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Travel bucket list: 2016 and beyond

Global to-do dream trips

By Lark Gould - - *Thursday, December 31, 2015*

Gotta bucket list? There is no time like resolution time to create one. Whether you are an experienced wanderer or an experienced dreamer, you are likely to have a special place or two you do not want to miss tucked within the pages of your life's to-do list. But if you need some ideas to spark your fantasies before calling your travel agent for some sage advice and discounts, here is an [A to Z list](#) for what dreams may come with a little inspiration.

Africa

Micato Safaris puts you in the wild: sunrise balloon floats over the African savannah, mid-day picnics with the elephants and wildebeest, penning the adventures as Ernest Hemingway might have done, in a luxury tent under endless stars.

Argentina

For those explorers setting out on an adventure toward tales untold in Antarctica, a start with a luxury stay at Arakur Ushuaia Resort and Spa in Tierra del Fuego can make a perfect launch memory. Find custom designed rooms with large windows, and sensual soaks in a spa overlooking the massive peaks of Patagonia.

Australia

Sail through unspoiled rivers and coves on the edges of the Kimberly and into the wilds of West Papua and Papua New Guinea on a super luxury yacht with North Star Cruises. The True North is 164 feet long with room for 36 passengers, 20 crew and a helicopter on top. See places humans dare to tread.

Canada

Watch icebergs float by along the northeastern tip of North America from your cozy room, one of 29 suites, at the Fogo Island Inn in Newfoundland. Quiet, pure, nearly godly, the Inn offers peace and a rare immersion in rural, can-do life in rugged Canada. Fogo Island Inn is one of National Geographic's picks for Unique Lodges of the World.

Caribbean

What's a life gone by without a stay at the magic island of Musha Cay? A private island resort, Musha Cay in the Bahamas' Exuma isles, is one of the true life works of master magician David Copperfield, who ensures every guest gets all the privacy possible as well as an ongoing show in entertainment, food, sublime surroundings, and unexpected detail. Only 24 guests here with natural – and the preternatural – settings all to themselves.

Colombia

Stay in an authentic 17th-century Mansion in the middle of colonial Cartagena at Casa San Agustin. The city's well-preserved 11-kilometer wall surrounds the Old Town and was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 -- and those designs and traditions are reflected in Casa San Agustin's ambling layout and luxurious décor.

Costa Rica

Villa Manzu makes a stay in Costa Rica's Liberia region particularly memorable, possibly because it is a mansion with butlers and chefs and a vacation all to its self. Overlooking the Pacific, it shares the Peninsula Papagayo's resort region and amenities with the Four Seasons, but it remains unto itself with eight suites, pools, dining, a private beach and a spa.

Ecuador

The Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador is rife with experiences and natural immersions found nowhere else on earth. For guests who want to savor the experience of evolutionary time travel, a stay at Pikaia Lodge will sooth the senses and satisfy the soul. Tortoises, boobies, frigate birds, seal pups and Galapagos penguins outnumber any human count and you can swim with creatures that choose to swim with you during daily sailings on Pikaia's private yacht adventures.

Fiji

The Wakaya Club & Spa is Fiji's answer to a sustainable Eden. The resort is on its own island, a five square mile paradise off of Suva where guests can scuba or snorkel through a marine preserve, accessed directly in front of their bure. Sublime dining, healthy vacationing, guests have the island to themselves.

French Polynesia

Being Marlon Brando – for a day or a week – comes with perks. Mostly that means being in one of 35 exclusive villas on the island of Tetiaroa in Tahiti at The Brando, a celebrity showpiece owned, built and designed by the legendary actor. Rustic luxury here means sustainable vacations with Deep-sea fishing, photography outings and whale watching tours available.

Iceland & Scandinavia

The magic of the northlands pop through customized tours to remote regions at the top of the earth. Nordic Luxury provides these experiences to order, whether sleeping in a suite made of ice, soaking in thermal waters while the northern lights whip across the skies, or exploring ice fjords with a pack of energetic huskies.

Italy

Any vacation in Italy will embrace food and fashion and to focus on the first of these iconic elements, a stay at La Corte dei Papi can satisfy the cause. Check into one of 15 accommodations in the circa 1700s Relais & Chateau estate located deep in the rolling hills of Tuscany. Wine tours and tastings, top Tuscan dining, and a sensual Ottoman spa create the on-property experience while visiting nearby quaint villages in the Umbria offers up authentic Italy in all its beauty. Finish it up with a fashion stay at the Armani Hotel Milano in the heart of Milan, the iconic designer's flagship property.

Maldives

These remote and untouched islands east of Africa and South of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean offer some of the most sumptuous stays on earth. TripAdvisor has tabbed Gili

Lankanfushi as the best hotel in the world with 45 overwater bungalows, an award-winning wine cellar and some of the clearest water on earth for swimming and exploring. At Six Senses Laamu, each villa is a pool villa with butler service to keep the bar raised high.

Mexico

Retreat into the jungles of the Yucatan to arrive at the Chable Destination Spa (opening in 2016). Forty villas with private pools in the middle of the Mayan forest promise to be more than a place of exotic beauty. They are also a place of healing. The spa is inside a "cenote," a natural sinkhole considered sacred and providing an opening to fresh water and healing spirits. Mayan-inspired spa treatments harness these powers with a steam room, a sauna, a salt cabin and a floatarium.

New Zealand

A stay in New Zealand can have three facets. The beauty rolls in from the roiling Pacific with a stay at the Lodge at Kauri Cliffs on New Zealand's Bay of Islands. With 22 fireplace suites, panoramic ocean views, and plenty of natural immersion, amid cliff walks and kauri forests, the retreat offers a slice of North Island life that contrasts experiences from its sister properties. The Farm at Cape Kidnapper is a farm indeed, with sheep, working dogs, golf and a spa, a 50-foot heated pool, library, and wine cellar tasting room. All this is in the midst of North Island's dramatic east coast atop 6,000 rolling acres of pastureland. Finally, the third sister stands apart from the others as a feat of fine design in the heart of South Island's Queenstown on Lake Wakatipu. Matakauri Lodge has 11 suites, each with private terraces with dramatic lake and mountain views – close to some of New Zealand's prime outdoor adventure areas.

Nicaragua

Bucket list check-offs must come with bragging rights locations and one of these is Mukul Beach Golf & Spa, Nicaragua's first and most luxurious resort found on the Pacific Emerald Coast. An emerging destination, Nicaragua is yet untouched and undiscovered by the cruise ships and charter flights. And Mukul is as untouched as it gets without sacrificing luxury with 37 spacious free-standing accommodations, a mystical-themed spa area and plenty of jungle and beach for roaming. Mukul is safe and fun for children and firmly romantic for adults. Gracious hosts, makers of the country's best rums, offer plenty of ways to explore the island.

Puerto Rico

A stay at the Condado Vanderbilt on the edge of old San Juan is now as dazzling as it was when it opened in 1919 and entertained a host of luminaries – from Errol Flynn to the Roosevelts. A recent makeover has given the grand dame new legs and what are now 319 newly opulent guest rooms all restored to former glory in their perches over the Atlantic.

Thailand

Between the food, the aromas and the pops of gold reflecting off sacred Buddhas and towering pagodas, Thailand is a kingdom to behold and a country as welcoming as a roaring fire on a snowy day. Experiences of Thailand and Thai culture are as varied as there are faces of Buddha and some of them are precious, indeed. Consider Chiva-Som in Hua Hin that offers healing therapies, innovative beauty treatments, and programs

to build health through body, spirit and place – located on a quiet white sand beach opening to the Gulf of Thailand. The Siam in Bangkok provides a rare look into the glory days of Bangkok's colonial past with posh rooms over the Chao Phraya and themed retreat packages encompassing unusual treatments at the onsite Opium Spa. Guests can learn the art of Thai cooking, traditional Muay Thai, or dare to get a Sak Yant tattoo.

United Kingdom

A stay at the Lanesborough in London brings all the pomp and circumstance one could wish for in the Queen's territory in one perfect place in prestigious Knightsbridge, with panoramic views of Hyde Park. Recently reopened after a top to bottom redo, the nearly 300-year-old property (originally a hospital) offers a tea time worthy of tales, a Michelin star dining experience, 24-hour butler service and stately rooms and suites that could be found in a fairytale or a local palace.

United States

Bucket list hotel and resort experiences in the U.S. abound and reflect the rising bar in guest wants as well as the varied experiences to be had in different regions of the country. Consider the Halekulani, a celebrated circa 1907 hotel near Waikiki that offers guests the getaway vacation they crave in Hawaii with sophisticated packages in art, spa and shopping. An oasis of calm, a stone's throw from designer shopping in Honolulu, it is possible for guests to have it all ways at this property. Other bucket lists may call for a ranch stay and that would be the Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek in Wyoming, where cowboy country mixes with creature comforts and plenty of horseplay. Cabins are not cabins but villas on the chaparral., and dining goes from crystal and china settings to campfire sing-alongs. A more sedate experience in the great north woods not far from the madding crowd would be Twin Farms in Vermont. This is a retreat for all seasons where each room or suite is custom designed with plenty of artful interiors -- and those artful plays extend to the cathedral like spa ambiance and the creative gourmet pleasures to be discovered.

Lark Gould reports on travel and the travel industry from Los Angeles, covering travel trends and destinations on Travel-Intel.com and etravel.news.