

TRAVEL WEEKLY

OPINION

[Reality Check](#)

For clients seeking something different, part 2

Part 2 of 2

By [Richard Turen](#) / February 16, 2017



This week I would like to continue [my Bucket List recommendations](#) for clients who have done the basics and are looking for something different, something exciting and worth describing in detail to their kids and grandkids. These are a few of my favorite things.

- There is family travel and then there is **Big Five Tours & Expeditions'** unique departures to Kenya and Tanzania expressly designed for families traveling with young ones. Big Five knows which villages house the Masai people, who enjoy interacting with children. Its 11-day [Kenya Safari](#), offered when school is out, allows kids to sleep in a treehouse on the edge of the Mara River. Imagine when your children return home to tell schoolmates about the orphaned elephant they met that was named in their honor.

- Abercrombie & Kent has partnered with the New York Times to create an amazing 25-day [Around the World by Private Jet: Cultures in Transformation](#) journey. The trip will commence at the Times' headquarters in New York where guests will meet the paper's publisher and key international staff members. The departure, on Feb. 8, 2018, uses a beautifully re-designed Boeing 757.

For \$135,000 per person, guests will visit Iceland, Morocco, Iran, Myanmar, Sydney and Samoa before returning home. The trip will be escorted by experienced Abercrombie & Kent staff, but what makes this opportunity unique is the focus on cultural changes in key parts of the world. To explain it all, four of the Times' top editors and writers will accompany the group, offering historical, political, and diplomatic background on all of the destinations on the itinerary (and many that aren't).

Of course, true to Abercrombie & Kent style, there are numerous special events and only top-tier accommodations. There are few upscale travel options that are geared toward international understanding. This is one, packaged as one big worldwide dream for the intellectually inquisitive.

- For soft-adventure seekers, 50 Degrees North packs a five-day expedition to [Finland's Lapland region](#) with a

significant variety of experiences. You can snowmobile under a sky lit by the aurora borealis; visit a reindeer farm and a traditional Sami village; and watch the brilliant sky during an overnight in a glass igloo. Other accommodations including a stay in a private log cabin with a fireplace and sauna. This is the perfect getaway for families with teens.

- The itinerary planners at Azamara Club Cruises always seem to be one step ahead of their competitors. You might want to look over its [Aug. 1, 12-day Baltic cruise](#) that begins in Leith, just outside Edinburgh, Scotland. The journey then overnights in Copenhagen, Denmark, and moves on to Gdansk, Poland; Estonia; and two nights in St. Petersburg, Russia, to check out Putin's mood; followed by Helsinki; and an overnight in Stockholm. This is so much more than a traditional, seven-night Baltic run.
- Don't forget that one doesn't have to cruise the Greek Islands. National Geographic Expeditions offers a nine-day, [close-to-the-land adventure](#) that includes hiking and kayaking the Cyclades, sailing along the Naxos coast -- ending up on a secluded beach -- and kayaking Santorini's coastline in groups no larger than 16 guests. The cost is \$6,595 for multiple dates. The trip is suitable for beginning kayakers, and the hiking portions of the trip are in the four- to five-hour range over "moderate" terrain. Do note that in Greece "moderate hiking" might apply to goats or local donkeys.
- In a sign of continued confidence in the luxury end of the cruise market, more than a dozen around-the-world sailings are scheduled for 2018. The record holder is Oceania, with a [180-day circumnavigation on the Insignia](#) roundtrip from Miami. Cunard's Queen Mary 2 is the largest ship to do an around-the-world next year, a [135-day roundtrip from New York](#).

Carnival brands Holland America Line and Princess Cruises are both in the world-cruise game. A [111-day sailing on the Pacific Princess](#), roundtrip from Los Angeles, heads first to Australia, and is followed by the Middle East, substantial time in the Mediterranean and a few days along the coast of Mexico. Holland America's Amsterdam will be doing its [world cruise roundtrip from Fort Lauderdale](#).

For those seeking both an intimate experience and a lengthy world cruise, Silversea's 382-passenger Silver Whisper will sail from Los Angeles to Rome on a [121-day journey](#) that will feature world heritage sites, including Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Taj Mahal.

- Here is one on my personal bucket list: the [North Pole Ultimate Arctic Adventure](#), a 14-day journey usually offered in July by Quark Expeditions. Priced in 2017 at \$27,995, this journey is offered on a particularly unattractive (from the outside) ship with the nonhousehold name 50 Years of Victory. But when you are crashing through pack ice to get to your destinations it might be comforting to know that you are aboard a former Russian science vessel that is the most powerful icebreaker on the planet. In addition to its onboard helicopter, the Victory has a gymnasium, a basketball court and a heated pool. It carries 130 passengers supported by a crew of 140.
- The hottest destination in Italy for foodies is Puglia, and I love the idea of sharing it with another couple on a six-day walking tour called [Puglia and Basilicata](#) by Butterfield & Robinson. Operating from Otranto to Bari and priced from \$7,995 per person, this tour features memorable coastal walks, distinctive stone trulli (huts) and gorgeous white-washed villages.

Tourists on this route are not that plentiful, so the locals greet walkers with exuberance. Think fresh air, the glittering Adriatic below, fresh seafood and some of the planet's best, for home consumption, olive oil. The olive oil is (trust me!) reason enough to go.

- Luxury operator Travcoa has a refined yet energetic, 12-day journey it calls [Arabian Odyssey](#). Priced from \$7,595, this is an active, insider's look at the cultures and the cuisine of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Doha. Think of incredible minarets perched near true luxury resorts on the sea. This itinerary includes "dune bashing" in Qatar, a Bedouin desert camp and Al Ain, one of the world's oldest human settlements. This trip is offered all year in 2018, but winter months are the best time. It gets a tad warm during the summer.
- For the truly adventurous, particularly those who don't require five-star accommodations but are looking for vistas worth photographing with real camera equipment, I like International Expeditions' [Uganda Safari](#). A group of only 10 guests explore four of Uganda's most scenic national parks, with the opportunity to track gorillas in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. This tour will also include a search for chimps in Kibale Forest, the Mountains of the Moon and Murchison Falls. Pricing starts at \$8,298 per guest.
- The highly regarded adventure tour operator Mountain Travel Sobek has established a [series of adventures](#) with activities suited to family members in good health with an active, outdoor sports orientation to travel. The company does numerous family trips, including a rafting and camping experience down Idaho's Salmon River and ziplining across the lush canopy of the Costa Rica jungles. They have programs for families in the Swiss Alps, the Galapagos and, of course, wildlife-focused trips to Africa. All the company's family adventures are fully customizable.