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Jordan Harvey, a South America specialist, plans treks in the Andes passing alpaca- and llama-filled pastures.

The more unpredictable our natural and political landscapes become, the more we feel the urge to visit places untouched by the news cycle. So, as we continue to support and keep a close watch on those areas hit hardest by a rash of hurricanes, fires, and foreign-policy blunders, we're craving the kind of life- and perspective-changing travel that's made all the more magical when planned by the pros—no matter how fearless and self-sufficient we sometimes feel. Because surviving in, say, the Bolivian jungle one day and meeting with the hottest artists in Lima the next requires both grit and access—to say nothing of a network of on-the-ground know-how that you quite literally can't live without in some places. Here are the experts, fixers, and experience makers you'll want in your foxhole. →

2017

TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

Photograph by Jérôme Gaillard

guests can watch wild-life and navigate floating villages aboard a private wooden boat. He's also figured out the best times to visit ancient complexes like Angkor Thom to avoid jostling with crowds.

CENTRAL ASIA

Zulya Rajabova

Silk Road Treasure Tours
Rajabova knows the top guides at the incredible Gur-e-Amir complex in Samarkand (a sort of Silk Road Taj Mahal) and the best hotels across the region.

CHINA

Gerald Hatherly

Abercrombie & Kent
Thanks to decades spent on the ground here (and his perfect Mandarin), Hatherly can pull off seemingly impossible access to the Forbidden City and Xi'an's Terracotta Army site.

Mei Zhang

WildChina
She's a Chinese-food expert, plotting quests for prosciutto-like ham in Yunnan and fiery *mapo* tofu in Chengdu. She's also built a network of experts who add context to trips throughout the country.

THE HIMALAYAS

Sanjay Saxena

Nomadic Expeditions
He'll handle all that byzantine paperwork to secure trekking permits, arrange flight-seeing over the Himalayas, and set up one-on-ones with scholars, philanthropists, climbers, and craftspeople.

INDIA

Lucy Davison

Banyan Tours & Travels
Davison works across the country, planning treks in mountainous Ladakh, palace tours in Jaipur, and visits to festivals in Tamil Nadu.

Bertie and Victoria Dyer

India Beat

The Jaipur-based couple has organized elephant-tracking trips, visits to polo matches, and gallery tours led by curators at spots like Delhi's National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Jonny Bealby

Wild Frontiers

Bealby is a logistics mastermind who has planned expeditions through the Hindu Kush and Kashmir.

INDONESIA

Diane Embree

Bali Barong Tours

Think Bali is overtouristed? She'll guide you to spots that don't even appear on maps and set you up at luxury hotels almost nobody's heard about.

JAPAN

Nancy Craft

Esprit Travel & Tours
She helps open doors to artists, chefs, craftspeople, musicians, Shinto priests, and Buddhist abbots.

THE MALDIVES

Lindsey Wallace

Linara Travel

He knows which resorts have the best service and which offer the quickest access to snorkeling in the United Nations-protected Hanifaru Bay. He also knows Mauritius and the Seychelles.

MONGOLIA

Jalsa Urubshurow

Nomadic Expeditions

He'll get you riding horses, watching traditional wrestling and archery, shooting incredible photos in the Gobi Desert, and touring the highlights of Mongolia's rapidly modernizing capital.

MYANMAR

Tyler Dillon

Trufflepig

He's constructed pop-up hotels along remote hiking routes and planned street-food tours. Dillon can also set up meetings with activists and officials for timely briefings on the country's political landscape.

Maximilian Horsley

Arakan Travel

He takes travelers deep into the countryside for market tours, monastery visits, and encounters with hill tribes and with insiders who can contextualize the country's ongoing internal conflicts.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

April Cole and Andrea Ross

Journeys Within Tour Company

This pair is well-connected across the region: In Cambodia, they can make your Angkor Wat excursion pop; in Thailand, they arrange street-food

tours; in Vietnam, they introduce travelers to veterans of the war for a local perspective on the conflict.

G. W. "Sandy" Ferguson

Asia Desk

He can make intros to artists in Thailand, conservationists in Siem Reap, archaeologists in Angkor, and monks in Luang Prabang.

Catherine Heald

Remote Lands

Heald is at her best with multicountry Asia trips, coordinating drivers, guides, and private tours, whether you're going to remote villages in Myanmar, the Borobudur Buddhist temple on Java, or on rain forest treks through Borneo.

VIETNAM

Nathan Lane

Butterfield & Robinson

Lane is a pro at pulling together cycling trips through villages in the Red River Delta, Vespa tours in Saigon, and sails off the coast of Hoi An.

AUSTRALIA AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC



AUSTRALIA

Drew Kluska

The Tailor

Kluska's roster of winemakers, fashion insiders, and Olympic medalists adds next-level insights to trips.

Pedro O'Connor

Epic Private Journeys

He's planned private-jet adventures that hopscotch the country and led scuba divers to the Great Barrier Reef.

Stuart Rigg

Southern Crossings

Go behind the scenes at some of Australia's most famous vineyards, charter yachts to the Great Barrier Reef, and explore the wild, raw Northern Territory with Rigg's help.

FIJI AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Lynette Wilson

Destination World

She's the ultimate go-to in the region for scuba diving, water-view villas, and off-the-grid hiking.

NEW ZEALAND

Donna Thomas

New Zealand Travel

She plans hikes with the best guide in the Papamoa Hills, evenings with Maori elders, and wine tastings at the country's top vineyards.

Trevor Thomas

Southern Crossings

Thomas scours his home country for new lodges, camps, and villas (like the suites at Mahu Whenua), and adventures like boating through fjords.

SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

Kleon Howe

The Art of Travel

Howe knows every inch of the islands: which resorts are worth booking (Vahine Island and the Hotel Kia Ora), which Saturday farmers' market is worth a detour (Avarua's), and which windsurfing spots still have the best breeze (he likes the Aitutaki lagoon).

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA



ARGENTINA

Maita Barrenechea

Mai 10

She was among the first to offer fly-fishing trips to Patagonia and to open estancias to guests for horseback riding. She's still our go-to for both.

"THIS SEASON WE'RE DOING THE FIRST-EVER YACHT-BASED HELI-SKIING TO ANTARCTICA'S INNER PEAKS. WE ACTUALLY CHARTERED TWO VESSELS, SO TWO HELICOPTERS CAN TRAVEL WITH THE MOTHER SHIP."

Tim Soper, expedition ships specialist



ARGENTINA, CHILE,
AND COLOMBIA

Harry Hastings

Plan South America

Hastings has intel on top-notch estancias and can connect you with all sorts of interesting locals, from emerald miners to rock-star chefs.

ARGENTINA, CHILE,
AND PERU

Jordan Harvey

Knowmad Adventures

He's scoured the whole of Chile, scrambled all over Machu Picchu, and searched the cities and pampas of Argentina to find the top hikes and best hotels.

BOLIVIA AND PERU

Marisol Mosquera

Aracari

She taps insiders like museum curators, chefs (like Pedro Miguel Schiaffino of Lima's Malabar), and even jungle-survival experts for her trips.

BRAZIL

Martin Frankenberg

Matuete

Frankenberg is dialed in with incredible villas, Amazon River charter yachts, and expeditions to the dunes of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park.

Paul Irvine

Dehouche

He's planned exclusive workshops with a local fashion designer, cooking classes with chef Felipe Bronze of Oro, art tours, jaguar tracking, and samba dancing lessons.

Jill Siegel

South American Escapes

If you want the best seats at the Carnival parade, a trip up the Amazon in search of pink dolphins, or a yacht charter off the coast of Paraty, Siegel can hook you up.

"I HAD A CLIENT, A PRO CRICKET UMPIRE, WHO WANTED TO CALL A GAME AT THE FAMOUS NEWLANDS STADIUM IN CAPE TOWN. I ARRANGED IT—AND DINNER WITH SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL CRICKET TEAM."

Deborah Calmeyer, Southern Africa specialist

CHILE

Brian Pearson

Upscape

He knows the top boutique hotels (like Casa Bouchon), the Sno-Cat guides who'll have you skiing chutes, and the cycling routes for riders of all fitness levels.

COLOMBIA

Boris Seckovic

Amakuna

Seckovic can make it all happen: street-art tours through Medellín's once-dangerous *comunas*, dark-roast tasting at a coffee farm, or a visit to lesser-known villages like Mompós.

COSTA RICA

Irene Edwards

GreenSpot Travel

She can pull off helicopter flights over volcanoes or a day at a sloth sanctuary.

COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA,
AND PANAMA

Pierre Gedeon

Nicaragua Adventures

He's clutch when it comes to multicountry trips that combine running rapids with relaxing at retreats like Nekupe.

ECUADOR AND PERU

Tom Damon

Southwind Adventures

His focus is active travel with guides like the grandson of one of the Peruvians who took Hiram Bingham to Machu Picchu.

EUROPE



CENTRAL EUROPE

Gwen Kozlowski

Exeter International

Kozlowski can score tours of the Spanish Riding School, open doors to crafts workshops in the Czech Republic, or plan multiday tasting trips to family-owned wineries in the Wachau Valley.

Ellison Poe

Poe Travel

She'll arrange for the best tables at under-the-radar restaurants in Vienna and private tours of legendary Habsburg palaces.

CROATIA

Wanda S. Radetti

VisitCroatia.com

Tap Radetti for the latest intel on the best hotels (like the Lešić Dimitri Palace), wineries, restaurants, and yacht charters along the Adriatic Coast.

FRANCE

Anthony Bay

Anthony Bay Is Europe

He has extraordinary historical and regional

knowledge and an extensive network of personal contacts who open their homes to his guests.

Pascale Bernasse

French Wine Explorers

She's got the connections and clout to get the most exclusive tours of legendary estates, often from family members whose names are on the bottles.

GERMANY

Marion Harbison

Brownell Travel

Harbison will take you to normally overlooked (but supremely stunning) castles and coordinate fascinating tours of centuries-old abbeys and wineries.

GREECE

Mina Agnos

Travel2Greece by Travelive

Her on-the-ground ops team can handle complex multi-island itineraries with private boat and helicopter transfers to spots like Ios and Koufonisia.

Ronnie Liadis

Liadis Travel

She's secured access to otherwise off-limits ancient sites and wineries that aren't open to the public, and chartered boats around Santorini.

Leftheris Papageorgiou

Hellenic Adventures

Go behind the scenes at artists' studios and archaeological digs with Papageorgiou. He'll even set up chats with experts on contemporary Greek politics (if geeking out is your thing).

Christos Stergiou

TrueTrips

Stergiou can pull off private, after-hours access to museums, organize catamaran trips around the Cyclades, and find quality hotel rooms, even in high season.

ICELAND

Chris Gordon

Icepedition

He's the guy to call if you want to kayak among icebergs, go horseback riding on an Arctic Ocean beach, or spend the night under the Aurora Borealis.

IRELAND

Geraldine Murtagh

Elegant Ireland

She has an insane Rolodex—dukes and duchesses, historians, politicians, mountain climbers, artists—all of whom look after her travelers. She also has a can't-find-it-anywhere-else roster of amazing castles and estates for rent.

Kathleen Sheridan

McCabe World Travel

Sheridan knows the top castle hotels and countryside manors (like Sheen Falls and Ballyfin), and has clued-in guides who lead seaside hikes, fishing trips, and horseback rides.

ITALY

Brian Dore and Maria

Gabriella Landers

CIU Travel

They've arranged a prime viewing spot for the iconic Palio race, the best rooms at small-but-lovely Sicilian inns, and tours of privately owned Palladian villas that aren't normally open to visitors.

Andrea Grisdale

IC Bellagio

She has behind-the-scenes access at fashion houses (like Gucci and Zegna) and iconic sites like the Vatican and the Uffizi, where she'll make sure you never wait in line.

Adamarie King

Connoisseur's Travel

She'll have you baking alongside locals in Sicily, touring private art collections, visiting ceramicists and furniture makers, or sailing the Venetian Lagoon.

Gary Portuensi

Authentic Italy

He's our go-to for tooling through Parma and Modena to sample Parmigiano-Reggiano, balsamic vinegar, and prosciutto; flying from Rome to Capri for lunch (back in time for dinner); or having a private picnic on the Sicilian island of Mozia.

Rudston Steward

Trufflepig

He's sussed out amazing food (and places to stay) in lesser-known corners of Italy, like the Aeolian Islands, Tuscany's Monte Amiata, and towns like Matera in Basilicata.

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