



LIGHTS,
CAMERA,

VACATION!

ALL THE WORLD IS A STAGE, AND YOU CAN VISIT SOME OF ITS BEST SETS

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Next time you're thinking of doing a little jet-setting, why not consider some set-jetting? There are countless reasons to visit the different cities around the world including scenery, history, nightlife and cuisine, but visiting the locations where your favourite films were shot can be an exciting new way to see the world. Delve into our handy guide to some key movie hotspots in some of the most spectacular places in the world. ➤



THIS IMAGE: The latest incarnation of Sherlock Holmes, played by Robert Downey Junior. ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Spectacular sights to see: The British Museum, Houses of Parliament, St. Paul's Cathedral, homes in Notting Hill and Tower Bridge.

LONDON

For those of a more deviant nature, head to London and discover where Charlie Croker's hatched his heist plan in the 1969 classic *The Italian Job*. Start at Charlie and Lorna's swinging 60s flat, which was located at Denbigh Close off the north end of Portobello Road in Notting Hill. For the team's makeshift headquarters, make tracks to the high-rise penthouse that's now called Peninsula Heights, at Albert Embankment in Vauxhall. It's also one of the tallest buildings in London.

No London movie-set quest would be complete without mention of *James Bond*, and London's Pinewood Studios have played host to a large number of 007's capers from the SPECTRE island and car chase scenes to underwater action. Unfortunately, the studios are usually closed

to the public but the website Bondstars.com occasionally organises tours as special events.

Director Guy Ritchie, an icon in modern UK cinema, also has a soft spot for London when it comes to his films. His rollicking remake of *Sherlock Holmes* is set in 1891 London, and the film features the detective and his trusty sidekick Watson leaving their base at 221b Baker Street (where there is even a museum dedicated to the characters!) to roam all over London, including the House of Lords, the Royal Opera House, the British Museum and St. Paul's Cathedral. Don't forget Holmes' favourite restaurant, Simpson's-in-the-Strand! Still not enough to feed your sense of adventure? Make your way to the Sherlock Holmes Pub at Charing Cross road and order from the detective-themed lunch.



PRAGUE

Despite its colourful landscapes and extraordinarily atmospheric architecture, Prague seems to be the perennial understudy of the movie world, frequently doubling as other cities and locations. Films such as *The Brother Grimm*, *Jumper* and *Hellboy* have all utilised the scenic city, but professed it was somewhere else entirely.

The city does, however, have its moment in the limelight in some movies, including *Mission Impossible*. In the ill-fated first operation, Tom Cruise aka Ethan Hunt and his cohorts are secretly at work at a lavish party at the US Embassy that was actually situated at the National Museum. During the breathless chases, audiences are treated to scenes at Wenceslas Square in the old town and the Lichtenstein Palace.

The two-faced Jim throws himself off the Charles Bridge into the Vitava River, while head-honcho villain Max's digs are at the elegant Hotel Europa.

The James Bond megahit *Casino Royale* also began with a sequence in Prague, and while some scenes were filmed at Barrandov Studios, other sets included Hradcany and glimpses of the Strahov Library and Loket Castle. Popular action flick *XxX* takes place mostly in Prague and features hotspots such as the Old Town Square, Hradcanské náměstí, and a number of the city's bridges. If you're in the mood for an adrenaline rush, take a nighttime stroll down Sokolovska Street near the Florenc subway station, or through the tunnel under Letna.



THIS IMAGE: Daniel Craig aka James Bond at the Modrany Studio in Prague. ABOVE L to R: Prague's old streets, the Charles Bridge, Strahov Library and a view over the Old Town Square.



NEW YORK

Being an inimitable destination in which to film blockbuster hits, action scenes are where it's at when it comes to taking a bite out of the Big Apple.

Spiderman fans can visit the New York Public Library to stand where Uncle Ben told Peter Parker with his last breaths that "With great power, comes great responsibility." If it's the Daily Bugle offices you're itching to see, make your way down to the Flatiron Building on 175 Fifth Avenue. The Columbia University campus masqueraded as Peter's school, while the vistas that sprawled out from Spidey's aerial view began from the rooftops of 225 Park Avenue, 260 Fifth Avenue, 11 East 26 Street and 222 West 15th Street.

The famous Times Square is also a must-see — not only did Spidey first clash with the Green Goblin here, but this vibrant hub

of bright lights is also where *King Kong* was put on display after being captured. If you want to see more of the giant ape's path of destruction, wander over to the Empire State Building to see how high Kong climbed.

King Kong isn't the only giant monster to have wreaked havoc in the city on the silver screen — *Godzilla* destroys Madison Square Garden in the 1998 remake of the movie. And let's not forget Central Park — among many other films (of almost every genre), this oasis of green in the city was where an army of soldiers lured the colossal lizard into a trap, before it eventually leaps into the Hudson River. Thankfully, while filmmakers seem to have a penchant for making their radiation-affected creatures run amok in the city and subsequently rip the scenery to shreds, it's all make-believe and the beautiful sets are still intact in reality.



THIS IMAGE: *King Kong* is unveiled in Times Square. ABOVE L to R: The New York Public Library, *Spiderman* shooting on location, Times Square and the Empire State Building.



PARIS

No trip to Paris would be complete without a visit to the Louvre, but fans of *The Da Vinci Code* have ample reasons to head to the famous museum. Movie buffs will delight in discovering the paintings featured in the film, as well as the Pyramid and The Grand Gallery.

The 17th century church at Saint Sulpice in Saint-Germain-des-Prés is where enthralled audiences met Silas, the Opus Dei albino monk assassin. The Champs-Élysées is another must-visit — after fleeing the Louvre and driving down Rue de Rivoli, the main characters Neveu and Langdon speed down the Champs-Élysées towards the Arc de Triomphe in their Smart car.

Montmartre has been featured in countless movies with scenes set in Paris, and the thrilling 1998 action flick *Ronin* is no exception. Visit the Blue Sky restaurant at Rue des Trois Frères to catch a glimpse of where the crew met up at the "Bar de Montmartre", then dash down the steps at Rue Drevet to recreate Robert De Niro's

opening scene. The arms deal gone awry took place under the Pont Alexandre III bridge over the River Seine on the Rive Droite after their meeting at the Port du Gros Caillou, though you're more likely to gawp at the at the impressive view of the famous Grand Palais, Champs-Élysées and Les Invalides nearby rather than engage with shady characters.

Jason Bourne (of his namesake spy movie series fame) travelled to countless countries, but his home base was in this 'City of Lights'. In *The Bourne Identity*, his apartment at '104 Rue du Jardin' was actually on Avenue Kléber, near the Arc de Triomphe. His alter-ego John Michael Kane, on the other hand, stayed at the Hotel Regina facing the Louvre, overlooking the Jardin des Tuileries. While we hope you're not an amnesiac target of an assassination plot, if you do need somewhere to stash your bags you can take a tip from Bourne and do so at the lockers at the Gare du Nord. ►



THIS IMAGE: The infamous Mona Lisa on The *Da Vinci Code* poster. ABOVE L to R: The stunning Louvre, the Champs-Élysées, Montmartre and the Pont Alexandre III bridge.



THIS IMAGE: A Tunisian-based set from *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith*.
 ABOVE L to R: Tozeur, a desert home, the vast Sahara desert and a variety of ruins in the Sahara desert.

TUNISIA

The rugged expanses of beautiful countryside and unique architecture wooed George Lucas into choosing Tunisia as the home of hero Luke Skywalker in *Episode IV: A New Hope*. It also moonlighted as part of the planet Naboo, and scenes in all three movies from the prequel trilogy were filmed there.

Although there actually is a town called Tatouine in Tunisia (which inspired the fictional planet's Tatooine's name), most of the scenes were shot in areas around it rather than in the town itself. One of the key locations is Tozeur, where several scenes from another much-loved film, *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* were captured. The 'eglow' from *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* and *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* was based around the Chott El-Jerid Salt Lake near Tozeur; here you can also still find ruins of the original sets from 1976. Although they were set in different deserts

in the film franchise, Ben Kenobi's hut and Jabba's Palace were actually both filmed in La Grande Dune further north.

Another key area is Chott El-Gharsa, here we catch our first sighting of Darth Sidious at Ong Djemel (Camel Head Rock). The local yardangs make for great photo-ops and have been in the backdrop of many *Star Wars* scenes. Anakin's slave house was also based nearby, as is the Mos Espa racing area — with parts of the set still visible.

If it's the Mos Eisley cantina you're interested in, where Luke and Obi-Wan first meet Han Solo and Chewbacca, be sure to visit Chalmun's Cantina in Ajim. The traditional Berber bakery that used to stand there no longer exists, but you'll love picturing the mishmash of space creatures that hung out there. When it's an out-of-this-world desert backdrop that's needed, Tunisia's surreal beauty has it all.



ROME

With its charming side-streets, picturesque terraces, sensual cuisine and a culture that simply exudes love, Rome is undeniably one of the most romantic cities in the world. It's no wonder that the city's stunning scenery has provided the stage for some of the most romantic movies ever.

One of the most famous is *Roman Holiday*. The film features numerous famous tourist destinations including the Colosseum, the Castel Sant'Angelo, the Piazza della Rotonda (which is right in front of the Pantheon) and the Piazza Venezia. The bench where newspaperman Joe Bradley found Princess Ann asleep was in Via dei Fori Imperiali. Joe convinced the princess to loosen up and try a gelato at the Spanish Steps, but the place where she really demonstrated her joy of liberation was at Via della Stamperia 85, where she had her hair cut short. One of the most famous scenes in the movie takes place at the

Bocca della Verita, the "Mouth of Truth" — legend has it that it will bite off the hands of liars. Joe's attempt to affectionately trick Ann into thinking his hand had been bitten off was replicated by Robert Downey Jr. and Marisa Tomei in the 1994 romantic comedy *Only You*.

You'll also have to visit the Fontana di Trevi — traditional lore suggests that if you throw a coin into the fountain, you are ensured a return visit someday. After being featured in *Roman Holiday*, *Three Coins in the Fountain*, *La Dolce Vita* (one of the most famous Italian films of all time) and the recent rom-com *When In Rome*, the location is one of the city's most iconic and romantic landmarks. ►

L to R: The Colosseum, a view over the city of Rome, the Bocca della Verita and the fabulous Fontana di Trevi.

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GREECE

Something about the unbridled beauty of the serene Greek islands just makes one want to run around and break into song. Fans of *Mamma Mia!* will want to do just that if they visit the island of Skopelos, where the majority of the film was shot. The crystal-clear turquoise waters of Kastani Bay and the powdery sands of its beach provided the backdrop for the performance of *Does your mother know*, while the beach and cliffs above Glisteri is where Sophie began to truly bond with her three potential fathers. The fictional Villa Donna was also nestled atop those cliffs. Sophie's (almost) wedding took place at the Agios Ioannis Prodomos Monastery. Inhabited by a few nuns, this convent is only open during its feast day. Nearby in the Aegean Sea, the old port in the island of Skiathos was the place where the three

fathers met for the first time. Sophie mailed letters to them, inviting them to her wedding from the area near St. Nikolaos Bell Tower on the island as well.

Mamma Mia! isn't the only famous muscically-inspired flick to come out of the Greek isles. The 1964 classic *Zorba the Greek's* title character is a peasant and musician with the ability to dance in a fashion so mesmerising it has practically come to define Greek culture. A skip past the Cyclades islands, the island of Crete's surrounding sea and beautiful beaches are the perfect stage upon which to show off your sirtaki skills — it was good enough for Zorba after all! If it's the Rembetiko folk music that warms your soul more than the desire to tap those tootsies, the island of Symi is a must-visit — the namesake 1983 film by Costas Ferris that celebrates the passion of the music was filmed there.

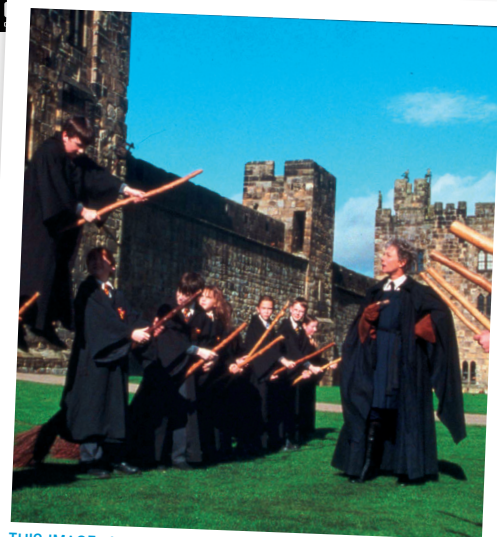
L to R: Pierce Brosnan and Meryl Streep in a scene from *Mamma Mia!* Skiathos' port, typical Greek island homes, Santorini houses, Agios Athanassios church in Timios Prodomos Monastery and the St. Nikolaos Bell Tower.



JUST FOR KIDS

The *Harry Potter* book series has undeniably been one of the most popular children's stories of all time, and the movies are no different. A tour around the UK can bring the magic of that wizarding world to life. A trip to London's King's Cross Station is inevitable, especially since a cast-iron Platform 9 ¾ sign has been erected on a wall in the building containing the real Platforms 9 and 10. A visit to London Zoo's Reptile House will show you where Harry first discovered he could talk to snakes (beginning with a Burmese python, to be exact), while Leadenhall Market at Lime Street in London's Broadgate plays host to the entrance of the mysterious Diagon Alley. A trip to Oxford would not be remiss since little ones can dine in the real-life version of Hogwarts' Great Hall at Christ Church College's dining hall. Nearby, the library where Harry, Ron and Hermione made so many important discoveries awaits, at Duke Humfrey's Library within the Bodleian Library.

If your children prefer real-life mischief and magic, why not take them to the locations featured in *Home Alone 2*? Kevin's fantasy of being in New York City for Christmas can come alive with a trip to the Plaza Hotel, or the Gapstow Bridge in the South East part of Central Park where Kevin first met the pigeon lady. If you're visiting at Christmas do as Kevin insisted, and take in the infamous Rockefeller Centre Christmas Tree. Alas, the incredibly merry Duncan's Toy Chest was actually a fictional store created just for the film. But we guarantee that if you take your little ones to real-life toy heaven FAO Schwartz instead, which is rumoured to have inspired Duncan's, they won't be disappointed. **END**



THIS IMAGE: A scene from the first *Harry Potter* movie. ABOVE L to R: London's King's Cross Station, Christ Church College in Oxford, London's Leadenhall Market, Gapstow Bridge in Central Park and the famous Rockefeller Christmas tree.

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