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While climbing Mt Semeru, **Indonesia**, guidebook writer Andrew Whitmarsh discovers that you can't actually run very far when you're running for your life



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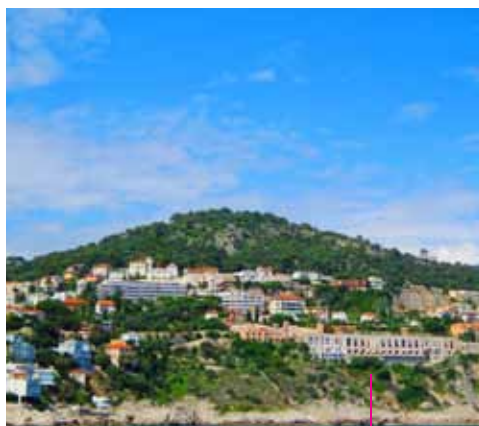
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After visiting the Golden Temple, Wahyuni Kamah find spirits are high at the **India-Pakistan** border

Always travel with a good book

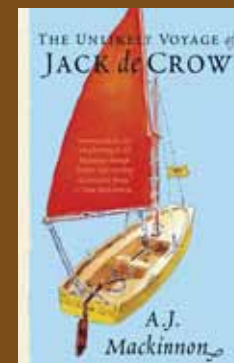


DEANIRA BONG ("Budget-Friendly Montreal," page 54 and "Traveling by Thumb," page 76) has no permanent home and no desire for one most of the time, except when she happens upon the latest Ikea brochure. Born in Indonesia, Dea has lived in Singapore, Australia, and Canada. Her personal finance website - www.nomadwallet.com - explores how regular people afford to travel.

Italian **PIERLUIGI CAVARRA** ("City of Endless Sunshine," page 30) has been a professional photographer and videographer for 23 years. He currently lives and works in Spain, though fancies a move to the UK or Germany soon. He loves to travel, particularly with his girlfriend, exploring landscapes, food, and distant cultures.



Born in the UK, **ANN WHEATON** currently shuttles between Australia, Vietnam, France, and England - which gives her fabulous opportunities to write about diverse cultures and lifestyles. She loves to find secret paths in the countryside ("The Pyrenees High Country," page 60) - and if there is great food and cafes along the way, all the better.



"*Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer is one of my favorite things on the planet," says Zulu. Krakauer tells the tragic story of Christopher Johnson McCandless's life in the Alaskan wilderness.



"Brilliantly well-written and most amusing," says Patrick of AK Mackinnon's *The Unlikely Voyage of Jack de Crow*. "The author leaves Wales for Gloucester, UK, in an 11-foot dinghy, but things get out of hand and he ends up in the Black Sea..."



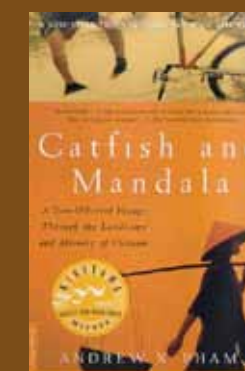
English poet **MICHAEL PAUL HOGAN** ("Dante Chicago Purgatorio," page 38) currently lives in Dalian, China. *American Voodoo* is Michael's first collection of published poetry. Michael's article includes an illustration by New York graphic artist **MARCELO GALLEGOS**.



PATRICK HORTON ("Fun and Games in Sochi," page 12) is a travel writer, photographer, guidebook and app author, and occasional tour guide. He has been published worldwide in newspapers and magazines, has written several Lonely Planet guides, and recently published Delhi Travel Guide and Bristol Travel Guide, two travel guide apps. Patrick's particular interests are anything curious, the less-visited countries, rail travel, and India.

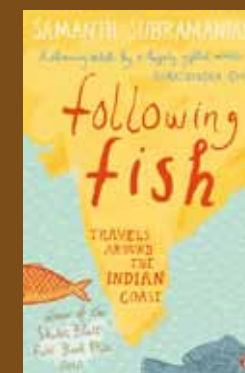


Raised in Wyoming, USA, on bear survival books, **ANDREW WHITMARSH** moved to Southeast Asia nine years ago. Over the years he has ridden on train roofs, joined street protests, seen a ghost, had fire therapy, and fled an exploding volcano ("On Top of Old Smoky," page 20). Andrew is author of *Jakarta: 25 Excursions In and Around the Indonesian Capital*.



"Roughing it by bicycle," says Andrew of Andrew X. Pham's *Catfish and Mandala* - a cycling odyssey through Vietnam. "A real adventure."

Wahyuni enjoyed *Following Fish: Travels Around the Indian Coast* by Samanth Subramanian. "This is a non-fiction book about fish and how they impact people living along the coast of India."



ZULU IRMINGER ("Utah Road Trip," page 26) quit his job as a software engineer in May 2013 and has been traveling ever since. So far he has explored both ocean coasts of the USA, the breadth of Canada, the Bahamas, and Hong Kong, and is currently spending a year in Australia. You can follow his adventures on Twitter: @ZuluTravels

When traveling, **WAHYUNI KAMAH** ("Into Punjab," page 68) is particularly interested in culture, language, history, and people, and has written on these for local and international publications. Wahyuni speaks English, German, some Spanish, and a little Arabic. She currently lives in Depok, Indonesia.



Pierluigi recommends Jules Verne's classic science fiction novel *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

INTO PUNJAB

BY WAHYUNI KAMAH

“Get out and take a rickshaw,” my taxi driver advised. We had entered Amritsar’s old city and the street was noisy and messy and crowded with people. Vehicles honked. The road to my hotel was blocked. I took his advice and got out of the cab.



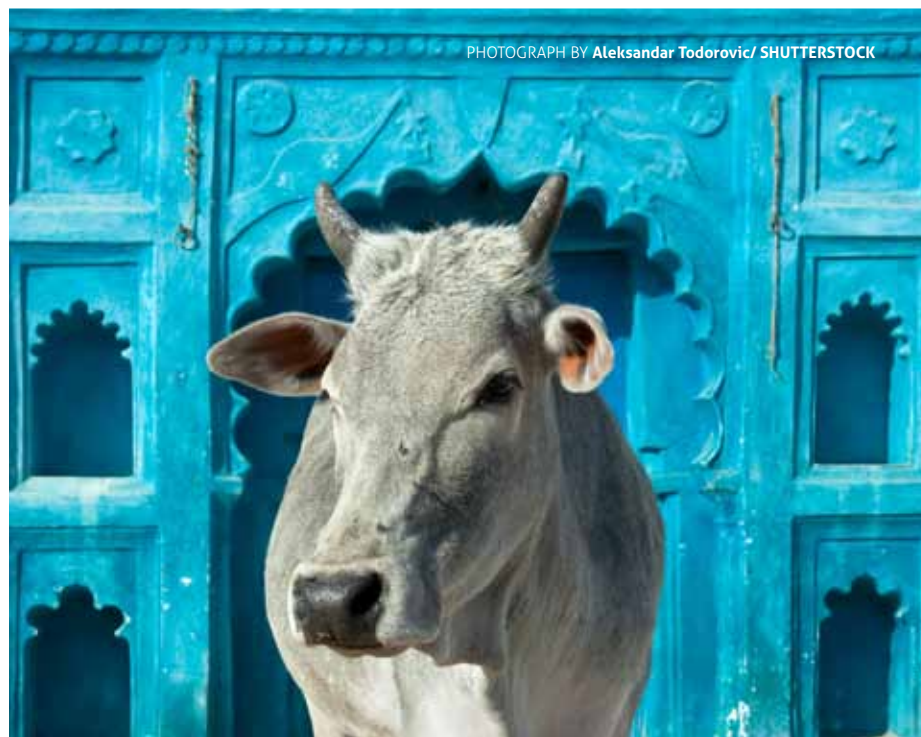
PREVIOUS PAGE
A Sikh man wearing
salwar kameez in front
of Harmandir Sahib

TOP
The Golden Temple
reflected in the Amrit
Sarovar pool
Inset above

INSET
A Sikh man bathing in
the holy waters of Amrit
Sarovar

RIGHT
Cows in India make
popular photographic
subjects for tourists

FAR RIGHT
A Sikh pilgrim at the
Golden Templecelebration
Diwali day



PHOTOGRAPH BY Aleksandar Todorovic/ SHUTTERSTOCK

IT WAS SPRING and I was in Amritsar, a city in the state of Punjab, North India. Amritsar is home to Sri Harmandir Sahib, the holiest shrine in the Sikh religion – and is only 30 kilometers from Wagar, a town on the border with Pakistan which holds the theatrical Wagah border ceremony.

The road in from the airport had passed makeshift houses, factories, grocery shops with worn-out placards, street vendors, and roaming cows and donkeys. But the city itself was busy and lively. Big banners and billboards written in Punjabi stood at street corners, shops lined the streets, and the roads were packed with all kinds of fuel-powered and man-powered transportation.

I zigzagged through the old city's market in the rickshaw, my heart frantic as the driver pedaled fast down the narrow roads. Male shopkeepers stared at me; it was not touristy area. After 20 minutes we arrived at my hotel, just a few meters from the north entrance to the Golden Temple.

Construction of the temple - Harmandir Sahib - began in 1588, though it wasn't gilded until the nineteenth century. It is now the world's largest *gurdwara* – a Sikh place of worship; is the spiritual and cultural learning center for Sikhism, and a growing tourist attraction. It is also where the epic Ramayana was written. Harmandir Sahib literally means temple of God.

It's impressive to look at: a stout, gilded, two-story rectangle of a temple topped by a dome. At night its golden reflection is mirrored back in the holy waters of the surrounding *Amrit Sarovar* pool.

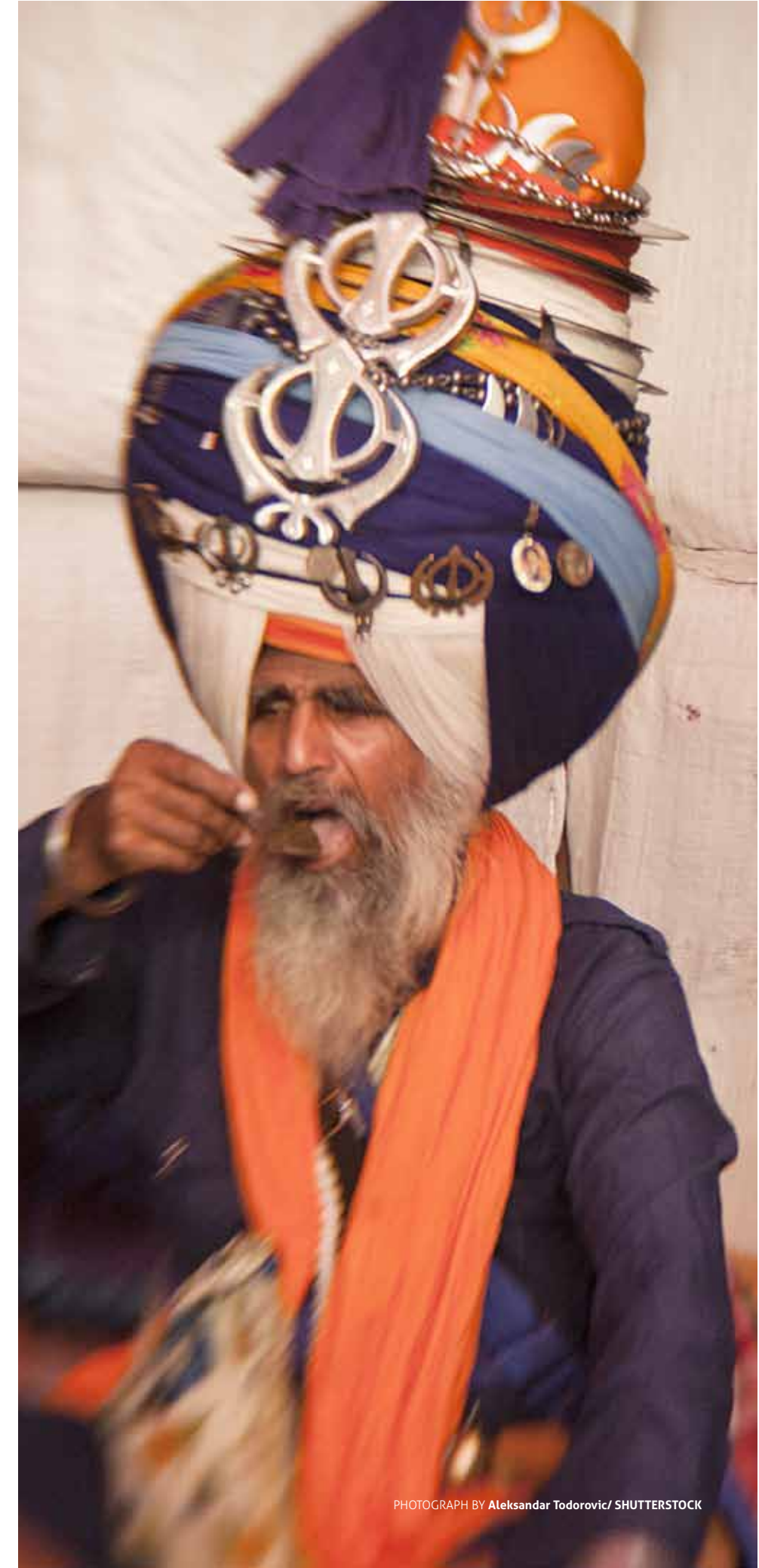
Sikhism originated in Punjab in the fifteenth century and is now the fifth largest religion in the world, with around 23 million devotees.

I slipped off my sandals at the gate and washed my feet in a small pond before entering the gurdwara. Hymns were being chanted over loudspeakers. Descending a staircase, I entered a cool, white marble court. It was crowded. Both the men and women had their heads covered and wore traditional *salwar kameez* (knee-length tunics with loose trousers).

It was morning and the sun glinted off Amrit Sarovar. Some men were preparing to bathe in the holy water, believing it would cleanse them of their sins.

Over the bridge, visitors formed a long queue to see the remains of the *Guru Granth Sahib* - the holy scripture of Sikhs. The ambience among the pilgrims was compassionate and warm. People of different classes seemed united and I sensed a spirit of equality and humbleness.

There were also busy queues at the *langar* – the place within the temple which serves food for free. Here Sikhs volunteer: washing dishes, preparing and serving



PHOTOGRAPH BY Aleksandar Todorovic/ SHUTTERSTOCK



Did You Know?

A common Sikh surname is Singh – which means ‘lion’.

TOP
Segregated security checks at the Wagah border

ABOVE
Street scene in Amritsar

RIGHT
Cow dung is collected for use as biogas



chapatti and dal, cleaning floors, and other housekeeping tasks. “This place is open 24 hours a day; you can get food anytime,” said Jaspreet, a Sikh man sitting beside me. Their dedication to voluntarism (and efficient diner turnover) impressed me.

The next day I went to Virasat Haveli, a 250-year-old renovated farmhouse and homestay with a huge garden surrounded by lush wheat fields. “Come to my village,” invited 50-year-old Resma, who worked in the farmhouse.

She led me down a cobblestone road, passing girls collecting firewood and groups of women washing clothes at a communal water source. Others were making cow dung ready for biogas.

In her small, simple brick house (shared by her married daughter and two grandchildren) we had time to sip some sweet *pulled tea* (a type of hot milk tea) before I headed to the border town of Wagah.

The road to the border was dusty. The driver dropped me in a parking lot crowded with people, vendors, and cars. A rickshaw took me to the security gate. There was a long queue of trucks carrying staple foods from India.

It was hot under the sun, queuing in the women’s line. When I entered the stadium, I found a seat in the tourist section, among the enthusiastic Indian spectators. Both soldiers and spectators seemed in high spirits. The border was only 20 meters from where I sat and I could clearly see spectators from the Pakistani side – who were both calmer and fewer in number.

The border between India and Pakistan cuts through the middle of Wagah. Every day soldiers on both sides conduct a border closing ceremony at sunset. Performed since 1959, it’s a theatrical ceremony with striking uniforms and aggressive parades, and attracts a lot of local and foreign tourists.

Music played through loud-speakers. The Indian Border Security Force wore dun-colored uniforms and red turbans trimmed with gold braid and topped with fanned coxcombs. The Pakistani Rangers wore a sober black. They both marched with high kicks. At the climax of the ceremony, both the Indian and Pakistani soldiers marched to the border – which was opened for a few minutes. They theatrically faced off before shaking hands and saluting; the flags were lowered simultaneously and folded away, and both sides retreated. The 45-minute ceremony was over.