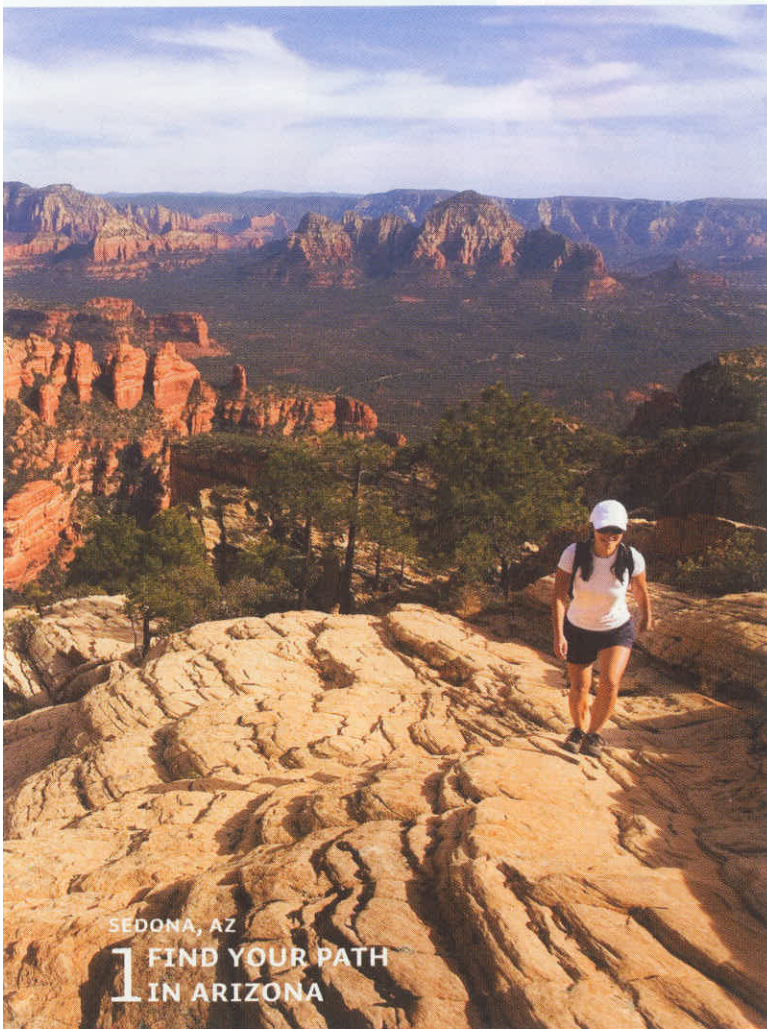


Smart vacations

Come home from your next trip not just relaxed but smarter



SEDONA, AZ
1 FIND YOUR PATH
IN ARIZONA

In Sedona, the path to enlightenment involves hiking boots and yoga mats. Sedona Spirit Yoga & Hiking offers four-day retreats where you'll take guided hikes through red rock wilderness to vortex sites, places where the Earth's energy is supposedly strongest. You'll also learn meditation, experience a Native American sweat lodge, and maybe even nail that eagle pose. Abbreviated three- to six-hour yoga hikes are also offered. **PLAY HOOKY** In between downward dogs and trail switchbacks, check out uptown Sedona's restaurants, which include vegan and raw choices, or browse art galleries. **INFO** Sep–Jun; from \$995, including lodging and breakfast; yoga hikes from \$90; yogalife.net or 888/282-9907. —NORA BURBA TRULSSON

OAXACA, MEXICO **MIX UP MOLES SOUTH OF THE BORDER**

2 Learn to tell your chiles from your *chapulines* (toasted grasshoppers) at Seasons of My Heart, a cooking school in the Oaxacan countryside of southern Mexico that kicks off with some serious market research. Guided by Mexican food maven Susana Trilling, sample and buy local delicacies, then head back to the chopping blocks and stoves of Trilling's spacious blue-tiled kitchen to create complex *moles* and *picante* bisques.

PLAY HOOKY While you're in Oaxaca, ascend the ruins of the ancient city of Monte Albán for spectacular vistas of Oaxaca Valley. **INFO** Year-round; \$75 for full-day class, including transportation from Oaxaca City; seasonsofmyheart.com —EDIE JAROLIM



ENSENADA, MEXICO **SPEAK SPANISH IN BAJA**

3 Get beyond your Mexican-restaurant-level Spanish without going back to school by spending a week at the Baja California Language College in Ensenada, Mexico, where there are no exams or grades. Thursday afternoons are set aside for excursions to a winery

or a local taqueria to learn the difference between *salsa verde* and *pico de gallo*—*en español*, of course. **PLAY HOOKY** Afternoons and evenings, you're free to surf, explore the area's burgeoning wine region, or practice your language skills at the harbor's fish market as you search for the

perfect *tacos de pescado*. **INFO** Year-round; \$279 for week-long classes in which you log 30 hours; bajacal.com or 877/444-2252. —DAVID LANSING

FROM LEFT: KARL WEATHERLY/GETTY IMAGES, GAIL ALBERT HALABAN, DOMINIC BOLTON

