



VIRTUOSO®
SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL

VIRTUOSO® LUXE REPORT REVEALS WHAT TRAVELERS WILL SEEK IN 2018: PRISTINE, UNFREQUENTED & UNIQUE DESTINATIONS

NEW YORK (November 8, 2017) – Global luxury travel network [Virtuoso®](#) has determined 2018 will be the year for discovering less-visited destinations. **Virtuoso's 2018 Luxe Report**, which forecasts what to expect in travel for the year ahead, shows the desire for unspoiled natural beauty continuing to motivate travelers. The annual report, which has firmly established Virtuoso as a recognized trend spotter, reveals consumer preferences in high-end and experiential travel, as discerned from a comprehensive survey of the network's travel advisors worldwide.

Five must-take trips for 2018, according to Virtuoso advisors:

1. **Cold is hot.** Seasoned travelers in search of fresh destinations are setting their sights on chillier climes. Iceland continues to surge in popularity, placing high in several Luxe Report categories this year. Cruisers are enthusiastic about Alaska, and adventurers about Antarctica and the Arctic. One trip of a lifetime mentioned by Virtuoso's expert advisors: seeing the Northern Lights.
2. **Exploring new destinations** is the year's top trip motivator, and travelers are embracing the opportunity to push beyond their comfort zone. Virtuoso advisors suggest that people check out at least one new place a year, and challenge themselves to try something unexpected during their sojourn: swim with marine life like dolphins or mantas, go zip-lining or ballooning, or take a helicopter tour.
3. **Connecting with family through travel.** After topping the list of trends since 2010, multigenerational travel has firmly established itself as a travel niche. Following close behind is travel with immediate family, also a consistent trend that will carry forward in 2018. Whether renting a European villa for a celebration with loved ones, cruising to the Galapagos Islands, or snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, a family trip creates lifelong memories, strengthens bonds, and plays a pivotal role in childhood education.
4. **Experience Africa.** From culturally rich South Africa, also 2018's top adventure destination, to the wilds of Botswana and Kenya, to the souks of Morocco, Africa is one of the world's most diverse continents. Virtuoso's advisors say a safari is an integral part of the African experience, particularly with wildlife preservation a priority for today's sustainably savvy travelers.
5. **Be a traveler rather than a tourist.** Immersive experiences not found in a guidebook or brochure, opportunities to meet locals, wandering neighborhoods and making spontaneous discoveries are the best ways to experience a destination, according to Virtuoso advisors. Whether it is wine tasting, or learning a traditional craft or a new language, travelers will be seeking out the true culture of that area they are visiting.

The desire for experiences that foster genuine human connection is a key driver for today's travelers. No activity is too unusual for the clients of Virtuoso travel advisors, as some of the more surprising requests show. Travelers are asking for everything from reaching the edge of space in a MiG-29 flight in Russia, to herding cattle in Australia, to hosting a celebration in a private capsule aboard the London Eye. They also seek rare accommodations such as an igloo in Norway, a private castle all to themselves, and sleeping under the stars in the desert – no tent required.

With the focus on far-flung exotic destinations in 2018, it is not surprising that luxury travelers are embarking on international trips of two weeks or longer, which are seeing strong demand. Week-long international trips and three- to five-day domestic trips continue to be popular as well. What is surprising, though, is that Virtuoso advisors also noted more interest in shorter international trips, such as Machu Picchu and the Galapagos Islands in less than a week. Conversely, some travelers are requesting longer trips of three to five weeks.

Key findings from the 2018 Virtuoso Luxe Report:

Top Travel Trends

1. Multigenerational travel
2. Active or adventure trips
3. River cruising
4. Food and wine travel
5. Celebration travel

Top Global Destinations

1. Italy
2. Iceland
3. South Africa
4. France
5. Australia and New Zealand (tie)

Top Millennial Destinations

1. Thailand
2. Italy
3. Iceland
4. Costa Rica
5. Australia and South Africa (tie)

Top Family Travel Destinations

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

Top Cruise Itineraries

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

Top Emerging Destinations

1. Iceland
2. Croatia
3. Japan
4. Cuba
5. Portugal

Top Adventure Destinations

1. South Africa
2. Iceland
3. New Zealand
4. Costa Rica
5. Antarctica

Top U.S. Destinations

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

Top Honeymoon Destinations

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

Top Travel Motivations

1. Exploring new destinations
2. Crossing off bucket-list items
3. Seeking authentic experiences
4. Rest and relaxation
5. Personal enrichment

Advisors from Virtuoso-affiliated travel agencies in North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and the Middle East were polled, drawing on their expertise and client requests to offer insight into 2018's biggest trends.

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About Virtuoso

Virtuoso® is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 800 travel agency partners with more than 16,000 elite travel advisors in over 45 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.) \$21.2 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com.

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