

# T&C TOWN & COUNTRY TRAVEL

WHITE  
OUT  
The Lodge  
at Blue  
Sky will be  
minutes  
from ski  
areas like  
Deer Valley.

## WHERE TO GO IN 2019

*Visit the gorillas in the mist, cruise the Mekong in a boat built for four, or just bask again in the Caribbean sun—for starters. Here, all the places to see and be seen this year.*

*By Klara Glowczewska*

Figuring out how best to spend your travel dollars is the most delicious dilemma of a life well lived. On the pages that follow are our suggestions, based on intelligence collected, insiders consulted, and cultural, gastronomic, and geopolitical trends considered. Want to bathe in wellness? Try the Berkshires—or Bhutan. Want to leave the world behind? Head for Namibia—or Norway. Fancy some

time travel? Get thee to Romania—or a secret bit of paradise off Panama. Our 25 destinations include places near and far, hot and cold, laid-back and anything but. They all have noteworthy new hotels, and we provide the names of travel specialists who can help you book. Nothing like starting the New Year spoiled for choice. *Contributors: Jen Murphy, Kevin Forbes, Leena Kim, Graham Boynton, Sarah Khan.*

## Europe

## EDIFICE COMPLEX

Frank Gehry's tower at the Luma Arles arts center opens next year.



## PORTUGAL

BECAUSE NOW THERE'S  
EVEN MORE TO LOVE.

There's charming Lisbon, the wineries of the Douro Valley, the seaside towns of the Algarve. And now the Alentejo, where stylish Lisbonites go on private home holidays, has three magnetic new places to stay: **São Lourenço do Barrocal**, a centuries-old estate that is now a dreamy boutique resort (restored by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Eduardo Souto de Moura); on the coast, the design-driven **Sublime Comporta**, its villas shaped like the area's traditional rice storage buildings; and the just opened **Quinta da Comporta**, set between dunes and rice fields. Think the solitude and natural beauty of the Hamptons before they became hot.

**TO BOOK** Virginia Irurita, who devises great itineraries throughout the Iberian peninsula. VIRGINIA@MADEFORSAINANDPORTUGAL.COM. *J.M.*

## ARLES ▲

BECAUSE THE ART  
WORLD IS ARRIVING.

Swiss-born art collector and philanthropist Maja Hoffmann has invested a decade (and nearly \$200 million) in laying the foundation for the city of Arles, France, which played muse to van Gogh and Gauguin, to become a new cultural hub. Her biggest project is **Luma Arles**, a 20-acre contemporary arts complex that includes a performance venue that launched last summer, and the crown jewel, a tower designed by Frank Gehry, which is slated to be completed in late 2019. In anticipation of Arles's ascent to art destination status, Hoffmann has opened a Michelin-starred restaurant, **La Chassagnette**, and the creatively decorated hotel **L'Arlatan**, which is set in a grand centuries-old townhouse. **TO BOOK** Philip Haslett, all-knowing on things Provençal. PHILIP@KAIROS-TRAVEL.COM *J.M.*

## ROMANIA

BECAUSE PRINCE  
CHARLES  
HAS THREE  
HOUSES IN THE  
COUNTRYSIDE—  
AND CHARLES  
KNOWS COUNTRY.

Bucharest is getting its first real luxury hotel this year (the Corinthia) and has a burgeoning food scene. But the real star is Romania's countryside: Bukovina, with its painted monasteries; Maramures, with its wooden churches; and Transylvania, a.k.a., Dracula country—romantic reminders of what this continent looked like centuries ago. In an era of shrinking biodiversity, Romania's Carpathian Mountains contain the largest swath of virgin forest in Europe; its meadows, which have never been sprayed with pesticides, are miraculously abundant in flora and fauna, with Europe's largest populations of bears, wolves, and lynxes. Prince Charles, one of the country's most vocal protectors, rhapsodized that here "man lives in harmony with nature." You can go tracking with guides and otherwise geek out on the natural world, and because the hinterlands are unfenced, there is excellent horseback riding and cycling.

When Charles is not around, you can stay at **Zalanpatak**, one of his meticulously restored homes (seven rooms, no phone or internet). Small, family-owned inns are becoming increasingly stylish, and even a tad modern (i.e., WiFi). **Copsa Mare**, a Saxon village at the edge of a vast forest, has four charming cottages suitable for two to eight guests; larger properties include **Raven's Nest**, **Sesuri**, and **Viscri 125**. All will immerse you in local culture, customs, and cuisine. **TO BOOK** Raluca Spiac has the keys to this kingdom and can arrange bespoke activities, such as a stay at a castle in Zabola owned by Austro-Hungarian aristocrats, where a day of 4x4 adventures culminates with a lakeside dinner, a performance by a gypsy band, and some astronomer-led stargazing. A peek at the old-fashioned life just may be the bucket-list trip of the future. RALUCA@BEYONDDRACULA.COM. *J.M.*

## Europe

## NORWAY

BECAUSE IT'S LIKE  
HAVING VALHALLA  
ALL TO YOURSELF.

Chiseled by glaciers into a vast multi-faceted gemstone, Norway's craggy coastline, with its soaring fjords and snowcapped peaks, reaches all the way up to the Arctic Circle. The country is awash in oil money—and all the optimism it brings. Thoroughly modern Oslo has world class restaurants and hotels, but most of Norway's delights lie outside the cities, with unique small hotels and converted farmsteads that give visitors a taste of the country's uncommon hospitality—which, together with the scenery and outdoor pursuits (a Norwegian specialty)—will fix whatever ails you.

A sampler: In the western Sunnfjord region, known for its waterfalls, fishing, and kayaking, **Amot Country Villa & Opera Farm** is a sublimely renovated farmstead where traditional music and inventive cuisine feature prominently. Surrounded by the fjords of the Aurland region, **29/2 Aurland** is owned by a young couple who have transformed this former farm into a sanctuary for foodies and nature lovers alike. There's fly fishing and fjord skiing, but you can content yourself by simply strolling from one towering waterfall to another. For an Arctic adventure, there's **Manshausen Island Resort** (*right*) or **Lyngen Lodge**, an eight-room property with dramatic mountain and sea views and its own boat for whale watching and ferrying hikers, bikers, and skiers to parts (almost) unknown. **TO BOOK** George Morgan-Grenville and his team will craft one-of-a-kind itineraries and get you VIP service. GMORGAN-GRENVILLE@REDSAVANNAH.COM *K.F.*

## IT'S ELEMENTAL

Manshausen Island Resort's four Arctic Circle glass cabins come with a hot tub for 12.



## MOSCOW

BECAUSE  
THE  
FALLING  
RUBLE  
MEANS  
LUXURY IS  
ON SALE.

It's safe to assume that Vladimir Putin's popularity in Moscow has less to do with his charms than it does with the billions he has showered on the capital, restoring it to a level of grandeur not seen since the czars and giving all Russians a glittery distraction from, well, everything else. Chic boutiques and cafés have opened along storied Kuznetsky Most, which was recently joined by a network of pedestrianized streets, creating a quarter ripe for strolling, shopping, and people watching. Red Square

now competes for attention with nearby Zaryadye Park, a 35-acre public space devoted to culture and entertainment designed by the team that created New York's High Line. Diversions include footpaths through forest and tundra, a sweeping boomerang-shaped viewing platform that juts over the Moscow River, and a food court showcasing Russia's regional fare. Even the most discriminating palate will be pleased by the city's culinary offerings, which include caviar with a view of Red Square at elegant

**Beluga**; farm-fresh produce and meat at sleek, airy **Twins Garden**; and a modern take on haute cuisine in the striking white dining room at **Bolshoi**. The ruble's fall has affected even the city's best hotels. At the newly refurbished **Park Hyatt**, a roomy Park Suite goes for \$450, and similar values can be had at the **Four Seasons** and, for a feel of old Russia, the historic (and heavily gilded) **Hotel Savoy**. **TO BOOK** Greg Tepper lived in Russia for years and creates unique experiences. 800-633-1008; GREG@EXETERINTERNATIONAL.COM. *K.F.*



## Africa

## RWANDA ▶

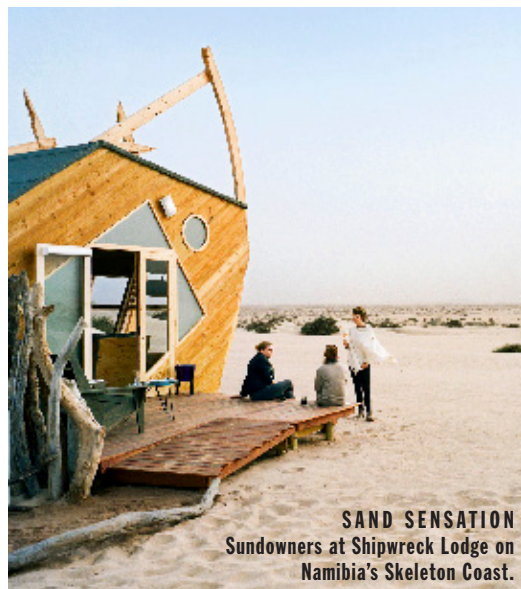
BECAUSE IT'S NOW  
THE SWITZERLAND  
OF AFRICA.

President Paul Kagame may have his detractors, but he has so steered his country that today it is known less for its 1994 genocide than for being safe, spotless, hilly, and high-end. The mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park have long been the main wildlife draw here, but now travelers can base themselves in lodges on par with the best in Kenya and Botswana. There's Wilderness Safaris' **Bisate**, a collection of six podlike suites that look like bird's nests suspended in the cloud forest; **One&Only Gorilla's Nest**, which debuts later this year (and will have nine holes of golf in case you need to decompress after a face-to-face with a silverback); and **Kwitonda Lodge**, opening in August from Singita, the uber-luxe South African safari company.

Beyond the apes, Akagera National Park, the country's only savannah park, is now officially a Big Five destination, and this month **Magashi Camp** opens, the park's first luxury lodge, a joint venture of Wilderness Safaris and the NGO African Parks (of which Prince Harry is president). And on the edge of Nyungwe Forest National Park, you can now stay on a working tea plantation at **One&Only Nyungwe House**. Even Kigali, the capital, has its game on, with a creative scene worth exploring and a new boutique lodge, the **Retreat**. **TO BOOK** Kate Doty will connect the dots and can arrange additional insider experiences. KATE@GEOEX.COM. *J.M.*



**THE COLOR OF MONEY**  
Luxury has arrived in Rwanda. **One&Only Nyungwe House** is one example.



**SAND SENSATION**  
Sundowners at Shipwreck Lodge on  
Namibia's Skeleton Coast.

## NAMIBIA

BECAUSE IT'S THE CLOSEST YOU'LL GET TO  
MARS WITHOUT LEAVING EARTH.

There's Namibia's intense beauty: the red dune-framed salt pan of Sossusvlei; the stupendous rock formations of Damaraland; the mashup of desert and ocean along the Skeleton Coast, riddled with old shipwrecks. Just as moving is the desert-adapted wildlife (including lions and elephants). Because the country has a "free roaming" policy, you're not likely to find clusters of animals as you do in the fenced parks of Kenya, Tanzania, or South Africa. They are out there in space—just as you are—and thus all the more thrilling to come upon.

And now there's a crop of equally thrilling places to stay. Ten-cabin

**Shipwreck Lodge** is the Skeleton Coast's first beach camp. Coming this spring from Zannier Hotels (whose ethos is "simplicity is the ultimate sophistication") is **Sonop**, in the Namib desert, where you'll wake up to the world's tallest freestanding dunes. Many of the new lodges have partnered with conservation programs. Zannier's **Omaanda**, near Windhoek, complements its game drives with visits to a hospital for abandoned rhinos and elephants, funded by the Jolie-Pitt Foundation. **TO BOOK** Elizabeth Gordon can give you a deeper look at Namibia's conservation programs. ELIZABETH@EJAFRICA.COM. *J.M.*

ONE&ONLY (RWANDA); NATURAL SELECTION SAFARIS (NAMIBIA)



## Africa

## ZIMBABWE

BECAUSE IT'S  
A BEAUTY  
WAKING FROM A  
BAD DREAM.

After 30 years, the despot Robert Mugabe is gone. The dust has settled after last July's elections (which controversially installed former Mugabe henchman Emmerson Mnangagwa, a.k.a. the Crocodile, as president), and Zimbabweans are hoping for better times. The country's wildlife areas rival any in Africa, and there are new and newly refurbished camps to stay at.

Hwange, the country's largest national park, is also one of Africa's most abundant (thanks to the 70 boreholes drilled in the 1920s that guarantee water year-round). Wilderness Safaris' **Linkwasha** is the epitome of safari luxury, and it's in the best game area of the park: warring lion prides, packs of wild dogs, cheetahs, and herds of elephant and buffalo everywhere. For rustic charm, the Amalinda Collection's new four-bed **Khulu's Private Retreat** (attached to the 12-bed Khulu Bush Camp) at Hwange's southern edge is the real thing. Sip a G&T while watching wild things on their way to water.

Also recommended is **Camp Amalinda**, which is in the Matopos area, one of the country's most beautiful places: a dramatic granite outcrop that provides a spectacular "view of the world," as Cecil Rhodes, who is buried here, put it. Elsewhere, the newest camp in Zambezi National Park, an hour's drive from Victoria Falls, is Great Plains' swank, colonial-style, four-tent **Mpala Jena Camp**. And in the remote southeast is rustic **Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge**, where the bonus is meeting proprietor Clive Stockil, one of Africa's greatest living conservationists. **TO BOOK** Nick Van Gruisen, a former wildlife guide, knows Zimbabwe intimately. [THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK](http://THEULTIMATETRAVELCOMPANY.CO.UK). G.B.

## FIVE-STAR SAFARI

A tented room in Zambezi National Park's swank new Mpala Jena Camp.



GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION (MPALA JENA CAMP)

# United States

## UP IN THE AIR

Book Park City's Lodge at Blue Sky and you can be doing this before check-in.



### PARK CITY, UTAH ▲

## BECAUSE THERE'S A WHOLE NEW WAY TO WIN THE WEST.

**NAPA VALLEY**  
BECAUSE IT'S NOT YOUR FATHER'S NAPA NOW.  
The region that put American wine on the map has a lot new going on. Forget mansion-size tasting rooms; there's a crop of intimate places from small lot producers like Tom Garrett's **Dakota Shy** and **Favia Wines** (from Screaming Eagle's Andy Erickson and his wife, Annie Favia). Casual dining is better than ever, with newcomers like **Charter Oak**, a shrine to open-fire cooking. Even Thomas Keller, fresh off renovating the **French Laundry**, is reportedly doing Mexican food in Yountville. And Calistoga Ranch is no longer the only place to stay in hot springs country: The five-room **Francis House** opened in August, and **Four Seasons Resort & Residences** arrives this summer. **TO BOOK** Dani Johnson can tailor days around Napa's distinctive AVAs (DANI@COASTLINETRAVEL.COM); Michelle Murré knows all the new hot spots (MICHELLE@AZURINETRAVEL.COM). *J.M.*

There are few ski areas in North America where a morning flight can have you floating on dry champagne powder by early afternoon. That accessibility has long made Park City a favorite winter playground. **Auberge Resorts' Lodge at Blue Sky**, on a 3,500-acre ranch, will bring the mountains even closer: A helicopter can pick you up at the airport and have you skiing on untouched terrain before check-in. The 46-suite lodge debuts in May, and it will have daylong "teaser" heli-ski packages, which include meals in a fire-warmed yurt. Once open, it will have Amangiri-level service and warm and cold weather activities (for kids, too) and a range of lodgings. Our favorite: the 500-square-foot tents. Park City's High West Distillery already has a tasting room and restaurant on-site, so you can toast your achievements. **TO BOOK** Direct or through Rick Reichsfeld, who can also organize a custom ski vacation for you, mixing Blue Sky with ski experiences elsewhere. RICK@ALPINEADVENTURES.COM. *J.M.*

### THE BERKSHIRES

## BECAUSE YOU NO LONGER NEED TO GO WEST FOR WELLNESS.

California and Arizona have traditionally been the favored spots for a serious mind-body reboot. Now this bucolic patch of Massachusetts, renowned for such cultural institutions as Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow, and Mass MoCA, is picking up the wellness mantle. A hiker's paradise with many miles of forested trails and five ski areas, it is already home to two destination retreats: the **Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health** in Stockbridge and **Canyon Ranch Lenox**. Next summer **Miraval in the Berkshires**, which has outposts in Tucson and Austin, comes to Lenox too. This is big: There will be golf and Miraval's signature equestrian therapy program, and, unlike Kripalu and Canyon Ranch, Miraval will serve alcohol. So much for ye olde New England Puritanism. **TO BOOK** MIRAVALL BERKSHIRES.COM; CANYONRANCH.COM; KRIPALU.ORG. *J.M.*



## Asia

## CAMBODIA

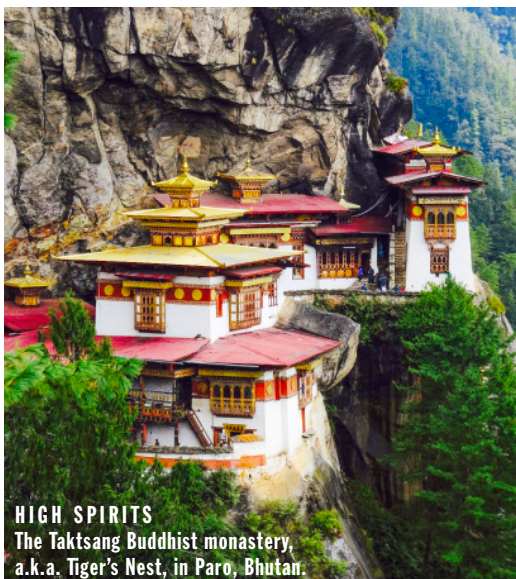
BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT **TEMPLES** ANYMORE.

For decades Cambodia has been a quick-hit trip to Siem Reap's Angkor Wat tacked onto a longer stay in Thailand or Vietnam. But new lodgings are making the former Khmer Empire a destination in its own right. Set in a wilderness corridor between Bokor and Kirirom national parks, spectacular **Shinta Mani Wild** has 15 platform tents perched over a rushing river (the creation of uber-resort designer Bill Bensley). The property's look is inspired by luxury safaris of a bygone era, but its mission is thoroughly modern: to provide employment and protect flora and fauna. You can help out on poaching patrol, go mountain biking, or hit the spa. Farther south are the Gulf of Thailand's tranquil island resorts. The rustic-luxe villas at **Song Saa Private Island Resort** (a longtime favorite) are now being joined by more modernist digs on neighboring islands, including **Alila Villas Koh Russey** and **Six Senses Krabey Island**. For cruise fans, Aqua Expeditions has four-night river trips between Siem Reap and Phnom Penh aboard the deluxe **Aqua Mekong** (20 suites, floor-to-ceiling windows, outdoor pool). In the capital, the historic **Raffles** drips with French Colonial charm, while the towering new **Rosewood** hotel anchors the city firmly in the 21st century. **TO BOOK** Andrew Booth can help you beat the crowds at Angkor Wat, introduce you to lost culinary traditions in Phnom Penh, and arrange other unique experiences. A.BOOTH@ABOUTASIATRAVEL.COM. *K.F.*



JUNGLE LOOK

Alfresco dining at Cambodia's Shinta Mani Wild, opening this month.



HIGH SPIRITS

The Taktsang Buddhist monastery, a.k.a. Tiger's Nest, in Paro, Bhutan.

## BHUTAN

BECAUSE IT'S LIKE **BALI** IN THE 1960S.

There are a handful of places with the right combination of intense natural beauty and rich cultural heritage to make them lodestars for Western seekers of physical and spiritual well-being. If Bali has been loved almost too much, the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan has been focused, since it opened to the outside world in 1974, on providing high-end tourism at volume low enough to protect its culture and environment. But there's change afoot. A new arrival terminal at Paro International Airport makes the journey less daunting, roads are being improved, and by mid-2019 the selection of wellness-focused luxury hotels will approach

Bali's. In addition to Aman and COMO—pioneers here—independent five-star retreats are opening, among them **Bhutan Spirit Sanctuary**, which employs Bhutanese doctors who serve as “well-being guides.” **Six Senses** will debut a circuit of five lodges in Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Gangtey, and Bumthang, each with its own spa. By the end of 2019, adventure specialist **andBeyond** will have opened two camps as it expands out of Africa. **TO BOOK** Antonia Neubauer will help you match your interests with local possibilities, such as participating in a Bhutanese archery match or meditating with a Buddhist master. TONI@MYTHSANDMOUNTAINS.COM. *J.M.*

TONI NEUBAUER (BHUTAN)

## Asia

## ANDAMAN ISLANDS, INDIA

## BECAUSE THE MALDIVES ARE GETTING CROWDED.

Sometimes it seems all the best beaches are overrun: by backpackers in Phuket, honeymooners in Bora Bora, influencers in Tulum. Yet India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, long among the world's top diving destinations, have somehow managed to avoid that fate. Nearly 600 isles, all but a few uninhabited, make up this archipelago in the Bay of Bengal. It's a two- or three-hour flight from several mainland Indian cities, followed by a two-hour ferry from Port Blair to Havelock, the largest and most developed island. Of course, development is relative: The hostels, restaurants, and dive centers catering mostly to homegrown adventure tourists and honeymooners (and a smattering of foreign backpackers) are still outnumbered by betel nut plantations, overgrown mangroves, and immaculate beaches. But that's about to change—thanks to the islands' first true

luxury hotels. First came **Jalakara** in 2016, the platonic ideal of the chic jungle hideaway, on the crown of a hill in the island's rugged interior and thoughtfully accessorized with items procured by the British owners during their adventures all over India. And then, last April, India's venerable Taj Hotels debuted a sumptuous resort with 50 stand-alone thatch-roofed villas, **Taj Exotica Resort & Spa**, at Radhanagar Beach, a swath of sugary sand that often tops rankings of Asia's best beaches. Strict government restrictions mean the islands are unlikely to go the way of the Maldives, but you should still get there ASAP—before everyone you follow on Instagram does.

**TO BOOK** Tanya Dalton can help with logistics, including a tour of Port Blair on your way to or from the islands; the 19th-century Cellular Jail is a heartbreaking part of India's colonial history. [TDALTON@GREAVESUK.COM](mailto:TDALTON@GREAVESUK.COM) S.K.



**THE SHAPE OF WATER**  
A swimming elephant with his mahout off an Andaman beach.

JAMES R.D. SCOTT/GETTY IMAGES (ELEPHANT)



# Caribbean



## ART BENEFIT

Come to Puerto Rico in January and catch Lin-Manuel Miranda in *Hamilton* again.

## PUERTO RICO ▲

## BECAUSE GOING IS HELPING.

## GRENADA

### BECAUSE THE SPICE ISLAND HAS FOUND ITS SWEET SPOT.

**G**renada was spared last year's hurricanes, but that's not the only reason it has become one of the hottest destinations in the Caribbean. Compared to its neighbors, it's still relatively untouristed, though it's just as endowed with beaches, culture, and many adventure options, from hiking waterfalls to scuba diving in an underwater sculpture gallery. Many direct flights add to the appeal, as does the new **Silversands**, a sleek, ultra-modern resort (a rarity here) with 43 spacious suites—the smallest one 721 square feet—and the longest infinity pool in the Caribbean. Elsewhere, the **Calabash** hotel recently underwent a renovation and earned entry into the coveted Relais & Châteaux club. There's a bonus for the eco-conscious traveler: The government is banning all styrofoam imports and single-use plastics. *L.K.*

**P**uerto Rico's destruction, as we all know, was catastrophic, and the island's most remote areas are still recovering, more than a year after Hurricane Maria. The major highways and roads, however, are in good condition once again, the San Juan airport is fully operational, and the country plans to add 25 percent more hotel rooms by the end of 2019. **Dorado Beach**, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, which was founded by Laurance Rockefeller 60 years ago, didn't suffer any structural damage, but it has updated all 114 of its beachfront rooms (think floor-to-ceiling windows and outdoor showers; some have private plunge pools), as well as **Su Casa**, the five-bedroom villa where Amelia Earhart spent one of her last holidays. For several months last year the resort served as the main base of operations for the World Central Kitchen, helping provide millions of meals to the community. Through February it will be donating \$10 per room to Flamboyant Arts Fund, an initiative founded by Lin-Manuel Miranda, who will be reprising his role in *Hamilton* at the University of Puerto Rico in January. *L.K.*

## ANGUILLA

### BECAUSE THE PLACE BILLIONAIRES GO TO BE BEACH BUMS IS BACK.

**W**hile Anguilla did find itself in the path of Hurricane Irma, its famed white beaches have been restored, and many of its restaurants (the island has some of the best in the region) have reopened. The **Belmond Cap Juluca**, on Maundays Bay, opened last month after a \$121 million restoration, with 108 rooms and eight villas with private pools. As did **CuisinArt Resort**, over on Rendezvous Bay, with new interiors and a new chef. (Four Seasons reopened in March.) For a doubleheader, St. Martin is just a 20-minute boat ride away, and home to the ultra-luxurious **Belmond La Samanna**. Reopening December 10, the resort sits on 55 acres of tropical garden teeming with fuchsia bougainvillea and orange poinsettia trees, but it is most famous for its below-sea-level wine cellar, which holds 12,000 vintages. *L.K.*

**TO BOOK** Lindsey Epperly Sulek specializes in all things tropical—if it has a beach, she knows about it. [LINDSEY@EPPERLYTRAVEL.COM](mailto:LINDSEY@EPPERLYTRAVEL.COM)



# Mexico & Central America

## POINT OF LIGHT

The Terraza restaurant-cum-lounge at Panama's sustainable new Islas Secas Reserve & Lodge.



## PANAMA ▲

### BECAUSE YOU'LL FIND A JACQUES COUSTEAU FANTASY AT YOUR FEET.

The islands in the Gulf of Chiriquí, 20 miles off Panama's Pacific coast, have always been a bit of a secret, sparsely inhabited for centuries, if at all. The difference now? Brand new, high-end lodges committed to preserving the area's unspoiled environment. **Isla Palenque** (of the Cayuga Collection brand) opened last July with eight casitas and a beachfront villa estate on 400 acres of protected jungle. Its organic garden dictates the restaurant's menu, lunch is sustainably caught by fishermen in nearby Boca Chica, and the island's seven beaches mean you never have to share a patch of sand. In January the sustainable luxury bar gets raised further still with the opening of **Islas Secas Reserve & Lodge**, on the archipelago's Jurassic-esque Isla Cavada. The property sleeps just 18 in

nine tucked-away wooden villas, and everything has been engineered to leave as small an environmental footprint as possible: Ocean breezes do the cooling, water is treated, the sun powers everything. Divers and snorkelers can explore a wonderland of some 750 species of fish in the surrounding sea, and there are private marine safaris and deserted island excursions—with picnics—at their beck and call. Coming in 2020: a field station for the study of the humpback whales that migrate here each summer; guests will be able to geek out and partake in research. **TO BOOK** Pierre Gedeon suggests an itinerary with a few nights first in Panama City (for the Casco Antiguo, the Biomuseo, the canal) and then the highlands (coffee plantation, hiking, indigenous tribes). [PIERRE@COSTA-ADVENTURES.COM](mailto:PIERRE@COSTA-ADVENTURES.COM). *J.M.*

## CABO'S EAST CAPE

### BECAUSE IT'S SO CLOSE YET FEELS SO SURREALLY FAR.

John Steinbeck loved the raw beauty of the Baja Peninsula's little-visited east coast, on the Sea of Cortés: empty beaches, expanses of dune, sleepy villages, cardon cactus-studded landscapes, and barely a hotel in sight. But most travelers have long headed west from Los Cabos International Airport to the Pacific side's boho-chic town of Todos Santos (now home to the sceney Hotel San Cristobal) and the many five-star pleasures in Cabo San Lucas: the grand stalwart One&Only Palmilla and the Resort at Pedregal (and, soon, a new Nobu).

But that flow is about to change direction. **Viceroy**, the **Luxury Collection**, and **Montage** all recently planted their flags on the peninsula's east side, and **Zadún**, only the fourth Ritz-Carlton Reserve property in the world, opens this March on a secluded two-mile stretch of beach in San José del Cabo. Farther on, a bumpy dirt road brings you to the oasis that is Costa Palmas, home to the **Four Seasons**, which is slated to open next year, as well as a members-only beach club, a 250-slip marina, a yacht club, a golf course, and an 18-acre working organic farm. (The first Aman in Mexico, the **Amanvari**, arrives in this gorgeous semiwilderness in 2020, with pavilions on stilts that resemble spaceships poised amid the sand and cacti.)

The promise (at last!) of infinity pools, world class spas, and gourmet restaurants may be what lures you here, but the calm, swimmable waters of the Sea of Cortés (parent alert: There is no undertow along this coast), the spectacular diving in Cabo Pulmo Marine National Park (Mexico's premier marine sanctuary and protected reef), and the tiny village restaurants where the grandmas hand-toss tortillas are the reasons you'll keep coming back. **TO BOOK** Zach Rabinor can create a complete Baja circuit for you, connecting Cabo, Loreto, La Paz, Todos Santos, and Espiritu Santo, organizing along the way "Africa-worthy" experiences such as gray whale watching over Magdalena Bay from a Cessna. [ZACH@JOURNEYMEXICO.COM](mailto:ZACH@JOURNEYMEXICO.COM). *J.M.*



# Mexico & Central America

## COSTA RICA

**BECAUSE IT'S A  
LITTLE BIT LIKE  
AFRICA A LOT  
CLOSER TO HOME.**

There seemed nothing new under the sun in Costa Rica, with its *pura vida* vibe, epic surf spots, and rainforests. But that was before Ofer Ketter, an adventure specialist and former first lieutenant in the Israeli Defense Forces, and Felipe Artinano, an expert free diver and surfer, launched Origen Escapes, which offers trips that dramatically showcase the country's undiscovered wild places. With access to Costa Rica's only hydroplane (and even a submarine), Origen will take you to untouched spots like the Venice of the Tropics, a wildlife-rich patch on the Caribbean coast; give you exclusive access to class III and IV rapids on one of the country's wildest rivers; or let you swim with thousands of spinner dolphins.

The country's newest lodging option has also been reimagined in the style of Africa's luxe safari camps. Family-friendly **Nayara Resort Spa & Gardens** and its adults-only neighbor, **Nayara Springs**, in Arenal Volcano National Park, opened a third sister property this fall, **Nayara Tented Camp**, on a hillside surrounded by jungle. Its 18 canvas-sided cabins have plunge pools fed by natural hot springs. You can lounge on a daybed and admire the view of one of the youngest active volcanoes in Central America, or scan the guarumo trees for monkeys and the elusive sloth. No jeep required. **TO BOOK** Diego Blanco excels in multi-gen itineraries from ages 5 to 80, [DBLANCO@COSTARICAEXPEDITIONS.COM](mailto:DBLANCO@COSTARICAEXPEDITIONS.COM). Go to Ofer Ketter for high-octane adventures, [OFER@ORIGENESCAPES.COM](mailto:OFER@ORIGENESCAPES.COM). *J.M.*

## DAY GLOW

The pool and wet bar at adults-only Nayara Springs, in Arenal Volcano National Park.



NAYARA SPRINGS (COSTA RICA POOL)

## Cruise

BECAUSE ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO SEE THE WORLD IS TO  
SAIL AROUND IT—AND THESE TRIPS ARE TOPS.



**SMOOTH SAILING**  
The Crystal Serenity in Moorea. The line's new expedition yacht, Endeavor, is taking bookings for 2020.

## THE FAR EAST ▲

When Crystal Cruises' 200-passenger, all-suite **Crystal Endeavor** leaves for its maiden voyage in 2020, it will be the world's largest luxury expedition yacht. With two helicopters, a submersible, and custom features built to navigate the farthest reaches of the planet, the vessel is well equipped for adventure. Its 100 suites, all with butler service and private balconies, take care of the

luxury part. Bookings have already begun for the inaugural 17-day cruise, which starts in Tokyo, stops at such Japanese islands as Hokkaido and Rishiri, and then sails through virtually untouched territory in the Russian Far East. Snowcapped green mountains, black sand beaches, and steaming volcanoes make up the scenery, along with strikingly diverse wildlife, from sea lions to brown bears to majestic Steller's sea eagles. *L.K.*

## CUBA

Starting next November, the **Seabourn Sojourn** becomes one of very few cruise ships with permission to sail around the island, its 11- to 14-day trips providing a level of luxury that's still nowhere to be found on land. Among the stops are Nipe Bay, home of the lush pine forests of the Sierra del Cristal range and Guayabo waterfalls, and Isla de la Juventud, a former pirate hideout with coral reefs, shipwrecks, and the otherworldly Punta del Este Caves. Several UNESCO World Heritage Sites round out the itineraries, as does a night in Havana—which is celebrating its 500th anniversary. *L.K.*

## THE MEKONG RIVER

In a contemporary nod to old Indochina, **Mekong Kingdoms'** new **Gypsy** river cruiser is an exquisite construction of wood and thatch, woven leather furniture, and coverings made of Thai silk. But the really glamorous perk is that the ship has just two cabins (that's room for only four passengers at a time), so as you sail down the Mekong for four days from Luang Prabang, Laos, to Chiang Saen, Thailand (in the Golden Triangle), all your whims will be catered to, from mountain biking to attending a weaving workshop. Each day ends with an alfresco dinner on the boat's panoramic deck. *L.K.*

## AFRICA

Imagine being able to spot wild game from your own balcony on an intimate ship as it cruises down the Chobe River. That's what **Ama-Waterways** promises with its 14-room **Zambezi Queen**, designed specifically for this purpose, with eco-friendly features like low-emission generators. Factor in the jeep outing to Chobe National Park, and you've got a safari-cum-cruise experience unlike any other. What's more, the trip, which begins with three days in Cape Town and includes two at Victoria Falls, ends with three romantic nights on the **Rovos Rail**, Africa's answer to the Orient Express. *L.K.*

## INDONESIA

More than 13,000 islands make up this culturally and geographically diverse country, and in June, **Silversea's Silver Discoverer** will take you to a dozen of them. On the list: Yamdena, with its centuries-old traditions of music, dance, and crafts; the Leti Islands, known as the "Forgotten Islands" for having been isolated for generations, with their own language and a matrilineal society; Pulau Tellang, with its hilly volcanic terrain and spectacular sunsets; and Anano, which has some of the most diverse coral reefs in the world. Naturally, the 15-day trip ends in Bali. *L.K.* ◀

**TO BOOK** Tom Baker is outstandingly savvy about all things cruise: ships, cabins, itineraries, and what's right for you. [TOM.BAKER@CRUISECENTER.COM](mailto:TOM.BAKER@CRUISECENTER.COM)