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# Travel

January 21, 2015

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## What to do & Where to go in 2015



If you're dreaming of a getaway this year, here are our inspiring ideas for what to do and where to go on holiday in 2015.

### Experiential, personalized travel

An Amex survey of professional Travel Counsellors found that 67% of their professional time is spent helping travellers customize their itinerary to the smallest detail. It's no surprise then that one of the biggest predicted travel trends for 2015 is the complete personalization of holidays. Look out for the new breed of tour operators who really

listen to you, get a sense of who you are and how you like to travel, and then create bespoke trips you won't find in the guide books.

They say 2015 will be all about experiential travel and trying things we've never done before – like the holiday I spent trying to be a radio DJ on a breakfast show in Austin Texas, arranged through a brilliant company called Pivot Planet. You might prefer polar snorkeling in Antarctica with Aurora Expeditions or camping in teepees at the new Mustang Monument Wild Horse Eco-Resort in North Eastern Nevada.

The personalization of the travel experience is breaking new ground, with more and more of your likes, dislikes and holiday habits being stored by your tour operator, to help them improve their service to you.

### Escape to the local

Authenticity is all in 2015. Travelling now is all about escaping the compound, plugging into local life and really getting a sense of where we are, through hook-ups with great local guides, spot-on concierge recommendations and even better, by staying somewhere owned and run by locals. Try Jungle Bay Resort in Dominica, owned by the charismatic Sam Raphael or Londolozi in South Africa's Sabi Sands, a game reserve run by the rather wonderful Varty Family.

### Good food

Good food is more important than ever to the discerning traveller. In fact, 44% of our Amex Travel Counsellors noted that planning dining and restaurant activities has become increasingly popular when planning travelers itineraries. That's why soon I'll be dining at El Cellar de Can Roca in Girona, nine absurd months after I made the booking (it recently made it to the top spot of 'world's best restaurant' though Noma in Copenhagen has now regained the crown). There's no better illustration of our new willingness to follow a chef around the world than the recent launch of a collaboration between Cox & Kings and MasterChef – Foodie trips take small groups, accompanied by MasterChef winners, to destinations like Morocco, Vietnam and Jordan. Also just launched is Stirred, a new cookery school in the foothills of the Dolomites, run by Sarah 'Tasting Places' Roberts, at Villa Casagrande, the gorgeous 15th century home of her good friend the Contessa Brandolini d'Adda.

### Simple pleasures

Perhaps best of all, there's a shift towards life's simple pleasures and making the most of our precious time away to prioritize relaxing and spending quality time with the people we love. Twenty-four percent of Travel



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Counsellors surveyed say customers plan to travel with immediate family, while 19 per cent see multi-generational family vacations on the rise. While some travellers will opt for a chic contemporary villa at the new [Amilia Fushi resort](#) in the Maldives, an island with a deli for lazy at-home dining. I'm more inclined towards a night in Switzerland in the [Gstaad Palace's shepherd's hut](#) (aka a walg-hut) in the meadows above the hotel, eating fondue by candlelight beneath a starry, starry night.

**Hot Spots:**

Based on where Amex customers are going in the New Year, it is clear travellers want to- and will- go farther in 2015. From South America and Europe to the Pacific, the following destinations are trending:

- 1) London, England
- 2) Santiago, Chile
- 3) Paris, France
- 4) Mumbai, India
- 5) Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 6) Providenciales, Turks and Caicos
- 7) Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- 8) Sydney, Australia
- 9) New York, NY
- 10) San Francisco, CA

Planning a 2015 trip? Head over to [American Express Travel](#) to book flights, hotels and more.

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