

West African Wild Things

WHY GO: Several hours' drive south of Dakar, Senegal, the Sine-Saloum Delta encompasses 700 square miles of braided streams, mangrove swamps, glimmering flatlands, and salt wells in green, yellow, and orange hues. Travelers interested in fishing and bird-watching will find both in this surreal landscape.

Anglers can hire pirogue owners through their hotels to navigate the *bolongs* (waterways) that allow fishing. About 80 species of freshwater and marine fish thrive here, including grouper, snapper, and barracuda.

Hundreds of types of birds, including flamingos and herons, populate the delta, drawn by the abundant fish and diverse habitats. Adventurous birders should sail offshore to the Île aux Oiseaux (Bird Island) in the Parc National du Delta du Saloum, a water and forest reserve in the southernmost part of the delta. From April to August, pink-backed pelicans dive into the ocean for fish, and colonies of royal terns and other seabirds lay their eggs on the low-lying island. The boat ride to get there can be choppy, but lucky visitors might spot dolphins and manatees along the way.

After a day outdoors, retire to the Lodge des Collines de Niassam in the northern coastal community of Palmarin, where baobab treehouses and huts balanced on stilts in the lagoon keep you close to nature, even while you sleep. —Jori Lewis

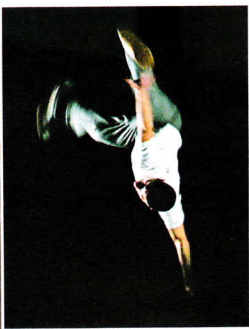


CALENDAR

DANCE

Tanztage Berlin

Jan. 3-15
Berlin, Germany



Since reunification, Berlin has been an incubator of European modern dance. In 1996, Barbara Friedrich, godmother of the city's dance scene, cofounded Tanztage Berlin (Berlin Days of Dance) to give young choreographers a chance to

present new works. Their efforts now draw standing-room-only crowds in the cavernous Sophiensaele, a historic craftsmen's hall, built in 1905. tanztage.de

THEATER

Santiago a Mil International Theater Festival

Jan. 3-31
Santiago, Chile

In honor of Chile's bicentennial celebration, this year's Santiago a Mil theater festival presents plays—including previously censored works—that provide insights into the country's history. Native playwright Marco Antonio de la Parra's political play *The Raw, the Cooked and the Rotten*, which was banned in 1978 as "obscene and vulgar," is finally produced uncut. stgoamil.cl/stgo

STREET PERFORMANCE

Buskers Festival

Jan. 21-31
Christchurch, New Zealand

Street performers from around the globe bring their routines to Christchurch's city plazas for the 10-day World Buskers Festival. Since launching in 1994 with only eight acts, the festival has ballooned to a program of 500 different shows by aerialists, contortionists, and clowns at more than a dozen indoor and outdoor sites. The entire festival is free, leaving it up to you to throw a few dollars into the hat. worldbuskersfestival.com



COMICS CONVENTION

Festival International de la Bande Dessinée

Jan. 28-31
Angoulême, France

Dubbed the Cannes of comics, the annual Festival International de la Bande Dessinée attracts writers, illustrators, and fans from around the world to the medieval town of Angoulême in southwestern France. Called BD ("bay-day"), *bandes dessinées* (drawn strips) are considered serious art. Last year's Fauve d'Or prize for best comic book went to a dark, adult interpretation of *Pinocchio*. The festivities include comic strip improv, in which teams of illustrators and thespians act out comic strips on stage, and a comics concert, where artists draw to live music. bdangouleme.com