

Our Favorite Stories From Gastro Obscura's First Year

Read about otherworldly apples, champagne-chugging marathoners, and fishy acts of God.

BY ALEX MAYYASI DECEMBER 05, 2018

A BAR ON A TINY Wisconsin island is the world's biggest consumer of bitters. Absinthe enthusiasts have been hiding bottles in the Swiss woods since the country banned the drink in 1910. Iran does not have any Pizza Huts, but you can dine at Pizza Hat.

This is just a sampling of what I have learned as the editor of Gastro Obscura (*Atlas Obscura's* food section) since its launch one year ago. During our first year, we added more than 1,000 entries to our database of unique and wondrous food and drink, published 450 articles (including the above), and created our first itinerary: a Gastro Obscura guide to Mexico City's Centro Histórico.

To celebrate Gastro Obscura's birthday, our writers and editors each chose a favorite article from our first year. We hope you savor them.



Sticky stencils are applied to mojie apples in an orchard in Aomori prefecture. **JANE ALDEN STEVENS**

Harnessing the Power of the Sun to Turn Apples Into Art

I don't think I've ever clicked on an article as fast as I did for this story on "apple stenciling." An age-old Japanese practice, it relies on orchardists carefully wrapping apples during their growing process, which dictates which parts of the apple redden and which remain a ghostly white. With stencils, the orchardists can emblazon apples with *kanji* or even the faces of celebrities. Abbey Perrault elegantly describes the painstaking, but increasingly rare practice, and the photos by Jane Alden Stevens are otherworldly: The white apples, especially, seem like something out of a fairy tale. —Anne Ewbank, Associate Editor of Gastro Obscura