

ELLE TRAVEL

ON THE RADAR

What's the itinerary for savvy travellers in 2017? Booking by emoji, extreme stargazing, oh, and the secret unspoilt beaches of India

Edited by Susan Ward Davies



Above: The eco-friendly Hotel Playa Koralia resort in Colombia. Bottom right: 1 Hotel in South Beach, Miami

RADHA VYAS

CO-FOUNDER OF FLASHPACK.COM

TRENDING COLOMBIA

Colombia is hot right now. Since the country recently signed a new peace deal, tourism here is rising as quickly as you can say 'quiet Caribbean coastline'. As well as amazing beaches, it's home to wonderful coffee, and you might recognise its lush jungle setting from hit Netflix series *Narcos*.

DO IT: For an eco-friendly designer resort, Hotel Playa Koralia (koralia.com) is the perfect getaway on the sparkling Santa Marta coast. And with doubles at £57 a night per person, it's a snip.

TRENDING SOLO TRAVEL

Holidays for one have firmly shaken off their stigma of sad singletons, and the latest trend is all about small group adventures. You may begin the trip as strangers, but after trekking Peru's Vinicunca, the 'rainbow mountain', together or sharing a wild night out in Havana, you'll soon become lifelong friends. Expect unforgettable experiences with like-minded adventure-seekers.

DO IT: Check out Flash Pack's group tours (flashpack.com).

TRENDING 360° CAMERAS

Forget selfies – 2017 is all about 360° cameras and 'surroundies', which capture the entire scene around you.

DO IT: The Ricoh Theta camera (theta360.com) takes great 360° shots, and the Nixie (flynixie.com) goes one step further with the 'wrist drone', a wearable camera that can also take pictures while hovering above you.



Above: South Korea is home to futuristic Songdo, a high-tech utopia. Left: Book via Expedia.co.uk for Lake Bled in Slovenia. Below and bottom right: La Granja Friends Of A Farmer retreat, Ibiza

JENNY SOUTHAN

FOUNDER OF GLOBETRENDERMAGAZINE.COM AND FEATURES EDITOR OF BUSINESS TRAVELLER MAGAZINE

TRENDING BIOPHILIA

The biophilia hypothesis is the belief that humans have a deep-rooted connection with all living things. In a wired world, hotel designers are offering solace with organic-inspired interiors and sustainable practices.

DO IT: New luxury chain 1 Hotels (1hotels.com) has three properties: two in New York and one in Miami. Their exteriors sport 'living walls' of plants, there are farm stands with free fruit in the lobby, interiors are panelled with reclaimed wood and beds have hemp mattresses. Meanwhile, at China's first carbon-neutral hotel, the roof and balconies of the sprawling Cachet Resort & Urban Hotel



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Wanfeng Valley (cachethotelgroup.com/en) are covered in trees, and the forthcoming Rosemont Hotel in Dubai (curiocollection3.hilton.com), opening in 2018, will house 7,000 sqm of artificial rainforest. Expect adventure trails, exotic plants, waterfalls, streams, a beach, and even a 'Jurassic marsh.'

TRENDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A new era in computing is taking us from science fiction to science fact, and Apple's Siri is just the beginning of the new virtual reality.

DO IT: Online travel companies, such as Kayak.co.uk, Expedia.co.uk and Skyscanner.net have created 'chatbots' so you can book holidays through Facebook Messenger. Self-driving taxis (nutonomy.com) have hit the roads of Singapore, and robots are delivering room service: Aloft Hotels (starwoodhotels.com/aloft-hotels) has Botlrs, and Hilton (hilton.com) has Connie. What Starwood is calling the world's first voice-activated hotel rooms are being trialled at Aloft Hotels in Boston and Santa Clara – just say, 'Goodnight' and the lights will go out. In Japan, the new Henna hotel (h-n-h.jp/en/guidance) is staffed entirely by robots in human and dinosaur form. You won't need a key to your room: doors are unlocked via facial recognition.

TRENDING EMOJI SERVICE

We are well-versed in communicating using aubergines, crying faces and clappy hands, so it makes sense to organise your travel experiences with these colourful abbreviations as well.

DO IT: It may be a gimmicky attempt by companies to connect with millennials, but



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Travel

why wouldn't you want to order a hangover package to your hotel room with nothing but a water droplet, pill and banana? Aloft Hotels' TiGi (Text it, Get it) service (aloftlondonexcel.com/tigi) launched last autumn in London and is now available in hotels across Europe and the US. Meanwhile, travel-deals site Cheap Flights began letting people search for flights with emojis in the summer. Want to fly from Tokyo to Sydney? Just use the koala bear and sushi icons.

TRENDING EXTREME TRAVEL

Research shows social status now comes from our experiences rather than the brands we wear. Travel companies are tapping into that sense of curiosity and adventure by packaging 'extreme' trips for the more intrepid among us.

DO IT: With the budget, you can do almost anything (Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic service plans to take people into space). Total Management (total-management.com) can organise Porsche ice-rally driving in Sweden, Responsible Travel (responsibletravel.com) runs sea-kayaking trips around Indonesia in search of komodo dragons, and Wild Frontiers (wildfrontierstravel.com) can take you along the Congo River from Kisangani to Kinshasa. Or venture to North Korea with Lupine Travel (lupinettravel.co.uk).

CLAUS SENDLINGER

CEO AND FOUNDER OF DESIGN HOTELS

TRENDING THE NEW COLLABORATION

Travellers are seeking meaningful brands and experiences, which also give them access to creative networks.

DO IT: International co-working spaces such as NeueHouse in LA, New York, and soon London, (neuehouse.com), unite occupants with weekly members-only talks and events. Design Hotels' La Granja (designhotels.com/la-granja), is an Ibiza retreat created with Friends of a Farmer (friendsofafarmer.com). Initiatives include communal farming, yoga and slow-food workshops.

TRENDING FESTIVAL MAKEOVER

SALT (salted.no) launched on an Arctic beach in Norway in 2014; the founders aim to raise environmental awareness.

DO IT: SALT plans to take its portable structures to countries such as Greenland, Scotland and Russia. Audiences will experience art, concerts, theatre and local food cultures. >



Above: Sea kayaking in Indonesia in search of komodo dragons



Top and above: Aloft London Excel Hotel





Above: The Tower Room at Jalakara Eco-Retreat. Bottom left: Give yourself a digital detox. Bottom right: The Six Senses, Douro Valley, Portugal

TOM MARCHANT

CO-FOUNDER OF THE BLACK TOMATO GROUP
TRENDING ANDAMAN ISLANDS & EAST INDIA

The east is an emerging part of India and less travelled than the south and Rajasthan, and the Andaman Islands give you beautiful unspoilt beaches that are way cheaper than the Maldives or Mauritius.

DO IT: The place to stay next year will be Kolkata's Glenburn Penthouse (glenburnteastate.com), opening in spring 2017, where you can trek through tea plantations. From Kolkata, fly east to the Andamans. This string of islands is home to some of the world's best beaches, where your only company on the sand might be the occasional elephant or two. Stay at Jalakara Eco-Retreat (jalakara.info), the first of its kind on the islands.

TRENDING MADAGASCAR

The ultimate must-see for lovers of wildlife and deserted beaches; there are species in Madagascar that you won't find anywhere else in the world.

DO IT: Miavana (timeandtideafrica.com) on Nosy Ankaon, the hotly anticipated private island, will be up and running by the end of 2016. Direct flights are starting soon from Johannesburg with Airlink (flyairlink.com) flying straight to the beautiful nearby beaches of Nosy Be island, some of the best stretches of sand in the Indian Ocean. Our other favourites? The islands of Nosy Tanikely and Tsarabanjina.

TRENDING FAR-FLUNG FITNESS

This year, fitness fans will travel halfway round the world to run a marathon or a sports challenge in somewhere exotic.

DO IT: In Cambodia's Angkor Wat, you can run a half-marathon (angkormarathon.org) around the world-famous temple ruins. When you're done, camp out under the stars in the jungle or in our favourite retreat, Phum Baitang (phumbaitang.com). Sign up for the Easter Island Marathon (maratonrapanui.cl) and you get to run around the remote Pacific island with its iconic *moai* head statues as a backdrop. Book all of these trips at blacktomato.com



ROMNEY JACOB

DIRECTOR OF MINDSET NORTH AMERICA AT WGSN
TRENDING SIGHT-DOING

Experimental is travel's new favourite buzzword, and there is a growing boom in consumers seeking out cultural adventures. Now sight-doing (cultural immersion through local experiences) is a higher priority than sight-seeing (typically, group tours of historical landmarks), and travel companies are on the case to reflect that.

DO IT: EatWith (eatwith.com) lets you pick a location (more than 200 cities) and a chef, then book an immersive dining experience or food tour. Meals are typically served at the chef's home and each is vetted by EatWith. Fancy a Balkan feast in New York or a 'live' tapas tasting in Barcelona? You've come to the right place.

TRENDING THE ECCENTRIC HOTEL

Minimalist hotel design is on the way out. The 'eccentric' trend is an unapologetic celebration of storytelling through design. More is more, and we predict a bold return to colour, print and pattern; interiors are theatrical and dramatic in scale.

DO IT: Forerunners are hotels such as Hôtel Maison Souquet, Paris (maisonsouquet.com/en), in the heart of Montmartre, which is big on opulence and period style, and whose designer, Jacques Garcia, took inspiration from the building's history as a brothel to create a darkly romantic getaway. In Switzerland, Maison Bergdorf (maisonbergdorf.ch) shows how to do contemporary eccentricity by marrying modern art with eclectic fabrics and floral wall coverings for a multicoloured aesthetic.

TRENDING THE HYPER-LOCAL HOTEL

The farm-to-table and artisanal food movements are inspiring us beyond trips to the farmers' market. Hotels are working with neighbourhood artisans and suppliers to inform design and guest experience.

DO IT: The Six Senses brand is at the forefront of the trend for luxury hotels, with a strong wellness message. Its first European destination is in a converted 19th-century estate in Portugal's port-making Douro Valley (sixsenses.com). The 19 acres of farmland provide fresh produce and the design relies heavily on local craftsmen and materials, including Portuguese limestone and ceiling installations made from upcycled wine bottles.



Top left: The stunning Angkor Wat, Cambodia. Top right and above: The eclectic Maison Bergdorf Hotel in Interlaken, Switzerland



SERGE DIVE

CEO AND FOUNDER OF BEYOND LUXURY MEDIA
TRENDING CURATED GROUP TRAVEL

Travel is becoming less about exclusivity and more about embracing experiences with people who share your passion.

DO IT: Tour operators will curate 'tribes', who want to experience powerful moments as a group, with trips including Burning Man Festival (burningman.org), AfrikaBurn (afrikaburn.com), the Wave Week floating festival in Croatia (croatia-wave.com) and Yacht Week (theyachtweek.com).

LOTTIE GROSS

WEB EDITOR AT ROUGH GUIDES, A LEADING TRAVEL PUBLISHER KNOWN FOR ITS 'TELL IT LIKE IT IS' ATTITUDE AND ACCURATE, UP-TO-DATE CONTENT

TRENDING NAMIBIA

Known for its Mars-like desert landscapes and national parks teeming with wildlife, Namibia is on the up for 2017.

DO IT: Take a scenic flight over the Skeleton Coast, where hulking shipwrecks lie half-swallowed by the sand, or climb the world's tallest sand dune at sunrise to look out over the Namib Desert, the oldest of its kind. It's all accessible by car, so it's the ultimate African road trip. Our new Namibia guidebook is out in 2017 (roughguides.com).

TAMARA HEBER-PERCY

FOUNDER AND CTO, MR & MRS SMITH
TRENDING THE GREAT BRITISH BREAK

Domestic tourism is enjoying a massive moment, and it's not just because of post-referendum exchange rates, but the current mini-boom in fantastic hotel openings.

DO IT: From seductive urban stays such as The Franklin in London (thefranklinlondon.com) and Bath's new No.15 Great Pulteney townhouse (no15greatpulteney.co.uk) to cool country manors such as Devon's The Pig At Combe, The Forest Side in the Lake District and The Painswick in Gloucestershire (allmrandmrsmith.com), the surge in stylish staycation spots means there's more choice than ever.

TOM HALL

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR OF LONELY PLANET
TRENDING STARGAZING, EVERYWHERE

As more of us have migrated to cities, the simple pleasure of the night sky has, for many, become harder to experience. Following on from the rise in trips to see the northern lights in Nordic countries, we predict a boom in destinations where you can find long, dark nights.

DO IT: In the UK, Galloway Forest Park and Northumberland National Park are both designated International Dark Sky Parks (darksky.org/idsp/parks), and James Turrell's Irish Sky Garden in West Cork's Liss Ard Estate (lissardestate.com) is an oval structure that perfectly frames the night sky. Further afield, top stargazing spots are the Aurora Domes at Finland's Lake Torassieppi for the Northern Lights (theaurorazone.com/aurora-dome), Chile's Atacama Desert, and Coonabarabran, New South Wales, AKA the astronomy capital of Australia. Just layer up, look up and enjoy the show.

TRENDING DIGITAL DETOX

If you've ever found yourself bumping into a lamp post while posting Instagrams, you might already think our device addiction is out of control. Help is at hand with a variety of tech-free holidays to encourage us to re-engage with the world around us.

DO IT: Time To Log Off (itstimetologoff.com) runs retreats in Somerset, Italy and Hawaii. ■



Top left: The Aurora Domes on the shores of the frozen lake Torassieppi in Finland. Top right: The Pig At Combe, Devon. Below: An aerial view of NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibia. Bottom left: A dirt road in scenic Namibia

