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EPIC COASTAL DRIVES

ITALY FRANCE IRELAND SOUTH AFRICA AUSTRALIA NORWAY

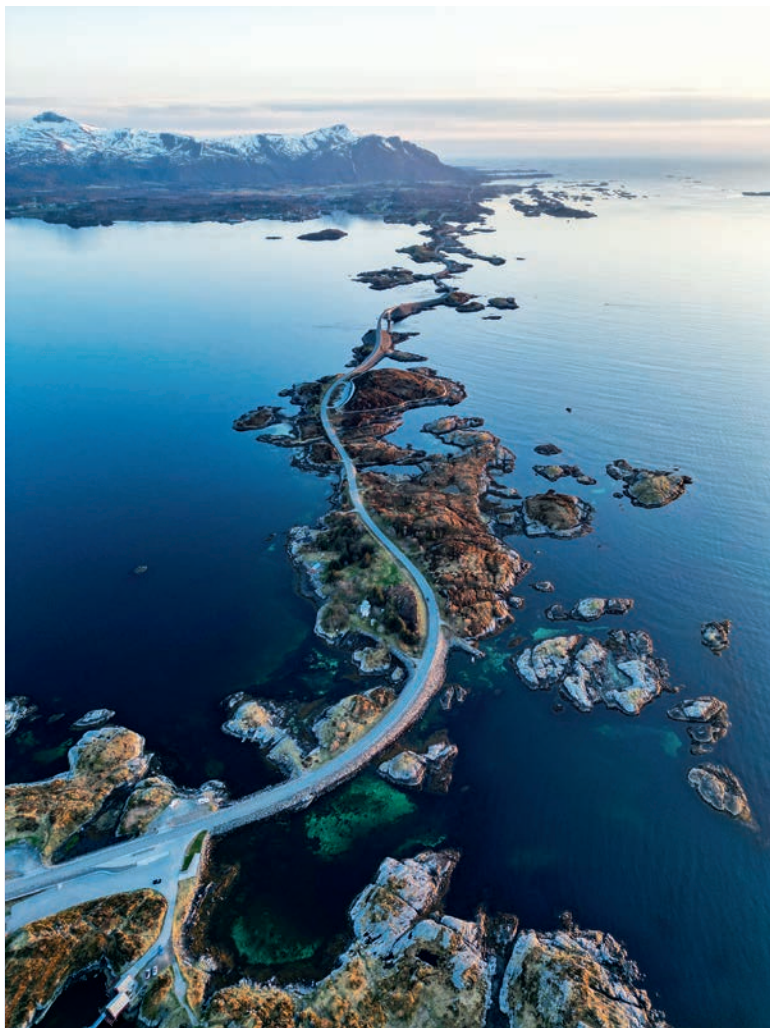
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ATLANTIC OCEAN ROAD, NORWAY

An elevated ocean road connects a chain of small islands and islets on this route taking you from mainland Norway across to the remote island of Averøy. The longest and most iconic of its eight bridges, Storseisundet – often referred to as ‘the road to nowhere’ – dramatically curves around in a way that from some angles creates the illusion of abruptly ending mid-air. The elements play a starring role, with adventurous travellers making the journey during the autumn months to see the route at its most dramatic as waves break on the rocks, flinging spray across the tarmac. Spring and summer bring the best, and safest, driving conditions, though, as the warmer weather brings calmer waters. Across unspoilt islands, including Eldhusøya, Lyngholmen and Geitøya, designated stopping places encourage you to get out and explore the rugged landscape on foot. The circular, elevated walkway at Eldhusøya, known as Svevestien (or ‘the hovering path’), takes you further into the rugged landscape, commanding views over the bridges and ocean. The glass-walled viewing platform, Askevågen, provides 360-degree views across the archipelago. From Geitøya, boats ferry visitors over to the tiny island of Håholmen, a historic fishing village, where 17th- and 18th-century buildings now house a museum, restaurant, pub and hotel. Here, Restaurant Ytterbrygga highlights the seasonal coastal flavours of this Norwegian wilderness.

Where to stay At Håholmen, cosy rooms are spread across a cluster of traditional wooden sea cottages. Doubles from £149, including breakfast. haholmen.no

From mountain-hugging roads to bridges skimming the sea, there are some routes so scenic they turn the journey into the destination. Lauren Jade Hill pulls on her driving gloves and heads for the horizon

EPIC COASTAL DRIVES





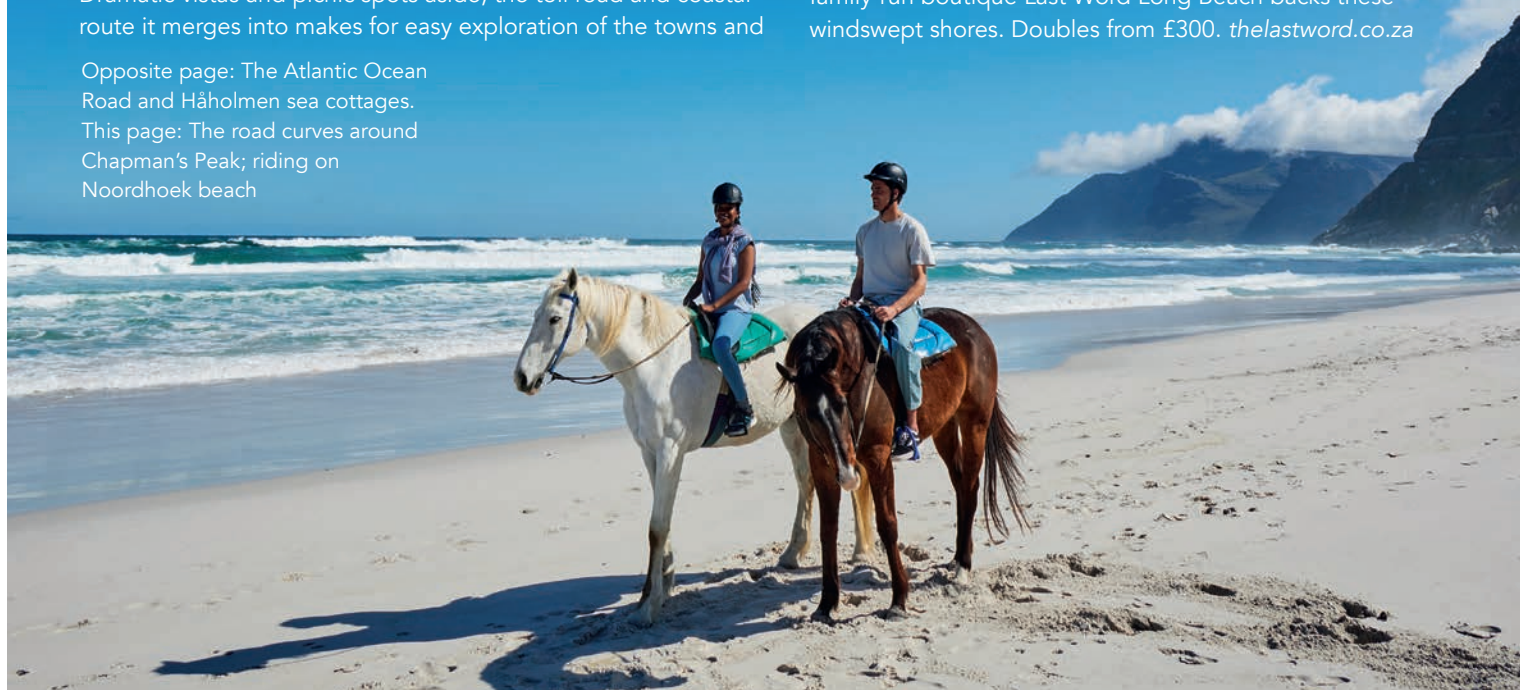
CHAPMAN'S PEAK DRIVE, SOUTH AFRICA

A coastal road that recently marked its 100th year, this is a drive that never fails to impress, with as many as 114 panoramic curves skirting its namesake mountain – a southerly extension of the larger Constantia Berg – on the Atlantic-facing Cape Peninsula. Starting in the seaside village of Hout Bay, around half an hour's drive from Cape Town, the oceanside route follows the rugged coastline of the Western Cape around to the laidback coastal town of Noordhoek. The route climbs steeply up to Chapman's Point midway for views over the bays below. Dramatic vistas and picnic spots aside, the toll road and coastal route it merges into makes for easy exploration of the towns and

natural landscape stretching out between Cape Town and the south-westernmost tip of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope. Worthwhile food stops add to the route's appeal. Tuck into fish and chips oceanside at Fish on the Rocks, try refined dishes such as crayfish tortellini and linefish sashimi at Chefs Warehouse at Tintswalo Atlantic, or dive into tapas at The Foodbarn, courtesy of French-born chef Franck Dangereux. **Where to stay** Long Beach, Kommetjie is connected to Noordhoek by an 8km stretch of white sand beach. The family-run boutique Last Word Long Beach backs these windswept shores. Doubles from £300. thelastword.co.za

Opposite page: The Atlantic Ocean Road and Håholmen sea cottages.

This page: The road curves around Chapman's Peak; riding on Noordhoek beach





GREAT OCEAN ROAD, AUSTRALIA

On Victoria's rugged south-west coast, the 243km Great Ocean Road winds along cliffs above the wild, windswept Southern Ocean. Dramatic sights unfold along the way: the iconic limestone stacks of the Twelve Apostles, miles of empty beaches, jagged cliffs and soaring bluffs stretch between the towns of Torquay and Allansford. A verdant green landscape backs this coastal scenery and lush wilderness areas like the ancient Otway rainforest lie inland. Stop by landmarks such as Cape Split Point Lighthouse, take in areas of great natural beauty such as the Bay of Islands and stroll through the seaside towns of Port Campbell, Lorne and Apollo Bay – hiking trails from Lavers Hill lead you into rainforest that's home to some of Australia's most beautiful waterfalls. Up and down the coast, chefs and producers bring exciting local flavours to the table. The 12 Apostles Food Artisans Trail, in and around Port Campbell and Timboon, introduces visitors to brewers, winemakers and chocolatiers among other specialists in the area, and the region's finest produce fills the stalls of The Fresh Market Warrnambool. Dishes celebrate local produce like smoked eel at The Merrijig Inn (Victoria's oldest) in Port Fairy and chef Dan Hunter's Brae restaurant offers imaginative degustation menus on an organic farm in the Otways.

Where to stay Cape Nelson Lighthouse is a historic lighthouse turned hotel perched on cliffs overlooking the ocean, close to the end of the coastal route, in Portland West. Doubles from £164. capenelsonlighthouse.com.au

AMALFI COAST, ITALY

A narrow road clings dramatically to the verdant cliffside of this 50km stretch of coastline curving along the southern edge of Italy's Sorrento Peninsula, where steep rock face plunges into the sparkling Tyrrhenian Sea. Hairpin turns reveal breathtaking panoramas and tunnels cut through the limestone rock on a route that takes you through Unesco-listed landscape punctuated with pastel-hued villages and terraced lemon groves – arched stone bridges crossing its deep ravines. The Costiera Amalfitana runs from Sorrento, perched on the cliffs overlooking the Bay of Naples, to the historic port city, Salerno. Come in May, before the crowds descend, to traverse this exceptionally scenic, although challenging, route, stopping by towns such as Positano, Amalfi and Ravello that have long captivated artists with their colourful streets running down to the sea. Follow steps leading down to hidden coves like that of Fiordo di Furore and soak up the atmosphere of popular beaches like Spaggio Grande in Positano. The freshest seafood, sun-ripened lemons and handmade pasta help define the coastline's culinary identity, with family-run trattorias sitting comfortably alongside Michelin-starred icons. In Amalfi, book a table at the legendary Ristorante la Caravella, pairing gastronomy with fine art, and venture to Valle delle Ferriere just outside the city for the farmhouse Agricola Fore Porta's zero-kilometre menus, farm tours and Mediterranean cooking classes.

Where to stay At Palazzo Suriano – set within gardens of centuries-old citrus and olive trees, flowering bougainvillea framing the sea views – frescoed rooms capture the spirit of the Amalfi coastline. Doubles from £282. palazzosuriano.it

Opposite page: The Great Ocean Road boasts empty beaches, verdant forest and surf life. This page: Follow the hairpin bends to Positano





WILD ATLANTIC WAY, IRELAND

Along Ireland's Atlantic coast, the Wild Atlantic Way stretches for 2,600 scenic kilometres, making it one of the world's longest defined coastal routes. It traverses nine counties, from the Inishowen Peninsula in Donegal to Kinsale in Cork, taking in landmarks such as the Cliffs of Moher and connecting travellers with local communities along the way. With so much ground to cover, the route is divided into 14 stages, including the southern peninsulas. On the 150km loop around the Dingle Peninsula, golden strands stretch towards the horizon at Inch Beach and Castlegregory. A drive over the Conor Pass leads to Dingle, from where the winding Sleah Head Drive follows a panoramic circuit, taking in the dramatic Sleah Head promontory. On the peninsula's westernmost tip, Dunmore Head looks out over the Atlantic Ocean and Blasket Islands. The 175km Ring

of Kerry stretch then follows the picturesque Iveragh Peninsula's coastline, continuing on over to the Skellig islands and viewpoints like Bray Head. Together, these southern peninsulas proudly display a farm-to-fork food scene focusing on fresh seafood, artisan cheeses and locally reared meat such as lamb. While driving the Ring of Kerry, stop by the Boathouse Bistro at Dromquinna Manor for dishes informed by the seasonal produce – signature dishes often include their famous potted crab, golden fried scampi with pink sauce and Atlantic seafood chowder. In Dingle, tuck into crispy chilli monkfish, battered hake or buttermilk-infused fish tacos at The Fish Box.

Where to stay Kenmare Bay is the backdrop for Sheen Falls Lodge, a 17th-century fishing lodge turned five-star retreat. Doubles from £242, including breakfast. sheenfallslodge.ie



Clockwise from top left: Stop off at Dromquinna while exploring The Ring of Kerry, with its abundant fresh seafood and clear waters



CÔTE D'AZUR, FRANCE

Few stretches of coastline are as theatrically composed as the corner of the French Riviera linking artistic Nice with Italianate Menton and passing through Monaco, where the route skirts its yacht-filled harbour. This is where the three panoramic roads of Les Trois Corniches – Basse, Moyenne and Grande – run in parallel along the cliff-flanked Côte d'Azur. The Basse Corniche hugs the shoreline, linking the coastal communes of Villefranche-sur-Mer, Beaulieu-sur-Mer and Cap d'Ail. Higher up, the Moyenne Corniche – the middle road – weaves through pretty Èze and Beausoleil. Above them both, the most panoramic of the three, the Grande Corniche – built on the orders of Napoleon – offers far-reaching views as it passes through elevated villages such as La Turbie and Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, some 500m above sea level. Intersecting roads link the three routes for easy exploration of the whole coastal area. At the water's edge, stop at the cliff-sheltered beaches of Plage Mala, Plage de la Baie d'Èze or Plage de la Petite Afrique. Higher up, take in the views from Parc Naturel Départemental de la Grande Corniche. Fresh seafood, Provençal herbs, olive oil and Italian influence shape the local cuisine, showcased at restaurants such as the three-Michelin-starred Mirazur in Menton, where menus are guided by chef Mauro Colagreco's 5 hectares of biodynamic and permaculture gardens; or Les Remparts, perched above the coast at La Chèvre d'Or in Èze, where artfully presented Mediterranean plates and Parisian pastries come with uninterrupted views over the Mediterranean Sea.

Where to stay The nearby village of Saint-Paul-de-Vence is home to La Colombe d'Or, a storied hotel-restaurant long favoured by artists including Pablo Picasso. Doubles from £400. la-colombe-dor.com



Visit Nice, Menton, Beaulieu-sur-Mer and Monaco; and soak up Provençal flavours at Les Remparts

