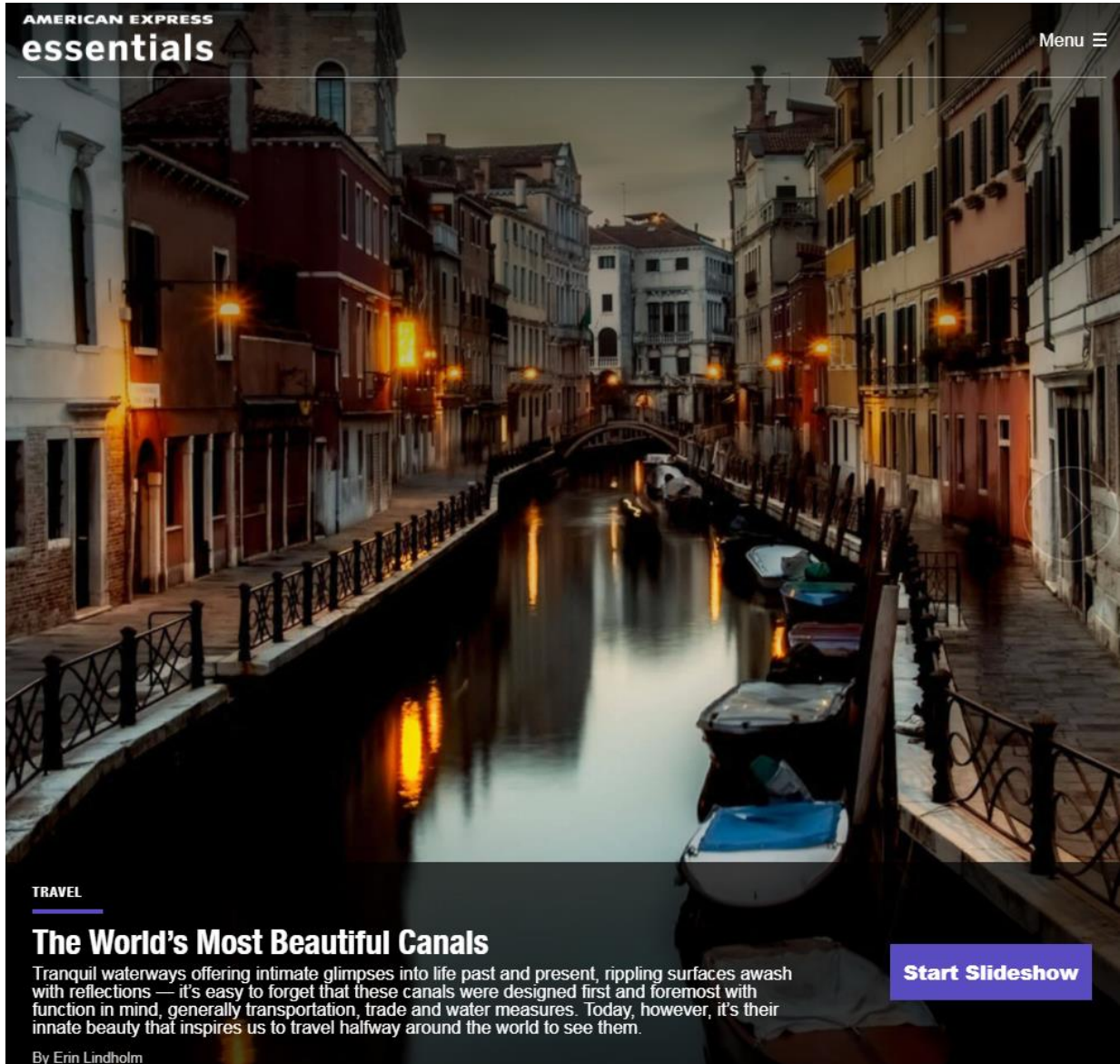


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The World's Most Beautiful Canals



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The World's Most Beautiful Canals

Tranquil waterways offering intimate glimpses into life past and present, rippling surfaces awash with reflections — it's easy to forget that these canals were designed first and foremost with function in mind, generally transportation, trade and water measures. Today, however, it's their innate beauty that inspires us to travel halfway around the world to see them.

By Erin Lindholm

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Suzhou, China — Located less than 30 minutes by bullet train from Shanghai, in many ways Suzhou feels light years away, with its classical gardens, well-preserved old town and network of bridges and canals that even Venetian world traveller Marco Polo admired when he visited in the 13th century. [Day trips from Shanghai](#) offer numerous options for exploring the watery wonders of Suzhou and the city's renowned gardens. In Zhouzhuang and Tongli, Suzhou's ancient water towns, gondolas are still the primary mode of transportation.

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