

Specialty Travel Trends and Destinations

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Now that the holidays are over, and the new year is in full swing, consumers are beginning to think about their travel plans for 2008. The Specialty Travel Agents Association (STAA) offers its picks for the best destinations to visit this year. Take a look and see if one of these destinations inspires you to visit and then find a travel specialist on STAA's website to turn your inspiration into reality.

1. Alaska - Alaska is among the top cruise destinations for 2008. Its increasing popularity is no surprise as so many travelers are attracted to the natural beauty and wildlife in this area. Cruising offers an experience that highlights the breathtaking scenery and nature together with fine dining and entertainment. With a combination like that, who could resist?
2. Argentina - Argentina is one of the destinations that will offer you the most for your dollar this year. With so many Americans concerned with the declining dollar, Argentina is a great option. Buenos Aires offers boutique hotels, magnificent shopping, stunning architecture, and terrific restaurants, all at an affordable price.
3. Australia - The land down under is an appealing destination for the adventurous, well traveled and even those looking for a unique personal experience. The latest trend shows more mature travelers opting for longer stays in more exotic and faraway locations. Australia has also become popular with European travelers who are finding a favorable exchange rate. This of course, translates into longer stays at more upscale resorts and hotels.
4. Canada - Québec City will be celebrating its 400th anniversary on July 3rd. and has a celebration designed to enchant first time visitors to this amazing city. Québec has long been known for their festivals, outdoor activities, history and culture. They have capitalized on this year's anniversary by hosting an eight month long celebration with a French flair. With the rising euro, and travel to Paris becoming more costly each day, why not experience a touch of France right here in North America?
5. China - China is spreading its wings to welcome millions of travelers as their tourism industry flourishes. Visitors can discover China's most revered treasures, but in 2008 they will also get the added excitement of the Beijing Summer Olympics Games. The games will be held August 8 - 24 and Beijing is preparing diligently to be a first rate host.
6. France - France is one of the worlds top travel destinations. Although Paris has so much to offer, it is Lourdes that will be inviting visitors to come and celebrate this year. 2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the French peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous. As a religious pilgrimage destination with six million visitors each year, consider adding Lourdes to your France itinerary this year. Even for the non-religious, it is an experience you will not soon forget!
7. Hawaii - As the top honeymoon destination, brides and grooms continue to find romance in the Hawaiian Islands. Couples are lured by miles of sandy beaches, romantic sunsets, perfect island weather, numerous outdoor activities, and beautiful scenery. Each island has its own unique qualities and is worth their own visit!
8. India - India is a must if you are a wildlife lover. With the declining population of Bengal tigers, now is the time to see them. Experience a safari or tiger spotting expedition and see these splendid creatures in their natural habitat. Combine that with a visit to the Taj Mahal, and see one of the greatest wonders of our world!
9. U.S. Virgin Islands - The Islands of St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas are a great choice for a family vacation. They are packed with activities and feature plenty of water sports, white sand beaches and adventure activities. Each of the islands has its own unique flavor, and many of the resorts are offering kids programs to attract the whole family. A plus for U.S. citizens visiting the USVI's is that no passport is required since it is a U.S. Territory. What could be more appealing for a last minute get away?
10. Vietnam - When you think of golf, I am sure most are not thinking about Vietnam. You may want to reconsider this, since Vietnam is becoming the next premier golf destination. The country is undergoing considerable tourism growth and golf is also following this trend. Affordable pricing and the tropical climate are attractive to the golf enthusiast or the traveler just looking for a unique place to visit!

Did we whet your appetite to learn more about one of our 'top 10'? If so, visit our website and locate a specialist that has been certified in this destination and explore the possibilities. If we did not choose the site you've been dreaming about, log on to find a professional specialty agent that can help turn that dream into a reality. www.specialtytravelagents.com.

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