

THE  TIMES

MAGAZINE

11.01.14

Your children can't add up

You only talk about sex
when you're drunk

Your men don't know
how to behave

You wear nighties
in bed



**WHAT
WE FRENCH
REALLY THINK
ABOUT YOU
BRITS**

By Muriel Demarcus

PLUS

Travel special
50 things to do
before you die

TRAVEL SPECIAL

50 THINGS YOU SHOULD DO BEFORE YOU DIE

Never mind the Taj Mahal or Grand Canyon – try diving with whale sharks or stargazing in Utah instead. Travel experts tell Lisa Grainger what's on their bucket lists



Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

9. RELAX IN PROVENCE



1 Sail round Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

This is one of the most affordable ways to see a natural wonder of the world – an all-in day trip from Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, is about £40. This includes the bus journey (about three and a half hours each way), a boat trip out to the limestone islands and lunch on board. Just book at any travel agent in the centre of Hanoi. And don't forget your cosie.

2 Lunch on the Isle of Skye

The Three Chimneys is a tiny restaurant in a former fisherman's cottage whose ingredients all come from the island or nearby Lochalsh. Regularly cited as one of the world's top 50, it offers a seven-course tasting menu (£90 per person) including oysters, langoustines with tattie scones, crab with green apple and nasturtium, and a hot marmalade soufflé. threechimneys.co.uk

3 Camp in the Empty Quarter

Rub' al Khali, the Empty Quarter on the Arabian Peninsula, is the largest sand desert on Earth. Hud Hud Travels sets up the most comfortable camps surrounded by mountains, canyons and plains. Tents have proper beds and starlit showers (as you might expect at a cost of £730 per person per night), and excursions are conducted on camels for those who want to explore the dunes slowly (or there are Jeeps for fans of air conditioning). hudhudtravels.com

4 Learn to dance in Cuba

Dance company Ballet Folklórico Cutumba offers lessons in Cuban son and salsa in Santiago de Cuba and organises club nights in Havana. Plus, trips around the country can be arranged, trying or watching various dance forms and experiencing local styles

of music. A three-day package costs £480 (including flights from Havana). esenciaexperiences.com

5 Shop for antiques in Paris

Paris has the biggest flea markets in the world – from the seven-hectare Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen at Clignancourt to the smaller Porte de Vanves. Antiques specialist Stuart Paterson will not only whisk you round the best bits, but arrange for your purchases to be shipped back home – all while you're lazing at the perfect little Marais hotel, Pavillon de la Reine. Rooms start at £365 a night. pavillon-de-la-reine.com; stupat@gmail.com

6 Explore Spitsbergen from a ship

Basecamp Explorer's ship, *Noorderlicht*, is based all year in the frozen fjords of Norway, hemmed in by ice. Overnight packages start from around £835 per person and while its ten cabins are not superluxurious, they provide a base from which to explore the Arctic wilderness from February until May, climbing glaciers and traversing mountain passes by dog sled or skidoo. basecampexplorer.com

7 Click with the bushmen in Botswana

Jack's Cap and San Camp, owned by the charismatic guide Ralph Bousfield, are in the middle of the biggest salt pans in Africa, the Makgadikgadi. From here, go with San bushmen into the desert, learning about bush life and traditional lifestyles, or head out on safari to spot unusual creatures such as desert lions, brown hyena, porcupines and meerkats. Prices from £710 per person per night, staying in stylish colonial tents filled with antiques and four-poster beds. unchartedafrica.com

4. LEARN TO DANCE IN CUBA



8 Explore the Dolomites in privacy

San Lorenzo Mountain Lodge in the Italian Dolomites was once a 16th-century hunting hideaway. It's now a stylishly decorated gourmet retreat for private groups, run by a charming couple. You can keep it just the two of you from £1,995 a day or invite friends for an extra £82 per person a day. With mountains and forests all around, there's plenty to do, from hiking, biking and mushroom-hunting in the forests to skiing – just ten minutes away by helicopter. Or you can just float in the heated pool, admiring the views and tucking into porcini soufflés and wild-boar tagliatelle. sanlorenzomountainlodge.com

9 Relax in Provence

Stay at La Bastide de Marie: a farmhouse converted into a superchic boutique hotel.

From far left: La Bastide de Marie, Provins; downtime in Havana



Spoil yourself at the spa, hang out in olive groves, then go on a tour with a local painter to discover the spots that inspired Picasso, Matisse and Chagall. From £315 a night. labastidedemarie.com

10 Lie on a beach in Mozambique

Situated on 200 metres of private beach on a protected wildlife peninsula, Pambele is on a stunning part of the African coast, surrounded by reefs, deserted beaches and seas teeming with fish. The fully staffed private house sleeps ten adults and four children (from £3,920 a night all-inclusive) in five wooden, thatched villas, and comes with a catamaran and speedboat for excursions to marlin fish, dolphin and whale-spot, or picnic on one of 100 little islands nearby. pambele.co.mz

11 Watch glaciers calve

Glacier Bay in Alaska has some of the world's most impressive glaciers. The only yachts allowed to stay there overnight are those owned by American Safaris. Week-long trips start from £1,154 per person per night. From the intimate yachts, see huge ice walls falling off glaciers, explore icebergs from kayaks and, if you're brave, take a dip in the icy water. un-cruise.com/alaska-cruises

12 Fly-fish on the Tweed

The Boathouse, a five-bedroomed, self-catering cottage in Northumberland, is not just surrounded by spectacular countryside, but fronted by 1,000 yards of the River Tweed, renowned for its salmon fishing. It starts at £1,000 per week and, for non-fishers, there are fine beaches at nearby Bamburgh

and spectacular clifftop walks at St Abb's Head. crabtreeandcrabtree.com/The_Boathouse-propertyid:11647

13 Track gorillas in Rwanda

Tracking gorillas in the Parc National des Volcans is the highlight of staying at Virunga Lodge (from £384 per person per night), but its hilltop position, with views over the Virunga volcanoes, shimmering lakes and misty tropical forests, is pretty special, too. There are 10 gorilla families in the area (of the 800 or so mountain gorillas still left in existence); once one has been found, you have just one precious hour to spend with them. volcanoessafaris.com

14 Swim with penguins in Cape Town

At the very tip of the African continent the ➔

21. GAME-WATCH ON THE ZAMBEZI



experiences of the glacier at Riederalp, staying at comfortable local guest houses en route. From £1,065 per person. walksworldwide.com

19. Step out on the new Wales Coast Path

The path is now 870 miles long, taking in some of the most beautiful parts of the British coastline. A good start – or end – is the Llys Meddyg restaurant and hotel, known for its food using local produce and foraged ingredients. Rooms start at £100 a night and a three-course meal is £35 a head. llysmeddyg.com

20. Taste whisky on Jura

Right next to the distillery on the island of Jura – inhabited for 8,000 years – is Scotland's most romantic hideaway. Furnished by the fabulously named French decorator Bambi Sloan, it offers snifters of peaty whisky just a few steps away and dramatic sea views. It sleeps up to eight people and costs £2,500 for four nights. isleofjura.com/lodge

21. Game-watch on the Zambezi

Chongwe River House is the only private villa on the Lower Zambezi and the most exclusive location from which to see game from the water and land. From the Gaudi-esque house in Zambia, paddle on canoes right up to elephants, drive out lion-spotting at night, fish for the sharp-toothed tigerfish, or just lie by the pool, listening to game trumpet and roar all around. Prices start from just under £2,000 a night for a family of four. chongweriverhouse.com

22. Fall in love with palatial Venice

Stay in one of the city's swankiest hotels. The Gritti Palace's rooftop suite now has a private pool with stonking views of the Grand Canal (£7,825 a night); the Ca'Sagredo hotel has restored murals in its palatial rooms (from £430 a night); the new Aman (from £830 a night) has opened in a former palace. Lunch at Cip's, right on the Canal – order cuttlefish with fresh peas or spaghetti with clams. bellinitravel.com

23. Take over a mini Italian hamlet

American aesthetes have taken over the entire village of Castiglioncello del Trinoro and created the just about perfect Monteverdi: a group of three villas (starting at £4,570 for the week), a chapel, a seven-room boutique hotel (rooms cost from £310 a night) and a farm-to-fork restaurant. Learn to cook Italian-style or simply luxuriate in the fine private collection of art and wine from vineyards just outside your window. monteverdituscany.com

24. Sail off Papua New Guinea

Just off the coast of the remote Raja Ampat area, 5 metre-wide manta rays swim the channels, whale sharks come to breed, and walls of unspoilt coral drop for miles onto the ocean floor. This is the place to which the British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace came to discover new species (now in our Natural History Museum), and where the scenery is still as stunning as it was when Sir Francis Drake dropped anchor. The *Tiger Blue* schooner sleeps up to ten and has its own chef, diving equipment and tender and can

25. TAKE OVER A MINI ITALIAN HAMLET



From far left: Lower Zambezi National Park; Monteverdi, Tuscany

travel to the Banda and Komodo islands, too. You and six others can hire her from £2,680 a day or two can share a double cabin from £3,025 per person including international flights, transfers, meals and watersports. tigerblue.info

25. Bathe at the top of the Victoria Falls

Just above one of the world's biggest waterfalls is a pool, which, at low tide, you can only get to from a Zambian island with an experienced guide. With him, you can swim into it, be guided onto a rock at its edge and watch millions of gallons of water roaring over right beside you. Stay at Tongabezi, from £360 per person per night, a little further up the river. tongabezi.com

26. Cocktail over the sea

The Rock Bar at Ayana Resort in Bali (rooms from £152 per night) has one of the most stunning settings on the island: built right over the sea, with bar seats set up for optimum sunset views and DJs on hand to keep the party going as the stars come out. ayanaresort.com/rockbarbali

27. Furniture-shop in Stockholm

Swedes are masters of simple but stylish living, and their capital is littered with design shops. Spend a morning with guide Charlotta Carlsen of Smart City Shopping, lunch on herrings, lobster and fine wine at Lisa Elmqvist in the Ostermalms Saluhall (£70), and end the day with waygu beefburgers (£30... yes, for the burger) at the Michelin-starred Matbaren restaurant at the Grand Hôtel. selectcollection.com; grandhotel.se

28 Fly above the fairytale castles of Bavaria

Germany's 19th-century "mad king", Ludwig II, built palaces to rival Louis XIV's in Versailles, and 200 years later inspired Disney. For a fairytale view of the Linderhof Palace, Neuschwanstein and Herrenchiemsee, fly in a balloon to see his fantastical creations from the air. A 90-minute ride for 2 costs £166. bavaria-ballon.de

29 Rejuvenate in Geneva

The seven-day Better Ageing Programme at La Réserve in Geneva, £3,300, is not just supervised by doctors, nutritionists and fitness instructors, who use science to test your body and ascertain what it needs; it is also beautiful: modern, luxe, light and overlooking Lake Geneva. Rooms are an additional £300 a night. lareserve.ch/en/the-spa

30 Live like a cowhand in Montana

The Ranch at Rock Creek, in spectacular Montana wilderness, has been a working cattle ranch for more than a century. Expect clay shooting, horse riding, biking, hiking and fishing in the summer, as well as skiing and skating in winter. All-inclusive rates start at £517 per person per night. Accommodation is in spacious wooden villas or canvas tents with five-star comforts – including barstools topped with cowboy saddles. theranchatrockcreek.com

31 Meet Santa in Finland

The Arctic Circle, just above Rovaniemi, is where Santa has set up his Finnish home – and where children can visit the bearded, red-suited man, tell him their wishes, send a postcard with a North Pole stamp and then meet up to 50 Arctic creatures in the Ranua Zoo, from polar bears to Arctic ravens. A three-night package starts at £588 per person. After a night at the private log cabin Bear's Den, there are husky rides and a trip to the reindeer farm the next day. luxurybeyond.com

32 Dive with whale sharks

From April to June, the world's biggest fish converge on the Unesco-protected Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia, coming so close to the beach that you can paddle right up to them. Stay at the barefoot luxury Sal Salis (£410 per night all-inclusive), where you camp on the dunes with no one else around. salsalis.com.au

33 Dance with the Gnaoua

Every year in June, hundreds of traditional Gnaoua musicians converge for the World Music Festival in the white-walled coastal town of Essaouira in Morocco. Most gigs are in the square or on the beach, so the whole town becomes filled with sound: a hypnotic

30. LIVE LIKE A COWHAND IN MONTANA



The Ranch at Rock Creek

mix of Haitian and Brazilian melodies, African beats and Islamic chants that few can resist dancing to. Stay at the chic Villa Maroc (rooms start at £75 a night). festival-gnaoua.net; villa-maroc.com

34 Take children on safari in South Africa

An ideal combination for first-time safari-goers is Ant's Nest in the Waterberg (no lions or elephant, but there are horses, so you can trot around; £160 per person per night and £103 for the kids), followed by Jaci's Safari Lodge in Madikwe (from £170 for adults and £74 for children aged 5 to 12; four-year-olds and under go free), which has the Big Five (lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino and elephant). waterberg.net; madikwe.com

35 Ski in Aspen

The little town where America's millionaires jet in to ski and snowboard has remained remarkably unblingy. The slopes are wide, the snow is powdery and deep, and skiing is hassle-free thanks to ski concierges who store, dry, clean and transport equipment between slopes overnight, so you can make straight for the après-ski attractions without any distractions. Stay at the historic Hotel Jerome (rooms from £400 a night), with its famous J-Bar (where cocktails were disguised with ice cream during Prohibition). hotelerjrome/aubergeresorts.com; scottdunn.com

36 Party with Indian folk-lovers

Every October, groups of musicians from all over India descend on Jodhpur, playing on ramparts, in ornate palace rooms and on platforms on the edge of a mountain in a wild, colourful celebration of traditional folk music. The place to stay is in safari-style tents in the maharajah's fort, which is closed to crowds at night, leaving it blissfully free for you to explore on your own. A seven-night package

to Rajasthan (including flights and four nights at the fort) starts from £2,150 per person. jodhpurriff.org; greavesindia.com

37 See tigers in Rajasthan

Thanks to poachers and the insatiable Chinese demand for tiger bones for traditional medicines, there aren't many of these magnificent animals left in the wild. A good place to see them is Ranthambore. If you can stretch to it, stay in the smartest glamp site, the Oberoi Vanyavilas (from £550 per night), where staff look immaculate in cream outfits and coloured turbans. oberoihotels.com/oberoi_vanyavilas/

38 Luxuriate in colonial splendour

Singita Sabora Tented Camp, on a 130,000-hectare private reserve in Tanzania, is where Middle Eastern princes and Hollywood stars go for safaris. *Out of Africa* style. Its canvas-walled rooms are littered with Persian rugs and antiques; the food is gourmet and served on silver; there's a stable of horses for crossing the plains; and masseuses to soothe muscles after a hard day. If you're lucky, the wildebeest migration passes by here; if not, they'll whisk you off by plane or helicopter to see it. A seven-night package (including flights and transfers) starts at £6,495 per person. AfricaTravel.com, 020-7843 3500

39 Venture into the tribal heartlands of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is still home to ancient tribes who have had little contact with the Western world. Simoon Travel runs small specialist group tours into Southern Ethiopia to meet little-seen tribes and witness their traditional way of life once a year with prices starting from £3,300 for two weeks (full board, including flights). Accommodation is basic – but with such stunning sights around, who cares? simoontravel.com

42. FEAST ON MICHELIN-STARRED FORAGED FOOD



From left: Fäviken restaurant, Sweden; Patagonia, Chile

40 Party like a film star

The most glamorous house on the Côte d'Azur is Le Grand Chateau in St Tropez (yours to hire from £25,000 per week). It sleeps 16, and is just off the Place des Lices (within walking distance of Caves du Roy, Club 55 and Nikki Beach), with its own DJ and 16 metre pool lit by coloured fibre-optic lights for pool parties. svillas.co.uk

41 See New Zealand by helicopter

The aptly named Louisa "Choppy" Patterson founded her own helicopter company in 1976, and her smart black Over the Top flying machines still whisk guests over some of the country's most exquisite scenery. Glide over fjords, glaciers and coastlines, stopping for an hour or two of heliskiing or a picnic on the edge of a mountaintop – with an antique gramophone providing the soundtrack. A 30-minute ride starts at £134. flynz.co.nz

42 Feast on Michelin-starred foraged food

Fäviken restaurant isn't easy to get to – on a huge estate in the north of Sweden, with an airport a few hours' drive away. And neither is it easy to get into; it has just a few tables and long waiting lists. But the long journey there is worth it to sample the extraordinary cuisine (fancy birch-sap wine, berry digestifs or roast deer with nuts?). There are six double rooms (from £187), and most guests stay the night. faviken.com

43 Explore the pampas

From a South American perspective, Patagonia is the end of the Earth – and it feels like it. Arctic gales blow, trees grow sideways... even its mountains are twisted into contorted peaks. In Chile, stay at the Explora inside the Torres del Paine National Park (from £1,716 per person for four nights) or the Singular

hotel (from £213 per room), converted from a cold-storage plant just outside the park, and cross the hundreds of miles of pampas and Lord of the Rings-like ice-covered mountains on horseback. explora.com; thesingular.com

44 Sail the Croatian coast

Anouska Hempel's private 92ft gulet, *Beluga*, is equipped with a butler and a chef from Blakes Hotel, and is captained by a charming local sailor who will let the anchor down whenever you want: in turquoise bays, at oyster restaurants, in deserted coves. It sleeps six and is yours for the week for £37,400. Or, for around £1,000 per head for ten people, book the *Eleganza* gulet, from Sail Dalmatia. dalmatiandestinations.com; saildalmatia.com

45 Follow Scott to the ends of the Earth

On Silversea's *Silver Explorer* – one of the most luxurious expedition ships on the seas – it is possible to reach the snowy world explored by Captain Robert Scott (but in considerably more comfort). Witness calving glaciers and penguins and killer orcas, while taking in spectacular scenery. The ten-day trip starts at £6,450 per person. silversea.com

46 Drink in the vineyards of Cape Town

Because of the diversity of South Africa's vineyards – some small and charming, others sophisticated and gilded – there's always plenty to do around the characterful towns of Franschhoek and Stellenbosch. Dream trip? Stay at Babylonstoren, feasting on dishes made of produce from its own gardens (from £258 a night); then luxuriate at Delaire Graff (from £444 a night), with its impressive African art collection, slick spa and private villa pools with vineyard views. babylonstoren.com; delaire.co.za

43. EXPLORE THE PAMPAS



47 Live like a tsar in St Petersburg

The Russian city's famous Lion Palace, immortalised in Alexander Pushkin's poem *The Bronze Horseman*, has been restored and transformed into a Four Seasons hotel under the watchful gaze of the Department of Culture to make sure none of its precious frescoes, marble, elaborate ceilings and impressive staircases is lost. Double rooms start at £236 per night. fourseasons.com

48 Sip in the châteaux of Bordeaux

Winemaker Bernard Magrez organises bespoke trips into rarely visited private estates, touring the properties in his Rolls-Royce, enjoying dinners and concerts in private châteaux (including his own) and, from September to October, taking part in the harvest. A 24-hour tour starts at £1,068 for two people. luxurywinetourism.fr

49 Celebrate with monks in Bhutan

In April, during the Paro Tsechu festival, thousands of devotees flock to the Paro Dzong fortress for five days of celebrations, which culminate in a huge appliqué picture of Buddha being unfurled at dawn. Highlights include festival dances and hikes during the day and nights in quaint mountain inns. The festival package starts at £2,795 per person including flights, hotels and guided tours. ampersandtravel.com

50 Snorkel in the Indian Ocean

Park Hyatt Hadahaa in the Maldives is a beautiful string of villas on a speck of sand, with a pristine house reef and a resident marine biologist. Think *Finding Nemo*, but with turtles. From £514 per night (maldives.hadahaa.park.hyatt.com) ■