

WRITTEN BY ROBIN ANDERS

BRIGHT IDEAS

FOR YOUR NEXT VACATION



It's not unusual for AAA Members to ask their travel professional
"Where should we go?"
We posed that question to six of our seasoned Travel Specialists.
Here are their top recommendations....



Europe's Great Cities

AAA Travel Specialist: Michelle Younis, Charlotte, N.C.

For a quintessential European experience, go to Rome, Florence and Venice. Venice is like one big, romantic, open-air museum. You have all the winding canals, the gondolas and the ancient art of glass-blowing. In Florence, the museums are incredible, and Rome is a hodgepodge of architectural ruins mixed with present-day bustle. When you go to a restaurant in Italy, the dining experience is almost ritualistic. I always recommend trying a family owned restaurant that makes its own wine. It's better than anything I've had anywhere in the world.

Don't leave home without: A shoulder-strap purse that you can wear across your chest under a jacket to deter pickpockets.

Trevi Fountain, Rome



Our National Parks

AAA Travel Specialist: Pamela Norman, Fayetteville, N.C.

If you've never been to a national park, head west. I recommend an itinerary that starts off in the Grand Canyon and stops in Sedona, an eclectic little artist's colony near Red Rock State Park. You'll spend a day at Utah's Zion National Park with its tremendous white sandstone cliffs and nearby Bryce Canyon before continuing on through Salt Lake City and into Wyoming. There you have Grand Teton National Park, with some of North America's oldest rocks, and Yellowstone. Traveling into South Dakota, visit the Crazy Horse Monument and Mount Rushmore. With a trip like this, you're not just seeing wildlife, you're also visiting U.S. memorials. The landscape is gorgeous, and during summer nights, the sky looks like it's lit up with so many stars.

Don't leave home without: Sunscreen, bug spray and layers for evenings and higher elevations.

Denali National Park, Alaska



Family Fun

AAA Travel Specialist:

Jennifer Jones, Greensboro, N.C.

June is my favorite time to visit Alaska because it's not too hot and the animals are active. If you take the National Park Service tour through Denali National Park, you'll likely spot a buffalo or caribou. Go whitewater rafting, fly fishing or take a helicopter to the top of a glacier. Once there, you can even ride in a dogsled and play with puppies at a true musher's camp—great for every generation!

Don't leave home without: Your binoculars. That way you'll be ready when someone points out a breaching whale.



Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah





Bright Ideas

Look what's hot for 2014!

It used to be that the Galapagos Islands would be the last destination you'd visit after you'd done and seen it all. But now, because people are understanding a little more about the ecosystem, they want to see the islands in case something happens and you can't go anymore.

AAA Travel Specialist Tiffany Heinisch, Columbia, S.C.

River cruising in Europe is my most popular trip right now. I've also arranged several independent vacations in Europe.

AAA Travel Specialist Pamela Norman, Fayetteville, N.C.

As the prices in Europe have spiked, we've seen an increase in South American travel. I'm doing a lot of bookings for Peru; people are excited about seeing Machu Picchu.

AAA Travel Specialist Jennifer Jones, Greensboro, N.C.

People want to do river cruising in Europe. With river cruising, you have the advantages of all-inclusive meals. You can experience the nightlife when you stay over in some of these less-touristy cities in Europe.

AAA Travel Specialist Wendy Wheeler Moberg, Irmo, S.C.

➔ What's your hot spot for 2014?

Send an email to traveler@mailAAA.com and tell us where travel will take you this year. We'll report on Member favorites next issue.

IMAGES (BOTH PAGES): SARA BRENNAN/HARRELL GETTY

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

Amsterdam, The Netherlands



An Exotic Vacation

AAA Travel Specialist: Tiffany Heinisch, Columbia, S.C.

In all my travels, I've never seen any place as breathtaking as Tahiti's Bora Bora. The water is an unimaginable deep turquoise blue. I recommend bungalow accommodations at the Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort. You'll wake up each morning to panoramic views of the lagoon and Mount Otemanu. From your balcony, you can watch the sea turtles and fish swim beneath you—or hop in the water and swim around with them. Schedule a motu picnic, a local feast at another island a quick boat ride away, on a picnic table in the water.

Don't leave home without: An underwater camera. When you go snorkeling, you can get amazing video or pictures with the reefs and the fish.



Bora Bora Pearl Beach
Resort, French Polynesia



City Escape

AAA Travel Specialist:

Susan Perry, Wilmington, N.C.

For a sensational getaway with reasonable airfare, take a nonstop flight to New York City for a 4-night stay. Settle into a plush Times Square hotel. Pick up a Gray Line hop-on hop-off narrated bus tour for sightseeing, shops and restaurants. Stop at South Street Seaport and catch a boat ride around the Statue of Liberty. Visit museums or take an NBC studio tour. Cap your stay with a Broadway show.

Don't leave home without: Your AAA map and TourBook®. It lists restaurants and phone numbers.



Baltic Cruise

AAA Travel Specialist: Wendy Wheeler Moberg, Irmo, S.C.

On a 2-week Baltic Sea cruise, you don't need expensive tours or excursions to experience Scandinavian capitals like Copenhagen and Amsterdam. Just walking around, you have access to world-class museums and quaint cafés and restaurants. Most of the population speaks English as a second language, so it's easy to communicate. The cruises also dock at St. Petersburg, one of my favorite ports, which is very different from the rest of Europe. Because the cruise ship usually spends 2 days there, you can really see it in depth. Be sure to sample authentic Russian cuisine; don't overlook *pierogi*, rectangular pies stuffed with traditional fillings like cabbage or apples.

Don't leave home without: Comfortable walking shoes, so your feet won't get sore and cramp your style.

IMAGES: GETTY



Copenhagen, Denmark

