

Top 10 Must-Do Adventures for 2007

Been there, done that, and you've got the T-shirt to prove it? Make 2007 your year to experience some new travel thrills. Below are ten must-do adventures that will make the coming New Year one to remember.

Live Like a Pirate: Cruises are great fun, but sometimes you really want to *feel* like you're in a boat in the ocean. [Atlantic Stars](#) offers a ship to suit whatever nautical fantasy you may have, from the classic speedboat *Rum Runner II*, which zips around Newport, Rhode Island, to the 160-foot sailing cruise yacht *Arabella* (photo, right), which embarks from St. Thomas or St. Martin during the winter months for six-night Caribbean voyages. Rates for this fabulous five-star sailboat cruise start at \$1,295.00 for six nights in the Caribbean.



Safari, Anybody?: Urban life can wither your soul, but an African safari can help you get back to reality. [Smithsonian Journeys](#) offers a 14-day wildlife sojourn in some of the world's finest nature sanctuaries: Arusha, Tarangire, Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti, and Lake Manyara. Total cost is \$7,895, which includes accommodations and meals, but not airfare. Looking for something a bit less pricey? [Go2Africa](#) based in Cape Town, offers a dizzying array of safari adventures, priced to suit every budget.

Costa Rican Wildlife Tour: Costa Rica tour and lodging operators have long been ahead of the ecotourism curve, allowing visitors to explore fragile environments *sans* guilt. [Wild Planet Adventures](#) offers a "Ultimate Wildlife Tour" in Costa Rica: 14 days and \$3,598 buys you time in eight national parks and wildlife preserves, a cloud forest canopy tour, rafting and river boating, a volcano visit, night hikes and snorkeling, accommodations, activities, meals but not airfare.

Hit The Road: Is there anything as magical as a cross-country road trip? Even Oprah Winfrey hit the road with her sidekick Gayle last summer. The trip turned out to be a multimedia adventure! You don't



need a camera crew for your trip, just burn some great CDs, pack a cooler with cold drinks and snacks, promise to stay off the big interstates as much as possible (you won't see anything wonderful there), and head out exploring for a few weeks or more. For off-the-main-highway inspiration check out [American Road](#) magazine, or the Federal Highway administration's [American Byways](#) website.

Take the Plunge in Bonaire: Strap on a scuba tank or wrap your lips around a snorkel and take the plunge into a whole new world. The Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire boasts year-round sunshine, pristine coral formations, and perhaps the most varied fish population in the Caribbean. Bonaire's [Deep Blue View](#) resort offers myriad packages, starting with a seven-day dive package priced at \$1,460 for two people, including accommodations, breakfasts, dive fees, and use of a pick-up truck.

Be a Ranch Hand: Mournfully whistling "Home on the Range" a lot these days? Head west and spend a week on a working ranch. [Klondike Ranch](#), established in 1886 and located in Johnson County, Wyoming, offers guests an authentic western adventure. Visitors help move cattle to new pastures, learn to rope cattle, and repair barbed wire fences. Weekly rates are \$1,325 per person for accommodations and meals. 14 years old and up only.

Discover Australia's Never Never: The Never Never is another name for Australia's outback, the place where most people *never never* went. But you can go there in style with [Great Southern Railway's](#) train vacations. Their "Never Never Tour" loosely follows an itinerary set in the pages of Jeannie Gunn's best selling book *We of the Never Never*, traveling deep into Australia's tropical outback, a paradise of waterfalls, jungles, and streams. Tour guide Mike Keighley has exclusive access to much of this special area of Australia (itinerary proceeds from Sydney to Adelaide to Alice Springs and concludes in Darwin). Tour prices start at \$3,500(US) per person for a ten-day train journey (airfare not included).

See the Northern Lights: You simply have to see the aurora borealis with your own eyes -- no words or pictures can capture the thrill of seeing the night sky don iridescent colors and dance. The Northern Lights can occasionally be [seen](#) throughout the U.S. and Europe, but the best places to witness them are near the magnetic poles in places like Fairbanks, Alaska; Yellowknife in Canada's Arctic; the southern tip of Greenland; and Tromso, Norway. Tromso, about 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, holds a Northern Lights Festival from 22 to 27 January. [Fjord Travel](#) offers three-night Northern Lights packages to Tromso that includes sleigh rides, snowmobiling or fjord cruises, starting at \$735 per person (airfare not included).



Scare Yourself Silly: 2007 marks the 110th anniversary of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. To celebrate, the [Transylvania Live](#) tour company invites intrepid travelers to spend Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler. The tour travels along narrow winding roads deep in the Carpathian Mountains, plunging into the heart of Transylvania. The package includes tours of legendary Transylvanian castles, a Halloween Party in Sighisoara (Dracula's birth place), instruction in the correct way to make a vampire-killing stake, and a visit with Dracula's descendants. Survivor's Certificates are handed out at the farewell dinner that concludes the tour. The 10-day trip is priced at \$1,884 (US), per person. Price includes accommodations, meals, activities but not airfare.

Blast Off: Space -- the final tourism frontier. If you have a substantial travel budget you can be among the first to explore a tiny bit of the galaxy. Oklahoma-based [Rocketplane](#) hopes to launch their first commercial suborbital passenger flight in early 2007. Passengers will speed 60 miles above Earth and experience weightlessness for up to four minutes. The descent is promised to feel like the ultimate roller-coaster ride. Passengers who take the maiden voyage will pay dearly for the privilege -- \$150,000 for 45 minutes. Virgin Galactic is also taking reservations now for their suborbital flight packages, slated to begin in 2008, with an estimated price tag of [\\$200,000](#). Fret not would-be astronauts on a tight budget, Rocketplane and Virgin hope to make space travel affordable for most within the next decade.

---Michelle Delio