

# Intelligent Traveler

TIPS AND TRICKS TO HELP YOU TRAVEL SMARTER

Edited by PAUL BRADY & SARAH BRUNING

SUMMER STRATEGIES

## Unlocking the Ultimate National Parks Experience

These wildly popular American classics are at their peak in summer—which means you'll need expert advice to make the most of your nature-fueled getaway. **BY TANVI CHHEDA**

WE'RE A NATIONAL PARKS-loving family, and our kids have the Junior Ranger badges from Joshua Tree and Rocky Mountain to prove it. We've spotted elk, scrambled over boulders, and even tried to hug giant sequoias. But we're certainly not alone: in 2019, the parks saw 328 million visitors, a number that's been on the rise for years. This summer, as some Americans look to travel closer to home—and celebrate the beauty in wide-open spaces—these reserves are likely to be of even greater interest. (Check [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) for the latest on what's open.) We surveyed some parks pros for their tips on how to go off the beaten path and have a wilderness vacation your family will remember for years to come.

### Choose Lesser-Known Parks from the Jump

Sometimes great parks get overshadowed by having a bigger name nearby: Sequoia and Kings Canyon, contiguous parks with dramatic trees and peaks, both sit about 125 miles south of Yosemite; scenic and wildlife-rich Grand Teton neighbors Yellowstone. Other reserves suffer for their remoteness, says Kathy Kupper, a spokeswoman for the National Parks Service, giving three examples of lesser-seen gems: Nevada's Great Basin is home to magnificent stalagmite- and stalactite-filled caves and a number of centuries-old bristlecone pines—the oldest living things on earth. Utah's Capitol Reef is marked by stunning red-rock formations and lots of doable day hikes as well as tougher backcountry routes. North Cascades, 100 miles north of Seattle, has stunning waterfalls, 400 miles of hiking trails, and alpine lakes perfect for paddling.

### Rethink How You Do the Biggies

Several national parks have topographical features such as canyons or valleys that naturally lead to bottlenecks, Kupper says. Two cases in point: the Narrows at Zion and ▶

MICHAEL HANSON/GALLERY STOCK

Soaking in the serenity at Washington's North Cascades National Park, where lakes and hikes abound.



▲ A new Under Canvas lodge, slated to open near Maine's Acadia National Park this season, will make trails like this one even more accessible.

► the valley floor at Yosemite, which are often packed. She recommends avoiding these pinch points and, instead, hitting “areas where you won’t see a single person,” even in peak summer season. At Yosemite, for example, the area around Wawona is often sparsely visited; in Zion, the Kolob Canyons in the western part of the park get fewer visitors.

### Splurge on a Guide— and Let Them Take the Wheel

“Driver-guides take a lot of the annoying bits away,” says travel advisor Melissa Ladvala, a national parks specialist on T+L’s A-List. These experts know the best places to spot wildlife and learn about each park’s natural history, and they can tailor hikes and other adventures to your family’s specific interests. They also tackle the logistics—like knowing how to duck crowds—while letting you keep an eye on scenery rather than the road. “They’ll even get you in to places you can’t go on your own, like

roads closed to the general public,” Ladvala adds. A travel advisor can point you to a quality guide, or you can find vetted options on individual park websites. The cost can vary greatly from park to park (and also depends on the size of your group), but rates start around \$700 per day.

### Pick Where You Stay Carefully

Staying at a lodge within a park is important if you’re focused on seeing wildlife during early morning hours, before other park-goers have arrived, or at dusk, when animals are most active. But in-park properties can lack some of the luxe touches, including spa services and more privacy, that you’ll find at resorts just outside the major parks, such as California’s Rosewood Miramar Beach (Channel Islands), Tennessee’s Blackberry Mountain (Great Smoky Mountains), Wyoming’s Caldera House (Grand Teton), and Maine’s Under Canvas (Acadia), which is scheduled to debut this summer.



## From Online to Outdoors

Hit these websites to maximize your time in nature and connect with adventures you can’t find anywhere else.

BY PAUL BRADY

### YONDER

Launched in early 2020, this site is a bit like Airbnb but focuses exclusively on outdoor escapes like a ranch in British Columbia where you can learn to ride horses (or help wrangle and brand the cattle); a boho three-room inn set on a 20-acre vineyard in Paso Robles, California; or a Utah cabin within striking distance of five national parks.

### TENTRR

Not into roughing it? Most of the campsites curated by this start-up—like an oceanfront escape in Maine or a scenic spot high above Idaho’s Lake Coeur d’Alene—come with roomy canvas-sided tents, real beds, and Adirondack chairs.

### OUTDOORSY

The go-to for anyone curious about #vanlife, with peer-to-peer recreational vehicle rentals starting at just \$38 per day. It also has a wide selection of high-end RVs, including many in Alaska and Hawaii—prime spots for camper trips.

### BOATSETTER

This site for seafarers will hook you up with captained vessels around the world, whether you’re looking for a sightseeing trip around San Francisco Bay; a day of wakeboarding on Lake Travis near Austin, Texas; a harbor excursion in Charleston, South Carolina; or a sail charter in the British Virgin Islands.



## Perk Up Your Picnic

Warm, sunny days are ahead. Take your setup to the next level with these chic versions of classic outdoor-entertaining essentials. **BY SARAH BRUNING**



▲  
Clockwise from top left: Mango-wood trays, two for \$115, [theartisanvariety.com](http://theartisanvariety.com); leather football, \$150, [shinola.com](http://shinola.com); diamond jacquard picnic blanket, \$50, [thekomorebICollection.com](http://thekomorebICollection.com); bowling set, \$106, [wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com); Yeti Tundra 35 hard cooler, \$250, [yeti.com](http://yeti.com); rolling wicker picnic basket with place settings for six, \$299, [markandgraham.com](http://markandgraham.com); melamine round dinner plate, \$12, [ricebyrice.us](http://ricebyrice.us).



## Explore Iconic Museums, Wherever You Are

Long before this year's ever-changing travel restrictions, the giants of the global art scene could be tough to do right. Long lines, limited hours, and confusing ticketing policies often made trips to, say, the Uffizi Gallery or New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art stressful. These institutions are still worth the effort, of course, but now you can prep for your next visit with help from Google: its Arts & Culture platform ([artsandculture.google.com](https://artsandculture.google.com)) puts 360-degree views and detailed descriptions of collections online, in a variety of easy-to-navigate formats that will make you feel like you're there. Think of them as the perfect dry run. **BY PAUL BRADY**

▲ *Even if you can't jet to Amsterdam, you can catch the Dutch masters at the Rijksmuseum.*



▼ *Find works like Nighthawks, typically on view at the Art Institute of Chicago, online.*

### ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Zoom in on high-definition images of permanent-collection gems—such as Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, one of van Gogh's self portraits, and Hopper's *Nighthawks*—in photos so detailed you can see cracks in the oil paint. You can also pop through first- and second-floor galleries.

### METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

Swivel Street View-style through exhibits, including the one housing the famous ancient Egyptian Temple of Dendur, or dive in to more than 200,000 individual artifacts, among them paintings, sculptures, suits of armor, decorative vases, and engravings.

### NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

Click your way through room after room; jump right to the highlights, such as canvases from Bosch, Titian,



▲ *Marvel at the reconstructed Market Gate of Miletus in a virtual tour of Berlin's Pergamonmuseum.*

▼ *See a high-def version of Renoir's Two Sisters (On the Terrace) at the Art Institute of Chicago using Google's Arts & Culture platform.*

FROM TOP: ERIK SMITS/COURTESY OF RIJKSMUSEUM; THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, FRIENDS OF AMERICAN ART COLLECTION



▲ *An online tour of the Temple of Dendur, at the Met in New York City, lets you see it without the crowds.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID VON BECKER/COURTESY OF PERGAMONMUSEUM; THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, MR. AND MRS. LEWIS LARNED COBURN MEMORIAL COLLECTION; AGEFOTOSTOCK/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

and van Eyck; or explore digital-only collections like "Monet's London," a curated look at the artist's paintings of the U.K. capital.

### THE PERGAMONMUSEUM, BERLIN

Tour the massive gallery that houses this institution's eponymous exhibit, the Turkish Pergamon Altar. Or browse artifacts from across the Muslim world, including treasures from Iran and Syria. There's even a reconstructed market gate—nearly 55 feet tall—from the ancient city of Miletus.

### THE RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

Navigate the galleries, pausing to zoom in on details such as the pinprick-size dots of paint and subtle brushstrokes of 17th-century masterpieces like *The Milkmaid* by Vermeer.

### UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

Follow the guided "walk-through" to



capture the feeling of being there, with close-ups of iconic works, including Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and da Vinci's *Annunciation*.

## Plan Now, Play Later

When it comes to planning some trips, the earlier, the better. For these once-a-year (or even once-in-a-lifetime) journeys, it pays to strike at exactly the right time, according to these expert advisors on T+L's A-List.

BY ELAINE GLUSAC



▲  
Book well in advance for the Serengeti's migration season.

THE TRIP	WHEN TO BOOK	THE STRATEGY
<b>AN ANTARCTIC CRUISE</b>	<i>18 to 24 months ahead</i>	Though polar cruises have grown in popularity, there's still very limited capacity, since the ships that are equipped to make the trip are quite small. Plus, "the further ahead you book, the lower the cost," says Mary Curry ( <a href="mailto:mary.c@adventure-life.com">mary.c@adventure-life.com</a> ), a small-ship expert. The best deals are found as much as two years out, she adds.
<b>THE CARIBBEAN OVER THE HOLIDAYS</b>	<i>One year ahead</i>	Many vacationers lock in the best hotel rooms and villas in January for the following Christmas and New Year's, according to Jack Ezon ( <a href="mailto:jack@embarkbeyond.com">jack@embarkbeyond.com</a> ), a specialist in family travel. "Last-minute deals are typically hard to come by," he says. "If you wait, it's a leftovers game."
<b>EAST AFRICA'S GREAT MIGRATION</b>	<i>Up to 18 months ahead</i>	In the northern Serengeti, where accommodations are scarce, the Great Migration peaks during the summer, when many kids are out of school. Africa expert Elizabeth Gordon ( <a href="mailto:elizabeth@ejafrika.com">elizabeth@ejafrika.com</a> ) says, "It's a double whammy, so you need to book places like Nomad Tanzania's Serengeti Safari Camp or andBeyond Serengeti Under Canvas early."
<b>AMERICA'S CUP IN NEW ZEALAND</b>	<i>At least three months ahead</i>	Like the Kentucky Derby, the America's Cup sailing race is more than just a sporting event—it's an excuse to party. Next year's edition is slated for March, and you'll need to lock in viewing plans early. New Zealand ace Alexandra Stewart ( <a href="mailto:alexandra@antipodeanluxurytravel.com">alexandra@antipodeanluxurytravel.com</a> ) says, "A charter yacht is the best option, as it can navigate to the best vantage points. But there aren't many of them."
<b>YOUR OWN PRIVATE ISLAND</b>	<i>A year or more ahead</i>	Super-exclusive retreats, such as Bawah Reserve (Indonesia), Laucala (Fiji), Necker Island (British Virgin Islands), or North Island (Seychelles), don't have many rooms, so they often require at least a year of preplanning, says Chad Clark ( <a href="mailto:cclark@chadclarktravel.com">cclark@chadclarktravel.com</a> ), who specializes in over-the-top vacations. "It's not a matter of price, but rather whether you can get in at all," Clark says of these hideaways.

## Why We Should All Start Traveling Like Millennials

Millions of young families are skipping traditional trips in favor of global experiences their parents never would have considered. How exactly do they pull it off? And should we all be following their lead? **BY CAROLINE TELL**

FOR OUR FAMILY, going out to see the world always outweighs the stresses of getting there. Once we decided to visit Italy with our 10-month-old, that was that—no matter how long I had to spend on the phone with Alitalia figuring out how to request a bassinet on our connecting flight to Florence.

I'm in good company. Survey after survey confirms that millennials—the oldest of whom will soon turn 40—have embraced family travel to more far-flung destinations than previous generations. “This group is also taking their children to see the world at younger and younger ages,” says Shawna Huffman Owen ([shawna@huffmantravel.com](mailto:shawna@huffmantravel.com)), a travel advisor on T+L's A-List. “Our parents’ generation had the mindset of ‘work to get to retirement.’ Today, it’s all about enjoying the journey.”

Chris Fair, the CEO of Resonance, a consulting firm for destinations and hotels, sees a similar shift. “Travel is a form of social currency, and millennial families travel to more exotic places because the parents valued travel before they had kids.”

It goes beyond bragging rights, says Aliza Pressman, a developmental psychologist and cofounding director of the Mount Sinai Parenting Center. “If parents can model a genuine curiosity and interest in the world around them, then traveling can be beneficial for both them and the kids,” she explains.

That’s one reason Stirling Kelso, a mother of two and the founder of the website Half Pint Travel, recently embarked on a six-month trip around the world with her husband and little ones. Though the itinerary was cut short in New Zealand this spring, the early lessons still stuck: “Travel teaches children about change and resiliency,” Kelso says. “Learning about different cultures, food, and languages is not only fun and educational but also

helps kids learn to navigate new situations with grace and confidence.”

While logistics can be a challenge, that hasn’t stopped Parents.com executive editor Julia Dennison from traveling to Bermuda, London, and Rome with her three-year-old. “It’s still worth it, even if the flights are a headache,” she says. “I was lucky to grow up traveling from a young age, and I’ll be taking my daughter to as many countries as I can.” ●

*Parents are getting more adventurous than ever—and taking the kids along, too.*



*Travel + Leisure's Take Your Days campaign encourages travelers to use those vacation, personal, and mental-health days to spend more time with their loved ones. Learn more at [travelandleisure.com/takeyourdays](http://travelandleisure.com/takeyourdays).*