

SUMMER 2018 ISSUE

THE DISTINCTIVE LIFE



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Read on for some creative suggestions on how to create an outdoor design that you will love. p.46

EASY TIPS FOR REFRESHING YOUR BEACH HOUSE DÉCOR

Read about some simple tips for refreshing your beach house décor without losing your personal sense of style or creating clutter. p.6

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SHERRY CHRIS



They say life is made up of moments and I agree, I think the moments both life-changing and risky are what make life worth living. When we started Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate in 2008, we set out to create a new lifestyle-based real estate brand unlike anything in the industry. Through the years we have worked hard, learned from each other and grown our network to over 12,000 agents.

Now, in our 10th anniversary, I look back and am so humbled by the dedication of every agent and broker in our network.

This is our third issue of *The Distinctive Life* magazine. I sincerely hope that the following pages will inspire you to achieve the impossible and create the moments that you will remember for a lifetime.

Please enjoy and thank you for reading this issue of *The Distinctive Life*.

Sincerely,

SHERRY CHRIS
President and CEO
Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate

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*easy tips for
refreshing your*

BEACH HOUSE DÉCOR

Whether you are embarking on a total beach house renovation or hoping to refresh your vacation home, small changes, such as soothing paint color and nautical accessories, can make a big impact. Read on for some simple tips for refreshing your beach house décor without losing your personal sense of style or creating clutter.





INTRODUCE AN OCEAN-INSPIRED PALETTE

You have an enormous amount of leeway when choosing a color scheme for your beach house, but one of the most enduring styles incorporates clean, white walls. You can go for a rustic vibe by adding white shiplap or simply roll on the paint. It's an airy, breezy and crisp look. From there, you can add pops of color like turquoise, seafoam green and a range of blues through your accessories.

Want to add more color on a larger scale? Coastal Living suggests you "pick a statement area to go bold with color." This can mean anything from accent walls in light aqua to a vibrant front door. Picture the pink sand colors of Miami or the gentle greens of Hawaii. Once you've decided on your signature color, add accent pieces that either reference it directly or complement it.

CONSIDER THEME WALLPAPER OR MURALS

When choosing the décor for your kids' rooms, feel free to lean in on the ocean themes. Small sailboats, anchors or mini beach scenes can stay fun even as the kids age, whereas cartoons may only appeal to younger children. Seascape wallpaper can bring the delights of the ocean into master bedrooms or guest rooms and are particularly popular in spaces without views. Grasscloth wallpaper is among this year's biggest trends. It is made of natural fibers, brings an outside element to your beach house décor and adds appealing texture to your walls. If you are hoping for something more personal on a bedroom or living room wall, you may want to commission a local artist to create a mural for you.





OPEN THE WINDOWS

When you think of beach house décor, you may be focusing solely on the home's interior. And yet, one of the most important features of your beach house may be the windows. Whether you are right on the water or set back, the windows can reveal some spectacular sunrises, sunsets and glowing afternoons.

You want as much of that inspiring sea-side light to find its way into your home, so start by removing heavy drapes or blinds. Coastal Living recommends sheer curtains because they “provide some privacy, yet still keep that airy, light-filled quality.”

INCORPORATE FLOORING

Selecting the right flooring for your beach house can be critical. Certain rooms, like sun porches and living rooms, will be exposed to sand, wet bathing suits and a lot of happy summer visitors. Ornamental rugs or carpet can show wear and tear. Hardwood or laminate flooring tends to have a longer life in beach houses. If you want to veer from the traditional, consider adding a painted floor to your décor. Martha Stewart Living recommends painting floors of select rooms in a “soothing sand color” that will look great when freshly painted or after some distress. Can you picture your sun porch floor painted in a sea blue or green? Even stenciled patterns can play well if they are complemented by your accessories.

If you do want to add area rugs to your décor, weather-resistant options are key. Use natural fiber rugs like sisal or sea grass. Coastal Living likes the durability of both, and you’ll love the casual, yet “pulled together” atmosphere it brings.



BUILD OPEN KITCHEN SHELVING

If you are incorporating a kitchen makeover into your decorating plans, think about swapping out your closed cabinets for open shelving. Beach house décor tends toward the light and airy, and that can be difficult to achieve with the heavier cabinets, even if they are white. Open shelves feel brighter and more welcoming. They also allow you to show off colorful or sea-inspired tableware or serving pieces. You may also be surprised to find that it gives you more flexible storage options.



ADD STRATEGIC SEATING

Beach houses often lend themselves to impromptu entertaining. Be prepared for drop-ins and extra guests by adding seating in strategic areas like the front room and sun porches. Double-duty furniture like fabric covered ottomans can easily be moved into place when needed. Versatile outdoor seating with slim frames can be drafted into your party décor.

Your couches are also likely to see increased usage. To keep them looking fresh throughout the season, Coastal Living suggests dressing “indoor furniture with outdoor fabric.” The modern fabrics have a soft, comfortable feel while still being waterproof and stain resistant – red wine spills and suntan lotion can be removed with ease.

BRING THE OUTDOORS INSIDE

Connect your beach house décor with the outdoors. Well-chosen, ocean-inspired accents can make a big impact, and you don't need to add dozens of pieces to achieve your new look. Driftwood artwork or chandeliers can make a statement. Select pieces of coral or large shells enliven a bookcase, while Martha Stewart Living suggests that a collection of shells and rocks, displayed on an antique ship carpenter's trunk sets a sea-worthy scene."



ACCESSORIZE WITH NAUTICAL ELEMENTS

You can't go wrong by adding nautical-inspired touches to your beach house décor. As with the outdoor elements, you don't need to add them to every shelf or wall in order to achieve a striking visual. Instead, select pieces in bright colors that will pop against your neutral, sea-like palette. A sailboat model with a bright red hull or a string of signal flags as wall art in kids' bedrooms or on the sun porch are easy changes. Antique lanterns, porthole wall hangings, vintage wood oars and accents made from sailboat lines are also popular options.

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*Contemporary Decorating
Tips inspired by*

SOUTHERN HOMES

When you think of Southern homes, traditional images of graceful columns, a cladding made of natural materials like stone or brick and wide porches with blue-green painted ceilings immediately spring to mind. If you love this classical style, but long to add some contemporary elements, continue reading for our simple suggestions on how to introduce a modern style into your refined home.





LET YOUR ROOMS TELL A STORY

Southern style often refers to the way the décor of a home reflects the history of the residing family or the town. How do you transition your home to reflect this refined approach? Start by adding one antique into each of your main rooms. This can mean adding in family heirlooms for a personal touch or buying antique pieces that speak to you in some meaningful way. Whatever piece you choose can become a focal point for the room and the base for the rest of your style elements.

Do not feel as though you have to use antiques for its original purpose. You can easily rewire outdoor lanterns or other light fixtures for use inside the home. Do you have an antique dresser that you love, but cannot use? Interior designer Rachel Halvorson suggested to *Southern Living* that instead of letting it molder in the garage, “[use] an antique dresser as the vanity in the powder room.” Of course, it might take you a moment or two to come to terms with the idea that the antique piece will be altered in order to repurpose it. Focus instead on the fact that this piece you love will now be seen on a daily basis while bringing its story with it.

INCORPORATE PERSONAL ELEMENTS INTO YOUR DÉCOR

In much the same way your heirlooms or antiques can add a story to your room, so can your personal pieces. Here, you can mix framed pieces with photographs and mirrors on a gallery wall. When arranged interestingly, these pieces can feel like an evolved collection of your history. Do you live in a city with an intriguing history? You can frame replicas of individual pieces that illustrate that history and incorporate it into your selection of personal photos on your display wall.



EXPERIMENT BY MIXING OLD AND NEW PIECES

Once you've added your focal point antique, consider mixing in new, modern pieces. In fact, according to Southern Living, "[f]inding a way to perfectly balance your well-worn, loved antiques or family heirlooms with fresh, modern design and accents is the closest thing to Southern home heaven." This does not mean that you have to fill every space with contemporary finds. For instance, hanging a piece of modern art that really speaks to you over an antique settee can provide a striking visual. Antique tables next to brightly upholstered chairs can make a statement. If you want to go with smaller modern accents, just adding a bit of mid-century lighting over an antique chair can make a significant impact.

INTRODUCE BOLD COLOR

When making your plans for refreshing your home, you may get the urge to add a bold color to your mix. Go for it! A bright yellow bedroom, particularly one in a more shaded part of your home, can feel refreshing and energizing. Accent walls can easily work when your overall palette has been relatively neutral. Paint the backs of bookshelves with something bold or even patterned for a touch of sophistication. Once you've chosen which bold addition you want to make, select decorative elements that reflect or complement it. Upholstering can respond to it, as can pillows, vases, glassware or other pieces.

Going bold does not always mean choosing Pantone's color of the year, Ultra Violet, in every space. Sometimes, going bold means adding an unexpected color, like white, to a traditional piece. As illustrator Clare Pernice told *Martha Stewart Living*, their style epiphany was "to give his grandparents' Victorian mahogany table a coat of thick white lacquer." Yes, it's a risk and should be done by professionals, if at all possible. But if the alternative is storing a fantastic dining table that can fit up to 22 in the garage because its current state doesn't fit your style, the risk is a manageable one. The result could be the perfect piece to add to your refined home.



ADD DIFFERENT MATERIALS INTO YOUR DÉCOR

If your home revolves around a mostly neutral palette, adding in different materials can bring an interesting textural quality. There are no rules that prevent you from mixing linens with velvet or shearling wool. Mixing styles and textures can feel refined without becoming too sedate. You want your new décor to feel purposeful and collected, but not staid.



DON'T SKIP THE DETAILS

Often the things that set a refined Southern home apart is the attention to details. This can refer to small elements like the elegant trim around doorways and intricately patterned wallpaper in pantries or more substantial changes like adding paneling to select walls or refinishing your original hardwood floors.

CREATE A SYNERGY BETWEEN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR STYLE

When the warm weather comes, you know that you are going to gravitate outside. Long, lazy evenings spent with good friends or relaxing in your favorite chair are on the horizon. For a refined touch, create a synergy between your indoor and outdoor styles. Sturdy, upholstered pieces are vital to inviting evenings full of fun and relaxation. Interior designer Lisa Palmer tells *Southern Living*, "Comfortable outdoor upholstered furnishings with large teak or concrete tables are what I am showing my clients." Antique sideboards can be repurposed on wide front porches or back decks. They are perfect for highlighting floral arrangements or acting as serving stations for elegant outdoor dining.





Discover Some of the
**BEST CITIES IN
THE U.S.**

MIAMI, FLORIDA

There is no doubt that Miami has been revitalized. This buzz-worthy city has a high “cool” factor with contemporary art zones, architectural wonders, a “must-taste” culinary scene and, of course, those pristine beaches.

Art lovers with flexible schedules will want to book your travel during the world-famous Art Basel in Miami Beach.

Hundreds of galleries from around the world showcase inspiring work while creating a vibrant event that mixes artists, critics and enthusiasts. But if you cannot be there during Art Basel, there is still a wide variety of art for you to see in and around Miami. Travel + Leisure recommends visiting

Museum of Contemporary Art, the De La Cruz Collection and Wolfsonian- Fiu, before exploring the exciting Wynwood Arts District. Wynwood is so popular that there are organized graffiti-brunch tours to help you gain an appreciation of the area’s street murals, open galleries and their artists.

Architecture enthusiasts will not want to miss the stunning Art Deco District in South Beach. There are 960 historic buildings in this area, including the mansion that once belonged to designer Gianni Versace. It's also an incredible area to stay in – many of the hotels are extraordinary examples of the Art Deco style and the area is particularly well-known for its nightlife. It doesn't hurt that you are steps from the Atlantic, either.

Sports enthusiasts can see Dolphins games at the Hard Rock Stadium in nearby Miami Gardens, and basketball fans pack the American Airlines Arena to see the Heat take the court. And if you are there during the summer, and you love baseball, Marlins games at Marlins Park are always exciting.

Want to relax on the sand? You have an array of beaches to tempt you. Among the favorites of locals and travelers alike: Lummus Park, Haulover Beach and the 21st–45th Street Beach, found outside of the busy tourist zone.

Spend the morning on the beach and then take a detour to sample Miami's famous restaurant scene. The Cuban food here is incredible and plentiful – that alone could make Miami a contender for joining the best cities in the U.S. Nearly every corner has something for you to try. But that is not the only option in this thriving city. If you want Argentinian comfort food, you can find it here. Peruvian, Spanish and Mexican flavors may tempt you, and La Petite Haiti is well-worth a look. If you want a more comprehensive approach to tasting Miami, fit one of the popular culinary tours into your itinerary.





FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Greater Fort Lauderdale is known for its watersports, natural wonders, arts centers and family-friendly activities. Its famous promenade has drawn tourists to its white wave wall since the 1960s. It is no surprise that watersports continue to be the dominant activity here, and the area can offer a relaxing respite from your ordinarily jam-packed schedule.

What shouldn't you miss? Las Olas Boulevard is a great place to start. It runs from the beach at A1A and goes over the Intracoastal Waterway before taking you downtown into considerable shopping, dining and nightlife. Considered the city's Rodeo Drive, upscale boutiques will tempt you almost as often as the incredible Jamaican and Brazilian cuisine.

Travel + Leisure recommends that art and history lovers should add "the whimsical 35-acre Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, a 1920 Caribbean-style plantation-cum-artist residence" to their itineraries. This famous estate was once the winter getaway for Chicago-based artists Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett. Tours provide visitors a glimpse of their impressive, personal art collection, as well as the home and grounds.

If you are traveling with children, be sure to visit The Museum of Discovery and Science and the incredible Flamingo Gardens. The Young at Art children's museum and Butterfly World are also popular options for families.

Fort Lauderdale is also considered the gateway into the Everglades. From the exotic fauna to the fantastic wildlife, you'll want to see it all. Schedule an airboat ride to take you into this natural wonder where you will learn more about the habitat. You may even spot a panther, alligator or other animals native to the area.



HOUSTON, TEXAS

Currently, the fourth largest city in the United States, Houston is becoming known as a foodie destination. And while your restaurant options appear to grow daily, you can still find the outstanding Tex-Mex that made the city famous. But it is not just their incredible restaurants that ranks Houston among the best cities in the U.S.

Art buffs “could spend an entire vacation absorbing the world-class art here,” according to Travel + Leisure. Where should your first stop be? The Menil Collection should be at the top of your itinerary. The private collection of John de Menil and Dominique de Menil includes more than 17,000 sculptures, drawings, paintings and photographs. Even rare books have been added. Of course, you can’t come to Houston without also exploring the stunning Museum of Fine Arts (one of the largest in the Southwest) or the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

Visitors can attend performances of the Houston Symphony or catch ballet or theater performances at the Miller Outdoor Theatre when the weather warms. Tour Space Center Houston or the Houston Museum of Natural Science before relaxing with a picnic in the impressive Memorial Park. And, of course, if you need some retail therapy, the Galleria boasts an incredible array of shops, as well as dining and even a skating rink.

Sports fans certainly won’t be bored here. The city is home to the Texans football team, the Astros baseball team and the Rockets basketball team. Soccer aficionados will love cheering on the Dynamo or the Dash.



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

From the College Football Hall of Fame to the MLK Jr. National Historic Site, there is something for everyone who visits Atlanta. It's easy to see why Atlanta is considered to be among the best cities in the U.S. Travel + Leisure comments that Atlanta's "magnetic charisma is grounded in its historic roots." It's also home to world-famous chefs, as well as cultural and natural attractions. In fact, there is so much to see that you might want to schedule an extra day – or week!

Are you interested in the history of the Civil Rights Movement? Both the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and the Center for Civil and Human Rights offers tours full of information about this critical era in our nation's history. Tours of the MLK Center also include Martin Luther King, Jr.'s childhood home and the church where he preached. The Atlanta History Center will guide visitors through its rise as a major international city.

Explore the Atlanta BeltLine. Once it was miles of abandoned railroad corridors, but today it represents 22 miles of parks, trails, restaurants and vendors. This is one of the most popular spots in the city on a summer Saturday afternoon, so plan to come in early and stake out the best place for picnicking and people watching.

There is no doubt that Atlanta is a sports town. There are six professional sports teams, including the Atlanta Hawks and the Dream, the Falcons and the Braves. If you are a college football fan, Travel + Leisure lists the College Football Hall of Fame as a "must-see," but be prepared to declare your favorite team when you arrive. Interactive exhibits will surround you – it's a college football fan's dream.

High Museum of Art, located in the city's arts district, features an impressive permanent collection of Civil Rights photos, as well as

more than 15,000 works across collections of African Art, American Art, modern and contemporary art and much more. If you want to experience Fine Art in a whole new way, try Atlas. Here, you can dine on a decadent menu while sitting near works by Matisse, Picasso, Chagall and Van Gogh. Even the Library Lounge inside the restaurant is worth some extra time.

Speaking of fine dining, celebrity chefs have flocked to the city. From glamorous steakhouses to traditional Southern fare, from formal dining to casual food halls, you can find something to satisfy every taste.

If you are traveling with children, they'll love the Georgia Aquarium and Zoo Atlanta. The World of Coca-Cola museum is here, and Stone Mountain Park is a fun spot for the whole family.



NAPA VALLEY

Napa Valley is the beating heart of wine country. It's the ultimate vacation city in the United States for oenophiles. Here, you can visit many of the wineries that put California vintages on the map. Tour the vineyards, explore the wine caves and attend tastings led by the master winemakers. Travel + Leisure even recommends "join[ing] in a hands-on harvesting camp" to find a whole new appreciation of the process. Don't be surprised if you find yourself signing up for more than one wine club and shipping home some souvenirs.

Of course, when you have terrific wine, the food will follow. In Napa's case, the Michelin-starred restaurants followed. To date, seven area restaurants have received this prestigious designation.

La Toque, The Restaurant at Auberge, The Restaurant at Meadowood Napa Valley and The French Laundry in Yountville are among them. Word to the wise, make your reservation early. Most of the restaurants will release their reservations six months in advance, and they are known to fill up as soon as spots become available. Never fear, it will be well-worth the planning.

Even if your interest doesn't revolve around wine, there is still a variety of things to do. Just walking through the historic downtown, dotted with 19th-century architecture, can be a treat. The biannual Napa Art Walk draws visitors throughout the year. Visitors can wind their way through a revolving set of sculptures from artists that primarily reside in the Western United States. The Welcome Center on Main Street offers audio tours, often narrated by the sculptors themselves.

Gordon Huether Studio and Gallery proves to be a fascinating tour. Huether is responsible for the design of The 9/11 Memorial Garden downtown. You can also catch a glimpse of his 18-foot Fork creation outside of the Culinary Institute of America at Copia. If you want to learn more about San Francisco Bay area art, be sure to add a tour of the Di Rosa to your plans. It houses three galleries, a sculpture park and a wildlife preserve, along with a picturesque lake.

Natural wonders are also not far from Napa. You can kayak the Napa River, take a day trip to Old Faithful or hike into Calistoga's Petrified Forest or through Skyline Wilderness Park.





CREATING THE PERFECT CHEESE PLATE

Whether you are planning a cheese course for a dinner affair or you need ideas for creating an irresistible cheese plate for a party, the perfect cheese platter is just a few short steps away. All you need to do is decide on your extras, choose your bread and, of course, select cheese that will tempt even the pickiest turophile.



DINNER PARTY CHEESE PLATTERS

Cheese platters are wonderful alternatives to traditional dessert courses during a dinner party, or they can arrive just before the sweet stuff. Since the cheese is the star, start by determining which ones you want to serve. Naturally, as the host, you can stack the board with your favorites. However, the general rule when looking for cheese platter ideas is to select one hard (or semi-hard) cheese, one soft and something “funky.” Of course, if you are opting for more than three cheeses, you have some additional options.

Looking for inspiration? Martha Stewart Living suggests a mild Manchego or a “dry, sharp variety, such as Pecorino Romano” for your harder options. Triple crème cheeses will always win you raves from cheese aficionados, but Brie is also a favorite.

The more aromatic additions do depend on your palate or that of your guests, should you know it in advance. Martha Stewart Living offers a “creamy Roquefort or pungent Stilton,” and, of course, a sample of funky Époisses de Bourgogne will add a bit of the unusual to your platter.

If you include more than three cheeses, think about adding milder versions of the hard and soft options, or maybe bring a goat cheese into the mix.

Naturally, you cannot forget the cheese platter complements. Pieces of baguette or wedges of other freshly baked crusty bread will never steer you wrong.

Crackers are also very popular, but you want to make sure that you don’t choose anything too flavor-forward, particularly when pairing it with pungent cheese. You want to avoid having the flavors clash or compete.

Looking for extras to round out your dinner cheese board? You won’t go wrong by adding something slightly sweet. Think about adding fruits like apples, grapes or dried figs or apricots to your presentation. Nuts may bring more salt to the mix, but that crunchy texture will go particularly well with the softer cheeses. As always, be mindful of any guests with nut allergies before putting together the platter.



FESTIVE PARTY CHEESE PLATTERS

Cheese platters are always a big hit for even the most casual of social gatherings. Here, you tend to have more leeway than when you are planning a cheese course as part of a dinner. Of course, the standard rules still apply – it’s still all about the cheese.

Because you are likely to be serving people with a wide variety of tastes, Martha Stewart Living suggests that you think about selecting fromage that covers “a variety in the type of milk, age, and texture, as well as in shape and color.” In addition to your favorite soft and hard options, consider adding a goat cheese, a crumbly blue cheese and another triple crème into the party cheese platter mix. Because you have such a variety, you can afford to go bigger with the more pungent options. Take some risks when looking for additions to your traditional favorites.

Looking for even more ideas? Baked cheese always wows. Baked Brie is often fun, but a baked goat cheese, like Humboldt Fog, can really be a show-stopper.

Whether you are opting for fresh-baked French baguettes, choosing an olive bread or offering a range of crackers, you’ll want to be sure that the overall flavor complements, rather than drowns out the flavor of your cheese selections. Water crackers are tasty and mellow enough not to overpower your milder offerings.

It is not uncommon to see charcuterie added to party cheese platters. Prosciutto or serrano are lovely choices, as is speck. If you are going to have very soft, creamy cheeses, you’ll want something more substantial for a meat pairing. Likewise, salty options go well with creamy flavors. Think of the classic prosciutto and truffle cheese pairing when planning your own board.

Other cheese board extras could include sweet elements, as well as zesty accents. Chocolate or small honey dishes are not unheard of, while a small serving dish of intense balsamic vinegar (or a homemade balsamic glaze) could add a nice, tangy option for dipping. If you have the time, experiment before the party to find your favorites. If not, it will be a taste adventure for both you and your guests.

Just as you will with dinner party platters, party cheese platters can welcome salty, crunchy nut options, as well as olives or cut springtime vegetables. You can also add the sweet slices of apples, grapes or dried fruits to your party board.

SERVING TIPS

Whether you are serving the cheese boards at a dinner gathering or as a side dish at a party, the cheese should be served at room temperature. If it is too cold, you'll lose the flavor, and you don't want that after all your hard work. The trick is, of course, the timing. When your setting is very warm, you'll only need the cheese set out for a short time before serving – five or ten minutes even for hard cheeses. Otherwise, you should bring out the cheese platter about 45 minutes before serving.



VEGAN PLATTERS

Do you have vegans on your invite list? You can create a vegan cheese platter just for them, although you should be sure to mark it in some way, perhaps with a festive pop-up sign, so that there is no confusion. These days, there is no shortage of vegan cheese options, from soft-ripened to smoked Gouda-like possibilities. If you have a favorite vegan grocery, start there, but upscale chains like Whole Foods have nut-based artisanal cheese that will tempt even your non-vegan friends.

Visit the Planet's Most Inspiring

ECO-RESORTS

Do you have a desire to visit the gorillas of Rwanda or see the Belize rainforest? Have you always wanted to sleep high above the treetops or wander a volcano? All of these things are possible, and they are possible to do in a responsible, sustainable way. When the United Nations kicked off the International Year of

Sustainable Travel in 2017, travelers became much more aware of the opportunities and responsibilities inherent in visiting not only delicate ecosystems but any destination. How do you make your travel dreams a reality while still supporting conservation, education and local development? Start by exploring some of the world's most inspiring eco-resorts.

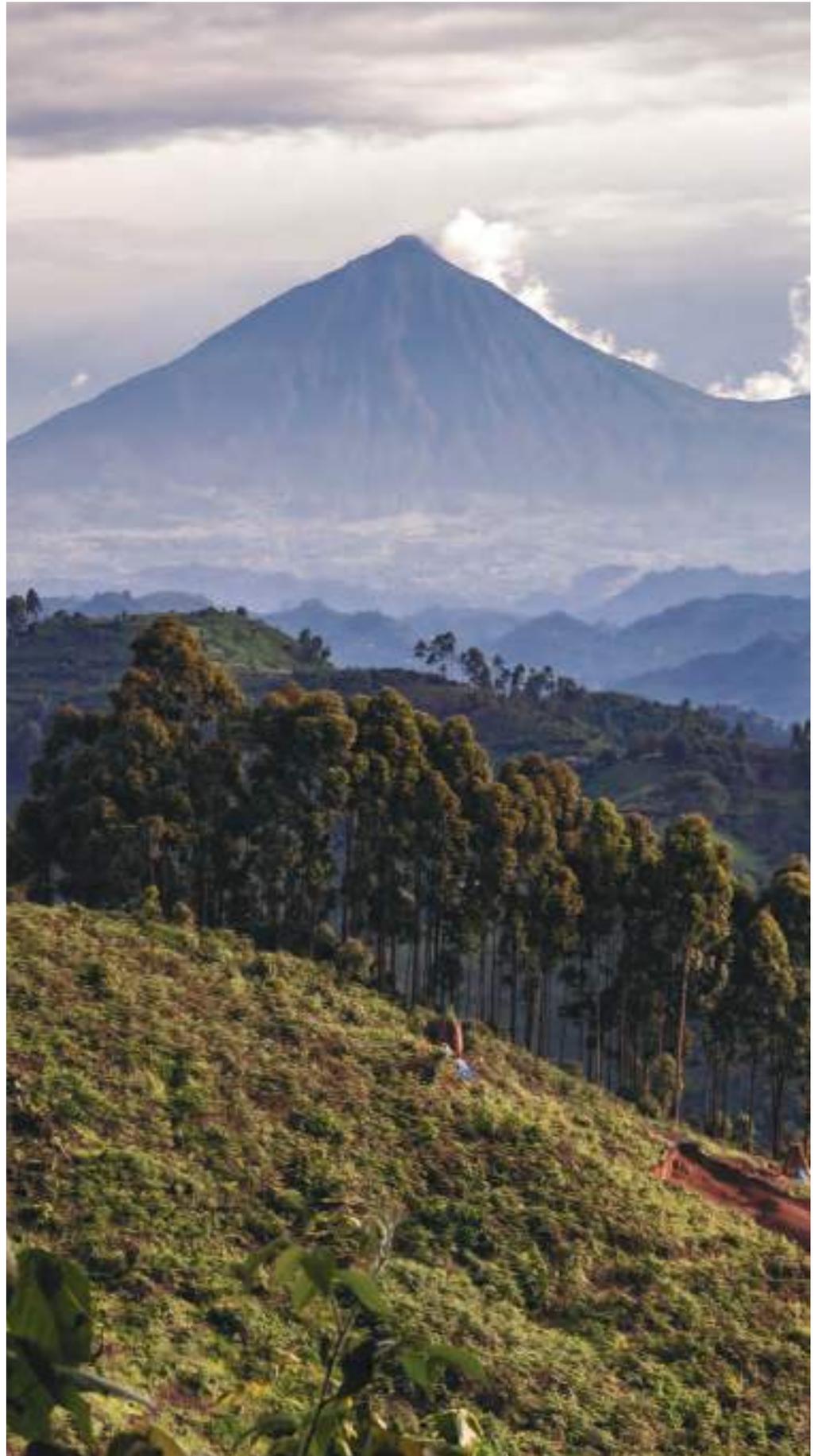
ECOCAMP PATAGONIA IN CHILE

Travel + Leisure Magazine has declared that EcoCamp Patagonia is the best way to see Chile's Patagonia. Their reasoning? It starts with the amazing location. You will find yourself in the midst of a national park surrounded by stunning icebergs and towering mountains. The resort itself is considered fully sustainable, while also offering a truly luxurious experience. You'll realize pretty quickly that the accommodations go beyond glamping when you spot the luxury domes highlighted by massive ceiling windows. The domes themselves are green to blend into their surroundings and, according to Travel + Leisure, they keep a low footprint "with hydro and solar power." EcoCamp Patagonia isn't short on opportunities for adventure either. Here, you have access to professional guides who can take you on glacial treks, as well as wildlife excursions.



BISATE LODGE IN RWANDA

When you started thinking about eco-conscious travel, you may not have considered waking up in the middle of a volcano. But now you can start. Opened in 2017, Bisate Lodge can be found adjacent to Volcanoes National Park. It's an eco-lodge that provides guides to take visitors through the volcano park and monitor animal encounters with the native gorillas, elephants, buffalo, golden monkeys and many others. The entire eco-resort is made up of six forest villas that live inside an "eroded volcanic cone." The resort is dedicated to protecting Rwanda's now famous gorillas and their habitat. They also support a massive reforestation project in the area. Visitors are even encouraged to plant a tree during their visit. While the interiors offer real luxury, sustainability is taken seriously. From the chandeliers made of recycled glass to the locally made décor and the volcanic stones in the villa fireplaces, you can see their commitment to supporting the local economies and resources.



KING LEWANIKA IN LIUWA PLAIN NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA

Also new to the eco-resort scene is King Lewanika. It is the only permanent eco-resort in Zambia's Liuwa Plain National Park. While you may have heard the term "safari chic" before, the lodge takes it to a whole new level with its six eco-conscious villas. Here, you can enjoy expansive views of the plains and the cheetah, lions, hyenas and birds that call it home. It's such a remote location that you don't have to worry about competing against other tourists to experience the wonders of the area. Don't miss the wildebeest migration when it roams through in September – the second largest such migration in the world.



BELCAMPO LODGE IN BELIZE

Here is your chance to experience the stunning beauty of the Belize rainforest in one of the most sustainable ways possible, while enjoying incredible food. The Belcampo Lodge places you above the massive rainforest, allowing you a somewhat literal tree-top view. But that vantage point doesn't keep you away from their legendary cuisine. According to Departures Magazine, "80 percent of the cuisine is produced onsite from Belcampo's own 3,000-acre sustainable farm." The eco-resort is also committed to helping to develop the region's crop market. They employ local farmers and offer not only ethical treatment of laborers but fair wages. Excursions abound. You can dive the Belize Barrier Reef, go mountain biking, try your hand at fly-fishing, bird spot or attend one of the numerous cultural experiences.

*ALILA VILLAS SOORI
IN THE TABANAN
REGENCY, BALI*

Alila Villas Soori was designed and built, and now managed, under the guidance of EarthCheck, but the architects went beyond those restrictions when they consulted the community on ways the resort could exist and preserve the famous black sand beaches, a cornerstone of the economy. They incorporated specific irrigation techniques and have local hires for more than half of their staff. The eco-resort itself consists of a 10-bedroom estate. Every room offers impressive views of the Indian Ocean. There are spa treatment rooms, a tempting infinity pool, a gym and dining space. And, of course, the black sand beach is never far away



POST RANCH INN IN BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA

If you have ever seen footage of the dramatic cliffs off of Highway 1 on California's Central Coast, there is a good chance that you have gotten a glimpse of Big Sur. Post Ranch Inn is a luxury retreat that took advantage of those incredible views by setting up 41 sustainable structures on the ocean-facing cliffs.

Every structure is made of natural materials, and it is run through a massive solar panel array. There is a wellness spa, an onsite restaurant that is an incredible farm-to-table experience and an overall feeling of peace and seclusion. The tree-house rooms have wood-burning fireplaces, incredible views of the mountains from their individual decks and indoor spa tubs.



SAFFIRE FREYCINET IN TASMANIA

Often compared to a UFO that has landed in the midst of Tasmania's Coles Bay, the impressive Saffire Freycinet property offers guests incredible luxury in the midst of stunning natural beauty. Guests can enjoy huge soaking tubs, a wellness spa and delicious onsite restaurants that rely on fresh, locally-sourced ingredients. This eco-resort has been noted for limiting light pollution, conserving rainwater and works with the Save The Tasmanian Devil Program and the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical. As a side benefit to these efforts, guests are offered a rare opportunity to encounter the endangered Tasmanian Devils.

SIX SENSES CON DAO IN VIETNAM

Six Senses Con Dao is part of a chain of resorts that were built to be socially responsible and eco-aware. This property features sustainable villas, each with private infinity pools. It is set in a national park near a marine reserve. The eco-resort boasts a filtration system, and half of the proceeds from the fresh water usage is paid to local drinking water initiatives. Organic free-range eggs are provided by the property's chickens. There is an on-site wellness spa and a host of specialists on hand to work with you on fitness regimens and nutrition efforts.



LUNA LODGE IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is known for its incredible eco-resorts. Luna Lodge overlooks the Osa Peninsula rainforest and offers guests a personal experience that includes up-close animal encounters and delicious, locally-sourced cuisine. The resort accommodations include eight luxury villas with private gardens. You are likely to hear the howler monkeys, and you'll see some incredible birds right from your garden. You are also likely to share your guided hikes through the property's paths with sloths, kinkajous and even the rare jaguar.



Hiring a
**PRIVATE OR
PERSONAL
CHEF**

Whether you have a large family or you are a singleton with an erratic schedule, your busy lifestyle may make it challenging for you to cook the most nutritious or satisfying meals possible. In fact, your schedule may have you reaching for take-out menus or going out to eat far more than you would prefer. If that is true, or you are hoping to make big changes in your diet and lifestyle, it might be time to hire a personal or private chef.





DIET/LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Do you have special dietary needs? Are you hoping to change toward a healthier lifestyle? If so, keep those issues foremost in your mind when you begin researching and interviewing personal or private chefs. The market for personal chefs has exploded over the last decade, which means it's likely that you can find someone who can meet your exact dietary requirements. They will not only keep you on track with the meals that they prepare, but they are likely to introduce you to more flavorful combinations than you would have had time to prepare on your own. That kind of variety will also help you stay enthusiastic about new lifestyle choices.

Obviously, if you have family members with dietary needs that differ from your own, be sure to state that early in the process. This allows the prospective chef to offer ideas on how to address them, and you to get an idea of how many different meals will need to be prepared each week.

You may also find in the midst of the process that a particular diet isn't working for your body, or for your family, as well as you'd hoped. Work with your chef to introduce a different approach; the chef can help you develop a custom approach to mealtime. And as the refrigerator will always be filled with delicious and diet-friendly options, you'll know that whatever you reach for will be satisfyingly guilt-free.



BUDGET

Naturally, there is a significant difference between the costs of hiring a private chef versus a personal chef. A full-time private chef will work exclusively for you and your family. You may choose to have them live-in or not, but they will be part of your household staff. Their fees are exclusive of the costs of the food. Private celebrity chefs earn an annual salary. According to Health, you can expect to pay around \$150,000 plus health and (potentially) boarding benefits per year.

Personal chefs tend to work with multiple clients at any given time. They may charge a flat-rate for a week's worth of meal shopping and preparation or offer you a day salary (typically \$300 to \$500) plus grocery budget. Decide if you want your personal chef to prepare all of your meals for the week, or if you only need dinners and ready-to-go lunches. They may choose to cook in their own kitchens and deliver ready to heat meals or cook in your kitchen. That can be worked out during the interview process. If you have a specific budget in mind, find out what your potential chef can do within those constraints before you hire them.



PERSONALITY/ LIFESTYLE

Diet and health concerns for you and your family can be very personal and sometimes challenging. You want to be sure that the private or personal chef you are bringing into your household meshes well with your household. This can range anywhere from their readiness to use only organic produce to

their flexibility and willingness to collaborate. Personality becomes an even bigger factor when private chefs live-in. Before any contracts are signed, you want to get a sense of how this person is going to fit into your routine or how those routines are going to change. This is particularly true if you have young children.

TASTING SESSION

Don't be afraid to go beyond reputation. While you should check references for anyone coming into your household, it is perfectly acceptable to ask for a sample meal. These food tasting sessions can help you decide if you like their style and the overall food quality of what they are offering. Ask them about where their ingredients are sourced. If local sourcing and organic products are important to you, have that conversation early, as it is likely to impact your budget and their buying options.



EVENTS

If you entertain often, work that into your contract with your personal or private chef. They can be invaluable in crafting menus for dinner parties or creating divine appetizers for more casual affairs. If this is an important, and frequent, element of your lifestyle, consider hiring a chef with a background in events, so that they are comfortable creating delicious cuisine for groups.

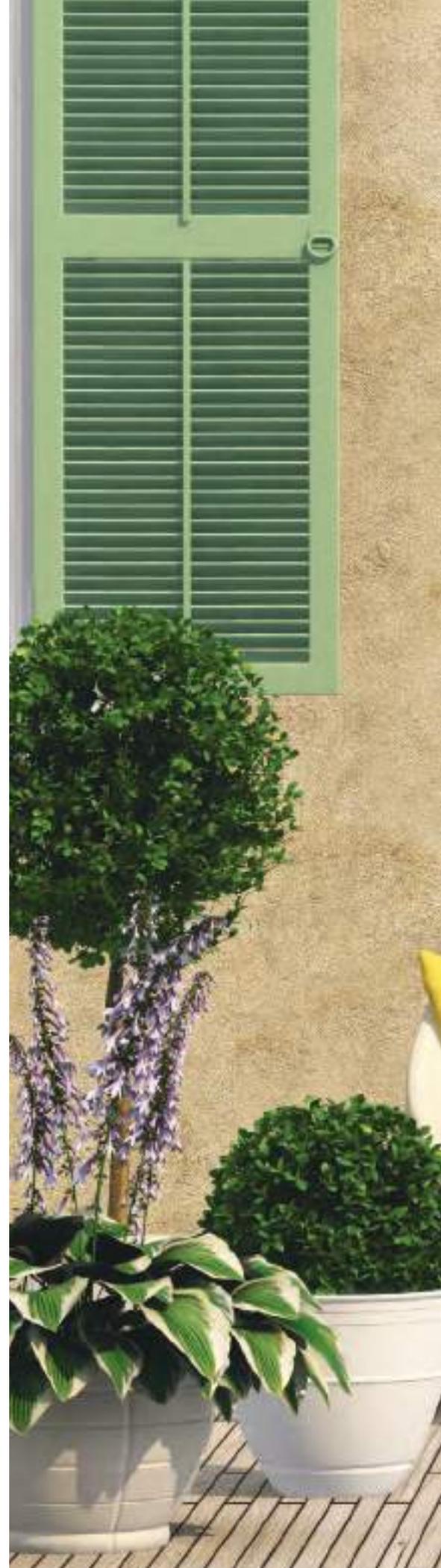
HIRING

Often chefs are found through word of mouth, but there are many services that can offer suggestions of highly rated personal and private chefs. You can contact certifying and training organizations like the United States Personal Chef Association or the American Personal and Private Chef Association for potential hires and know that their suggestions will come highly recommended. And if you are a resident of NYC, there is an intriguing player in town: Kitchensurfing. According to InStyle, it's one of the most popular foodie subscription services. The service sends "a chef to homes once a week to whip up a balanced meal (a main and two sides) in under 30 minutes." The cost runs approximately akin to what a nice, but not extravagant meal would.



LUXURY OUTDOOR DESIGN TIPS

Warm weather is here and with it comes the desire to spend lazy afternoons and festive evenings outdoors. You will be amazed at how a few, small changes can dramatically transform your space. From creative lighting to indoor accents brought outside, your space can become as luxurious and inviting as your home's interior. Read on for some creative suggestions on how to create an outdoor design that you will love.





DETERMINE YOUR PRIORITIES

When approaching your outdoor make-over, start by determining what your priorities are for the space. Do you want to do a lot of outdoor entertaining? Are you interested in having both a flourishing garden and a permanent outdoor dining area? Do you need to create a fun play space for children in addition to your other needs?

Once you answer those questions, it's easy to move forward by creating blocks to address those requirements. It does not matter if you are dealing with an expansive back lawn or an intimate side yard – having your outdoor space serve your needs is the ultimate in luxury.

DESIGN OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING SPACE

If you foresee long dinners as the sun sets or afternoons filled with good friends, food and conversation, you will want to design a permanent outdoor entertaining space. This may involve building a spacious deck off the back of your home, creating a patio with a built-in kitchen, or just allocating a special place on the lawn, under your favorite tree, for elegant dinners.

If you want large-scale change, it's best to consult a designer and contractor. They can help you determine the structural needs of your design, add electrical hook-ups for lighting and offer suggestions on the best outdoor kitchens for your space.

If you decide to set aside space on your lawn for entertaining throughout the warmer months, consider adding some permanent features to elevate the look. You can achieve this relatively quickly by setting down pavers (or actually paving) the area. Southern Living highlights a couple who designed a special outdoor dining patio: “[they] paved a 10-x-10-foot area in their side yard, gave it a boxwood border, and hung an iron chandelier from the tree branch above.” The visual is one of pure luxury.



BUILD A SHADED OASIS

Protect yourself and guests by creating an outdoor space that enjoys some well-designed shade. Creating entertaining zones near shady trees help, but for open patios or decks, “a classic umbrella offers an elegant solution,” according to Martha Stewart Living. The magazine also suggests a moveable scrim that can move as the sun does. There are numerous comfortable outdoor furniture pieces that incorporate curtains or sun-shades that are well-worth exploring. Pergolas or canopies are also appealing ways to shield your outdoor festivities from the sun’s rays.



INTRODUCE A WATER ELEMENT

Whether you want to upgrade your existing garden or you are embarking on a full-scale outdoor rejuvenation, water features can add a touch of elegance to your property. Choose a fountain with classical elements to sit amidst your blooming flowers or a modern water wall that splashes down into a cooling pool close to your entertainment area. The choice really depends on the size of your property (you don’t want the element to overwhelm or underwhelm) and your personal style.

CREATE A FIRE FOCAL POINT

Fire pits have continued to evolve, and as their designs have changed, their popularity has increased. If you have the room (experts interviewed at Martha Stewart Living suggest setting it back at least 10 feet from the house), adding a fire pit not only creates an area of visual interest but invites conversations with friends or romantic evenings, well after the summer season has ended.



CHOOSE STURDY, COMFORTABLE FURNITURE

Traditional patio sets with colorful umbrellas are lovely and work particularly well in smaller spaces. But if you have the room, consider adding larger, sturdy pieces. Big, cozy couches employing waterproof fabrics are ideal. Club chairs bring comfort that inspires lounging. Similarly, use your dining room chairs (or extras in that style) to welcome guests for your elegant outdoor dinner parties, rather than using traditional patio seating. Weathered sideboards placed on your deck not only elevate the visuals of your entertaining space but they are perfect for food and drink set-ups.

BRING INDOOR ACCENTS OUTSIDE

As interior designer Nate Berkus told Real Simple, 'You want your outdoor space to feel as luxe and comfortable as your indoor space.' You'll be amazed at the impact small changes can make to your outdoor setting. For instance, place a richly colored rug at the center of your outdoor furniture to automatically create a more intimate and elegant atmosphere. Rugs also work well under dining tables that are placed on decks or patios. Berkus goes on to suggest adding design accents like "throw blankets draped over chairs, framed photos, votives or lanterns, and greenery."

Large, colorful pillows are quick additions to dining areas, conversation zones or to fire pit seating, and they immediately evoke a luxury feel. Need more seating around the fire pit? Consider incorporating tufted ottomans or brightly colored poufs. They are comfortable, can add a burst of color and are light enough to move wherever they are needed.

LIGHT UP YOUR SPACE

Adding an elegant piece to your outdoor design, like an unexpected chandelier brings a touch of luxury and some much-needed light to your outdoor dinner parties. Globe lights, lanterns and strings of hanging lights crisscrossing your space are also popular additions, as they throw a soft glow on the festivities without bringing harsh glare.



*Experience the World's
Most Exciting*

LUXURY WILDLIFE SAFARIS

If you have always dreamed of roaming with exotic animals, seeing dramatic vistas and going on adventures, but aren't keen on the idea of roughing it, you are in luck. Luxury wildlife safaris are the perfect blend of experience and extraordinary comfort. And while Africa has always been a popular destination for luxury safaris, even North Pole destinations are possibilities for the intrepid traveler. What is the best way to pick a wildlife safari? Start by exploring some of the world's most exciting adventures.





*SVALBARD
PHOTOGRAPHY/
WILDLIFE POLAR
BEAR SAFARI BY
NATURAL WORLD
SAFARIS*

It's true, you don't normally think of going into the tundra for a safari, but Natural World Safaris may just change your mind. Svalbard is considered the most northern settlement with a permanent population. A safari to this region reveals a world of arctic animals, including the magnificent polar bear. Travel + Leisure Magazine lists it among the top 10 safaris for "unforgettable experiences," and notes that adventurers have the "opportunity to venture out on Zodiac excursions and shore landings, hear informative lectures from guides and dine with the Captain on the final night."

*KENYA'S SCENIC AIR
SAFARIS*

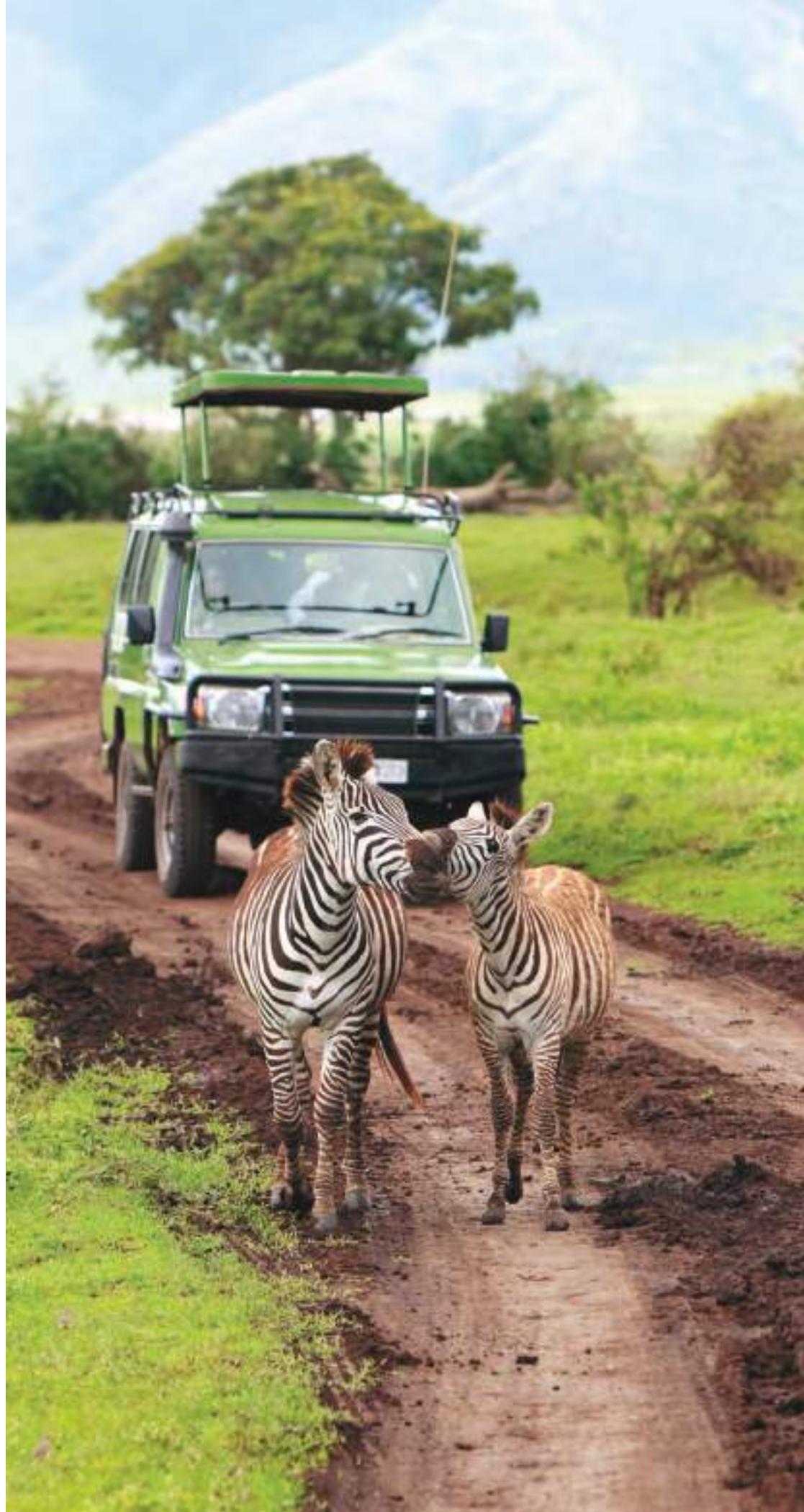
If your dream is to experience the wonders of Kenya, consider going on one of the Scenic Air Safaris. Not only do you see the extraordinary landscapes and roaming wildlife from a truly unique perspective but you'll be able to cover far more of the country than you would with a standard trek. If you can arrange it, plan to combine this with a stay at the world-famous Giraffe Manor in Nairobi. Here, the luxury accommodations are coupled with a once-in-a-lifetime experience as the endangered giraffe population makes its way to the Manor for their early morning feedings. As you eat breakfast, be ready to have a friendly giraffe join you through the window. Guides are also on hand to take you out to see more of the sanctuary.

NORTHERN TANZANIA AND ZANZIBAR SAFARI BY SCOTT DUNN

This tour through Scott Dunn reveals some of the most incredible wildlife experiences in the world, including the famous wildebeest migration. This trek takes you through the Serengeti, the Ngorongoro Crater and ends on a stunning white beach in Zanzibar. The entire experience lasts 12 days and includes nights at Zanzibar's opulent Breeze Beach Club & Spa.

CLASSIC TANZANIA TOUR BY JACADA TRAVEL

As the name would suggest, this luxury wildlife safari focuses on the North Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater. Lodgings are particularly upscale, with options including a stay at one of the country's largest coffee plantations. According to Travel + Leisure's review of the trek, the Ngorongoro Crater Lodge has a "private butler service on-site, is the most exclusive accommodation from which to relax, unwind and keep watch of the animal activity below." Even the tented excursions take glamping to a whole new level.



MADAGASCAR'S TROPICAL SAFARI BY RAINBOW TOURS

“Blue Safaris” reveal the wonders of the oceans to visitors, and on the Madagascar Tropical Safari, you get to visit both the creatures of the ocean and the island’s forest. You begin by arriving at your luxury retreat by helicopter and then setting off by boat on a whale watching adventure. From there, be ready to take to the forest to spot lemurs and other exotic denizens.

CLASSIC BOTSWANA TREK BY ABERCROMBIE & KENT

Take a delta retreat to Botswana that combines pampering and wildlife spotting. Lions, giraffe and leopards are common as you roam the Moremi Game Reserve with your guide. After a long day, retire to one of the 12 luxury pavilions at the Sanctuary Chief’s Camp. Each boasts its own outside sitting area and a private pool. Larger suites have kitchens, waiters and personal guides.

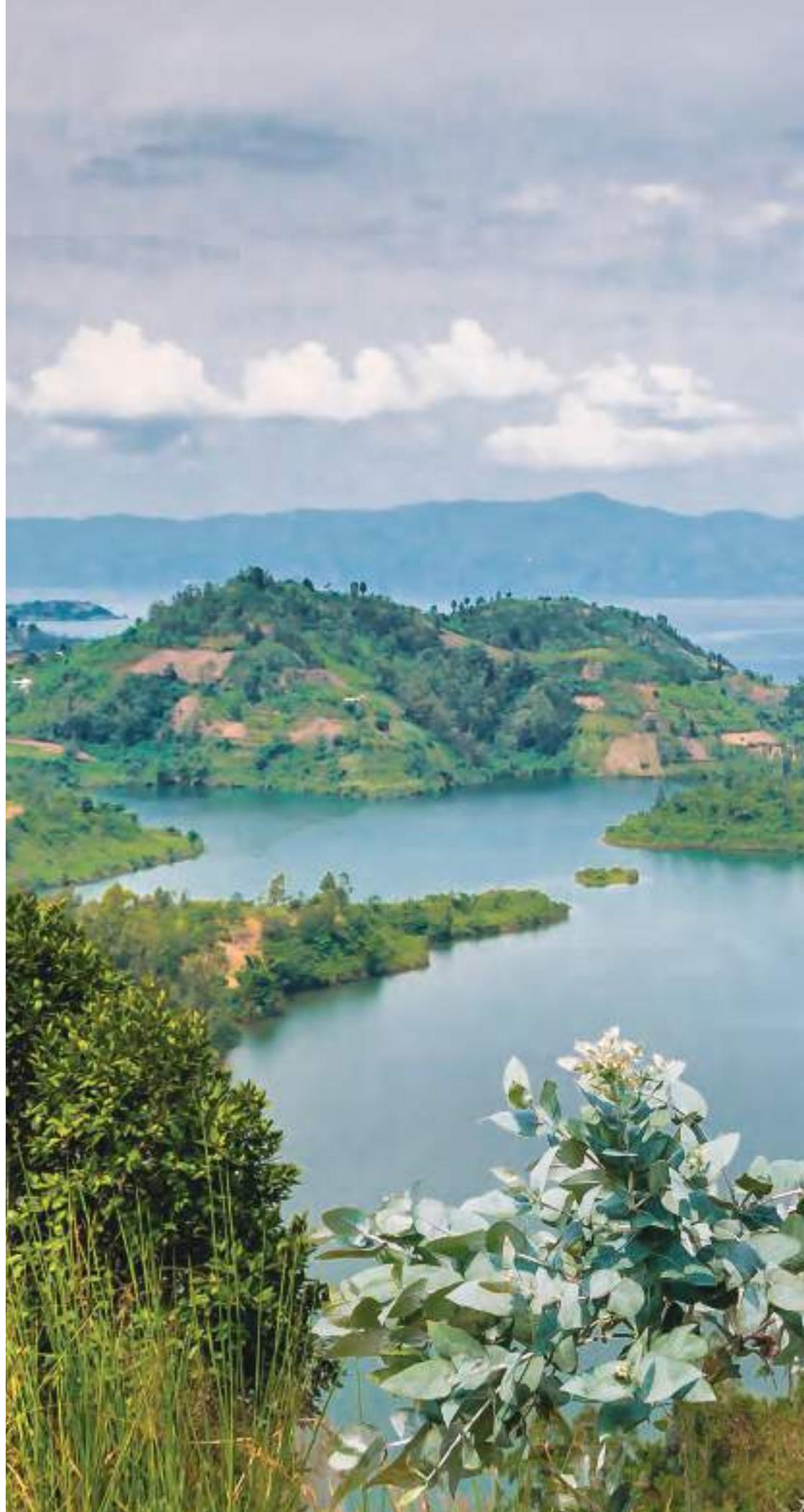


SILVERBACK GORILLAS IN RWANDA THROUGH BISATE LODGE

The endangered Silverback Gorillas are slowly seeing their numbers climb as protections for them have increased. For those who want to see these magnificent animals, along with elephants, golden monkeys and buffalo, a stay at Bisate Lodge in Rwanda is a must. This intimate resort offers six forest villas that sit atop an eroded volcanic cone. The villas are opulent, but sustainably developed and maintained, and your access to the wildlife is unparalleled.

ZAMBIA THROUGH THE LUXURY SAFARI COMPANY

Zambia is on everyone's list for the best safari experiences in the world. The guides have strict training regimens, and depending on the tour company, visitors can get a glimpse of wildlife from Victoria Falls to Lower Zambezi National Park. The Luxury Safari Company offers a popular walking tour that allows you to see big game from an unusual perspective. Their Zambia & Mauritius tour is a particularly luxurious safari adventure which includes lodgings at the Royal Zambezi Lodge, with ample opportunities to elephant spot, and stays on white sandy beaches in Mauritius.



GALAPAGOS MARINE SAFARI BY BUSHTRACKS SOUTH AMERICA SAFARI

While many think of safaris in terms of open jeeps driving through the desert, a safari in the Galapagos starts with a journey aboard a 47-berth private ship. This particular safari offers kayaking with sea lions, snorkeling with penguins, hiking highlands while spotting giant tortoises and some extraordinary lava walks. While this journey may involve less opulent lodgings, the berths are comfortable and the experience offers a rare look into a world you have only dreamed existed.

COSTA RICA WILDLIFE HOLIDAY BY NATURAL WORLD SAFARIS

Picture pristine beaches visited by monkeys and your wildlife encounters only limited by how many activities you want to do. That is the experience of a wildlife safari in Costa Rica. You can raft the rivers, zipline through the forests and explore the volcanoes, as you spot the birds, tapirs, monkeys and other exotic animals along the way. Natural World Safaris pairs with multiple options for lodging, from boutique hotels to eco-lodges in the trees.



THE
DISTINCTIVE
LIFE

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