

# Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 5th November 2025



## A&K unveils 2026-27

**ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K)** has opened sales for its 2026 and 2027 small group journeys, including the 14-day 'Ultimate Great Migration Safari' and the 12-day 'Wonders of Morocco: From Souks to the Sahara' tours. For more details, see **page nine**.

## NT charts a new course

**THE** Northern Territory Government has unveiled its new visitor economy strategy, which aims to grow tourist spending from \$1.5 billion to \$2.2 billion by 2032.

The Top End will also seek to lift overnight trips from 1.2 million to 1.5 million over the next seven years, as part of its new roadmap to grow year-round visitation.

Led by the newly formed powerhouse entity Tourism and Events Northern Territory (**TD 22 Sep**), the strategy will focus on showcasing the NT's distinctive character, from its vibrant food and festival scene to its natural



and cultural tourism offerings.

"The NT visitor economy is a key part of the NT economy and lifestyle, when it thrives, the Territory thrives and Australia thrives," stated Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Marie-Clare Boothby.

"With two World-Heritage listed national parks and a lifestyle the rest of the nation should envy, the NT has what Australia and the world are looking for."

For the year ending Jun 2025, the NT recorded the strongest growth in visitor numbers and expenditures around the nation.

The NT Visitor Economy Strategy 2032 implementation roadmap will be delivered in Mar 2026 with the full kickoff with partners in May 2026. *JM*

### Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features eight pages of industry news, including a photo page from **HX** and our **Luxury** page, plus full pages from:

- Abercrombie and Kent
- Scenic

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**HONG KONG**

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from **Hong Kong**, courtesy of the **Luxury Travel Collection (LTC)**.

**THE** final day of the LTC Global Business Owners Harbour Soiree will pay homage to Hong Kong, with delegates breaking up into groups to enjoy city experiences along the lines of food tours, historical explorations, active, and more. Afterwards, attendees will enjoy a farewell event at the Regent before flying home.

## Scenic offer still on

**THERE** are only a couple days left for clients to take advantage of Scenic's super earlybird offer, which applies to the line's 2026 Europe cruises - see **page 10**.

## Eurostar flash sale

**RAIL** Europe has launched a Eurostar flash sale on its global B2B platform, offering 25% off selected Eurostar Standard and Standard Premier (Plus) fares across key routes in Europe, including London to Paris and Paris to Amsterdam.

The promotion ends tomorrow night and applies to travel from 24 Nov 2025-11 Mar 2026.

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## Aussies set to ho ho holiday

**CHRISTMAS** travel is up more than 100% this year, with Australians booking almost 40 days earlier than usual to beat price hikes.

New data from BNPL online travel advisor Paylater Travel shows key routes for Australians over Christmas include London and New York City.

Although these destinations are more expensive than in years past, the peak booking month has now shifted back from Oct to Aug, as travellers aim to secure cheaper flights, Paylater found.

"Homecoming travel" is also booming this year, the company reported, with top international destinations dominated by family reunion routes to countries such as Samoa, New Zealand, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

Those not heading home for Christmas are travelling to a wide variety of destinations, including Honolulu (up 233%), Osaka



(217%), and Hobart (100%).

Queensland is the top Australian destination to visit over Christmas, with travellers heading to Brisbane, Cairns and the Gold Coast, among others.

Meanwhile, New South Welshmen are leading the domestic getaway, with Sydney showing the highest increase in outbound travel, up 58%.

Queenslanders are also itching to escape, with the state's key port of Brisbane showing a 52% year-on-year outbound increase, followed by South Australia (up 37% from Adelaide) and Victoria (up 34% from Melbourne). *MS*

### EAST AFRICA EXPLORER

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## Syd agent in trouble

**TRAVEL** World director Zahra Rachid has admitted to ripping off eight customers to the tune of \$77,000 after booking international flights for them between 2023 and 2024, then secretly cancelling the tickets and saving the refunds for herself.

Many did not realise their tickets were cancelled until they contacted their airlines to finalise their details.

One customer lost more than \$50,000 for business-class flights and accommodation for a trip to Lebanon and Portugal.

Court records have revealed that Travel World was financially struggling at the time, with its bank account in negative balance on 837 occasions between Jan 2023 and Jun 2024.

The Travel World director originally faced 82 charges, but 72 were previously withdrawn and dismissed.

She will be sentenced in Downing Local Court in Jan.

## NRMA holiday parks

**NRMA** Parks & Resorts has added four Central Coast holiday parks, just in time for summer.

The resort operator has taken over the management of the caravan parks at Budgewoi, Canton Beach, Norah Head and Toowoona Bay.

A raft of new guest experiences, park facilities and member benefits will be introduced, with those part of the My NRMA Member rewards program to enjoy 10% off bookings year-round, plus an extra 5% during sale time.

## China visa extends

**CHINA** has announced an extension of its 30-day visa-free entry scheme for Australians until the end of next year.

The new system was first introduced last year (**TD** 18 Dec) as part of China's broader push to revive tourism and encourage foreign engagement.

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## Window Seat

**A HISTORIC** Rolex belonging to Canadian filmmaker James Cameron (**pictured**) has arrived at the Australian National Maritime Museum.

The watch was affixed to Cameron's vessel *Deepsea Challenger*, as she dived 11 kilometres deep to the bottom of the Mariana Trench.

The journey saw Cameron become the first man to reach the deepest point of the ocean solo, with the watch keeping perfect time throughout.

Rolex developed the timepiece exclusively for the mission, and thought it to be waterproof to about 12 kilometres - giving it around 1km of headroom for the 11km journey.

The watch now joins the museum's new exhibition, 'Ultimate Depth: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea', reuniting it with *Deepsea Challenger*, which is already on display at the facility.



## A bear-ly believable result



**ADVENTURE** World and Hong Kong-based charity Animals Asia (AA) celebrated the fourth year of their partnership last night, sharing a team dinner at its office in Sydney.

The AW team heard from Jill Robinson, founder of AA, which operates the Vietnam Bear Rescue Center for moon bears and sun bears which have been rescued primarily from bile farms.

Vietnam is set to phase out the practice next year - a result Robinson said AW has been instrumental in accomplishing.

"They are totally the real deal and an ethical organisation to work with," Robinson told *Travel Daily* yesterday.

"[We're able] to shout very loudly and proudly that the travel industry really is beginning to genuinely care for the welfare of animals and conservation."

Both AW and AA then shared a delicious vegan dinner together,

in recognition of everything the partners have achieved. *MS*

**Pictured** are the Adventure World and Animals Asia teams.

## Go Global no more

**TECH** company Go Global Travel has transformed into Yanolja Go Global (YGG), as it sets out to mark a new era in B2B travel innovation.

The rebrand reflects the company's integration within Yanolja Group, which acquired it two-and-a-half years ago.

It will also better equip the new Yanolja Go Global to advance its mission to progress innovation and global growth through technology and data.

"This evolution reflects our strong commitment to technology leadership and to delivering even greater value to our partners and customers worldwide," CEO Francesco Deledda said.

YGG will officially debut its new brand identity at WTM London '25.

## JOIN OUR JOURNEY

### ATAC MEMBER ACQUISITION MANAGER

The **Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC)** is expanding and seeking a dynamic Acquisition Manager to champion the growth of its community of independent travel agents and entrepreneurs.

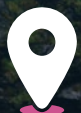
This newly created role will focus on identifying and onboarding new member agencies, strengthening relationships across the travel industry, and supporting ATAC's mission to empower independent businesses through shared strength, collaboration, and purpose.

The ideal candidate will have proven business development experience within the travel sector, exceptional relationship-building skills, and a genuine passion for helping independent travel entrepreneurs grow and succeed.

**Location:** Flexible (hybrid/remote options available)

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## Rex's mixed bag

**FEDERAL** funding has delivered relief to rural airports hit by the collapse of Rex Airlines.

The Australian Government yesterday announced a \$5 million support program for rural and remote airports affected by the airline's bankruptcy.

Funding will go to facilities that are unsecured creditors of Rex, with sums owed ranging from \$45,000 to \$650,000.

Australian Airports Association Chief Executive Officer Simon Westaway said the announcement provides much-needed relief for these airports, many of which are council-run and operate at a loss.

However, Rex's suppliers, ground handling agents, and other, larger airports, will get nothing from the airline's recent sale to American aviation business Air T (**TD** 21 Oct).

Administrators confirmed the unfortunate news in a report release earlier this week.

## LTC unveils digital edge

**LUXURY** Travel Collection (LTC) is preparing to roll out a new intelligent digital platform from early next year that will give its members more intuitive access to luxury product details and inspire long-term sales success.

Revealed during an update from LTC Global Head of Product Shannon Fogarty in Hong Kong, the Product Showroom will seek to inspire more ideas, provide a deeper level of product info, and eliminate search duplication through multiple platforms.

"When there is scattered information and a thousand clicks to get to something, it makes things very difficult.

"[This platform] will create one space to see a product's unique selling points...in a meticulously organised intuitive interface," Fogarty enthused.

"All the hidden gems that are part of our collection will be available and visible, and

[members] will be able to show their clients experiences that they may never have thought of before and really create something unique and beautiful."

Saving time will be another key benefit, Fogarty explained, with product listings to include a list of all the BDMS across the country for any training or assistance, as well as key details like commissions and tactical offers.

Members will be able to compare different products too, with the new platform providing filters to narrow down product options faster and match clients to the right travel experience.

Suppliers will also have added benefits, with the platform to feature the option to spotlight new or interesting product features for LTC members.

So that members will be ready to use the new tool upon launch, training materials will be sent out in the next few months. **AB**

## VA most trusted

**VIRGIN** Australia has been named the most trusted travel & tourism brand for the third year running at the Roy Morgan Trusted Brand Awards.

According to the research company's Chief Executive Officer Michele Levine, travellers rated Virgin highly for being "down-to-earth, approachable, and with a good track record".

Travellers also rated Virgin "the most reliable of airlines in terms of flight times and, when cancelled, quick to offer compensation without even being prompted."

The achievement was hailed by Virgin founder Richard Branson on LinkedIn.



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## Domestic tourism grows

**DOMESTIC** travel is set to rise, as more Aussies are searching for “best places to visit in Australia”, with search numbers increasing 17% year-on-year, according to anybusiness.com.au.

Mary Tamvakologos, Managing Director, said the numbers call for local small businesses and entrepreneurs to anticipate demand for tourism-led ventures, boutique accommodation, restaurants and more.

“We’re seeing a direct link between where Australians want to visit, and where entrepreneurs are investing,” noted Tamvakologos.

“Regional destinations in particular are attracting new cafes, boutique hotels, eco-tours and lifestyle-driven businesses.”



The top destination leading this increased demand is Sydney, specifically for its harbour, beaches and major events, offering opportunities for accommodation, small bars and walking tours.

Following that is Melbourne and its laneway dining and culture, then Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef, which could herald a boon for sustainable tourism.

In fourth place is Uluru–Kata Tjuta in the Northern Territory, which may experience a rise in cultural tours and Indigenous experiences. *JHM*

## Utah goes virtual

**UTAH** tourism held a virtual trade event last week, featuring more than 324 one-on-one appointments connecting 19 tourism partners with Australian and New Zealander travel trade and tour operator partners.

“The Australian and New Zealand trade’s enthusiasm for Utah is stronger than ever. They see the demand for our unique combination of wide-open spaces and adventure,” explained Corey Marshall, Account Director for Visit Utah in Australia and New Zealand.

“With exciting new products like the expanded Rocky Mountaineer itinerary and the rare opportunity to tour the Salt Lake City Temple, we’re giving the trade compelling new reasons to promote and book Utah for 2027,” he added.

## IE flights for Xmas

**SOLOMON** Airlines has added 20 extra flights during the festive season between Brisbane and Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

Flights will be added in both directions between Brisbane, Honiara and Munda on 23 Dec and 04 Jan 2026.

Extra flights will operate in both directions between Brisbane and Espiritu Santo on 27 Dec and 03 Jan 2026.

Lastly, new flights will operate between Port Vila and Honiara every Tues between 23 Dec and 13 Jan 2026, and between Honiara and Port Vila every Wed between 24 Dec and 14 Jan 2026.

## Cruise expert wins big



**MTA’S** Lauren Jenkins has been announced as the lucky winner of Destination Vancouver’s luxury getaway prize draw at Cruise360.

Held in partnership with Air Canada, CLIA-accredited cruise specialists were invited to complete the Vancouver Specialist Program and Air Canada Global Sales University for a chance to win.

“Winning the major prize from Destination Vancouver and Air Canada is an incredible honour, and I’m truly grateful for this

opportunity,” said Jenkins.

As part of her prize, Jenkins scored round-trip flights from Australia to Vancouver with Air Canada and accommodation at the Fairmont Waterfront and the Westin Bayshore.

Jenkins will also enjoy a Seair Seaplane City Skyline Tour, a Taste Vancouver food tour, a full-day e-bike rental or a guided tour with Cycle City, a Destination Experience Pass, and more. *JHM*

**Pictured:** Jenkins with Janis McDonald from Air Canada.



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# HX expands pole-to-pole learning

**HX EXPEDITIONS** and the University of Tasmania (UTAS) hosted a special trade event at The Old Clare Hotel in Sydney last week to announce the next chapter of their world-first education partnership. The evening celebrated the expansion of their award-winning, university-developed Antarctica program into the Arctic from 2026.

HX's Chief Scientist Dr Verena Meraldi and HX Antarctic Ambassador Tudor Morgan were joined by UTAS representatives to share how the program is reshaping responsible expedition travel.

Guests enjoyed an engaging science session with Dr Meraldi, exploring the research and stories that inspire HX's voyages.

"Our partnership with UTAS shows how travel and learning can work together to create something truly special," said Amber Wilson, Director of Sales for HX.

"It's about giving travellers a deeper connection to the places they explore," she added.



**HX CHIEF** Scientist Dr Verena Meraldi, Senior Marketing Manager Shannon Davis, Director of Sales Amber Wilson and HX Antarctic Ambassador Tudor Morgan.



**THE** Flight Centre team with the HX Antarctic cocktail inspired by cook Adolf Lindstrom, who kept the champagne warm so Roald Amundsen could toast their arrival at the South Pole.



**DR VERENA** Meraldi shows the room a plankton species under the microscope.



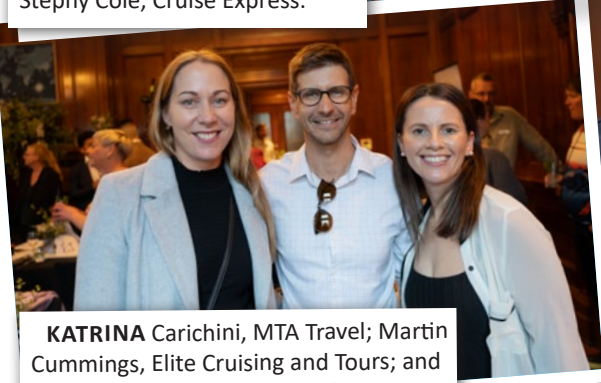
**CHRIS** Bellmon, Travelcall and Stephy Cole, Cruise Express.



**HX'S** Amber Wilson with Martin Cummings, Elite Cruising and Tours.



**SCIENCE** time - did you know the idea for Velcro came from studying feathers?



**KATRINA** Carichini, MTA Travel; Martin Cummings, Elite Cruising and Tours; and Callie Francis, Goldman Travel.



**ROSLYN** Ranse and Megan Catterall, LUXE by itravel and Kim Ryan, Carina Mullen and Astrid Maier from CruiseHQ.



**TUDOR** Morgan, Amber Wilson and Dr Verena Meraldi talking all things 2027/28 and enjoying every minute.



### A royal return to Oz

**CUNARD'S** *Queen Elizabeth* will return to Australia for the first time in 10 years for the luxury cruise line's 2027/28 program, as part of the ship's 113-night world voyage.

*Queen Elizabeth* will stay overnight in Sydney and visit a collection of Australian ports including Airlie Beach and Cairns, as well as three ports in Japan, during its circumnavigation.

Cunard's newest ship, *Queen Anne*, will also call Sydney during her 111-night western circumnavigation.

Both *Queens* will depart for their cruise in Jan 2028, offering Australian and New Zealand travellers the chance to join select voyages both to and from Sydney.

## BIG ACHIEVEMENT FOR SMALL LUXE

**SMALL** Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) is on track to achieve record signings in 2025, with 38 new properties added in Q3.

The boutique property collection has racked up 87 new additions so far this year, and now offers more than 650 luxury hotels in more than 90 countries around the world.

Among the latest batch of destinations is Sanctuary Rainforest Resort and Spa - Dominica, marking SLH's first property in Dominica.

Due to open in Aug 2026, the 72-key hotel is set in tropical rainforest with nearby waterfalls, rivers and scenic lookouts.

Recently opened in Aug 2025, Palacio de Tavira - a former 19th-century aristocratic residence in the Algarve - has also joined the premium portfolio.



SLH has also welcomed two luxury golf resorts, including Dunluce Lodge on Ireland's Causeway Coast and Scotland's Seaton House, which is near the world-famous Old Course.

Other recent additions for the brand include Jiva Hoa Lu Retreat, the brand's first property in northern Vietnam, located in a forested valley in Trang An's

UNESCO World Heritage site, and Hotel Villa Honegg (**pictured**), which offers sweeping views over Lake Lucerne, Switzerland.

Additionally, SLH has signed a swathe of countryside escapes in recent months, including A Mandria di Murtoli in Corsica, France and Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, which offers vintage luxury in the rolling hills of San Diego. *JM*

### Bunnik's deluxe India

**BUNNIK** Tours has launched its first luxury journey to India with a brand-new 20-day In-Style small group tour, which journeys from Delhi to Mumbai.

Deluxe experiences include a welcome dinner at Delhi's The Spice Route, two nights in a luxury tent within Ranthambore's wildlife sanctuary, a stay at a restored heritage fort in Nagaur, and a private evening tour of Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur with the museum curator.

The itinerary departs Oct 2026, with multiple dates through 2027.

### Noosa welcomes new holiday home collection

**NOOSA** is now home to new luxury accommodation with the opening of Allawah Noosa, a collection of high-end holiday homes now open to travellers for the first time.

Founded by two seasoned travellers and investors in the short-term rental market, Allawah combines hidden-gem accommodation with a service-first holiday experience.

The current collection consists of nine properties, including a freshly renovated Little



Cove penthouse, a designer apartment at Picture Point, and a family-friendly property within walking distance of Noosa Main Beach.

Learn more about the collection **HERE**.

### Luxe regional offers

**SALTER** Brothers Hospitality is offering 25% off a collection of luxury regional getaways, from its mountaintop lodge on Queensland's Scenic Rim, to refined estates in the Hunter Valley and a secluded retreat in the Blue Mountains.

The 'Summer Escapes' sale kicks off tomorrow and ends 05 Jan 2026, for stays between 01 Dec 2025 and 31 Mar 2026.

**CLICK HERE** for more info.

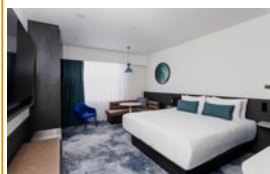
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## ACCOMMODATION

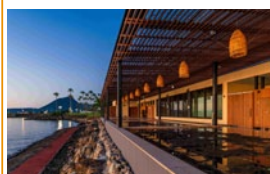
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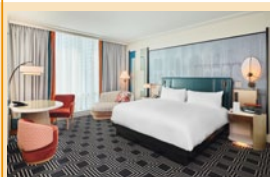
Choice Hotels' **Bayside Geelong Hotel & Apartments**, an **Ascend Collection Hotel** has unveiled the first stage of a multi-million-dollar redevelopment. Once complete in late 2026, the waterfront property will be redefined as a 4.5-star, 110-room boutique hotel. Phase one saw the introduction of a new lobby, an all-day Italian-inspired dining venue, 79 newly built guestrooms, seven meeting and event spaces, a fitness centre, and more.



Autograph Collection Hotels, part of Marriott Bonvoy's brand portfolio, has debuted in the Maldives with the opening of **The Halcyon Private Isles Maldives, Autograph Collection**. Set across two private islands in the Gaafu Alifu Atoll, the resort features 38 villas with private infinity pools. Guests can enjoy in-villa multi-course dining, Champagne sandbank experiences, multi-day wellness itineraries, and activities such as marine biology workshops.



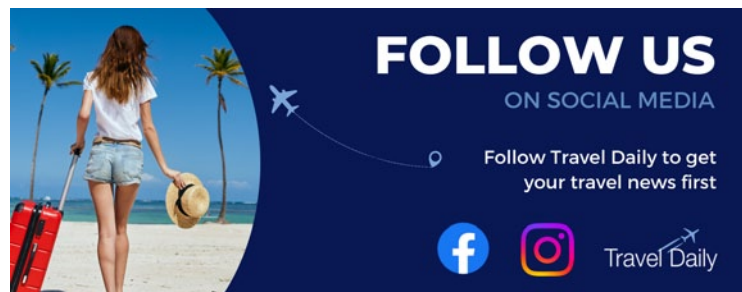
The city of Beppu in Kyushu, Japan has welcomed its latest property - **Ishinoya at Shonin Park**. Located on the beachfront, the hotel features 23 rooms across seven styles, each with a private hot spring bath. The premium rooms can sleep up to six guests, making the property ideal for families. Guests will be ideally based to experience Beppu's geothermally heated sand baths, which offer an authentic onsen experience.



**Sofitel Montreal Golden Mile** has unveiled the results of a multi-phase refurbishment. The luxury Canadian property now boasts refreshed guest rooms and revitalised meeting and event spaces. Additionally, the hotel's Renoir restaurant has been completely redesigned, and now features a sunroom, an intimate chef's table, and artful interiors inspired by French Impressionism.



**Kapama River Lodge and Kapama Southern Camp** in Africa is set to introduce new premium suites next month. Ideal for families, the brand-new Tamboti Superior Suites will replace the existing four Family Spa Suites. The fresh accommodations feature interleading rooms, and offer a more sophisticated design and views of the surrounding bushland.



## TC's resplendent famil



**A GROUP** of Travellers Choice agents has recently returned from a famil to Sri Lanka as guests of MW Tours.

From the fragrant spice gardens in Matale and Kandy's lush tea plantations to Colombo's vibrant Pettah bazaar, the advisors had a wonderful time exploring the South Asian island, which is smaller than Tasmania.

As part of the trip, the advisors also visited several of the country's eight UNESCO World Heritage listed sites, including medieval capital Polonnaruwa, the port city of Galle, and the 180m tall Sigiriya Rock.

They also had the opportunity to view some classic colonial-era

railway architecture in Ella.

One of the highlights of the trip was a safari at Yala National Park, where sloths, elephants, spotted deer, jackal and leopards roam.

The agents also enjoyed visiting the Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe, a sanctuary dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of orphaned and injured elephants. **JHM**

**Pictured:** Travellers Choice agents climbed Pidurangala Rock for views of Sigiriya Rock.

## Change for good

**TRAVEL** Money Oz and Unicef have partnered to launch The Great Coin Drop, a nationwide initiative that converts foreign coins into humanitarian aid.

Donation boxes are now set up in every Travel Money Oz store.

One hundred grams of coins is equal to about \$3 of impact, which could deliver six packets of therapeutic peanut paste to help one child recover from severe malnutrition, or eight vaccines to protect children from diseases.

## US cargo plane crash

**A CARGO** plane with three people on board crashed after take-off near Louisville International Airport in Kentucky yesterday at 5.15pm local time.

The US Federal Aviation Administration is currently investigating the incident.



# Small Group Journeys

*Our most epic journeys now on sale for 2026 and 2027!*



Adventures are always better in good company. Our Small Group Journeys offer a glimpse of what makes travel with A&K so distinctive: intimate group sizes averaging 14 guests, insider access, expert-led exploration and guaranteed departures with just two guests. Goodwill bookings are now available for a wide range of our 2027 departures. From tracking Africa's iconic wildlife across Kenya's golden savannahs to exploring the extraordinary wonders of India, each itinerary is designed to bring like-minded travellers together for something truly special.

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**Petra, the Pyramids and a Nile Yacht Cruise**  
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**Wonders of Morocco: From Souks to the Sahara**  
12 days from \$16,830 pp

**Iconic China and a Yangtze Cruise**  
13 days from \$16,845 pp

**Taj Mahal and the Treasures of India**  
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**Sri Lanka: Treasures of the Spice Island**  
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**Ultimate Peru by River and Rail**  
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**Spain and Portugal: 10 Extraordinary Cities**  
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