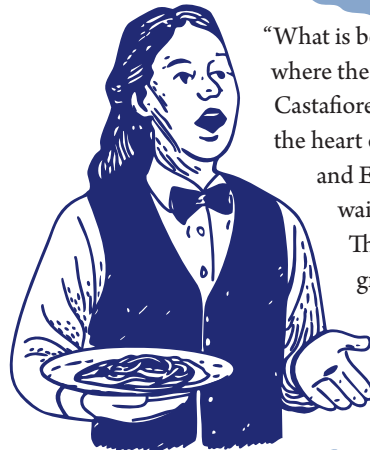


Passport Picks: Faculty Edition

Looking for uncommon travel destinations? BYU Humanities faculty share their favorite hidden gems.

by Briana Wright (English Teaching '26)
Illustrations by Bruce Cui (Graphic Design '26)

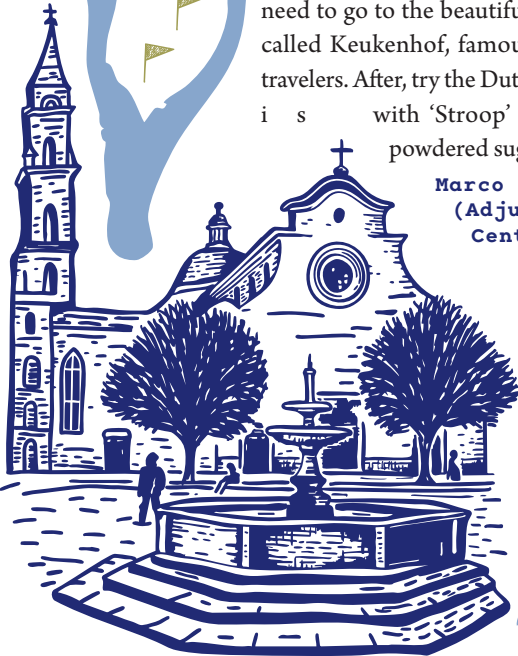


“What is better than dinner in **Madrid**? How about one where the waiters are professional opera singers? La Castafiore offers such an experience, located in the heart of Madrid near the National Library and El Retiro Park. Between courses, the waiters break into beautiful opera music. This fun and interactive experience has great food and amazing entertainment, all in a cozy locale that just can’t be missed!”

Greg Thompson
(Spanish, Second Language Acquisition)

“If you go on a trip to the **Netherlands**, and it is in the period between April and May, you for sure need to go to the beautiful Dutch tulip attraction called Keukenhof, famous all over the world of travelers. After, try the Dutch pancakes; my favorite is with ‘Stroop’ and raisins covered in powdered sugar.”

Marco de Ruiter
(Adjunct Faculty, Dutch, Center for Language Studies)



“When visiting **Florence**, I love to explore the less-frequented southwestern corner of the Oltr’Arno (the other side of the Arno River), where medieval and Renaissance artisans and laborers worked and lived. A distinct sense of urban identity continues there to this day. Not to be missed: the extraordinary 15th-century frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine, which inspired Michelangelo’s art, and the best gelato in all of Italy on the bridge at Gelateria La Carraia!”

Jennifer Haraguchi
(French and Italian, Women’s Studies)



“In **London**, visit the Handel Hendrix House at 25 Brook Street. Explore the newly restored Georgian home where George Frideric Handel composed, performed, grew old, and died. Enter 1960s London and the bedroom where Jimi Hendrix jammed with friends. See the *Messiah* vinyl records Jimi bought when he moved into the flat next door. Ask about when he saw Handel’s ghost. Read wall labels, pick up headphones, play dress-up, and imagine these gifted musicians’ worlds.”

Jill Terry Rudy (Folklore, Fairy Tale Studies)



“When in **Montreal**, be sure to begin with a trip to La Banquise, a 24-hour mecca for poutine (Quebec’s ubiquitous fries smothered in gravy and cheese curds); it’s a great fuel up before heading down Rue Rachel to the George-Étienne Cartier monument, behind which—weather permitting—you can hike up Mount Royal on beautiful, vista-laden nature trails, as opposed to the knees-destroying grand staircase behind McGill University!”

Bob Hudson
(French Renaissance
Poetry and Culture)



“If you’re going to travel to Mexico, I highly recommend visiting the **Yucatán Peninsula**—the ‘other Mexico.’ With its Mayan, Caribbean, and Lebanese influence, it’s definitely a unique cultural and gastronomical experience. The city of Mérida is a great hub to take day trips from. In the evenings, walking Paseo de Montejo and getting a coconut sorbet at Dulcería y Sorbetería Colón is a must.”

Lauren Truman
(Language Usage)

“If you’re in **Quito**, you’ll likely visit Mitad del Mundo, the monument marking the equator. But the modern GPS shows it’s about 20 yards off. For the real equator, walk north, away from the crowds, and use your phone’s GPS or Google Maps to find 0° latitude. It’s a quiet, rewarding moment and an epic geocaching opportunity.”

Grant Eckstein
(TESOL, Second
Language Writing)



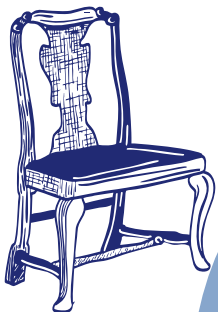
“If you go to **Beijing**, here are four activities you can’t miss: Climb the Great Wall of China to enjoy a one-of-a-kind view and get a great workout; visit Jingshan Park for a bird’s-eye view of the Forbidden City; ride past Tiananmen Square on a shared bike to see it from a distance; and stay at a hotel in the Houhai alleys, one of the city’s hidden gems that are perfect if you enjoy culture, shopping, food, and music.”

Rachel Yu Liu
(Chinese Linguistics, Second
Language Acquisition)



“One of **London**’s hidden gems for me is St. Dunstan-in-the-East. It is a gorgeous Anglican cathedral designed by Sir Christopher Wren that was destroyed during the Blitz bombings of the city in 1942, but which now contains an enchanting free public park framed by the ruins.”

Julie Allen
(European Silent Film,
Danish Literature)



“One of the places I recommend visiting in the Philippines is Fort Santiago. You can walk through stone walls that once guarded the city of **Manila**, visit the dungeon cells, and see the memorial to José Rizal, the national hero who was imprisoned there before his execution. While exploring, you learn that the Spanish came to the Philippines mainly for three reasons—to spread Christianity, gain wealth through trade and resources, and expand their empire. It’s history that comes alive before your eyes.”

Rose Bybee
(Adjunct Faculty, Cebuano and Tagalog,
Center for Language Studies)