

TATLER

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a black one-piece swimsuit with a crisscross back, stands in the ocean waves. She is looking out to sea with a slight smile. The water is a vibrant blue-green, and white foam from the waves surrounds her. The overall mood is serene and summery.

TRAVEL
GUIDE 2017

1 DAY

2 DAYS

3 DAYS

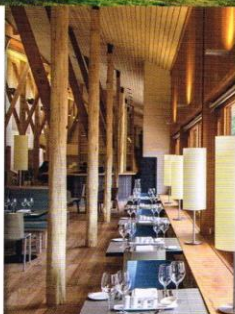
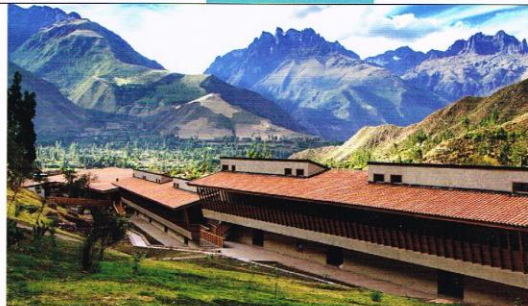
4 DAYS

5 DAYS



EXPLORA VALLE SAGRADO CUSCO, PERU

The problem with Machu Picchu is having to share it with a few thousand other people. Time to find the Inca road less travelled. Enter Explora, the Chilean outfit that's bagged the choicest spots in Patagonia, Atacama and Easter Island, and has now opened up a far-flung corner of Peru's Sacred Valley. Set among fields of red quinoa and golden corn and flanked by evergreen slopes, the long, low building takes its cue from the surroundings – stone, adobe and wood, with blasts of colour from handwoven blankets. It's less hotel, more luxe base camp – 20 'explorations', most on two feet or two wheels, will take you to Inca ruins and up snow-tipped peaks for views of turquoise lagoons and sparkling glaciers, startling doe-eyed llamas on the way. Knock back that local altitude-sickness-busting coca tea before you set out, though. You're going where the air is rarefied. **BOOK IT** Aracari (aracari.com; 00 51 1 651 2424) offers four nights, full board, as part of an eight-night trip, from £4,280, including domestic flights, transfers and tours.



WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Saving by the 17th-century Pomacocha Bath House for a well-earned massage and to take in the views from the pool.



SVATMA THANJAVUR, INDIA

Get an atlas (we're old school here). Look up Thanjavur (tip: it's in southern India). Commit it to memory. Because Indophiles will be flocking to the subcontinent's newest hub of revived arts. And in tune with the city's renaissance is Svatma, an immaculate hotel in a restored colonial mansion. Just dipping into its menu of brilliantly curated cultural activities will make your head spin. Fancy a spot of Vedic chanting with Hindu priests, or an afternoon making musical instruments out of jackfruit wood? Or how about learning how to cook a proper Tamil thali? You'll be wanting a nap after all that – make sure you're up in time for the hotel's evening classical-music recital, followed by an 11-course supper in the rooftop restaurant. Highbrow bragging rights: off the chart. **BOOK IT** The Ultimate Travel Company (theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk; 020 3051 8098) offers three nights, as part of a 14-night trip, from £3,295, including flights, transfers and private driver.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Watch the mighty tower of the 1,000-year-old Brihadiswara Temple turn the colour of golden syrup in the setting sun.



6 DAYS

7 DAYS

8 DAYS

9 DAYS

10 DAYS

DEV SHREE RAJASTHAN, INDIA

When we heard that Shatrunjay Singh and Bhavna Kumari, a couple of notable pedigree (the family is behind the fairytale fort Deogarh Mahal), had returned to their roots to build a dreamy haveli hugging the banks of Ragho Sagar Lake, bags were hastily packed. And we weren't disappointed. Dev Shree is a regal Rajput retreat with five courtly yet cosy bedrooms, awash with vivid fabrics and cool marble. This is a place to stay a while, to doze in a rattan chair under the arches of the deep verandas, to slip into the saltwater pool, to totter out onto the sunny lawn bordered by sweet-scented roses, to take afternoon tea of homemade samosas and squidgy Victoria sponge as flocks of parakeets swoop overhead. But this is a rare corner of unexplored Rajasthan, and explore you must – on thoughtfully curated forays with Shatrunjay into the glorious Aravalli Hills, or through time-frozen villages for a cup of chai with the local farmers, returning for sundowners and home-cooked suppers in the graceful courtyard as stars make a spectacle of themselves overhead. **BOOK IT** Greaves India (greavesindia.com; 020 7487 9111) offers five nights, full board, as part of a seven-night trip, from £1,840, including flights and transfers.



WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Shatrunjay will encourage you to sit, legs dangling, in the open doorway of an ancient train as you chug through the Aravalli Hills, feeding langur monkeys as you go.



WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Have your coca leaves read by a local shaman before giving an offering to Pachamama, the Inca goddess of fertility.



AMANTICA LODGE LAKE TITICACA, PERU

Roosting on a rocky shoulder of land in the Hockney-blue water of Lake Titicaca, Amantica is properly, wildly remote (a flight, a drive and then a boat from Lima). Benefits: an unambiguously tourist-free experience of one of the world's loftiest lakes. The lodge is locally built, locally run and sustainable as anything – solar-powered and constructed from groovy adobe, totora reeds and island stone. There are only two glass-walled terraces, run by the charming, fedora-clad Señor Osvaldo, who'll show you island life, and Adeli, who turns just-caught/plucked ingredients into delightful dishes like zesty trout ceviche. Life on the island is simple. Villagers rise with the sun, farm pre-Inca terraces and make offerings to the goddess Pachamama. You come here to disconnect from your devices and reconnect with the elements. The deck is the perfect spot for, well, not doing much. Sit and watch the sunlight sparkle on the water, while fishermen bob past in their wooden boats. Then rouse yourself, huff and puff your way up one of the island's peaks and catch one of the most glorious sunsets you've ever seen. **BOOK IT** Aracari (aracari.com; 00 51 1 651 2424) offers two nights, all-inclusive, as part of an eight-night trip, from £4,280, including domestic flights, transfers and tours.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Hike through a secret wadi (ravine) known only to local guide Tariq and lots of wild goats. Then cool off with a swim in a luminous natural pond.



NEWSFLASH

JUST-OPENED CHABLE, DEEP IN MEXICO'S MAYAN JUNGLE, HAS A SPA NEXT TO A SACRED SINKHOLE, AND THE WORLD'S LARGEST TEQUILA COLLECTION. OLÉ! (CHABLERESORT.COM)

ANANTARA AL JABAL AL AKHDAR NIZWA, OMAN

It's been five years in the making, and the buzz around this mountaintop five-star was so feverish that they had an Omani royal turn up unannounced on day one. Now you can explore this isolated, craggy wilderness, where goats scamper and wolves roam, without skimping on in-room massages or Amouage lotions. The hotel sits on the edge of a sheer canyon, 6,500 feet above the heat of the desert, and the best rooms have infinity pools and full-frontal views. You can get out and about for archery and abseiling, or hide away in the spa for a pomegranate scrub or punchy (not literally) hammam. There are six restaurants, one with a private jetty over the canyon, where Sicilian chef Francesco will cook the best funghi risotto imaginable, with the lights of Muscat twinkling far below. **BOOK IT** Double, from £370, including breakfast (jabal-akhdar.anantara.com; 00 968 2521 8000). Oman Air (omanair.com) flies to Muscat from £599.