Where Our Editors Dream of Traveling in 2021

By The Editors on January 01, 2021

Our travel editors and writers share the first place they're headed when the world opens up.

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Remember planes? Remember booking a last-minute ticket from JFK and waking up in Paris? We do. And to say our eagerness to travel is mounting as 2021 gets underway is, frankly, an understatement. While we aren't sure what the year will bring in terms of borders reopening, we've already started daydreaming about future travel. Right now, these travel plans are purely aspirational, but because we've stayed tapped into the latest hotel openings, destinations on the rise, and burgeoning culinary scenes around the world, we've already got the itineraries ready to go. Here, 18 Departures' editors and contributing writers share where they're dreaming of traveling in 2021.

Marco Bottigelli/Getty Images

Patagonia

“After so very much ‘inside time’ this past year, I’m really craving big expanses of wild and free space —really enormous, emotional landscapes, that remind you just how big the world is. I’m also desperate to return to South America and to Patagonia, one of my favorite places to visit on the planet. This time instead of staying solely in the southernmost stretches, like we did at Awasi Patagonia, I’d like to spend some time in the Atacama Desert, and the Argentinian rainforest too. Luckily Awasi has gorgeous, eco-conscious stays in all three locations. My only real concern is that I won’t want to come back.” — *Alessandra Codinha, Style Director*

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Newfoundland and Labrador

“Newfoundland and Labrador has been on my bucket list for the past few years and after spending the better part of the last year cooped up inside, I’m making it my mission to finally check out the eastern coast of Canada—God willing. From the multicolored homes that dot St. John’s to the rolling vistas that are surprisingly similar to those in Ireland and Scotland, this is an area that I already know I’ll want to visit again and again. Not to mention, after catching Anthony Bourdain’s Newfoundland special in *Parts Unknown* that featured chef Jeremy Charles (head chef at Raymonds in St. John’s), the focus on incredibly fresh seafood and local ingredients made it clear that this would be a culinary dream trip. Add to that the whale watching, kayaking around glaciers, the epic hiking, and abundant fishing opportunities, and you’ve got me hooked.” — *Sean Flynn, Deputy Digital Editor*

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Northern California

“As a self-proclaimed lover of all things wine, 2020 was especially difficult as we all had to be sidelined and watch as the coronavirus pandemic and wildfires caused mass shutdowns throughout Napa and Sonoma counties. My travel dream revolves around a cabernet-filled road trip where I get to visit, sample, and stay among the recovering grape vines of Northern California. I want to start my trip at Castello di Amorosa for a brief *Under The Tuscan Sun* moment at their Italian-styled castle; their wine storage was lost to the fires but the tasting room remains open. In Napa, I’ll be staying at the soon-to-open Four Seasons Napa Valley, and then I’ll head to the Sonoma vineyards to stay at Montage Healdsburg. With so many hotels and wineries still suffering from the damage of 2020, this trip is the perfect way for me to jump back into the world of travel while still doing some good, and of course, enjoying a glass of wine (or two!)” — *Alessandra Amodio, Digital Photo Editor*

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Sicily, Italy

“I've been to Italy dozens of times, but I've never been to Sicily. I'd start with a week of ‘slow living’ at Monaci delle Terre Nere, a celebrated resort near Mount Etna, and soak up some of the farm-to-table food grown on the estate, and then transition to back-to-basics activities like horseback riding or a cooking class. I'd follow that up with a few days in Palermo in full tourist-mode, and then head west to the beaches around Trapani and the nearby Egadi Islands. Maybe snorkel a bit. Maybe never come back.” — *Dan Rubinstein, Home + Design Director*

Diana Robinson/Getty Images

East Africa

“After months of being cooped up inside with the same views, I am craving adventure and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Going on safari has always been a bucket-list trip for me, and after 2020, I’m ready to go. Drinking a glass of rosé while watching elephants in a nearby watering hole sounds like heaven to me! My priorities are seeing the wildlife and incredible landscapes in Kenya and Tanzania, but if I had time for a very long trip, I would want to see the gorillas in Rwanda, too. Luxury accommodations on these safaris are top notch, ranging from elegant tented camps within private game preserves to One&Only Gorilla’s Nest’s beautiful suites built in the treetops. Micato Safaris is one of the best safari operators and is known for seamless trips led by expert guides with no detail overlooked. — *Kristen Shirley, Contributing Writer*

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New Zealand and Fiji

"Known as a haven for outdoor thrill-seekers, New Zealand would be the first place I'd visit to celebrate a missed milestone birthday. My ideal to-do list for this three-week adventure would include wine tasting in Hawke's Bay, hiking through glowworm-lit Abbey Caves, touring the popular Hobbiton movie set, visiting Rotorua for a Maori history lesson, and soaring to new heights on a helicopter above Milford Sound. A stay at the cozy Matakauri Lodge is the best way to take in the natural beauty of Lake Wakatipu and enjoy Chef Jonathan Rodgers' modern twist on farm-to-table cuisine. Next, it's off to Fiji! Well, Kokomo Island Fiji, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, to be specific. This private paradise is located near the Great Astrolabe Reef, a popular diving spot to explore colorful coral and marine life, such as manta rays and sharks. But let's keep it real. Relaxing is at the top of my agenda for the second leg of this dream trip, starting with a soothing Kokomo Seashell Massage. Add an immersive excursion to a local Fijian village to complete the perfect South Pacific vacation." – *Kwin Mosby, Contributing Writer*

Jason Arbour/Getty Images

Marrakech, Morocco

"Visiting Marrakech has long been a dream of mine. La Mamounia, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, a luxury hotel famous for its traditional Moroccan architecture, opulent swimming pools, and gourmet restaurants, has been on my moodboard since childhood. In undergrad, I studied abroad in Florence, Italy—while there, my friends and I planned an elaborate agenda for a long weekend in Marrakech, which was swiftly thwarted by our school due to travel advisories at the time. Ever since then, I've kept our agenda in my metaphorical back pocket, vowing to make it there someday—but, this time, in style. My visions of Morocco are dotted with camelback treks through the Sahara, sunsets on rooftops with panoramic views, ultimate relaxation in luxurious hammams, hot air balloon rides at dawn, and loud, colorful visits to the souks. Yves Saint Laurent, one of my longtime inspirations, once said of Marrakech, 'The city taught me color. Before Marrakech, everything was black.' In 2021, I hope to experience that for myself." — *Samantha Feher, Social Media Editor*

Sharon Lapkin/Getty Images

Amalfi Coast, Italy

"I'm very attached to the French Riviera—I've lived in Paris and am always game to hop a train down to *le sud* when I'm traveling through France. So, it feels like a real gap in my European travel knowledge that I've never made it to the southern Italian coast. I've done Cinque Terre, but an Amalfi Coast trip has always eluded me. Maybe I've watched *The Talented Mr. Ripley* too many times amid stay-at-home orders, but I've been plotting my Amalfi trip for the last nine months. I want to start in Positano at Le Sirenuse, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, drive the 15 minutes along the coast to Praiano (I'm eyeing Casa Angelina, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property), and then keep winding past Amalfi to Belmond Hotel Caruso, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, where they have an infinity pool so wildly stunning the thought of being there makes me understandably giddy." — *Maya Kachroo-Levine, Contributing Digital Editor*

Andreas Schulte-Beckmann/Getty Images

Maldives

“This pandemic has made me reflect on how the travel industry impacts the earth, for better or worse, and has increased my interest in sustainability. So my dream is to stay at Soneva Jani and Soneva Fushi, both American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts properties, and the original eco-friendly resorts in the Maldives established by Sonu Shivdasani and his wife Eva in the ‘90s. The brand’s mission is to show that luxury and sustainability can—and should—go hand in hand. I want to see first-hand their many environmental and community-based initiatives and learn more about the Maldives’ delicate marine ecosystem and how to protect it. Plus, after months cooped up in a small apartment in a big city, I’m craving the feeling of sand between my toes and the freedom to dive right into the sea outside my overwater bungalow.” — *Laura Itzkowitz, Contributing Writer*

Johner Images/Getty Images

Bohuslän archipelago, Sweden

"The short answer is, if I could travel anywhere right now, I would. After a year of home confinement, any place beyond the local Stop & Shop sounds exotic. If I had a magic lamp, or better yet, prompt access to the vaccine, sure, I'd be tempted to strike off a few items off the bucket list—Bali, Vietnam, Colombia. But at the same time, I long more than anything to be with family. As it happens, one of my homes away from home happens to be bucket list–worthy, or would be if more people knew about it. For five generations, the Swedish side of my wife's family has spent summers on an island in the Bohuslän archipelago, a few hours south of Oslo. There's no electricity (a way to preserve the old ways, yes, but also to keep taxes low, I'm told) and we typically share the island with a herd of sheep. There's little to fill the long summer days but hike, play music, read, cook on a wood-burning stove, take saunas, and dive into the fjord. Come to think of it, it'd be a great place to wait out a pandemic, as long as it didn't last into October. For those not fortunate enough to have family ties there, it's possible to find good hotels, often connected to great restaurants. But in that part of Sweden, true luxury is not found on land. As long as we're dreaming, I can't think of a place I'd rather be right now than on the deck of a chartered sailing ship like the gorgeous three-masted schooner *Lady Ellen*, cruising among the islands of Bohuslän, breathing lungfuls of briny air." — *Julian Sancton, Senior Features Editor*

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Rajasthan, India

"I've turned down a few trips to India for work and for pleasure, so when we can travel again safely, I'm eager to finally explore Jaipur which is beloved by so many of my friends in fashion and jewelry. I would source recommendations from India aficionados, like Marie-Helene de Taillac, Sara Beltran, Ulla Johnson, and Christian and Yasmine Hemmerle. Staying at Rajmahal Palace would be a highlight. I'd spend my days visiting jewelry studios, like The Munnu Gem Palace, and sourcing textiles for my new sewing projects at the Ganesh Emporium (the treasure hunt of travel shopping is something a click on Etsy can't replicate). I'd be sure to have a cocktail at Bar Palladio at the Narain Niwas Palace and enjoy a meal at Peshawri. After exhausting shopping and dining in Jaipur, I'd head to the rural region for a stay at Amanbagh where I'd indulge in an Ayurveda program for four days. I would end my dream trip in the north with a stay at the tented camps of Sujan Jawai in the Aravallis Hills. My family would magically appear at this point and we'd enjoy the sunsets from our tented suite." — *Melissa Ventosa Martin, Fashion Director*

Timothy Hearsum/Getty Images

Costalegre, Mexico

"The pandemic hasn't had me dreaming of new and exotic places so much as my tried-and-true favorites that have become suddenly out of reach. Top priority for my 2021 return to travel will be Mexico's Costalegre, to an exquisite little resort called Las Alamandas. I miss it for the memories I've made there over the years with my husband, for the colorful villas on a perfect crescent-shaped beach, and for the sense of being totally isolated in paradise. But I also miss it because it's one of those rare gems where you feel welcomed like family by the warm staff. The conversation is always lively, and the *camarones* are always fresh too." — *Jackie Caradonio, Travel Director*

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South/West American Road Trip

“While my bucket list of far-flung destinations grows daily, the excursion I’m most looking forward to is a Great American Road Trip. This journey, no doubt fueled by the hopeless romantic in me and a penchant for anything of the *Thelma and Louise* ilk, would take me south and then west. I’d like to honky-tonk my way through Nashville, catch a few live blues shows in Mississippi, listen to jazz in New Orleans, and then head west via Texas, stopping in Austin before driving under a blistering sun through the desert expanse to New Mexico and Arizona (ideally in a top-down 1970s MGB, of course). Out in the southwest, I dream of days spent unwinding at Canyon Ranch Tucson, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, and nights stargazing in the company of Saguaro cacti in the Sonoran Desert. The last bit of this trip would be all about national parks: the Grand Canyon, Zion, Arches, all the way up to Glacier National Park—and hopefully a stop at Amangiri, an American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts property, in Utah along the way. Even if I have to do it in sections, I can’t wait to hit the open road.” — *Ellie Nan Storck, Associate Digital Editor*

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Faroe Islands, Denmark

"When things return to some level of normalcy, I can't wait to travel again to both new destinations and old favorites. In the former category, I've had my eye on the Faroe Islands for some time now. This group of isolated islands, part of Denmark, lies in the North Atlantic between Iceland and the UK, and is full of the stark, beautiful, rugged cliffs-meet-ocean settings that I love so much. There are many outdoors activities to do there, like hiking, horseback riding, and exploring the surrounding ocean both on the surface and below. As far as dining, there is an abundance of fresh seafood to enjoy, and traditional Faroese dishes like fermented lamb and fish as exemplified by the menu at Ræst. There are not many luxury accommodations available in the Faroe Islands, but I'll be spending most of my time outdoors and soaking up the local culture. I will likely book a room at Hotel Føroyar, with its convenient location, clean Scandinavian design, and breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside." *— Jonah Flicker, Contributing Writer*

Tan Man Photo/Getty Images

Niseko, Japan

"Truly, anywhere in Japan is a dream for me. A return trip to Tokyo or Kyoto would be more than welcome, but, on my next venture to the country, I'd love to finally check off a bucket list item: Snowboarding at Niseko (while staying at Higashiyama Niseko Village, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve). Known for its epic powder days, plentiful *onsens*, and lots of wide open spaces to roam—not to mention Japan's delicious dining and sake breweries that cause me to salivate at the mere thought—it's a destination I find myself daydreaming about over and over again." *— Stacey Leasca, Contributing Writer*

Paul C Stokes/Getty Images

The Hebrides & Highlands, Scotland

"Scotland's dramatic wilderness (and whisky) is calling my name. I've been putting this trip off for so many years as it's always felt so close, but after the year we've had it feels like the time to go totally off-grid along the country's rugged Highlands and remote northern isles. The adventure would start on Alladale Wilderness Reserve's 23,000 acres, an estate dotted with lush pine forests and spectacular wildlife (they've recently reintroduced wolves to the area in an effort to rewild the environment). Then I'd drive down the iconic North Coast 500, Scotland's answer to route 66 which whizzes past castles and ruins before hopping aboard a RIB for a private Scottish sea safari (tap Blue Marble Private for the ultimate yacht-based itinerary), and toasting the day with a Highlands whisky like Macallan or Oban." *—Tal Dekel Daks, Contributing Writer*

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Aquitaine Region, France

“One of the first trips I’d like to take when the world opens up again is a trip I had to cancel due to COVID. In April, I was supposed to spend 10 days in France, most of it in the Aquitaine region. While I’ve been fortunate enough to visit France several times, this was a region I had yet to explore. And it had all the makings of a fairytale vacation. For starters, it’s known as the ‘Land of 1,000 Castles.’ So, you can expect to find a historic *château* around nearly every bend. Plus, the area is known for its quaint markets, prehistoric cave paintings, delicious cuisine, and outdoor sports on the river. There was something for everyone, which is why our entire family—in-laws, sisters, nieces, etc.—were set to join the adventure. We had rented a newly opened *château*, La Chartreuse de Calès, just down the road from Relais & Châteaux’s majestic waterfront property Château de la Treyne. It was the perfect home base for venturing around the region (Bordeaux was only 2.5 hours away) and enjoying downtime with loved ones. After spending so much time apart this past year, I couldn’t think of a better way to step back into the world of travel than with the whole Lippe-McGraw crew in town. Oh, and the entire trip was topped off with a few night’s stay at Hôtel Particulier Villeroy in Paris. And as we all know, Paris is always a good idea. — *Jordi Lippe-McGraw, Contributing Writer*

Vadim Nefedov/Getty Images

Antarctica

“It probably sounds crazy that after a year of social distancing and quarantine, anyone would dream of spending a few weeks in the most isolated place on Earth, but I have always been fascinated with remote and unexplored destinations, and Antarctica is both. I became obsessed with it after reading about Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton’s expeditions and attempts (alas, unsuccessful) to cross this icy desert. I actually like that the hostile conditions of the continent have prevented people from settling there or developing it in any way. It truly is like no other place on Earth. And since exploring it on foot is not an option for obvious reasons, I’d like to go on an expedition aboard Ponant’s brand new Le Commandant Charcot luxury polar ship. It operates off a mix of liquified natural gas, the cleanest fuel on the market, and electric battery and is able to cut through ice floe up to seven feet thick, which means it can reach places that other ships haven’t. Le Commandant Charcot’s newest itinerary includes visiting Peter I Island, Charcot Island, and reaching deep into the Bellingshausen Sea, home to huge colonies of emperor penguins. Talk about a once-in-a-lifetime experience!” — *Dobrina Zhekova, Contributing Writer*