Where to Go in 2017

We know that technology and globalization can make the world feel small and thoroughly explored. But we also know that the world is big and that there are always places to discover—and rediscover—for yourself. From familiar getaways that have found a new groove to far-flung corners that are finally within easy reach, these are the 20 buzziest destinations to visit this year.
Maldives Multiplication

So many villas, so little time.

The islands have reached beyond the honeymoon market and are seeing the next generation of overwater bungalows cater to a wider variety of niche interests like surfing and yoga. A staggering 23 new hotels opened in 2016 and about a dozen more will open in 2017. Baglioni Hotels (baglionihotels.com; doubles from US$1,100) acquired a private island named Maagau, part of the Dhaalu Atoll, a 30-minute seaplane ride from Malé. It will be home to a brand-new resort to be completed this summer, composed of above-sea villas, and three restaurants. Soneva Jani (soneva.com; villas from US$3,085) is a new 25-villa family-friendly resort set within its own private six-kilometer-long lagoon, which opened in late 2016. Its modernist timber architecture and bedrooms with retractable roofs are raising the bar for bungalow design. Another newcomer is the Four Seasons Voavah Baa Atoll (fourseasons.com; rates not yet available), which will be the world’s only private resort located entirely within a UNESCO biosphere. And those who can’t bear to leave the water will appreciate Hurawalhi (jumeirah.com; tasting menu at US$122) that’s launching a cruise with stops in the Maldives, and Malé International Airport’s US$450 million refurb includes a new runway to accommodate more passengers. If all that weren’t enough, UNESCO has been working with Maldives officials to make the entire archipelago a Biosphere Reserve by the end of this year. The plan includes a massive UN-funded clean water project that will start on Funadhoo and expand to at least 48 other remote islands, helping the Maldives become less wasteful and more self-sufficient. —Adam H. Graham

Oman of My Dreams

The Arabian peninsula’s best-kept secret is on an upscale swing.

You’d be forgiven for wondering how a cradle of civilization and a major intersection of global trade routes has managed to stay off the tourist radar for so long. Oman, with its rich history exemplified by the 10,000-year-old city of Al Walit and its unrivaled scenery that ranges from the limestone Al Hajjar mountains to a 3,000-kilometer coastline, has big draws for every type of traveler. Trek windswept deserts, spot rambunctious dolphins in the gulf, visit dazzling mosques, stay in charming Bedouin towns. Even capital city Muscat, famed for its souqs and seafood, boasts an incredibly diverse terrain—not to mention a laid-back, liveable scene that’s less over-the-top than neighboring Dubai and Abu Dhabi. No, the wealth hasn’t run rampant in this country; it’s been wisely reinvested back into the country. Avail yourself of that legendary Omani hospitality.—Jennifer Lee-St. John

Feast of the Future

Lively drinking and dining scenes have put three destinations on the culinary map.

In the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) in the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) is an easy one-stop shop: browse hand-embroidered tunics and gorgeous sting-ray home décor while sipping an iced coffee topped with homemade soft-serve ice cream, stop in at neighboring Bajloni (bajloni.com) for some of the region’s best Croatian sausages without casing and stuffed somborka peppers at Sokače (sokače.rs; mains from RSD914–1,714), set in a former brewery. —Mark Lean

Maldives Multiplication

The islands have reached beyond the honeymoon market and are seeing the next generation of overwater bungalows cater to a wider variety of niche interests like surfing and yoga. A staggering 23 new hotels opened in 2016 and about a dozen more will open in 2017. Baglioni Hotels (baglionihotels.com; doubles from US$1,100) acquired a private island named Maagau, part of the Dhaalu Atoll, a 30-minute seaplane ride from Malé. It will be home to a brand-new resort to be completed this summer, composed of above-sea villas, and three restaurants. Soneva Jani (soneva.com; villas from US$3,085) is a new 25-villa family-friendly resort set within its own private six-kilometer-long lagoon, which opened in late 2016. Its modernist timber architecture and bedrooms with retractable roofs are raising the bar for bungalow design. Another newcomer is the Four Seasons Voavah Baa Atoll (fourseasons.com; rates not yet available), which will be the world’s only private resort located entirely within a UNESCO biosphere. And those who can’t bear to leave the water will appreciate Hurawalhi (jumeirah.com; tasting menu at US$122) that’s launching a cruise with stops in the Maldives, and Malé International Airport’s US$450 million refurb includes a new runway to accommodate more passengers. If all that weren’t enough, UNESCO has been working with Maldives officials to make the entire archipelago a Biosphere Reserve by the end of this year. The plan includes a massive UN-funded clean water project that will start on Funadhoo and expand to at least 48 other remote islands, helping the Maldives become less wasteful and more self-sufficient. —Adam H. Graham

Oman of My Dreams

The Arabian peninsula’s best-kept secret is on an upscale swing.

You’d be forgiven for wondering how a cradle of civilization and a major intersection of global trade routes has managed to stay off the tourist radar for so long. Oman, with its rich history exemplified by the 10,000-year-old city of Al Walit and its unrivaled scenery that ranges from the limestone Al Hajjar mountains to a 3,000-kilometer coastline, has big draws for every type of traveler. Trek windswept deserts, spot rambunctious dolphins in the gulf, visit dazzling mosques, stay in charming Bedouin towns. Even capital city Muscat, famed for its souqs and seafood, boasts an incredibly diverse terrain—not to mention a laid-back, liveable scene that’s less over-the-top than neighboring Dubai and Abu Dhabi. No, the wealth hasn’t run rampant in this country; it’s been wisely reinvested back into the country. Avail yourself of that legendary Omani hospitality.—Jennifer Lee-St. John

Feast of the Future

Lively drinking and dining scenes have put three destinations on the culinary map.

In the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) in the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) is an easy one-stop shop: browse hand-embroidered tunics and gorgeous sting-ray home décor while sipping an iced coffee topped with homemade soft-serve ice cream, stop in at neighboring Bajloni (bajloni.com) for some of the region’s best Croatian sausages without casing and stuffed somborka peppers at Sokače (sokače.rs; mains from RSD914–1,714), set in a former brewery. —Mark Lean

Maldives Multiplication

The islands have reached beyond the honeymoon market and are seeing the next generation of overwater bungalows cater to a wider variety of niche interests like surfing and yoga. A staggering 23 new hotels opened in 2016 and about a dozen more will open in 2017. Baglioni Hotels (baglionihotels.com; doubles from US$1,100) acquired a private island named Maagau, part of the Dhaalu Atoll, a 30-minute seaplane ride from Malé. It will be home to a brand-new resort to be completed this summer, composed of above-sea villas, and three restaurants. Soneva Jani (soneva.com; villas from US$3,085) is a new 25-villa family-friendly resort set within its own private six-kilometer-long lagoon, which opened in late 2016. Its modernist timber architecture and bedrooms with retractable roofs are raising the bar for bungalow design. Another newcomer is the Four Seasons Voavah Baa Atoll (fourseasons.com; rates not yet available), which will be the world’s only private resort located entirely within a UNESCO biosphere. And those who can’t bear to leave the water will appreciate Hurawalhi (jumeirah.com; tasting menu at US$122) that’s launching a cruise with stops in the Maldives, and Malé International Airport’s US$450 million refurb includes a new runway to accommodate more passengers. If all that weren’t enough, UNESCO has been working with Maldives officials to make the entire archipelago a Biosphere Reserve by the end of this year. The plan includes a massive UN-funded clean water project that will start on Funadhoo and expand to at least 48 other remote islands, helping the Maldives become less wasteful and more self-sufficient. —Adam H. Graham

Oman of My Dreams

The Arabian peninsula’s best-kept secret is on an upscale swing.

You’d be forgiven for wondering how a cradle of civilization and a major intersection of global trade routes has managed to stay off the tourist radar for so long. Oman, with its rich history exemplified by the 10,000-year-old city of Al Walit and its unrivaled scenery that ranges from the limestone Al Hajjar mountains to a 3,000-kilometer coastline, has big draws for every type of traveler. Trek windswept deserts, spot rambunctious dolphins in the gulf, visit dazzling mosques, stay in charming Bedouin towns. Even capital city Muscat, famed for its souqs and seafood, boasts an incredibly diverse terrain—not to mention a laid-back, liveable scene that’s less over-the-top than neighboring Dubai and Abu Dhabi. No, the wealth hasn’t run rampant in this country; it’s been wisely reinvested back into the country. Avail yourself of that legendary Omani hospitality.—Jennifer Lee-St. John

Feast of the Future

Lively drinking and dining scenes have put three destinations on the culinary map.

In the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) in the bar-filled neighborhood buzzed with commerce half a century ago when the country’s main shopping spot, the Central Market, opened its doors, the taste of what life must have been like for Sultan Qaboos is still evident. The alley at Kabinet (kabinetيري.com; tasting menu at RM55) is an easy one-stop shop: browse hand-embroidered tunics and gorgeous sting-ray home décor while sipping an iced coffee topped with homemade soft-serve ice cream, stop in at neighboring Bajloni (bajloni.com) for some of the region’s best Croatian sausages without casing and stuffed somborka peppers at Sokače (sokače.rs; mains from RSD914–1,714), set in a former brewery. —Mark Lean
Go Wild

A new glamp site in Yala National Park, Sri Lanka, is adding creature comforts to creature sightings.

With more than 200 avian species flaunting their plumage and mammals including ruddy mongooses, golden jackals, sloth bears, langur monkeys, elephants and Indian palm civets roaming the forests, this 130,000-hectare protected park has always been a mecca for wildlife enthusiasts. Later this year, nature-lovers will be able to explore the biodiverse region in comfort while keeping their eco-footprint to a bare minimum. Set on the southeastern Sri Lankan coastline just outside the park boundaries, Wild Coast Tented Lodge (resplendentceylon.com; rates not yet available) will feature just 28 plush, low-impact tents. Some 30 leopards prowl the area, meaning the odds of spotting one of these elusive creatures are uncommonly high. —Diana Hurbell

Hamptons Down Under

Just an hour north of the city, Palm Beach is the go-to escape for the Sydney’s wealthiest residents and now new home-sharing sites are making it easier to rent one of the mansions that dot the peninsula.

If the perfect, sweeping arch of sand edged by pine trees an hour’s drive north of Sydney looks familiar, that’s because it’s the set of Home and Away, the iconic Australian soap opera about the lives of small-town people. But the real Palm Beach sits far atop the food chain: stacked with the high-design weekend escapes of affluent Sydneysiders. Now, thanks to the sharing economy, many of the best properties here are being rented out to celebrities like Nicole Kidman, Mick Jagger and, frankly, anyone who can afford it.

“Sharing beach houses has always been an Australian tradition. But the offerings in Palm Beach differ dramatically from the rustic no-frills cottages of yesteryear,” says Terry Kaljo, CEO of Contemporary Hotels (contemporaryhotels.com.au), which manages and provides concierge services for 34 high-end holiday homes in the area. The list includes Rockridge, an elegant 1940s residence with a clifftop pool; and the Spaceship House, a six-bedroom mansion with its own cinema. Add a smattering of cafés, restaurants, galleries, a liquor store that only sells wines that have been tasted by staff, and an annual polo event (polobythesea.com.au) held January 14 that attracts the who’s who of Sydney, and you’ll see why Palm Beach has emerged as the Hamptons of the Antipodes. —Ian Lloyd Neubauer
**Weekend Getaway**

**Rotterdam Uncovered**

Known for its pulsing student nightlife and alternative vibe, Rotterdam is starting to steal Amsterdam’s spotlight. Here’s how to spend three days in this dynamic Dutch city.

**Friday**

Start your weekend off by checking in to the Maaport (maaporthotel.com; doubles from £253), a wellness-oriented hotel where you can book a room with a Finnish sauna, or the CitizenM Hotel Rotterdam (citizenm.com; doubles from £87), which feels like your design-savvy friend’s living room. Wander north for some shopping in Oude Noorden, a vibrant residential area with experimental fashion and homedesign boutiques. Grab a pre-dinner drink at Brouwerij Noord (brouwerijnoord.nl), a brewery with 20 beers on tap situated in a former firehouse.

Continue the tasting tour with a 15-minute bike ride to Roffa Streetfoodbar (roffafood.nl; entrées €8–€25), a smokehouse that serves bread, beer and cheese from some of Rotterdam’s best producers. The brisket—slow-cooked over oak for 24 hours—is a must-try. Your ideal elixir is crafted with bespoke G&T at Ballroom (hmb-restaurant.nl; small plates €5–€25), a wellness-oriented hotel where you can book a room with a Finnish sauna, or the CitizenM Hotel Rotterdam (citizenm.com; doubles from £87), which feels like your design-savvy friend’s living room. Wander north for some shopping in Oude Noorden, a vibrant residential area with experimental fashion and homedesign boutiques. Grab a pre-dinner drink at Brouwerij Noord (brouwerijnoord.nl), a brewery with 20 beers on tap situated in a former firehouse.

Continue the tasting tour with a 15-minute bike ride to Roffa Streetfoodbar (roffafood.nl; entrées €8–€25), a smokehouse that serves bread, beer and cheese from some of Rotterdam’s best producers. The brisket—slow-cooked over oak for 24 hours—is a must-try.

**Saturday**

Stroll to the nearby Het Nieuwe Instituut (hetnieuweinstituut.nl), a museum dedicated to Dutch design and architecture. Afterward, cruise the river in a water taxi to spot a few examples in person, like the Erasmus Bridge and De Rotterdam, a striking skyscraper in the steigersgracht canal. Once you’ve worked up an appetite, take in the skyline while dining at HMB Restaurant (hmb-restaurant.nl; small plates €5–€25). Cap off the evening with a bespoke G&T at Ballroom (hmb-restaurant.nl; small plates €5–€25), a wellness-oriented hotel where you can book a room with a Finnish sauna, or the CitizenM Hotel Rotterdam (citizenm.com; doubles from £87), which feels like your design-savvy friend’s living room. Wander north for some shopping in Oude Noorden, a vibrant residential area with experimental fashion and homedesign boutiques. Grab a pre-dinner drink at Brouwerij Noord (brouwerijnoord.nl), a brewery with 20 beers on tap situated in a former firehouse.

Continue the tasting tour with a 15-minute bike ride to Roffa Streetfoodbar (roffafood.nl; entrées €8–€25), a smokehouse that serves bread, beer and cheese from some of Rotterdam’s best producers. The brisket—slow-cooked over oak for 24 hours—is a must-try.

**Sunday**

Art is everywhere in this city—more than a thousand pieces adorn the public spaces. Walk along the Rijnhaven for a glimpse of Robbing Forest, a surrealist installation of floating trees by art collective Motherson. Then head to De Markthal (markthal.nl), a vast, mural-covered space where vendors sell aged Roussaus and cinnamon-kissed stroopwafels. It’s also home to Het Nieuwe Instituut (hetnieuweinstituut.nl), a museum dedicated to Dutch design and architecture. Afterward, cruise the river in a water taxi to spot a few examples in person, like the Erasmus Bridge and De Rotterdam, a striking skyscraper in the steigersgracht canal. Once you’ve worked up an appetite, take in the skyline while dining at HMB Restaurant (hmb-restaurant.nl; small plates €5–€25), a wellness-oriented hotel where you can book a room with a Finnish sauna, or the CitizenM Hotel Rotterdam (citizenm.com; doubles from £87), which feels like your design-savvy friend’s living room. Wander north for some shopping in Oude Noorden, a vibrant residential area with experimental fashion and homedesign boutiques. Grab a pre-dinner drink at Brouwerij Noord (brouwerijnoord.nl), a brewery with 20 beers on tap situated in a former firehouse.

Continue the tasting tour with a 15-minute bike ride to Roffa Streetfoodbar (roffafood.nl; entrées €8–€25), a smokehouse that serves bread, beer and cheese from some of Rotterdam’s best producers. The brisket—slow-cooked over oak for 24 hours—is a must-try.

**Fast Track**

**Getting Here Just Got Easier**

Infrastructure and transportation updates have made travel to these three destinations a much smoother process. Go now, before the secret’s out.

**KANAZAWA, JAPAN**

This city on the western coast of Honshu has seen a boost in tourism since a bullet-train extension shortened the trip from Tokyo to just 2½ hours. So for the old wooden teahouses of the Higashi Chayagai district, the beautiful samurai residence in Nagamachi, and the contemporary art museum, then have your pick of sushi master Masa.

**DANANG**

New direct flights, an expansion for the international airport, and an easier e-visa application system, which is scheduled to roll out next month, are clearing the way for travelers to Danang. There are now direct flights from Bangkok (on Bangkok Airways) and Taipei (on Jetstar Airways), and the Danang Department of Tourism just launched an app to help travelers navigate the pretty port city in central Vietnam; its position makes it a perfect gateway to explore neighboring Hue and Ho Chi Minh City.

**CAMBODIAN COAST**

Cambodia has some of Southeast Asia’s most stunning islands, but getting to them has always been arduous (a flight to Phnom Penh, a four-hour drive, then a choppy ferry ride). Luckily, there are now direct flights into the coastal Sihanoukville airport via Saigon. That means a smoother journey to the island escapes coming this year: the wellness-minded Six Senses (sixsenses.com) on Krabey Island and the Alila Villas eco-resort (alilavillas.com; doubles from US$350) on Koh Russey.
Rural Burma Explorer

Myanmar Mysteries Tour

Flash Pack has recently added two days in Kayah state in its 12-day the storied Kayan women, known for adorning their necks with brass coils, are scattered across Kayah state’s mountaintop settlement. Both tours include the opportunity to interact with Kayans and floating villages, Kayah state was but a land unto itself and its inhabitants for decades, forbidden fruit for all tourists after more than 50 years of state-sanctioned isolation, as some parts of Kayah state cannot be accessed unless making it one of Asia’s most promising last frontiers. With unspoilt jungle and gilded mountaintop pagodas, long-necked Kayans and floating villages, Kayah state was but a land unto itself and its inhabitants for decades, forbidden fruit for all tourists after more than 50 years of state-sanctioned isolation, as some parts of Kayah state cannot be accessed unless making it one of Asia’s most promising last frontiers. Expect an influx of new tours into the once conflict-ridden region via long-tail boat through the grassy, open-air expanse to the mystified region via long-tail boat through the grassy, open-air expanse of Tah Pome forest. Scour the canopy for shy orangutans, clouded leopards and western tarsiers as you take to this 130-million-year-old rainforest on foot, and then spend the night at eco-friendly Borneo Rainforest Lodge for a real boutique jungle experience. —MARCO FERRARSE

Sabah Safaris

New tours reveal a few of Borneo’s more elusive inhabitants. A 13-night Rural Burma Explorer (misadventures.com; £2,400 per person) for two nights travelers explore the Kayah state’s capital, Loikaw, and visit several Padaung tribal villages. Also riding the wave of authentic, hyper-local travel opportunities, The Flash Pack has recently added two days in Kayah State in its 12-day Myanmar Mysteries Tour (flashpack.com; £2,089 per person). Guests arrive to the mystified region via long-tail boat through the grassy, open-air expanse of Blu Creek, and share smiles and authentic dishes such as wild octopus, or barbecue Kayah sausage, with Pan Pet locals in their ancient mountaintop settlement. Both tours include the opportunity to interact with the storied Kayan women, known for adorning their necks with brass coils as a centuries-long symbol of beauty. —TRAVIS LEVY

Packing for La Paz

La Paz, as seen from the Ato Hotel.

1. Issey Miyake mosaic coat, US$2,375 (issey-miyake.com).
2. Tseum rabbit-felt fedora, US$460 (tseum.co).
3. Fresh Vitamin Nectar Vitality-Boosting Facial Mask, US$92 (fresh.com).
Right Time, Right Place
The openings, events and festivals worth planning a trip around this year.

PATTAYA in FEBRUARY

The third installation of Thailand’s super-green music, food and culture festival Wonderfruit (wonderfruitfestival.com; from Bt3,800 for an adult day-pass) was postponed from last December out of respect for the passing of beloved King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Those who can make it February 16-19 instead are promised headlining acts Rudimental, Liana La Havas and Young Fathers at a 100-percent carbon neutral, four-day frolic in the fields two hours southeast of Bangkok.

HONG KONG in MARCH

Picking up steam as it goes, the fifth edition of Art Basel Hong Kong (March 23-25; artbasel.com/hong-kong; tickets HK$300) promises to be a visual candy store for art-lovers, with 241 galleries from 34 countries. New this year is the Kabinett sector, in which galleries offer curated shows within their booths.

QUEENSTOWN in JULY

There are two new places to stay in New Zealand’s adventure capital. (Ski season starts in mid-June, but there’s bungee jumping and jet boating year-round.) Bed down at the boutique Hulbert House (hulberthouse.co.nz; doubles from NZ$950), with six suites in an 1888 Victorian villa, or the 69-room QT Queenstown (qthotelsandresorts.com), which is slated to land on the shores of Lake Wakatipu this year.

LAKE LUCERNE in SEPTEMBER

The ultramodern Bürgenstock Resort (buergenstock.ch), which opens in mid 2017 with four hotels and a spa, is one of the biggest developments to come to this part of Switzerland. Get there quicker via the 56-kilometer Gotthard Base Tunnel (the world’s longest train tunnel), which has shaved 40 minutes off the trip from Milan. And don’t miss Mount Pilatus—its popular cog railway is now included in the Swiss Travel Pass.

RWANDA in JUNE

Travelers hoping to see East Africa’s waning population of mountain gorillas will be able to do it in style starting this summer, when Wilderness Safaris’ first Rwandan property, the upscale, six-villa Bisate Lodge (wilderness-safaris.com; villas from US$1,400 per person), opens near Volcanoes National Park Volcanoes National.

Picking up steam as it goes, the fifth edition of Art Basel Hong Kong (March 23-25; artbasel.com/hong-kong; tickets HK$300) promises to be a visual candy store for art-lovers, with 241 galleries from 34 countries. New this year is the Kabinett sector, in which galleries offer curated shows within their booths.

Travelers hoping to see East Africa’s waning population of mountain gorillas will be able to do it in style starting this summer, when Wilderness Safaris’ first Rwandan property, the upscale, six-villa Bisate Lodge (wilderness-safaris.com; villas from US$1,400 per person), opens near Volcanoes National Park Volcanoes National.