



TRAVEL

The Top 20 Places to Travel in 2019

AD consulted with the industry's leading experts to uncover the hottest destinations for design lovers in the new year

Where should you plan a trip in 2019? We found the places celebrating major anniversaries and other cultural events, consulted travel experts about emerging destinations, and compiled the hottest new hotel openings. It wasn't easy narrowing this list down to just 20 places around the world, but a few key places stood out from the rest. In 2019, the Southern Italian city of Matera will be crowned a European Capital of Culture, drawing countless visitors to see its architectural and cultural heritage. The Taj Mahal will emerge from a yearlong restoration of its iconic dome. And Berlin will celebrate the centenary of the Bauhaus as well as the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Of course, these are just a few highlights. From remote safari spots and off-the-beaten-path islands to well-trodden cities with new reasons to visit, these are the locations at the top of our list for 2019.

Matera, Italy



This Southern Italy city known for its sassi (cave dwellings) is making a major comeback. For decades the caves were uninhabitable and unsanitary, but over the last several years entrepreneurs have started restoring them and transforming them into unique hotels like *Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita*, a member of Design Hotels. Crowned a *2019 European Capital of Culture*, Matera will host a dynamic roster of events throughout the year. For the opening ceremony on January 19, a series of marching bands from the region of Basilicata and across Europe will parade through the city's streets to kick off the yearlong celebration.

Agra, India



The majestic Taj Mahal will emerge in 2019 from a yearlong restoration that polished its gleaming marble dome and turrets, which have been hidden under scaffolding for months. If you want to see it in all its glory, plan a visit between November and March, before monsoon season. Stay at the *Oberoi Amarvilas*, where every room has a view of the monument. You can wake up and do yoga in the gardens with a view of the Taj.

Berlin



2019 marks two important anniversaries for Berlin: the centenary of the Bauhaus and 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. To celebrate, the opening *Bauhaus Festival* will be held at the Akademie der Künste on January 16–24. The renowned Bauhaus Archiv—which displays furniture and other designs by the school’s most important figures—is currently being renovated, and a temporary space will host exhibits for the centenary. It’s worth visiting some of Berlin’s UNESCO Heritage-listed Bauhaus sites, including a famous Mies van der Rohe house constructed during the last year of Bauhaus in Berlin.

Savannah, Georgia



Georgia's second city may be known for its charming squares and weeping willows, but this big small town is also a hotbed of contemporary design thanks to the *Savannah College of Art and Design* (SCAD), which is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Travelers who want to see what it's all about now have two new options: the *Perry Lane Hotel*, a member of the Luxury Collection with a gorgeous design featuring work by SCAD students, and the *Alida*, a new boutique hotel in the emerging warehouse district.

Namibia



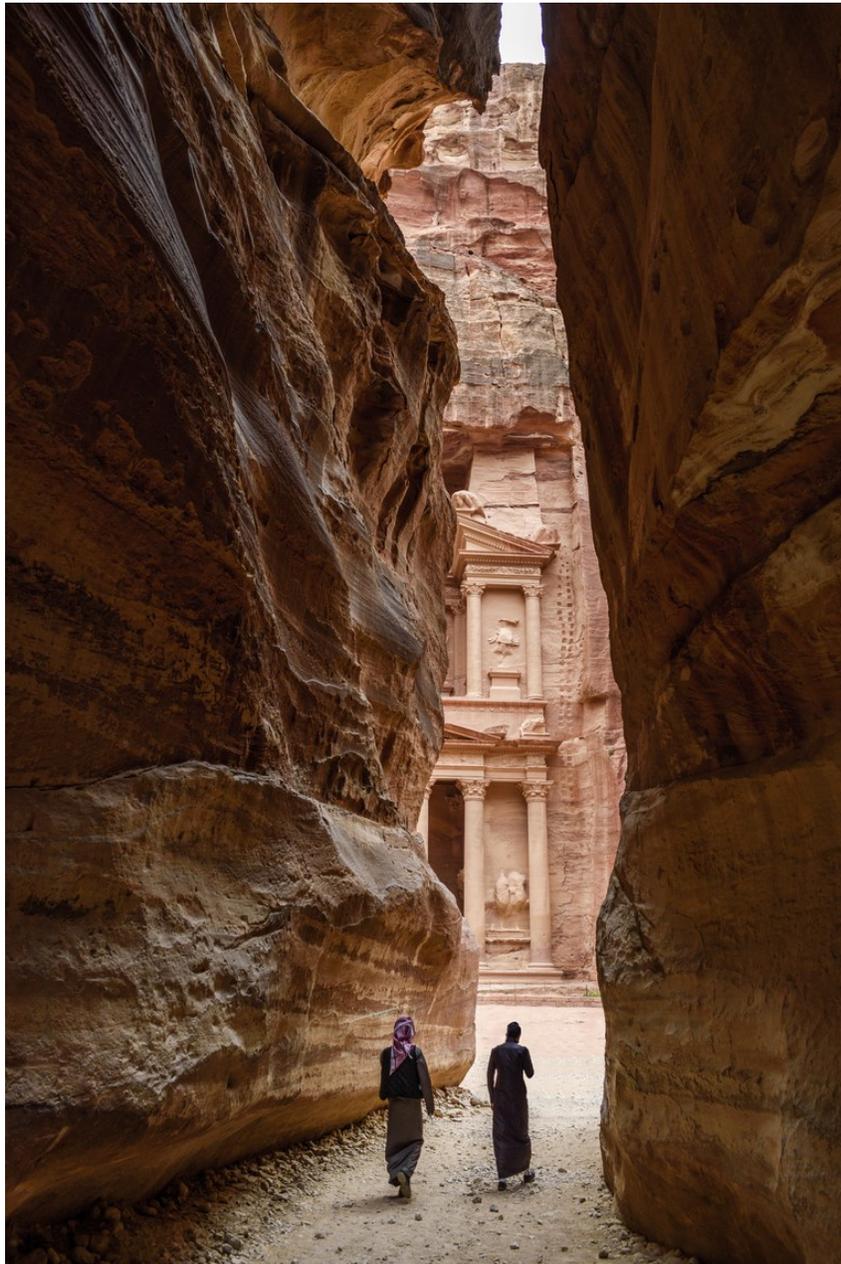
Barren landscapes and sand dunes may not be what most people expect to find in Southern Africa, but they show a whole other side of the region that's becoming much more accessible. According to George Morgan-Grenville, Founder & CEO of luxury outfitter Red Savannah, "a spate of new lodges in Namibia moves the Southern African nation further up the luxury travel hot list." He cites *Omaanda*, a collection of ten Owambo-style huts in a private reserve, the British Colonial-inspired tented camp Sonop, and the luxurious, eco-friendly *Shipwreck Lodge* by Natural Selection, which opened on the Skeleton Coast. Just this fall, *Serra Cafema Camp* by Wilderness Safaris emerged from an environmentally sensitive rebuild.

Singapore



Following the runaway success of *Crazy Rich Asians*, we predict that Singapore will be one of the top travel destinations for 2019. It comes at an apt time as the small nation-state is celebrating the bicentennial of its founding by Sir Stamford Raffles, Changi Airport recently unveiled its swanky new terminal, and the iconic *Raffles Singapore* is set to emerge mid-year from a top-to-bottom renovation by Alexandra Champalimaud. It will join several other exciting new hotels, including the *Capitol Kempinski Hotel Singapore* in a renovated heritage building, *Six Senses Duxton and Six Senses Maxwell*, and three new hotels on Sentosa Island by Far East Hospitality.

Petra, Jordan



If this Wonder of the Ancient World isn't already on your bucket list, it should be. Early next year, the Petra Museum is slated to open, telling the story of this magical place. "Travel to the Middle East is making a comeback, indicating travelers want to explore the region for themselves, beyond the media headlines," says Jenny Gray, Intrepid Travel's regional product manager for the Middle East. "The travel ban proposed by President Trump in 2017 appears to have actually spurred interest in the region, with travelers wanting to learn about the countries they continually hear about in the news and make their own decisions about them." *Intrepid Travel*, which offers 22 different itineraries in Jordan, has seen a 112 percent growth on bookings to the Middle East.

Seto Inland Sea, Japan



For art lovers, 2019 will be the year to get off the beaten path and venture to Japan's remote Seto Inland Sea to experience the *Setouchi Triennial*, which will last from April through November. The triennial will take over the islands of Naoshima, Teshima, and Megijima, which are home to the Chichu Art Museum and permanent installations by the likes of Yayoi Kusama and James Turrell. "We love bringing our guests to the Seto Naikai because it's a region that few visitors have the chance to experience—and it's a calm and refreshing antidote to the hectic urban areas of Japan," says Jeff Krevitt, the vice president of marketing, Americas for *InsideJapan Tours*, which can organize luxury yacht charters and seaplane tours of the region.

St. Barth's



The Caribbean is *making a comeback* after last year's devastating hurricanes, but perhaps the most highly anticipated comeback story is that of St. Barth's. A favorite of the rich and famous, it was one of the hardest hit islands, with countless homes, luxury resorts, and infrastructure destroyed. Some resorts, like *Villa Marie Saint-Barth*, are already open again, but others like *Le Guanahani* and *Eden Rock St. Barth's* are slated to open next fall. You can bet when they do, the island will be celebrating like there's no tomorrow.

Liechtenstein



This tiny land-locked country bordering Austria and Germany is not on your bucket list? Now might be the time to add it, since the nation will celebrate its *tricentennial* with festivities and also opens the new Liechtenstein Trail, which spans the country. The kickoff birthday party will be held on January 23, a special exhibit at the Landesmuseum will open in February, and many other events will follow through the end of the year.

Auckland, New Zealand



Recently inducted into the UNESCO Creative Cities network for music, this inspiring city will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's voyage that put New Zealand on the map, literally. A nationwide commemoration called Tuia Encounters 250 will celebrate the country's dual heritage. *SO/ Auckland* by Sofitel is set to debut in November, and the Park Hyatt is slated to open its first property in New Zealand next year, bringing a whole new level of luxury to Auckland. New direct flights from Chicago to Auckland aboard New Zealand Air will make it even easier to get there.

Copenhagen



There's never a bad time to visit Denmark's capital, but 2019 brings a host of compelling new reasons to plan a trip. Bjarke Ingels's *groundbreaking CopenHill project* (a waste-to-energy plant with a ski hill and recreation center) is slated for completion. The *Museum of Copenhagen* will reopen with a renewed focus on the city's history and architecture. The new Noma relaunched this year, also with a design by Bjarke Ingels, and it is leading the way for new projects by its alums. The city also happens to be having a hotel boom, with seven new properties slated to open in 2019, including *Hotel Ottilia* in the old Carlsberg brewery.

Napa Valley



After last year's destructive wildfires, the Napa Valley is back and welcoming travelers with a spate of new luxury hotels. This fall, the *Francis House* opened in a landmarked 1886 home with just five luxurious rooms, and the *Villa at the Estate*—comprising two hotels, a spa, shopping, and a dining complex on 22 acres—completed a \$45 million renovation. In 2019, Napa Valley's first Four Seasons will open in Calistoga with 85 guest rooms, 20 villas, and its own vineyard and winery. If you go, be sure to check out *Ashes & Diamonds*, the next-gen winery with a midcentury modern-inspired tasting room and bold Cabernets that have landed on wine lists at the country's top restaurants.

Arles, France



Until recently, Van Gogh was this Provençal city's claim to fame, but it's been in the midst of constructing a massive new art center known as LUMA Arles. The complex, in a former industrial site, has been opening in phases and in 2020, its final stage—a shimmering tower by Frank Gehry—will be completed. Consider going in 2019 to be among the first to see the new Arles. The new building of École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie will open in September 2019, in December the *Museon Arlatan* will reopen, and three buildings by Annabelle Selldorf on the *LUMA Arles* campus are already open. A new design-forward boutique hotel called *L'Arlatan* offers a whimsical place to stay.

Baltimore, Maryland



Forget what you think you know about Baltimore from watching *The Wire*. This gritty city on Maryland's Eastern seaboard has got a lot going on between a burgeoning art scene fueled by grassroots development and some new design-forward hotels. The *Sagamore Pendry Baltimore* has been the place to stay since it opened this year on the waterfront with a locally inspired design and dining by all-star chef Andrew Carmellini. It joins the *Hotel Revival* by Joie de Vivre, which opened this past May, and the *Ivy Hotel*, Relais & Châteaux's only property in Maryland.

Zambia



Safari experts say it's all about Zim (i.e. Zimbabwe) and Zam (i.e. Zambia), as increased flights and new lodges make the latter much more accessible to luxury travelers. "Lesser known than its neighbors to the south, Zambia is an unmissable gem for anyone looking for a back-to-nature safari experience of a bygone era," Elizabeth Gordon, cofounder and CEO of luxury safari operator *Extraordinary Journeys*, tells *AD*. "In 2019, we are especially excited to see Tusk & Mane's new approachable-luxury fly camps in the Lower Zambezi, as well as famed walking guide Deb Tittle's new Surefoot Safaris in South Luangwa." The Bushcamp Company also has three lodges in Zambia, two of which were recently renovated.

Baja California Sur, Mexico



Mexico's wild Baja California Peninsula has seen unprecedented growth and development, with more than \$1 billion of investment in hotels alone. 2018 saw the opening of the *Viceroy Los Cabos* in May, *Montage Los Cabos* in June, and the Luxury Collection's *Solaz Resort* in September, plus *Garza Blanca Resort & Spa* and the *Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palma* are slated to open in December. Five more resorts by major brands, including Nobu, Park Hyatt, St. Regis, and Aman, are coming over the next three years. Now is the time to go and discover San Jose del Cabo's growing Gallery District and the emerging culinary scene taking over Los Cabos.

Sao Paulo, Brazil



Getting a visa to visit Brazil used to be a major hassle, but a new e-visa system has made the process much more streamlined, and new flights by LATAM are better connecting the largest metropolis in the Americas to the rest of the world. Once you get there, you'll find a burgeoning art and design scene that proves the city's not all business. The *Four Seasons Hotel São Paulo at Nações Unidas* just opened this fall, joining more established luxury hotels like the *Hotel Unique*, which recently refreshed its rooftop Skye Bar & Restaurant.

Saskatoon, Canada



Deep in the wilderness of Saskatchewan, this small city came onto the consciousness of art-loving travelers with the opening of the *Rimai Modern Museum*. Now, *Wanuskewin Heritage Park* is being renovated, and its gallery space is undergoing an expansion, adding one more reason to consider making the trek to this remote part of Canada.

Tbilisi, Georgia



Always ahead of the curve, Anthony Bourdain called Georgia “a place you should absolutely visit if given the chance” in the 2017 episode of *Parts Unknown* in which he explores Tbilisi. And now it seems like everyone else is catching on. *Forbes* called it “this year’s most exciting city” due in part to the stylish new hotels like *Rooms Hotel* and its sister property *Stamba Hotel*, an increasingly global mentality, and the chacha-fueled nightlife. Go now before everyone else does.

<https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/top-travel-destinations-2019>