

AVOID FLIGHT DELAYS! BEST (AND WORST) AIRLINES AND AIRPORTS

TRAVEL + LEISURE

Where To Go For The
Holidays

VIENNA
MAUI
PROVENCE
TOKYO
VIEQUES
CHARLESTON
RIO
QUEBEC CITY
VENICE

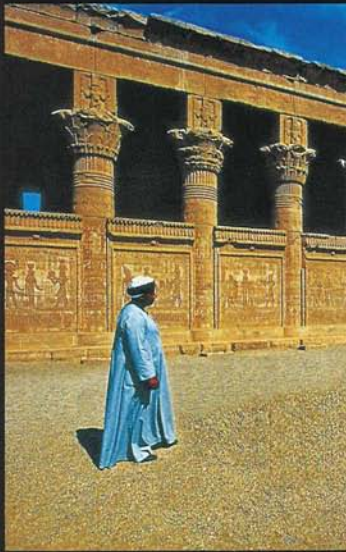
22
TRIPS
OF A
LIFETIME

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARTIN HARTLEY.COM/COURTESY OF KENSINGTON TOURS; COURTESY OF MARCHESI DI BAROLO; RICHARD KOEGL/COURTESY OF COUNTRY WALKERS; COURTESY OF COX & KINGS; COURTESY OF ABERCROMBIE & KENT PICTURE LIBRARY



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 rope—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. >>



TRANSFORMATION VACATIONS Clockwise from top left: Exploring ice waves in Antarctica with Kensington Tours; inside the Marchesi di Barolo winery, in Piedmont, Italy, led by Country Walkers; cheese maker Silvio Pistone in Piedmont; the 17th-century Cartagena Cathedral, included on a Cox & Kings five-day Colombia tour; Egypt's Dendera Temple, on a trip with Abercrombie & Kent.

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 canoeist from the Argentinean Olympic team. 800/256-5307; blueparallel.com; October–April; from \$10,500 for seven days.



EUROPE

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 *grands 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. 866/551-9090; butterfield.com; May–September; from \$6,795 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. 800/633-1008; 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. Afterward, board a *gulet*, a traditional wooden vessel, and sail the Turquoise Coast, with stops at sites where Greek and Roman myths originated. 800/777-8183; geoex.com; April–October; from \$6,480 for 12 days.



ASIA

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 »



The 15th-century Château du Rivau, in France's Loire Valley, on a bike trip with Butterfield & Robinson.