

ACTIVE ADVENTURES *and* EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES



- *Adventure Travel from A-Z*
- *6 Adrenaline Rushes*
- *How to Pick a Safari*
- *3 Sustainable Travel Experiences*

*The 2017
Virtuoso Collection*



ADVENTURE TRAVEL

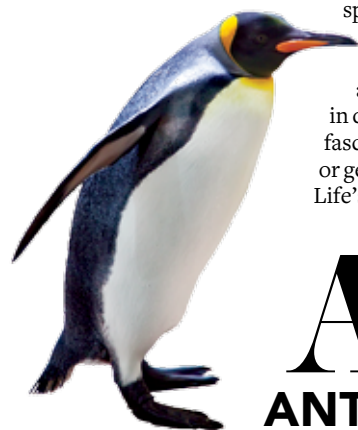
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A to Z

YOUR GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S
BEST ACTIVE, OUTDOOR, AND
EXPERIENTIAL VACATIONS.

By Jessica Mueller

Who said all leisure vacations need to be, well, leisurely? Whether it's sea kayaking in Los Cabos or cooking traditional meals with locals in Morocco, sometimes you want to ditch the lounge chair and *do* something more. Your travel advisor can craft customizable itineraries with cruise, hotel, tour, and destination partners who specialize in authentic experiences, and who are committed to sustainable tourism practices in the communities and regions you visit. Immerse yourself in dramatic destinations, connect with fascinating cultures, commune with nature, or get moving on a multisport expedition. Life's an adventure – and it's time to explore.



A is for ANTARCTICA

The last place on earth tops a lot of travelers' bucket lists. If you want to cross the Antarctic Circle, **Quark Expeditions** – which has been charting the poles since 1991 – offers journeys ranging from ten days to three weeks. Sign on with **Australis** for a shorter trip; the Patagonia cruise specialist provides one- to three-day add-ons to the White Continent. **Lindblad Expeditions** is the only operator in Antarctica with an undersea specialist qualified to dive in polar waters. An accompanying remotely operated vehicle gives guests a rare look at the Antarctic underworld from depths of up to 1,000 feet.



¡Buen provecho!
Friends feast in Baja.

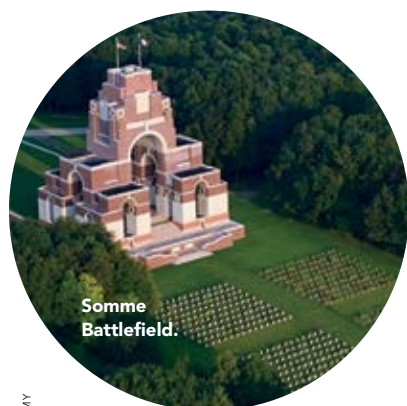
B is for BAJA

Whether you're sea kayaking or savoring ceviche in a secret-garden courtyard, **Los Cabos** caters to all the senses. Cabo San Lucas' hotels, shops, and restaurants are a beach-stroll away from granite islands and secret coves; the colonial San José del Cabo is home base for Mexican culture, towering cardon cacti, and a fresh-water coastal lagoon that's home to hundreds of bird species. Dive into Baja's salty side with **UnCruise Adventures**, which charts the Sea of Cortés year-round. Gray whales star in the early months, while whale sharks make their appearance after November.



C is for CYCLING

The tactician of active adventures, **Backroads** offers a range of impeccably organized trips for everyone from families and beginners seeking a gentle pedal, all the way up to iron-quadded mountain scalers. Trips span the world, with additional routes added frequently (new biking itineraries for 2017 include Bermuda, Maine, and Provence). Canada-based **Butterfield & Robinson** also offers family cycling trips in adventurous locales such as Cambodia; custom and self-guided routes let travelers set their own pace, from Chile to China.



Somme Battlefield.

D is for DOWN UNDER

Australia, mate: Surf the Gold Coast, sip Margaret River wines, and fly over the Bungle Bungles. The Outback calls explorers inward, to the Aboriginal culture of Alice Springs and Uluru, while pearls, opera, and Asian night markets beckon from Sydney. In Darwin, delve into Oceania's military past with **Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours**. The journalist and historian is the leading expert in ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) history and culture; in 2017 he leads six-day Darwin tours marking the 75th anniversary of the year WWII reached Australia's shores.



One heli of an adventure on New Zealand's Franz Josef Glacier.

G is for GLACIER

Arrive by helicopter to the brilliant snowy surface of **New Zealand's** Franz Josef Glacier or boat beneath the country's Tasman Glacier in the shadow of Mount Cook. In a land renowned for emerald hills, fluffy sheep, and a rich native culture, these ice giants of the south are not to be missed. Oceania specialist **Southern World** can get you walking on Fox Glacier, sailing in Auckland Harbour, or winetasting on Waiheke Island.

E is for EASTER ISLAND

On Rapa Nui, aka Easter Island, **explora's** LEED-certified hotel is built in harmony with the land and the Pacific. The South American specialist's 30-room sanctuary impedes on none of the famous architectural remains; to see them, guests adventure by foot and bike, horseback and boat, with a maximum group size of eight.



A monolithic moai statue.

F is for FAMILY

Tauck Bridges connects family members of all ages to 19 destinations from Tanzania to Ireland, and provides family-only river cruising in Europe that keeps kids engaged while adults float to their dream destinations. One of our favorite places for a multigenerational adventure: **Vancouver, British Columbia**. Adults are already familiar with this culturally rich city, and children will get a rise out of the Capilano Suspension Bridge and revel at Granville Island, North America's largest free water park. For winter fun, the enormous Whistler Blackcomb ski resort is just a couple hours' drive away.





H

is for HIMALAYAS

Buddhist retreats, snowcapped peaks, and a focus on bliss call travelers to Bhutan – the country is the only in the world to measure Gross National Happiness as a barometer of success. For equally sublime stays, Amankora's five lodges blend seamlessly into the surrounding landscape of mountains and temples, from Punakha in a subtropical valley to Gangtey in the lesser-visited Phobjikha Valley. Specializing in the Himalayan region for 25 years, Nomadic Expeditions can arrange trips that segue Mongolia's Gobi Desert into Tibet's rich cultural life, and that take you into remotest China, Siberia's Lake Baikal region, and beyond.



A lighting ceremony in Varanasi.

I

is for INDIA

Though **Micato Safaris** started more than 50 years ago in Kenya, its history goes all the way back to Goa, where the founding Pinto family has roots. Today, Micato creates bespoke journeys, from three-day immersions in Varanasi, the Hindu soul of India, to a 13-day temple-studded Northern Indian retrospective. India specialist **Greaves Tours** extends its expertise to Sri Lanka and the Maldives; the company's mainland lineup includes Central India, an oft-missed area where Kipling's creatures still roam and Buddhism was born some 2,600 years ago.

K

is for KRUGER

Home to 19 national parks, **South Africa** is synonymous with adventure. One of our favorite ways to find it: aboard the country's renowned **Blue Train**, which whisks passengers between Cape Town and Pretoria in its elegant lacquered cars throughout the week, and, since 2016, to Kruger National Park via special biannual routes. Among the biggest national parks in the world, Kruger shelters more species of mammals than any other park in Africa. Daily flights from Johannesburg and Cape Town also make it one of the most accessible.



J

is for JOIE D'VIVRE!

Of course you'll love sailing the Mediterranean, Alaska, or the Caribbean aboard **Ponant's** yachts. But life aboard France's only cruise line might surprise you with echoes of your favorite Parisian hotel: French chefs and gastronomy set the tone, with extra touches such as baked goods from Maison Lenôtre. The all-French crew will make sure your Pierre Frey linens are pressed and the L'Occitane bath supplies stocked.

L

is for LAKE LUCERNE

At the geographic heart of **Switzerland**, Lake Lucerne has ambling branches that radiate deep into verdant Alpine valleys. Tour by sailboat in the summer, or take up residence in the historic and hip city of Lucerne, where you can explore waterfalls, mineral baths, and endless miles of wildflower-flanked hiking trails.



(HIMALAYAS) HADYNYA/GETTY IMAGES
(PASTRIES) JACQUES PAULT/GETTY IMAGES
(LAKE LUCERNE) BLUEJAYPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

Aqua Expeditions'
Aqua Mekong.



M is for MEKONG

For centuries the shared lifeblood of Southeast Asia, the Mekong River now faces an uncertain future, as hydropower projects threaten its ecosystems and vitality. To help preserve this historic waterway, **Aqua Expeditions** carries no more than 40 guests through Cambodia and Vietnam aboard its modern *Aqua Mekong* river-cruiser, whose interior is built of local and sustainable materials, and features comforts such as an outdoor pool and spa. Discover the cultures that thrive along the river with stops in top sites such as Angkor and Ho Chi Minh City.



O is for OPEN DOORS

You're invited: From concert venues to sporting events and other hot tickets, your travel advisor can work with **CAA Premium Experience** to secure access to the U.S. Open, Kentucky Derby, Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, and more. A division of a top entertainment and sports agency, the company can arrange tickets, hotels, transportation and the like for a true red-carpet experience.



N is for NORTHERN LIGHTS

In **Iceland**, the swirling alien-greens and milky blues of the aurora borealis are an "ordinary" part of the night sky during most of the year. **Iceland Encounter's** five-day tours include glaciers and waterfalls, volcanoes and geysers; overnights in Thorsmork Wilderness Area and Thingvellir National Park provide optimal dark-sky viewing of the northern lights.



In ruins: Touring the Saksaywaman citadel near Cusco.

P is for PERU

The ancient Inca homeland is a thoroughly modern destination. Trekking, camping, and glamping options abound for travelers making their way from Cusco to the ruins at Machu Picchu, while the **Belmond** Hiram Bingham train remains the preeminent way to access the Incan citadel in style, either as a day trip or as part of Belmond's five-day Peru experience. In the capital of Lima – also widely recognized as South America's culinary capital – a four-day gastronomic tour from **Lima Tours** delves into a fusion cuisine that draws on indigenous, Chinese, African, and Japanese influences.

A sunset *mokoro* (canoe) safari in Botswana.

S is for SUSTAINABILITY

The United Nations has designated 2017 as The Year of Sustainable Tourism, and Virtuoso is proud to work with tour operators who lead the way in responsible travel. Among them: **G Adventures**, which takes travelers to nearly 100 countries, with a core value of giving back to communities and ecosystems, and with strong animal welfare standards. **Natural Habitat Adventures** is the first carbon-neutral travel company and it partners with the World Wildlife Fund in trip planning and guide training. In New Mexico and southern Colorado, **Ted Turner Expeditions** invites guests into the private ranches of the philanthropist-billionaire, whose passions run from conservation to nuclear arms eradication.



Aboard the **Rocky Mountaineer**, the Canadian Rockies are the backdrop to eight- or nine-day rail journeys that wind their way over seven snowcapped mountain ranges, stopping each night at stunning hotels. Further on, **Knightly Tours** is your gateway to Alaska. With 45 years of experience in the state, Knightly excels at crafting tours around niche tastes – eight different tours, for instance, specialize in bear viewing. To go as far north as the planet allows, **Arctic Kingdom Expeditions** takes you “comfortably out of your comfort zone,” to get up close to walruses and polar bears, and deep into Arctic Circle communities.

(EL PANECILLO BUILDING) ELISALOCCHI/GETTY IMAGES, (ELEPHANT) NARV/KV/GETTY IMAGES, (ARCTIC) IMAC72/GETTY IMAGES

Q is for QUITO

Ecuador's capital is inherently superlative: At 9,350 feet, it's the world's highest official capital; it's also the closest to the equator. What's more, its beautifully preserved Old Town was among the first UNESCO World Heritage sites. **Ladatco Tours'** 22-day Ecuadoran immersion starts with two nights in the city before embarking into the indigenous cultures and precious ecosystems of the Andes and Amazon. With **International Expeditions**, a Galápagos Islands sailing aboard the 32-passenger *Evolution* can be extended with three days in Quito and the Andean highlands.

The Virgin of Quito stands sentinel atop El Panecillo hill.

R is for RANGE ROVER

This boxy hero of the safari is one beast you're sure to spot in Africa's landscape. **Big Five Tours & Expeditions'** 14-day Tanzania trips take in the wild Serengeti as well as the Mahale Mountains for chimp viewing. **Abercrombie & Kent**, which blazed the trail for luxury African safaris in the 1960s, offers a classic Kenyan safari in the Masai Mara. In Botswana's Okavango Delta, **African Travel, Inc.** will get you on the water during a four-day paddle on the Selinda Canoe Trail, a waterway born of heavy rains in 2009.



Wild times in Kenya's Mwaluganje Sanctuary.

Moroccan moment: Trekking in the Saharan sand dunes.

T is for TAILORED

The best travel is all about connections – to people, places, and our world. Case in point: **Heritage Tours Private Travel's** customizable Morocco itineraries, which can include experiences like curated cooking lessons with a *dada* (Moroccan grandmother) in her family kitchen. The company also provides special access in sub-Saharan Africa, plus Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey. In northern Europe, **Norwegian Adventures'** approach is both tightly organized and totally laid back, whether you want to hang out at a remote farm or grill your catch of the day in a fjord-side *rorbu* cabin. For those of Viking descent, the company offers genealogical research and family tracking.



V is for VOLCANOES

Volcanoes tap into the imagination, calling explorers with their unpredictable power and beauty. In Costa Rica, **Cox & Kings'** eight-day adventure spends two days at **Arenal Volcano**, formerly the country's most active (and deadly) volcano, but dormant since 2010. In Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, **National Geographic Expeditions** shepherds you into the rugged wild, where the attraction isn't so much the five volcanoes themselves, but the chimpanzees, golden monkeys, and critically endangered mountain gorillas who make the park home. Winter sports specialist **Alpine Adventures** can get you summer skiing in Chile, where vintage slopes, stunning lake views, and soothing springs are on the menu at Lonquimay, Villarrica, and other geothermal hot spots.



Oregon's Crater Lake National Park.

W is for WILD WEST

The canyons and rifts of the American West will always call to road trippers and adventure seekers. **National Parks Revealed** offers another side of well-known parks, such as the birdlife of Glacier and the best photo-ops in Yellowstone. They'll also help you uncover lesser-known parks such as Utah's Capitol Reef. National Park packages from **Austin Adventures** include family-friendly vacations and active adults-only multisport trips, such as a hike/bike/raft adventure in Oregon's Crater Lake National Park.



X is for XOXO

Beaches, Bora-Bora, and bungalows: French Polynesia can't help but be passionate. While sailing with **Paul Gauguin Cruises**, island idylls are your playground during 8- to 15-day cruises; on board, a sarong-wrapped, flower-crowned Tahitian vow renewal keeps love burning brightly. Founded in 1987 and operated by an Aussie-American husband-and-wife team, **Swain Destinations** can uncover romance all over the world, from secluded cabins in the wilds of New Zealand to Champagne toasts in Namibia's sand dunes.



Z is for ZAMBEZI

The river that makes the renowned "smoke" of Victoria Falls is the soul of Zambia and **The Royal Livingstone Anantara**. Each of the hotel's 173 rooms features a private veranda with views of the thundering main attraction. Before high tea is served, go river cruising in search of the "big five," or raft the rapids at Bakota Gorge.



A Mongolian couple backed by their ger (yurt).

Y is for YURTS

In the vast wilds of Central Asia, hardy and portable yurts (*gers*) are frequently the lodging of choice. **Zegrahm Expeditions'** 17-day Mongolia adventure has you sleeping in the round by night and riding Bactrian camels, making dumplings, and watching archery competitions at the national Naadam Festival by day. **Remote Lands'** camping itineraries in Tajikistan's Murghab District also take you well off the beaten path, to Rangkul Lake and the 15,000-foot Ak-Baital Pass.



BY FOOT

Acadia National Park, Maine

"For a nice hike, follow the **Bar Island Trail**, a 'land bridge' from behind the Bar Harbor Club that takes you out to the island. The hour-long hike offers great views of Bar Harbor. Make sure to plan your walk with the tide, though, or you'll get stuck on the island until the next one!"

– *Denise Meiler, Portland, Maine*



BY BIKE

Montana

"While visiting Glacier National Park, take advantage of nearby Whitefish Lake, whose **Whitefish Trail** offers great biking opportunities; in mid-July, Flathead cherries begin to ripen."

– *Caroline Bach Wood, Bozeman, Montana*



BY FLOATPLANE

Alaska

"To experience some of the real Alaska, base your stay in the town of Talkeetna. You can take a floatplane flight into Denali National Park, **landing on an alpine lake** between two glaciers for a hike deep into the backcountry."

– *Lynda McMahon, Anchorage, Alaska*

EXTREMES

TIME TO GO WILD

*Advisor-recommended **adrenaline rushes.***

BY HOT-AIR BALLOON

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

"You'll fly over an array of animal species and be amazed at how they appear so different from the sky. Passengers can **touch down in the savanna** for a Champagne breakfast, typically set up under an acacia tree and surrounded by curious animals – kept at a safe distance by local Masai."

– *Chad Clark, Phoenix*



BY VOLCANO SLED

Nicaragua

"Nicaragua is a great choice for adventure travelers who want to explore a less discovered country, and boarding down **Cerro Negro volcano** is a unique experience. For further active adventure, don't miss a visit to the volcanic Ometepe Island on Lake Nicaragua."

– *Michele Cohen, Vancouver, British Columbia*

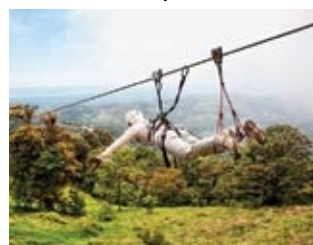


BY ZIP LINE

Costa Rica

"The zip lines of Arenal Volcano National Park and Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve soar high over lush canopies, making you feel like a bird if you choose to **fly head first**. Hanging bridges and Tarzan swings complement the ride."

– *Ryan Dandy, Garden Grove, California*



(FOOT) AURORA PHOTOS/ALAMY; (BIKE) GSBARCLAY/GETTY IMAGES; (FLOATPLANE) SHAUN/ISTOCK; (BALLOON) WILLIAM MANNING/MEDIA BAKERY; (ZIP LINE) STEFANO PATERNAL/ALAMY; (VOLCANO SLED) WENN LTD/ALAMY; (SNS) BUZZ PICTURES/ALAMY

► SAFARI STRATEGY

*When it comes to life-altering travel experiences, an **African safari** is in a league of its own. “Visiting Africa opens your heart in a way that is totally unexpected,” says advisor Phoebe Weinberg of Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. But because each destination is unique and suits a different style of traveler, it’s important to study your options, she notes. Which safari is right for you? Here are three key categories to consider.*



• FOR YOUR FIRST SAFARI

For the most impactful and rewarding experience, **Botswana and South Africa** top the list with an array of small, intimate camps for every budget, says Weinberg. Two must-dos: a canoe ride along Botswana’s **Okavango Delta** at sunset, and South Africa’s **Kruger National Park** – “a consistent source of the ‘big five.’”

BEST TIME TO VISIT:

Prime game viewing occurs from late April through early October and late November through December.



• FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG KIDS

While the majority of African game camps provide children’s activities, and many now feature connecting family accommodations, **Kenya and Tanzania** have the added plus of **local Masai** tribes that children can interact with during village visits.

WORTH NOTING:

Those concerned about malaria should consider South Africa, which offers camps in **malaria-free zones**.



• FOR SEASONED SAFARI-GOERS

For those ready to go beyond the game experience, “so many more African wonders await,” says Weinberg. Just a few ideas: exploring Namibia’s **Skeleton Coast**, learning ancient skills from the Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert, and spending a day with the **remote Pokot tribe** in northern Kenya.

EXTREME AFRICA:

For extra adrenaline, she adds, try snorkeling with sharks in Zanzibar or **white-water rafting at Victoria Falls** along the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe.

(ARROW: GON) BRIAN OPENLAND/THE NOUN PROJECT; (LION) DAVID NOTON/PHOTOGRAFHY/ALAMY; (MASAI) KAREN SU/CHINA SPAN/ALAMY; (RAFTING) KUMAR SRISKANDAN/ALAMY; (SUITCASE) TARASOV VU/GETTY IMAGES



BEYOND BASIC

Three ways to explore the wide and wonderful world of sustainable travel now. BY COSTAS CHRIST

**A snow leopard
in Mongolia.**

TODAY, TAKING A SUSTAINABLE holiday comes in as many forms as a traveler's imagination can conjure, from dining on farm-to-fork fare in treehouse-style villas to photographing thriving wildlife on 250,000 acres of formerly denuded farmland. The following travel experiences share a common bond: They protect threatened habitats, support cultural heritage, and improve local livelihoods – and also make for great vacations.

Snow Leopard Quest

Among the world's critically endangered big cats, snow leopards are so rare that finding a paw print in the wild is considered an important discovery. This year, Mongolia's government signed off on the creation of a new nature reserve – Tost Tosonbumba. Located in South Gobi, in a region considered prime snow leopard habitat, the reserve will connect two other conservation areas to establish one of the largest protected snow leopard landscapes on the planet. Big-cat lovers have the chance to track – and possibly spot – these mysterious felines.

Habitat Heroes

Starting in September, South Africa's UNESCO-designated Cape Floral Region bursts into a brilliant display of south-of-the-equator springtime, showcasing the world's greatest concentration of plant species – more than are found in the Amazon rain forest – and carpeting the rugged terrain with rainbows of color. This biodiversity-rich habitat is home to endangered wildlife such as the Cape Mountain zebra.

Flower Power in Peru

Over the past half-century, the rush for tourism dollars from waves of visitors eager to see Machu Picchu's ruins meant the sanctuary's natural heritage received scant attention – and area flora and fauna spiraled into decline. Enter a hotel whose mission is to create a sustainable tourism model that protects and restores nature, rather than tramples it.



PACK LIKE A TRAVEL ADVISOR

Suggestions from a few on-the-go gurus.

Create a packing spreadsheet.

"Organized by day and event (especially good for cruising), it takes the guesswork out of what to wear and when."

– **Jane Martz, San Francisco**

Layer your travel outfit.

"Wear heavier items on travel days to free up suitcase space."

– **Lindsey Epperly, Atlanta**

Carry on a duffel bag instead of a wheel-aboard.

"You're less likely to be asked to gate-check it, you can pack more in it, and it weighs less."

– **Michael King, Leawood, Kansas**

Zip valuables and essentials in a plastic bag.

"If you have to gate-check your suitcase, it'll save you from having to search for everything."

– **Jean Pickard, Atlanta**

FANCY FREE

Looking to shed your baggage?

"Any traveler hoping to **save time and headaches** should consider using **Luggage Free**," says Los

Angeles-based advisor Stacy Small. The guaranteed luggage-shipping service is ideal for multideestination trips and also active vacations that require traveling with bulky items such as skis, she adds. "It also works well for travelers who just don't want to worry about their bags 'missing a connection' or being delayed if there are issues with their flights."

My luxury is being a global citizen.



Photo courtesy of Virtuoso traveler, Julie Floyd

THE BEST WAY TO DEFINE LUXURY IS YOURS. The best travel experiences uniquely reflect you — your personality, preferences, and style. It's a matter of personal taste. So whether it's being a global citizen or anything that makes your trips extraordinary, put us to the test. It's personal for us, too — every client, every detail, every time.

A Virtuoso travel advisor provides the value, expertise and connections you expect from all of your trusted professionals. Put us to the test. We'll make your next travel experience worth rave reviews.

The world's finest travel agencies and advisors are Virtuoso®.



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