

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

ADVENTURE

Wild ways to see the world

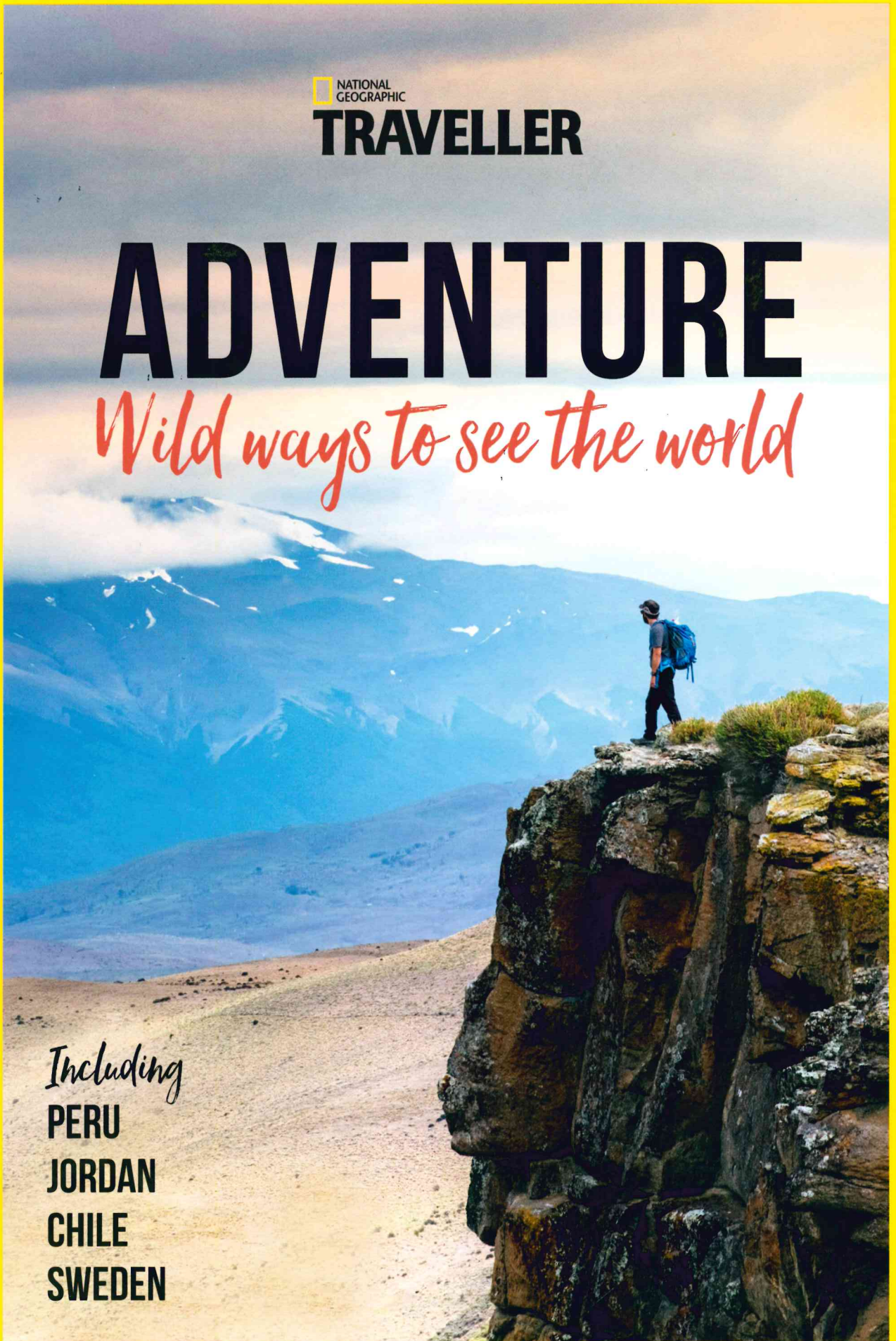
Including

PERU

JORDAN

CHILE

SWEDEN



The Word

A BORN ADVENTURER

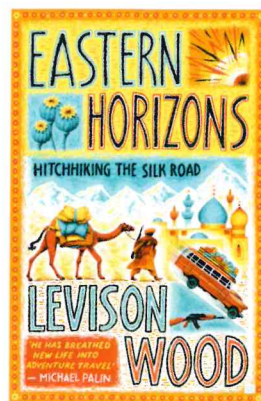
Years before Levison Wood became a globetrotting TV star, he took a 10,000-mile overland journey across Russia, along the Silk Road, to Afghanistan

The backpacking tales of a nascent TV adventurer may seem like thin material for a book, but this isn't just any TV face; this is a face that has some epically adventurous feet set some distance below it. In the short time since he's graced our TV screens, British Army Officer Levison Wood has become synonymous with long-distance overland journeys — walking the Nile, traversing the Himalayas, travelling from Mexico to Colombia and, in his most recent Channel 4 series, trekking the 'wild frontier', from Russia to Iran.

The overland journey to begin them all, taken when Wood was 22-years-old between university and army training, followed a similar route to the recent TV show — spanning some 10,000 miles through challenging terrain. He traced the route once taken by East India Company officer Arthur Conolly, who coined the phrase 'The Great Game' (describing the 19th century's protracted British/Russian tug of war over Afghanistan). This highfalutin format gave Wood's itchy feet more erudite direction than the usual hippie trail as they made their way through Russia and the Silk Route to Afghanistan.

The time elapsed between penning his youthful travel diaries and writing this book makes for some awkward hindsight points, and the garrulous 22-year-old's tone takes a bit of settling into. But once we're in the moment with Wood, at this wide-eyed age, the lure of eastern horizons pulling at his heels, his voice is one that will chime with any traveller. Except most of us at that age wouldn't have set off to hitchhike, often solo, into the fringes of war zones.

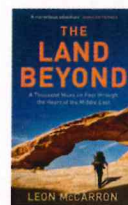
We travel with Wood as he meets Russian mafia, mujahideen fighters, and myriad colourful road and rail companions. Each dealing adds more fuel to a fire that pushes him onwards — always wanting to see more, to map more, to understand the world better. It's the very reason why, now as a grown-up, this man makes for such genuinely compelling TV. **SARAH BARRELL**



Eastern Horizons: Hitchhiking The Silk Road is published by Hodder & Stoughton. RRP: £20.00

The natural reader

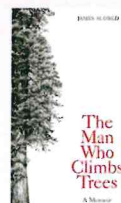
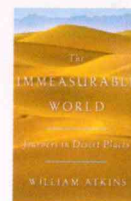
ON LAND



THE LAND BEYOND
Leon McCarron's account of his epic walk through the Middle East is hewn with the visceral language and spirit you'd expect from this adventurer. RRP: £17.99 (I.B. Tauris)

THE IMMEASURABLE WORLD

Over the course of eight journeys, William Atkins investigates deserts and the explorers they have confounded. RRP: £20 (Faber & Faber, May 2018)

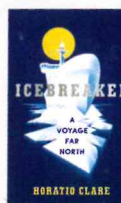
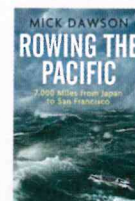


THE MAN WHO CLIMBED TREES
What does the world look like while tree climbing in the Congo? Attenborough cameraman, James Aldred, has the answer. RRP: £16.99 (WH Allen)

AT SEA

ROWING THE PACIFIC

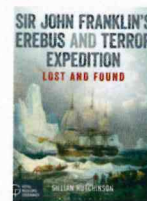
This is the hair-raising story of Royal Marine commando Mick Dawson's 7,000-mile journey rowing across the Pacific. RRP: £13.99 (Robinson)



ICEBREAKER
Horatio Clare explores Finland's north on an icebreaker, attempting to understand what it is to be Finnish and the fragilities of frozen water. RRP: £14.99 (Chatto & Windus)

LOST AND FOUND

Sir John Franklin's deadly expedition through the Northwest Passage was, until recently, the most mysterious voyage ever taken. RRP: £18.99 (Bloomsbury)



WHEN THE DETOUR IS EVERYTHING.

If you like salty sea-breezes, beautiful archipelagos and smooth granite cliffs set against a wide-open horizon, there's a whole lot you can look forward to in West Sweden. And while you're here, there are even more undiscovered gems to explore and enjoy at your leisure.

WELCOME TO THE DETOUR OF YOUR LIFE!

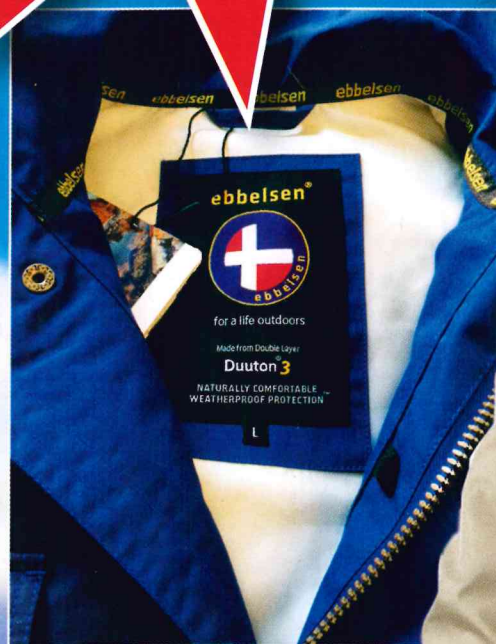
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THE *wild wild* WEST



Island hopping, wild camping, seafood safaris
— Sweden's wild west coast offers adventure by
the bucketload. Words: Josephine Price



PREVIOUS PAGE: Caught lobster
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Lobster
safari in Bohuslän; walkers in
Lysekil; kayaking; fresh seafood

Per points out our route on a curled scrap of a map, so worn it seems likely to disintegrate in his hands. "This may be the last time we use this," he concedes. It's no problem, though. Per and his brother Lars know these waters. Within this swathe of the Bohuslän archipelago, they've hidden 40 lobster traps and today they're taking me on one of their famed lobster safaris.

But the storm-tested fishermen look concerned at the elements. Outside, a fierce wind whips around the rickety hut. There are around 8,000 islands scattered off Sweden's west coast, and we're plotting a path through a more protected, tranquil section as the previous night's storm refuses to cease. Our vessel is a nine-metre, golden wood schooner dating back to 1952. Waves smash into the hull, engulfing us in a salt spray that immediately coats my lips and eyelashes.

"What's the boat called?" I ask Per. He smiles: "Tuffa." I ask if it means something in particular in Swedish. "No, it's just what the boat does," he

replies. He purses then blows out his lips — "Tuff, tuff, tuff!" — mimicking the noise of the engine inhaling water and gushing it out again as we rise and fall with the crested tide, bouncing on each powerful surge.

As a slender eider swoops into view, Lars points out our first stop. Two buoys — a large red one and a smaller black one — mark the spot. He wastes no time hauling a trap from the seabed. It's a tangle of black rope, scuttling with crabs and topped by starfish — but it's empty. No lobsters, no 'black gold'.

Onwards we go. I have a go at pulling up the second one. The undercurrent whips it back from me with every tug. "Watch for the jellyfish," he warns. He points to a gelatinous string hanging off of the rope right below my hands. "If that flicks up, it can burn your face. It's not dangerous, but it can burn." For the first time I notice three pearlescent jellyfish in the water by the rope. I watch them pulse and play and disappear with the next wave as I push the lobster-less trap back into the water.

We swing by the third trap and I have another go. My arms aren't happy. As I haul it up, I think we've failed again. But then, through the gushing water, I spot a snapping claw. Lars pulls the lobster out and grabs the silver measuring tool. They have to be 9cm-long from eye to tail. He flips it over and checks the tail for roe. They can't be pregnant either. Both check out: we cave a catch.

Next, we have to bait the traps — a pungent bucket of herring heads is brought out. Suddenly the sky is filled with ravenous, squawking gulls. It's as if a drunken puppeteer is dictating their movements. They jerk and bounce in the wind, trying to get close but not quite having the elegance to do so. Then the baited pot disappears beneath the surface, and they fly off.

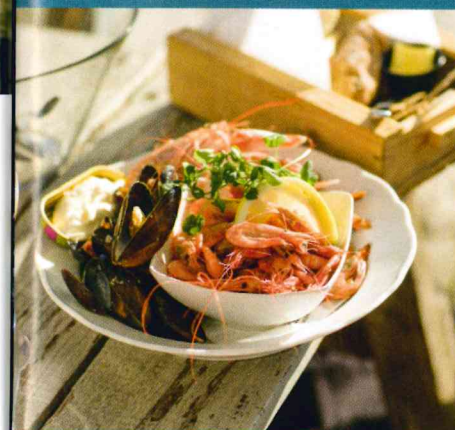
Lars points beyond the near islands. "We have pots out there, too, but not today," he says as the spirited seas smack us back to shore. The trip has flown by, but the delicate film of salt and a sense of adventure linger.

Lysekil: Blushing beauty

Set out on foot from the former fishing town of Lysekil to the nature reserve at Stångehuvud. Rescued from quarry merchants in the early 1900s by the town's hero, Calla Curman, the area with its distinctive pink Bohus granite now offers a wild hiking trail. Nestled in between the rocks are fisherman's huts and minuscule harbours. Go at sundown to see the rose-coloured granite blush beneath the sinking rays.

Grebbestad: A view from above

Around Grebbestad harbour — the epicentre of a region that produces 90% of the country's world-famous oysters — there are plenty of bustling bars and seafood joints overlooking the water. Tired of the crowds? Climb Stöberget, the hill that frames the town, for spectacular views along the coastline.



EAT LOCAL

Grebbestad's gastronomic offerings include light lager at Sweden's oldest microbrewery, unctuous cheese at Greby Mejeri dairy and smoked seaweed sea salt sold by the harbourside fishmongers.

MORE INFO: westsweden.com

IMAGES: GETTY; ROGER BORGEID

ADVENTURER'S GUIDE

Lobster law


READY...

The lobster season launches at 7am on the first Monday after 20 September. People even sleep in their boots the night before to ensure they're raring to go fishing! Peak season lasts until November, but fishing is permitted until 30 April.

GET SET...

About 70% of Sweden's lobsters are fished in these waters, among the 8,000 islands scattered off the shore of west Sweden. Locals call lobsters the 'black gold'.

GO!

Each inhabitant has a personal allowance of six lobster pots each, but this increases to 40 if they're a professional fisherman. Though lobster season only lasts two months, people can fish for mackerel, shrimp, oyster and seaweed year round. 



Go wild // Allemansrätten — the Freedom to Roam principle — means you can pitch up anywhere for the night. The only thing you have to pay is respect to nature and the animals.



KAYAK

Paddle up to an uninhabited island for a wild picnic of smoked haddock in the summer and fish soup in the winter. Expect seal spotting and a crash course in marine biology. skargardsdyllen.se