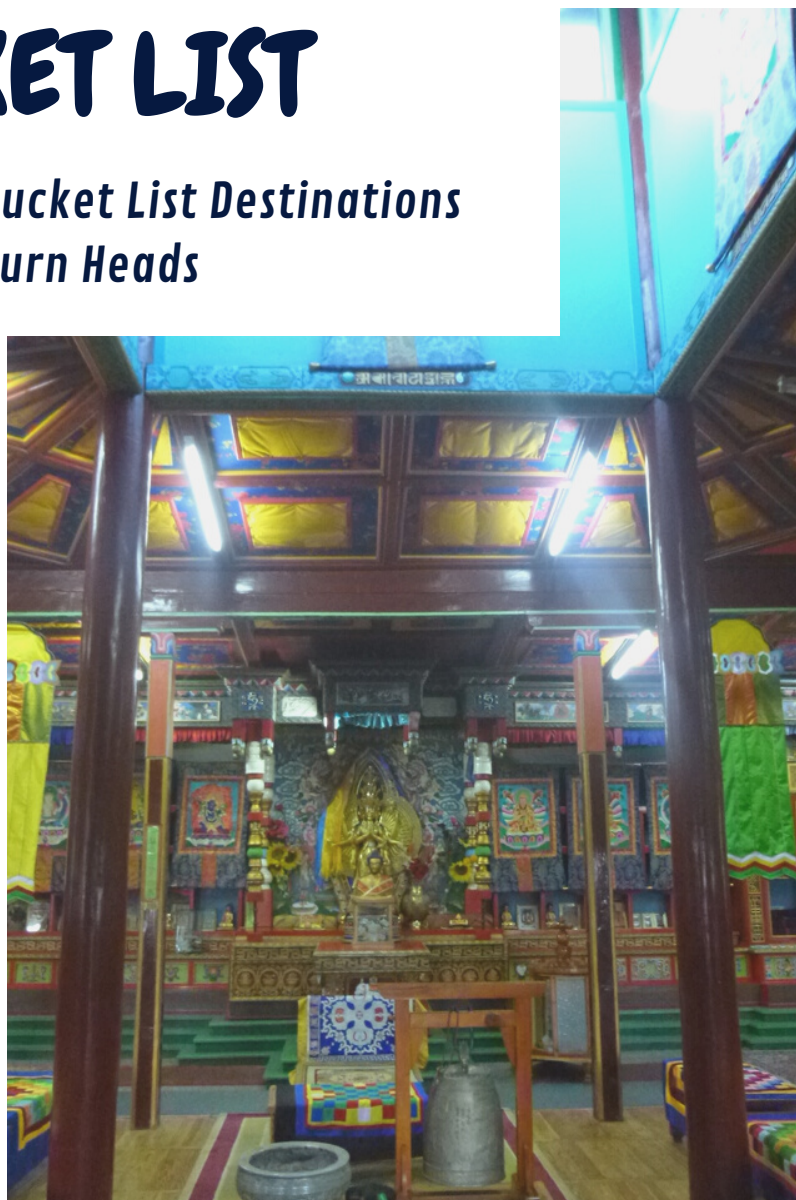
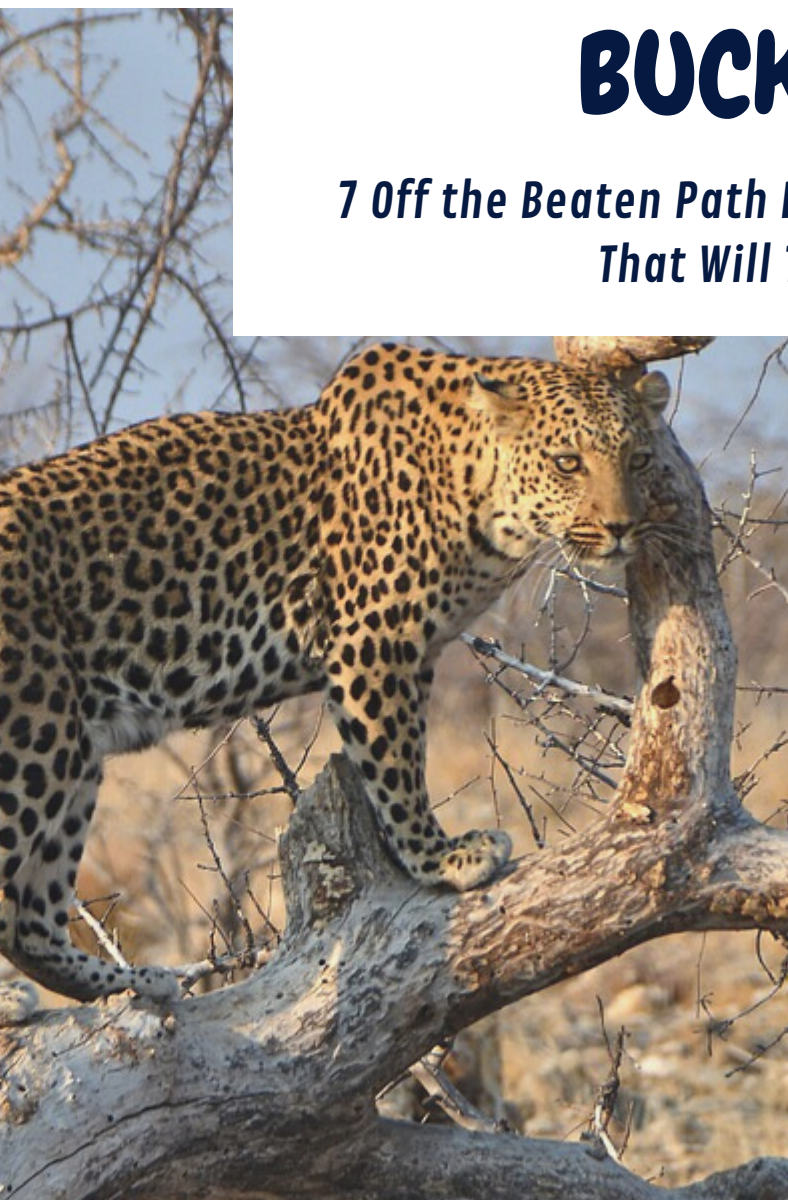


**VOYAGES  
EXTRAORDINAIRES**

# **OFF THE BEATEN BUCKET LIST**

***7 Off the Beaten Path Bucket List Destinations  
That Will Turn Heads***





# Mongolia



Wedged between China and Russia, few think about Mongolia as a travel destination. In the Middle Ages, Genghis Khan and his horde left their mark across Asia and Europe, and you can feel the influence everywhere, whether in the capital Ulan Bataar, or in the steppes, where you can find a 40m tall museum/statue of the conqueror himself.

A truly unique experience to have in Mongolia is to stay in a ger, the nomadic tent of Mongols. Don't let the simple description fool you; you'll find all the modern niceties inside. While there, go ride with the locals, and imagine how it was centuries ago, or last year for some of still nomad families.

You can also visit the Gobi Desert on a camel and discover some dinosaur fossils. You could also opt to visit Ulaan Bataar, a ever developing city full of people and cars (btw, lanes are often just suggestions when driving). On the main plaza, you will also find the 0km marker, from which all distances are measured.

Mongolia is a beautiful country to visit by it self, or as a long stop when doing the trans-Mongolian train ride. If possible, visit around July 11 for the Naadam festival; a national festival with wrestling, archery and horse racing. Ok, and eating mutton pancakes and drinking vodka.



# Namibia



On the Atlantic coast of Africa, Namibia is a country that is slowly gaining recognition as a travel destination. Its deserts and harsh lands hide beautiful treasures waiting to be discovered. For an immersive experience, rent a 4x4 and drive around the country. There's even a ghost town, Kolmanskop.

One of the truly amazing experience to have is in the Etosha National Park. This spot of green is essentially surrounded by a salt desert, so when you come up to a watering hole, you can have a thousand sightings of animals during the day. For that fact alone, Etosha is worth a stop.

South West of Windhoek lies Sossuvlei, a expanse of sandy red dunes surrounding a salt and clay area. This area is part of the Namib Desert, on the coast. It's a great place to climb up a dune, like Dune 45, and witness the sun rise and light up a side while the other side still stands in darkness. And if you listen closely, you might hear Toto's Africa playing in the distance.

While adventuring in Namibia, visit the Himba people, who still live according to their traditional way of life and cover themselves in ochre. To escape the hotter zones, head down to the coast, to Walvis Bay, or to Cape Cross' Seal Reserve, and its hundreds of thousands seals.





# Borneo



Borneo is one of the biggest islands in the world, and is split between 3 countries: Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. It is also a place known for its incredible biodiversity – scientists are still discovering new species there to this day.

Its capital, Kota Kanabalu, boasts beaches of orange sand and the Floating Mosque. For the shore of the city, you can see the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park. There are five islands to explore – on the ground, or under water. Divers will not be disappointed, as there are more than 20 dive sites and at least three shipwrecks to explore, and many more in Labuan.

Borneo is said to house about half of the world's flora and fauna. Discover some of it in Danum Valley. Look closely, you might see wild sun bears and pygmy elephants. You can also visit the Gunung Mulu National Park, with its limestone pinnacles.

While on the island, visit the Sultanate of Brunei. There are several protected rainforests to explore, and you might witness the sea glow of Tusan Cliff Beach, where tiny bioluminescent organisms transform the waters into a mesmerising blanket of colour.

Borneo is also the home of many native people, like the Bajau, often called the Sea Nomads or Sea Gypsies, who live in stilted villages above the sea.





# Slovenia



Slovenia is one of those hidden European gems, tucked away between Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The country has something for every one. The Alps for skiing and hiking, beautiful cities, lakes, vineyards and great local cuisine. The famous Croatian beaches on the Adriatic Sea also extend in Slovenia, like in Piran.

Outside Ljubljana, if there is one place you simply must visit: Lake Bled. The moment you see its waters, with the island and medieval church in the middle of it, you'll think you just stepped into a fairy tale. Bled castle is also great to visit – take some time to enjoy some coffee and a piece of Bled cake, gazing at the surrounding area from your table on the castle wall.

Ljubljana is a great city to visit. You have a castle, modern restaurants, and museums (families will love the puppet museum). The downtown core is pedestrian friendly. You can also cruise down the river that goes through the city.

Predjama is a castle that was half built in a cave. Legend has it that it was built in a way that one man could defend it. Erazem Lueger, the Slovenian Robin Hood, proved it, until he met a rather embarrassing end.

Wine lovers will be delighted to know that Slovenia has a wine history dating back some 2,500 years – before the Roman influence on winemaking. Posavje produces reds and sparkling wines while Podravje produces mostly whites.





# Yukon



Canada is a big country, and has countless sites to visit and sights to see. But few bring out thoughts of untamed wilderness and unreachable regions like Yukon. Travelers are delighted to discover that the territory has a very strong tourism industry and a vibrant culture.

The great outdoors are very popular. The territory is great for hiking, horseback riding or mushing (dogsledding). Whether it's the Rockies, the shores of the Arctic ocean or the Carcross desert, Yukon has your outdoor fix.

Around Dawson, discover the history of the Goldrush, and try your hand at gold panning. Visit the Watson Lake Sign Forest, where you'll find more than 77,000 signs left by visitors.

Yukon has a proud First Nation heritage and culture, with festivals throughout the year. Foodies will also enjoy fresh fish, local beers, and international cuisine. For a unique experience, go to the Sourdough Saloon in Dawson City and order a sourtoe cocktail. The drink does come with a certificate, as long as the toe touched your lips.

For something simply magnificent, visit between mid-August and mid-April. Stay up late, and watch the Northern Lights. Best place to check them in winter is from local hot pools.

Darkness and night are not your thing? Then witness the Midnight Sun in the summer – it doesn't set for several weeks.





# Uzbekistan



This country was once a major stop on the fabled Silk Road. The country has a very friendly population and has opened itself considerably to tourists over the last few years; hospitality is an essential element of daily life there.

Many romantics have dreamt of travelling the Golden Road to Samarkand, the former capital of the country. The sight of the Shah-i-Zinda necropolis and the Registan Complex will give you a glimpse of the importance and wealth of the city once commanded. You can also see the 18m long tomb of the prophet Daniel.

Tashkent, the current capital, is a younger city with a different vibe than other cities like the ancient towns of Khiva or Bukhara. Visit the Chorsu Bazaar, and its chaotic network of stalls of shops and restaurants. For nightlife, head to Amir Timur Square, and its restaurants, bars, inline skaters and occasional disco.

If you feel like Indiana Jones, you will find outside of Khiva Elliq-Qala, the lost desert fortresses of the Khwarezm. Explore the desert oasis and let your guide show you the highlights of the Kyzylkum and the history of what was once a proud nation.





# French Guiana



A small slice of France tucked away on the South American coast, French Guiana is at the crossroad of the Caribbean, Europe and South America.

Travelers will enjoy discovering the history of this former French colony. If you go in February or March, you might celebrate Carnival!

Space enthusiasts will love the Kourou Space Center, where many satellites are launched into space. Lovers of nature will enjoy the Guiana Amazonian Park and its native people, all in more than 20,000 square kilometers.

Off the coast of the country, you will also find l'île du Diable (Devil's island), infamously known as a penal colony surrounded by shark-infested waters. Alfred Dreyfus, of the Dreyfus Affair, was imprisoned there, and like all inmates, his history starts at the Camp de transportation, in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, where prisoners were processed.

Beachgoers will love the beautiful beaches, like Remire-Montjoly and its golden sands, lined palm trees and lush greenery. You can also head to Plage les Hattes at Awala-Yalimapo, the most important nesting site in the world for giant leatherback turtles.



*Always travel with an open mind and curiosity, and you will always find unique places to have great adventures.*