top of Nevado de Colima and return to your all-inclusive resort in just one day. It's a craggy, snow-patched dormant volcano 14,600 feet above the ocean. There is a spectacular view of the adjacent Volcan de Colima - North America's most active volcano.

Go with **transat Holidays** and hire a local guide

### ARGENTINA: BUENOS AIRES - LET'S GO TANGO!

Learn to tango in its passionate home. Mansion Dandi Royal has some of the most accomplished and well-known tango maestros in Buenos Aires. Its professional staff will guide you through every step in the wonderful wood-floored basement studios. Then spend some time with the gauchos on a traditional estancia in the Pampas to marvel at their horsemanship...and maybe tango with them under the stars.

Go with **AIR CANADA VACATIONS**



**COLORADO: MESA VERDE -  
A PLACE WITH A VIEW INTO HISTORY**



Situated close to where Colorado, Arizona, Utah and New Mexico meet, Mesa Verde is the only National Park in the US devoted to the works of Man. It is a place unique in time and space. Huge canyon desert-land scenery is fused with abandoned 700 year old Ancestral Puebloan dwellings that are accessed by narrow wooden ladders.

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES: YELLOWKNIFE -  
A TASTE OF THE NORTH**

The Wildcat Café is a part of Yellowknife's DNA. It's a ramshackle, venerable log cabin built in the mining camp style of early Yellowknife. First opened by owners Willie Wylie and Smokey Stout, it is the oldest restaurant in Yellowknife. It has been closed, almost collapsed, but is back and open for business again this year. It's an essential experience and taste of the Canadian North.

**MEXICO: OAXACA - DAY OF THE DEAD**



Of all Mexico's many festivals, Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead is perhaps the one that most vividly fuses the pre-Hispanic cultures and Roman Catholic beliefs. It is a head-spinning phantasmagoria of markets, processions, foods and celebrations. And there's nowhere better in the country to experience this explosion of Mexican culture than the mountain city of Oaxaca. Time your visit for Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> [and take a local tour.]

**BOLIVIA: ORURO - DANCE WITH THE DEVIL**

Carnival is an outrageous experience in many parts of Latin America. But high up on the Bolivian Altiplano at over 10,000 feet, Carnival in the old silver and tin mining town of Oruro takes on a very different guise. Each year over 30,000 dancers and 150 marching bands participate. The main dance is the Diablada - the dance of the devil. The devil-dancers are led by Lucifer who wears a grotesque, papier-mâché mask with sharp silver teeth and horns. Oro Carnival begins on the Saturday before Ash Wednesday.

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