TRAVEL + LEISURE

Where To Go For The Holidays

VIENNA
MAUI
PROVENCE
TOKYO
VIEQUES
CHARLESTON
RIO
QUEBEC CITY
VENICE

22 TRIPS OF A LIFETIME
TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

On a quest to bring you the world’s most extraordinary experiences, we reached out to some of our favorite tour operators and asked them to create exclusive itineraries just for T+L readers. The result? Luxury camps in Antarctica, an Italian Slow Food immersion, Egyptian ruins at sunrise, and more. PLUS All the information you need to book now. REPORTED BY PETER J. FRANK

UNITED STATES

1

The American Southwest
Essential Canyon Country

The Operator Off the Beaten Path
The Highlights Escape the crowds in America’s iconic desert landscape. Start with a lesson in canyoneering—exploring the slot canyons of Utah’s Zion National Park by foot and ropa—followed by a stay at the new Amangiri, near Lake Powell, in Utah. A three-day raft trip through the Grand Canyon includes hikes and gourmet food. ➞
TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

7 Patagonia
Luxury at the End of the World
The Operator Blue Parallel
The Highlights Expert guides and special access help tame Patagonia's rugged landscape. On Peninsula Valdés, watch sea lions and whales from your cliffside villa, which is stocked with limited-production Malbecs. Meet with a glaciologist before an ice-trekking excursion on Perito Moreno. In Ushuaia, you'll stay in a lodge overlooking the Beagle Channel, which you'll explore by paddle with a former canoekist from the Argentinian Olympic team, 800/256-5507; blueparallel.com; October-April, from $10,500 for seven days.

8 France
Cycling and Châteaux in the Loire
The Operator Butterfield & Robinson The Highlights Pedal through the gardens and sunflower fields of the Loire Valley, touring grand châteaux, tasting little-known wines such as Domaine de Noiré Chinon, and dining at the home of the renowned chef Jean-Claude Rigollet. Only B&R stays at the 15th-century Château du Rivau, where Joan of Arc was once a guest. 888/551-9090; butterfield.com; May-September, from $6,755 for seven days.

9 Italy
Walking Through Piedmont
The Operator Country Walkers The Highlights Get to know the birthplace of the Slow Food movement on foot (average three to six miles per day). Participate in a tasting at the historic Marchesi di Barolo winery, visit with a local cheese maker, and go hunting for white truffles in Neive. Learn to cook traditional Piedmontese dishes such as truffle ravioli and vitello tonnato at a family-run restaurant, and then dine on your own creations. 800/464-9255; countrywalkers.com; May-October, from $5,498 for eight days.

10 Russia
Glimpse the Imperial Past
The Operator Exeter International The Highlights See Russia like a Romanov, with access to buildings closed to most. In Moscow, view the Kremlin's Faceted Chamber, where the czars held receptions, and go backstage at the circus. In St. Petersburg, explore the Hermitage and meet with a curator specializing in a genre of your choosing. In between are a caviar tasting and a seven-day luxury cruise up the Volga River. 800/635-1008; exeterinternational.com; June-September, from $10,650 for 11 days.

11 Turkey
Ancient and Modern Aegean
The Operator Geographic Expeditions The Highlights Spend three days in Istanbul, then head to Termessos, one of Turkey's most complete—and least visited—classical ruins, a mountainside fortress that resisted the armies of Alexander the Great. Afterwards, board a gulet, a traditional wooden vessel, and sail the Turkish Coast, with stops at sites where Greek and Roman myths originated. 800/777-6133; geoexp.com; April-October, from $6,480 for 12 days.

12 China
Secrets of Shangri-La
The Operator WildChina The Highlights Tour the snowcapped mountain landscape of northwestern Yunnan province via a circuit of three secluded luxury lodges. Watch the sun set behind 19,000-foot peaks from your room, furnished with Tibetan art, rugs, and furniture, then meditate with a Tibetan master and hike ancient pilgrimage routes. 888/902-8808; wildchina.com; May 21-27 or September 24-30, from $1,985 for seven days.

13 India
Celebrate Holi Week
The Operator Banyan Tours & Travel The Highlights This greatest-hits tour is designed to coincide with Holi, the Hindu festival of color, which you will celebrate with the maharajah of Jodhpur. Add in the Taj Mahal, tiger viewing in Ranthambore National Park, and a game of elephant polo, plus sessions with a master chef, an art historian, and a respected jeweler. 866/401-3705; banyantours.com; through April 30, from $10,705 for 11 days.

14 Japan
Kyoto Behind Closed Doors
The Operator Wabi-Sabi Japan The Highlights Unravel the mysteries of the former imperial capital. A priest brings you to off-limits sections of an iconic temple in western Kyoto. Chef Tomoyuki Konagaya closes his restaurant to take you shopping in the Nishiki market, and shows you how to slice sashimi and other delicacies. 888/843-7068; wabisabi.com; April-October, from $4,595 for 10 days.

Denotes a Global Vision Awards winner. See page 145.