

Trending

Where are we all off to this year?

Of all the seismic shifts in travel right now, it's our desire for escapism and 'otherness' that shows how we will be holidaying in 2022, says Laura Fowler

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AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURES

New year, new travel portmanteau – and for 2022 it's "ed-venture". That's an educational adventure, if it's not bludgeoningly obvious already, and we have tour operator Scott Dunn to thank for the word. Its ed-venture smorgasbord includes conservation research projects and animal tracking in South Africa, nautical navigation and marine biology programmes in the Maldives – but this is a travel trend we are seeing across the board. Families are driving bookings in 2022, and parents are keen to compensate for their children's lost formative years.

Recognising this, Black Tomato has just launched Field Trip, a series of innovative learning encounters for children aged 12-plus, which aim to enrich their knowledge of curriculum subjects – whether history or physics, sculpture or music – through enviable real-life experiences. That might be through an exclusive visit to the Large Hadron Collider, going backstage at Paris's Opera Garnier with a prima ballerina, snorkelling through Iceland's Silfra fissure to learn about tectonic plates, or getting under the skin of Kyoto's wooden buildings with a local architect.

TAKE THE TRIP A well-chosen holiday to Kenya – now open again to UK travellers and relatively restriction-free – helps bring desperately needed tourism to the country's communities and conservation projects. Among Black Tomato's sustainability Field Trips is the chance to join an anti-poaching patrol in the Loisaba Conservancy, bringing an extra dimension to a luxury safari holiday. For more information see blacktomato.com/field-trip



Take it slow: explore Iceland's remote corners on a 28-day self-drive adventure

2

LIFE IS ONE LONG HOLIDAY... SORT OF

First we had "working from anywhere". Now the concept has evolved into what Airbnb founder Brian Chesky is calling "the Live Anywhere Travel Revolution". While "living anywhere" may not sound like a trend, more an ongoing description of our time here on earth, Chesky knows the power (currently around £10.3 billion) of nailing a paradigm shift in a soundbite.

"The pandemic untethered people from the need to work in specific places at specific times," the rentals giant reports. "And despite life seemingly returning to normal... the ways guests are using Airbnb have shifted; 20 per cent of business is stays of one month or longer."

In a recent survey, G Adventures (gadventures.com) found that a third of people plan to combine work with

travel in 2022 on "workations". Adventure companies are seeing stays lengthen by around 30 per cent, with more of us than ever taking, say, a month to do what Jimmy Carroll, co-founder of Pelorus (pelorus.com), terms "a deep dive" into one country. Now that we can do our jobs from a finca in Ibiza or a wadi in Oman, the lines between work and travel have been transcended: life is one big holiday – albeit one bound by a laptop.

TAKE THE TRIP Discover the World has introduced a 28-night self-drive adventure called Go Slow and Savour in Iceland, allowing time to get stuck into the country's most remote corners. From £4,539pp; discover-the-world.com/holidays/go-slow-and-savour-in-iceland



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; NOTA; ESCOVA; RAGNAR TH. SIGURDSSON

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WE'RE ALL GOING TO THE USA...

Proving that distance really does make the heart grow fonder, it is those destinations that have been off-limits recently which are proving most popular for travel in 2022. Resoundingly, the United States is the top-selling destination for Easter and summer holidays in 2022, reports agency Travel Counsellors. The finding is echoed by tour operators such as Scott Dunn, which noted particular interest in California, the South West, and Florida, while for Red Savannah it is Montana. "Interest in ranch holidays has been increasing since the US opened its borders last month," says travel specialist Mel Matthews. "People are seeking freedom, space and adventure – and a ranch holiday delivers this in spades. It's a particularly popular choice for families with teenagers, who can enjoy some independence, and skills – hiking, biking, horseriding and fishing – which can be learned together."

TAKE THE TRIP Scott Dunn's new 2022 trips include a 13-day California road trip in an SUV, from experiences to go-getting experience – kayaking, whale watching, bear-spotting (scottdunn.com) from £5,800pp; Red Savannah offers holidays at the Ranch at Rock Creek, Montana (redsavannah.com)

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... OR WALES

For all our grand travel plans in 2022, prudence still pays. Holidays in Britain are booming, and people are discovering parts of the British Isles they might not have previously considered, not least to escape the crowds of honeypots such as Cornwall and the Cotswolds. Wales – with its great dramatic landscapes and beautiful empty, sandy beaches – is both the fastest-rising and the most popular destination for 2022, according to holiday-cottages.co.uk, among others.

"Enquiries for Welsh getaways are 125 per cent higher than in 2019," says Daniel Marshall of Unique Homestays, whose Welsh properties are 36 per cent booked for the year ahead. "The remote locations that Wales has to offer afford an opportunity for guests to experience true escapism without the need for long-haul flights."

TAKE THE TRIP Unique Homestays has recently added Heddwen to its collection, an exquisitely restored stone farmhouse in Harlech, with views over Cardigan Bay and the peaks of Snowdonia. Sleeps six, from £1,595 a week; heddwen.uniquehomestays.com



Go paddleboarding off mountainous Catalina Island as part of a California road trip

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... AND WE'RE TAKING OUR NEW BFFS

Have dog, will travel – that's now one in three of us, since the great puppy boom of 2020. Hotels and self-catering cottage owners have responded to demand – which has more than doubled for 2022 – by not just allowing "well-behaved pets" (my Cornish hosi didn't bat an eyelid when I turned up with two rabbits in tow this autumn), but spoiling them with treats, canine cocktails and doggy afternoon teas. The Bell at Sklenfrith, in Monmouthshire (thebellatkslenfrith.co.uk), has installed a Pooch Parlour for grooming after muddy walks. And after spotting a 190 per cent increase in its

"dog-friendly" category of glamping stays, Canopy & Stars launched a new dog-friendly travel brand last month, Paws & Stay, which specialises in finding holidays for up to three dogs (and any number of owners).

TAKE THE TRIP Paws & Stay's Hill's Cross Hide in Devon is a bohemian-rustic cabin sleeping up to three humans and two dogs, with a dog-friendly local pub, fields to run wild in, and a porch overlooking the outstanding natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills. Four nights, from £580; pawsandstay.co.uk

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OLDER PEOPLE ARE GOING PLACES...

"We don't know how long we've got left!" my septuagenarian mother said, after mentioning she had booked no fewer than eight – eight! – holidays in 2022. She's not alone. A new wave of silver swashbucklers and empty nesters, who had planned to spend the

past couple of years enjoying retirement and independence, are making up for lost time and booking multiple bucket-list trips in 2022. Costa Rica is a prime choice for adventure, thanks to its combination of exotic landscapes, wildlife experiences, easy-going nature and luxury eco-lodges.

TAKE THE TRIP British Airways' direct Gatwick-San Jose flights relaunched last month (ba.com). Those with the time to spare might consider Pura Aventura's Ultimate Costa Rica: A Month of Wonders, taking travellers zip-lining across the rainforest canopy and snorkelling with turtles. The grandchildren will never believe you. From £6,590pp, including 28 nights' B&B, many lunches and dinners, 4x4 hire, guides, activities and domestic flights, with Pura Aventura (pura-aventura.com)



Bucket-list trips to places such as Costa Rica are a hit with older travellers

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... AND GOING IT ALONE

Solo travel has never been so popular. That might come as a surprise, given all the isolating – but in fact it has prompted us to strike out alone and book the trip we have always dreamed of. And it's not just gap-year youngsters. Wild Frontiers founder Jonny Bealby says bookings they are receiving are largely from solo travellers in the 45 to 50-plus age bracket, and mostly female. Partners, parents,

mothers especially, are taking time out for themselves, whether on wellness retreats, learning breaks such as surfing, or more intrepid adventures. "Often it's not that they are single – it's that they want to go to, say, Peru, but their partner doesn't want to," says James Treacy of Cox & Kings, almost half of whose recent bookings are by solo travellers. "So rather than go completely solo, they join a group

tour with other likeminded people." Others are positively embracing solitude. "This is about escaping the grind, setting challenges and pushing your comfort zone," says Tom Marchant, founder of Black Tomato, who arranged for one lone adventurer to travel alone to Mongolia, helping nomadic herders to move their winter camp, hunting with eagles and horseback riding across the mountains.

TAKE THE TRIP Cox & Kings' small-group big-hitting solo tour Treasures of Peru costs from £2,639pp for nine nights, including flights; coxandkings.co.uk. Black Tomato's boundary-pushing Become a True Explorer in Mongolia expedition costs £6,900 for nine nights (blacktomato.com)

Overseas travel is currently subject to restrictions. See Page 2

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UNIQUE, C'EST CHIC

A home from home just doesn't cut it in 2022. We have all had quite enough of our homes, frankly – on holiday we want special, one-off, out-of-this-world extraordinary. We want to sleep in gypsy caravans and floating cabins and party mansions with underground karaoke rooms. In a UK holiday rental market that has gone bananas – bookings soaring by 400 per cent – it's the quirky stuff that's getting snapped up fastest.

"Travellers are looking for unique stays," says Airbnb's Europe GM Amanda Cupples, whose company reports that the number of searches for "unique homes" on Airbnb has grown 94 per cent since 2019. Its Most-Wishlisted Top 20 for British holiday-

makers includes a converted 1940s boat, a former airship, two treehouses and, in top spot, a luxury "pigsty" outside Winchester. Canopy & Stars' most popular properties for 2022 are the Rowcombe Bathhouse in Devon and the Sky Den in Northumberland's Kielder Forest. Not to be outdone, hotels are creating their own offbeat, standalone boltholes; in 2022, if you want to get ahead, get a treehouse.

TAKE THE TRIP On the shores of Ullswater, Another Place has just launched a series of "Outside" rooms – a family-friendly treehouse and shepherd huts with stargazing roofs, plus a greenhouse for dining, yoga and crafting – with plenty of availability for next year. For more information see another place



It's not too early to plan a winter trip for 2022. British Columbia, anyone?

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THE RISE OF THE SUPER-EARLYBIRDS

Despite the return of some travel restrictions around the world, there's a thrilling sense that there are great possibilities for new experiences in 2022. And yet with our world still much reduced, it means increased demand for the places where we can go – particularly those within our own shores, as anyone who tried to book a last-minute staycation last summer can attest.

The result is the rise of a new species of super-early-bird bookers – hyper-organised holiday-baggers who snap up the best places at the best prices even into 2023, say UK rental companies who are taking bookings further ahead than ever before. Even while uncertainty over international travel lingers, booking far-flung trips in advance means you can pick up a bargain – and gives us something to look forward to, a ray of light in the winter months ahead.

TAKE THE TRIP Go with a trusted tour operator who scores refunds and flexibility. Original Travel, for example, has a "flexible pledge", allowing customers to change dates and destinations throughout 2022, with experts to advise on restriction-free holidays. Its dog-sledding, snoushoeing, craft-beer-drinking Winter in British Columbia road trip appeals for right now or next Christmas, depending on whether you are feet-footed or a planner. From £2,065pp for 11 days; originaltravel.co.uk

Overseas travel is currently subject to restrictions. See Page 2

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