

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

APRIL 2011

# ADVENTURE

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**kayaking**  
The Na Pali Coast

**dogsledding**  
The Alaskan Arctic

**rafting**  
The Grand Canyon

**diving**  
Bonne Terre Mine

**skiing**  
Corbet's Couloir

**mountain biking**  
Kokopelli's Trail

**trekking**  
The Zion Narrows

**paddling**  
The Forks of the Kern

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Kauai

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# THE ADVENTURE

**Great view, isn't it?** Somewhere down there at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, rafters bucketing along the Colorado River have an even wilder (and much wetter) perspective on the ramparts and rapids of the Big Ditch. As the boaters bounce through Granite Gorge and plunge into Lava Falls, they are either scared witless or having the time of their lives—or both—on the number one trip in our first annual countdown of the hundred best adventures in America.

We were pretty fired up ourselves (if not scared witless) when we began selecting and ranking America's finest trips. First, we drafted an all-star team of the country's foremost outdoors writers—experts on climbing, paddling, skiing, and a dozen other pursuits—and had them nominate their all-time favorites, as well as the best of the cutting edge. Then they rated each trip for aesthetics, adrenaline,

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athleticism, and such wild-card notions as novelty and earned-versus-uneared vistas. To help us crunch the data, we enlisted a Fields Medal-winning mathematician, Harvard University's Curtis McMullen. But it still took plenty of late nights and spirited debates to come up with the finalists. Is the ADVENTURE 100 subjective? Yes. But we're certain that the list packs as much surprise, excitement, and knockout beauty as a ride through the roiling waters of Lava Falls.





Who needs tropical fish? Divers in Bonne Terre Mine see mule shoes, locomotives, and elevator shafts.

The water is cerulean blue, calm, and as clear as a mirror. It's called the Bonaire of the Midwest, and it has been quietly drawing divers from around the world for years. A century ago, lantern-jawed miners hollowed out an 80-square-mile network of tunnels and subterranean caverns in the course of digging the world's largest lead mine. After the facility was closed in 1962, groundwater seeped into the mine, eventually flooding the entire complex. Limestone filtered out the impurities, leaving a body of water with a visibility of up to 150 feet, thanks to 500,000 watts of floodlights. "Magnifique!" said Jacques Cousteau the first time he saw the underwater labyrinth, which is part Pompeii, part Lara Croft. It's fitting that this place—under the rolling green hills of Bonne Terre, an hour south of St. Louis. There are 24 underwater trails where divers can find mule shoes, locomotives, elevator shafts, and stone pillars 50 feet around and 200 feet high. Instead of coral reefs, there's a wavering blue ghost town with a timekeeper's shack where no one has punched a clock in 50 years. The overall effect is spectral and serene.

**diving  
bonne  
terre mine,  
bonne terre,  
missouri**