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 NATIONAL  
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**TRAVEL**

TRAVELLER 10 

# LUXURY TRAVEL





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If you've deep pockets, the whole world is your playground. But how do you want to experience it? We bring you 10 of the most exclusive ways to explore the planet, from private jet tours to small-ship expedition cruises, ultra-bespoke holidays, high-end homestays and more... Words: Sarah Barrell, Francisca Kellett, Sam Lewis, James Litston, Jonathan Thompson, Simon Osborne and Kate Wills



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**01** **PAY-BACK TIME: PHILANTHROPIC TRIPS**

A fortnight on a superyacht or access to a private tropical island no longer cuts it: for high-net-worth individuals, there's major kudos in giving something back to the communities they visit on their travels — and experiencing something astonishing while they're at it. This is why many high-end travel companies now offer extraordinary adventures that also benefit local communities. Properties such as Shinta Mani Wild in Cambodia, and Misool in Indonesia — which charge premium prices for exclusive experiences — give a percentage of profits to conservation and community projects. They're not alone; tour operators such as The Explorations Company now specialise in combining luxury adventures with philanthropic endeavours. It all adds up to one thing: more money going to the places that need it. *See our feature on p.190 for more.* **FK**



PHOTO: SHAW-WALSH/GETTY IMAGES; TOTO/ISTOCK

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FROM LEFT: Stand-up paddleboarding at Misool, Indonesia; lantern-lit dinner at 700,000 Heures



## 02 | NOVELTY STAYS: THE NEW NICHE HOTEL

When it comes to accommodation, many travellers today are after something far from the ordinary: a quirky Airbnb stay, perhaps (think an Airstream trailer in Palm Springs or a windmill in Amsterdam) or a glamping experience in a shepherd's hut, yurt or gypsy caravan.

"The bar for what constitutes a novel and covetable holiday experience has been raised exponentially," says Lucie Greene, a trend forecaster at JWT Innovation. "We increasingly want complete immersion from our travel time, so, of course, the place where you stay is a big part of that."

Rising to the challenge, 2019's hottest luxury hotel openings have a story behind them. Take The Jaffa Hotel in Tel Aviv, a former convent and hospital that has the remains of a 13th-century Crusader fortress in the lobby. Or the Capella Ubud, Bali, where, on arrival, visitors receive a survival kit (sunscreen, insect repellent and a map), plus a carved walking stick to help pick their way over the suspension bridges leading to 22 black canvas tents with saltwater plunge pools.

But who says hotels have to stay in one spot? From 'floatotels' to luxury mobile camping, some of the very best hotels these days seem to have itchy feet. For example, last year saw the launch of 700,000 Heures, a nomadic hotel that changes location every six months. Rather than book a room, guests pay a membership fee starting at £1,800. The first wandering hotel in the world has so far popped up in a 19th-century Apulian palazzo and a traditional Khmer house in Siem Reap, Cambodia. It's currently occupying a property in Lençóis, northeastern Brazil.

The brainchild of French former theatre designer Thierry Teyssier, 700,000 Heures (named after the average number of hours in the human lifespan) redefines existing notions of what a hotel can be. "Does it need to be four walls, a roof, rooms?" asks Teyssier. "Hoteliers need to think outside the box and imagine their hotel as a hub for a local network — of people, food, crafts, and excursions — that extends far beyond its gates." KW

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## 03 | FLIGHTS OF FANCY: PRIVATE JET TOURS

**The private jet tour is taking off as a hot-ticket luxury trip, a multi-destination model reaching new heights for those who can afford it.**

It's the ultimate package holiday for high-flying customers. In the space of just a few weeks, you can tick off even the longest of bucket lists while circling the globe in unadulterated luxury. From the moment your chauffeur knocks on your front door to the moment you let yourself back in with a passport full of stamps, you won't have to lift a finger. Over the course of a single trip, you could be hiking Machu Picchu, snorkelling the Great Barrier Reef and hot air ballooning across the Serengeti, as well as sampling the finest restaurants in Marrakech, Shanghai

and St Petersburg. No need to worry about tiresome airport banalities like visa-filing, luggage-collecting or customs-queueing, either — with all of that taken care of, you're free to hopscotch your way around the planet in style.

Private jet holidays like this are the latest trend for the cash-rich, time-poor: tailor-made journeys traversing the globe in constant five-star luxury, aboard state-of-the-art aircraft. In addition to the regular crew, you'll find an elite concierge, a dedicated doctor and an executive chef on board, with your every need anticipated and professionally met. And then there are the destinations. From UNESCO World Heritage Sites to picture-perfect beaches,

exhilarating cities to tropical islands, this is the way to embrace the Earth's highlights a la A-list.

Despite the high cost of these trips (you won't get much change out of £100,000 for a full round-the-world itinerary), their popularity is soaring. The market leader, TCS World Travel, has reported a 25% growth in the number of its jet tours between 2017 and 2019, with five new itineraries recently added, and many trips sold out up to 12 months in advance. The company now has a fleet of three dedicated jets, including a specially adapted Boeing 757, plus an Airbus A318 with 28 lie-flat seats for shorter tours.

"Private jet vacations make things seamless and worry-free, optimising

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travellers' time where it matters most," says company president Shelley Cline. "We allow guests to dispense with the hassle of expeditionary travel without losing the adventure, ensuring that the only thing they have to focus on is being immersed in the moment."

That ability to switch off — to fully engage with a place without worrying about your schedule, or how you're getting back to your hotel or onto your next destination — is key to this model. It's maximum engagement for zero effort, as you drop into a carefully chosen cavalcade of exotic global highlights. Essentially, companies like TCS have taken the cruise-ship model, replacing the boat with a plane and cranking the speed and luxury up to 11.

Despite lengthy waiting lists for tours like this, the guests keep coming. Laine Silverfield, a 68-year-old from Florida who was recently a passenger on a TCS round-the-world trip, says the rewards of a trip like this more than outweigh the price. "This is an experience which goes far beyond the journey itself," she says. "The concept of being truly immersed in a culture appealed to us, yet we didn't want to have to compromise on luxury. Travelling by private jet was the perfect way to have the best of both worlds. It allowed us to maximise our vacation time too, because we didn't waste a moment standing in line at airports, waiting for baggage or sourcing local currency. We simply walked off the jet and the cars were there waiting for us on the tarmac. Travel doesn't get any better than this."

A number of traditional luxury tour operators are on board with the trend too, including Scott Dunn and Abercrombie

& Kent. According to the latter, most of the passengers involved are professionals or entrepreneurs aged between 50 and 70. "These are educated, active and accomplished people," says Geoffrey Kent, the company's founder, chairman and CEO. "Many weren't able to travel before as they were building their careers, and now they're making up for lost time. We're seeing requests for private jet holidays from multigenerational families too. With family members often spread out across the world, a shared holiday like this is seen as valuable, uninterrupted time spent together."

Not to be outdone, luxury hotel chains are also embracing the private jet action, with flight paths adapted to take in five-star properties. Four Seasons, for example, recently announced the commissioning of a second palatial plane, following the success of its own round-the-world itinerary. Stops on its current tour include New York, Tokyo, Beijing and the Maldives, with passengers given Mongolian cashmere blankets, Bose noise-cancelling headphones and iPads loaded with the latest Hollywood releases to keep after the trip.

That level of luxury is par for the course on this kind of tour, where frills might include capacious Italian-leather seats, diamond-encrusted cutlery and generous purses of local currency handed out. It's hard to think of a more opulent way to see the world — though, of course, the private jet industry's environmental credentials need to be addressed. For the majority of us, all we can hope is that as popularity and competition rise, prices will fall, because round-the-world private jet tours have to be the ultimate in globetrotting. *JT*



**FIVE OF THE BEST PRIVATE TOURS**

**AMAN: THE GRANDEST TOUR**

Aman's 22-day itinerary takes in everything from Vietnam's beaches to Greece's historical heartland, while staying in Aman's beautiful properties. There are only 16 seats on the annual trip, each costing £89,000. [aman.com/expeditions/private-jet](http://aman.com/expeditions/private-jet)

**TCS WORLD TRAVEL: WORLD OF ADVENTURES**

Taking in four continents and nine countries over 24 days, layovers include the Seychelles and the Galápagos. Activities range from gorilla trekking in Rwanda to river rafting in Bali. [tcsworldtravel.co.uk](http://tcsworldtravel.co.uk)

**SCOTT DUNN: THE ULTIMATE FOODIE TOUR**

A three-night tour of Spain's gourmet hotspots by private jet, with exclusive cooking experiences in San Sebastián, Seville and Majorca. £8,000 per person. [scottdunn.com/mimo](http://scottdunn.com/mimo)

**ABERCROMBIE & KENT: 'WINGS OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN'**

A 14-day private-jet odyssey taking in the likes of Nice, Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast. All for just £25,000 a head. [abercrombiekent.com](http://abercrombiekent.com)

**FOUR SEASONS: INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE**

Jet from Seattle to London, ticking off nine bucket list destinations over 23 days. A snip at just £113,000 a seat. [fourseasons.com/privatejet](http://fourseasons.com/privatejet)



FROM LEFT: Halong Bay, Vietnam; Interior, Four Seasons private jet; pintoise in San Sebastián, part of Scott Dunn's The Ultimate Foodie Tour



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