



## Big Cities, Little Noise

From bars where everyone speaks in whispers to urban hotels that mimic the countryside, here's **your guide to having a relaxing vacation** in the world's rowdiest places.

Hyundai Card Music Library

COURTESY OF KYUNGSUB SHIN/HYUNDAI CARD MUSIC LIBRARY



MODO



Cardinal



Máximo Bistrot

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## MEXICO CITY DIALED BACK

The **Roma district** is a great place to find local designers, memorable food, and compelling art. It's also maddeningly crowded. Follow this itinerary to dodge (most of) the craziness.

by SARAH BAIRD

2:00 P.M.

### Your Caffeine Fix

**Cardinal** was the first shop in town to take coffee really seriously. Unlike the vibe in many cool cafés, hand-poured cups aren't served with a salty attitude. It's a friendly neighborhood spot where you can read the paper in peace and enjoy a solid cappuccino at the same time. *Calle Córdoba 132*

3:00 P.M.

### Get Lit Here

English-speaking locals come to **Under the Volcano**, the city's most celebrated English-language bookstore, to practice their skills. Discover books by obscure Latin American authors and American writers on Latin America (e.g. Kerouac's apt B-side, *Mexico City Blues*). *Celaya 25*

4:30 P.M.

### A Time-Warp Museum

Housed in an art nouveau mansion, **MODO**—Museum of the Objective of the Object—is an odd keyhole into everyday pre-21st-century life. You're up close with items ranging from washing machines that were used in the 1800s to funky skateboards from the 1970s. *Colima 145*

6:00 P.M.

### Lofty Libations

Run by a veteran of New York City's Le Bernardin, **Máximo Bistrot** attracts a crowd of dedicated foodies, most of whom are not clued in to the new upstairs bar. Enjoy highbrow snacks (*jamón ibérico*), herb-driven cocktails (order any with bourbon), and kick your feet up on leather seats. *Tonalá 133*

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## Transcendental Transportation

Meditation instructor Ralph De La Rosa (*ralphdelarosa.com*) shares how not to lose your mind on a busy subway.

by ANDREW RICHDALÉ



### FOCUS ON ... BREATHING

"Claustrophobic? Try breath awareness, scientifically proven to chill you out. Get inhales to five seconds and exhales to six for two and a half minutes. You'll slow down the heartbeat and lower blood pressure."



### FOCUS ON ... CHOCOLATE

"Put a square on your tongue. Get curious about the flavors but also all the energy it took to make the bar and deliver it to you. You won't just appreciate chocolate more. The brain thrives on novel thoughts."



### FOCUS ON ... MUSIC

"Turn on an album by Brian Eno, Garth Stevenson, or anything ambient. Zero in on any swelling peaks and valleys or other changes in the soundscape. It'll help tune out all the other noise."

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## Rock Out In Peace

At Seoul's new **Hyundai Card Music Library**, visitors dive into 10,000 vinyl records (including rarities from Led Zeppelin), every issue of *Rolling Stone* ever, and a large-scale work by JR, perhaps the most punk-rock street artist alive. —A.R.



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## THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE RETREAT IN SOUTH AFRICA

This peaceful family-run hotel happens to be in the eye of Cape Town's nightlife storm.

You could parachute onto Cape Town's New Church Street without any plans and still have the best evening of your life: Just follow the cheering crowds pouring out of some of the city's most popular restaurants and bars. Then find your escape hatch from the noise, one of six cottage-like rooms at **La Grenadine** (from \$110, *lagrenadine.co.za*). Situated behind a large wooden gate at the end of a long driveway, the hotel is run by a pair of

charming French transplants (with moral support from their kids and pet shar-pei). The place feels as though they constructed a movie-set version of the South of France—complete with brick and stone walls, a loft with a record player perched above the kitchen, and a row of rooms tucked under an awning in a garden. Consider it your own little slice of Provence in one of the coolest corners of Cape Town. —M.B.

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## SHH ... THIS IS A BAR!

In Chicago, home of America's best cocktail scene, the real question is not how you like your drink. It's how quietly you like to enjoy it.

by MARK BYRNE

### 1. THE VIOLET HOUR

■■■■■■■■■■■  
A low, constant hum

The excited murmuring you hear when you walk into this sanctuary-like space? Call it the sound of reverence. The bar jump-started Wicker Park's resurgence, not to mention the drinking culture of the entire city. Order the Daisy 17, a spin on an old-fashioned they've been mixing since the doors opened in 2007.

### 2. THE AVIARY

■■■■■X■■■■■  
Date-night friendly decibels

Mad-scientist chef Grant Achatz, of Chicago's Alinea and Next, doesn't actually man the shakers or chip the ice at Aviary, but it's clearly his brainchild: Behind the bar there's more lab equipment than stirring spoons. The menu changes all the time, but the Carbonated Negroni is imperative if available.

### 3. SCOFFLAW

■■■■■X■■■■■  
Can still hold a conversation

Think of it as the designated corner bar of Logan Square, where cool kids still underpay for a full-floor loft. Its bartenders know their way around the classics (and have a love affair with gin), but unlike most liquor nerds, they don't skimp on the beer. Go during a "Tap Takeover" for rare pours from venerable breweries.



The Aviary

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**The Perfect Lima Sunset** All of **El Malecón park**, a six-mile stretch of cliffside greenery, offers stellar views of the Pacific Ocean. Hit the patch along the neighborhood of Miraflores, though, and that vista is set to music. Around sundown, locals of every stripe gather for mellow, impromptu jam sessions with drums and acoustic guitars. —A.R.