

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS



TRAILFINDERS **WORLD TRAVELLER** **2019 REPORT**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the inaugural World Traveller report from Trailfinders.

From the fastest growing destinations and the latest in family travel trends to the very best locations for honeymoons, wildlife, gourmet tours, road trips and more, we have compiled a comprehensive list of where people will be travelling in 2019.

This list is compiled by our experts, combining up-to-the-minute data trends with personal insights on what makes each location special, and how travellers can book to make the most of their holiday.

However, if there is one thing that is clear throughout, it is this – the appetite for travel has never been stronger. We are seeing a huge rise in travellers who want to experience the world, to go beyond the familiar, travel further, longer and more deeply than ever before. Whether its families or honeymooners, road-trippers or cruise passengers we are seeing world travellers look for new off the beaten track ideas, local experiences and adventure.

Trailfinders is the UK's largest independent UK tour operator specialising in bespoke and tailored journeys for anyone who loves to travel.

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TRAILFINDERS' TOP DESTINATIONS

1 USA

The USA is Trailfinders' top selling destination in the world and California is the most popular state. Trailfinders has also seen a significant growth in bookings for the Deep South, year-on-year over the last five years and it's the best-selling area in terms of increased growth. Overall, the luxury market in the USA has got off to a good start for 2019.

2 AUSTRALIA

Australia has been Trailfinders' second most popular destination for years, with strong historical, economic and cultural ties to the UK. Sydney, Uluru and the main gateways to the Great Barrier Reef have always sold well but now Trailfinders is seeing significant growth into secondary areas, for example: Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia. There is also high demand for boutique and luxury properties, touring and holidays revolving around food/wine, unique wildlife and back-to-nature experiences. The direct London-Perth flight has also peaked interest in Western Australia as a destination in its own right. Perth has completely changed in the last five years with prices decreasing significantly for leisure travellers as a result of the withdrawal of the mining industry from the area, which previously inflated costs.

1	USA	→
2	Australia	→
3	Canada	→
4	New Zealand	↑1
5	Thailand	↑1
6	South Africa	↓2
7	Seychelles	↑1
8	India	↓1
9	Argentina	↑2
10	Sri Lanka	↓1
11	Caribbean	↑2

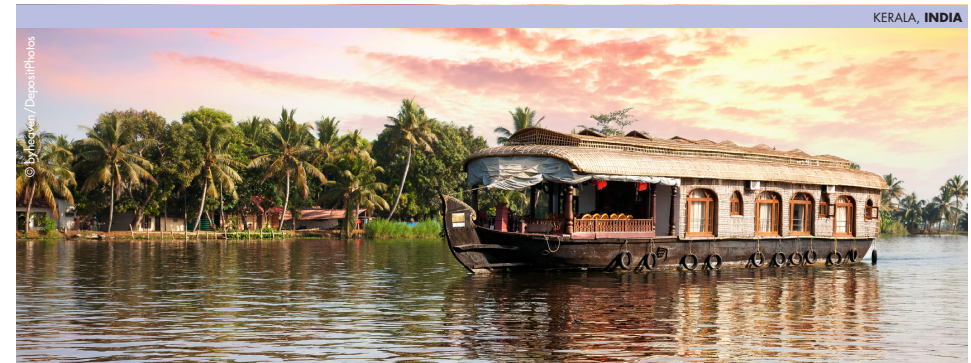


VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

CALIFORNIA, USA



© iatro Images/Alamy



KERALA, INDIA

3 CANADA

Canada has grown in popularity in recent years fuelled by an interest in experiential, wildlife and touring holidays. A boom in unique and interesting hotels in Atlantic Canada such as Fogo Island Inn and Quirpon Lighthouse Inn in particular, is driving new travellers to the region.

4 NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand bookings are strong for 2019 and Trailfinders is seeing noticeable growth in off-the-beaten-track destinations such as Akaroa and Stewart Island, indicating an increase in second time visitors and a further reflection of the demand for experiential travel.

5 THAILAND

Thailand is tipped as a top destination for 2019 because of the growth in interest away from main stream destinations such as Phuket and Koh Samui. Leading the surge is Koh Yao, with room nights increasing by 40% in 2018 and 2019 bookings currently logging a 90% rise. Other locations, such as Koh Tao, Koh Lanta and Koh Phangan are also showing large growth for 2019.

6 SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Rand is still keenly priced compared to other popular destinations with hotel and car hire prices likely to be around 10 to 15% cheaper than this time last year. For example, a three night stay in a 4★+ Cape Town hotel in May starts at just £65 per night. When it comes to eating out, you can quite easily sample the country's outstanding culinary scene without breaking the bank – for instance, a steak and large glass of local Pinotage at the fabulous Signal Restaurant at Cape Grace is less than £20! In addition, British Airways' new direct flight from London to Durban, has raised interest in the varied and stunning region of KwaZulu-Natal.

7 SEYCHELLES

The introduction of British Airways' year round twice weekly direct flight to the Seychelles in March 2018 has sparked a new rush of travellers to the region, with other destinations in the Indian Ocean also benefitting from the surge. This has been helped by a number of significant hotel openings such as Six Senses Zil Pasyon, that have stimulated new interest in the region.

8 INDIA

Demand for Indian heritage style accommodation run by local hosts is contributing to a growth in India bookings. Trailfinders' "Linger Longer" properties are now being extended from Rajasthan to cover Central and South India. Trailfinders has matched this accommodation with a range of authentic experiences such as picnicking with a local shepherd, teaching at a local school and more.

9 ARGENTINA

In 2017, the Argentinean government announced that foreign visitors would become exempt from paying VAT on accommodation, leading to savings of approximately 20% for holidaymakers. This has set Argentina ahead of the pack in a region that was already showing impressive growth thanks to the introduction of direct flights from London to most major South American cities, including Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Santiago.



IGUAZU FALLS, ARGENTINA

10 SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka has grown consistently in popularity over the past five years as the country has emerged from its former period of conflict and is now confidently developing new experiences and accommodation. Trailfinders is also predicting strong growth for 2019.

11 CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean is a constant long-haul seller but a combination of high-profile hotel launches and refurbishments has meant Trailfinders has seen a rise across the board, with Barbados, Grenada and Saint Lucia showing exceptional growth. Cuba is also up 13% for 2019, bouncing back after a barren two years where demand dropped substantially.



© georgatz/Depositphotos

MOUNT FUJI, JAPAN

TRAILFINDERS' TIPS FOR FASTEST GROWING DESTINATIONS

1	Japan
2	Zimbabwe
3	Maldives
4	Borneo
5	Chile
6	Cambodia
7	Kenya
8	Jordan
9	Fiji
10	Iceland
11	Russia

1 JAPAN

With the Rugby World Cup in autumn 2019 and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics taking place shortly after, Japan is fast establishing itself as a premium sporting destination alongside its cultural credentials. Often considered as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' destination, Trailfinders expects these events to inspire travellers to make the pilgrimage in 2019.

2 ZIMBABWE

The opening up of Zimbabwe post Mugabe's departure at the end of 2017 has contributed to a sense of general optimism throughout the country. Trailfinders expects Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park to be highlights for first time visitors to the country.

3 MALDIVES

More than twenty new hotels opened in the Maldives in 2018 and recent airport expansion means that A380s can now land in Malé. This increased supply has led to aggressive competitive pricing which has put the Maldives firmly on the shopping list for increasing numbers of travellers.

4 BORNEO

Private touring is seeing good growth due to the opportunity to easily combine wildlife, beaches and active holidays in one destination.



TORRES DEL PAINE, CHILE

5 CHILE

The introduction of direct British Airways flights in 2017 has kick-started a period of hyper-growth for the region which has yet to slow down. Chile has quickly established itself as a favourite for adventure activity holidays, being named the world's best adventure travel destination at the World Travel Awards in 2017, and it is this market that remains the main driver of growth in bookings.

6 CAMBODIA

A wave of new property openings and other infrastructure developments have opened up more options in the country, beyond the perennially popular attractions such as Angkor, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. This includes a number of excellent beach properties located on islands just off the coast, opening up new holiday markets for travellers. These new properties include the stunning Six Senses Krabey Island and the Alila Koh Russey, both are easily reached from the mainland but maintain a unique island ambience. Further inland, Shinta Mani Wild brings a luxury tented camp to the wilderness – the creation of renowned designer Bill Bensley, this opulent lodge offers the ultimate in luxury adventure.

ANGKOR WAT, CAMBODIA



© Alexander Ozerov/Alamy



MASAI MARA, KENYA

7 KENYA

Safari and beach stays are on the up in Kenya, with the country finally bouncing back after the terror incidents of 2013 and 2014. Trailfinders has vastly expanded its safari programme with a number of new options including two new family safaris and a third 'fly in' safari. Kenya's success is also reflected in other East Africa destinations; Zanzibar has benefited from a number of new hotel openings, including Zuri Zanzibar and Constance Aiyana, Pemba.

8 JORDAN

Jordan is bouncing back following a difficult period after the Arab Spring. Trailfinders is able to secure free visas for clients on private tours, saving £60 per person.

9 FIJI

Some great pricing means Fiji is performing well for 2019.

10 ICELAND

Iceland is benefiting from the double effect of a growing trend in active holidays and appearing as the backdrop in a raft of high profile movie and TV shows from Game of Thrones to Star Wars Rogue One.

11 RUSSIA

Despite the political climate, the success of the 2018 FIFA World Cup went a long way to addressing travellers' concerns and helped re-establish Russia as a tourism destination. Trailfinders is increasing its Russian portfolio to reflect this demand, with growth expected to continue throughout 2019.



ULUN DANU TEMPLE, BALI



SIGIRIYA, SRI LANKA



MALDIVES

TRAILFINDERS' MOST POPULAR HONEYMOON DESTINATIONS

1	USA	→
2	South Africa	→
3	Mauritius	→
4	Thailand	↑ 1
5	Bali	↓ 1
6	Sri Lanka	↑ 2
7	Maldives	↓ 1
8	Australia	↓ 1
9	Mexico	→
10	Canada	↑ 2

Newly married couples are increasingly combining beach and adventure options. Bespoke honeymoons created by Trailfinders include combining Las Vegas with Hawaii, the Maldives with Sri Lanka, and the jungle camps of Khao Sok with Thailand's beautiful beaches.

South Africa's popularity with honeymooners has been maintained in 2018. The value of the Rand has contributed to this success, but South Africa's popularity also highlights the growth in demand for more adventurous honeymoons, with couples looking to combine relaxation and exploration.

TRAILFINDERS' TOP ADVENTUROUS HONEYMOONS

1	Peru
2	New Zealand
3	Botswana
4	Silk Road
5	South Australia & Victoria, Australia

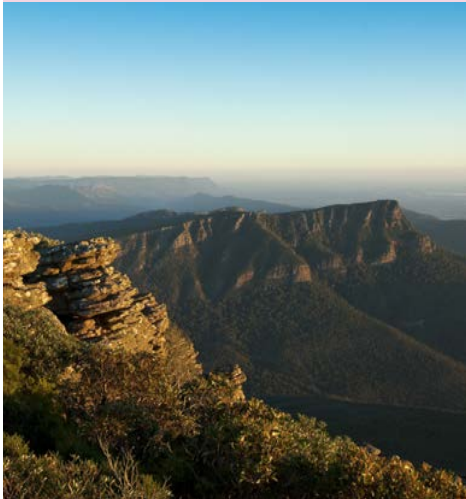
The trend for adventure is even more apparent in the less traditional honeymoon hotspots. Honeymoon bookings to Peru are up 110% in 2018 compared to 2017 according to Trailfinders, as newlyweds opt for adventurous experiences, such as Machu Picchu and the Amazon rainforest.

New Zealand (+36%) and Botswana (+20%) are also seeing large increases in honeymoon bookings. Luxury remains an important component, for example, Trailfinders' new 'Absolute Luxury New Zealand' holiday has become immediately popular and Botswana's Okavango Delta owes much of its appeal to its small exclusive camps and water-based safaris.

Australia has always been popular for honeymoons but Trailfinders reports that the food, wine and nature experiences of the south are also now selling well for honeymoons.

Trailfinders has created a new fly-drive holiday for 2019, called Nature & Gourmet Retreats of Southern Australia, which takes in the Barossa Valley in South Australia and the Grampians, Twelve Apostles and Melbourne in Victoria.

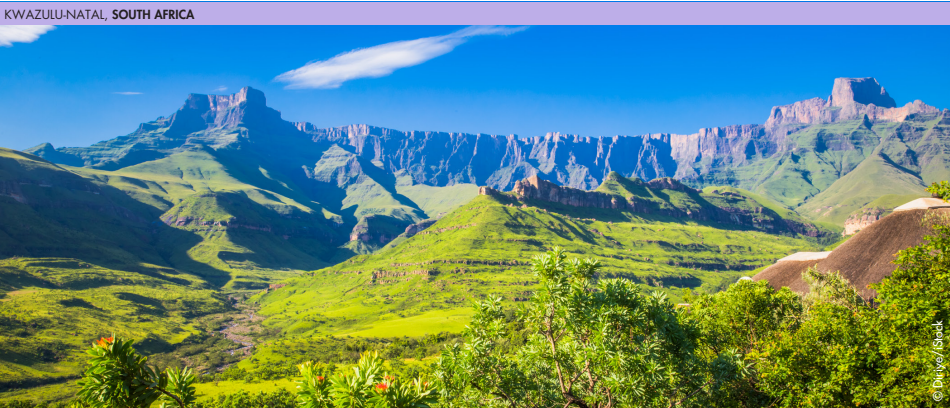
GRAMPIANS, AUSTRALIA



OKAVANGO RIVER, BOTSWANA



MACHU PICCHU, PERU



TRAILFINDERS' BEST VALUE DESTINATIONS

1	South Africa	4	Nepal
2	Japan	5	Thailand
3	Perth	6	Portugal

Perennially popular destinations such as Thailand and Portugal are well-known for their excellent value, however Trailfinders has found a number of surprise additions to this year's best value destinations list. For example, Trailfinders' insights show that Nepal is now 15% cheaper than it was last year. Favourable exchange rates have improved UK travellers' spending power in South Africa, whilst the Post Office Review has rated Tokyo as the world's cheapest city to experience. Perth also remains a much cheaper gateway than local rival, Sydney.



PORTO, PORTUGAL

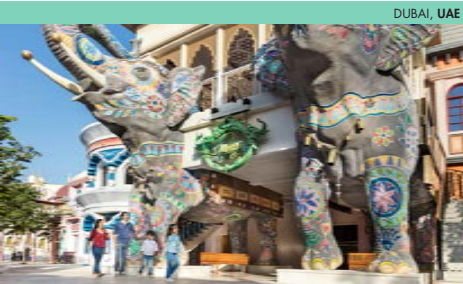
PERTH, AUSTRALIA

NEPAL

TRAILFINDERS' FAMILY WORLD TRAVEL TRENDS

		YEAR-ON-YEAR INCREASE
1	New Zealand	↑1
2	Orlando	↓1
3	Thailand	→
4	Kenya	↑2
5	Canada	→
6	Malaysia	↓2
7	Vietnam	↑3
8	California	→
9	Mauritius	↓2
10	UAE	↓1
11	Mexico	↑2
12	Costa Rica	→
13	Iceland	Newly introduced for 2018

Experience hungry families are increasingly looking for multi centre holidays according to Trailfinders. Motorhome holidays have been a key area for family travel this year with strong growth in destinations such as New Zealand and Canada. Safaris are also increasingly popular; with one in five of Trailfinders' tailor-made Kenyan safaris including children on the booking. Other initiatives which have spurred family bookings include the new Universal waterpark in Orlando and the introduction of new flights to Penang in Malaysia with Qatar Airways. Trailfinders has responded to the growth in multi centre family travel by creating family itineraries which are more flexible, incorporate shorter driving distances and always provide prices for the school holidays, to give clear and realistic holiday options for families to consider.



DUBAI, UAE

THAILAND

MOTORHOMES, NEW ZEALAND

TRAILFINDERS' TOP WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

Consumer interest in experiences and adventure has seen a surge of interest in holidays that include the opportunity to see wildlife in its natural habitat. Trailfinders predicts that the BBC nature series 'Dynasties' will spark another wave of the 'Attenborough effect' for destinations across the globe. Approximately 15-20% of all bookings to Australia visit one of the Great Barrier Reef's 'gateway towns' and 20% of travellers to India include a trip to see the tigers at Ranthambore National Park. Canadian bear lodges are another sell-out success, with year-on-year growth over the last several years.

Example wildlife experiences on new Trailfinders tours for 2019 include:

- Lion and leopard spotting in Gir National Park, Gujarat, India
- Tiger and rhino spotting in the Kaziranga National Park and World Heritage Site India
- Whale watching in Plettenberg Bay, South Africa
- Whale watching in Sydney Harbour, Australia
- Gorillas and chimpanzees in the wild in Rwanda
- Brown Kiwis on Stewart Island in New Zeland
- Moose spotting at Chic-chocs Mountain Lodge in Quebec, Canada

ANTARCTICA



© Westend61 GmbH/Alamy

PANTANAL, BRAZIL



© Ondrej Proszky/DepositPhotos

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK, INDIA



© Ondrej Proszky/DepositPhotos

1	Great Barrier Reef, Australia	→
2	Kenya	↑1
3	Galapagos Islands, Ecuador	↓1
4	Ranthambore National Park, India	→
5	Canada	↑1
6	Costa Rica	↓1
7	Antarctica	→
8	Alaska	→
9	Yellowstone National Park, USA	↑3
10	Borneo	↑3
11	Pantanal, Brazil	→

ALASKA, USA



© SURZa/DepositPhotos

TRAILFINDERS' TOP RAIL HOLIDAYS

The move to experiential holidays is matched with an increasing interest in luxury rail holidays according to Trailfinders which has seen an increase of 20% year on year on the back of already very strong growth in recent years.

1	Rocky Mountaineer, Canada
2	Indian Pacific (Sydney to Perth Australia)
3	The Ghan (Adelaide to Darwin Australia)
4	Palace on Wheels, India, (a round trip from Delhi including Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Agra)
5	Belmond Andean Explorer, Peru, the highest train journey in the world. One or two night journeys from Cusco to Arequipa
6	Rovos Rail includes journeys across South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania
7	Eastern & Oriental Express includes journeys from Bangkok to Singapore



ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Other popular train options:

- USA by rail including the high speed Acela Express between Washington DC, Philadelphia, New York and Boston or epic journeys from Chicago to California, or Seattle to LA.
- TransAlpine Train, New Zealand between Christchurch and Greymouth.
- China. Almost every Trailfinders' China private tour now has at least one high-speed train journey.
- Japan. Virtually every Japan holiday sold by Trailfinders includes travel on the excellent rail network, the majority using a Japan Rail Pass.
- India toy trains. Scenic narrow gauge railways to India's historic hill stations including the famous Kalka to Shimla Railway.
- Trans Mongolian Railway, following the route of the famous Trans Siberian Railway from Moscow to Lake Baikal before rolling south through Mongolia to Beijing.

New Trailfinders' rail journeys for 2019 include:

- Shongololo Express, South Africa. A new 15 day journey departing twice a year between Pretoria and Cape Town via the Greater Kruger National Park, Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Garden Route.
- Central Europe's Imperial Cities. A fascinating escorted journey travelling First Class to explore Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and Prague.
- Great Southern, Australia. The Great Southern will cover four states from Adelaide to Brisbane and vice versa with fascinating off-train excursions in the Grampians, Great Ocean Road, Hunter Valley and Canberra along the way.

THE GHAN



TRAILFINDERS' TOP ROAD TRIPS

The demand for multi-centre holidays is fuelling greater demand for bespoke road trips according to Trailfinders.

1	Highway 1 – California, USA
2	Legendary Pacific Coast – Sydney to Brisbane, Australia
3	Garden Route – South Africa
4	Great Ocean Road – Victoria, Australia
5	Route 66 – USA
6	Sea to Sky Highway – British Columbia, Canada
7	North and South Island – New Zealand



GREAT OCEAN ROAD, VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

Other popular road trips:

- Costa Rica – Trailfinders' road trips visit Sarapiquí, Arenal, Monteverde & Tamarindo or Arenal, Monteverde & Manuel Antonio
- Iceland Ring Road
- Western Shores & Whale Sharks – Western Australia
- Namibia
- Basque Country – Northern Spain
- New Mexico – USA
- Top End – Australia
- Acadian Coast & Gaspé – Canada
- Mount Rushmore & Dakota Badlands – USA
- Saskatchewan – Western Canada

Longest:

- Route 66 (16 days)
- Pacific Quest – Seattle to San Diego (22 days)
- East Coast Odyssey – New York to Miami (21 days)

Most scenic:

- Icefields Parkway – Canada
- Highway 1 – California, USA
- Te Anau to Milford Sound – New Zealand
- Blue Ridge Parkway – Virginia and North Carolina, USA
- Top of the World Highway – Alaska, USA
- Amalfi Coast – Italy
- Kancamagus Highway – New England, USA
- Lake District – Chile



ROUTE 66, USA



MARLBOROUGH, NEW ZEALAND

TRAILFINDERS' ON THE RISE: GOURMET TRAVEL

- Tokyo Street Food Tour, Japan
- Delhi Street Food Walking Tour, India
- A Taste of South America, Argentina & Peru
- United Tastes of America, USA
- Nature & Gourmet Retreats of the Western Cape, South Africa
- New Zealand's Food & Wine Trail, New Zealand

Demand for gourmet travel has skyrocketed in the last few years according to Trailfinders with an increasing demand from travellers looking to experience a destination through its food.

Day trips such as the Franschoek Wine Tram in South Africa and street food tours in Tokyo and Delhi rank amongst Trailfinders' most popular add-ons, and their success has been the inspiration for the creation of a number of new holidays that place food at the heart of the trip.

The new Trailfinders' Taste of South America 2019 capitalises on the rising popularity of Peruvian food in the UK, whilst the United Tastes of America tour, another new release, includes a wide variety of food and drink day tours, such as a New Orleans Cooking School, a cocktail history tour in New York and tequila & tortillas tour in San Diego.



COLCA CANYON, PERU

TRAILFINDERS' WHAT TO BOOK EARLY

Though the average lead-in time for most Trailfinders' holidays is around 6 months, there are a large number of holidays and experiences that can sell-out during peak times.

Certain holiday types, such as bear lodge trips in Canada and safari trips across Kenya and Botswana tend to sell out a year in advance, whilst other trips including popular Asia beach hotels or Walt Disney World Resort in Florida are often in demand early as travellers look to secure the best deals.

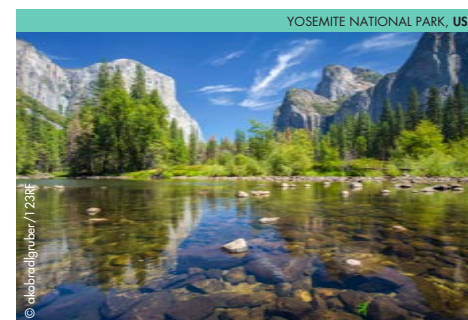
In particular, Japan is under huge demand for 2019 onwards, especially around the time of the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Trailfinders recommends exploring the option of staying in Kobe

and visiting Kyoto's hotspots on a day trip. Accommodation is also at a premium in Japan during the cherry blossom season (late March through April) and bookings should be made a year in advance.

Trailfinders also reports that cruise holidays are typically booked a lot further in advance – with an average lead time of 11 months. Antarctica bookings need to be made at least a year in advance, due to huge popularity and limited capacity. Additionally higher stateroom categories on World Cruises can sell out, up to 18 months in advance, as soon as they go on sale. Inaugural sailings of new ships are also hugely popular, with cruise aficionados reserving their places as soon as the cruises open for sale.

21 HOLIDAYS TO BOOK EARLY

1	The national parks of Western USA are a major draw for travellers from all over the world. Yosemite NP alone draws over 4 million visitors a year. The US National Park service jealously protects these pristine environments so there are very limited lodging options within the parks themselves. The lodges are available to book up to a year in advance.
2	Namibia. Lodges are few and far between in this vast country.
3	New Year's Eve – Sydney, Australia
4	Inca Trail, Peru. The only way to hike the trail these days is with a government issued permit and these can sell out up to 6 months in advance.
5	Cherry Blossom & Rugby World Cup, Japan
6	West Canada Bear Lodges. You can find bears all across Canada but by far the best place to see them is in one of the remote lodges scattered along the vast coastal forests of western British Columbia. The bears are up and about between May to October but the best sightings are during the salmon run in late August when the grizzlies literally queue up to catch salmon leaping from the crashing river waters. The lodges are tiny and remote and fill up fast.
7	Calgary Stampede, Canada
8	Torres del Paine National Park, Chile
9	Great Ocean Road, Australia
10	Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya
11	Ranthambore National Park, India
12	South Africa Safari Lodges. The few private safari lodges in South Africa's parks and reserves rest in splendid isolation which make for a uniquely personalised safari experience. However whilst small is beautiful, it does mean they fill up fast.
13	Asia beach hotels to take advantage of the early booking discounts
14	Elephant Hills, Thailand
15	Sri Lanka peak season Feb 2020
16	New Zealand peak season Jan & Feb 2020
17	Okavango Delta, Botswana
18	Walt Disney World Resort Florida
19	Cuba
20	Round the world, Antarctica and inaugural cruises
21	Rwanda and Uganda. The dense forests of Rwanda and Uganda are one of the last remaining habitats of the critically endangered mountain gorillas and a trek to see these creatures is a moving experience. Access is strictly controlled and only 10-11 group permits (of 8 people) are issued a day. These can sell out up to 10 months in advance.



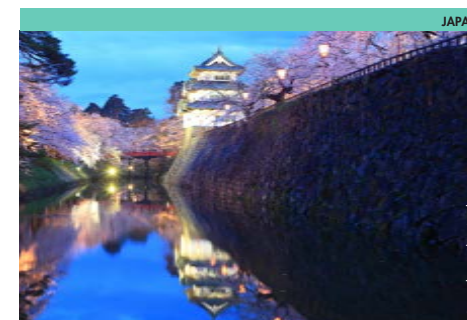
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, USA



NAMIBIA



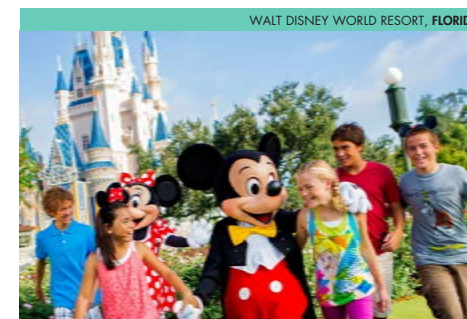
CALGARY STAMPEDE, CANADA



JAPAN



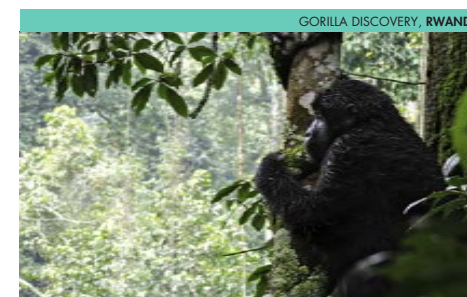
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT, FLORIDA



KOH PHI PHI, THAILAND



GORILLA DISCOVERY, RWANDA

CONTACT TRAILFINDERS

Trailfinders is the UK's largest independent tour operator.

Experts in tailormaking itineraries worldwide, they are the UK's No.1 tour operator to numerous destinations including Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Canada, India and South Africa.

Trailfinders was founded in 1970 by former SAS officer Mike Gooley with a staff of four. The company remains privately owned but today has a staff of over 1000 in 34 travel centres with 4 more due to open in 2019. In those 48 years Trailfinders has made travel arrangements for over 15 million clients.

Travel centres are staffed by the most expert travel consultants in the industry. Between them they travelled to over 96% of the world's countries.



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