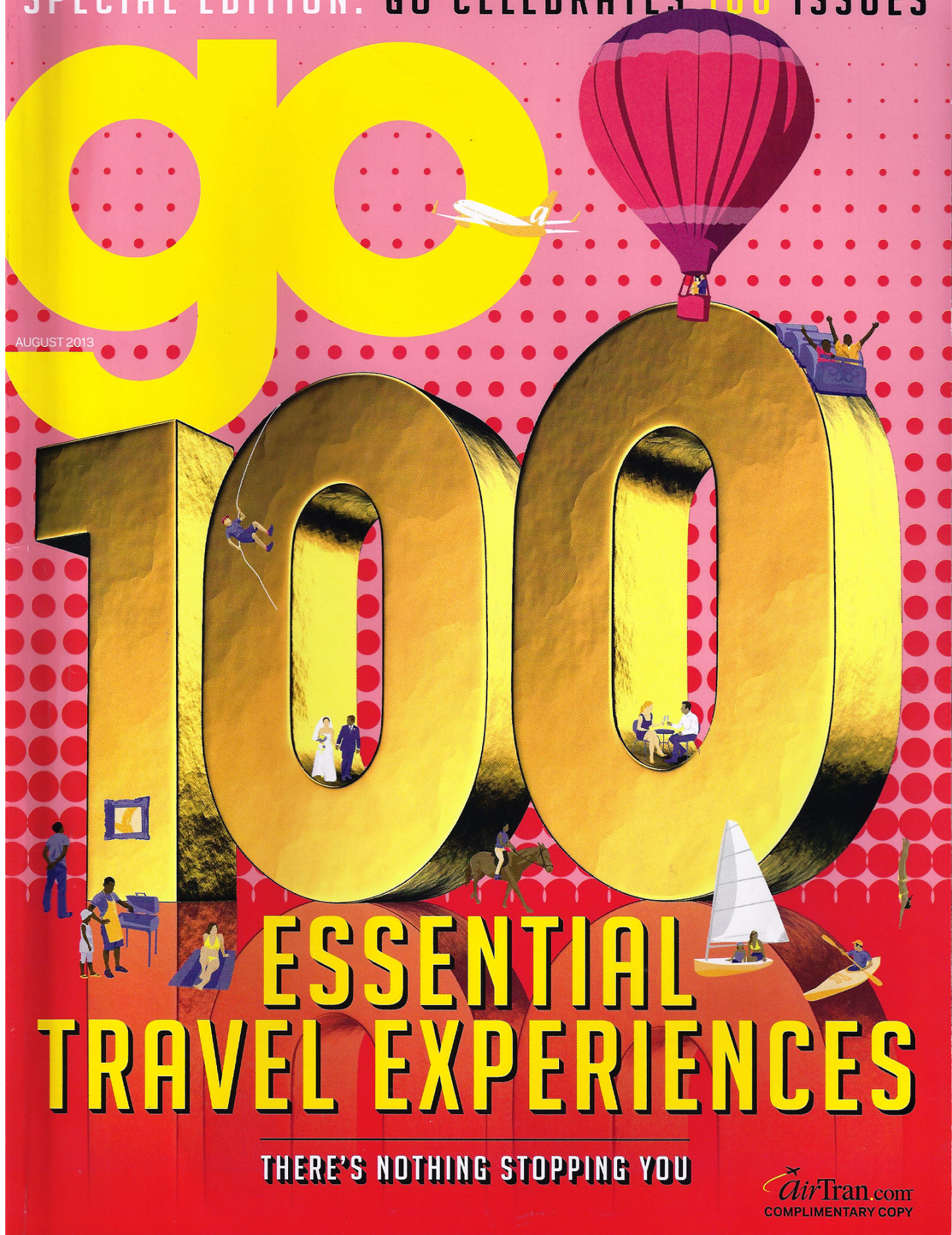


SPECIAL EDITION: GO CELEBRATES 100 ISSUES

AUGUST 2013



# ESSENTIAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

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# THE WILD ONES

WHICH NATURAL NATIONAL TREASURE IS THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION FOR OUTDOORSMEN?

By Bret Love

## 25

### CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA (30 miles from Atlanta)

#### THE STATS:

- 48 miles of river
- 10,000 acres
- 3.1 million annual visitors
- Stocked with 23 species of game fish
- Established 1978

**THE SALESMAN:** Information Officer Rudy Evenson

**THE SELL:** "Our park is a little piece of wilderness right in the middle of a big city. We've got hiking and mountain biking trails, and we've got the river for paddling. We're one of the southernmost trout streams in the US. For people who want to get a workout in, I recommend the Cochran Shoals Fitness Loop, or the more secluded and scenic Indian Trail. On that trail, you feel like you're in the middle of the woods, even though you're in Atlanta."

**THE SKINNY:** The Chattahoochee is a favorite among fly-fishermen and kayakers, and it's especially beloved for its proximity to the city.



## 26

### YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK (212 miles from San Francisco)

#### THE STATS:

- 747,956 acres
- 800+ miles of hiking trails
- Elevation ranges from 2,127 to 13,114 feet
- 3.8 million annual visitors
- Established 1890

**THE SALESMAN:** Park Ranger Scott Gediman

**THE SELL:** "Yosemite is known as a crown jewel in the National Park system for its scenic beauty. In Yosemite Valley, we've got 3,000-foot high granite walls with incredible waterfalls, including the highest in North America. The bulk of our visitation is during summer, but winter is a great time to see Yosemite Falls. Seeing El Capitan blanketed with snow is spectacular."

**THE SKINNY:** Yosemite was a favorite destination for naturalist John Muir and conservation trailblazer Teddy Roosevelt. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for you.

## 27

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK (76 miles from Denver)

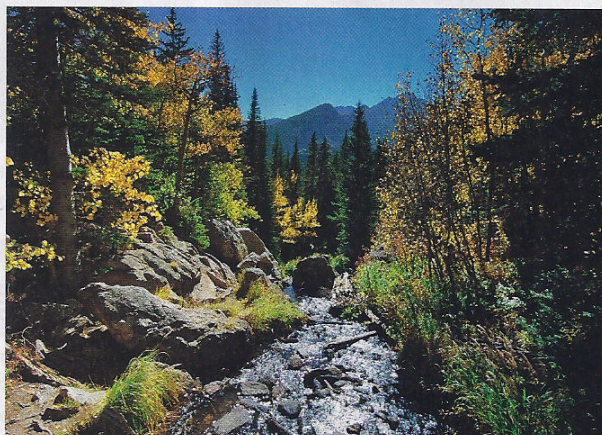
#### THE STATS:

- 265,770 acres
- 359 miles of trails
- 150 lakes
- 476 miles of streams
- 72 peaks above 12,000 feet
- 3.1 million annual visitors
- Established 1915

**THE SALESMAN:** Spokesperson Kyle Patterson

**THE SELL:** "If you picture the Rocky Mountains, we've got all of that—snow-capped peaks, alpine lakes, waterfalls and, at certain times of year, a sea of wildflowers. About a third of the park is alpine tundra, an incredible fragile ecosystem. We've got great wildlife watching: you might see elk, mule deer, big horn sheep, coyotes and an occasional bobcat. People will come in the summer to hike or go fly fishing, then come back in the winter and go backcountry skiing."

**THE SKINNY:** The Rocky Mountains are undeniably picturesque in summer, but its autumn leaves and rugged winter beauty are arguably its most distinctive draws.







TOP  
100

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## GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

(274 miles from Las Vegas)

### THE STATS:

- 277 river miles long
- 18 miles wide
- One mile deep
- Considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World
- Nearly 5 million annual visitors

**THE SALESMAN:** Park Ranger Gaelyn Olmsted (who blogs at [geogypsytraveler.com](http://geogypsytraveler.com))

**THE SELL:** "No photo can capture the magnificence of a 277-mile long, one-mile deep canyon filled with the brilliant colors of sunset. Everyone should see the Grand Canyon with their own eyes. Most visitors enjoy seeing it from the rim, but hiking into the canyon is a different experience. The diversity of landscapes ranges from desert to forest, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife. It's the greatest earth on show."

**THE SKINNY:** There's a reason this family favorite is the second most-visited National Park in America, despite its distance from civilization. It's big, it's bold, and it's unlike anything else—a must for any traveler's bucket list.



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## WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

(125 miles from Boston)

### THE STATS:

- 750,852 acres
- 1,200 miles of hiking trails (including 100+ miles of the Appalachian Trail)
- 1.7 million annual visitors
- Established 1918

**THE SALESMAN:** Assistant District Ranger Thomas Giles

**THE SELL:** "White Mountain has six federally designated wilderness areas, which provide a more remote and pristine experience. There are lots of camping, hiking, fishing and skiing opportunities, with alpine ridges on the summits and ridge lines that vary between 4,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation. But people have to be prepared for unexpected weather. Most time of the year, weather here can be very severe."

**THE SKINNY:** When a ranger tells you that weather in his forest can be "very severe," you know it's a place where Mother Nature is not to be trifled with.

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