LGBTQ TRAVEL EXPERTS REVEAL THEIR DREAM DESTINATIONS FOR 2021

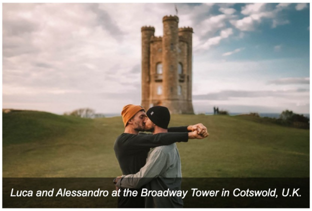
Travel industry professionals, journalists, and bloggers share which destinations they're most excited about in 2021

WRITTEN BY KWIN MOSBY (PHOTO: BREAKFAST IN BALI BY VISIONSI)

The travel industry is poised to make an unprecedented comeback in 2021. Travel Leaders Network, the largest group of travel agencies in North America, recently conducted a survey that revealed 82 percent of their past and current clients have already been vaccinated or planned to get vaccinated when eligible, and 62 percent are planning to take their next vacation in 2021. To keep you inspired about traveling again, we decided to reach out to LGBTQ+ travel advisors, content creators, and writers to see what dream destinations are at the top of their travel bucket lists after they are vaccinated.

JAPAN

Luca Pezzolo and Alessandro Zorzin, also known as **The Globbers**, managed to sneak in a few trips to the U.K., Morocco, and around Italy, their home country. Like most travelers, lockdowns and travel restrictions during the pandemic have made travel planning difficult. The happy couple dreams of traveling to Asia, their favorite continent, and looks forward to the day when they can hop on a plane and spend at least three weeks in Japan.



Luca and Alessandro at the Broadway Tower in Cotswold, U.K.

“We want to stay in all the main cities, like Tokyo and Kyoto, but also explore old villages, and visit Yudanaka Onsen to experience a traditional Ryokan (Japanese inn),” said Pezzolo and Zorzin. “And to be honest, we really can’t wait to taste real Japanese food.”

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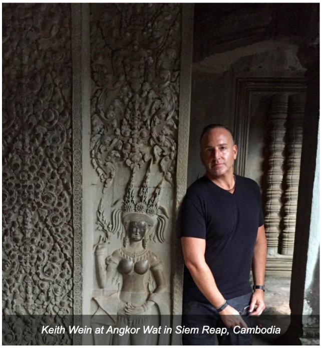
Vincent Jones at the pyramids of Giza in Egypt

Vincent Jones, the founder and CEO of The Citizen Jones Companies, which includes **Citizen Jones Travel**, enjoys solo travel, but he can't wait to connect with people in person again, especially leading group trips. An outdoor adventure in Kenya and Tanzania is at the top of his to-do list after he's vaccinated. This once-in-a-lifetime experience includes seeing the Big Five animals – lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo – and his dream to witness the Great Wildebeest Migration through the Serengeti and Maasai Mara.

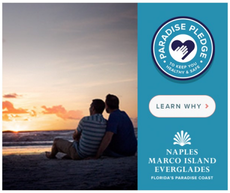
"I want to see the animals migrating from Tanzania to Kenya on safari and do more scuba diving off the Kenyan Coast," said Jones, who, as a child, wanted to be a marine biologist. He also dreams of visiting the Galápagos Islands to fulfill his lifelong dream to see the animals that helped form naturalist Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

BALI


Keith Wein at Angkor Wat in Siem Reap, Cambodia

During the pandemic, Keith Wein embarked on a wine tasting getaway in Walla Walla, Washington, but he looks forward to getting vaccinated to find his spiritual center in Bali. "I miss the beautiful serenity of the people, the beaches, and the spirituality of the island," said Wein, a travel advisor and founder of **127 Travel,** "I want to get back in nature and I find Bali to be a healing place."

In addition to serene walks along Bali's pristine beaches, Wein wants to explore the island's temples, which include Pura Besakih, Tirta Empul, Pura Luhur Lempuyang, Uluwatu, and Pura Ulun Danu Bratan. At the top of his list for this spiritual journey is a return visit to Ubud for the spa treatments, al-fresco yoga, and to see the long tail macaque



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Roxanne and Maartje at the Mexico Mi Amor Hotel in Tulum

Sweden and Iceland were two places Roxanne Weijer and Maartje Hensen visited during the coronavirus pandemic, but they hope to continue their adventure together with a return trip to Mexico. Authors of their own blog, **Once Upon a Journey**, the traveling couple miss the people, great food, warm weather, and nature. "We definitely want to explore new places again too, when it's possible, but we also love to go to places we already know, we love how it feels familiar," said Weijer and Hensen.

In addition to swimming in cenotes or natural swimming holes, the couple has already started planning their Mexican adventure. "We miss diving, so that's absolutely a top thing to do! Places in Mexico we really want to visit are Bacalar, **Puerto Vallarta**, and Isla Holbox."

SOUTH KOREA

It's no secret, but Nathan Aguilera will travel for food. After he gets vaccinated for COVID-19, he wants to follow through on his plans to visit South Korea, canceled last year due to the pandemic. "I'm dying to get to South Korea, and as a food blogger the answer why is easy: the food!" said Aguilera, who writes about his travels on **Foodie Flashpacker**. "I would love to learn more about Korean culture, but for me the big plan is to eat my way across the country, trying everything from street food to fine dining."

Nathan Aguilera at Tulum National Park in Mexico

Based in Merida, Mexico, the traveling foodie dreams of visiting South Korea's popular night markets, including the Jeju Dongmun Night Market on Jeju Island, the Yeouido World Night Market in Seoul, and Seomun Night Market in Daegu, the biggest night market in the world. Aguilera would also like to visit palaces and parks such as the Changdeokgung Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Bukhansan National Park.

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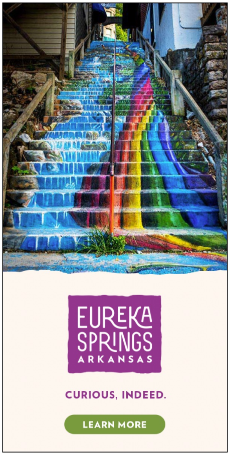

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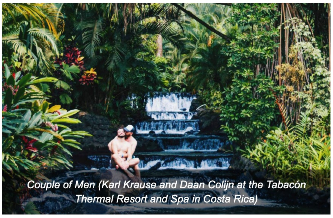

Couple of Men (Karl Krause and Daan Colijn at the Tabacón Thermal Resort and Spa in Costa Rica)

Based in Amsterdam, Karl Krause and Daan Colijn, known for their informative gay travel blog **Couple of Men**, have their sights set on visiting Costa Rica and its lush tropical rainforests. After spending so much time indoors, they want to surround themselves with as much biodiversity as possible. "One of the highlights from our last trip in Costa Rica was the **Tabacón Thermal Resort and Spa** in Arenal National Park," said the German-Dutch duo. "Back then, we only had a few hours, so we would love to go back and really spend romantic quality time in the beautifully landscaped hot springs."

The year started out well for the couple. Lonely Planet named Krause and Colijn the "LGBTIQ+ Storytellers of 2021." And they hope to celebrate that good news and World Pride with other revelers in Denmark, another destination at the top of their travel bucket list. For the first time, two cities, Copenhagen and Malmö, will host the Pride festivities, where these men dream of proudly waving their rainbow flags in person.

NEPAL

Dani Heinrich at Lünersee, a lake near Bludenz, Austria

Co-founder of **Globetrotter Girls**, Dani Heinrich had planned a big hiking trip to Nepal for 2020, but that obviously didn't happen. After she's vaccinated, the full-time travel blogger, and current solo traveler, wants to embark on a three-week trek along the Annapurna Circuit, a popular long-distance hike that follows an ancient trade route, winding through several Himalayan mountains and diverse climates. Her journey will start in the tropical Himalayan foothills and reach freezing alpine peaks at 17,769 feet.

"I'll get to see Nepalese villages, lush valleys, dramatic gorges, and Hindu temples along the way, and I will stay in Nepalese teahouses – simple guest houses run by local families who offer lodging and meals," said Heinrich. "In addition to admiring the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, I am excited to try *momos* (Nepalese dumplings) and to visit the temples, sacred sites, and shrines of Kathmandu."

ARGENTINA

Carlos Melia, the founder of the Luxury Gay Travel Network, is excited about planning unique experiences for a VIP corporate group to the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo, but a trip to see his parents in Argentina will be a priority after he gets vaccinated. In addition to visiting family, Melia can't wait to revisit his home county's classic destinations such as Buenos Aires, Iguazu Falls, Calafate, Bariloche, Ushiaia, and El Chalten.

"My absolute favorites are San Antonio de Areco to immerse myself in folk Gaucho culture, and then, to go on a drive in the north, from Tucuman to Salta and Jujuy," said Melia. "To me, it's one of the most beautiful landscapes in Argentina."

Carlos Melia in the ballroom at the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris

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Kwin Mosby *is a travel and lifestyle journalist who enjoys creating content from an African American and LGBTQ+ perspective. His work is featured in digital and print publications, including Travel + Leisure, Departures, and Marriott Bonvoy Traveler. You can follow Kwin's most recent travel experiences, from luxury resorts to urban escapes to outdoor adventures, on* **Instagram**.

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