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Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



On safari in Sri Lanka while staying at Wild Coast Tented Lodge

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Family and Small Group Travel As Destinations Re-Open

Dear Friends,

Like so many during this pandemic, it is the longest time in my life during which I have not been able to see my family. The last time we were able to gather was at The Goring in November 2019. I'm counting the days for the UK/US corridor to open so I may return with no quarantine and spend time enjoying the beautiful British summer with my parents, sister, niece and nephew, my 93-years-young Nanna, and Charlie's family too. I look forward to the simple pleasures that come from being together, whether here in California, the UK, or in one of our wonderful destinations that are now open, Turkey or Greece.

Throughout COVID, I have been grateful for my "adopted" family - friends who feel like family and with whom I've been able to spend more time as I haven't been traveling for work. We've enjoyed discovering local treasures and destinations, but we're now so excited to spread our wings abroad once again.

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Whether a family consists of several generations coming together on holiday, or a special group of friends getting together for a fun and fabulous getaway, sharing new and genuine experiences is an incredible way to connect. Delighting in new destinations, new wine and cuisine, new modes of travel (such as sailing on a Turkish gulet through the Aegean Sea, perhaps) and new activities elicit laughter and life-long memories.

From the indulgent niceties of Curtain Bluff in Antigua to the unabashedly chic and relaxed Hari in London, to the engaging boroughs of New York, beseeching to be rediscovered after our travel hiatus, these family and small-group travel opportunities beg your attention. Allow us to put you in touch with our Rebecca Recommends clients who put family first, in whatever form that takes.

Fondly,



Rebecca



Rebecca and her niece and nephew at The Goring, London

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Gulet experiences in Bodrum

Sea Song: Family Gulet Cruising in Turkey

A gulet voyage off the coast of Turkey makes for a remarkable family vacation. With a trustworthy captain at the helm, a private chef preparing Turkish specialties onboard, and deckhands to set up sunbeds and deliver drinks, every detail is attended to, leaving families to savor their beautiful surroundings. Gulet passengers have access to ancient local ruins accessible only by water and endless outdoor activities, from kayaking to biking. There's even the chance for a private riverboat excursion to Ancient Caunos and the Greek island of Symi.

Families with a penchant for active adventure can set off on Sea Song's exhilarating expeditions through Cappadocia. Bike through a lunar landscape to cave churches not open to the public. Hike through fairy chimneys to a resplendent sunrise view. Float over the valley by hot-air balloon, perhaps stopping to pick local apples and apricots. Meet local people along the way, stop for tea with them and learn the culture. These personalized and life-changing adventures will create long-lasting memories for families.

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Explore one of the many islands in Greece

[Curated Greece](#): Finding the Best Grecian Holiday for Your Families

After such a long period of isolation and uncertainty, everyone's eager to spend quality time with their family and friends again. There's no better way to create precious memories with loved ones than a trip to one of the world's prettiest and safest countries: Greece. With magnificent scenery, unique outdoor activities, top-notch services, and spacious accommodation options, Greece is the ideal destination for small groups and families that seek authentic experiences in lesser-known areas, away from the crowds.

With more than 6,000 islands, there's a Grecian holiday for everyone. In the heart of the Cyclades Islands, Naxos promises unparalleled culinary experiences and the rare opportunity for kids to get in touch with nature and animals. Diverse Crete is a fantastic destination for families and small groups looking to get a glimpse of local Greek life with a pinch of adventure and a touch of culture. Last but not least, Corfu is tailored to the needs and desires of small groups or families traveling with kids, offering countless fun activities on the calm waters of the Ionian Sea.

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Ballooning over beautiful lavender fields in Provence

Decouvertes: Hot-Air Balloon Rides and Sailing the French Riviera

Decouvertes is pleased to offer several family and small-group friendly travel experiences to bring back normalcy after a year of the pandemic. Whether floating by hot-air balloon over a field of lavender or sailing on the French Riviera, these personalized vacations will quickly make Zoom calls and quarantine a distant memory.

For small groups and families of up to six people, choose a balloon or helicopter flight over France's beautiful lavender country. Choose from Gorges du Verdon, Sainte Croix Lake or even Plateau de Valensole. Flights may include a stop at a small producer to taste olive oil and honey or to see lavender and its various transformations. For an extra special touch, add in a stop at the Alain Ducasse restaurant at Bastide de Moustiers.

For families and groups who prefer a vacation on the water, Decouvertes can arrange a day, a few days, or just a special evening aboard a private catamaran, sailing to the most incredible destinations in the South of France. Dreamy!

There are plenty more choices where these came from, so check out the host of travel courses and webinars on [Decouvertes University](#) and visit the [group website](#) for more bespoke group travel experiences in France.

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New York City welcomes travelers

[Beyond Times Square](#): Luxury Travel in the Five Boroughs of NYC

NYC is back! It's time to experience the [most memorable family and small-group travel experiences](#) in all five boroughs of the most popular destination in the United States. Quarantine periods for domestic and international travelers entering the state are no longer required, and restaurants, attractions, and stores all operate at 100% capacity. If you are planning for a family getaway for this fall or later, Broadway tickets are on sale now. Families can tour the most exciting neighborhoods while enjoying top-notch hospitality, top-of-the-line vehicle transfers, and top-level tour guides that only Beyond Times Square can offer.

Let this metropolitan city impress all ages with its iconic landmarks, such as Times Square and the Statue of Liberty, its world-class museums such as the Met and MoMA, its natural beauty in Central Park and New York Harbor, its widely celebrated fine dining experiences, and its warm and welcoming people. Travel insider access with BTSQ allows families and groups to explore some highly “braggable” experiences, such as glamping on Governors Island and private dining in the Grand Hall of Ellis Island.

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Enjoy snorkeling in the crystal clear waters at Curtain Bluff

Curtain Bluff: Set Sail for Family Fun

Sun, sand, and surf make relaxation practically inevitable - and at Curtain Bluff, these conditions are all but guaranteed. Families can play together all day long, including motorized and non-motorized watersports, like waterskiing, snorkeling, and scuba diving - all part of the resort's incredible all-inclusive experience. Looking for more? Your guests can venture farther afield in Antigua on various charters intended for groups and families. Each includes pick-up and drop-off service to and from Curtain Bluff. To cap off the experience, charters include a cooler full of ice, drinking water, beers, soda (and champagne, wine, and rosé on Bare Vibez).

Choose from the following all-day options:

A Barefoot Day: Sail along the west coast of Antigua. Visit Cades Reef for snorkeling and swimming, with the option for some light tackle fishing. Guests can wakeboard, tube, or simply relax on the secluded beach. A wonderful option for families with kids.

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A Restaurant by Boat and Chill-Out Day: Sail for a while, enjoy some snorkeling from the boat, then arrive for lunch at a local restaurant by the water. Later, swim, wakeboard, and explore with your crew for the day.

Circumnavigation: Sail around the island with an optional stop at Sting Ray City. The cruise includes a stop at Bird or Green Island for swimming and snorkeling.

Barbuda Day Trip: Impress the kids with their own island for the day! This day trip to Barbuda introduces them to reef snorkeling, incredible fishing, and endless beaches with no other people around. The captain will regale all guests with his vast amount of Barbudan knowledge and hidden spots. Choose to have lunch at Uncle Roddy's right on the beach, or at Barbuda Bell for a more upscale experience, or, go luxe all the way at the world-renowned NOBU.

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Teddy, the Shetland Pony

[The Goring](#): Afternoon Tea & Cuddles with The Goring’s “Pony in Residence”

Having been lovingly run by the Goring family for four generations, this favorite landmark hotel has always welcomed families with open arms. All children staying at The Goring are given exclusive “V.I. (little) P” status to make sure their stay is unforgettable. They will be delighted to dive into The Goring’s Dressing Up Box, which is overloaded with costumes and accessories for them to play with - everything from fairytale princesses to Harry Potter, from Beefeaters to a British Bobby.

The Goring chef even invites children down to the kitchen, helping them don an apron and chef’s hat before teaching them to decorate delicious cakes. This is a wonderful time for parents to relax over a glass of Bollinger at The Goring Bar.

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This year an extra special guest will be making an appearance at The Goring for his summer vacation - Teddy, the Shetland Pony will be the official “Pony in Residence” for two weeks in August. It goes without saying that he will be met with the most luxurious accommodation, a specially commissioned and beautifully constructed stable in the garden. There is a fabulous Teddy-themed stay during which guests will be able to cuddle him to their heart’s desire while enjoying a limited-edition Teddy afternoon tea.

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Legoland, moments away from Great Fosters

Great Fosters: Tudor Castles and Theme Parks for the Whole Family

When you stay at Great Fosters, you're not only convenient to London and the airport, but you're well located for royal exploration and amusement parks for all ages. First, take the family for a day out at the Queen's favorite castle, Windsor, the oldest inhabited castle in the world. Pick up a headset to listen to "Scorch, the dragon" guide you around the sights. Walk along the castle walls where you can see evidence of Windsor's role as an important royal fortress long ago and spot the battlements, towers, arrow loops, and murder holes!

The State Apartments where the Queen entertains her guests are truly magnificent and children will gaze in awe at their splendor. And don't miss the spectacular Changing of the Guards ceremony outside.

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For more pageantry of a different era, head to the magnificent Hampton Court Palace to experience the public dramas (there are many!) and private lives of Henry VIII, his wives, and children in the world of the Tudor court. Admire the impressive Great Hall, Haunted Gallery, and the vast Tudor kitchens. And be sure to explore the world's oldest puzzle maze and the new Magic Garden, a large Tudor-themed outdoor play area.

Two of the best theme parks in England are moments from Great Fosters - Legoland, perfect for 3-11-year-olds, and Thorpe Park (every teenager's paradise), which is home to over 30 exhilarating (and some quite terrifying!) rides, attractions, and live events.

Looking for more to do with the family near Great Fosters. Check out [these ideas](#).

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Enjoy seeing the incredible sights of London on your own wheels

[The Hari](#): A Gem for Families in the Heart of London

Within easy reach of London's popular attractions, including leafy Hyde Park and the grand surroundings of Buckingham Palace, the five-star hotel The Hari is the ideal base for exploring the city as a family or in a small group. Renowned for personalized, impeccable service, The Hari offers 85 bedrooms, 18 of which are interconnecting.

The guest relations team spends time getting to know guests before arrival to create a truly personal experience. Recently, the team found out that one of their family arrivals had a child who was a big Harry Potter fan and so, he was surprised with a magic wand. The hotel team was each told three spells that they must act out if they heard the young guest chant. For the duration of the stay, members of the team were either making animal noises, freezing, or walking backward whenever he waved his magic wand - what a captivating experience for a young London visitor!

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A perfect picnic lunch with idyllic views

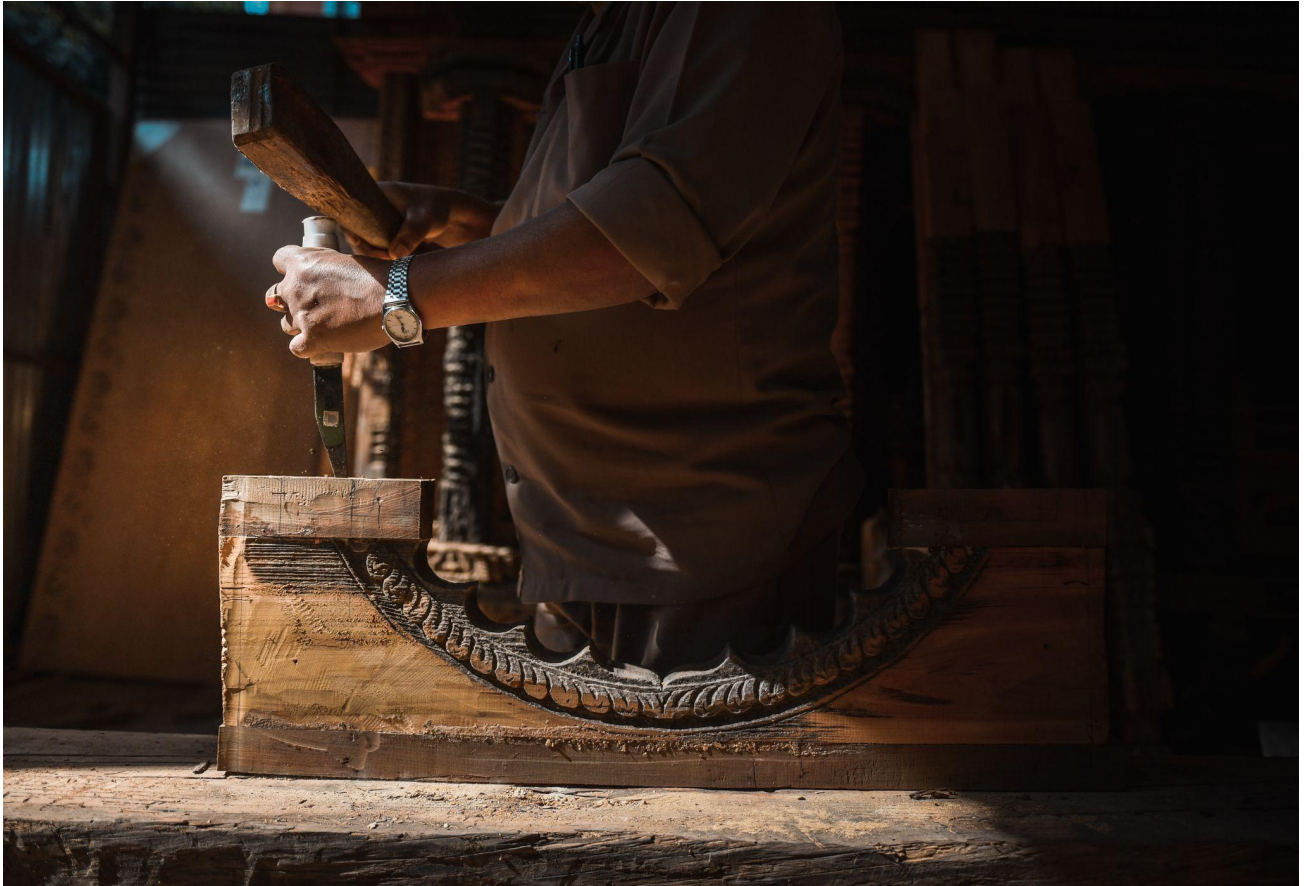
[Resplendent Ceylon](#): The Heart and Soul of Sri Lanka for All Ages

Introduce families to magical Sri Lanka through Resplendent Ceylon's purposefully curated intimate, authentic and exploratory journeys. With healthy doses of fun, excitement, adventure, and pampering, families will get to know the heart of this island nation. Whether it's a guided junior ranger adventure that provides an in-depth exploration of being in the wilderness at [Wild Coast Tented Lodge](#), an interactive junior chef experience tailored to various age levels at [Ceylon Tea Trails](#), or painting traditional masks as a cultural souvenir at [Cape Weligama](#), there's a special selection of activities to fulfill a memorable family vacation.

Traveling in smaller groups can also be an ideal time to learn about the richness of the wild on an exclusive game drive, take a break beneath the shade of a tree to enjoy a planter's lunch in the tea country, or sink into an intimate "chef's table" style affair with views of the Indian Ocean.

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Woodworking classes offered at Dwarika's Hotel

[Dwarika's Hotel](#): A Vacation for All Ages at Nepalese Retreats

Friends and family can reconnect and bond at the beautiful Dwarika's Resort and the mesmerizing Dwarika's Hotel in Nepal. Spread over an expansive 26 acres on the majestic hills of Dhulikhel, the Dwarika's Resort provides a perfect opportunity for families to explore nature and enjoy the great outdoors together. Indoor activities include art and painting classes, cooking classes, pottery sessions, and cinema, or bond over the outdoor activities at the farm within the resort or hike to a second farm in Darimbot. Bliss awaits at the Himalayan rock salt house, the crystal house, the breathtaking infinity swimming pool, and the indoor pool with hot tubs. Families can attend yoga and meditation sessions together, allowing everyone to benefit from this holistic retreat.

Likewise, set in the city of temples, the Dwarika's Hotel in Kathmandu is in itself a living museum. Soak in the stunning architecture with its extensive centuries-old collection of wooden, stone, terracotta, and metal masterpieces. There are plenty of chances to come together as a family, whether for a traditional woodworking class, yoga or meditation session, or fun cooking class made with the bounty of the Dwarika's six farms.

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Learning about Buffalo milk collection in Sri Lanka

[Ventours International](#): Two Incredible Ways to Carpe Diem

If the past year or more has taught us anything, it's that it is always time for a "once in a lifetime" moment. Ventours International takes this to heart when arranging your client's travel experiences, from the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas to the tropical paradise of Sri Lanka. There's no time like the present to journey to Nepal, home to eight of the ten tallest peaks in the world. This tiny mountain kingdom is ringed by the great and mighty Himalayan range. Ventours offers you a chance to get up close and personal with these forbidding mountains, all from the comfort of a chartered private helicopter. End on a high as you sip champagne and soak in unparalleled views of the entire Everest range!

In Sri Lanka, Ventours shows you how the locals keep cool, with a delicious Mee Kiri (buffalo curd) topped with treacle! Something so simple and healthy, yet steeped in tradition and heritage, cannot be missed. Visit a village where a local family invites travelers into their home to learn firsthand how this Sri Lankan curd, made solely from buffalo milk, is produced. Sights of fishermen at the lake, children going to school, and housewives going about their daily chores add further to this wonderfully immersive experience.

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Indigenous experiences. CREDIT James Fisher - Tourism Australia

[Southern Crossings](#): Down Under from Daring to Decadent

Whether you're traveling with toddlers, teens, or multiple generations, the lands Down Under offer something for everyone. There are wide-open spaces that invite all kinds of adventures, curious creatures that are sure to capture everyone's hearts, and a range of child-friendly accommodation and touring. Active and adventurous or relaxing to reconnect, the Southern Crossings Travel Design teams in Australia and New Zealand can curate extraordinary family experiences.

In Australia, climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge, learn to surf in Byron Bay, snorkel the Great Barrier Reef, spot kangaroos (and contribute to important local conservation efforts) or walk with wombats in Tasmania. Learn the art of Aboriginal dot painting from an inspiring local elder (and create a most memorable souvenir to take home) or visit the studios of a talented Melbourne street artist. Embark on a private air safari in Western Australia to explore the Pinnacles otherworldly limestone landscapes. Sand-board on snow-white sand dunes (and enjoy lunching on the fresh-caught lobster!). Swim with whale sharks at Ningaloo and swim in secret watering holes.

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In New Zealand, sail aboard an America's Cup Class racing yacht from Auckland Harbour or sleep in a (luxury) treehouse and swim with wild New Zealand fur seals in the shallow waters of the beautiful Kaikoura coast. Learn how the sets and special effects, costumes, and creatures of movies such as Lord of the Rings, Avatar, King Kong, and Thunderbirds were made with hands-on workshops at the Academy award-winning WETA workshops in Wellington and Auckland. Propel yourself off a bridge or down a hill with kiwi-invented adventures from bungee jumping to zorbing; there are action-packed adventures for every level of thrill-seeker right across the country: raft, ride, surf, ski, mountain bike, and more!

Check out Southern Crossings New Zealand Director [Sarah Farag's tips for traveling with teens recently featured in Travel+Leisure magazine.](#)