Into Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan, also referred to as the “Land of Celestial Mountains”, is located along the ancient Silk Road between China and Kazakhstan, in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan is home to the magnificent Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai mountain ranges, which cover 90 percent of this rugged land. With 29 peaks over 4,000 metres tall, and 45 over 3,000 metres, its dramatic scenery lives up to its name. Some of the most beautiful and most popular areas include Song Kol Lake, the Alai region and Sulaiman Too Mountain, located in Osh city. The Sulaiman Too was the country’s first UNESCO World Heritage listed site. Each summer the locals bring their livestock to Song Kol Lake from the villages in the valley below. Here the animals can freely move around and the people can return to their traditional way of life. Visitors can stay in a bozui – yurt – rented from a herder, eat traditional foods like oromo and kumus, fermented horse milk. discoverkyrgyzstan.org
In Greece’s heart, sit the monasteries of Meteora, six incredible buildings that have stood the test of time, perched on top of rugged sandstone peaks that jut out of the green valley floor like giant teeth. These six Orthodox monasteries are the only ones remaining of 24, that were somehow constructed by monks on top of almost vertical rock walls from the 14th to the 16th centuries, and are now World Heritage listed. Pictured here is the Roussanou Monastery built in 1529 on top of older buildings, and features incredible wall frescoes.

The jaw-dropping monasteries are perched above the town of Kalambaka, and can be easily accessed from Athens. visitmeteora.travel; visitgreece.gr
Walking with wolves

Wildlife photographers and animal lovers alike will love the opportunity to get up close and personal with the wolves at the Northern Lights Wolf Sanctuary in Golden, British Columbia, a safe place for wolves raised in captivity or too used to humans to survive in the wild. On a Blackwolf Photography Hike you can walk on the wild side with the wolves, exploring the untamed wilderness of the western slope as the wolves run free and scamper through the bush. This unique opportunity for people aged 16-years plus allows you to join the wolf pack, under the guardianship of the centre’s qualified wolf handlers, for an experience – and photographs – of a lifetime. northernlightswildlife.com; tourismgolden.com
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The Silo – the pride of Cape Town

The Silo Hotel, one of the most eagerly anticipated hotel openings in the world, swung its stylish doors open on 1 March, 2017. Part of the Royal Portfolio, the hotel was built in the grain elevator of a historic grain silo complex in the centre of Cape Town, above what will become the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, opening in September 2017. The hotel has 28 rooms, including a spectacular one-bedroom penthouse. Each room is individually designed with colourful and eclectic pieces carefully selected to juxtapose the building’s modern, industrial architecture. An ideal base from which to explore all that Cape Town has to offer, guests can relax at the spa, enjoy afternoon tea overlooking Table Mountain, quaff champagne on the roof, swim in the glass pool or enjoy a private tour of the museum once it opens. theroyalportfolio.com; capetown.travel

Spirit monkeys in Ubud

While a popular place for visitors to Bali, the Sacred Monkey Forest in Ubud is actually a spiritual haven. Located in the village of Padangtegal, the 12.5 hectare forest houses 700 monkeys, as well as over 100 species of trees and three temples, built in the middle of the 14th century – Pura Dalem Agung, Pura Beji and Pura Prajapati. These cultural sanctuaries are an important part of Balinese heritage and everyday life. Temple festivals are regularly held for the villagers with offerings and prayers given to the spirits and gods, as well as the spirits of the trees and statues in the forest. A walk through its leafy pathways, over beautiful bridges like the one pictured left, and the inevitable engagement with the cheeky monkeys, will leave you with lasting memories. monkeyforestubud.com
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ACTUAL VIEWS FROM OUR LOCATIONS IN BRISBANE, THE GOLD COAST AND SYDNEY
Bermuda takes centre stage with the America’s Cup

In May and June 2017, the eyes of the world will turn to the iconic Great Sound in Bermuda where the world’s best sailors will battle for the 35th America’s Cup, the oldest trophy in international sport. Oracle, helmed by Australian James Spithill is the defender, and will take on the winner of the Louis Vuitton Challenger series with Great Britain’s Land Rover Bar and Emirates Team New Zealand among the favourites. The action on board these brand new high-tech ACC rocket ships is fast and furious, with the foiling, wing-sailed catamarans something to behold as they reach speeds unheard of in yacht racing. In between races, explore some of the many wonderful natural attractions in beautiful Bermuda. americacup.com

Tuck into Tuckers Point

While Bermuda is in the spotlight with the America’s Cup in May and June, it is a worthy place to visit any time of year. One of the most beautiful places to stay is Rosewood Tucker’s Point, a sophisticated resort with British style and formality. Each of the 88 guestrooms and suites includes a full bath with deep soaking tub, fine natural finishes and a full array of amenities aimed at ensuring a comfortable stay. With guests able to enjoy the wonderful beaches, world-class golf courses, and the delights of the resort itself, a visit to the former capital of Bermuda, St. George, is a must. This UNESCO World Heritage site is one of the oldest continuously occupied settlements in the world. rosewoodhotels.com
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Treasures of South America

Ideal for first-time visitors to South America, Contours Travel is offering an all-inclusive, small-group 27-day itinerary through Peru, Chile, Brazil and Argentina with departures in September, October and November, 2017. Highlights of the tour include canoe trips on the Amazon River, swimming with pink river dolphins, sightseeing at the lost Incan city of Machu Picchu, private tango lessons in Buenos Aires and a ride in the world’s highest urban cable car at La Paz. Tour guests are also offered a unique opportunity to deliver and help install a water filter in a remote community in the Andes before winding up in ‘The Paris of the Americas’, vibrant Buenos Aires. contourstravel.com.au

Dragon Boats make a splash in Macau

The Macau International Dragon Boat Races will be making a big splash in a series of spectacular races and events on and around scenic Nam Van Lake from 27-30 May, 2017. One of Macau’s grandest and most colourful events, the Dragon Boat Races attract teams from all around the world to take on Macao’s best. This year’s highly-charged festivities will see thousands of onlookers lining the historic Praia Grande shorefront to cheer on squads from neighbouring Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines, China, Thailand, Singapore, Korea, USA, Australia and Europe as they compete in men’s, women’s and student events, to a soundtrack of beating drums. macaotourism.gov.mo
For those seeking lush foliage and a true departure from the crowds, Kauai is your garden paradise. Chiseled emerald cliffs and pristine white-sand beaches provide a rejuvenating energy to connect with nature.

The ultimate holiday hideaway at a great value is Kauai Shores featuring a unique “toes in the sand” dining experience.

Boasting 4 out of the 5 major climate zones in the world, Hawaii Island is sure to inspire your photo library. Perched on the rim of Kilauea caldera, the historic Volcano House is the only hotel within the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park offering once in a lifetime experiences.

Maui is equal parts thrilling and relaxing for spur-of-the-moment fun. Whether heading up to the summit of Haleakala for awe-inspiring sunrises or ambling along the picturesque road to Hana, Aston at the Whaler on Kaanapali Beach is the perfect upscale beachfront retreat within a world-class resort destination.

Whether lounging on famous Waikiki Beach or venturing into a lush tropical forest, Hawaii is a multifaceted destination. So isn’t it time for a Hawaiian holiday with benefits?

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London’s new Four Seasons

The Four Seasons Ten Trinity Square opened this year, in a landmark building that started life in 1922 as the Port of London Authority, hosted the United Nations and even starred in a James Bond film. The impressive property is steps from Tower Bridge and the Tower of London, and is the perfect place to use as a base to discover London’s 2,000 years of history, seamlessly blended with its futuristic modern day style. The five-star hotel has 100 rooms including 11 suites, some of which feature original ornate plasterwork and soaring ceilings. Londoners have embraced the Rotunda for its outstanding cocktails, La Dame de Pic for its divine cuisine created by Anne-Sophie Pic – the only female French chef to hold three Michelin stars, and opening in April, the Spa at Four Seasons for its blissful treatments and therapies. fourseasons.com

Australian Wildlife Collection

Tasmania’s multi-award winning Maria Island Walk has been named as one of the 12 founding members of the recently launched Australian Wildlife Collection, by Tourism Australia. Just a short boat ride off Tasmania’s east coast, Maria Island is a sanctuary often referred to as the state’s ‘Noah’s Ark’ thanks to its abundance of rare and unusual species, such as wombats, Tasmanian Devils, Cape Barren geese, kangaroos, wallabies, and more than 125 species of birds. The Maria Island Walk is a three-night, four-day guided hike winding through national park landscape, unspoilt beaches, a heritage-listed convict settlement, lush rainforests and mountains, taking in the dramatic sea cliffs of Fossil Bay, the peaks of Mt Maria, and the largest stand of giant Tasmanian blue gums. mariaislandwalk.com.au; australianwildlifecollection.com
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**New Kimberley Barra Bonanza itineraries launching in 2017!**
Swiss bliss at Huus Gstaad

With just 7,000 inhabitants, Gstaad-Saanenland is known for its secluded, relaxing retreats, yet it is its world-class cultural programs, outstanding skiing, and “chalet-chic” exuberance that makes it one of Switzerland’s premier destinations. Since opening its doors in December 2016, Huus Gstaad, nestled on a rolling hillside between the villages of Saanen and Gstaad, has proven popular with locals and guests alike. The seven-story, 136-room wooden-clad chalet is surrounded by 250 kilometres of slopes and trails for skiers of all levels as well as river rafting, family canyoning, rappelling, rope park adventures, bike tours, and more. Huus Gstaad strikes the perfect balance between restful retreat and a hub for adrenaline junkies with its adventure lounge, restaurants, spacious spa, all-inclusive activities and complimentary equipment hire. designhotels.com

Explore King Arthur’s Britain

There are film locations, and then there are the locations of legend. With the launch this May of the new film, King Arthur: Legend of the Sword, starring Charlie Hunman and Jude Law, and directed by Guy Ritchie, the renewed interest in the classic story may compel history buffs to head on their own Arthurian pilgrimage in Britain. Explore the country from the legendary leader’s supposed birthplace at Tintagel in Cornwall and King Arthur’s Round Table in Cumbria to Glastonbury Abbey, where monks claimed to have discovered the bones of Arthur, and Snowdonia National Park and Mount Snowdon in Wales, said to be home of the Lady of the Lake and the final resting place of Excalibur, Arthur’s legendary sword. visitbritain.org
Experience a life-changing safari with Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve with exciting close encounters to view Africa’s wildlife – including the Big 5 and a myriad of other species in their natural habitat. Deep in this exclusive wilderness lies Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge, a luxurious safari lodge that over 35 years has developed a reputation for contemporary style and service excellence. Cuisine here is first-class, while activities include thrilling game drives in open vehicles as well as leisurely bush walks led by qualified rangers and local Shangaan trackers.

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*Conditions apply. Subject to availability. Cost is based on per person twin share travelling from 01 Jul-19 Dec 2017. Included airfare is based on instant purchase and is subject to change. Please contact us for full details.
Parrtjima lights up

The second annual Parrtjima – A Festival in Light will light up Alice Springs this year with an even bigger program celebrating the magnificent Aboriginal art of Central Australia. This free public event on from 22 September to 1 October, is the first authentic Indigenous light festival of its kind and showcases the oldest continuous culture on earth through the newest technology, on a 300-million-year-old natural canvas. The 10-day event will illuminate 2.5 kilometres of the epic MacDonnell Ranges and spill into Alice Springs Desert Park, providing a breathtaking outdoor gallery experience presenting local artwork, culture and stories, along with interactive installations. parrtjimaaustralia.com.au

Hit the heights in Bolivia

Bolivia is heating up as a tourism hot spot thanks to its spectacular landscapes. One to put on your list is the Reserva Eduardo Avaroa, with its glacial salt lakes stained red or green by mineral deposits, volcanic peaks and wildlife, including rare James Flamingos and herds of photogenic vicuñas. Another highlight – and at over 4,000 metres we mean high – is the Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt flat in the world at a staggering 11,000-square-kilometres. It is highly recommended that you join a tour to explore this remote area as it is not for the faint of heart. Intrepid runs a three-day tour from La Paz to Salar de Uyuni. intrepidtravel.com
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Angel’s Flight to soar again

From 2 September this year, a Los Angeles icon will reopen to the public, thanks to its role in the blockbuster musical La La Land. Angel’s Flight is a 116-year-old funicular that operates a short and sweet ride on Bunker Street in downtown L.A. It was established in 1901 to carry the area’s prominent citizens up the steep slope between Hill and Olive Streets on two cars named Olivet and Sinai. It was dismantled in 1969 but was rebuilt and relocated to California Plaza – half a block south – in 1996. It closed again in 2013 but thanks in part to its romantic role in the movie, and the mighty efforts of the Angel’s Flight Railway Foundation and various agencies, it will be riding up and down between Grand Central Market and the top of Bunker Hill again come September. angelsflight.org; discoverlosangeles.com

Top Train Journeys

Chimu Adventures’ newly released Top Five train journeys collection showcases some of the most awe-inspiring scenery and unique experiences in Latin America. Criss-crossing magnificent scenery through exciting Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, the train journeys offer an unforgettable mix of iconic sightseeing and cultural immersion with a taste of local cuisine, artisan market stops, live music and even on-board runway alpaca wool fashion shows. Take the classic trip to Aguas Calientes on the Vistadome to see Peru’s world-famous Machu Picchu, journey between Quito and Guayaquil on the Tren Crucero in opulently-restored, colonial carriages, ride the Train to the Clouds in Argentina’s Salta Provence, cross the Andes from Cusco to Puno in luxury on the Andean Explorer and travel along the Cusco to Ollanaytambo route on Inca Rail to share views and local food with friends on this five-train, 24-day epic adventure. chimuadventures.com
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An island afloat in Graz

In the city of Graz, Austria, sits one of the most interesting spaces. The Island in the Mur is an architectural marvel, with footbridges linking it to both sides of the River Mur, which has one of the strongest currents in Austria – so strong that surfers attach ropes to the vehicular bridge a little further upstream and ride the waves. The Island is in fact a vessel, held by an anchor and stabilised by the footbridges. It is quite something to behold, commissioned as part of the city’s role as Capital of Culture in 2003 and designed by American artist Vito Acconci. Apart from providing another walkway from one side to the other, The Island is a great place for coffee, a drink or to watch live music with its curving shell-like structure housing a café, an amphitheatre and a children’s adventure maze. graztourismus.at/en

Some days are diamonds

Frontiers International Travel has introduced a one-of-a-kind day trip from Cape Town, South Africa, with guests able to source and select their very own diamond. The safari, created by Ellerman House and Benguela Diamonds, sees guests flying by private jet to Port Nolloth on the west coast, arriving to a gourmet breakfast feast in a luxury villa. You can then choose to join the dive masters to source seabed gravel in which diamonds can be found, before returning to learn all about grading of diamonds while they sort out the diamonds and garnets from stone. After a divine lunch, champagne tasting and gemstone sorting, choose your rough diamond and pick it up in a few days back in Cape Town. frontiersej.com
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Wellington ups the ante

Wellington in New Zealand oozes quirky, creative cool around every corner and it is now even funkier with the opening of QT Hotels & Resorts' first New Zealand property – QT Museum Wellington. Formerly the Museum Art Hotel, the property underwent an extensive $12 million refurbishment and now fits the QT mould of being inspired by its location, along with high tech, sophisticated spaces. Hippopotamus Restaurant & Bar adds to the dining scene along with popular local haunts like the Black Sparrow Lounge & Drinker, located in the orchestra pit of the Embassy Cinema (pictured). With its proximity to wine regions, its vibrant coffee culture and many attractions, Wellington has it all going on. qhotelsandresorts.com

Ride Kenya – Mara

Ride Kenya – Mara, the first permanent riding stables in Kenya's Masai Mara, is a stand-alone riding stable of 16 horses, offering a unique opportunity to experience authentic Africa, view game and interact with the Masai from horse back. Experienced guides Ali Mundy and Martin Dodwell have migrated north after spending 12 years in the Grumeti Reserves of Tanzania together with their top-condition horses, six months ahead of the annual zebra and wildebeest migration in search of fresh pasture. The guided rides are available to any competent horse rider over 14-years of age staying in any camp in the Mara Conservancies and Masai Mara National Reserve. ridekenya.com
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Three Capes to the wind

Tasmania’s Three Capes Track opened last year and has been wowing walkers taken aback by the beauty of the walk. The four-day hike takes you through the dramatic scenery of the Tasman Peninsula. Accommodation is in three cabins, with walkers spending the first night at Surveyors Cove, the second at Munro and the third at Retakunna Creek. Walkers will be mesmerised by the cliff-hugging wilderness, with the trip being focused on the location and its rugged beauty rather than clocking off kilometres. Choose to go after Boxing Day and watch the yachts in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race sail past, go in winter for crisp, clear, starlit nights and in September, watch for whales in the surging Tasman Sea. threecapestrack.com.au

Chihuly does New York

Dale Chihuly, world renowned sculptor and installation designer, will be presenting a major exhibition at the New York Botanical Garden from 22 April until 29 October 2017. Chihuly, presented by Bank of America, will be a new experience with monumental installations within and around the Botanical Garden. The new exhibition will also feature a display of Chihuly’s drawings. On select evenings, the installations throughout the Garden will be dramatically illuminated in a celebration of colour, form, and light. One highlight will be new hand-blown glass sculptures, created specifically for this exhibition, at the Garden’s Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, which is itself considered to be a work of art in glass. chihuly.com
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Flit into The Farmhouse at Mudgee

The Blue Wren, a beautiful boutique winery in the acclaimed Mudgee region of New South Wales, has launched new accommodation – The Farmhouse @ Blue Wren. The homestead is nestled amongst the vines and has five rooms, each designed in a contemporary and luxurious style with king beds, quality linen and lush bathroom amenities. It also features an open plan lounge and dining area, boardroom, swimming pool and alfresco area, with the fresh country air allowing you to rest and relax. Apart from the view over the vineyard, a highlight for guests is the opportunity to dine at the Chef’s Table @ Blue Wren, located at the winery’s recently refurbished restaurant. Head Chef and owner Kip Harris showcases first-hand, an innovative menu using only the finest produce matched with Blue Wren’s latest wine releases. bluewrenwines.com.au

Go slow in the Cooks

There is no better vacation than one where time seems to stand still, allowing visitors to wring every last drop of enjoyment from their allotted break. In the Cook Islands, chilling out is a way of life, and it doesn’t take long for visitors to sync into the rhythm of island life. It is easy to slow down on the Cook Islands; even on the main island of Rarotonga you can’t drive faster than 50 km/h and there is not one, single, solitary traffic light. So when you drive around the 32-kilometre Ara Tapu (Sacred Road) around the island or on the Ara Metua (Ancient Road) that runs inland, you can relax and just take in the scenery rather than watching it zip by in a blur. Fly over to Aitutaki which has one of the most spectacular lagoons in the world as well as a plethora of fantastic resorts in which to enjoy every single second of your day. cookislands.travel
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Voyage Beyond Expectation
Escape to Mount Mulligan

If going bush sounds good to you, then Mount Mulligan Station on a 28,000 hectare outback property is about as far bush as you can go. A sandstone mountain that is ten times larger than Uluru, the mountain itself was named by the Irish explorer and miner, James Venture Mulligan, who named the area in 1874. In the shadow of the mountain sits Mount Mulligan Lodge, which will host up to 24 guests in 12 magnificent rooms, suites and villas in a spectacular setting that will wow visitors from the moment they fly in on the scenic 30-minute flight. Guest can go 4WDing, do safari tours of the old mining town, the cattle station and homestead as well as guided hikes. The Lodge will open in 2018 and in the meantime, guests can stay in the Homestead. northernescape.com.au

Up in the clouds in Hokkaido

A magnificent place when next in Hokkaido, is the Unkai Terrace at Hoshino Resort Tomamu. While known for its skiing and snowboarding in the winter months, the Tomamu mountain resort has another jewel in its crown from mid-May to the end of October. Catch a gondola up to the Unkai Terrace to witness the phenomenon of the spectacular sea of cloud that rolls in over the mountains, like a foggy ocean rearing for the shore. The clouds are so close visitors feel as if they can touch them. In September and October you can even catch the sunrise up there. The views over the mountains of Hidaka and Tokachi are phenomenal, and also check out the Cloud Walk deck that hangs out over nothingness, for unforgettable memories. hoshinoresorts.com
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Street art in Seoul

Hi Seoul Festival is a cultural celebration that takes place in the spring and fall in Seoul, South Korea. The festival offers an exciting combination of art, entertainment, history and culture and appeals to locals and international visitors alike. There will be art installations along the Hangang River, and performances ranging from acrobatics to dance, music and street theatre, all bringing the city to life. The Seoul Street Arts Festival adds a massive splash of colour to the event. hiseoulfest.com

Kong’s Vietnam

Exotic Voyages’ new ten-day trip, ‘Kong’s Vietnam’, ventures into the depths of Vietnam from Quang Binh Province to Halong Bay, where dramatic otherworldly landscapes provided a primeval backdrop for Kong’s adventures in the new movie, Kong: Skull Island.

As well as taking in Vietnam’s two largest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, trip highlights include exploration of the massive caverns of Phong Nha and Paradise Cave in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, a picnic lunch along the Nuoc Mooc stream and a traditional sampan boat ride deep into Van Long Nature Reserve in Ninh Binh. At Halong Bay, another major shooting location for the film, guests can enjoy a Kong’s eye view from a scenic seaplane high above the UNESCO World Heritage site. exoticvoyages.com
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Crystal Life
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Cruise in ultimate luxury in an exclusive “ship within a ship” experience with 24-hour butler service

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