

# AIRBNB'S NEXT BIG THING

*Belinda Johnson's team helped launch Airbnb's new Experiences platform, which allows hosts to lead activities in their home cities for a flat fee. Meet three women using the service to share a little local flavor with tourists* By CARSON KESSLER



## THELMA JOHN

**Experience:** "Agent of Change"

**The gist:** Make Maasai jewelry, cook, and have dinner with Kenyan entrepreneurs

**Price:** \$150 for 11 hours

**Where:** Nairobi, Kenya

Zawadisha provides microloans for female entrepreneurs in the region. Airbnb reached out to Zawadisha in November 2016 when the home-sharing company piloted its Experiences platform. "People picture the madness of Nairobi: the traffic jams, sidewalks flooded with people, the slums; or the serenity of safaris: vintage Land Cruisers, elephants, and lions," says John, development director at the organization. Experiences allows John and her team to showcase a different side of Kenya, and to help local businesswomen feel valued.

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF JOHN (2); COURTESY OF CHOI, KYUNGSHIN LEE; COURTESY OF AIRBNB; MICHAEL SCHIBEL; OPPOSITE PAGE: MICHELLE LE/WIRED © CONDE NAST

## LINA CHOI

**Experience:** "Create Your Own Perfume"

**The gist:** Formulate a custom scent with a professional perfumer

**Price:** \$56 for two hours

**Where:** Seoul, South Korea

Choi's fragrance studio, a hidden gem nestled in the traditional 600-year-old village of Bukchon, used to attract only Korean customers. Since she joined the Airbnb Experiences platform in February 2017, Choi says, her Aromind perfumery has experienced a 30 percent increase in sales and serves a global crowd. "The customers from Airbnb are not just customers," she says. "They are very easy, polite, friendly, and very open-minded. I get lots of inspiration and energy from them."



## NICOLE LANDERS

**Experience:** "Eco-Urbanist"

**The gist:** Learn about and build a sustainable garden

**Price:** \$35 for two hours

**Where:** Venice Beach, California

"I'm one of the first 100 in Los Angeles to be a part of this," says Landers, the cofounder of sustainability-driven nonprofit Community Healing Gardens. She joined Experiences in August 2016 and aims to share her eco-urbanist lifestyle with locals and visitors alike. "We've easily worked with over 1,000 people so far," she says. "It's so easy to travel somewhere and get lost in the tourist stuff. My goal, though, is to tell the story of community and that we can all work together to have a better world. Don't rest on your laurels!"