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# One-Of-A-Kind Travel Experiences To Book This Year

Whether you're after regency reveries or a holy holiday, these are the places to visit in 2025

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Published Feb 20, 2025, 10:30am EST

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Clockwise from top left: Ritz-Carlton San Francisco; Sitatunga Private Island; Leading Hotels of the World's Palazzo Roma; Sitatunga Private Island; Ritz-Carlton Maldives; Italian Journeys  
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RITZ-CARLTON; GREAT PLAINS; LEADING HOTELS OF THE WORLD; GREAT PLAINS; RITZ-CARLTON; ITALIAN JOURNEYS

## Rome – For a holy holiday

“Rome has always been our top destination,” says Dino Triantafillou, owner of [Italian Journeys](#). “This year is a Holy Year (Jubilee), and it will be a special year to visit, especially for religious travelers. Pilgrims from around the world will gather for the special events, including Papal and Jubilee audiences.”

“We recommend staying in the city centre within a 15-minute drive of the Vatican, if you plan to visit; and you’ll be fully immersed in the buzz of the city. There are many options when it comes to accommodation, and Rome has welcomed several new five-star hotels of late, offering a range of luxury accommodations suited for different preferences—from classic elegance to contemporary design. I recently stayed at [Palazzo Roma](#), part of The Leading Hotels of the World collection, which is gorgeously furnished and centrally located on the Via del Corso.”

## Botswana – For above-average elephant sightings

“If you love elephants, then this is the year to travel to Botswana, which offers arguably the best elephant viewing in Africa,” says Paul Swart, President of safari specialists [Natural Migrations](#). “The annual flood in the Okavango Delta is predicted to be above average, and a visit to the new luxurious [Great Plains Sitatunga Private Island](#) camp in the heart of the delta will allow for some incredible elephant viewing whilst traversing the waterways by either boat or mokoro (traditional dugout canoe),” he says.

“Continue with an exciting helicopter transfer to the renowned [Selinda](#) or [Zarafa](#) camps, both located on the Chobe/Linyanti river system, which is also home to one of the largest elephant populations in Africa. Apart from spending time elephant viewing, you will also enjoy incredible sightings of all the other species that occur in

this region. We recommend traveling in October when wildlife viewing will be at its optimum.”

## Japan – For a celebration of new art and architecture

Japan has been an extraordinary popular travel destination in 2024, and this year is no different—especially with an influx of new exhibitions to enjoy. “This is the year to experience Japan’s innovative cultural landscape,” says Naomi Mano, President & CEO of Japanese hospitality outfit [Luxurique](#). “[World Expo 2025 Osaka](#) will see an influx of people traveling to Japan, but we highly recommend planning enough time to venture further out to Hiroshima and Setouchi to experience Japan’s contemporary art and architecture,” she says.

“The renowned contemporary art festival [Setouchi Triennale](#) returns this year, bringing thought-provoking artworks to 17 locations across the picturesque Seto Inland Sea, while the long-awaited [Naoshima New Museum of Art](#), designed by the legendary Tadao Ando, has its grand opening. Add to that the [Hiroshima Architecture Exhibition 2025](#), held once every three years, and you’ve got the perfect itinerary to immerse yourself in the brilliance of nine Japanese Pritzker Prize-winning architects.”

## Ho Chi Minh City – To mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War

“2025 marks a significant milestone for Ho Chi Minh City as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, one of the year’s biggest political events in the city,” says Nick Pulley, founder of [Selective Asia](#).

“Though detailed plans are yet to be announced, we can expect several key events such as the major parade at the [Reunification Palace](#) (though due to the small

ceremony area, it may be a challenge for tourists to experience this up close) and the annual bike race, a longstanding tradition that starts in the North and ends in the South, with the finish line in front of the Reunification Palace. Also, other activities will take place at locations such as Bach Dang Wharf Park, Nguyen Hue Street, and Le Loi Street and surrounding areas with special events such as light festivals, drone performances and fireworks.”

## The Maldives – For next-level dining and drinking

Maldivian resorts are constantly pushing the boundaries of luxury, but for discerning food enthusiasts, one destination stands out for 2025. “I have stayed at eight Maldives islands in total and Marriott’s [The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands](#) is by far my absolute favourite.” says Claire Baker, Head of Customer Experience at [Winged Boots](#). “It’s home to seven diverse on-site restaurants offering everything from Italian and Middle Eastern to East Asian cuisines, making the property a stellar choice for globetrotting gourmands.”

“However, the true highlight is the hotel’s Masters of Crafts initiative. This series of special culinary events pulls influence from the most innovative figureheads of the global food and drink scene. Looking ahead, the property will invite Locale Firenze, named 36<sup>th</sup> of the World’s 50 Best Bars in 2024, to take over EAU Bar at the resort throughout March.”

“Outside of the Masters of Crafts series, a staple favourite of mine during a visit was La Locanda, a charming bar and restaurant of southern Italian influence serving the most delightful espressos that pack a serious punch. And, with only eight seats, IWAU is an intimate Japanese dining refuge where I ate with my partner, but on other nights, I saw larger groups reserve the whole place for a private dining experience. I also had the pleasure of experiencing the most authentic dajaaj

maqlooba, a Levantine dish of chicken, rice and vegetables, at Arabesque. This oasis of calm is a reimagining of a Bedouin tent, serving cuisine from Morocco right through to North India, and guests enjoy hookah pipes, Turkish coffee and Moroccan tea in its sunken dining room.”

## Bath – To party like Jane Austen on her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday

“Bath is a fantastic addition to an itinerary to England, as it is one of the country’s most beautiful cities with magnificent architecture,” says Beth Blakeley, UK Senior Product Executive at [Audley Travel](#). “The already-popular city is getting extra attention this year, celebrating the birth of author Jane Austen, who lived in the city from 1801 to 1806. Bath had a significant effect on her work and the city's position as one of Britain's most fashionable social resorts. Her experiences as an independent-minded but unmarried woman wound their way into several of her books, and *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were set in the city.”

“In Bath, travelers can visit [The Jane Austen Centre](#), a museum set inside a classic Georgian townhouse. The museum tells the stories of Austen’s novels, and visitors can enjoy an afternoon tea in the traditional tearoom upstairs. We also suggest [No.1 The Royal Crescent](#), a townhouse museum set up to look exactly as the home would have looked in regency England. There will be a Jane Austen exhibition, *The Most Tiresome Place in the World*, running here from July 5th to November 2nd.”

Also, [The Jane Austen Festival](#) takes place from September 12-21 this fall, starting with a regency costume promenade, where the streets of Bath will see over 500 people in regency outfits.”

## San Francisco – For new green spaces

Based in San Francisco, Thomas Lonergan, Travel Support Advisor with [Andrew Harper](#), recommends The City by the Bay in 2025 for its new green expansions: “Most talked about is the expansion of the [Presidio Tunnel Tops](#), a gorgeous 14-acre park offering breathtaking views of the Golden Gate Bridge,” he says. “In July, the park will introduce Outpost Meadow, a new garden area designed by the same team behind New York’s High Line with food trucks and other family-friendly amenities.”

One of his picks for travelers looking for an urban oasis: Marriott’s [The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco](#): “Renovated just a few years ago, The Ritz-Carlton on Nob Hill has a gracious club floor lounge rich with period details,” he says. And the hotel also has a new green connection: “Since my last personal stay, the Ritz-Carlton converted its courtyard into an herb garden, helping the hotel’s restaurants to really embrace the eat-local ethos.”

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