



Ko Maeo — Cat Island, Thailand

The Cat Lovers' Travel Bucket List

KESSUDAP/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you're a cat lover, chances are you love anything and everything feline — from cat-centric clothes and jewelry to fuzzy cat slippers. Your coffee mug probably has a cat on it, too. And when you travel, you seek out fun feline places and events around the world. We've compiled the ultimate bucket list of fabulous feline attractions — and armchair travelers will appreciate them, too.

→ Tashirojima — Japan's Cat Island

Imagine a place where cats far outnumber humans. Japan's famous cat island is such a feline utopia and is often referred to as Cat Heaven Island. Originally, the cats were brought to the island to control the mouse population on the silk-worm farms that once existed here along with a vibrant fishing industry. But when those industries left the island, so did many of the residents, and the cat population boomed. The remaining human locals feed and care for the semi-feral cats, believing the cats will bring them good luck and prosperity.

Today, the island is a tourist des-

tinuation, and the cats come down to the docks at Nitoda Port in the south and Odomari Port in the north to meet the daily tourist ferries.

The Ajishima Line operates a ferry service from Ishinomaki. The one-way trip takes about an hour, and there are three departures per day. Tickets are purchased onboard the ship. Be sure to take some cat food and treats with you!

→ Torre Argentina Cat Sanctuary, Rome

The Torre Argentina Cat Sanctuary is situated amid the ruins of four Roman temples where Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar in 44 A.D. The cats who have lived here since

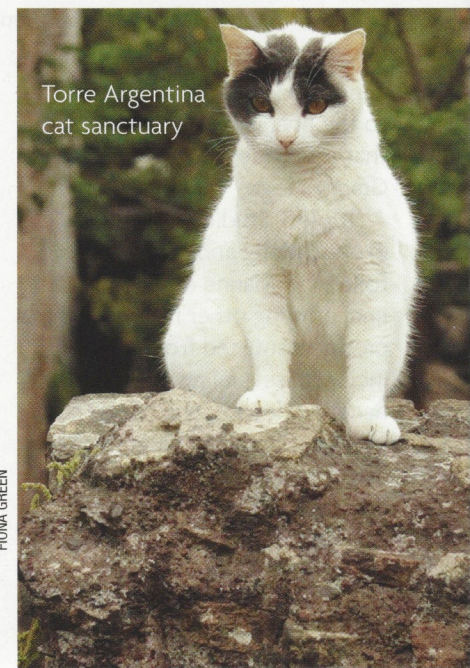
the architectural site was first excavated in 1929 have become an added attraction for tourists.

Torre Argentina wouldn't exist without the permanent support of international animal-welfare groups like the Anglo-Italian Society for the Protection of Animals and the Friends of Roman Cats, which provide both funds and humane traps.

The sanctuary runs a wonderful "distant adoption" program: You can "adopt" a cat who lives there and receive regular updates and photographs about your kitty. Where possible, cats are also adopted into forever homes. For more information about the sanctuary, visit romancats.com. Shop online at their cat shop, too. The sanctuary is in the archaeological site of Largo di Torre Argentina, at the corner of Via Florida & Via di Torre Argentina.

→ The Cat Museum, Malaysia

Located on the ground floor of the Kuching North City Hall Headquarters building in Bukit Siol, in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, the museum pays homage to everything feline, featuring a growing collection of paintings, posters, toys, and cat figurines. There is also an Egyptian mummified cat on exhibit. The museum requires that visitors pay to take



Torre Argentina cat sanctuary

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photographs in the museum, whether you are using your cell phone, a camera, or a video camcorder. And, of course, there's a gift shop for souvenirs.

→ Ko Maeo — Cat Island, Thailand

You'll know you've reached the right place on Samila Beach in Hat Yai, Thailand, when you see two huge statues — one of a cat and the other of a rat. The statues serve as a marker for the two islets known as the Ko Nu Rat Island and the Ko Maeo Cat Island. According to Thai legend, a dog, a cat, and a mouse were on board a Chinese sampan and stole a magic crystal from the sampan's owner. They tried to swim ashore but drowned. The cat and the rat were turned into islands, while the dog, who died onshore, became the hill known as Khao Tang Kuan. The magic crystal became the white sands on the beach now known as Hat Sai Kaco (Glass Sand Beach). It's a great swimming beach and an ideal place to sample local street foods.

→ Cat Fashion Show, Algonquin Hotel, New York

Save the date! The world's most famous annual feline fashion extravaganza is held at the cat-friendly Algonquin Hotel in New York on either the first or second Wednesday in August. This year's date is August 10. Resident cat Matilda "hosts" this annual charity bash to raise funds for the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals. People fly from all over the world to attend this famous fashion event when cats in outrageous costumes take to the catwalk. This year's theme will celebrate fashions worn by the hotel's celebrity guests, such as Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Audrey Hepburn, through the decades dating back to the hotel's opening in 1902. 59 W. 44th Street, New York, NY, 10036; algonquinhotel.com.



Luxury Pet Hotel — Singapore



Algonquin Hotel fashion show

→ Purr-fection Suites, Wagington Luxury Pet Hotel, Singapore

Your cat probably prefers to stay home when you travel. Nevertheless, it's always fun to see the type of feline accommodations available if she jetted with you to Singapore. The Purr-fection Suites is the cat wing of The Wagington, Singapore's five-star pet hotel housed in a converted

British colonial-era bungalow in the heart of the diplomatic quarter of the city. The hotel boasts designer cat beds, Roberto Cavalli wallpaper, and Swarovski crystal dinnerware. Purified air is pumped into every room, and classical music is piped through the hotel's surround sound system to help cats de-stress. According to hotel owner Estelle Tayler, there's a general play area for cats in what the hotel refers to as the Cabin Suites, while felines whose owners booked them accommodation in either the Royal or Imperial Suites get personal play-times. 27B Loewen Road, Singapore; thewagington.com.sg



Ziggy "works" as a feline muse for Sandy Robins, an award-winning multimedia pet lifestyle expert and pet industry personality. They have helped "write" three books, including *The Original Cat Fancy Cat Bible* (I-5 Press, 2014). When he is not lying on her desk blocking the computer screen, Ziggy likes to play fetch with his toys and direct food operations in the kitchen. Learn more about Sandy at sandyrobinsonline.com.

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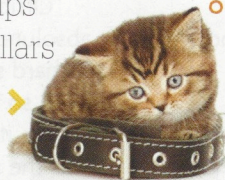


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