



#### AFRICA A LA CARTE

Have a few weeks to spare and an appetite to explore Africa on your own terms? Try superlative safari-operator Micato's "Corporate Jetting Bespoke Adventure", which will whisk its intrepid explorers wherever their whim desires aboard a sumptuous private jet with fine meals, pampering service and luxe amenities – all without the nuisance of dealing with commercial air routes, layovers and schedules. Eschewing the pedestrian, you'll go where you want, when you want, as free as the wildlife tearing across the savannah below your aircraft. Catch the Serengeti's great migration wherever the action is at its peak, switch up the scenery for the harsher desert landscape of Namibia and spy gorillas in Rwanda – then head even further afield to the otherworldly beaches of the Seychelles. And fittingly for a luxe getaway of this calibre, you'll be laying your head in the wild continent's most exceptional hotels and safari camps.

PRICE: Contact Micato for prices

AVAILABLE: Now

BOOK: [WWW.MICATO.COM](http://WWW.MICATO.COM)

GOOD  
FOR  
DISCERNING  
EXPLORERS

# ESCAPES

Kick off the new year with something exceptional – we've found getaways for gourmands in Japan and the Italian Alps, a bespoke private-jet tour of Africa and an over-the-top ode to romance in New York City

Words: **Laurel Munshower**

#### JAPAN FOR EPICURES

Taste the pinnacle of Japan's gastronomic delights on Zicasso's "Spirits of Japan Tour", a 13-day exploration of meticulously created single malt whiskey and coveted sushi. Unveiling the quest for perfection sought by the country's master distillers, artisans and chefs, the journey starts in electric Tokyo where authentic Kobe beef is prepared with precision at Park Hyatt's New York Grill, and Fuji Gotemba Distillery's whiskeys are later sipped against a backdrop of iconic Mount Fuji. In laid-back Takayama and Kanazawa, the county's sake heritage comes to light, as does its skill for creating blissful gardens, as seen at Kenroku-en. In traditional Kyoto taste the world's best whiskey – Yamazaki Single Malt Sherry Cask 2013 – which *Jim Murray's Whiskey Bible 2015* referred to as "near incredible genius". The journey next imbibes beer in bustling Osaka, where a tour of the award-winning Minoh Brewery is followed by a flashy teppanyaki dinner. The trip's finale is served back in Tokyo with the three-Michelin-starred sushi of elite Sukiyabashi Jiro – a fitting finish to an indulgent Japanese experience.

PRICE: US\$8,759 per person with five-star accommodation

AVAILABLE: Now

BOOK: [WWW.ZICASSO.COM](http://WWW.ZICASSO.COM)

PHOTO: Getty Images



“THE TWO-NIGHT ‘LUST’ PACKAGE OFFERS THE ULTIMATE IN ROMANTIC INDULGENCE, TOUCHING ON EACH OF THE FIVE SENSES”

#### ZEN IN THE CLOUDS

You can get a pretty good look at Hong Kong's magnificent layout from sky-scraping observation decks but nothing can quite compare to the bird's-eye view a helicopter can offer. It's good then, that Peninsula Hong Kong offers a "flight-seeing" tour of the city and its outer reaches – which, for some, could prove a bit hair-raising. But fear not; the hotel offers a clever solution to calm the adrenaline rush with a "Fly & Relax" package – the latter of which commences upon landing. A bevy of spa treatments will quiet the nerves, from a holistic aromatherapy massage to a personalised facial, and there's plenty of time to unwind in an infrared ice fountain and sauna with harbour views, while a poolside lunch or afternoon tea completes the high-flying cool-down. The Zen atmosphere continues in the guest rooms, which have been recently renovated to induce a tranquil atmosphere amid minimalistic décor.

PRICE: "Fly & Relax" from HK\$14,715 (US\$1,900) for two people; rooms from HK\$3,880 (\$500) per night

AVAILABLE: Through March 31

BOOK: [WWW.HONGKONG.PENINSULA.COM](http://WWW.HONGKONG.PENINSULA.COM)

GOOD  
FOR  
INDULGING  
SKY-HIGH



#### ROYAL HOLI-DAY

With spring's blooms comes Holi, India's vibrant festival of colour – a riotous affair marked by coloured powder, water and flowers being flung at revellers. Often a chaotic, (albeit entertaining) scene, travellers hoping to experience it in more sedate – and majestic – surroundings would do well to try Ampersand Travel's take on the celebration. While two nights at the Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, give you the opportunity to take in the city's famed sights from a charming old-world base, it's the three nights at Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur that transform this into a pinch-yourself experience. The dramatic sandstone palace is not simply a luxurious hotel – it's also the principal

residence of the Jodhpur royal family – and those staying at the palatial stay are welcomed by the Royal Guards as rose petals are joyfully tossed. During Holi, which takes place March 23-24 this year, guests are invited to mingle on these exclusive grounds as colours are thrown into the air and *kalbeliya* – traditional Rajasthani dancing – and *langa* music captivate spectators.

PRICE: £1,630 (US\$2,480) per person including return flights from Dubai

AVAILABLE: Through March, but time your stay at Umaid Bhawan Palace over March 23-24

BOOK: [WWW.AMPERSANDTRAVEL.COM](http://WWW.AMPERSANDTRAVEL.COM)

#### SPEND IT ESCAPES

#### I LUST NEW YORK

Valentine's Day: that special time of year when you have to outdo every other couple you know with the most grandiose experience for your other half. New York City's four W Hotels have created an itinerary that makes that endeavour a little easier. The two-night "Lust" package offers the ultimate in romantic indulgence, touching on each of the five senses, when booking into one of the Extreme Wow or Wow suites. The lavish experience takes care of sound with a customised soundtrack played through an Alexander Wang x Beats by Dre Pill boom box – choose whatever tunes will loosen inhibitions for the sight portion of the experience: a boudoir shoot. February's chilly climes are no match for the plush touch of a fur throw by couture fur designer Dennis Basso, ideal for snuggling in while tasting Almas Osetra caviar by Russe and working through a bottle of Dom Pérignon. The No.1 scent by high-end perfumer Clive Christian tops off the sensory experience – hopefully one to best all others on the year's most amorous day.

PRICE: From US\$33,000

AVAILABLE: February 13-17

BOOK: [WWW.WHOTELSNEWYORK.COM/LOVELUST](http://WWW.WHOTELSNEWYORK.COM/LOVELUST)





GOOD  
FOR  
A GROUP  
GETAWAY



EDEN DISCOVERED

Its former guests include Hollywood elite and well-heeled historic families, but Eden Rock - St Barths digs a little further into the outcropping's big-name visitors for a new suite debuting this month. The Christopher Columbus suite, an eponymous tribute to the explorer – who discovered and named the Caribbean island after his brother Bartholomew – clings to the property's famed rock outcropping, overlooking the white sands and aquamarine waters of St. Jean Bay. Decorated in the resort's sophisticated, mod-island style, the sprawling 200-sqm, one-bedroom suite includes a panoramic living area and an air-conditioned terrace, as well as the ability to connect with the glam Greta Garbo Suite, the rooftop Howard Hughes Loft and the panoramic De Haenen Suite to create a triple double-bedroomed suite – the island's largest hotel accommodation. Along with cuisine masterminded by Jean-Georges Vongerichten, a fantastic collection of on-site artwork and plenty of wellness and marine activities, we're ready to follow Columbus's lead for our own Caribbean discovery.

PRICE: Christopher Columbus Suite from €4,000 (US\$4,380) per night

AVAILABLE: Now

BOOK: [WWW.EDENROCKHOTEL.COM](http://WWW.EDENROCKHOTEL.COM)

“CHEFS HESTON BLUMENTHAL,  
SAT BAINS, MARCUS WAREING  
AND CLARE SMYTH ACCOMPANY  
EPICUREANS THROUGH A SUCKLING-  
PIG ROAST, WINE TASTINGS AND  
EXCEPTIONAL DINNERS”

PALATABLE PISTES

Italian ski resort Courmayeur is no stranger to gastronomy, having earned a reputation as the destination of choice for foodie skiers thanks to its enviable collection of gourmet offerings. The peak of this resort's dining season happens over four days in January during the Mountain Gourmet Ski Experience, when not only gourmands, but the kitchen masters themselves, descend on the slopes. The indulging begins before you even reach altitude at Heston Blumenthal's Perfectionists' Café in Heathrow Terminal 2, where travellers can devour a special breakfast along with a little extra to nibble during the onward flight to the Alps. Once in the snow-covered Aosta Valley escape – and cosily settled into five-star Grand Hotel Royal & Golf – chefs Heston Blumenthal, Sat Bains, Marcus Wareing and Clare Smyth accompany epicureans through a suckling-pig roast, wine tastings and exceptional dinners. Between all the wining and dining, guests can hit up the slopes shaded by the majestic Mont Blanc to burn off calories – and create space for the next feast.

PRICE: From £3,850 (US\$5,800) per person, including return flights from London Heathrow to Geneva

AVAILABLE: January 8-11

BOOK: [WWW.MOMENTUMSKI.COM/GOURMET-SKI](http://WWW.MOMENTUMSKI.COM/GOURMET-SKI)

