

BOLIVIA AND CHILE

Andean highs

DISCOVER BOLIVIA AND CHILE ON THIS mythological journey where the elevation connects you with ancient Andean cultures and their reverence towards the heavens. Marvel at the ghastly wares of La Paz Witches' Market, visit the Sun Virgins' Temple on Moon Island where Virgins of the Sun maintained an eternal fire in devotion to sun god Viracocha, climb the Inca Steps in Yumani to sip from the sacred fountain of eternal youth and happiness.

During the day, drink in the Altiplano with its blue skies, pink flamingos and multicoloured lagoons seasoned with a dash of salt from snow-white Uyuni Salt Flat, the world's largest salt pan. At night, gaze up at star-peppered sky from the remote Atacama – especially as this trip is timed for the darkest months of the year. Find out more at www.ietravel.com.



PHILIPPINES

Early bird catches the shark

MALAPASCUA ISLAND IS ONE OF THE FEW places on earth where graceful and elusive thresher sharks like to congregate. At Monad Shoal, north of Cebu, divers wake before dawn to secure front-row seats to witness the cleaning station in action – basically an aquatic car wash where sharks swoop over coral patches to allow cleaning wrasse to nibble the dead skin off of their bodies, removing parasites and preventing infection. Then, their sensitive eyes

unaccustomed to the sunlight penetrating at such shallow depths, they slide back down into the deep. Devocean Divers is a five-star PADI IDC dive shop that organises early morning dives for this occasion, and while it's currently not peak season, offers are very reasonable until October 2019. There are also plenty of other sights and activities, above and below the waves, to grab your attention. Plan your next dive at www.devoceandivers.com.

THAILAND

Eat, pray, travel

EXPLORE THE LAND OF SMILES SEEKING out the most authentic experiences and unknown parts of the country, absorbing history and many, many delicious calories along the way. Start by sampling the culinary offerings of Bangkok, from fast food to Thai Royal Cuisine, then travel to the mountainous north where you can burn off a few calories as you forge on by mountain bike, longtail boat and kayak, with automotive help at hand when needed. In Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Pai and Mae Hong Son, you'll trek to remote tribal villages, explore a picturesque cave system, visit the wondrous White Temple and receive private blessings at Doi Suthep. Round off the trip with a night safari and picnic where you get to search for gibbon, hornbill and wild elephant at Khao Yai National Park. Reserve now at www.audleytravel.com.



RWANDA

At home with great apes

THE AWARD-WINNING HOSPITALITY and conservation brand Singita officially opened Singita Kwitonda Lodge and Kataza House this August. Eight suites make up the lodge while the exclusive villa Kataza House adds another four; the only accommodation in the 72 hectares of Singita Volcanoes National Park, a venture that sees the brand contribute to conservation, community partnerships and ecotourism.

Their professed goal is to protect African wilderness for 100 years, and to raise awareness of, and provide much-needed support to mountain gorilla conservation. Their reforestation initiatives also aim at increasing the genetic diversity and numbers of gorillas inside the park. Experiences besides the thrilling gorilla treks include trips to the Musanze Caves, Nyungwe National Park and Lake Kivu. Enquire at www.singita.com.



ICELAND

On fire and ice

MOUNTAIN BEACH FITNESS RETREATS IN Iceland combines raw adventure, outdoor fitness, magnificent landscapes and fresh Nordic cuisine in holiday sanctuaries that help you realise your personal fitness and wellness goals.

One example is the award-winning, sustainable, boutique Ion Adventure Hotel at the bottom of Mt Hengill, which boasts minimalist Scandinavian aesthetics to connect seamlessly

with the seriously stunning surrounds. Expect outdoor fitness sessions to take place against the backdrop of waterfalls, geysers and volcanoes, and post-workout activities to include thermal pool dipping, lava stone saunas, spa treatments, and – conditions allowing – watching the famous Northern Lights at play in the night sky.

Secure a stay fit for any A-list celeb at www.mountainbeachfitnessretreats.com.

MALAYSIA

Borneo's crowning glory

THE MALAYSIAN STATE OF SABAH, ON the fabled island of Borneo, is a playground that would pass any nature-lover or adventurer's litmus test. Here you can hike, bike and kayak your way through steamy rainforests, up and around towering peaks, or out to remote beaches while also splicing in cultural landmarks along the way. The literal high point of this trip is summiting Mt Kinabalu in time to catch the sunrise, after which you descend to the via ferrata: hanging ladders and wire bridges that allow you to access views otherwise impossible to reach. Take it easy next day with more leisurely endeavours: visiting waterfalls, enjoying the wildlife and soaking in thermal pools.

Accommodation includes two homestays. Select departures between October 2019 and April 2020 are now on sale. Make a reservation at www.intrepidtravel.com.

