



VIRTUOSO®  
SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL

## 2017 VIRTUOSO® LUXE REPORT SHOWS TRAVELERS SEEKING EXOTIC ADVENTURES IN FAST-CHANGING DESTINATIONS

**NEW YORK (November 17, 2016)** – **Virtuoso®**, the global network of luxury travel agencies, has unveiled its **2017 Virtuoso Luxe Report**, forecasting emerging travel developments and top destinations for the coming year. Recognized as a leading trend predictor for luxury and experiential travel, the report offers insight into the preferences of upscale travelers as determined by the group's annual survey of its worldwide travel advisors. For 2017, luxury travelers are seeking adventures in less explored areas and craving customized local experiences wherever they roam.

Here are Virtuoso's recommendations for five must-have travels in 2017:

1. Head now for destinations with a sense of urgency: ones that are changing rapidly or even disappearing. Cuba tops the list as both an emerging destination and one in danger of losing its distinctive character. The Arctic is another must-see, with melting glaciers impacting the region's unique wildlife. Closer to home, now is the time to visit Lanai before it gains more popularity.
2. Seek out active journeys, as adventure travel soars even higher this year as a dominant trend. Virtuoso's advisors recommend a variety of adventures, including an African safari, swimming with whale sharks in Mexico or Australia, or hiking the Swiss Alps.
3. Splurge on an over-the-top exclusive experience: hire a personal guide for a city tour or board a private jet for an unforgettable round-the-world journey. Exclusive-use travel is a key trend for 2017, whether it is renting a villa in a prime destination such as St. Barts or even a private island, or chartering a yacht for a Croatian sail.
4. Savor the flavors and eat like a local wherever you roam. Take a cooking class, peruse the markets, hunt for truffles, dine at a world-class restaurant or opt for a private, in-home dining experience.
5. Take a cruise that matches your preferences and personality. Virtuoso advisors recommend cruising for its convenience, value and range of options. River cruising offers greater cultural immersion and the opportunity to explore the heart of a destination. Expedition cruising continues to gain popularity for its nature-focused and more intimate, experiential itineraries to remote destinations.

Travelers are seeking fresh territory, with exploring new destinations serving as the coming year's top travel motivator. And no short jaunts for the affluent, as international trips of two weeks or longer topped the list of trips seeing increased demand. Multigenerational travel also remains a defining trend, with Japan making its way onto the emerging destination list for the first time due to its rising interest as a less traditional location for family travel.

New this year, Virtuoso sought insight into rapidly changing destinations, some to the point of being endangered. Cuba topped the list, with concerns over retaining its rich cultural heritage in the face of increased tourism. Advisors also named the polar regions of Antarctica and the Arctic due to the threat of global warming. Australia's Great Barrier Reef, which is losing its coral due to pollution, and Venice, with its deteriorating lagoon, also made the list. The United Nations has declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, making this topic particularly timely and relevant.

Travelers today crave active experiences that are customized to their interests and abilities, and are venturing all over the globe to find them. South Africa retains its spot as the world's top adventure travel destination, followed by the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica and New Zealand. Peru and Iceland (new to the top 5 this year) tied for fifth place, and Iceland in particular is seeing remarkable growth as an adventure destination.

Key findings from the 2017 Virtuoso Luxe Report:

### **Top Travel Trends**

1. Multigenerational travel
2. Active or adventure trips
3. River cruising
4. Travel with immediate family
5. Celebration travel

### **Top Endangered/Changing Destinations**

1. Cuba
2. Antarctica
3. Great Barrier Reef
4. Venice
5. The Arctic

### **Top Global Destinations**

1. Italy
2. South Africa
3. France
4. Iceland
5. Australia

### **Top Family Travel Destinations**

1. Italy
2. Mexico
3. Hawaii
4. Orlando, FL
5. England

### **Top Cruise Itineraries**

1. Mediterranean
2. Alaska
3. European river
4. Caribbean
5. Greek Isles

### **Top Emerging Destinations**

1. Cuba
2. Iceland
3. Croatia
4. South Africa
5. Japan

### **Top Adventure Destinations**

1. South Africa
2. Galapagos Islands
3. Costa Rica
4. New Zealand
5. Peru/Iceland (tie)

### **Top U.S. Destinations**

1. New York, NY
2. Maui, HI
3. Napa Valley/Sonoma, CA
4. Las Vegas, NV
5. Miami/South Beach, FL

### **Top Honeymoon Destinations**

1. Italy
2. Maui, HI
3. French Polynesia
4. Maldives
5. Mexico

### **Top Travel Motivations**

1. Exploring new destinations
2. Seeking authentic experiences
3. Rest and relaxation
4. Personal enrichment
5. Seeking adventure

The 2017 Virtuoso Luxe Report also revealed that upscale travel is thriving as trips are selling out earlier than in past years. Many travelers are booking farther in advance, even one to two years for bigger trips. Virtuoso is also observing more requests for business and first-class air travel, as well as nonstop flights. Late bookers face higher rates and fewer flight options.

A total of 772 advisors from Virtuoso's travel agency partners in North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and the Middle East were surveyed, providing global insights on 2017's hottest trends.

###

### **About Virtuoso**

**Virtuoso®** is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 390 agency members with more than 11,400 elite travel advisors in 41 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with 1,700 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. More than (U.S.) \$15.5

billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

**Media Contacts:**

Misty Ewing Belles  
Managing Director, Global Public Relations  
Virtuoso  
202.553.8817  
[mewing@virtuoso.com](mailto:mewing@virtuoso.com)

Lauren Wintemberg  
Account Director  
Alice Marshall Public Relations  
212.861.4031  
[lauren@alicemarshall.com](mailto:lauren@alicemarshall.com)