



VAST
virtuoso active & specialty travel

HOTTEST TRENDS in Active and Specialty Travel

If you still think active and specialty travel is only for the young and uber-fit, think again. Today, grandmothers, kids, and recovering couch potatoes are reaping the benefits of immersive, hands-on travel. From bike tours and heli-skiing to expedition cruising, there's an explosion of options to delight anyone who wants a more direct connection to the world's natural and cultural treasures.

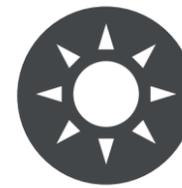
We asked seasoned participants with the Virtuoso Active and Specialty Travel program to share their best tips and predictions for this fast-growing sector of the travel industry.



NEXT BIG DESTINATION



UP-AND-COMING DEMOGRAPHIC



HOTTEST NICHE



INSIDER TIP



Ange Wallace
Virtuoso Travel Advisor
Amelia Island, Florida

The Arctic! Right now only 1,000 people visit a year compared to 40,000-ish to Antarctica.

Multi-generational family groups. Active travel is great for kids. It's more interactive and gets them into more face-to-face conversations. The bonding, the change in attitude, and the effect on relationships can be incredible.

There's a real "rush" in expedition cruising. These smaller ships can go into places the larger cruise ships can't. Instead of entertainment, you learn about what you're seeing. It's much more authentic than a typical cruise.

Pay close attention to the packing list and follow it, even if it means buying or borrowing some of the items. As the best guides and naturalists say, "There's no bad weather, only bad gear!"



Marsha Dolbow
Virtuoso Travel Advisor
Yorba Linda, California

The nature aspects of South America have been on the to-do list for a lot of people. Places like the Galapagos, Patagonia, the jumping off point for Antarctica...it's just one of those destinations that after you've done a few other things you say, "oh yeah, there's a lot to see there."

Grandparents are taking their grandkids on adventures. My clients in their 70s now have grandkids that are the right age to enjoy active experiences.

We're going to see more variations on polar travel, like the Northwest Passage trip from Alaska to Greenland. I used to think that if you do one pole, you're done, but now I'm thinking one is not enough. People fall in love with the ice, the drama of it. They want to see things that don't exist anywhere else.

Put the camera down. The last time I was in Africa, there were two huge male lions that came out of the bush and walked right in front of us. Everybody around me was clicking, clicking, clicking, but I didn't take any pictures. I had the whole experience of watching them move and really feeling how powerful they are.



Richard Engle
Virtuoso Travel Advisor
Chicago, Illinois

Malta is a little island nation in the Mediterranean just south of Sicily. It's relatively undiscovered by Americans, but English is widely spoken and there are lots of national resources – temple ruins older than the pyramids in Egypt, scuba diving with lots of shipwrecks, and great places to hike, sail or go to the beach.

I'm targeting Millennials, people in their early to mid-20s who haven't really started traveling yet but who are never going to want to sit on a tour bus. If they can visit something more actively, they'll do that. I think this generation has huge potential.

A lot of people who want to be adventuresome are married to people who aren't. There's a growing niche for people to do active travel together with different levels of enthusiasm. For example, powered bicycles are great for the person who doesn't want to do so much work.

If you're planning a very active trip, make sure you're really in as good a shape as you think you are. If you're a weekend cyclist or hiker, and you sign up for a trip that's going to have 10-12 miles of hiking every day, it may be more than you bargained for.



Carole Cambata
President
Greaves Tours
Highland Park, Illinois

Since Sri Lanka opened up after being unsettled for such a long time, there's so much interest – not only in the country but in its amazing diving facilities. A lot of it is only open to diving for short periods, and then closed again to protect the ecosystem.

A lot of single women want to travel, but not necessarily on their own. We do "Divorce Moon" trips for women who are divorced or recently separated. They focus on yoga, wellness, retail therapy, and meeting others who have been through challenges and come out on the other side.

A lot of people want to do volunteerism when they travel. For example, in Delhi there's a place called Gurdwara where they feed thousands of people every day. You can go behind the scenes and see how it works and help feed meals if you want.

Don't rule out "third world" countries. A lot of people think certain places, like India, are always disorganized and lacking in creature comforts. They're surprised that they can have safe, organized adventures like ziplining, hot air ballooning, and white water rafting.