

Condé Nast Traveler

HOMES AWAY
HOT MARKETS,
REAL VALUES

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

DECEMBER 2005

FRANCE

A RIVIERA CITY REBORN

AUSTRALIA

OUTBACK CHIC

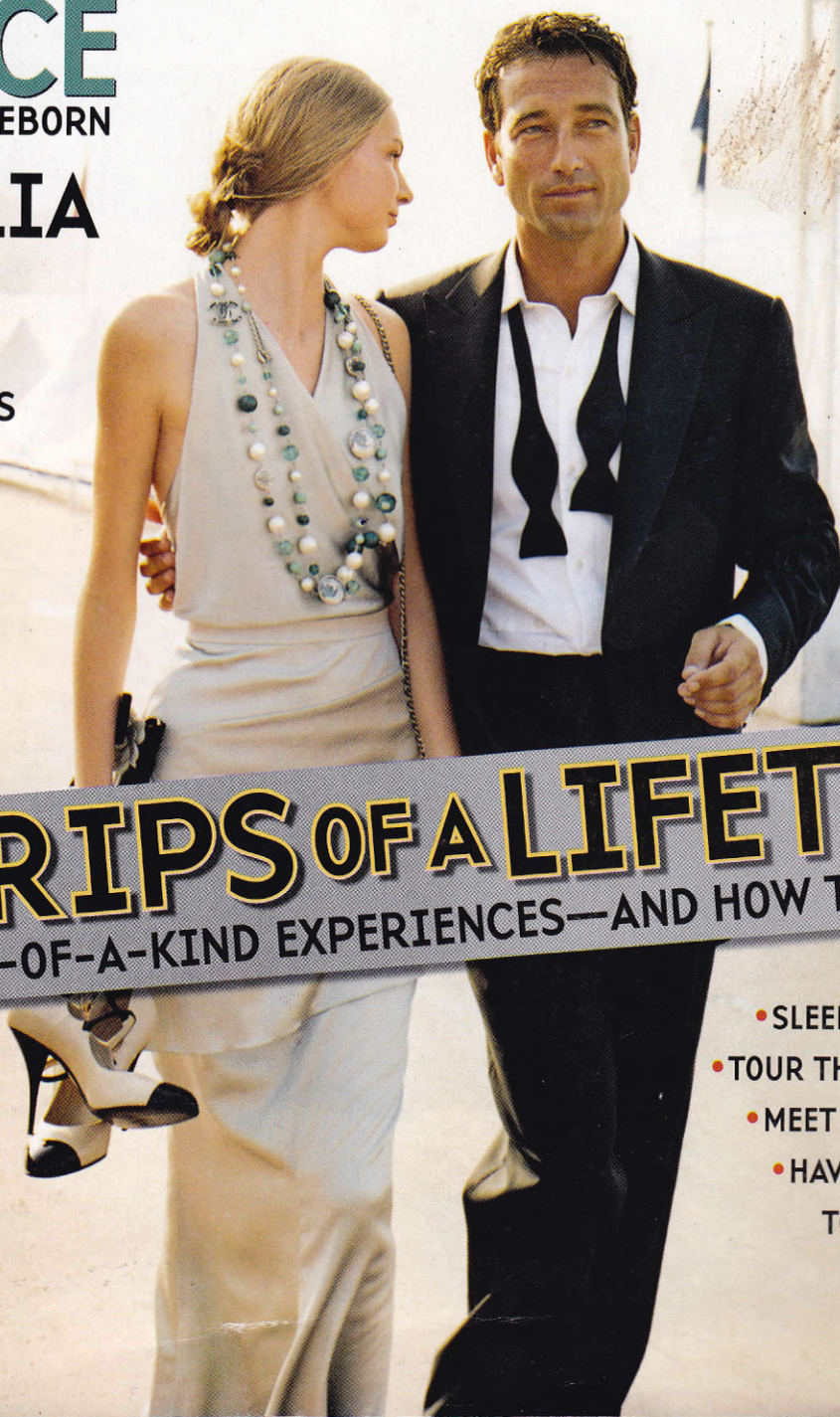
BRITAIN

EDGY NEW GARDENS

READERS' POLL

TOP SKI RESORTS

IN NORTH AMERICA



50 TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

ONE-OF-A-KIND EXPERIENCES—AND HOW TO GET THEM

- SLEEP IN A PYRAMID
- TOUR THE SECRET KREMLIN
- MEET THE DALAI LAMA
- HAVE THE VATICAN TO YOURSELF

EXPERIENCES THAT ONLY INSIDERS CAN DELIVER



You can delve deeper into an unfamiliar culture when you are able to gain access to places, events, and people that are normally off-limits. Below are 50 examples of such extraordinary opportunities worldwide, ranging in price from \$80 to \$30,000. This list is not exhaustive: The very act of publicizing some rare opportunities offered by the most well-connected travel firms would burn the bridges that make them possible. Furthermore, many of the options described on these pages include special features that we are forbidden to divulge but that will surely enrich your trip. Because of the nature of such experiences, they are of course subject to change and even cancellation. Most cannot be booked à la carte but only as part of a larger itinerary. (Note that prices quoted are estimates for two people.)

Reported by Brook Wilkinson

AFRICA

BOTSWANA

Among Bushmen | 🏠 📺 📱

Meet the spiritual leaders of one of the last surviving groups of Bushmen—the oldest indigenous peoples on earth—who still practice aspects of their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle. During your time with the Bushmen, you'll watch a sacred heal-

ing-trance dance and also learn about their present-day struggles: While this particular community remains on its ancestral land near the Namibian border, the Botswanan government has forced some of those inside the Central Kalahari Game Reserve off their land and placed them in resettlement camps. Cost: \$3,600 for three nights. Source: Cherri Briggs,

Explore, Steamboat Springs, Colorado (888-596-6377; info@explore-africa.net; exploreafrica.net).

In the Company of Lions | 🦁

2 Do research on lions and track leopards in the Kwando Reserve. Scientists with the African Predator Conservation Research Organization are studying the health and long-term

viability of these carnivore populations. Each night, you will help dart lions, collect DNA samples, and closely observe the immobilized animals. Cost: \$2,000 donation. Source: Cherri Briggs (see No. 1).

EGYPT

Museum After-hours | 🏛️ 📺

3 Dr. Zahi Hawass, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, will personally escort you through the Egyptian Museum's pre-eminent collection of artifacts for two to three hours, presenting the kingdom's broad and complicated history in layperson's terms. If Cairo is your entry point to a larger Egypt itinerary, he can focus on relics from the regions you'll later visit. Cost: \$8,000. Source: Ryan Hilton, Admiral Travel, Sarasota, Florida (941-951-1801; africa@admiraltravel.com; admiraltravel.com).

KENYA

Masai-Style Barbecue | 🍖 📺

4 Take part in an authentic meat roast on the Olololo Escarpment in the Masai Mara. More than 300 warriors arrive from nearby villages to prepare and cook a cow and 11 goats during the day. At sunset, you'll gather around the campfire for the feast, followed by dancing and singing. Cost: \$1,500 in food contributions. Source: Linda Friedman, Custom Safaris, Bethesda, Maryland (866-530-1982; customsafaris@aol.com; customsafaris.com).

MADAGASCAR

Moving the Dead | 🏛️

5 Attend a Famadihana, a Malagasy ceremony in which the deceased are moved between tombs on the anniversary of their death to reaffirm their link with living relatives. Not for the faint of heart, festivities in the village of Soatanana typically last two days and include the sacri-



The outer hall of Queen Nefertari's tomb, Luxor.

EGYPT

6 Inside Nefertari's Tomb | 🏛️ The most beautiful and colorful crypt in all of Egypt has been closed to the public for the past three years, and even before then was limited to only 150 visitors a day. Following years of water damage, its multiple chambers have been restored to their original splendor. Unlike Luxor's other tombs—which are so crowded that the guides can't be heard over the din—this one is eerily quiet and will be all yours for a private visit. Cost: \$4,240. Source: James R. Berkeley, Destinations & Adventures International, Los Angeles (800-659-4599; jberkeley@daitravel.com; daitravel.com).