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Vacation Off the Beaten Path

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You've experienced the breathtaking sights of India and Iceland. Portugal and South Africa... gorgeous, but been there, done that. This year, take your luxury adventure in a new direction.

The intrepid adventurer in you wants to explore uncharted territory. However, the realist in you craves comfort. These far-flung destinations combine "under the radar" with "over the top" offerings in upscale accommodations.

The landlocked South Asian country of [Bhutan](#) is known for its remote location in the Himalayas and its rural, spiritual culture. Once you obtain your Bhutan visa through a tour operator, you're ready to [tour Buddhist temples](#), ancient fortresses, and wildlife reserves. To really get off the grid, head west to the Punakha Valley, where a new Uma by Como property provides guest rooms with views of the Mo Chu River. *Afar* magazine recommends its spa baths, lined with river rocks that release minerals into the hot water.



Also check out: [Cooking Classes Around the World](#)

Retreating to a cave dwelling is one surefire way to get off the beaten path. In Cappadocia, [Turkey](#), you have several luxe lodging options carved into mountains. The Hezen Cave Hotel, Fresco Cave Suites & Mansions, and MDC Cave Hotel—three of the highest rated local luxury properties on TripAdvisor—all have cozy yet well-appointed cave rooms with thick, arched stone walls. From these home bases, explore this UNESCO World Heritage Site's underground cities, hidden cavernous churches and enthralling rocky terrain.

Travel 140 miles southeast of Auckland, New Zealand's most populous city, to explore [Rotorua](#). Originally settled by the Māori people, "Sulphur City" is known for its therapeutic hot mud pools and bubbling geysers. After bathing in a thermal pool, explore the Whakarewarewa Forest, go mountain biking, ascend 2,000 feet on the Skyline Gondola, or sail on any of 18 pristine lakes. There's a selection of luxury lakeside accommodations, including the Solitaire Lodge Rotorua, with ten secluded suites featuring panoramic lake and volcano views.

Malaysia's capital city of [Kuala Lumpur](#) is inarguably a busy dining, shopping and nightlife destination, but, as Lonely Planet advises, "don't restrict yourself to the city – there are numerous parks and monuments dotted around KL that make easy day trips for a break from the hustle and bustle." Avoid the rainy months (March, April, September, October, and November), and in under two hours, you can drive to Deerland Park and the Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary. Retreat to the [Chateau Spa & Organic Wellness Resort](#), a luxury chateau in the Berjaya Hills. Modeled after a 12th century Alsatian castle, it includes 130 eco-friendly rooms with 100% organic linens, three gourmet restaurants, and a spa with a salt grotto and mud chamber.

[Argentina](#) may be best known for its cosmopolitan capital of Buenos Aires and its 3,100 miles of coastline, but it's worth heading inland to the alpine Lake District. The Patagonian landscape includes pristine lakes, rugged forests, and snowy mountain peaks. *Afar* magazine calls this area home to South America's best spas, including Correntoso Lake and River Hotel and the Llao Lao Hotel and Resort. Avoid travel in January and February, when locals take their vacations, raising rates on accommodations.

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