

TRAVEL INSPIRATION FOR OUR MOST LOYAL FLYERS

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Hemispheres

DECEMBER 2020

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Plan Your Bucket List Trips Now

The Hemi Q&A with Rachel Brosnahan

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Where you can
go for a stroll
on Sandy Beach
at sunset



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What's on Your Travel Bucket List?

Now's the time to
make a life plan for
your dream vacations.
We asked the experts
how to do just that.

By Larry Olmsted

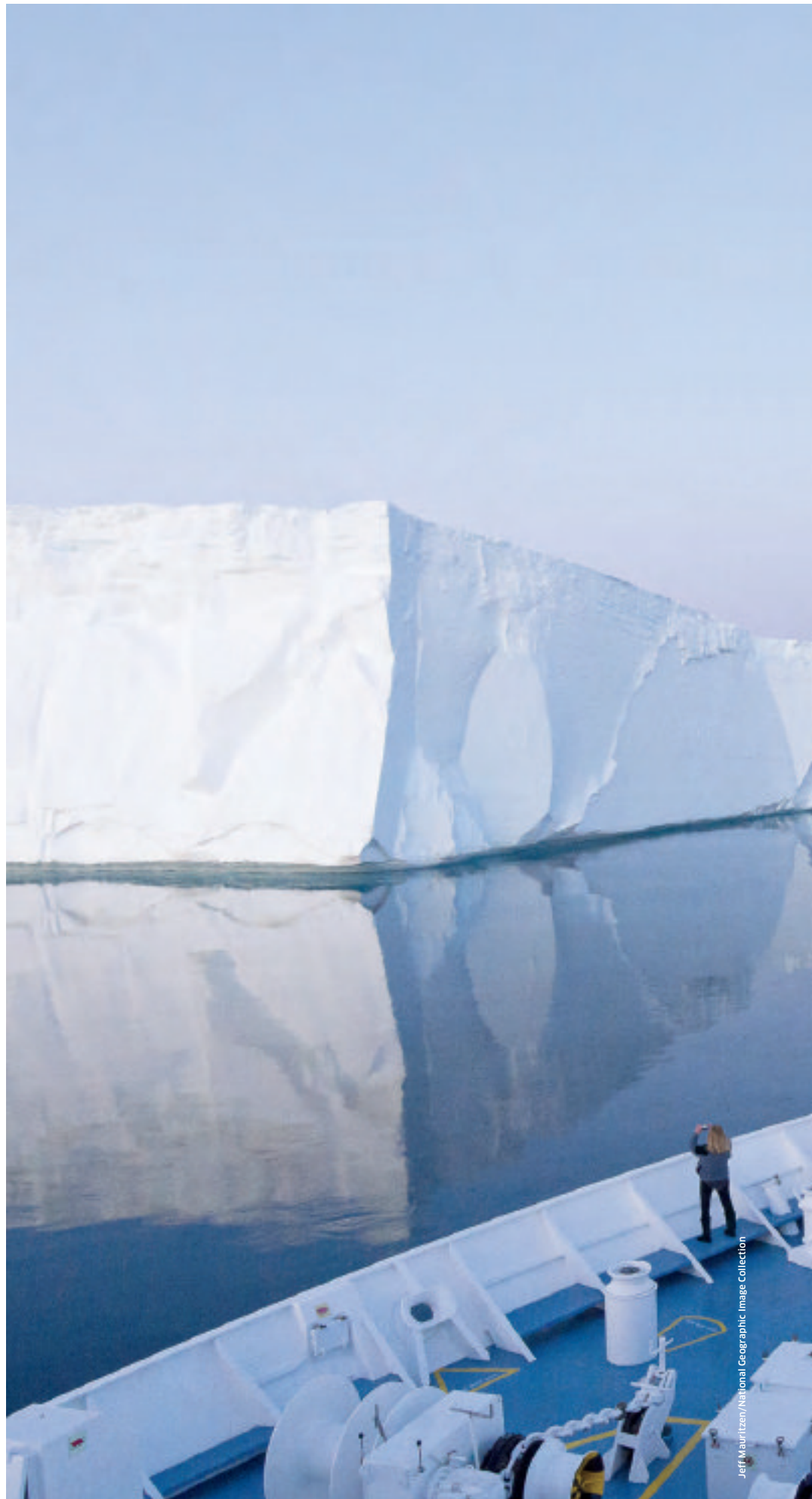
Milos Holodek/TNZ (horses); image: Artis Travel (Bomei); Mike Heydon/TNZ (cyclists); Mike Hill/Getty Images (jaguar); Gabor Basch/Alamy Stock Photo (beach); Merydolla/Getty Images (spinnaker); Chalerm Kit Sereedokmal/Getty Images (Pudong skyline); Courtesy of Oceania (Sydney); Daniel Road/TNZ (Castlepoint)

Arising junior at the University of Florida, Josh Rosen was slated to spend his 2020 spring term studying in Florence, Italy, participating in an eclectic academic program that ranged from international business to art and wine tasting. But the coronavirus pandemic had other plans, and his program—like most everyone’s study abroad programs—was canceled. Almost immediately, his parents began planning a family trip to Italy—to celebrate his 2022 graduation.

“He missed this big opportunity, and it kind of put things in perspective for all of us,” says Sherrie Rosen, Josh’s mother. “Our other son is starting college, and we’ll be entering a new phase of life, but right now we’re all home, sitting around the dining room table every night, and we had plenty of time to talk about it, to do research. It’s a long way off, but it has also become clear that life is short, and we didn’t want to miss any more big opportunities. In that vein, we’re already thinking about his brother’s graduation in 2025.”

The Rosens aren’t alone. More and more people have begun looking at their travel ambitions the same way they’ve long considered their finances: setting goals and making multiyear plans, five and even 10 years in advance.

There are many good reasons to map out your bucket-list trips. Some require long lead times, especially when limited permits are required, such as the increasingly hard-to-secure ones for treks to



Jeff Mauritzen/National Geographic Image Collection

▼ Polar Regions

“We call it the ‘penguin and polar bear’ fantasy, and the Arctic or Antarctic are always in the top five bucket-list trips for our clients,” says travel advisor Cate Caruso. Most of these journeys are on smaller cruises. National Geographic Expeditions, for example, leads excursions to Antarctica, Russia’s far east, Greenland, and more, and puts learning at the forefront, with a team of specialists—biologists, geologists, naturalists—giving science lectures to accompany travelers’ evening Champagne. nationalgeographic.com



Taking a cruise through tabular icebergs in the Antarctic Sound

▼ Italy

Nearly a third of Wanderlist users picked Italy as their dream destination. Tuscany is an oft-cited vacation spot, but travel fantasies abound throughout the country. History buffs head to Rome, fashionistas to Milan, artists to Florence, romantics to Venice. And no matter where you go—from the cliffs of the Amalfi Coast to Lakes Garda and Como—there's incredible food and wine at every turn. Devising your own trip is doable, but arranging private tours with a company such as Imago Artis will make a good trip great. iatravel.com



The Rocca Maggiore castle in Assisi, a hill town in the central Italian region of Umbria

Peru's Machu Picchu or the red-hot Milford Track hiking trip in New Zealand. Fantasy adventures requiring a higher level of fitness, like gorilla trekking in Rwanda, are better done sooner in life than later. There is no such thing as a last-minute around-the-world cruise, as the best ships offer these voyages only every few years, and they book up fast. Major spectacles and sporting events also require a lot of lead time; the Summer Olympic Games come once every four years, and may be held in a particularly desirable destination, such as Tokyo, just once in a lifetime. And it's never too early to start planning big trips tied to life events, major anniversaries, or milestone birthdays.

Jack Ezon was an early pioneer in this niche of the industry. As founder and managing partner of Embark Beyond,

a luxury lifestyle and travel agency, Ezon is one of the world's most prominent travel advisors, with numerous professional athletes, celebrities, and other high-net-worth individuals as clients. For years he has been pushing what he calls "meaningful travel." "Just like a financial advisor, we really want to understand our clients' life goals and work backward from that," he says. "They each have their own personal lifestyle and goals. The strategy is to help them enhance those life goals by using travel as a platform to fulfillment. To do that, we try to chart a course over five or 10 years to deliver on those goals and make it more meaningful than one-off, ad hoc trips that don't further their needs."

For clients with children, for example, Ezon created a program called Journey to Global Citizenship, under which he

tailors vacations to school curricula. Know that your daughter will be studying biology during her sophomore year? That's the perfect time to schedule a trip to the Galápagos Islands.

Whatever the reason for your dream vacation, it starts with a list—and many travel agencies are making that brainstorming process easier for their clients. Virtuoso, an international network of high-end independent travel agencies, for example, recently developed Wanderlist, a software platform for mapping each client's bucket-list aspirations.

The Wanderlist process starts with an advisor at a Virtuoso member agency opening an online portal for every member of a travel circle, be it a family, a group of friends, or a club. Participants answer questions about their desired destinations and experiences; then the

analytics crunch the results and produce a suggested roadmap for future travels, while also taking into account economic conditions and major scheduled events, such as the World Cup.

Cate Caruso, owner of True Places Travels, a travel agency structured more like a consulting firm, was one of the first Virtuoso advisors in the world to use Wanderlist. “This concept of the long-term travel portfolio has actually been around for a while,” Caruso says, although she notes that the software streamlines the planning process.

In fact, before Wanderlist, Virtuoso had a program called Return on Life and a partnership with Merrill Lynch

Wealth Management. “Merrill Lynch was doing a focus group, and one client said he wanted help with a return on life, not just a return on investment,” Caruso says. “It turned out that travel and financial planning have a lot of synergies, and once upon a time, financial planners were less focused on long-term success and were more transactional. So were travel advisors. The idea of having a long-term travel portfolio mirrors having a financial one, and my conversations with clients really changed. Now, I start by asking things like, ‘Why do you travel? What was the first trip that changed you? How does travel improve your life?’ Then we look at all the milestones,



Watching lions cross a plain near Lake Ndutu in Tanzania



◀ African Safari

Getting up close and personal with wildlife—especially lions, cheetahs, leopards, giraffes, hippos, elephants, and endangered rhinos on their own turf—is the dream journey for many. Planning is essential: The best lodges, with uncrowded private reserves (typically found in South Africa and Botswana, and also in Tanzania, Zambia, and Namibia), are very small, with just five to 15 rooms, and often book up well over a year in advance. Great safari options abound; one of our favorites, *Micato Safaris*, offers full-service treks in East and South Africa, generally lasting 10 to 17 days. micato.com

big occasions, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, births, grandchildren, retirements. That's a big one: People set a timeline for travel around retirement, especially for bucket-list things like an around-the-world cruise. We usually make a five-year plan."

Tania Swasbrook, VP of operations at Travelworld International Group, meanwhile, is planning her family's travel with her 8-year-old daughter in mind. "The legacy I want to leave her is to be a citizen of the world," she says. "It's important to me that she hits all

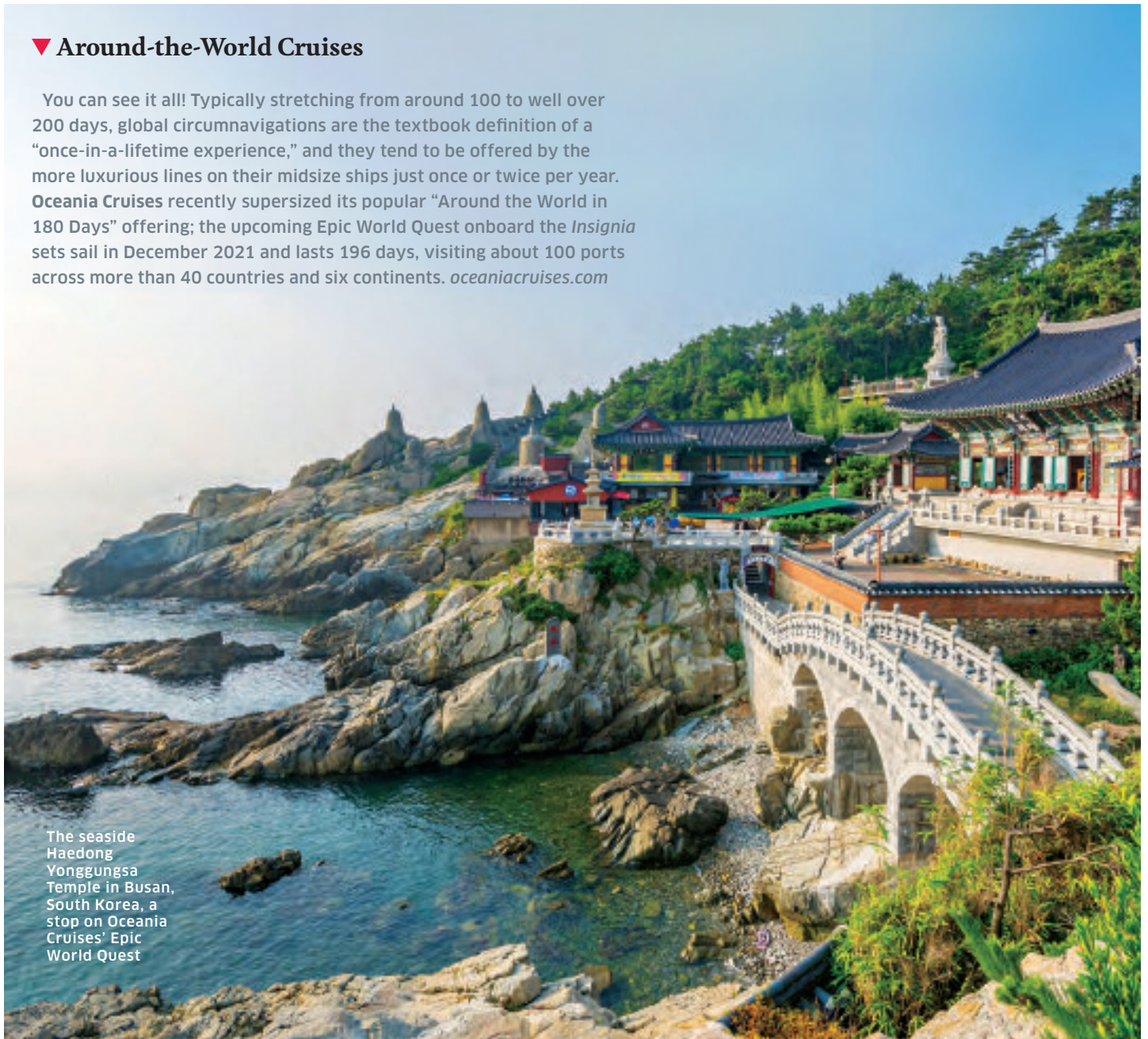
the major civilizations—Mexico, India, China, Japan, Greece, Egypt, and so on—but you can't just do that off the cuff; you have to be strategic." The key, she stresses, is to make a list and start simple. For her, that means saving trips to Japan or Egypt for when her daughter is older, since there's so much to learn. "Planning is for the future—not just Christmas vacation or where to go next summer, but years down the road. Planning ahead helps you make travel a part of your life, like work or school, not just something you do in your leisure time. I had already been

thinking about this for my family, and every client we've discussed the concept with says, 'Oh my God, I want to do that.'"

Of course, travel has looked a little different this year. The old adage, "You don't know what you got till it's gone" has proved especially true for leisure travelers during the pandemic, and the silver lining may be that travel will become an even more important priority when normalcy returns. Acknowledging the uncertainty of life goes hand in hand with realizing the importance of making every trip count—and not putting off the

▼ Around-the-World Cruises

You can see it all! Typically stretching from around 100 to well over 200 days, global circumnavigations are the textbook definition of a "once-in-a-lifetime experience," and they tend to be offered by the more luxurious lines on their midsize ships just once or twice per year. **Oceania Cruises** recently supersized its popular "Around the World in 180 Days" offering; the upcoming Epic World Quest onboard the *Insignia* sets sail in December 2021 and lasts 196 days, visiting about 100 ports across more than 40 countries and six continents. [oceaniacruises.com](https://www.oceaniacruises.com)



The seaside Haedong Yonggungsa Temple in Busan, South Korea, a stop on Oceania Cruises' Epic World Quest

ones that are personal musts. Time spent in isolation can be used productively to discuss, reflect, research, and ultimately emerge with a better sense of the places you want to visit, not to mention the people you want to go with. “More than ever, people crave human contact in their travel,” Ezon says. “Multigenerational travel with families and reunion travel with friends were already big trends, but they will greatly accelerate after this. We are already seeing increased interest.”

Typical bucket-list items include safaris and trips to UNESCO World Heritage sites and the polar regions, but increasingly, travel industry experts note a shift away from places and toward experiences. For instance, people want to go on a safari to engage with wildlife and experience Africa, not just to say they’ve been to a specific country, such as Kenya or Tanzania or Botswana. “It’s not just where and when anymore, it’s why,” Caruso says. “Even though this is a list, the kinds of trips people are putting on it are about experiencing something, not just checking them off.”

Ezon also uses Wanderlist, but he says making the initial list is just the start of the process. “We want clients to move away from thinking about travel in terms of destinations and think in terms of aspirations. When someone tells me their bucket list includes Machu Picchu, I ask, ‘Why? That’s one day. What else do you want to do in Peru?’ If it’s all about seeing ruins, maybe we could look at alternatives that are a better fit for them and the other things they enjoy. Just because your friend loved a trip does not mean you will. Traveling by aspiration instead of destination has proven so much more meaningful. I call it going from conspicuous consumption to conscious consumption.”

Still, there are destinations that hold a magic sway, and some people—a lot of people—just need to go to Italy. Others have passions—be it golf, skiing, yoga, or cooking—and are flexible enough to do these activities wherever the best option presents itself. But whichever way you lean—whether you start by asking “What do I want to do?” or “Where do I want to go?”—the important thing is to start asking. Life is short, and the world is a big place. Make a list.





▼ Australia and New Zealand

Considering the vast size, immense variety of natural beauty (the Great Barrier Reef, the Bay of Islands, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park), vibrant cities, and the long flights to get there, trips to Oceania tend to be saved until they can be done as multiweek experiences. If you need help putting together your excursion, **Southern Crossings**, a 34-year-old luxury tour company, will work with you on arranging accommodations, guides, activities, and more. southern-crossings.com

New Zealand's
Aoraki/Mount Cook
National Park