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Jordan Harvey, a South America specialist, plans treks in the Andes passing alpaca- and llama-filled pastures.

The more unpredictable our natural and political landscapes become, the more we feel the urge to visit places untouched by the news cycle. So, as we continue to support and keep a close watch on those areas hit hardest by a rash of hurricanes, fires, and foreign-policy blunders, we're craving the kind of life- and perspective-changing travel that's made all the more magical when planned by the pros—no matter how fearless and self-sufficient we sometimes feel. Because surviving in, say, the Bolivian jungle one day and meeting with the hottest artists in Lima the next requires both grit and access—to say nothing of a network of on-the-ground know-how that you quite literally can't live without in some places. Here are the experts, fixers, and experience makers you'll want in your foxhole. →

Photograph by Jérôme Gaillard

2017

TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST



CENTRAL, EASTERN,
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Cherri Briggs

Explore, Inc.

Briggs has spent more than two decades planning trips to Africa, and her latest focus is lesser-known but awe-inspiring places like Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Zambia.

Michael Lorentz

Passage to Africa

Lorentz shines at back-of-beyond trips to Ethiopia and mobile safaris in Botswana, where you'll spot meerkat, hyena, and other wildlife.

Henrietta Loyd

Cazenove + Loyd

She'll arrange art tours in Cape Town, meetings with politicians in Ethiopia, and safaris through tribal regions of Kenya.

Mark Nolting

The Africa Adventure Company

For off-the-map safaris led by researchers in places like the rarely visited Mabuasehube Game Reserve, Nolting is our guy.

Nina Wennersten and Daniel Saperstein

Hippo Creek Safaris

This duo pulls off spectacular trips in Kenya (to the Segera Retreat, for example), South Africa (where they'll arrange private wine tastings), and Tanzania (where they recommend Roving Bushtops).

EASTERN AFRICA

Linda Friedman

Custom Safaris

She's planned lots of multigenerational



Sean Nelson, an Oman specialist, knows his way around the Hajar Mountains.

family safaris, and she's also expert at gorilla tracking in Rwanda.

Wil Smith and Karen Zulauf

Deeper Africa

They take walking safaris seriously, pairing you up with leading researchers, game wardens, antipoaching teams, and guides for itineraries in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and beyond.

EGYPT

Rami Girgis

Abercrombie & Kent

Girgis can get you private access to the entire Giza Plateau,

including the three major pyramids and the Sphinx.

ETHIOPIA

Will Jones

Journeys by Design

A native of Africa, Jones has been working in safaris since 1994, managing camps, guiding trips, and planning way-out-there expeditions into tribal villages and stretches of untouched wilderness.

IRAN AND TUNISIA

Jerry Sorkin

Iconic Journeys Worldwide

He's got decades of

experience in North Africa and the Middle East, and has fixers who can speak to everything from ancient ruins to contemporary politics.

ISRAEL

Susan Weissberg

Wyllys Professional Travel

She knows the contemporary art scene in Jaffa and the right guides for a deep dive into Jewish history.

Joe Yudin

Touring Israel

Yudin can connect you with Israel Defense

Forces officers, archaeologists, chefs, and other insiders.

MOROCCO

Michael Diamond

Cobblestone Private Travel

His travelers meet with women's rights NGOs in the Ourika Valley, get the best rooms at in-demand *riads* in Marrakech, and do tasting tours through Fès.

Mike Korn

Heritage Tours

If you want to try dune boarding in the Sahara or see the blue-walled city of Chefchaouen, go with Korn. He's also got great guides in Fès and Marrakech.

OMAN

Sean Nelson

Oman Expeditions

He knows the best climbing and canyon-eering routes; the most exhilarating dune-bashing and quad-biking spots; and the perfect stretches of coast for surfing, diving, and sailing.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Dan Achber

Trufflepig

Achber knows Botswana particularly well—he's organized multiday paddles on the Selinda Spillway and game counts with zebra researchers working in the Makgadikgadi Pans.

Deborah Calmeyer

Roar Africa

With her far-reaching network that includes some of the region's savviest guides, she can get you into private homes, gardens, and art collections you can't otherwise see.

Julian Harrison

Premier Tours

He's arranged trips with wildlife filmmakers Dereck and Beverly Joubert, as well as with lion and rhino researchers.

Ryan Hilton

AuthentEscapes

He's planned photography workshops in the bush, connected travelers with antipoaching teams, and coordinated a 10-day, 62-mile walking safari through raw wilderness.

Teresa Sullivan

Mango African Safaris

Sullivan knows which routes, camps, and game reserves are best suited to families, and she's coordinated multiday walks in the Kenyan bush.

Phoebe Weinberg

Greatways Travel

Weinberg can get you the best rooms (like No. 6 at Singita Lebombo Lodge or No. 1 at Vumbura Plains), plus over-the-top extras like helicopter flights above the Okavango Delta.



ASIA



BHUTAN

Brent Olson

GeoEx

Olson knows where to stay (Amankora, Zhiwa Ling Heritage) and how to duck crowds, and can arrange meditation retreats with Buddhist monks.

CAMBODIA

Andy Booth

AboutAsia

Booth is particularly handy around Tonlé Sap Lake, where his guests can watch wildlife and navigate floating villages aboard a private wooden boat. He's also figured out the best times to visit ancient complexes like Angkor Thom to avoid jostling with crowds.