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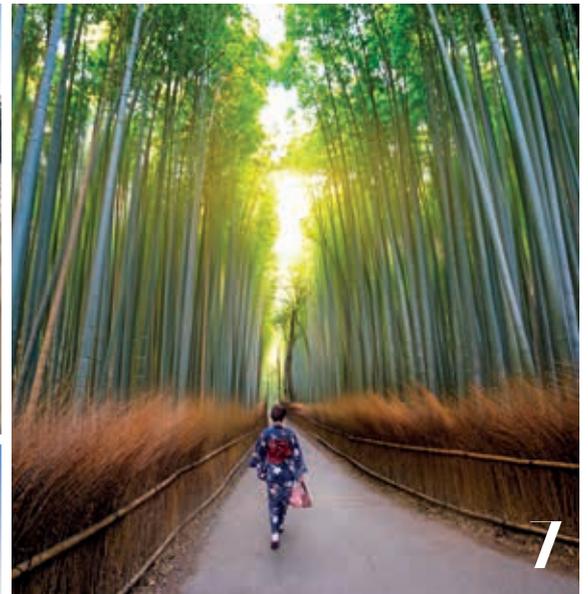
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# WHAT'S HOT FOR 2020

As we look forward to another exciting year in travel, one which marks Wexas's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our specialists have picked out their must-visit destinations for the months ahead. As you'll see over the following pages, it's a truly globe-spanning mix.

To start, we've got a pair of Wexas favourites – Sri Lanka, with its unique blend of history, wildlife and Indian Ocean charm, and Japan, a country looking forward to an Olympic summer.

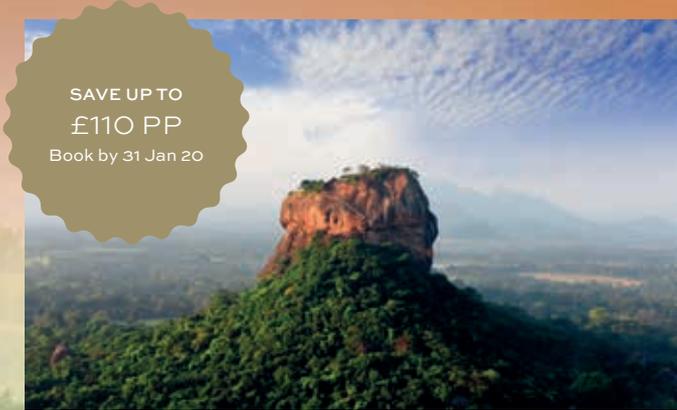
Then, having followed in the bow waves of Wexas honorary president Sir Ranulph Fiennes with a cruise to Antarctica, we continue the wildlife theme in Rwanda with a gorilla trekking adventure and a stay at the latest One&Only lodge. Both trips offer the ultimate blend of wilderness and luxury.

The theme of nature continues in Chile, where we shine a spotlight on two all-inclusive lodges – one in the Atacama, one in the Andes – and look forward to the total solar eclipse in December. And, lastly, there's a fresh take on the Italian Lakes, as we venture beyond the likes of Como, Maggiore and Garda to bring you some lesser-known gems.



# 1 SRI LANKA

Despite the challenges of 2019, Sri Lanka continues to dazzle with its mix of cultural intrigue, sun-soaked sands and superb accommodation, making it one of our ones to watch for the second year in a row. To inspire, our specialists have chosen two routes that best showcase this Indian Ocean jewel at different times of the year, swapping coasts to make the best of the weather. Expect World Heritage-listed fortresses, verdant tea plantations, palm-fringed beaches and national parks home to roaming elephants and elusive leopards.



SAVE UP TO  
£110 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## BEST OF SRI LANKA

15-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

Ideal as a winter holiday, this itinerary takes in all of Sri Lanka's highlights in the company of a private driver/guide. Sweeping along the country's beach-fringed coastlines and plunging into the jungled interior, you'll explore everything from colonial towns and rolling tea plantations to cave temples, the lost city of Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya – an ancient rock fortress. You'll even head out on safari, spotting wild elephants and searching for elusive leopards in Yala National Park. It's all brought to life by private tours, including the likes of dance shows and unique tea tastings. You'll also enjoy stylish stays throughout, including nights in a colonial manor house, where a personal chef will treat you to full-board dining, before ending with four nights at a beachfront spa resort.

**PRICES START FROM £3,740 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge, private transfers throughout, 11 nights B&B & 2 nights full-board accommodation & private touring throughout. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103865](http://wexas.com/103865).

## ANCIENT KINGDOMS & EAST COAST BEACHES

13-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

Focussing on the east coast to make the most of the fine summertime weather, this route takes in many of the same sights as our 'best of' tour, while adding in a trip to UNESCO-listed Anuradhapura as well as some time in Colombo and a bit longer on the beach. Again with the services of a private driver throughout, you'll take in everything from Sigiriya's fortress to Polonnaruwa's medieval temple complex and the royal palaces of Kandy. You'll also enjoy luxury stays on two of the country's best beaches, returning from whale watching trips and a whole host of water sports to spa treatments and cooking classes. What's more, you'll spend your nights in some of Sri Lanka's finest hotels, including palatial country manors and a boutique Victorian gem in Sri Lanka's garden-dotted capital.

**PRICES START FROM £2,615 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge, private transfers throughout, 11 nights B&B accommodation & private touring throughout. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/134061](http://wexas.com/134061).



SAVE UP TO  
£115 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20



## 2 JAPAN

After the success of the Rugby World Cup and with the summer Olympics on the horizon, now is Japan's time in the sun. But, what gives this Asian gem such enduring popularity? Of course, there's its fascinating blend of old and new, best exemplified in cities such as Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, where ancient castles and multi-tiered temples sit side by side with glass-and-steel towers and bright, 21<sup>st</sup>-century neon. Then, there's the sheer drama of its natural world, with everything from alpine mountain ranges to subtropical islands creating a truly stunning tapestry. Pair that with Japan's famed hospitality and you've got a holiday to remember. But, with so much to see and enjoy, where do you begin? We asked our specialists to pick two of their favourite itineraries.

### ESSENTIAL JAPAN

10-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

Offering superb value, this itinerary is an ideal introduction to Japan. Focussing on the main island of Honshu, you'll take in everything from Tokyo's neon to Nara's thousand-year-old shrines and Kyoto's imperial-palace heritage. You'll even explore Hakone's rural idyll on lake boat rides and mountain railways. Indeed, this curated itinerary offers truly superb value, featuring the likes of bullet-train trips, private tours tailored to your interests and even a stay in a *ryokan* inn, complete with traditional *tatami* mats, *kaiseki* dining and soaks in a private hot-spring *onsen*.

**PRICES START FROM £2,425 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers, 6 nights B&B accommodation, 2 nights half-board *ryokan* accommodation, rail travel, city transport passes & private touring throughout. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/142654](https://wexas.com/142654).



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£265 PP  
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£285 PP  
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### BEST OF JAPAN

14-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

If you've time, this upgraded offering adds in some extra stops, including Osaka's famous castle, the floating shrines of Miyajima island and tragic Hiroshima, where you'll visit its shell ruins before learning how the city has turned a new leaf in its teahouse-dotted gardens. As well as two extra nights in a *ryokan* inn, you'll enjoy a higher standard of accommodation throughout on top of a full range of included touring. Expect everything from cooking classes and an evening with a geisha to tickets for the Tokyo Skytree – the world's tallest tower.

**PRICES START FROM £4,695 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers, 12 nights accommodation on a mix of B&B & HB basis, 14-day Japan rail pass, city transport passes, private tours, Tokyo Skytree ticket, geisha evening & cooking class. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102303](https://wexas.com/102303).

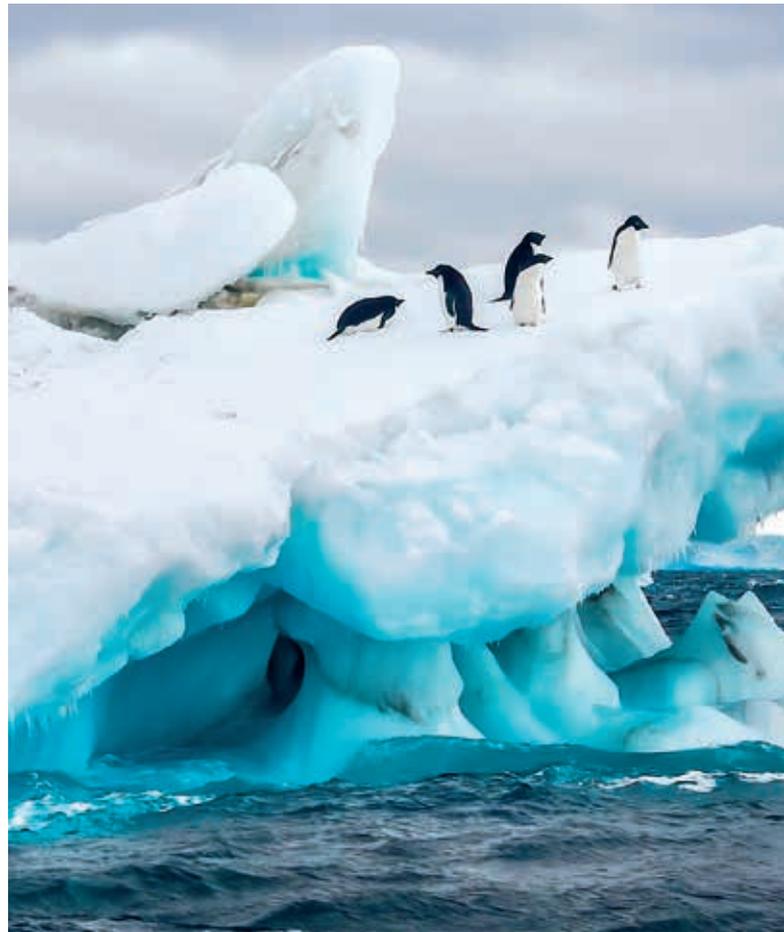


## 3 ANTARCTICA

40 years ago, Wexas honorary president Sir Ranulph Fiennes and his travel companion Charles R. Burton were in the midst of their daring Transglobe Expedition, the first circumpolar navigation of the Earth using only surface transport. Setting off from Greenwich in 1979, they crossed Europe and Africa, finally arriving at the South Pole in December 1980. Of course, this was only part of their epic journey, which ended back in Greenwich two years later. But, traversing the unforgiving wilds of Antarctica unsupported was perhaps the expedition's greatest achievement. This, after all, is a place of extremes, from its vast landscapes to its sub-zero temperatures. To commemorate Sir Ranulph's ground-breaking expedition, the 'white continent' simply had to take its place on our 2020 hot list.

At almost twice the size of Australia, Antarctica is truly vast. And, despite holding 70% of the world's fresh water, it's also our driest continent – a great desert of glaciers and ice sheets surrounded by the frigid waters of the Southern Ocean. Of course, aside from a handful of hardy scientists rotating stints at remote research stations, its otherworldly terrain is largely uninhabitable. But still, it remains a must-see destination for intrepid travellers keen to follow in the footsteps of the world's exploring pioneers. Indeed, there's something about this enigmatic polar region that needs to be seen to be believed.

Fortunately, today's traveller can take a far more leisurely approach to their Antarctic journey.



Luxury expedition ships, such as those from Wexas favourite Silversea, come with everything from butler-served suites to exceptional restaurants and even spas, all designed to bring you as close as possible to the wilderness outside without sacrificing those all-important creature comforts. What's more, using the latest in navigation technology, your captain and crew will tailor each voyage to suit the conditions, with a team of experts leading excursions via Zodiac boat and kayak into Antarctica's icy heart. You'll sail among colossal icebergs, come face-to-face with animated penguin and seal colonies and gaze at every star in the southern celestial hemisphere. It's a truly awe-inspiring place.





#### WILDLIFE WATCH LIST:

Look out for these incredible animals on your Antarctic adventure:

- Crowds of squawking gentoo, chinstrap and Adélie penguins
- Pods of whales, including humpback, minke, sei, fin, pilot, and orcas
- Seals of all sizes, from the smallest fur seals to the much larger elephant seal
- An incredible variety of birdlife; watch for wandering albatrosses as well as petrels, south polar skuas and Antarctic terns



## ANTARCTICA EXPLORATION ON *Silver Cloud*

15-DAY EXPEDITION CRUISE

Venturing through the Drake Passage to the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands, this bucket-list itinerary is the best way to see Antarctica in all its glory. The all-inclusive *Silver Cloud* has the highest space-to-guest and crew-to-guest ratios in expedition sailing, and with 18 Zodiac boats on board the opportunities for exploration are endless. Spot whales breaching in the ocean, view the caldera of an active volcano, or paddle kayaks among blue-hued glaciers. Your expeditions team will guide you through it all, bringing everything together with fascinating seminars and lectures in the onboard Explorer Lounge. And, if you've ever wanted to learn how to wield a camera, now's your chance. *Silver Cloud* features a Photo Studio, unique to the vessel, offering Masterclasses in photography and editing – ensuring you have the tools to capture and preserve lasting memories of your once-in-a-lifetime visit to the world's end.

**PRICES START FROM £8,730 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 1 night pre- and post-cruise B&B accommodation in Santiago, charter flights to Ushuaia & 10 nights all-inclusive sailing on *Silver Cloud* with shore excursions. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171846](https://wexas.com/171846).





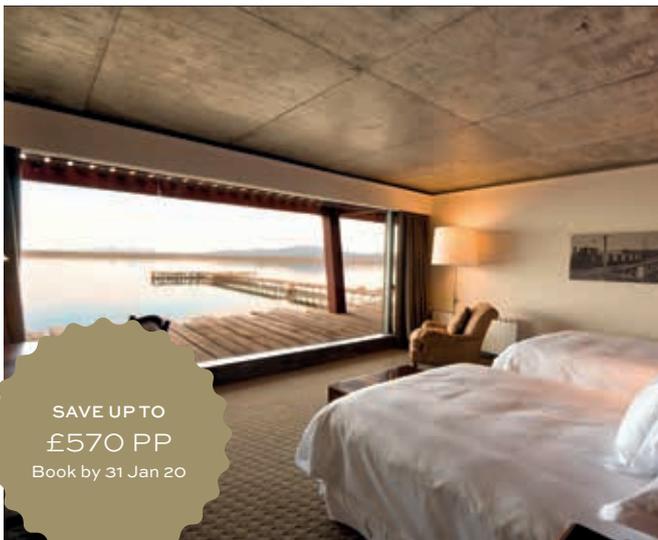
# 4 CHILE

Chile's topography spans everything from arid grasslands and volcanic rock formations to dense rainforests and glacial rivers. It's all big, beautiful and begging to be explored, particularly the jagged might of the Andes and the scorched red sands of the Atacama Desert. And, in December 2020, Chile will witness a total solar eclipse; fitting for a country that boasts some of the best sky-gazing on Earth. What's more, Chile's luxury accommodation is among the world's best, offering indulgence and adventure in equal measure. For inspiration, we've picked out two of our favourite lodges – one in the north, one in the south – and an itinerary which ties them neatly together.

## Northern Wilds

### Alto Atacama Desert Lodge & Spa

This remote lodge in Chile's Salt Mountain Range is totally enveloped by its surroundings. Nestled against a terracotta rock wall, and with sweeping views across the desert, Alto Atacama is the epitome of contemporary Chilean design. No fewer than six pools look out across the Catarpe Valley as outdoor lounges and sprawling gardens set the scene for spa treatments and a delicious array of included dining options, from traditional Chilean barbecues to dishes inspired by the Mediterranean. In the daytime, included excursions will bring you between the region's volcanoes, geysers and flamingo-dotted lakes while at night, you'll be introduced to the sheer beauty of the Atacama's star-filled sky from the lodge's very own open-air observatory.



SAVE UP TO  
£570 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## Southern Exploration

### The Singular Patagonia

Beneath the looming peaks of the Andes, near the town of Puerto Natales, this cold-storage-plant-turned-luxury-lodge offers industrial-chic interiors and views across Last Hope Sound. As with its Atacama cousin, everything is included in the price, from the food and drink to a full programme of excursions – think horse riding, kayaking, guided treks and full days out in Torres del Paine National Park. There's even a private boat for trips onto the fjord. But, it's not all action and adventure. After long days in the wilderness, you'll have the chance to unwind at the spa in its *hammam*, Jacuzzis and heated pools. And, the dining is just as impressive, with a gourmet menu created from the finest local produce and served alongside a curated wine list.

A 14-DAY LANDSCAPES OF CHILE ITINERARY, STAYING AT BOTH LODGES, STARTS FROM £5,285 PP  
Incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, a mix of private and shared transfers, 6 nights all-inclusive & 3 nights B&B accommodation, private tours in Santiago and Valparaiso and shared touring in Atacama and Patagonia. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/147392](http://wexas.com/147392).



While the Sicilian coastline and wine regions of Tuscany remain favourite destinations for Wexas clients every year, the Italian Lakes deserve just as much attention. Beautifully temperate in spring, summer and autumn, there's plenty of opportunity for travel even during low season – and in 2020, hotels and tourist attractions will open earlier and close later to maximise availability.

What makes this region so appealing is the scenery – mountains rise over rustic waterside towns; colourful boats gently bob on glassy waters; olive groves and vineyards cling to softly sloping hills. Everything seems slower-paced, even in the tourist hotspots, but nowhere is this more apparent than on the quiet shores of the smaller lakes.

Lake Iseo is an unspoilt gem near the wine region of Franciacorta. It's also home to the biggest inhabited lake island in southern Europe, and you can stay here if you wish, surrounded on all sides by crystal-clear lake water. Riding a bike around this former ancient trading post is like travelling back in time. To the west, the cobbled streets of Lake Orta's towns are similarly captivating but in a more



## 5 ITALIAN LAKES

romantic way; here a community of nuns inhabit a tiny islet just offshore and you can stay in a Moorish palace ornamented with sparkling chandeliers and marble carvings.

And, some of the region's lakes straddle both Switzerland and Italy, resulting in picture-perfect towns with a charming mix of European influences. Lugano is technically Swiss, but residents speak Italian and the piazzas are dotted with pastel-coloured palazzos in an

almost Mediterranean style. And to the north, Lake Maggiore also borders both countries – although you'll find it busier.

Of course it's for good reason that Como, Garda and Maggiore draw the biggest crowds, so if that's where you're headed, we recommend this itinerary: [wexas.com/104201](http://wexas.com/104201). But if you're moved to explore the lesser-known lakes – the hidden gems – consider the below for inspiration.

### Hidden Lakes of Northern Italy

8-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

Stepping a little off the beaten track will see you discover some of Europe's most beautiful scenery without the crowds. This self-drive itinerary includes day visits to Como, Garda and Maggiore, but you'll spend most of your time at the lakes detailed above – Iseo, Lugano and Orta. Their sparkling waters and mountainous backdrops are just as appealing, and a mix of boutique accommodation and historic properties offers a taste of lakeside living. Extend your trip with a city stay at either end in Verona or Milan.

**PRICES FROM £1,315 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 8 days car hire & 7 nights B&B accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172142](http://wexas.com/172142).





# 6 RWANDA

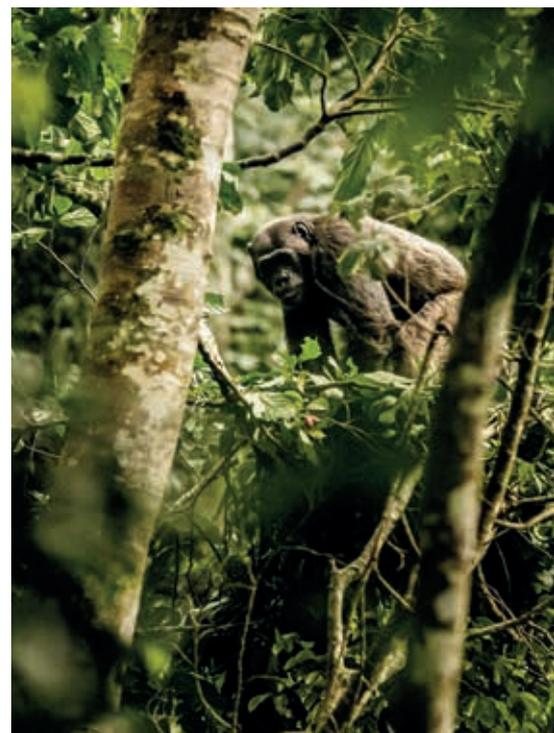
Once overlooked in favour of Africa’s Big-Five big hitters, the rare chance to come face to face with the mighty mountain gorilla, as well as the emergence of some seriously stylish accommodation, have brought Rwanda firmly into the spotlight. And its moniker, the ‘Land of a Thousand Hills’, only hints at how impressive Rwanda’s landscapes are; misty rainforests roll into green hills and valleys dotted with villages and quiet, beach-fringed lakes, all set against a backdrop of still-smoking volcanoes. Here, we focus on two of its most famous national parks – Volcanoes & Nyungwe Forest – and a pair of stunning One&Only lodges that showcase them at their beautiful best.

### Volcanoes National Park

Naturally, Rwanda’s biggest draw is the chance to meet its mountain gorillas and, following a guided trek into the jungles of Volcanoes National Park, spending an hour in the company of these gentle giants will be the undisputed highlight of your trip. Indeed, you’ll be just metres away as you watch mums teach their babies to play and climb while

marvelling at the sheer power of a 30-stone silverback. It really is the experience of a lifetime.

But that’s not all this fabulous region has to offer. Further excursions might see you seek out troops of rare golden monkeys and hike up jungle-clad volcanic peaks, before retiring to the luxuries of your lodge accommodation. New on the scene, the superb





One&Only Gorilla's Nest is our pick of the bunch. This stunning sanctuary, nestled at the foot of the Virunga Mountains, is as spectacular as its surroundings, with chic Forest Lodges scattered among verdant grounds, each furnished in rich patterns, fabrics and textures inspired by traditional Rwandan design. What's more, with private viewing decks and outdoor showers, they offer the chance to fully embrace the outdoors, while cooler nights are countered by roaring fires, thick rugs and huge, super-king-size beds.

### Nyungwe Forest National Park

Gorillas and golden monkeys aside, Rwanda is also home to plenty of other great primates. Tucked away in the country's remote southwest corner, Nyungwe is the best-preserved rainforest in central Africa. On jungle hikes and canopy-level walkways, you can expect to spot everything from colobus monkeys to chimpanzees, our closest relatives. Tracking these great apes as they swing from the vines up high is a truly memorable experience.

Our recommended lodge here is another boutique gem. Indeed, One&Only Nyungwe House is Rwanda at its most luxurious – a truly stunning base for guided trips into the jungle and ambling treks through the verdant tea plantation on which it's built. Rooms and suites serve up private decks and crackling fires, the restaurant is a showcase for local flavours and the spa is a truly indulgent counterpoint to the likes of community visits and evenings spent stargazing.

Inspired? Our featured itinerary to the right visits both the Nyungwe Forest and Volcanoes national parks, and includes stays in both One&Only lodges. Add in a tour of the capital, Kigali, and a few days of relaxation on the pretty shores of Lake Kivu and you've got the ultimate Rwandan adventure.



SAVE UP TO  
£260 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RWANDA IN LUXURY: GORILLAS AND CHIMPANZEES

9-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

This itinerary is all about experiencing the wilderness and wildlife of Rwanda in spectacular style. After flying to Kigali, the country's vibrant capital, you'll head onwards to Nyungwe Forest where the luxuries of your One&Only lodge await. Over 300 bird species and 85 animal species make their homes in the surrounding jungle, including the most playful of all the primates – the chimpanzee. After two days of exploration, your next stop is Lake Kivu, where you can unwind with a swim in the fresh lake water and take a sunset kayak paddle before an overnight stay on its palm-fringed shores. A private transfer will then bring you north to the ultra-chic One&Only Gorilla's Nest at the base of the Virunga Mountains. Make unforgettable memories as you encounter gorillas and golden monkeys in the wild, before heading back to Kigali to explore the city on a private tour.

**PRICES START FROM £11,485 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers, 1 night B&B & 6 nights full board accommodation, gorilla, chimpanzee and golden monkey tracking permits & tours. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/152074](https://www.wexas.com/152074).







# NO-FLY HOLIDAYS

More and more of us are opting not to fly for our holidays, and with good reason. Whether you want to avoid the hassle of the airport, reduce your carbon footprint, take your time to enjoy the scenery or simply travel with fewer luggage restrictions, there's a certain ease and romance to skipping the plane. And, if you thought that not flying meant not going abroad, think again.

Over the next few pages, our specialists have highlighted some of their favourite no-fly options to help get you started. There are road trips through Northern Ireland and the Spanish wine regions of Rioja and Navarra, both making the most of the UK's excellent ferry connections as well as our superb **free car hire offer**, valid for bookings made up to 31 January. Or, why not take let the train take the strain? We've got a wonderfully scenic route through the Swiss Alps, a luxurious trip along Spain's Costa Verde and a cork-popping adventure through France's Champagne and Bordeaux regions.

And, there are cruise options, too, taking in either the wilds of Scotland's Hebridean islands or the cultural delights of Bilbao, Vigo and Paris.

Of course, these represent just a small proportion of our ever-growing no-fly collection. For the full range, visit [wexas.com/no-fly](https://wexas.com/no-fly).





# Switzerland By Rail



Wexas Europe specialist *Norire Arakelyan* heads to Switzerland to see why rail travel is an increasingly popular option for a greener, hassle-free getaway.

I often speak to clients who want to avoid the airport on holiday – whether it’s to reduce their carbon footprint or simply skip the queues – and the high-speed Eurostar link between the UK and France offers an ideal solution. From here, the

rest of Europe awaits, and one of my top recommendations is an impossibly scenic journey through the Swiss Alps via the Bernina Express and Glacier Express. Alternatively, if you’re seeking food, wine and culture, I’ve also

included rail journeys around Spain’s northern coast and the wine regions of France for inspiration, detailed opposite.

After Eurostar and TGV transfer to Zurich, it’s from Chur, Switzerland’s oldest town, that you’ll take the Bernina Express, operating on the world’s highest-altitude railroad along UNESCO World Heritage-listed train lines. En route to Tirano, you’ll pass over the resplendent natural-stone Landwasser Viaduct and the Circular Viaduct Brusio, where a full loop of the tracks offers panoramic views of the surrounds. You’ll also see the Morteratsch, Cambrena and Palü Glaciers, and plenty of breathtaking mountain peaks.

The Glacier Express is just as impressive – as the world’s slowest express train, it offers unrivalled views of the Rhine Gorge and the Oberalp Pass. The new Excellence Class carriages are a highlight – you’ll be treated to Champagne and an exquisite five-course menu as the deep valleys of the Rhone pass by your window. And in Brig, at the other end of the tracks, I recommend a trip to the largest open-air hot springs in Switzerland. Finally, most people don’t know that world-famous Zermatt ski resort is really only accessible by rail, unless you happen to have access to a helicopter. So, take the train from Brig to the Gornergrat viewing platform for views of the majestic Matterhorn.

## SWITZERLAND ON THE TRACKS

8-DAY NO-FLY RAIL JOURNEY

This itinerary combines the best in Swiss rail travel with stays in Zurich and one of France’s wine-making capitals. Pass Alpine peaks and glacial lakes, and visit Zermatt at the foot of the mighty Matterhorn, as you link journeys on the Bernina Express and the Glacier Express with stays in boutique hotels in Chur and Brig. Finish in Dijon, in France’s historic Burgundy region, before returning by Eurostar to the UK.

**PRICES START FROM £1,795 PP** incl. return Eurostar between London and Paris, transfers, 7 nights B&B accommodation, Bernina Express reservation, First Class Glacier Express reservation & selected tours. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171117](https://wexas.com/171117).





# No-fly rail holidays

With convenient Eurostar and ferry links, and with the Continent hosting such a superb rail network, the number of no-fly options by train are almost limitless. Along with the superb Swiss itinerary detailed opposite, I've picked out two more of my favourites below.



SAVE UP TO  
£135 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## SPAIN'S COSTA VERDE EXPRESS

10-DAY NO-FLY RAIL JOURNEY

Venture off the beaten track to explore some of Spain's most treasured towns and villages, with ferry transfers at either end to bring you across from the UK. You'll take the Costa Verde Express on a scenic rail journey through the country's north, enjoying the comfort of your Grand Class suite and luxurious dining and bar carriages as you go. Experience the industrial splendour of Bilbao and its famous Guggenheim Museum, stop at the seaside town of Laredo, wander the cobbled streets of Santillana del Mar and discover pre-Romanesque Oviedo. You'll also have the opportunity to visit the site of the prehistoric Altamira Neocave and stand on the shores of Enol Lake in the highlands of the Picos de Europa National Park. It all ends with a stay in a historic Parador in Gijón, a converted mill house on the Cantabrian Sea.

**PRICES START FROM £3,210 PP** incl. ferry transfer in Premiere Outside 2 berth cabin, 1 night B&B accommodation in Bilbao, 4 nights Costa Verde Express in Grand Class Suite with all meals, drinks, guided touring & entertainment on board & 1 night B&B accommodation in Gijon. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171865](https://wexas.com/171865).

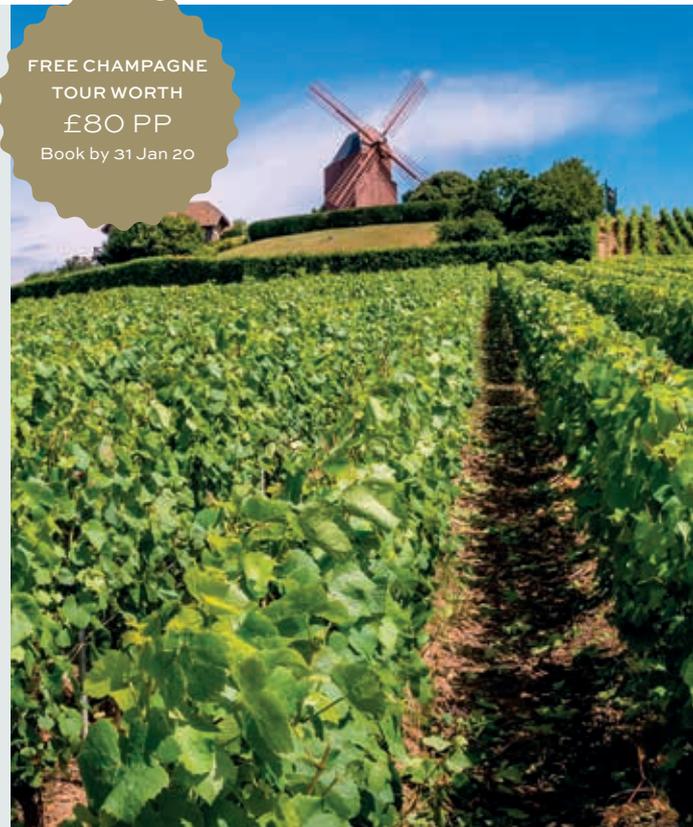
## CHAMPAGNE TO BORDEAUX

7-DAY NO-FLY RAIL JOURNEY

Journey across France to two of its revered wine regions and enjoy as much tasting as you wish, with no need to fly or drive. Eurostar links you from London to Paris before regional rail transfer brings you to Reims, the unofficial capital of Champagne wine country. Over the next three days you'll be immersed in the history and fermentation process behind France's most sought-after export, with tours to the Champagne caves of Épernay, the scenic Champagne vineyards and the home of Dom Pérignon – Hautvillers Village. Then, after private transfers and a direct train west to Bordeaux, you'll arrive at a countryside manor overlooking acres of manicured gardens and sun-kissed golden vineyards. We've included a tour to UNESCO World Heritage-listed Saint-Émilion, the oldest wine area of the Bordeaux region, and there's the option to explore Médoc, a hilly peninsula famous for cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc varietals. After three nights in the region, return to the UK once again by rail.

**PRICES START FROM £1,645 PP** incl. Eurostar UK to Paris, Bordeaux to UK, private transfers, 6 nights B&B accommodation & tours. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172143](https://wexas.com/172143).

FREE CHAMPAGNE  
TOUR WORTH  
£80 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20





# No-fly road trips



Wexas Europe specialist *Charlie Pritchard* shares two flight-free itineraries in Europe, making the most of the UK's well-connected ferry ports and spectacular driving routes across Spain and Northern Ireland.



## Tastes of Rioja & Navarra

9-DAY NO-FLY SELF-DRIVE

Avoiding the airport in favour of an overnight ferry between the UK and Bilbao, this self-drive itinerary brings together the best of Rioja and Navarra's historic cities and world-famous viticulture. Starting with Bilbao's iconic Guggenheim Museum, you'll head out through Spanish wine country to explore Medieval townships and sprawling vineyards. Discover the hidden alleyways of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, see the Romanesque churches of Olite, and walk the streets of Pamplona, home of the annual Running of the Bulls festival. You'll spend your days sampling the finest local wines, your evenings dining at authentic tapas bars and your nights in unique paradors and boutique hotels as you loop around this northern corner of Spain. Finally, round off your trip on the golden sands of San Sebastián in the Bay of Biscay, perhaps indulging at one of three Michelin three-star restaurants.

PRICES START FROM £1,060 PP incl. overnight ferry, 7 days car hire & 6 nights B&B accommodation. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/172144](http://wexas.com/172144).

## No-fly Northern Ireland

9-DAY NO-FLY SELF-DRIVE

Explore Northern Ireland at your own pace with this scenic self-drive, bookended by overnight ferry sailings from Liverpool. You'll begin with two days in Belfast among busy market streets, working shipyards, and the world-famous Titanic museum, before venturing out along the wild Causeway Coast. In the Glens of Antrim, you'll want to pause to breathe the fresh air and meander down woodland trails past waterfalls and pretty streams. You'll stop at the windswept Ballygally Beach, the UNESCO-listed Giant's Causeway and even the famous beech tree-lined Dark Hedges road of Game of Thrones fame. Stay at 17th-century castles and charming manor houses as you loop around to Londonderry and back through green hinterlands to Belfast for your passage home. It's the perfect way to see Northern Ireland's natural beauty without troubling the airport.

PRICES START FROM £875 PP incl. overnight ferry, 7 days car hire & 6 nights B&B accommodation. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/172000](http://wexas.com/172000).





# No-fly cruise holidays



There's something special about a cruise – perhaps it's waking up to a new view outside your window every morning without having to fly or drive to get there. Wexas cruise specialist **Meriel Lowe** shares two no-fly itineraries departing directly from the UK for the ultimate in hassle-free holidaying.



## SPAIN & FRANCE on *Celebrity Silhouette*

9-DAY NO-FLY CRUISE

Explore the coast of France and Spain on this luxury voyage from Southampton on *Celebrity Silhouette*. From modern Bilbao to the delights of Vigo and Paris, you'll see some of Europe's most treasured cities. There's the chance to visit the iconic Guggenheim Museum, walk along the beach at La Coruña and eat lunch at the Eiffel Tower. Get out into nature with optional kayaking or cycling tours, or perhaps embark on a food and wine tasting and cooking class with the guidance of a Celebrity Chef. Back on board, revel in the comfort of your contemporary stateroom – complete with Celebrity's signature eXhale® bedding and Cashmere Mattress – and make the most of the ship's many amenities. Highlights include the Lawn Club, an open-air grassed area on the upper deck, and Le Petit Chef™ At Qsine – an interactive animated table experience like nothing you've ever seen.

**PRICES START FROM £995 PP** incl. 8 nights aboard *Celebrity Silhouette* in a Veranda Stateroom incl. full-board dining and entertainment. Departs 1 May 20. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/169323](http://wexas.com/169323).

## ON THE TRAIL OF BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

8-DAY NO-FLY CRUISE

Follow in the footsteps of Bonnie Prince Charlie as you explore the history and beauty of the Inner and Outer Hebrides on this ultra-scenic no-fly cruise. It's the perfect blend of heritage and off-the-beaten-track beauty, as between historic ports, romantic castles, gold-sand beaches and unblemished wilderness, you'll experience the very best of Scotland's dramatic northwest coast. From windswept Skye and the Trotternish Peninsula to the tranquil islands of North and South Uist, you'll uncover geological and historical treasures and even watch weavers create world-famous Harris tweed. It's all enjoyed alongside the comforts of *Hebridean Princess*, the Queen's favourite ship. Hosting up to just 50 guests at a time, her dedicated crew, fine Scottish food and well-appointed cabins will guarantee you a journey to remember.

**PRICES START FROM £4,440 PP** incl. 7 nights aboard *Hebridean Princess* incl. full-board dining, drinks and shore visits. Departs 29 Sept 20. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/169325](http://wexas.com/169325).







# GREAT RAIL JOURNEYS

There's something truly magical about travelling by train, and the journeys featured across the following pages cover some of the world's most spectacular routes. It all begins with the timeless elegance of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, and with savings of up to £260 pp on selected dates, now is the perfect time to book. Or, for something closer to home, Belmond's Royal Scotsman and Grand Hibernian are equally luxurious, and scenic, alternatives.

There's also a brand new Silk Road itinerary on the Golden Eagle, with an exclusive free visa offer, while the splendour of the Maharajas' Express offers everything from watching the sun rise over the Taj Mahal to tracking tigers in Ranthambore National Park. And, if it's more wildlife you're after, our North America specialist Emma Sanger-Horwell recommends pairing Canada's Rocky Mountaineer with a stay at Sonora Resort between September and October for the chance to spot grizzly bears in the wild.

Of course, there's perhaps no country on Earth that lends itself more to rail travel than Australia. In 2020, a brand-new route sets a course from Adelaide to Brisbane on the Great Southern, making the most of the sprawling Outback, rugged mountain ranges and pretty coastal towns of Australia's southeast corner – it's all detailed on page 30.





# TIMELESS CLASSICS

## Europe on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

### Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: London to Venice

4-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express remains the journey of a lifetime. Its rich heritage, stunning wood-panelled interiors and world-class food are enamoured the world over. And, this route between London and Venice – also available vice versa – is a firm favourite. Watch the Kent countryside rush past with a Bellini cocktail and tuck into multi-course dining, inspired by the route, as you sweep through rural France and awake to majestic Alpine scenery. You'll then be greeted in Venice by one of its iconic water taxis, which will see you to your luxury hotel for a two-night stay.

**PRICES START FROM £2,785 PP** incl. private transfers, brunch on the British Pullman, 1 night on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express including all meals, 2 nights B&B accommodation in Venice & flight from Venice to UK. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/101166](http://wexas.com/101166).



EXCLUSIVE OFFER  
SAVE UP TO  
**£260 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20



EXCLUSIVE OFFER  
SAVE UP TO  
**£230 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20

### Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: Venice to Prague

6-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

Put simply, this route is a highlight of world travel. Boarding the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, you'll be treated to gourmet dining, personal-steward service and champagne bar-car drinks as the beauty of rural Europe rushes past. From your window, you'll see everything from the Alps to the rolling Czech countryside. But, this curated itinerary not only gives you a night on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, it also sees you exploring two of the Continent's city greats. You'll enjoy luxury, city-centre stays as you discover the hidden waterways and sprawling palazzos of Venice and the stunning Gothic architecture of medieval Prague.

**PRICES START FROM £3,325 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 1 night onboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express including all meals, 2 nights B&B accommodation in Venice & 2 nights B&B accommodation in Prague. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/168749](http://wexas.com/168749).

### Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: Budapest to London

4-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

Step back to the romance of yesteryear with this hidden gem of a train journey. It all begins in Budapest, where you'll take in the Hungarian capital's neoclassical beauty with a luxury spa stay and a curated guided tour. Centred around the glittering Danube, the city is dotted with medieval castles, ornate palaces, and Roman thermal baths. Then, plunging through some of Europe's most arresting rural scenery, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express will speed you back towards London while you enjoy fine dining experiences and free-flowing drinks in the bar car.

**PRICES START FROM £2,705 PP** incl. flight from London to Budapest, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 2 nights B&B accommodation in Venice, 1 night onboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express including all meals & afternoon tea on the British Pullman. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103691](http://wexas.com/103691).



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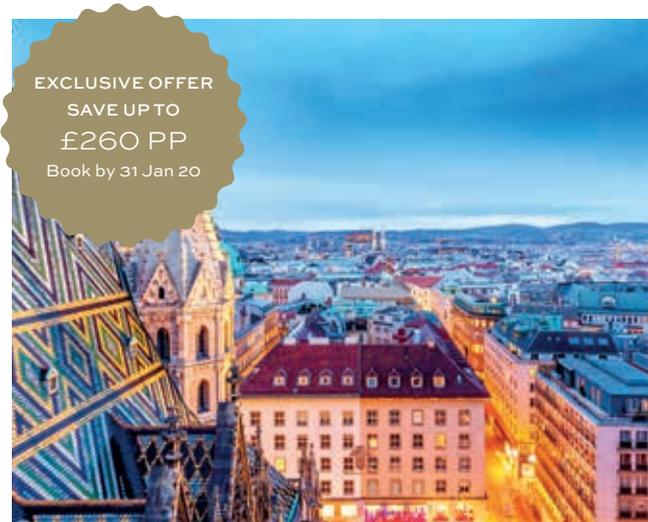
Belmond's rail journeys are unmatched in elegance, luxury and style. Wexas rail specialist **Sophie Sadler** has selected four classic itineraries featuring some of Europe's favourite cities aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express – the world's most iconic train.

## Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: Vienna to London

4-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

Evocative and luxurious, this journey will whisk you across the Continent from Vienna to London in unrivalled style. To start, we've included two nights in the Austrian capital, home to some of history's greatest classical composers, where grand Baroque architecture is accompanied by fascinating museums and lively beer houses. You'll then board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express for an unforgettable overnight journey, taking in the Austrian, German and French countryside accompanied by all-inclusive gourmet dining. On your return to home shores, step aboard the Belmond British Pullman for afternoon tea and sparkling wine as you head back to London.

**PRICES START FROM £2,610 PP** incl. flight from London to Vienna, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 2 nights B&B accommodation in Vienna, 1 night on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express including all meals & afternoon tea on the British Pullman. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103693](http://wexas.com/103693).



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## NEW FOR 2020

### *Three more exquisite Grand Suites*

Three new Grand Suites are currently being built by master craftsmen in Clermont Ferrand, doubling the current capacity of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. Each intricately designed, en-suite accommodation is a tribute to one of the iconic cities on the train's routes, with the new offerings drawing inspiration from the romance and glamour of Prague, Vienna and Budapest.



#### PRAGUE

Prague's Gothic architecture and theatrical history are reflected in this suite, with its Art Deco headboard and rich palette of gold and rose.

#### VIENNA

Vienna's romantic side is revealed in this ornate suite, featuring silk fabric panelling above the bed and jewel-tone furnishings throughout.



#### BUDAPEST

Budapest is a city of two halves, and this suite takes inspiration from Gothic and Ottoman architecture on both sides of the Danube.



# SPECTACULAR RAIL JOURNEYS

## *Close to home*

There's no need to venture too far afield to enjoy the magic of a Belmond rail journey. Like their sister the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the Grand Hibernian and Royal Scotsman pair the glamour of a forgotten era of travel with magnificent scenery and unrivalled service. It's all just a little bit closer to home.

### BELMOND ROYAL SCOTSMAN

#### Taste of the Highlands

Making the most of Scotland's rich cultural heritage with visits to grand country estates and historic distilleries, this Highland fling is set to a backdrop of some of the UK's most spectacular wilderness. You'll travel on a 720-mile loop around misty mountains and past glittering lochs, with opportunities to take part in everything from whisky tastings and battlefield tours to fishing and clay pigeon shooting. And, back on board, you'll be treated to Michelin-standard dining, evening entertainment, and even a spa carriage – the epitome of indulgence on the rails.

**PRICES FROM £3,260 PP** incl. 1 night B&B accommodation in Edinburgh, 2 nights onboard the Royal Scotsman including all meals & off-train activities. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103120](http://wexas.com/103120).



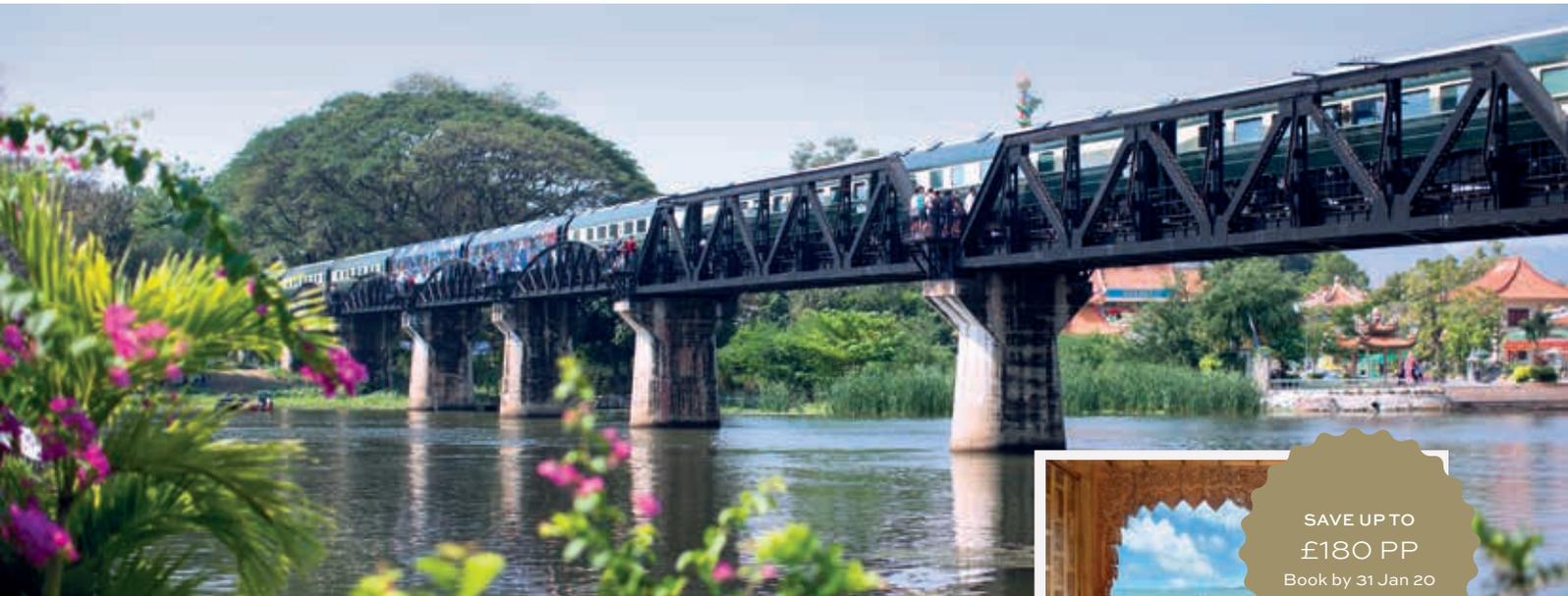
EXCLUSIVE OFFER  
SAVE UP TO  
**£300 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20

### BELMOND GRAND HIBERNIAN

#### Taste of Ireland

This grandiose train is old-world luxury at its best; expect dark-wood writing desks in your en-suite cabin, plush sofas in the panoramic observation car, and Waterford crystal in the restaurant carriages. You'll sweep through patchwork fields and the emerald green hills of Ireland's countryside as you enjoy an all-inclusive menu of gourmet dining and premium drinks. There's also a host of expert-led excursions, from a black-cab tour of Belfast to afternoon tea in a grand country manor. It's all prefixed by a luxury stay among the cobbled streets of Dublin – Ireland's historic capital.

**PRICES FROM £3,230 PP** incl. 1 night B&B accommodation in Dublin, return ferry crossings, 2 nights onboard the Grand Hibernian including all meals & off-train activities. Ferry crossings can be upgraded to return flights. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/145128](http://wexas.com/145128).



## ASIA BY LUXURY RAIL

There's nothing quite like the Eastern & Oriental Express. Cherry-wood panelling, rich embroidery and plush furnishings deliver vintage extravagance at every turn. Personal stewards are on hand to cater to your every need, preparing your cabin each night and serving breakfast each morning as rural Asia whips past your window.

Cabins start at the Pullman level, featuring dedicated seating areas that transform into upper and lower berths, or in the single cabin, a floor level bed in the most intimate of spaces. An upgrade to a State cabin offers recliners that transform into two floor level singles, while the jewel in the crown is undoubtedly the Presidential cabin, with its expansive seating and sleeping area and complimentary minibar.

Away from the comforts of your cabin, the train's elegant dining car features a menu that rivals some of the world's finest restaurants. Aromatic curries and pan-fried fish are accompanied by fine wines served in sparkling crystal alongside polished silverware and classic Asian décor. Sip a cocktail in the Bar Car to the sounds of the resident pianist, or take a stroll to the Observation Car for some fresh air and views of the jungle. However you spend your time on board, this is Asia as you've never experienced it before.

### Eastern & Oriental Express: Singapore to Bangkok

From ultra-modern Singapore to the royal palaces of Thailand's capital, this rail journey will see you through some of Asia's cultural hotspots in style. In between experiencing all that the Eastern & Oriental Express has to offer, you'll take in Kuala Kangsar's Ubudiah Mosque, the famous River Kwai Bridge and the beauty of rural Malaysia, all via a host of included excursions.

### PRICES START FROM £3,570 PP

Incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 4 nights B&B accommodation & 2 nights aboard the Eastern & Oriental Express with all meals, drinks, guided touring & entertainment on board. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171106](http://wexas.com/171106).



SAVE UP TO  
£290 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20



SAVE UP TO  
£180 PP  
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### EASTERN & ORIENTAL EXPRESS Thai Island Escape

This superb itinerary combines the glamour of the Eastern & Oriental Express with a luxury island stay. You'll explore the colonial history and slick modernity of Singapore before a journey of vintage excess through rural Malaysia into Bangkok. Your final destination, Koh Yao Yai, is a hidden paradise, and you'll have five days to soak up island life with kayak paddles, snorkelling and beachside yoga included in your stay. What's more, your villa features a sun terrace with a private pool for the ultimate in relaxation.

### PRICES START FROM

£4,425 PP incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 2 nights B&B Fullerton Hotel, Singapore, 2 nights aboard the Eastern & Oriental Express with all meals, drinks, guided touring & entertainment on board, 2 nights B&B The Sukothai, Bangkok & 5 nights Santhiya Koh Yao Yai Resort & Spa. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171330](http://wexas.com/171330).



# THE GOLDEN EAGLE EPIC JOURNEYS EAST



When it comes to the world’s most epic rail journeys, there are few on Earth to match those of the Golden Eagle. Wexas luxury rail specialist *Miranda Berliand* takes a look on board this iconic train and picks out her favourite routes, including the classic Trans-Siberian and a Naadam Festival special to Mongolia. Plus, we take a look at a brand-new-for-2020 Silk Road adventure, featured opposite.

## LIFE ONBOARD

Everything about the Golden Eagle screams old-world luxury. It all begins as you step onboard to be greeted with the soothing sounds of the train’s resident pianist and a glass of vintage champagne, served among the dark-wood grandeur of the bar car – also the venue for

afternoon teas and expert lectures. The restaurant carriage is equally delightful, with full-board menus of made-to-order breakfasts and dinners featuring the likes of salmon caviar. It’s all washed down with complimentary drinks. Then, come the evening, you’ll retire to your cosy en-suite cabin, where plush

sofas convert to both an upper berth and a small double bed. And, while all feature LCD screens and a 24-hour service from personal attendants, upgrades mix in extra space, underfloor heating and drinks at the bar included in the price. The wood-panelled Imperial Suites are a special highlight.





## TRANS-SIBERIAN & TRANS-MONGOLIAN

The train's iconic offering is, of course, its **16-day Trans-Siberian route, from £14,010 pp.** Across 6,000 spectacular miles, it traces snow-capped mountains, great Mongolian plains and Siberia's wild expanse to sweep between Moscow and Vladivostok. And throughout, you'll stop for unique excursions, from yurt visits and private concerts complete with champagne receptions to stops at frontier Tsarist towns. There's also the option of the shorter **14-day Trans-Mongolian Express**, detailed to the right, which follows the same route but finishes earlier in Ulaanbaatar.

## Trans-Mongolian & the Naadam Festival

Following the classic Trans-Mongolian route, this special July departure adds in a visit to the Naadam festival in Ulaanbaatar. This is a chance to experience the country's celebratory side, showcased across the three 'manly sports' of wrestling, horseracing and archery. It's all played out against a backdrop of traditional song, dance and food, while the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies feature everyone from monks to the mounted cavalry.

**PRICES START FROM £13,740 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 8-night Golden Eagle rail journey with all meals & selected drinks incl. wine and beer with meals, 4 nights B&B accommodation, festival entry & all guided touring throughout. For a full itinerary and inclusions, visit [wexas.com/103264](http://wexas.com/103264).



## THE SILK ROAD

For something entirely different, look to the **22-day Silk Road journey, from £19,295 pp.** It begins in Beijing aboard China's premier private train before swapping to the Golden Eagle to travel through the 'Stans and on to Moscow. Expect Xian's Terracotta Warriors, Gobi-Desert camel rides, Central-Asian exoticism and Soviet severity. Alternatively, there's the chance to head south from Moscow, visiting no fewer than five of the 'Stans on an epic Silk Road alternative. It's all detailed below.

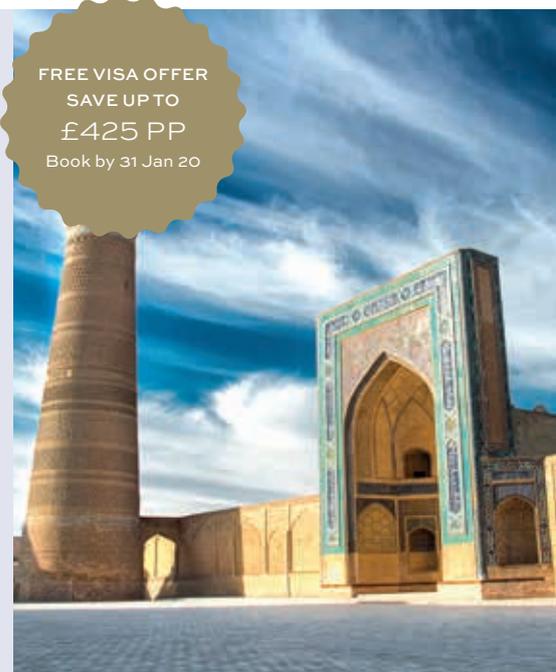
## GOLDEN EAGLE: REPUBLICS OF THE SILK ROAD

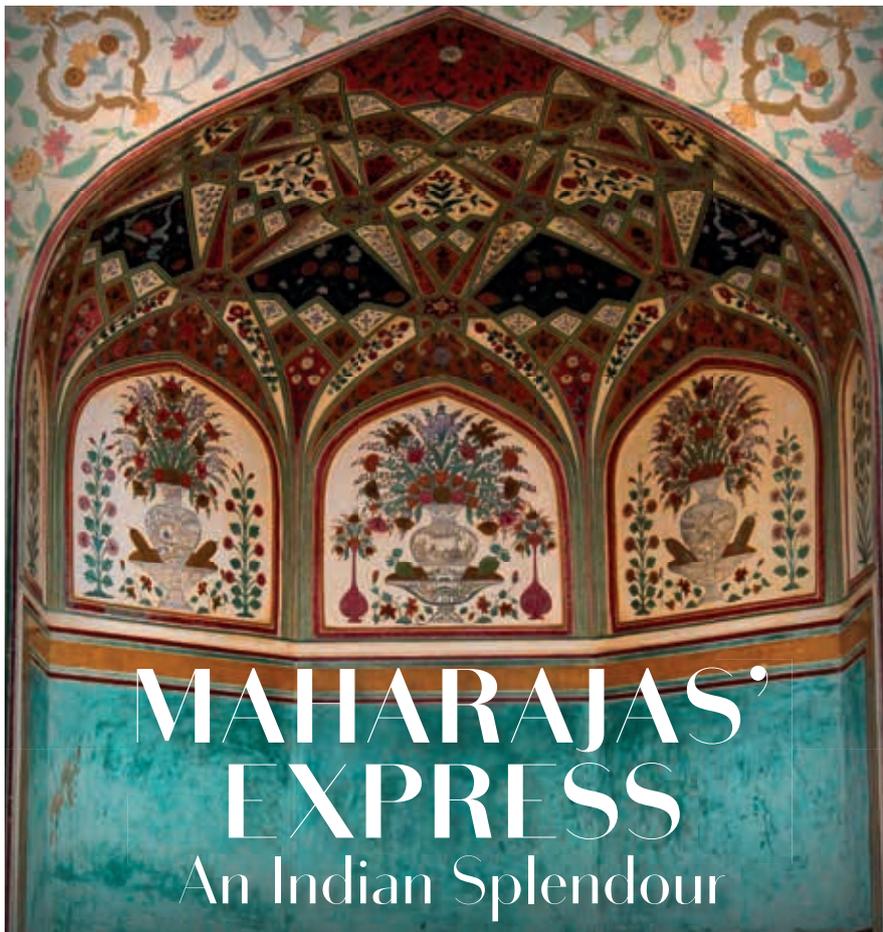
17-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

With just two planned departures – one in April 2020 and the next 12 months later – this is a rare opportunity to explore the wonders of the ancient Silk Road. Travelling aboard the Golden Eagle, you'll depart from Moscow to trace a route through the southern republics of the former Soviet Union, visiting Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan en route to Almaty. Along the way, you'll join expert guides who'll introduce you to the cultural and natural highlights of the region, from World-Heritage cities and grand Islamic treasures to great, mountain-framed lakes and the vestiges of the Soviet space programme. Of course, it's all wrapped up in the fine dining and attentive service of one of the world's most luxurious trains.

**PRICES START FROM £17,860 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 14-night Golden Eagle rail journey with all meals & selected drinks incl. wine and beer with meals, 2 nights B&B accommodation & all guided touring throughout. For a full itinerary and inclusions, visit [wexas.com/171859](http://wexas.com/171859).

FREE VISA OFFER  
SAVE UP TO  
**£425 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20





# MAHARAJAS' EXPRESS

## An Indian Splendour



With its opulent carriages, fine dining and collection of routes spanning India's cultural and natural wonders, the Maharajas' Express is right up there among the world's most seductive rail journeys. Wexas India specialist *Krishna Ghosh* takes to the rails.

From the grand palaces of Rajasthan to Agra's Mughal-empire icons, India's extravagance knows no bounds. And, when it comes to travel, there's no better reflection of this than the Maharajas' Express;

expect immaculately groomed butlers, elaborate gourmet dining and a host of signature experiences that are a true reflection of the country's regal heritage – there's everything from

champagne breakfast to sand-dune sundowners in the deserts of Bikaner.

A range of itineraries, from four-day dashes to in-depth, week-long adventures take in both north and south, with the most popular departures aptly focussing on the princely state of Rajasthan. Indeed, even the shortest itineraries provide a perfect introduction to some of India's most celebrated attractions.

My favourite is our ten-day Indian Splendour route, which starts with a luxury hotel stay and private tour in Delhi. You'll then wind north through the plains to Agra, where an expert guide will introduce you to the grandeur of the city's 16th-century fort before joining you to watch the sun rise over the Taj Mahal – a truly unforgettable experience. You'll then sweep south to Ranthambore National Park, a former royal hunting ground turned national park, home to a steadily growing population of royal Bengal tigers. You might just catch a glimpse of one of these magnificent creatures on a naturalist-led safari, before heading west to Jaipur where a sightseeing tour will see you explore everything from sandstone forts and marbled palaces to markets and laneways alive with wandering camels, buzzing rickshaws and turbaned traders. It's then on through Rajasthan, taking in Bikaner's rolling dunes and unique desert culture before arriving amid Jodhpur's cobalt-blue jumble. Here, a walking tour will introduce you to the city's vibrant markets and imposing Mehrangarh Fort before you head south, pausing to explore Udaipur's glittering palaces and mountain-framed lake en route to Mumbai, where you'll round things off with a luxury hotel stay.



SAVE UP TO  
£185 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

**A 10-DAY INDIAN SPLENDOUR ITINERARY IS AVAILABLE FROM £6,165 PP** incl. UK airport lounge access, flights, 2 nights accommodation, a private tour in Delhi & 6 nights aboard the Maharajas' Express in a Deluxe Cabin with all meals & shared excursions. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102885](http://wexas.com/102885).



# Belmond Andean Explorer: the height of luxury



A land of ancient civilisations and mist-shrouded Andean peaks, Peru is truly spectacular. And, what better way to explore its rich variety of landscapes and cultures than on a luxury rail journey.

The Belmond Andean Explorer, South America's first luxury train,

combines unique daytime exploration with included fine dining and stylish, Peruvian-inspired sleeping accommodation, all while traversing the snow-capped peaks and lush valleys of the Peruvian Andes.

Travelling along one of the world's highest rail routes, the train passes through towns and cities rich in

history, culture and architectural splendour on its way between Cusco, Lake Titicaca and Arequipa. There's even an onboard spa car, the perfect place to relax after busy days of high-altitude adventure. With a selection of one- and two-night trips available, it's the finest way to explore Peru's natural wonders and Incan ruins.

## LUXURY PERU BY RAIL WITH BELMOND

13-DAY TAILOR-MADE RAIL JOURNEY

This tour takes in Peru's diverse delights with expert-led private tours, exclusive stays and a two-night exploration aboard the Belmond Andean Explorer. After a day taking in Lima's European charm, you'll fly down to the Sacred Valley to compare its indigenous villages to nearby Machu Picchu's mist-shrouded secrets and Cusco's treasures both Incan and Spanish. Your indulgent mountain rail trip, complete with wine-paired fine dining and onboard spa treatments, will then see you link remote temple ruins with a cruise among Lake Titicaca's floating villages. End with Arequipa – a city hewn from white rock – along with the condors and savage peaks of Colca Canyon.

**PRICES START FROM £5,895 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, flights, private transfers, 9 nights 5-star accommodation, 2 nights aboard the Belmond Andean Explorer and selected private tours. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/146102](http://wexas.com/146102).

SAVE UP TO

£135 PP

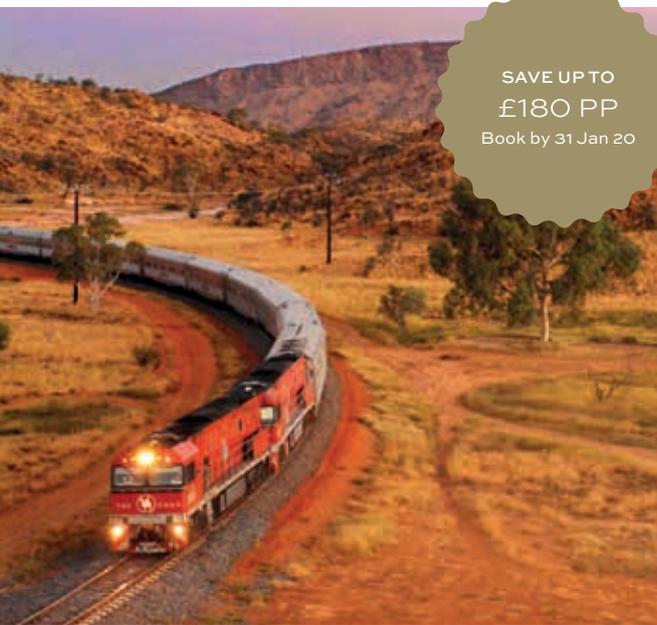
Book by 31 Jan 20





# Australia BY LUXURY RAIL

With a country as vast as Australia, covering great distances can be a considerable challenge, unless you fly, of course. But then you'll miss out on all that iconic scenery, from Victoria's southern ranges to the vast and unique landscapes of the Outback. That's why we recommend travelling by luxury train, with the classic south-to-north Ghan route and an all-new journey between Adelaide and Brisbane our top picks for the coming year. Expect luxury cabins, all-inclusive fine dining and a host of off-train experiences, all included in the price. Best of all, both routes are easily combined with a host of other attractions, be it the wildlife of Kangaroo Island or the southern Queensland hinterland. Here's all you need to know.



SAVE UP TO  
**£180 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## The Ghan & Kangaroo Island

12-DAY TAILOR-MADE RAIL JOURNEY

This is the Ghan's original journey, following in the hoof-steps of the cameleer explorers who first traced the route back in the 19th century. Taking three ultra-scenic days, it wends almost 3,000km from Adelaide to Darwin, sweeping through the deserts of the Red Centre. Stops include lazy cruises on the Katherine River, the chance to explore the frontier town of Alice Springs and a meeting with the Jawoyn Aborigines, where you'll try your hand at painting and basket weaving. Either side, we've included some time to relax, beginning with stays among Adelaide's church spires and Kangaroo Island's iconic wildlife. It all ends in Darwin, a city of artisan markets and tropical sunsets on the edge of the East Timor Sea.

**PRICES START FROM £3,565 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers, 2 nights all-inclusive aboard The Ghan, 6 nights accommodation & selected meals & touring. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/138401](http://wexas.com/138401).

## Great Southern: Adelaide to Brisbane by Rail

14-DAY TAILOR-MADE RAIL JOURNEY

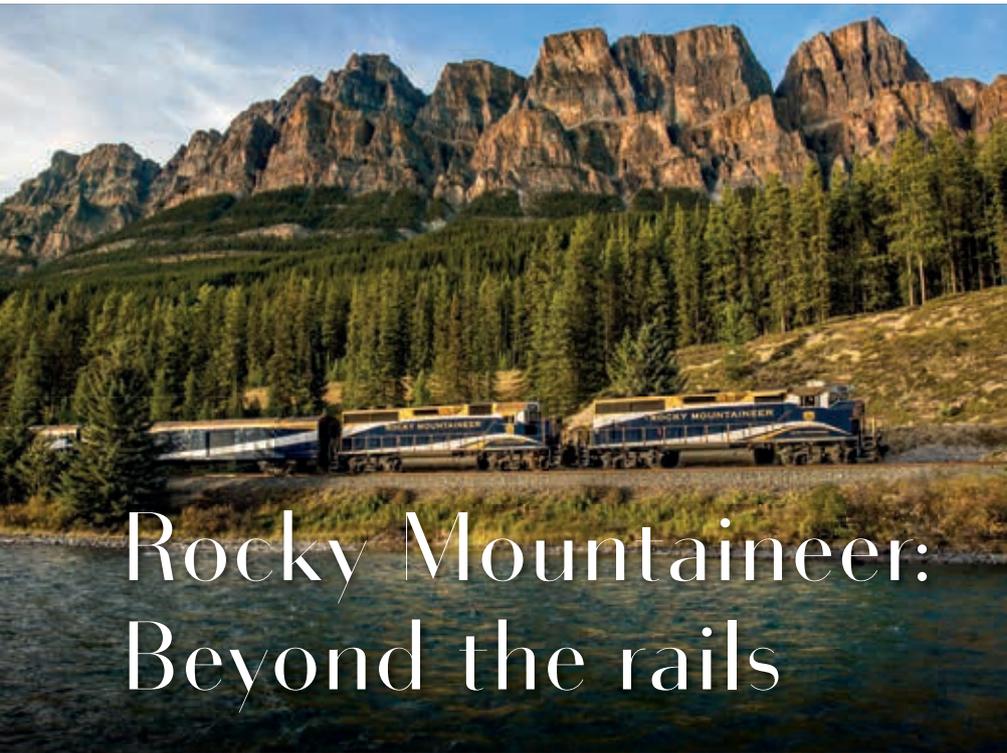
New for 2020, this route sets a course between the mountains, winelands and outback of Australia's southeast corner. To begin, we've included stays in Adelaide and the bucolic Barossa Valley wine region. It's then time to board the Great Southern for a journey across Australia's southern states, winding first through Victoria's Grampian Mountains, where an included outdoor dining experience will showcase the region's superb produce. Next, in Canberra, a choice of tours will introduce you either to the capital's world-class galleries and museums or the gourmet delights of the nearby Murrumbateman wine region. Finally, via coastal strolls in Coffs Harbour and the urban buzz of Brisbane, you'll be treated to two nights at Spicers Hidden Vale in Queensland's rural hinterland.

**PRICES START FROM £3,145 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, selected transfers, 6 days car hire, 8 nights accommodation, selected meals & 2 nights all-inclusive in a Gold Cabin on the Great Southern with off-train excursions. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171120](http://wexas.com/171120).



SAVE UP TO  
**£285 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20

FREE  
CAR HIRE



# Rocky Mountaineer: Beyond the rails



Wexas North America specialist *Emma Sanger-Horwell* shares her top picks for extended journeys on Canada’s iconic Rocky Mountaineer.

You might remember my piece in the last issue of Escapes about my own trip aboard Rocky Mountaineer. From the warm Canadian hospitality to the incredible scenery, it really was an amazing journey. Since my return, clients often ask me to put together itineraries that include the train and

a little something extra. There are so many combinations, there really is something for everyone.

One of our most popular itineraries combines Rocky Mountaineer with a cruise through the Alaskan wilderness onboard Holland

America’s MS *Nieuw Amsterdam*. After days spent taking in the sights from the glass-domed carriages of the train, you’ll embark the ship, sailing via sleepy Juneau, the fascinating port towns of Skagway and Ketchikan – home to a wonderful local chocolate shop, and the spectacular Glacier Bay, on your return to Vancouver.

If you’re a fan of sky-gazing, I highly recommend Rocky Mountaineer paired with a visit to Yukon to search for the Northern Lights. After winding past waterfalls and Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Rockies, you’ll disembark the train and fly north to the Yukon, a wild, sparsely populated region famous for its fur-trading, gold-rush history. It’s here, away from the city lights, that you’ll seek the ethereal light show of the Aurora Borealis.

Finally, if it’s Canada’s wildlife you’re after, Rocky Mountaineer and the Relais & Châteaux fineries of Sonora Resort offer a combination that’s hard to match. I was lucky enough to spot bears, wolves and moose on my own rail adventure, so imagine adding in glimpses of bald eagles, river otters, sea lions and even orcas with a stay at one of British Columbia’s premier wilderness retreats. It’s all detailed below, but don’t hesitate to call if you want to discuss any of the options I’ve highlighted.

## ROCKY MOUNTAINEER & SONORA RESORT

12-DAY LUXURY RAIL JOURNEY

Sonora Resort is surrounded by nature; hiking and biking trails, a putting green, tennis courts, swimming pool and even fly-fishing ponds await. During September and October, additional grizzly bear viewing tours offer up-close views of these majestic creatures from one of five purpose-built grizzly stands along the river – a must-do activity. Next, you’ll follow in Emma’s footsteps on Rocky Mountaineer from Vancouver to Banff, enjoying panoramic views from your glass-domed carriage, attentive service and delicious food and drink included in the price.

**PRICES START FROM £4,865 PP** incl. UK airport lounge access, return flights to Vancouver, transfers, 2 days onboard Rocky Mountaineer, selected touring & 10 nights hotel accommodation including 2 nights all-inclusive at Sonora Resort. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171845](http://wexas.com/171845).



SAVE UP TO  
£250 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20





# ON THE ROAD

Over the next few pages our specialists have picked out some of their favourite road trips, taking in the likes of California's iconic Pacific Coast Highway, Utah's big five national parks and the lesser-known prairies of Saskatchewan. Sticking with North America, we also avoid the crowds in Alberta's Rocky Mountains and hit Atlantic Canada's coastal trails.

Elsewhere, Africa specialist Rui Ribiero picks out a pair of self-drives in Southern Africa, showcasing the red deserts of Namibia and the Big Five game reserves of KwaZulu-Natal. And, for those who prefer something a little more relaxed, there are savings of up to £355 per person on a trip through the winelands of South Africa's Western Cape.

As always, Australia remain firmly on our radar, with a choice of three short breaks out of Sydney – perfect if you're staying with family or friends. Then, there's a rundown of everything New Zealand's North and South Islands have to offer, from subtropical islands to majestic fjords.

And, for something closer to home, we've also featured scenic trips in Portugal, making the most of its historic Pousadas, and a foodie retreat on Spain's Duero River.

This issue also sees the return of our free car hire offer. With the exception of Namibia and the UK, all of our tailor-made road trips come with car hire included at no cost. But hurry, this exclusive offer is available for a limited time only. You'll need to book by 31 January to take advantage. See [wexas.com/freecar](https://wexas.com/freecar) for details.



# ROAD TRIPPING IN CALIFORNIA

From rolling vineyards and misty redwood forests to ocean-framed highways and bohemian cities, the extraordinary diversity of California is what keeps us and our clients returning time and time again. And, there's no better way to immerse yourself in the state's rich urban intrigue and awe-inspiring natural world than with a fly-drive, exploring it all in true American style, and at your own pace. Indeed, with such a wealth of highlights to choose from, it pays to take it slow. To inspire, our specialists have picked two of their favourite itineraries, which, of course, can be tailored to suit.



## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY TOUR

12-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

The Pacific Coast Highway is, put simply, the king of road trips. You'll begin with San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Bridge before making your way south, skirting the forest-lined highways and plunging cliffs for which this region is famed. After your fill of dramatic mountains and ocean scenery – allowing plenty of time for photo stops, of course – you'll take in golden, sea lion-dotted beaches and fuel up on freshly caught seafood and local wines from celebrated vineyards. Sunset at iconic Big Sur is a particular highlight, with stays in classic beachfront properties throughout ensuring you feel right at home among the Californian elite. It all culminates amid the historic pier and famed farmers markets of Santa Monica – the epitome of Cali cool.

**PRICES START FROM £1,440 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge, 6 days car hire & 10 nights room-only accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/100897](http://wexas.com/100897).

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

14-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

The rugged neighbour to its glitzy southern counterparts, the north of California is all silent redwood forests, jaw-dropping national parks and world-renowned wineries. This road trip starts by contrasting San Francisco's eclectic neighbourhoods with a luxury oceanfront lodge, reached, yes, via those emblematic ocean-lined highways. Sonoma – Napa's laid-back little sister (or rather, big – it's twice the size) – is next, which you'll showcase with the likes of vineyard bike rides and wine-paired picnics. Finally, swap it all for the alpine beauty of Lake Tahoe and Yosemite, with plenty of time to explore its gin-clear waters, monolithic mountains and drenching waterfalls. It's all done alongside food and wine that'll satisfy even the most seasoned epicurean, as well as stays in boutique lodges that make it the perfect base to show off the region's iconic scenery.

**PRICES START FROM £1,975 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 12 nights accommodation, selected meals & 10 days car hire. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/100899](http://wexas.com/100899).





# UTAH

## adventures in America's southwest



Wexas USA specialist **Patrick Griffin** rides the highways and byways of the USA's Beehive State.

Utah is full of natural beauty. The Rocky Mountains and green forests of the state's north slowly give way to the skyscraping red spires and cliffs of the southern wilds. Taken together, the state features some of the most extraordinary landforms on the planet. It's best appreciated at one of Utah's truly unique national parks – Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef and Zion – known collectively as The Mighty 5®.

Both located in the state's southeastern quarter, Arches and Canyonlands national parks make a great combination. The former is dominated by over 2,000 natural, sandstone arches, framing a spectacular backdrop of vast desert and distant mountain ranges. In stark contrast to the towering rock

structures of its neighbouring park, Canyonlands is home to dramatic valleys and chasms, carved out over thousands of years by the Colorado and Green Rivers.

To add in some human intrigue to the geographic drama, head to Capitol Reef National Park, a Martian-like landscape complete with staggering rock cathedrals and dome-shaped peaks. Here, the weathered rock reveals its ancient stories through carvings made thousands of years ago by the Fremont and Ancestral Puebloan people.

Turning to Utah's southwest, you'll find Zion's gigantic sandstone cliffs and tumbling waterfalls, which dwarf the forests that line its Virgin River. Hiking The Narrows

is perfect for any adventurer, with travellers coming from around the world to wade through the waters of this slot canyon, which soars up to 1,000 feet tall. Then, in Bryce Canyon National Park, just over an hour's drive away, it's all forested plateaus overlooked by thousands of crimson spires known as 'hoodoos'. Hiking down into the natural amphitheatre is a treat and feels completely detached from civilisation. Sunsets and sunrises are spectacular, with great rock formations casting long shadows across the landscape.

Whichever of the parks you choose, they're all linked by the state's 27 scenic byways. These spectacular routes knit together not only The Mighty 5®, but also Utah's lesser-known gems, from its 43 state parks to its seven national monuments.

**A 15-DAY SELF-DRIVE COVERING ALL OF THE MIGHTY 5® AND MORE STARTS FROM £2,355 PP**

Incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 14 days car hire, 13 nights accommodation & a personalised driving pack. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102975](https://wexas.com/102975).



## PICTURE PERFECT PALM BEACHES

13-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

Starting with Orlando’s world-famous theme parks and artisan breweries, our recommended road-trip traces Florida’s idyllic Atlantic coast, with a particular focus on The Palm Beaches. Indeed, with a luxurious three-night stay at The Breakers hotel, you’ll have the whole of The Palm Beaches region on your doorstep, from its boutique shops and championship golf courses to its powder-soft sands and world-class dive sites. Then, perhaps via a trip to the wildlife-rich Everglades, it’s a scenic drive south to the Art Deco treasures of Miami’s iconic South Beach.

**PRICES FROM £2,945 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 9 days car hire & 10 nights accommodation. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/103420](http://wexas.com/103420).



# DISCOVER The Palm Beaches

Set on the coast between Orlando and Miami, The Palm Beaches are Florida at its iconic best. Expect stunning white sands paired with classic luxury, natural beauty and a diverse range of attractions, from its cutting-edge culinary scene to its eclectic shopping and historic architecture. It’s no surprise that The Palm Beaches is termed Florida’s Cultural Capital®.

The Palm Beaches not only feature 47 miles of, well, beaches, but a diverse collection of 39 cities and towns as well. One moment you could be browsing designer boutiques or tasting your way through the latest in avant-garde gastronomy, and the next playing a round on a world-class golf course or exploring the Atlantic coastline by fishing boat, kayak or snorkel. The diving is fantastic, with tropical coral animated by dolphins and sea turtles. Don’t forget, the Everglades’ gator-dotted waterways are also just next door.

When taken as a whole, it’s no surprise that The Palm Beaches are considered America’s First Resort Destination®. Indeed, heads of state and the Hollywood elite have been making the pilgrimage here

since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with their riches immortalised in art galleries and lavish Gilded Age mansions. Today, however, there’s a firm focus on affordable luxury, whether it’s a spa break, cocktail bar or iconic hotel available to all. And remember, it’s all blessed with that famous Florida sunshine.





# Atlantic Canada



Wexas North America specialist **Rachel Mostyn** reveals why travellers are drawn year on year to this enchanting region of Canada.

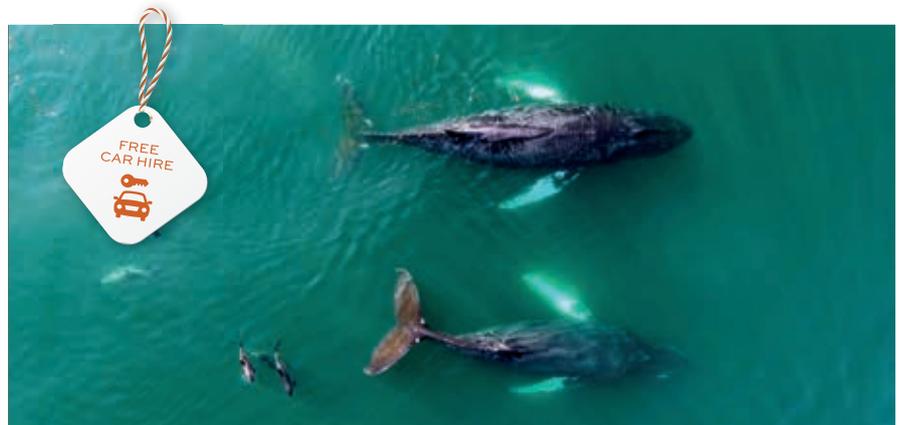
Comprising the provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Atlantic Canada is a region of unique cultures, fabulous food and a spectacular, unspoilt coast. It's also the closest part of North America to the UK, making it surprisingly easy to reach.

For me, it's the region's natural world that really stands out. Perhaps take a drive along the Lighthouse Route, which traces the south shore of Nova Scotia and takes in dramatic cliffs dotted with pristine white lighthouses. Or, head to Newfoundland & Labrador's famous iceberg alley to watch millions-strong colonies of Atlantic puffins. Then there's the beautiful Bay of Fundy between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, home to the world's highest tides. Here, from May to September, it's possible to spot up to 12 species of whale, including giant humpbacks and North Atlantic right whales, as they come to feed in the nutrient-rich waters.

But, there's far more to Atlantic Canada than just its coastline. Across all four provinces you'll find everything from storybook villages to World Heritage-listed Viking ruins and spectacular national-park walking trails. Wildlife is abundant, too. Keep an eye out for Canadian moose or search the skies for a glimpse of an elusive bald eagle.

And, there's plenty for the foodie, with the ocean playing a starring role – think rich clam chowders, succulent scallops and moreish blue mussels. In fact, Prince Edward Island is known as 'Canada's Food Island', where visitors are treated to everything from freshly caught lobster to award-winning potatoes – the island's number one export. And, for those like me with a sweet tooth, blueberry pie and buckwheat pancakes served with Canadian maple syrup will leave you craving for more.

Lastly, there's a palpable sense of history tying it all together. Colourful Maritime towns, steeped in Acadian culture, give way to thousand-year-old stone carvings marking an indigenous past. Former military strongholds are brought to life by battle re-enactments between 18<sup>th</sup>-century garrisons, while fascinating museums tell tales of ocean voyages and the seafaring explorers of old.



## A 12-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE THROUGH ATLANTIC CANADA IS AVAILABLE FROM £1,510 PP

incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 9 days car hire, 10 nights accommodation and admission to historic sites. For a full itinerary & all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/146892](https://wexas.com/146892).



Royal Canadian Mounted Police. And, at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, the world's largest *Tyrannosaurus rex* is on display.

### Saskatoon

The mighty South Saskatchewan River is Saskatoon's lifeblood, offering riverboat tours and walking trails along its tree-lined banks. Trendy neighbourhoods showcase craft breweries, a delicious culinary scene and the city's artistic character. The Remain Modern museum houses an impressive collection of Picasso's works.

### Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Step back through 6,000 years of the Northern Plains people's history at this heritage park located to the north of Saskatoon. Wanuskewin features indigenous performances, interactive exhibits, hiking trails, archaeological digs and overnight tipi stays, while its restaurant serves traditional First Nations cuisine with a contemporary twist.

### Saskatchewan's natural world

In between its urban highlights, Saskatchewan is a pristine wilderness of rolling hills, rushing rivers and prairies, ripe for hiking, canoeing and horseback rides. Spot bears and eagles among Prince Albert National Park's old-growth forests, while burrowing owls and roaming bison animate Grasslands National Park.

# The Secrets of Saskatchewan

From century-old architecture and indigenous traditions to craft breweries and vibrant cities, the lesser-visited Canadian province of Saskatchewan hides plenty of treasures among its vast prairies. Perfect for a summer self-drive, this is your introduction to the region's highlights.

### Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

With its towering hills, lush pine forests and wildflower-dotted prairies, this border-straddling park is a scenic delight. Be sure to include a hike to the Hidden Conglomerate Cliffs, then join a guided tour of Fort Walsh National Historic Site to hear stories from the 19th-century western frontier. At night, take in the astronomical wonders of the largest Dark Sky Preserve in Canada.

### Moose Jaw

The prairie town of Moose Jaw began life as railway outpost, its frontier history bringing in the

likes of smugglers and Al Capone gangsters. Today, the past of "Canada's Most Notorious City" lives on in tours of its bootlegger tunnels. And, below ground, geothermal reservoirs provide mineral-rich waters for the town's Temple Gardens Hotel & Spa.

### Regina

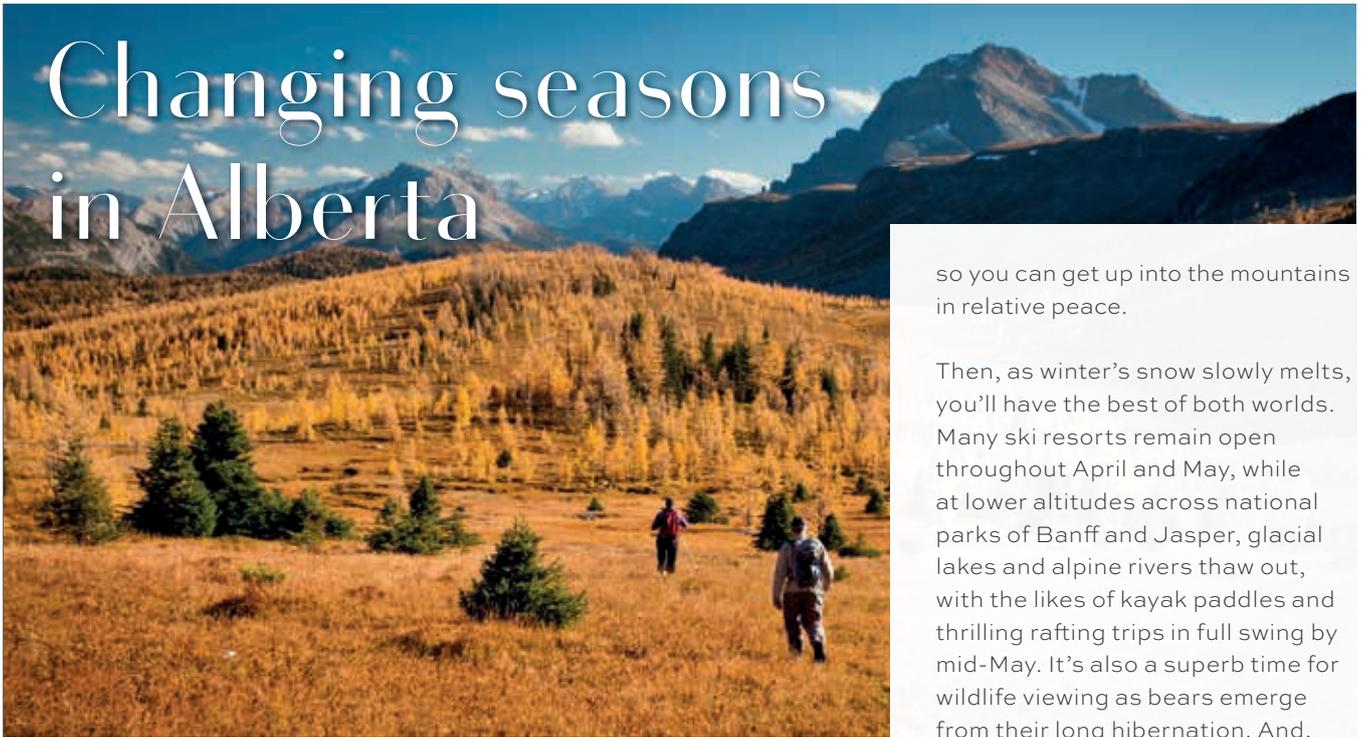
As Saskatchewan's capital, Regina oozes provincial history. Its centrepiece is the stately Saskatchewan Legislative Building, set in one of North America's largest urban parks. The city is also home to the sole training academy of the

A 19-DAY SELF-DRIVE THROUGH ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN STARTS FROM £1,695 PP

Incl. flights, UK airport lounge access. 18 days car hire, 17 nights accommodation & selected touring. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/154601](http://wexas.com/154601).



# Changing seasons in Alberta



so you can get up into the mountains in relative peace.

Then, as winter's snow slowly melts, you'll have the best of both worlds. Many ski resorts remain open throughout April and May, while at lower altitudes across national parks of Banff and Jasper, glacial lakes and alpine rivers thaw out, with the likes of kayak paddles and thrilling rafting trips in full swing by mid-May. It's also a superb time for wildlife viewing as bears emerge from their long hibernation. And, by early June, high elevation lakes such as Lake Louise are free from ice, offering a last-minute chance to visit before summer kicks in and the crowds descend.



Words by  
Wexas Canada  
specialist  
*Debbie Mayger*

Alberta has always conjured up images of snow-capped peaks, dramatic ski slopes and frozen lakes. But, despite its cold-weather charms, it's summer that draws the biggest crowds. Snow can fall at the highest elevations all year round, but the warmer months bring bright blue skies, verdant forest trails and the chance to escape into the great outdoors on a bike or canoe. It's a beautiful time of year, but here's a

secret – the shoulder seasons also ensure spectacular scenery and unforgettable experiences, without the tourist rush.

If you're the outdoorsy type, autumn in Alberta offers everything the summer does, just with slightly lower temperatures. In fact, the setting is perhaps even more special, as lush green forest gives way to a Fall palette of deep orange and red. The golden larch trees throughout Banff National Park are breathtakingly beautiful as they fade to a pale copper colour, seen only in a short window between September and October. And before winter sets in, most of the hiking trails remain open,

For me, a self-drive is *the* best way to take advantage of Alberta's changing seasons. If the weather is a little unpredictable, you'll have the option to choose the activities and excursions that suit you best. And, a drive along the breathtaking Icefields Parkway is a highlight all year round. As one of the world's most scenic highways, you'll pass glaciers, jagged peaks, and with some luck spot native wildlife such as white tail deer, big horn sheep, and even elusive black bears.

## ALBERTA'S ROCKIES, LAKES & NATIONAL PARKS

9-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

This spectacular self-drive takes you from the wild west of Calgary into the heart of the Canadian Rockies and back again. Visit the windswept Canadian Badlands, stop to take in the turquoise waters of Lake Louise and hike through the alpine forests of Banff. You'll even have the chance to explore hidden gems such as Canmore and Red Deer. Along with a drive on the Icefields Parkway, this itinerary showcases the best of Alberta and the magnificent Rocky Mountains.

**PRICES START FROM £1,425 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 8 days car hire & 8 nights accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172135](https://wexas.com/172135).





# LUXURY ON THE CAPE

## Steenberg Hotel & Spa

The Western Cape of South Africa is infinitely alluring. Its wild coastline, ancient mountain ranges and flourishing vineyards draw millions of visitors every year. And, despite the tourism boom, there are pockets that still feel untouched – places where you can escape the commotion and truly get away.

One such spot is the Steenberg Hotel & Spa, nestled in the picturesque Constantia Valley, just a 30-minute drive from Cape Town. Although you're within easy reach of the Mother City, you'll feel worlds away, surrounded by blossoming gardens, rich grasslands, and a championship 18-hole golf course. In fact, its idyllic setting is the site of the region's oldest registered farm, dating back to 1682.

Extensive renovations have since transformed the hotel into the epitome of understated luxury. Its 24 rooms are decorated in a classic Cape Dutch style; light and airy with pastel accents against elegant dark wood and bathrooms stocked with indulgent Healing Earth toiletries. The largest of their suites comes complete with private gardens and its own heated swimming pool.



Bistro Sixteen82, the hotel's long-standing restaurant, offers seasonal dishes derived from fresh, locally-sourced ingredients. And now, guests can enjoy a second signature dining experience, dedicated to the hotel's 17<sup>th</sup>-century founder Catharina Ras. Bright ruby red, jade and burnt orange accents adorn the walls of Tryn, channelling the feisty spirit of its namesake. Expect classic food with a touch of Asian and Middle Eastern flair from a menu designed by Executive Chef Kerry Kilpin.

And, of course, after days spent on the golf course or exploring the icons of Cape Town, you'll want to unwind with a glass of wine on the terrace, overlooking sprawling vineyards framed by rugged, sandstone peaks.

## SOUTH AFRICA'S FAIREST CAPE

15-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

Our recommended trip combines a stay among the Cape Wineland vineyards at Steenberg Hotel & Spa with an ultra-scenic Garden Route self-drive and a luxury journey into South Africa's interior on the iconic Blue Train. There's also the option to extend your trip with a safari to seek out the Big Five.

**PRICES START FROM £3,085 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 12 days car hire, 10 nights B&B accommodation & 2 nights on The Blue Train on a full-board basis. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102647](http://wexas.com/102647).

SAVE UP TO  
**£355 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20





# GO WILD in Southern Africa



Wexas Africa specialist and Rainbow Nation native **Rui Ribeiro** highlights two self-drives through the epic landscapes and wildlife reserves of Namibia and KwaZulu-Natal.

Picture yourself driving across the boundless plains of the Namib Desert, observing zebra at a watering hole or tracking rhino in the grasslands of a vast game reserve. If you're seeking adventure on a grand scale, look no further than the southern tip of my home continent. And, whether it's going off-grid in Namibia or seeking the Big Five in South Africa, both the itineraries I've suggested below offer unforgettable experiences in the wild.

## BEST OF NAMIBIA SELF DRIVE

16-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

Namibia's dry desert landscapes support a staggering array of wildlife. Lions and leopards stalk the salt pans of its northern national parks as colonies of seals and thousands-strong flocks of flamingos cool themselves on the dune-fringed coast. Take in the country's best bits on a self-drive 4WD adventure that spans the red sands of the Namib Desert, summits the apricot dunes of Sossusvlei and calls into charming coastal towns and ancient tribal lands. You'll round things off in style with a two-centre safari in Etosha National Park and a visit to the AfriCat Foundation – a not-for-profit organisation rehabilitating Namibia's big cats. It's all knitted together by scenic drives, stays in chic lodges and delightful included meals.

**PRICES START FROM £3,485 PP** incl. airport lounge access, return flights, 14 days car hire & 13 nights accommodation on a mix of B&B, half-board and full-board basis. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102490](http://wexas.com/102490).



SAVE UP TO  
£310 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## KWAZULU-NATAL DISCOVERY SELF-DRIVE

10-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

The southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal has perhaps the most dramatic and varied topography in all of South Africa, all showcased on this spectacular road trip. After relaxing with a beachfront stay on Durban's white sands, you'll leave the warm waters of the Indian Ocean behind and sweep up into the awe-inspiring peaks of the Drakensberg, a world of soaring buttresses and crystal-clear rivers. Then, yet more scenic roads bring you among the rolling plains of the Battlefields region, where I highly recommend a guided tour to learn more about the region's unique Anglo-Zulu history. And of course, finish your holiday in style at the andBeyond Phinda Private Game Reserve, taking twice-daily game drives across 23,000 hectares of bushveld to spot the Big Five.

**PRICES START FROM £2,905 PP** incl. airport lounge access, return flights & domestic internal flights, 9 days car hire, 7 nights accommodation on a mix of B&B, half-board and full-board basis & safari game drives. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102019](http://wexas.com/102019).



# New South Wales: Short breaks beyond Sydney

While our holidays to Sydney and its surrounds have traditionally been full-blown, flight-inclusive affairs, in recent times my clients have also been seeking out shorter experiences, offering an in-depth appreciation of a region over just a few action-packed days. It's the perfect way to truly tailor-make your Australian adventure, whether that's a two-week holiday or part of a longer break staying with friends or family. To help get you started, I've picked out three of these "bolt-on" itineraries, all departing from Sydney. There's everything from rail trips to self-drives, taking in some of my favourite corners of New South Wales.



## COASTAL GLAMPING IN JERVIS BAY

This ultra-scenic road trip brings you out along the Grand Pacific Drive from Sydney to Jervis Bay for a unique glamping experience at Paperbark Camp. You'll stay in a Deluxe safari tent, complete with a private open-air en suite and wraparound deck to immerse you in the surrounding bushland. As well as exploring well-trodden trails through the bush and relaxing on Jervis Bay's pristine white sand beaches, there's also an included Dolphin Cruise, taking you out into the bay to see pods of resident bottlenose dolphins. And every evening in the centre of camp, The Gunyah restaurant serves delicious regional dishes and drinks among the treetops – it's certainly an upgrade from the usual campfire barbecue.

**THIS 3-DAY ITINERARY STARTS FROM £375 PP** incl. 2 nights half-board accommodation, Dolphin Cruise tour, and 3 days car hire. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172138](https://wexas.com/172138).

## BLUE MOUNTAINS DISCOVERY

Part small-group tour, part independent journey, this three-day itinerary is the perfect add-on to a stay in Sydney. In the company of an expert guide and your fellow travellers, you'll wind your way through rural New South Wales to the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains, pausing at scenic lookouts along the way. You'll then spend a full day exploring at your own pace, perhaps enjoying a hike, seeking out local wildlife or chilling out by the infinity pool of your luxury hotel. Award-winning restaurants and bars serve up the very best in regional food and fine wines, while an onsite spa offers indulgent treatments to help you truly unwind. It's then time to rejoin your group for a guided journey back to Sydney.

**THIS 3-DAY ITINERARY STARTS FROM £660 PP** incl. 2 nights B&B accommodation & small-group touring to and from Sydney incl. 1 lunch with sparkling wine. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172137](https://wexas.com/172137).





Wexas Australia specialist **Eleanor Kania** shares three mini itineraries in New South Wales, the perfect add-ons to a stay in Sydney.



## HUNTER VALLEY BY TRAIN

This itinerary begins with a journey on the express train from Sydney to the spectacular Hunter Valley Resort. Located in the heart of Australia’s oldest wine region, surrounded by 70 acres of gardens and vineyards, the resort offers an enchanting escape from the bustle of the city, despite being only two hours away. During your stay, you’ll experience a unique wine theatre experience, taste world-class vintages and, if you like, add on activities such as horseback riding and Segway touring. My tip? Book a hot air balloon ride over the vineyards – there’s no better way to take in one of New South Wales’ prettiest regions.

**THIS 3-DAY ITINERARY STARTS FROM £270 PP** incl. 2 nights B&B accommodation & return transfers on the express train from Sydney. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/172136](http://wexas.com/172136).

Of course, alongside these shorter breaks, we also offer a range of flight-inclusive holidays, perfect for exploring more of New South Wales in one go. I’ve selected my favourite below, which brings together the highlights of the east coast in one epic self-drive. With flights from the UK included, it encompasses everything from the magic of the Blue Mountains to laid-back Byron Bay.

## AUSTRALIA’S EAST COAST: SYDNEY TO BYRON BAY

14-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

The road from Sydney to Brisbane is well-travelled, and for very good reason. A mix of golden beaches, sprawling vineyards and rugged hinterland paint perhaps the ultimate portrait of the country’s celebrated outdoor lifestyle. After exploring the many delights of Sydney, from the iconic Sydney Opera House to its relaxed seaside neighbourhoods, head into the wilderness to explore the spectacular Blue Mountains, taste your way around the award-winning wineries of the Hunter Valley and take in the charms of pretty coastal towns such as Port Stephens, Coffs Harbour and Byron Bay. It’s all accompanied by included car hire and stays in hotels handpicked for their outstanding locations.

**PRICES START FROM £1,495 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 10 nights accommodation on a mix of B&B and room only basis & 8 days car hire with max cover. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103059](http://wexas.com/103059).

SAVE UP TO  
**£255 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20





## NORTH ISLAND



If you're seeking sandy beaches, sub-tropical temperatures and a more relaxed feel, New Zealand's North Island is for you. Most journeys begin in what is the country's largest city, Auckland,

dotted with volcanic cones and fronted by the sparkling waters of the Hauraki Gulf.

Just off the Auckland coast is Waiheke Island, a haven of

vineyards, olive groves and pristine white sandy beaches. A short ferry ride from the mainland, it's ideal for leisurely nature walks, kayaking, fishing and laid-back afternoons in the sun. If it's island idyll you're after though, the Bay of Islands is a real highlight. More than 140 subtropical islets make up this micro-region, surrounded by warm turquoise waters teeming with marine life.

It's not all about the coast, however. The North Island is also a hotbed of geothermal activity. And, while hot springs can be found right across New Zealand, it's the area between Rotorua and Taupo that has the highest density of geysers, bubbling mud pools and geothermal waters. Located 27 kilometres south of Rotorua, Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland is arguably the best place to see it all in action, with the

## New Zealand: North vs South

## SOUTH ISLAND



New Zealand's South Island is the more dramatic of the two. This is a land of glaciers and fjords where, aside from the golden sands of Abel Tasman, the landscape is one of cragged coastlines and lake-dotted

alpine ranges. It's an adventurer's utopia, tailor-made for hiking, jet boating and white-water rafting.

For a spot of culture, a visit to New Zealand's most 'English' city,

Christchurch, is a must. Constantly evolving and regenerating, there's everything from cutting-edge architecture to punting on the River Avon. And, just along the coast is Kaikoura, New Zealand's whale-watching capital, where guided boat trips head offshore to seek out sperm whales, humpbacks or orcas, depending on the season.

It's the mountains, though, that offer the greatest adventures; heli-hiking on the blue-tinged Fox or Franz Josef Glaciers, snow-shoeing at the foot of Mt. Cook, or simply exploring the trails between snowy peaks. The spectacular TranzAlpine Train takes you from the Canterbury Plains to the heart of it all. And, from Queenstown on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, there's the chance to set out among the Southern Alps, perhaps adding on a walk along the Hollyford Track, following the river



Champagne Pool, pictured above, attracting the most camera clicks.

The North Island is also home to New Zealand's oldest wine region, Hawkes Bay. There are some 90 wineries here, producing world-class chardonnays and cabernet sauvignons in particular. The wines here are perhaps rivalled only by the



South Island's Marlborough region – proving once again that New Zealand's main competition is itself.

**A 17-DAY NORTH ISLAND SELF-DRIVE STARTS FROM £2,440 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers to Waiheke and ferry, selected touring, 12 days car hire & 13 nights accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102589](http://wexas.com/102589).



## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW ZEALAND

19-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

Still can't decide between North and South? Experience the best of both on this ultra-scenic road trip. You'll be treated to everything from the giant glaciers and snow-capped mountains of the South to Rotorua's explosive geysers in the North. There's also plenty of time to take things easy, with wine tastings, city sightseeing and golden beaches showcased between stays in hand-picked boutique hotels.

**PRICES FROM £2,495 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, selected transfers, 14 days car hire & 15 nights accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/103678](http://wexas.com/103678).



They're so close they're almost touching, but New Zealand's north and south islands can feel worlds apart. From golden beaches to colossal glaciers, Wexas specialist *Gary Stevens* takes a look at their varying appeals.

through lush forests to the coast and Fiordland National Park.

Indeed, no visit to the South Island would be complete without seeing the fjords. My tip? Take an overnight cruise on Doubtful Sound to see fur seals and penguins thriving among breathtaking, glacier-carved landscapes. This is really the South

Island's claim to fame – the awe-inspiring beauty of nature.

**A 13-DAY SOUTH ISLAND SELF-DRIVE STARTS FROM £2,755 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers, TranzAlpine rail journey, selected touring, overnight Doubtful Sound cruise, 8 days car hire, 8 nights accommodation & selected meals. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/102596](http://wexas.com/102596).



SAVE UP TO  
**£495 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20



# Tastes of Spain

*with Hacienda Zorita*

Spain is well known for its cuisine – *paella* by the sea, delicious cured meats and fresh *gazpacho* – usually paired with fine wine or *sangria*. Of course, it’s also a popular holiday destination for UK residents seeking sunnier climates. But, it’s away from the crowded tourist centres where you’ll find some of the country’s best food, and its most evocative landscapes. Castilla y León in the northwest, ringed by mountains and dotted with ancient castles and churches, is one such gem. And, it’s here that you’ll find the superb Hacienda Zorita.

Set on the banks of the Duero, Europe’s longest ‘wine river’, the Hacienda Zorita lives and breathes viticulture. Surrounded by beautifully terraced vineyards and cellars lined with thousands of solid oak barrels, it’s also nestled among working farmland, home to wandering African water buffalo and woolly Mangalica pigs. A guided tour of the Hacienda Zorita Organic Farm is by far the best way to see – and taste – everything that makes this hotel so special.

You’ll learn exactly what goes in to making award-winning cheeses, see the Acetaia – the



only traditional balsamic vinegar cellar of its kind in Spain – and walk through the Iberian Pata Negra drying house, sampling everything from sumptuous mozzarella to Ibérico ham along the way. These Spanish staples, along with olive oil, freshly-baked breads and organic fruits and vegetables, serve the hotel’s farm-to-table restaurant. It’s here that you’ll finish the tour, dining on a feast of acorn-fed cold cuts, grilled vegetables and meats, and delicious desserts.

And, don’t forget that you’re just minutes from Salamanca. Known for its incredibly ornate sandstone architecture, it’s awash with Renaissance and Baroque flourishes alongside monuments to the city’s rich past. Indeed, its historic interior is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Day trips here are best rounded off with a rejuvenating vinotherapy treatment back at the hotel’s spa. Paired with world-class food and wine, your experience at this hidden getaway offers an exclusive taste of authentic Spain.



SAVE UP TO  
£180 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## SALAMANCA WINE EXPERIENCE AT HACIENDA ZORITA

PRICES START FROM £550 PP incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, car hire, 5 nights B&B accommodation, welcome drink, bottle of wine & Organic Farm package with tour & lunch included. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/146168](http://wexas.com/146168).



# PORTUGAL'S POUSADAS

Scattered across Portugal are dozens of stunning castles, palaces and monasteries – and some modern properties too – all recognised as sites of historical importance, converted for overnight stays. Known as Pousadas, they're the equivalent of the UK's stately homes, but somehow even more special. Many are a little off the beaten track, reached via rambling nature preserves or untouched coastlines. And, each one is unique – stay in a viscount's manor house or on a sprawling wine estate, depending on your taste. Wherever you go, you'll get a glimpse of Portugal's rich history.

## POUSADAS OF PORTUGAL: ALENTEJO & THE ALGARVE

8-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

This journey through southern Portugal contrasts the golden plains and rolling hills of Portugal's central Alentejo with the coastal beauty of the Algarve. The historic Pousadas in this itinerary include a converted 16th century convent close to the medieval charms of Arraiolo and a Franciscan convent in historic Beja, an oasis of calm among the city's narrow streets. The spectacular clifftop Pousada de Sagres is a highlight, surrounded by surf beaches with panoramic views over the Algarve and an onsite restaurant serving freshly caught seafood. As you make your way to each Pousada, you'll have plenty of time to take in the region's charming fishing villages and ancient towns. And, after days spent exploring in the sun, the swimming pools at each property offer a place to escape and refresh, often nestled among peaceful gardens of native plants.

**PRICES START FROM £450 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 8 days car hire & 7 nights Pousada accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/150426](https://wexas.com/150426).



## POUSADAS OF PORTUGAL: GREEN PORTUGAL

8-DAY TAILOR-MADE SELF-DRIVE

To the north, Portugal's interior is lush and green and the rugged Atlantic coastline is wildly beautiful. This self-drive itinerary takes you through it all, with stays at some of the country's finest Pousadas along the way. The Pousada Viana do Castelo, set high on Mount Santa Luzia, reveals stunning views over the old sailing port and the ocean, while a drive into Geres National Park sees you to a magnificent mountain chalet where wild horses roam freely outside. In Guimarães, a UNESCO World Heritage site, you'll sleep in a 12th-century Augustinian monastery overlooking the city's cobbled streets. And, after visiting another monastery nestled in the Vinho Verde wine region, you'll return for a further night in the Pousada Viana do Castelo, looking out across the mountain-framed Lima River, the Templo de Santa Luzia and the Atlantic Ocean beyond.

**PRICES START FROM £530 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 8 days car hire & 7 nights B&B Pousada accommodation. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/147485](https://wexas.com/147485).







# TIME TO RELAX

After another busy year and with winter well and truly upon us, escaping to warmer climes is more appealing than ever. With that in mind, our specialists have scoured the globe for the very best luxury beach breaks, with some great early-booking deals to the Caribbean and great savings to everywhere from Mauritius to the Maldives. However, in true Wexas style, we're also looking beyond the beach, with some curated holidays that add a little something extra to the mix.

For example, a trip to Tenerife doesn't have to be all about golden sands and warm seas. As a designated Starlight Reserve, it's the perfect place to experience some of the world's best stargazing, while the island's well-established wineries offer plenty of chances to slow down and savour a taste. To help inspire, Europe specialist Angela Perro has highlighted an itinerary that brings together all of this and more with a luxury stay in the island's mountainous north.

And, while crowds continue to flock to Dubai's seven-star resorts, it's the unspoilt beaches of Oman that have caught our eye. With savings of up to £350 per person, our three-centre itinerary, staying at exclusive Anantara hotels, combines the mosques and markets of Muscat with spa treatments in the Al Hajar Mountains and dolphin-watching on the Dhofar Coast.





# Exquisite Italy *with Rocco Forte*

Rocco Forte Hotels can be found in some of the world’s most beautiful locations – in Russia, Germany, and of course, Italy. In Rome, a favourite is always the Hotel de Russie, located in the heart of the Eternal City between the bustling Piazza di Spagna and Piazza del Popolo. The new Hotel de la Ville, perched atop the Spanish Steps, offers sweeping views, fine dining and a charming open-air courtyard for soaking up the atmosphere. And on the East coast, the Masseria Torre Maizza in

Puglia features airy rooms and suites complete with fireplaces, plunge pools, and rooftop terraces looking out across the turquoise Adriatic.

Particularly special is the Verdura Resort, set among 230 hectares of southern Sicilian countryside next to the sparkling Mediterranean Sea. It’s here that you can truly unwind, soaking in thalassotherapy pools and indulging in volcanic hot stone massages, or teeing off on the 18-hole championship golf course along the water.

Nearby, the historic fishing port of Sciacca’s narrow lanes are the perfect place to take an afternoon stroll. A little further away lies Agrigento, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of ancient Greek

temples and ruins, accompanied by fascinating exhibits in the Museo Archeologico. Or, take to the waves with a luxury yacht experience among Sicily’s dazzling white cliffs and tranquil island coves.

Back at the hotel, four signature restaurants offer guests a range of dining experiences, including catch-of-the-day seafood on the beach at Amare, modern Mediterranean at Zagara and a traditional trattoria-style menu at Liolà. There’s even an onsite culinary school, where expert chefs teach you to create classic Italian dishes with ingredients hand-picked from the hotel’s vegetable garden. And at sunset, head to Granita for tapas and a cocktail overlooking the sea, the perfect end to a day in paradise.



EARLY BOOKING OFFER – SAVE UP TO £715 PP  
Book by 29 Feb 20

**A 7-NIGHT STAY AT ROCCO FORTE VERDURA RESORT IS AVAILABLE FROM £1,115 PP**

Incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers & 7 nights B&B accommodation in a Deluxe Room. For more details visit [wexas.com/104136](http://wexas.com/104136).



# Northern Tenerife: Beyond the Beach



Tenerife has a long history of welcoming travellers to its beaches. But, alongside the sun and sand, there's plenty of the unique to this island idyll. With this in mind, Europe specialist **Angela Perro** shares her highlights.

## Stargazing

As both a Starlight Destination and a Starlight Reserve, Tenerife is one of the world's finest destinations for stargazing. Offering the clearest and cleanest skies in Europe, its high altitude and low levels of light pollution make for spectacular displays of the entire Milky Way, stretching right across the night sky in colourful bursts. It's a truly special experience, not least when paired with a Michelin-standard dinner with a professional astronomer.

## Rural beauty

In Tenerife, moving away from the beach rewards with verdant valleys, volcanic landscapes and even sky-scraping peaks. UNESCO-listed Teide National Park is an obvious highlight, where petrified lava fields and otherworldly rock formations offer stunning views over the entire island, especially from the cable car.

## Fine wines

Perhaps surprisingly, wine has been produced on Tenerife for

over 500 years, once having been a favourite among European royalty – something referenced by Shakespeare himself. And, the tradition continues today, with winemakers favouring local grapes over international counterparts. When paired with the volcanic soil and high altitudes, the result is delightfully unique. Our recommendation? Get yourself to the 18th-century Bodegas Monje winery, where sommelier-chosen tastings are set to spectacular views over the Teide Volcano.

Inspired? Our Luxury Northern Tenerife itinerary, featured below, includes all of these highlights alongside a stay at one of the island's finest boutique hotels.

## LUXURY NORTHERN TENERIFE

8-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

Staying at Hotel Botanico, the sole luxury property in northern Tenerife, this is your chance to enjoy secluded island life, surrounded by botanical gardens commissioned by a Spanish king. And, alongside the beach relaxation, your private excursions include a wine tasting, a tour of Tiede National Park and an astronomer-led stargazing dinner.

**PRICES START FROM £2,215 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 7 nights B&B at Hotel Botanico and excursions as described. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/155385](https://www.wexas.com/155385).

SAVE UP TO  
£125 PP  
Book by 29 Feb 20





# Relaxing Escapes

Not every holiday needs to be action-packed and full of adventure – sometimes, we simply need to unwind. On the shores of sparkling turquoise seas, discover some of our favourite beach getaways. From former palaces to contemporary resorts, all of them offer an escape from the stresses of everyday life. If you're seeking total relaxation, there's no better place to start.

## D-Maris Bay TURKEY

Set high up on a hillside on Turkey's stunning Datça Peninsula, D-Hotel Maris offers exclusive accommodation surrounded by lush pine forests, volcanic mountains and crystalline waters. Designed for total relaxation, this is a peaceful enclave where the Mediterranean meets the Aegean Sea.

**PRICES FROM £1,135 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Classic Sea View Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/103769](http://wexas.com/103769).



SAVE UP TO  
**£320 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20



SAVE UP TO  
**£220 PP**  
Book by 29 Feb 20

## Iberostar Perast Hotel MONTENEGRO

On the shores of the Balkans' turquoise waters, this former 18<sup>th</sup>-century palace is all plush fabrics, cream furnishings and touches of satin and silk. Make the most of the onsite spa, sauna and pool, or head to the shores of some of Montenegro's golden beaches, only moments away.

**PRICES FROM £770 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Superior Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/153260](http://wexas.com/153260).

## Belmond Reid's Palace MADEIRA

This century-old grand dame is perched high on a clifftop above the Atlantic, with gorgeous views taken in from cocktail bars, expansive pools and the balconies of its marbled rooms. Be sure to cap it all off with a spa treatment, set of tennis or classic afternoon tea.

**PRICES FROM £880 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Classic Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/100716](http://wexas.com/100716).



SAVE UP TO  
**£180 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20



## Baros MALDIVES

This is the Maldives at its best – towering palms, powdery sands and bathtub waters. It's all showcased by everything from marine-biologist-led dives to a superb spa. Then, after indulging with the excellent fine dining, you'll retire to your villa, with the beachside and overwater offerings particular favourites.

**PRICES FROM £2,175 PP** incl. flights, airport lounge access, speedboat transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Deluxe Villa. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/101634](http://wexas.com/101634).



SAVE UP TO  
£575 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20



SAVE UP TO  
£730 PP  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## Constance Éphelia Resort SEYCHELLES

The suites at this elegant Mahé retreat pair the latest in-room technology with garden or ocean views, while villas add in the likes of private pools and complimentary bicycles. Elsewhere, the spa offers indulgent relaxation between gourmet meals, zip-lining and idyllic island-hopping boat trips.

**PRICES FROM £2,125 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights half-board accommodation. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/101778](http://wexas.com/101778).

## Coral Reef Club BARBADOS

One of our favourite Caribbean resorts, this family-owned offering is set within serene landscaped gardens on Barbados' west coast. Expect everything from sizzling seafood grills at the restaurant to sundowner cocktails and lazy days on the beach, by the mosaicked pool or at the excellent spa.

**PRICES FROM £1,925 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Garden Room Cottage. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/100251](http://wexas.com/100251).



SAVE UP TO  
25%  
ON SELECTED STAYS  
Book by 31 Jan 20



SAVE UP TO  
25%  
ON SELECTED STAYS  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## East Winds Inn ST LUCIA

Scattered among 10 hibiscus-scented acres, this inn's 30 chalets ooze old-world charm. From the bar to the barbecues, the atmosphere is wonderfully social and, with a pool with self-service swim-up bar, as well as a small spa and watersports centre, there's plenty to keep you entertained.

**PRICES FROM £2,445 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights all-inclusive in a Superior Cottage. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/100232](http://wexas.com/100232).

# BRITISH AIRWAYS to the beach

Escape to sunnier climes with British Airways this winter and beyond. Flying direct to more destinations in the Caribbean than any other airline, British Airways will take you to where you want to go in style, whether it's the white sands of St Lucia, the crystal-clear waters of the Bahamas, or the tropical rainforests of Grenada. Journeying east across the Indian Ocean, the Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius await, while just a little closer to home, the glittering beach resorts of Dubai are now served by the state-of-the-art Airbus A350 and its all-new Club Suite, detailed below.

## INTRODUCING THE AIRBUS A350

In August of this year British Airways introduced the Airbus A350, one of the most fuel-efficient aircraft operating in the world today. Its revolutionary adaptive wing design helps it achieve maximum aerodynamic efficiency in the air. And, a combination of carbon composites, titanium and aluminium alloys delivers reduced CO2 emissions and a lower overall fuel burn – important steps forward in an era of growing environmental consciousness.

Inside, the A350's reimagined Club World cabin – Club Suite – offers direct aisle access from every seat, sliding doors for enhanced privacy, and 79" fully flat beds with luxurious White Company bedding. High-speed WiFi, personal charging points and minimum 17" high-resolution screens help you stay connected and entertained whether travelling for business or pleasure.



## AN UPGRADED EXPERIENCE FROM LONDON GATWICK

Flying to exotic destinations such as Cancun, Punta Cana and Bermuda, the Boeing 777 is a favourite among the British Airways fleet. By the end of 2019, a complete refresh of all Boeing 777s flying from London Gatwick will offer passengers in World Traveller and World Traveller Plus a newly enhanced onboard experience. Redesigned seats with 50% larger entertainment screens and personal USB outlets ensure enhanced levels of comfort when flying long haul.

If you'd like to discover the world's islands and beaches with British Airways, we've detailed three superb offers opposite as inspiration for your next sun-soaked holiday.

## Coco Reef Resort & Spa TOBAGO

If any hotel captures the laid-back ambience of the Caribbean in its entirety, it's Coco Reef. Located on the southwest coast of Tobago in the town of Crown Point, this stunning resort is set on a beautiful white sand beach, surrounded by 10 acres of lush gardens. Rooms have a decidedly tropical feel, featuring hand-crafted wicker furniture, exotic prints and a pastel colour palette, many of them with sweeping views across the turquoise Caribbean Sea. As well as an onsite spa offering a range of treatments, guests can stay active with water-sports such as sailing and windsurfing, scuba diving and water skiing, and there are two championship golf courses just minutes away.

**PRICES FROM £1,410 PP** incl. British Airways flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Superior Garden View Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/101960](http://wexas.com/101960).



**SPECIAL RATES  
FOR SELECTED  
DEPARTURES IN  
APRIL & MARCH 2020**  
Book by 7 Feb 20



**STAY 7 NIGHTS,  
PAY FOR 5 ON  
SELECTED 2020  
DEPARTURES**  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## Cobblers Cove BARBADOS

Cobblers Cove is one of the best loved hotels in the Caribbean. Located on the west coast of Barbados, this stylish and sophisticated member of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux group is the perfect choice if all you want to do is relax and unwind beside a beautiful Caribbean beach. Akin to a tropical country club, its rooms are all fresh white linens and vintage florals, and upgraded suites feature luxurious private plunge pools with ocean views. Enjoy daily complimentary boat trips into the sparkling sea, adding on kayaking, windsurfing, paddle boarding and even swimming with Hawksbill turtles during your stay.

**PRICES FROM £2,285 PP** incl. British Airways flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights B&B in a Cobblers Garden Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/100236](http://wexas.com/100236).

## One&Only Le St Géran MAURITIUS

This exclusive resort is ideally situated on the silver sands of its own peninsula, surrounded by sugar-cane mountains and colourful coral reefs. Jutting out from the east coast of Mauritius between a sheltered lagoon and the warmth of the Indian Ocean, its clear waters are perfect for trying out a full range of water sports, from diving and snorkelling to kitesurfing and water-skiing. Each of its accommodation options is dressed in contemporary-colonial elegance, with views over the lagoon, ocean or sandy beach, while suites include personalised butler service and private sun decks. There's even the finest ocean villa in Mauritius; it comes complete with a private infinity pool, dedicated butler, chef and valet.

**PRICES FROM £2,220 PP** incl. British Airways flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 7 nights half-board in a Lagoon Room. Prices vary by departure date. For full details, visit [wexas.com/101537](http://wexas.com/101537).



**SAVE UP TO  
£805 PP**  
incl. free half-board on  
selected dates  
Book by 31 Jan 20

**BRITISH AIRWAYS**  
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# Oman with Anantara: Between the desert and the deep blue sea



Throughout the Arabian Peninsula, there are some truly stunning beaches. But, while the crowds flock to Dubai's oversubscribed sands, those in the know are heading south to Oman, sacrificing the faux-glitz and gaudiness for something altogether more authentic. Here, a rich Bedouin culture still pervades the very heart of society, all the way from Muscat's whimsical sprawl to the gleaming, white-sand beaches of Salalah – perhaps the Gulf's best-kept secret – and up into the valley orchards and mudbrick villages of its mountainous interior. It's a visual delight, but there's plenty of luxury here, too, showcased in two of the region's finest hotels, detailed across these pages. First is the Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara, idyllically nestled between vast deserts and the dolphin-dotted waters of the Dhofar Coast. Then, for a complete contrast, the Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar is perched high in the hills near ancient Nizwa – a spectacular base for hikes onto the Saiq Plateau.



## New Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara

Located on a private beach in Oman's southern Salalah region, this resort effortlessly blends Omani and Thai influences with Anantara's signature sense of style. Accommodation ranges from ultra-stylish garden-view rooms to deluxe beach-view suites complete with free-standing bathtubs, rain showers and outdoor terraces. Most notable, though, are the 88 pool villas. With their private temperature-controlled plunge pools and butler service, they're the only ones of their kind in Salalah.



## OMAN IN STYLE WITH ANANTARA

Our recommended three-centre holiday combines both Anantara resorts with the breathtaking beauty of Oman's mountainous interior and the golden sands of its desert and coast. It all begins, however, in the capital – Muscat. Alongside a stay in one of the city's finest hotels, you'll be treated to a tour of its highlights, before swapping mosques and markets for the tranquil beauty of the Al Hajar Mountains. Here, between Nizwa's cultural intrigue and the sprawling verdure and crumbling ruins of Birkat Al Mauz, you'll enjoy all the luxuries of your stunning Anantara hotel, from spa treatments to gourmet dining. And, there's more of the same on the coast in Salalah, where further Anantara indulgences are paired with included tours of Ubar's lost city, the vast deserts of the Empty Quarter and a dolphin-watching adventure off the beautiful Dhofar Coast. And of course, there's also plenty of time to relax on the pristine beach.

**PRICES FROM £3,495 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 2 nights B&B at Chedi Muscat, 3 nights half-board at Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar, 5 nights half-board at Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara, selected sightseeing & two lunches at local restaurants. For a full itinerary and inclusions, visit [wexas.com/168384](http://wexas.com/168384).

SAVE UP TO  
**£350 PP**  
Book by 31 Jan 20



The dining is equally impressive, with a choice of gourmet experiences, from the all-day delights and themed buffet nights at Sakalan's to Al Mina's zesty Mediterranean flavours and Mekong's authentic Asian cuisine. There's also the chance to enjoy an immersive cooking class, dine on the beach with the services of a private butler, or sample wines in the company of the resort's sommelier. Naturally, in-villa dining is available at all times. The resort's facilities, too, are second to none, with the stand-out Anantara Spa featuring the region's only luxury hammam, alongside an array of treatments that incorporate creative ingredients and ancient methods. And, that's not to forget the gorgeous infinity pool and palm-tree lined gardens, which spill down onto the beach and play host to a superb 'cinema under the stars' experience. That's just one of an array of activities, which also include fishing, dolphin watching and some of the finest diving and snorkelling in the Arabian Peninsula.

### Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort

The elevation of the Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort is not the only world-class height it reaches – its level of luxury is perhaps even more spectacular. Contemporary design lies alongside intricate murals and features reflective of

Oman's Middle Eastern culture, with natural materials that, combined with striking modernity, exude utter elegance and, above all, the utmost in luxury.

What's more, this is one of the world's highest resorts, situated on the Saiq Plateau on Oman's Green Mountain, 2,000m above sea level on the rim of a mammoth canyon. Indeed, humbling canyon views lie outside many rooms, which range from deluxe suites to luxurious mountain villas that feature personal temperature-controlled plunge pools and outdoor showers, as well as a personal maid service.

Elsewhere, four exquisite restaurants all offer dwarfing views of the canyon surrounds, from the sprawling elegance of Al Maisan to the fresh Italian fare of poolside Belle Vista and Al Burj – a Moroccan lounge of opulent maroon and gold. There are also masterchef classes and multi-day personalised wellness retreats as well as endless hiking opportunities in the expansive surrounds. Round off days of adventure with an indulgent treatment in the private hammam suite of the spa, where sauna and steam rooms lie alongside luxurious relaxation areas. The striking infinity pool also provides a wonderful spot to while away the hours.





# SAIL AWAY IN STYLE

Whether you're looking for a fresh perspective on a favourite destination, or exploring somewhere for the very first time, a luxury cruise ticks so many boxes. You'll wake to a new view each morning, enjoy days of in-depth exploration in the company of expert guides, and enjoy evenings of indulgent relaxation with everything from live entertainment to fine dining and open bars.

Throughout this section, you'll find a range of enticing offers alongside our specialists' top picks for cruising in 2020 and beyond. There's an off-the-beaten-track appreciation of Italy with Seabourn, featuring free business class flights for early bookers; Scenic's latest luxury sailing to Antarctica; and a culture-packed journey along the Mekong with AmaWaterways. Then, there's a cruise aboard a SeaDream yacht combined with a journey on the iconic Venice Simplon-Orient-Express – the ultimate luxury pairing.

New for 2020 is Regent Seven Seas Cruises' *Seven Seas Splendor*, with its all-balcony suites, six superb restaurants and a luxurious spa among a host of highlights. Our featured voyage includes a huge £1,600 per person saving as well as \$300 onboard credit. Lastly, we shine a spotlight on Oceania Cruises' Regatta-class fleet and its recent \$100million revamp with an itinerary that takes in the best of the Arabian Sea and India's Golden Triangle. It all comes with a choice of free drinks packages, complimentary tours or free onboard spending money.



750 GUESTS | 542 CREW | 375 SUITES | 10 DECKS | 224M LENGTH | 31M WIDTH | 55,254 TONNAGE

# Splendour of the Seven Seas



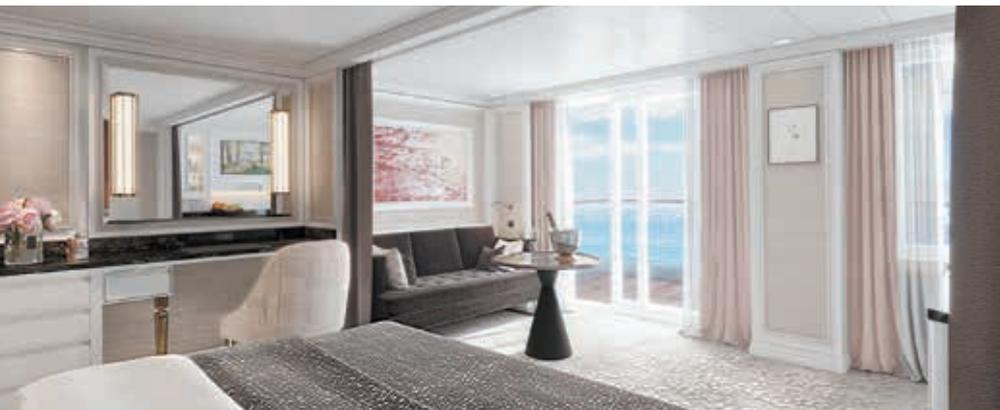
Wexas cruise specialist *Meriel Lowe* takes a look on board Regent Seven Seas Cruises' latest luxury ship.

While I always look forward to the launch of a new ship, I'm particularly excited about the inaugural sailing of Regent Seven Sea Cruises' *Seven Seas*

*Splendor*. Setting sail for the first time in February 2020, it's set to bring a new level of luxury to one of the industry's most elegant fleets.

First to the all-balcony suites, each adorned with Elite Slumber™ Beds and oversized marble bathrooms, and designed to maximise those all-important ocean views. There will be 375 suites in total, but it's the 32 Distinctive Suites that I think are particularly noteworthy. Ranged across the Master, Grand, Splendor and Seven Seas categories, these exclusive offerings add in the likes of private butler service, pillow menus and customised bath products. Plus, guests will be treated to some special extra concessions, from luxury pre-cruise stays to priority restaurant reservations.

Then there are the ever-so-elegant public areas, perhaps best exemplified by the spectacular Grand Staircase which, for those of you who've sailed with Regent Seven Seas Cruises before, has been positioned to face the entrance to the ship's largest restaurant, Compass Rose – a fleet favourite. This signature dining space is a study in sophistication, where guests will be treated to a full spread of world-spanning delicacies, from succulent chateaubriand to spicy Malaysian short rib.





And, that’s just the start of Seven Sea Splendor’s fully-inclusive dining experience, showcased across no fewer than six superb venues. Among them are the American-inspired Prime 7, a steakhouse decked out in marble and metal; La Veranda, where guests will tuck into sumptuous breakfasts and buffet lunches behind huge floor-to-ceiling windows or al fresco on a shaded deck; and Chartreuse, for modern takes on French classics. That’s as well as the Asian-fusion fine dining at Pacific Rim and the Pool Grill’s regionally-inspired barbecues and catch-of-the-day grills. What’s more, if you feel like testing your own cookery skills, the Culinary Arts Kitchen is set to offer expert-led classes under the watchful gaze of a resident chef.

But, it’s not all wining and dining. There’s also a full range of state-of-the-art facilities to enjoy. I’m particularly looking forward to the Serene Spa & Wellness centre,



its range of treatments specially curated for Regent Seven Seas Cruises, and the pool deck, where comfy sun loungers and two whirlpools complement an inviting main-pool centrepiece. There’s even a jogging track and fully equipped gym with sweeping sea views. Then, alongside the lectures and library, evening entertainment is set to include a casino, cigar-and-cognac club and a spectacular full-scale theatre.

This being Regent, you can also expect the ‘most inclusive luxury cruise experience’ at sea. As such, along with the likes of speciality dining, premium drinks and onboard WiFi, sailings on *Seven Seas Splendor* will feature a comprehensive programme of shore excursions included in the price. To showcase this, and so you can experience all of the above for yourself, I’ve picked out the itinerary below.



SAVE OVER  
£1,600 PP PLUS  
ENJOY \$300 SHIP  
CREDIT  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## MONTE CARLO TO ROME ON *SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR*

11-DAY LUXURY CRUISE | DEPARTS 26 JUN 2020

With up to 52 free shore excursions included, this is a comprehensive appreciation of the Mediterranean. It all begins with a short overnight hop from Monte Carlo to Antibes, where local market tours and absinthe tastings will introduce you to the region’s rich array of produce. Then, via the whimsies of Gaudi’s Barcelona, you’ll arrive in Mallorca. Get a taste of island life on city tours, cave visits, tapas tastings and vintage train rides before enjoying all the luxuries of *Seven Seas Splendor* with a

full day at sea. Then, after comparing World Heritage Valetta with the atmospheric tavernas and golden beaches of Cephalonia and Corfu, the islands and coastlines of Italy beckon. Choose first between Godfather-inspired tours of Sicily’s hilltop villages and the Greco-Roman sites of Taormina, then sail to the mainland for vineyard tours and boat trips along the gorgeous Amalfi Coast. Finally, disembark in Civitavecchia for your flight home from Rome.

**PRICES START FROM £6,155 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, transfers & a 10 night sailing aboard *Seven Seas Splendor* with all-inclusive drinks, speciality dining, shore excursions & WiFi. Departs 26 June 2020. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/171930](http://wexas.com/171930).



# Seabourn's alternative Italy



Wexas cruise specialist **Janet Welsh** explores the glamorous side of the Mediterranean aboard *Seabourn Encore*.

I've spent a lot of time in Italy and for good reason; its crumbling landmarks and diverse landscapes are begging to be explored. I find the coastline particularly special; there's nothing better than sipping a glass of wine on a terrace overlooking the water after a day on the beach. It's that feeling that Seabourn have captured on board their luxury ships – intimate vessels that offer plenty of opportunities for reflective sea-gazing and leisurely time in port.

*Seabourn Encore* is one of the newest ships in the fleet and is perfectly suited for sailing in this

region. At just 690 feet long, it's small enough to visit some of the less crowded ports, giving guests the chance to explore Italy's hidden gems in relative peace and quiet. Its 300 suites are light, modern and airy, complete with private verandahs – perfect for sharing that bottle of wine – and personal steward service. There's even a programme of guest speakers designed to enhance and enrich your time on board.

There's much to love about this ship, but for me it's the food that sets it apart from others I've sailed on. The signature experience is

of course *The Grill by Thomas Keller*. The Michelin-star chef's mouth-watering menu features American-style classics like Lobster Thermidor and perfectly cooked steak. It's all included – though reservations are recommended – as are the many other restaurants on board, from *The Colonnade*, a casual open-kitchen buffet, to *Sushi*, featuring modern Japanese cuisine. You can even choose to dine in your suite.

Although there's so much more available on board, including the Spa & Wellness centre, a range of luxury boutiques, a card room and the ultra-stylish open-air Sky Bar – the perfect spot for a sundowner – you'll also want to explore the history and culture of *Seabourn Encore's* ports of call. For inspiration, take a look at one of my favourite itineraries, detailed opposite.



**BUSINESS  
CLASS FLIGHTS  
INCLUDED**

Book by 28 Feb 20

## RIVIERA & ITALIAN IDYLL ON *SEABOURN ENCORE*

9-DAY LUXURY CRUISE | DEPARTS 30 MAY 2020

Every stop on this itinerary is a sparkling jewel in Europe's crown. And, as I've mentioned, *Seabourn Encore* is able to manoeuvre into some of the smaller, lesser-known ports, offering guests a more exclusive experience of Italy and southern France. You'll leave this cruise feeling as if you've unlocked some of Europe's treasured secrets.

The sailaway from the harbour at Valletta, Malta's colourful capital, is a wonderful way to start your journey, and the reason you'll find almost every guest on the ship's upper deck as the sun begins to set. The following morning, you'll arrive in Trapani, a charming town on the west coast of Sicily, extending into the ocean at the base of the magnificent Mount Erice. I recommend exploring its bustling streets on foot; there's a decided air of romance about the faded pastel buildings here, especially in the golden afternoon light.

From here, you'll head to Golfo Aranci on the Costa Smeralda, a stretch of Sardinian coastline known for its sparkling turquoise waters and white sandy beaches. Though it's tempting to spend all day on the sand, you might want to add on a boat trip to an island in the Maddalena Archipelago, characterised by tumbling

granite rock walls, crystal-clear water, and plenty of native wildlife.

Leaving the delights of Italy behind for a little while, your next few ports take you to some of France's most popular resort towns, from the multicultural Bastia in Corsica to the pristine boulevards of Monte Carlo. Saint-Tropez is a highlight; many great artists have spent extended periods of time here, capturing images of a harbour teeming with life. As you amble along the picture-perfect waterfront, you'll understand why.

For the young at heart, your return to Italy via Viareggio is sure to impress. The month-long Carnevale di Viareggio at the start of each year draws huge crowds into the city streets, revelling in a sea of vibrant floats and masquerade processions. Even if you visit outside of the season, there are references to the carnival everywhere. It's unlike anywhere else in Italy.

Disembarking the ship in Civitavecchia, gateway to Rome, you'll want to enjoy some final authentic Italian food before you head home. My top tip is to extend your trip to include a few days in the Eternal City – it's the perfect end to an idyllic journey.

**PRICES START FROM £3,695 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers & 8 nights all-inclusive aboard *Seabourn Encore* incl. all meals, drinks, gratuities & entertainment. Departs 30 May 2020. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171856](http://wexas.com/171856).





# Magic of the Mekong *with AmaWaterways*



Wexas cruise specialist **Emma Sanger-Horwell** uncovers the secrets of Southeast Asia's Mekong River on board *AmaDara*.

The Mekong river is Southeast Asia's import and export lifeline, winding its way through China, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam for over 4,000 kilometres. And, although modern trade depends on it, a journey on this iconic waterway is like a trip back in time. As you drift past rural villages, floating markets and ancient temples, you'll feel intimately connected with the region's rich history.

Many people equate cruising with big ships and crowded port towns. Here, nothing could be further from the truth. I love AmaWaterways' *AmaDara* for

this very reason – it's an intimate ship with a maximum of 124 passengers and 52 crew. At every stop along the river you'll interact with locals and immerse yourself in a different way of life, whether that's participating in a silk-making workshop, watching a folk dancing display or riding an oxcart through a remote village.

*AmaDara* also takes you to some of Vietnam and Cambodia's most significant landmarks. Not far from Ho Chi Minh City, the rabbit warren of underground war tunnels at CÙ Chi is an absolute must. And, despite its sobering effect, a visit to the Killing Fields and Genocide Museum

in Phnom Penh is perhaps the only way to truly appreciate what the Cambodian people have endured.

For me, however, the highlight of any Mekong exploration will always be Angkor Wat. Built by King Suryavarman II in the 12th century, this spectacular sandstone complex is a source of great national pride. Stretching around the temple's perimeter are hundreds of metres of bas-relief carvings – seeing this work up close is simply breathtaking. And of course, the reflection of the domed towers in the surrounding moat makes for a magical photo opportunity.





A river cruise is undoubtedly the easiest way to experience everything in one trip. And, aboard *AmaDara*, you'll also be treated to superb dining, drinks and entertainment, and the very best service. The superb twin-balcony staterooms are decorated in a classic Colonial style, which is echoed throughout the ship in everything from the wood-panelled restaurant to the stylish Saigon Bar. There's also a pool and no fewer than three onboard spas; after a busy day of excursions, a massage, available for a supplement, will leave you feeling instantly renewed. My top tip? Head to the upper deck for sunset each evening – there's nothing more beautiful than the golden light bouncing off the water as night begins to fall.



## CHARMS OF THE MEKONG AND SIEM REAP

14-DAY LUXURY RIVER CRUISE

Preceded by two nights in Ho Chi Minh City, this luxury river cruise takes you from Vietnam to Cambodia along the mighty Mekong, visiting rural villages, historic pagodas, busy markets and even a Buddhist monastery where you'll be treated to a special blessing by local Monks. You'll be taught to make rice paper and candy in Cái Bè, visit the traditional weavers at Silk Island and ride a *xei-loi* trishaw around Tân Châu. Get a glimpse into another era; one where people still happily honour the timeless traditions passed down through the centuries from their ancestors. And, enjoy the comfort of your twin balcony stateroom, included dining and drinks, onboard spa and pool deck aboard the luxurious *AmaDara*. Finish it all off with two nights in Siem Reap, exploring iconic Angkor Wat and the ethereal Kingdom of the Trees.

**PRICES START FROM £3,425 PP** incl. flights, UK airport

lounge access, transfers, 2 nights B&B accommodation pre-cruise, 2 nights B&B accommodation post-cruise & a 7-night cruise aboard *AmaDara* incl. all meals, snacks, drinks, guided tours & entertainment. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/150933](https://www.wexas.com/150933).





# OCEANIA CRUISES luxury renewed



Wexas cruise specialist *Alison Nicolle* tests the waters onboard Oceania Cruises' recently revamped Regatta fleet.

The words 'intimate' and 'luxurious' are used far too often when it comes to cruising. But, in Oceania Cruises' case, with their mid-size ships and focus on laid-back indulgence, these descriptions are fully deserved.

Indeed, their entire Regatta-class fleet has either just undergone,

or is currently undergoing, a comprehensive \$100million facelift. As such, guests will be treated to the very best in ocean-bound luxury, showcased across a full package of upgrades and the designer touches of Miami-based studio, DADO. Expect suites and staterooms to feature

the likes of rich fabrics, elegant dark-wood furnishings and all-new Ultra Tranquillity beds. Even the fleet's signature Grand Staircases have been given a makeover, adding in intricate railings and crystal-inset balustrades.

The same feeling of indulgence continues throughout the ship, not least through their OLife Difference programme, which includes high dining on the high seas. Master Chef Jacques Pépin oversees an array of all-inclusive restaurants, all serving gourmet cuisine to rival any on land.





With organic ingredients, cooking classes, a vast vegetarian and vegan menu and a raw juice bar, Oceania Cruises meets the standards of the best restaurants in all the ports they visit. The international menu is available at all times, anywhere, from the dedicated themed restaurants to private suites or staterooms.

For me, however, it's what happens in port that makes a cruise genuinely special, and this is where Oceania Cruises really shines. With smaller ships than many of their competitors, they've the ability to anchor in shallower waters and at ports not included in most cruise itineraries, allowing guests to venture further off the beaten track. And, once you're ashore, a programme of expert-led excursions will showcase the very



best of each destination's culture and cuisine.

Inspired? I've picked out my top 2020 sailing on board *Sirena*, taking in the delights of the Arabian

Sea and Indian Ocean – two of my favourite regions. Best of all, it comes with a choice of a **free drinks package, free tours or free spending money**, coupled with other superb value-adding offers.



INCLUDES PRE-PAID GRATUITIES & \$200 ONBOARD SPENDING MONEY  
Book by 31 Jan 20

## SPICES, SANDS & THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE ON *SIRENA*

22-DAY CRUISE AND TOUR | DEPARTS 20 DEC 2020

Taking nearly a month and sailing over Christmas, this luxury cruise makes for a festive season to remember. From the glitz of Dubai, you'll sail to some of the Middle East's most exciting destinations, taking in Abu Dhabi's impressive monuments, Oman's ancient forts and the paradisiacal islands of the Maldives, on which you'll spend two sun-soaked days. Alongside the exploration, you'll take advantage of all the luxury *Sirena* has to offer, from four fine-dining restaurants to newly refurbished staterooms and a stunning spa. That's as well as such classic onboard indulgences as traditional afternoon teas, pianist-accompanied sundowners and sun-soaked dips at the pool deck. You'll then explore India's Kerala fishing villages and Goa's golden beaches before discovering the iconic Golden Triangle on a private, five-day tour. Highlights include watching the sun rise over the Taj Mahal, exploring the storied carvings of Agra Fort and taking in the grand palaces and bustling markets of Rajasthan's capital – Jaipur. What's more, you'll be treated to stays at some of India's most luxurious accommodation, from ultra-chic urban retreats to an immaculately restored *haveli* complete with spa and courtyard dining.

**PRICES START FROM £4,095 PP** incl. flights, private transfers, 15 nights aboard Oceania's *Sirena* with all onboard meals, WiFi and butler service & 6 nights post-cruise accommodation with daily breakfast & private touring. Departs 20 December 2020. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/171855](http://wexas.com/171855).



# Nights out with Azamara®

At Wexas, we always recommend Azamara® for those looking to explore a destination in depth. Indeed, on each voyage, a curated repertoire of optional shore excursions are available to help you get to the heart of each port. And, whether you choose to immerse yourself in the local culture, uncover a region's natural wonders, or even take to the air in a helicopter or light aircraft for the most spectacular

views, it's all complemented by Azamara's signature sense of style.

What's more, with late night departures in selected ports, you'll have time to keep exploring even when others have left. With the day-trippers gone, it's the chance to watch city streets come alive or simply enjoy a quiet drink in a traditional pub. In fact, each cruise includes a complimentary

AzAmazing Evening®, such as the champagne reception and Beatles tribute performance in Liverpool's spectacular St George's Hall, included on our featured sailing to Iceland, detailed below.

Back on board you'll also enjoy included fine dining, drinks and gratuities as well as shuttle services to and from ports and a dedicated concierge service. There's even live music and Broadway-style cabaret shows to keep you entertained on overnight sailings.

## VOYAGE TO ICELAND

16-DAY EXPEDITION CRUISE | DEPARTS 6 AUGUST 2020

This no-fly cruise brings you among Iceland's snow-capped mountains, stunning fjords and volcanic cliffs, between stops in some of the UK's liveliest port towns. On board *Azamara Pursuit*™, you'll enjoy complimentary amenities and 24-hour room service in your elegant stateroom, as well as seven restaurants, a spa and pool for unwinding between ports of call. And of course, you'll have plenty of time to explore Iceland's beauty, from its magical wilderness to picture-perfect remote villages. Optional excursions cover sightseeing in the famous Golden Circle, bird-watching among the fjords, hiking to majestic waterfalls and much more.

PRICES START FROM £3,365 PP incl. 15 nights aboard *Azamara Pursuit*™ incl. drinks, full-board dining & AzAmazing Evening®. Departs 6 Aug 20. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/170617](http://wexas.com/170617).





# Scenic Eclipse: Luxury at the ends of the Earth



Wexas cruise specialist **Tim Tan** casts his expert eye over Scenic's industry-leading discovery yacht.

Christened in September 2019 in New York City by none other than Dame Helen Mirren, *Scenic Eclipse* is the world's ultimate discovery yacht, combining the highest possible ice class with a flawlessly sleek design. Smaller than its competitors, it's able to go where other ships simply can't. Indeed, the lucky few aboard – just 228 passengers or 200 in polar regions – are hosted by a near one-to-one staff-to-guest ratio, promising an intimate, private-yacht atmosphere. Lucky clients can expect the likes of butler service and private verandahs across the all-suite accommodation. Thinking of upgrading? Then add in everything from Jacuzzis and private dining areas to commanding views over the ship's bow.

This being Scenic, it's all wrapped up in a fully inclusive experience, showcased across a comprehensive range of 6-star facilities. Alongside a host of superb dining options, and the usual hot tubs, pools and spa, *Scenic Eclipse* even features its very own pair of helicopters and a submarine for a unique perspective on the world's oceans, weather-dependent, of course. That's alongside an all-inclusive collection of shore excursions, led by the experienced Discovery Team, which will see you head out on Zodiac cruises, snorkel trips, kayak paddles and scuba dives. I, for one, can't wait to step on board.

## ANTARCTICA IN DEPTH on *Scenic Eclipse*

16-DAY EXPEDITION CRUISE

For many, Antarctica is the last frontier – a wilderness of dramatic ice formations and unique wildlife. Sailing aboard *Scenic Eclipse*, this itinerary adds in plenty of all-inclusive luxury, from butler-served suites to the indulgences of the onboard spa. It's all enjoyed alongside a comprehensive programme of excursions, offering the chance to get up close to seals and penguins, kayak next to giant icebergs, spot breaching whales on Zodiac cruises and visit working scientific research bases. What's more, for a supplement, you'll be able to make the most of the ship's onboard submarine and helicopters. For an added spot of luxury, you'll also be treated to a pre- and post-cruise stay in Buenos Aires.

**PRICES START FROM £10,795 PP** incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights B&B accommodation, all touring & 11 nights aboard *Scenic Eclipse* with selected shore excursions & all-inclusive drinks & dining. For more information and a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171861](http://wexas.com/171861).



While *Scenic Eclipse* sails everywhere from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean, it's the ship's polar expeditions that really capture the imagination. My favourite has to be its Antarctica In Depth itinerary, detailed above.



# STEAM SHIP SUDAN

*Adventures on Agatha Christie's Nile*



Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* is a tale of murder and intrigue set on one of the world's most exotic rivers. Now, a big-screen adaptation of the novel is scheduled for release in 2020, bringing renewed interest to Egypt's golden waterway. And, it's on the very ship that Christie sailed on in 1933 – the luxury *Steam Ship Sudan* – that you can relive the romance of a bygone era that inspired one of her most famous works.

The *SS Sudan* is elegant and airy; rich wood panelling lines its broad passageways and soft linen curtains flutter against open windows. Its five suites and 18 cabins feature parquet flooring, gilded bed frames and period detailing, while genuine

historical artefacts adorn the walls and furnishings of the bar, lounge and restaurant. Life onboard is serene and unhurried; you can sip hibiscus punch on the upper deck as you watch the world float by.

And of course, it is this world outside the ship, home of Pharaohs and Kings, that makes a journey here so special. In Cairo, expert Egyptologists will guide you around the Great Pyramids of Giza and the enigmatic Sphinx. In Abydos, you'll tour the Temples of Seti, Dendera and Hathor, beautifully restored with rich, colourful bas-reliefs. An adventure to the Valley of the Kings sees you exploring the tombs of Ramses VI and

Ramose, resplendent with intact hieroglyphics and paintings from the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

And, at the end of the Nile Valley, ancient Nubia emerges, a region extending from the river valley to the shores of the Red Sea, down into Sudan and across to the Libyan desert. Palm groves and tropical plants dot the banks of the river, while floating restaurants serve freshly caught fish. After sunset at Philae Temple Island, a sound and light show illuminates the grounds as the story of Isis and Osiris is re-created. There is a magical quality to every experience here – follow in Agatha Christie's footsteps and you'll see why.

## DEATH ON THE NILE CRUISE

9-DAY LUXURY RIVER CRUISE

Alongside a luxury stay in Cairo, this itinerary re-creates the magic of Christie's tour-de-force novel with a sailing from Luxor to Aswan, pausing daily for included tours of some of Egypt's most important historical sites. Explore the Great Pyramids at Giza, and the holy city of Abydos, home to temples inscribed with ancient hieroglyphics. Then, arrive at the Valley of the Kings to explore royal tombs and uncover the secrets of the afterlife. You'll finish your journey at the edge of ancient Nubia, surrounded by lush tropical palms and yet more sacred temples. On board *Steam Ship Sudan*, you'll discover a charming restaurant, airy rooms and peaceful lounge areas, the perfect place to retire after a busy day of sightseeing.

**PRICES START FROM £3,400 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, 2 nights B&B accommodation in Cairo & tours, 5 nights river cruise on *SS Sudan* with meals, drinks & daily tours. For a full itinerary, visit [wexas.com/171854](http://wexas.com/171854).

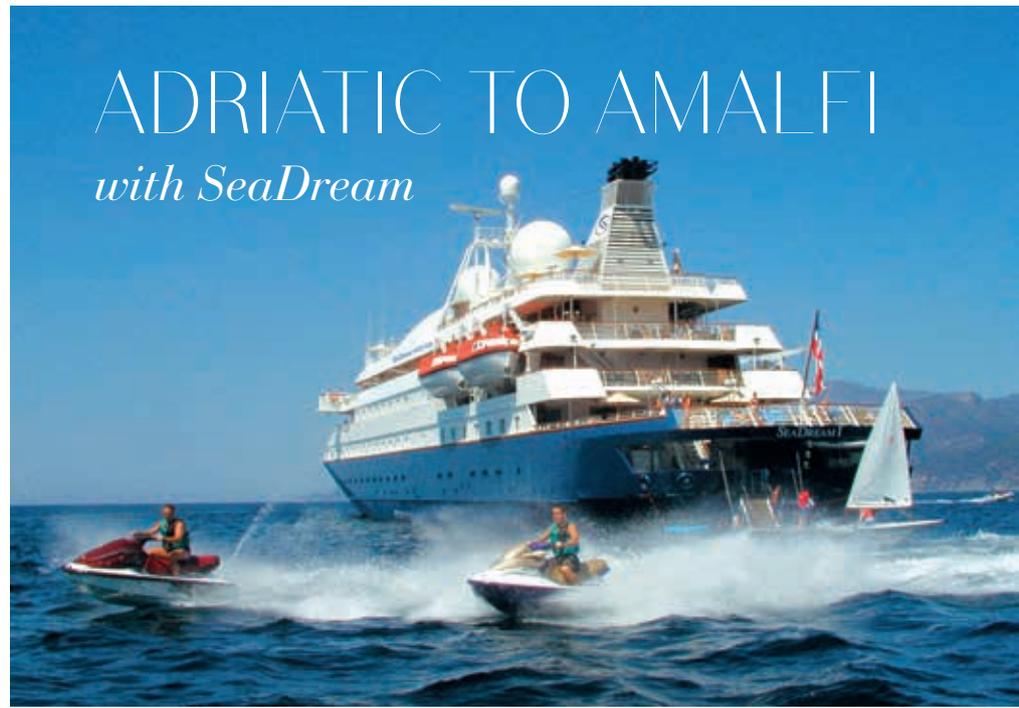




Combining the concept of small-ship luxury cruising with a yacht-club feel, SeaDream offers guests something a little different. Its two ships, *SeaDream I* and *II*, each host just 112 passengers served by a nearly 1:1 staff-to-guest ratio – this is attentive service at its finest.

However, it's not only about size; SeaDream curates a full yachting lifestyle. Marbled staterooms all come with ocean views and complimentary minibars, the small casino is perfect for a nightcap, and the all-inclusive dining and open cocktail bars are best enjoyed al fresco. And, on deck, there's also everything from pool and Jacuzzi soaks to complimentary yoga and Balinese beds.

It's all wrapped up in a highly personalised, anticipatory service, whether that's the waiter surprising you with your favourite dessert or the bartender knowing you by both your name and your drink order. Then, alongside the library, golf simulator



and sauna-equipped fitness centre, it's the water-sports marina that truly excites. Wakeboarding, paddleboarding and kayaking are all on offer – there are even personal sailboats – all supervised by the dedicated team of marina staff.

What's more, given the ship's size, it's able to access the quieter ports that others simply can't, something showcased in the itinerary below. To make it even more special, we've also included a trip on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.



## ORIENT EXPRESS, ADRIATIC AND AMALFI

14-DAY RAIL JOURNEY AND CRUISE | DEPARTS 27 SEP 2020

Let piano-accompanied drinks and multi-course delights see you over the French Alps aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express for a night in a Venetian palace followed by a yacht-club cruise on the boutique *SeaDream II*. Cruising into picturesque Hvar and idyllic Fiskardo, alongside the headline acts of Dubrovnik, Vis, Capri and Corfu, you'll experience the very best of the Adriatic and Amalfi Coast. Each day, make use of kayaks, sailboats and snorkelling gear in the ship's water-sports marina before relaxing in the onboard spa, pool and freshwater jacuzzi. Bid farewell to the ship with a glass of wine in Civitavecchia, gateway to the Eternal City.

**PRICES START FROM £9,180 PP** incl. flights, UK airport lounge access, private transfers, 1 night full-board on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, 1 night Venice & 10 nights all-inclusive on *SeaDream II* incl. drinks, dining & gratuities. Departs 27 Sep 2020. For a full itinerary and all inclusions, visit [wexas.com/157970](https://www.wexas.com/157970).





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