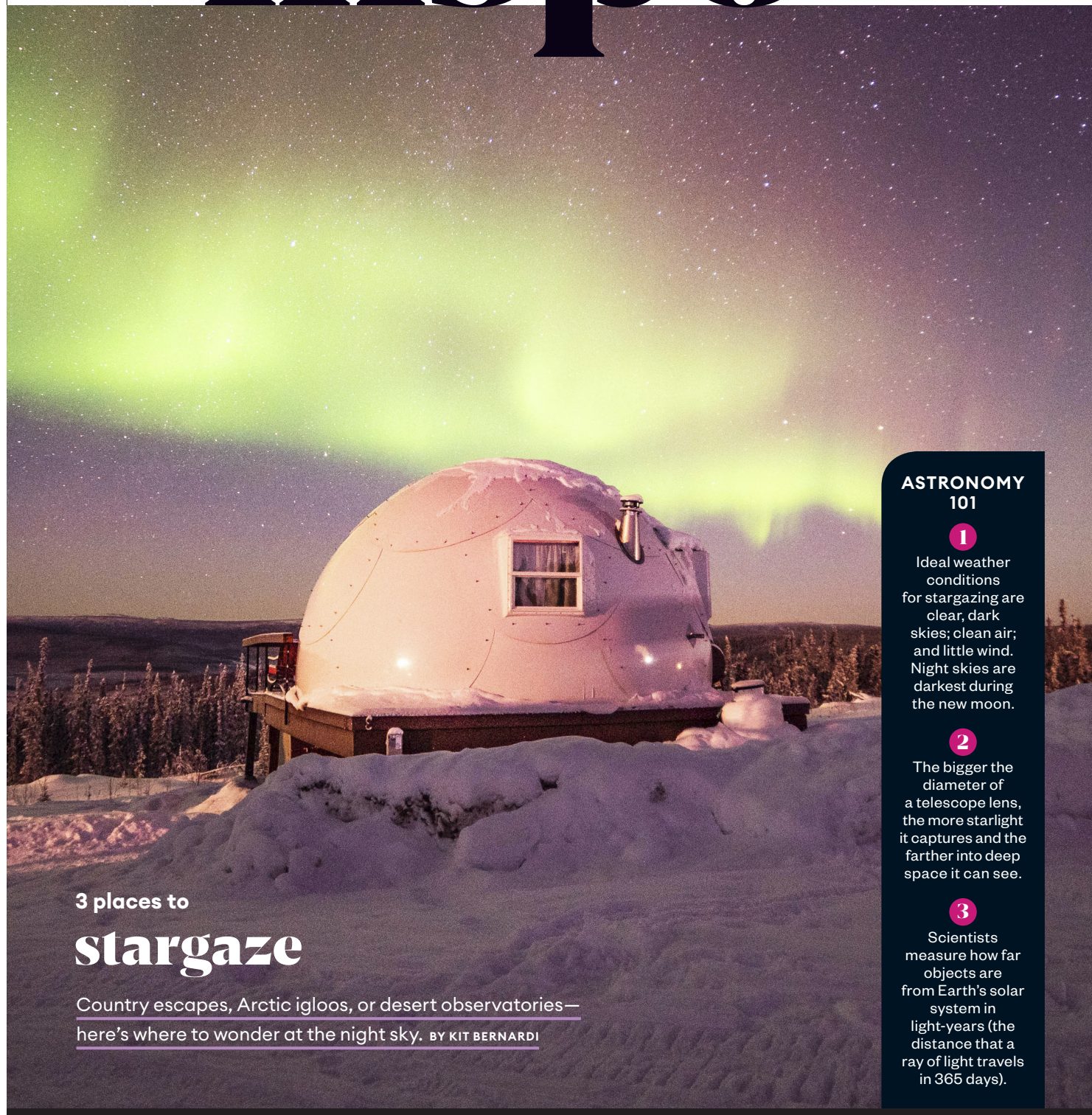


awesome people, places & spaces

# inspo



## 3 places to stargaze

Country escapes, Arctic igloos, or desert observatories—here's where to wonder at the night sky. BY KIT BERNARDI

### ASTRONOMY 101

- 1 Ideal weather conditions for stargazing are clear, dark skies; clean air; and little wind. Night skies are darkest during the new moon.
- 2 The bigger the diameter of a telescope lens, the more starlight it captures and the farther into deep space it can see.
- 3 Scientists measure how far objects are from Earth's solar system in light-years (the distance that a ray of light travels in 365 days).

## Out of this world

### TUCSON

"Telescopes are time machines—the farther away an astronomical object is, the farther back in time you're viewing it," says Bill Buckingham, the visitor-center manager at **Kitt Peak National Observatory** ([noao.edu](http://noao.edu)), in the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, one of two world-class

stargazing spots near Tucson. The observatory, famous for dark-matter and exoplanet discoveries, hosts guided tours and solar-telescope viewing.

Two hours northeast of Tucson in the Coronado National Forest, the **University of Arizona Mount Lemmon SkyCenter**

([skycenter.arizona.edu](http://skycenter.arizona.edu)) holds stargazing for 28 guests, astronomy overnights, and photography workshops. The center's director, Alan Strauss, Ph.D., says "visitors gain an understanding of humanity's place in the universe and learn stargazing skills to use anywhere in the world."



THIS PAGE, FROM FAR RIGHT: COURTESY OF E-EYE; BETTYMAYA FOOT/MOUNT LEMMON SKYCENTER/UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. OPPOSITE: BOREALIS BASECAMP.



Download an app like Skyview for local stargazing. Because sometimes you just have to look up to be reminded of how tiny we are. That should bring you back to earth if you need a little grounding. —JONATHAN



## Star-party retreat

### FREGENAL DE LA SIERRA, EXTREMADURA, SPAIN

"For thousands of years, humans have studied the night sky—stargazing is in our DNA," says Cristina Fabo Induráin, co-owner with José Luis Quiñones of the **Entre Encinas y Estrellas Astronomical Complex**, 90 minutes from Seville, Spain. During astronomer-guided night sessions at this rural retreat, you view constellations, the spiraling Andromeda Galaxy, and the Milky Way with the naked eye, and then step up to a powerful telescope for a peep at the moon, planets, and red, gaseous nebulae. Perfect for a family or friends' getaway, the complex's contemporary houses can accommodate up to 28 guests. From \$150 per night, [entreencinasyestrellas.es](http://entreencinasyestrellas.es)

## Into-the-wild aurora viewing

### SUBARCTIC ALASKA

Witness the Northern Lights streak across Alaska's chalkboard-black sky from your own private igloo at **Borealis Basecamp**, 25 miles north of Fairbanks. The 100-acre wilderness retreat generates its own electricity and has

15 Arctic-expedition-quality, heated fiberglass huts, each with a clear ceiling dome, Scandinavian-style furnishings, a full bath, Wi-Fi, and a deck overlooking the White Mountains. In a comfy yurt, guests dine on chef-prepared local

seafood, game, and hydroponically grown vegetables. Available from August 21 to April 10, two-night stays include breakfast, guided stargazing, snowshoeing, fat-tire biking, and sledding. From \$389 per night, [borealisbasecamp.net](http://borealisbasecamp.net)