Riders in the sky: 8 chairlifts, gondolas, and trams with gorgeous views

DECEMBER 28, 2015 3M READ TIME

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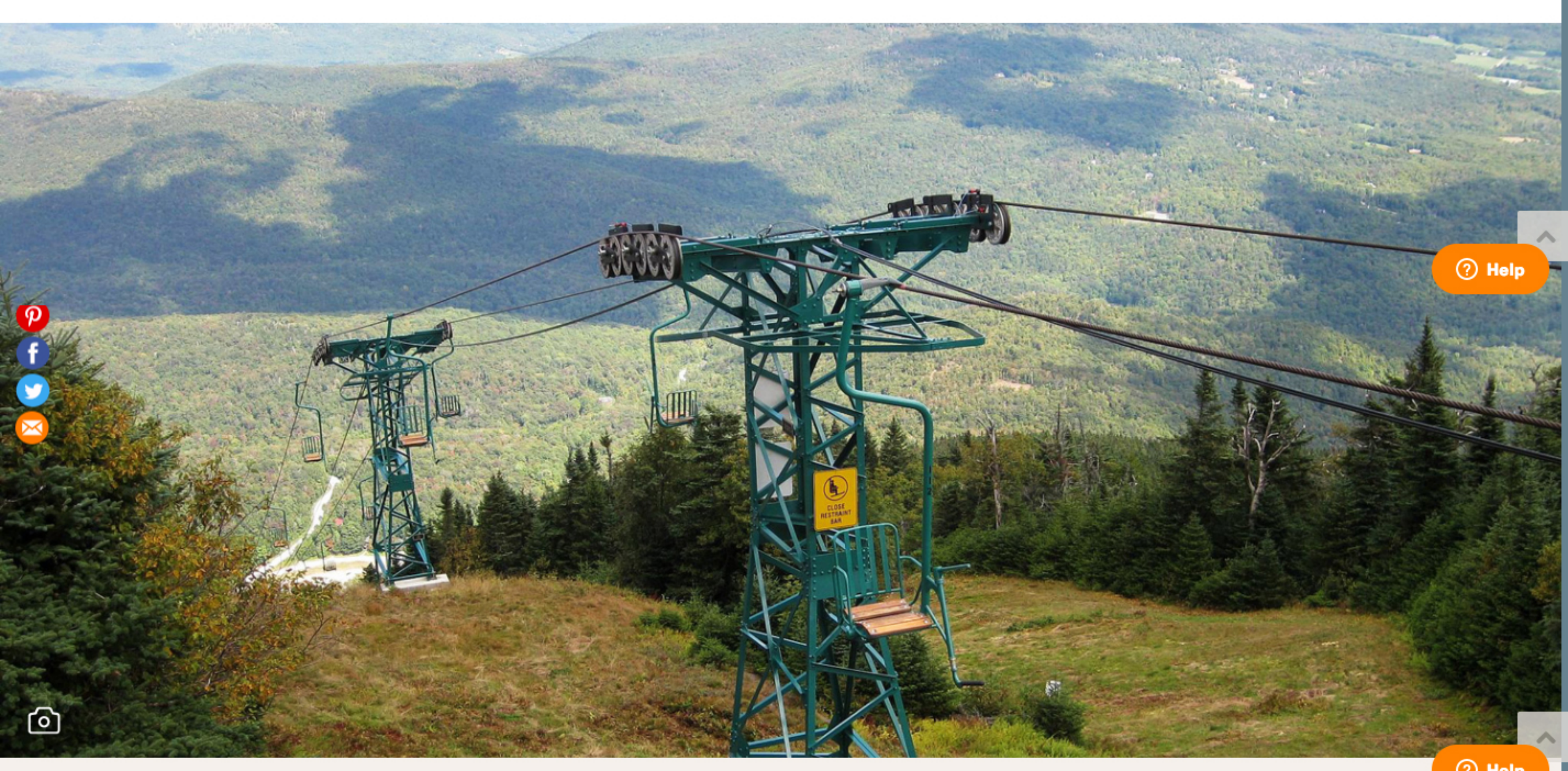
Chairlifts don't have to feel like awkward, stuffy elevators—and they don't have to be the most boring part of your ski trip either. These eight trams, gondolas, and chairlifts have views that will rock your ski lift world, making the journey up just as heart-stopping as your ride down.

1. AIGUILLE DU MIDI, FRANCE

The Aiguille Du Midi cable car in Chamonix, France, is at the top of the bucket list for any hardcore skier, and the lift ride up adds to the intensity. Crossing an open chasm through high winds with rocky, avalanche-prone cliffs nearby—all to get dropped on a jagged mountain at 12,605 feet above sea level—it's a surefire way to conquer a fear of heights (or acquire one). You and 64 other passengers will ride up the highest vertical ascent in the world to the razor-like mountain's tippy top, with views of Mont Blanc massif and the French Alps the whole way.

2. SINGLE CHAIR, VERMONT



If you're seeking a bit of snowy solitude, then Mad River Glen Resort is the place for you. There's room for one and one only on the aptly named Single Chair. The infamous, rickety-looking fixed grip chairlift is one of only two single-chair lifts left in the country. Soak up the unblocked views of the Green Mountains as you glide solo up General Stark peak. When you're done, continue the relaxation with an appropriate brew: **Magic Hat Brewing Company's Single Chair Golden Ale**.

3. JACKSON HOLE TRAM, WYOMING

The famous **Jackson Hole** Tram leads to the nation's longest skiable vertical drop and some of the world's best backcountry powder. But if you're more of a bunny slopes kind of skier, this lift is still well worth the ride. Located at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, the tram ferries passengers more than 4,000 feet to the top of Rendezvous Mountain. As you glide above the slopes, you'll see sweeping views of the Snake River Valley, Grand Teton National Park, and the Gros Ventre Range. At the top, stop in Corbet's Cabin for hot chocolate and their famous Nutella-covered Top of the World Waffles. In the summer, take a tandem paraglide flight back down to Teton Village for an adrenaline-pumping return.

4. AERIAL TRAMWAY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Want to see two countries in one go? Hop on the Aerial Tramway on New Hampshire's Cannon Mountain. Originally built in 1938 and later replaced in 1980, this ride has long been giving people expansive views of New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont's Green Mountains, New York's Adirondacks, and Canada in the distance. The cable car carries 80 people at a time to New Hampshire's highest lift-accessed point. From here, visitors can follow walking paths to more outlooks or grab a drink at the summit's cafe and bar.

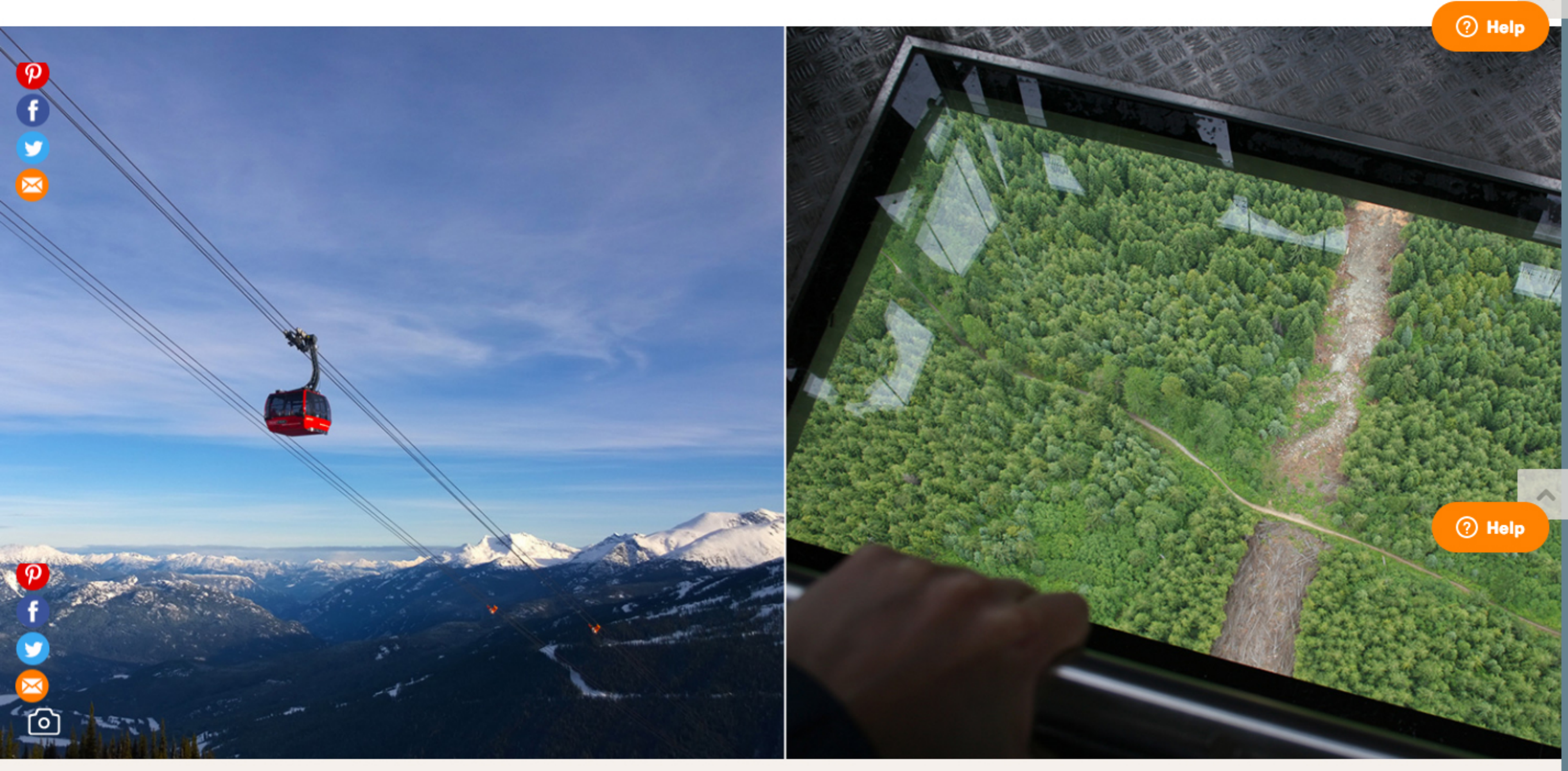
5. THE GONDOLA, INDIA

Aiming to get higher and go farther? Head to the Gulmarg Gondola in India at the western end of the Himalayas. One of the highest and longest gondolas in the world, it'll take only 11 minutes to whisk you about 3 miles through the air, giving you amazing views of the Pir Panjal Range and K2, the world's second highest mountain after Everest.

6. HEAVENLY GONDOLA, NEVADA

With 4,800 skiable acres reaching 10,067 feet above sea level, Heavenly Resort has the most terrain and highest elevation of any resort in **Lake Tahoe**. Heavenly's 28 chairlifts will keep you busy skiing for ages, but no matter the season, don't miss out on the views from the Heavenly Gondola. See Lake Tahoe, Desolation Wilderness, and the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range as you ride to the observation deck at 9,123 feet. At the top, you can climb the 25-foot rock wall, or grab some grub at the Umbrella Bar and Adventure Peak Grill.

7. PEAK 2 PEAK, CANADA



A top ski lift list wouldn't be complete without the Peak 2 Peak 360 Experience in British Columbia, Canada—the world's highest and longest continuous lift system. The system's glass-bottomed gondolas link the Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains; it's about as close to Charlie's Great Glass Elevator as you can get. Look out at the mountain ranges and down at the valley floor 1,430 feet below. When you reach the top, there are world-class ski slopes, high alpine hiking trails, and more biking terrain than any other North American bike park.

8. ROCA JACK LIFT, CHILE

The Roca Jack lift in Chile's Portillo Resort is one of the most unique (and extreme) you'll find. They leave the "chair" part off the name for a reason: there are no chairs involved. The slopes of the Andes Mountains at Portillo are steep and avalanche-prone, making chairlift towers risky. Instead, pulleys anchored high on the mountain drag five skiers up side by side on their skis. You'll cruise at 17 miles per hour, so the ride is a real adventure. Advanced off-piste skiers are best suited to go down this avalanche-prone run. When the rocks and ice come tumbling down, they just dig up the wires and keep pulling daredevils up.

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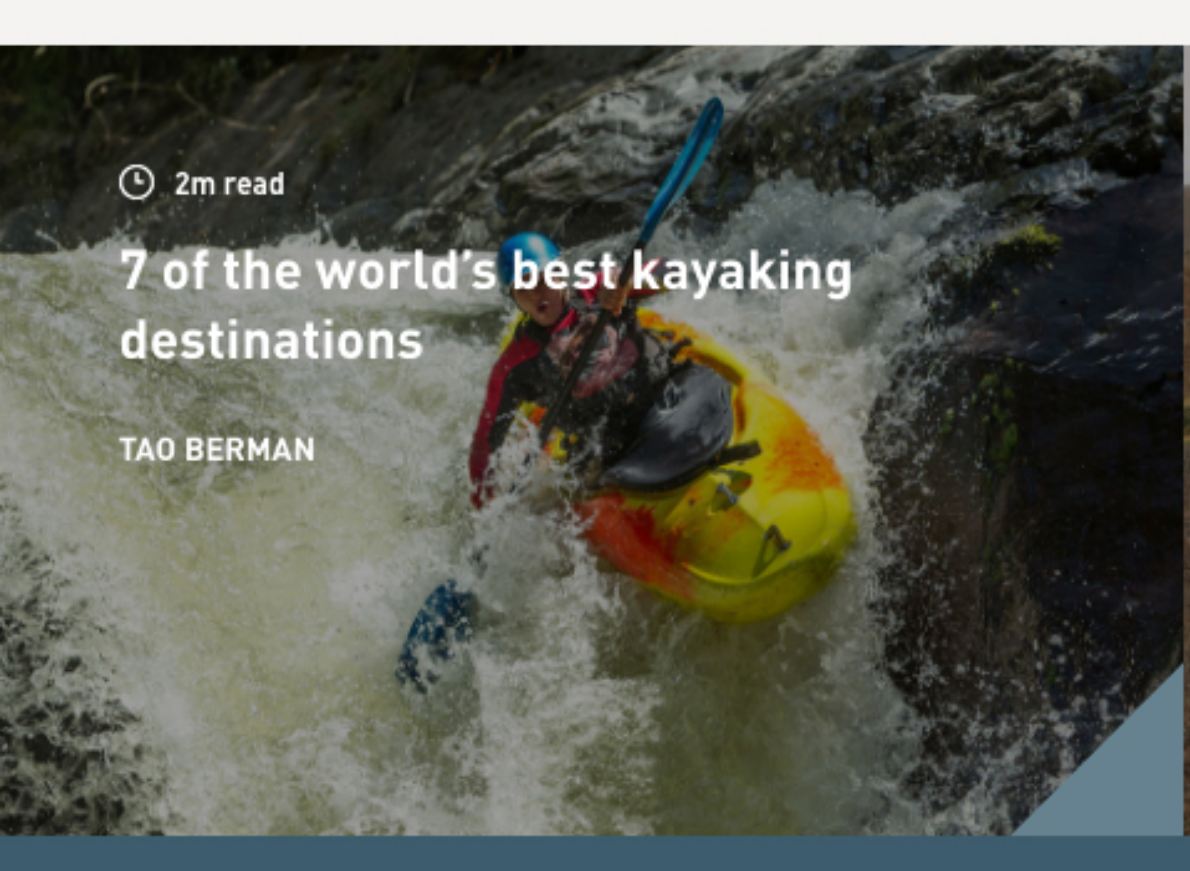
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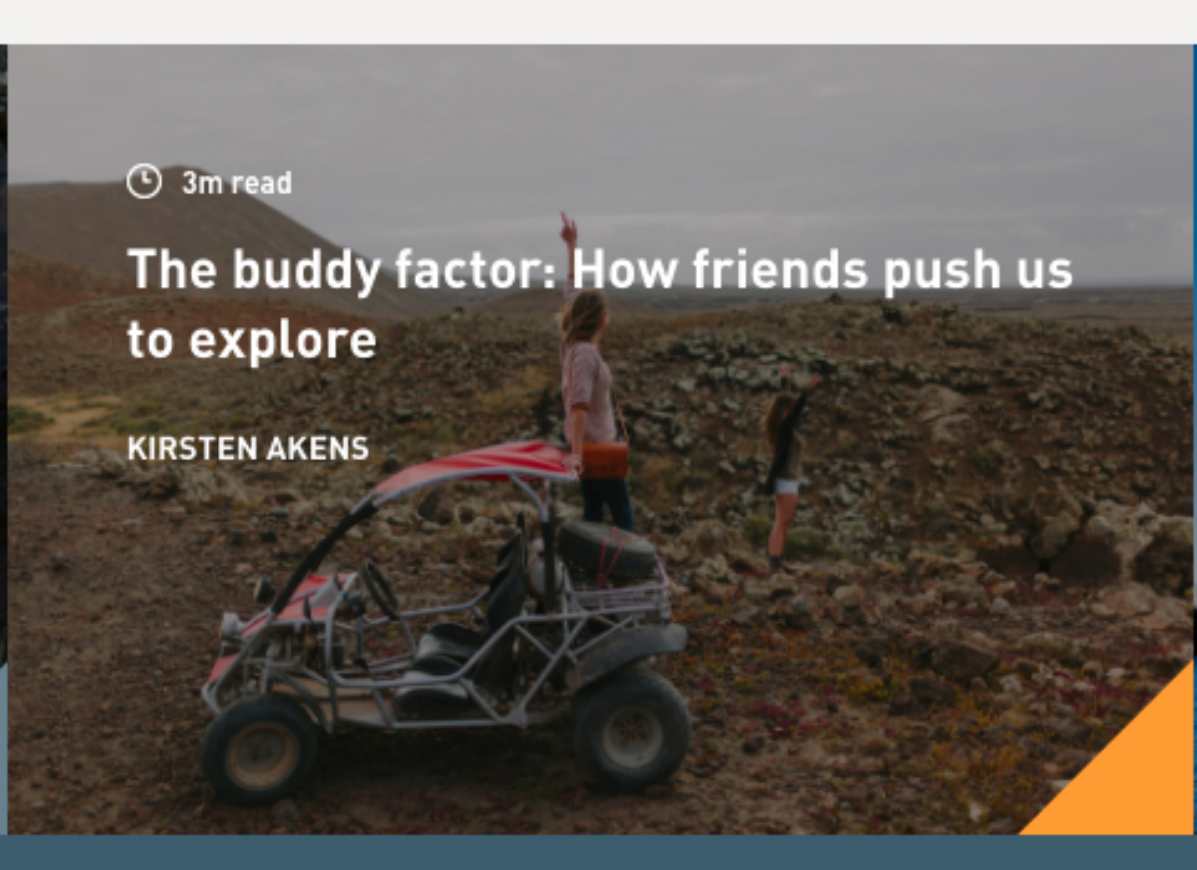
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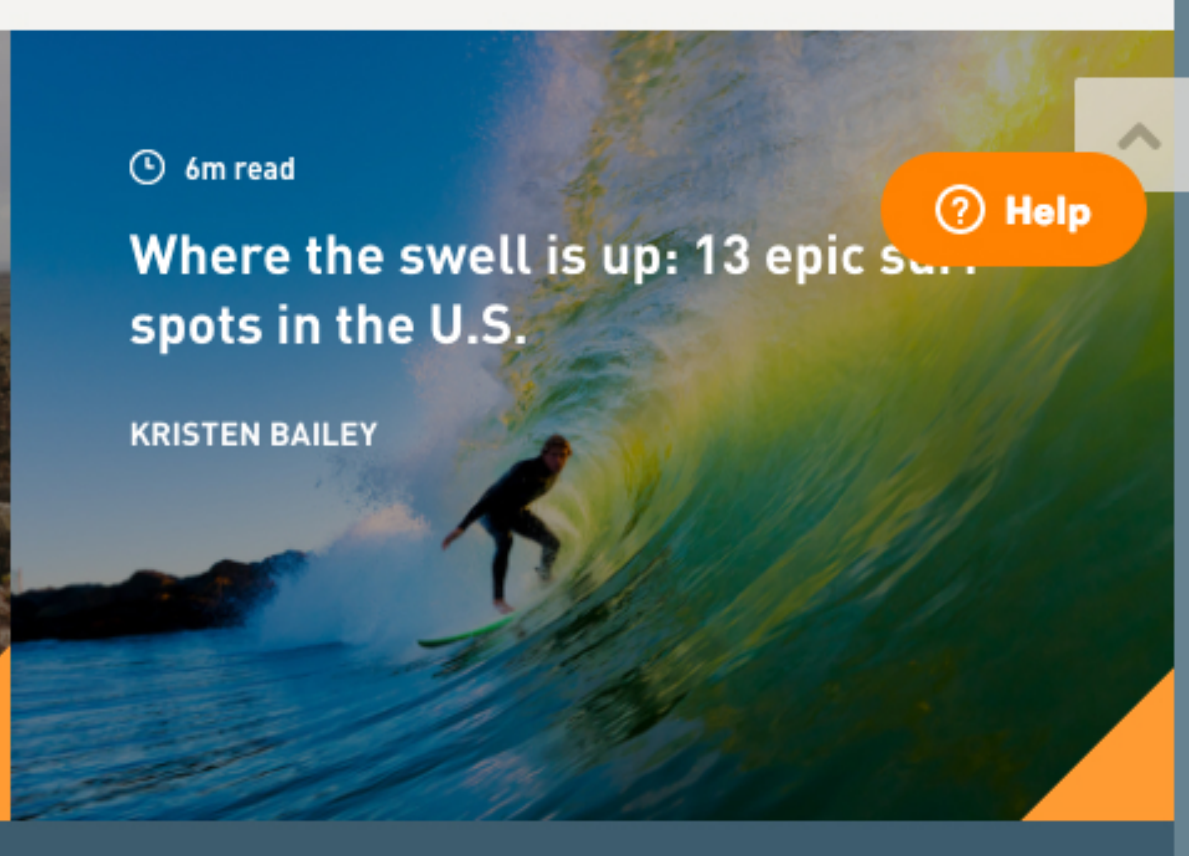
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