

LUXURY TOURISM IS EVOLVING TOWARD AN EXTREME EXPERIENCE



Up until the 1980s, it was commonly believed that the epitome of luxury tourism was reserved for those who traveled first class, stayed in 5-star hotels, and dined in Michelin-starred restaurants. However, some people had a broader perspective, such as Agustín Picazo, the director of the famed Los Monteros in Marbella during its golden years. Picazo believed luxury was about service. He transformed his hotel into one of the most expensive in Spain by offering personalized attention and a magnificent "beach club" despite having normal rooms.

As time passed, "luxury experiences" were defined by the size of the rooms or the number of stars. It was no longer sufficient to eat and drink well simply; a theme was required to tie everything together. This included suites with jacuzzis and swimming pools and private plane trips.

Yachts have become increasingly popular at sea despite owners' declining accounts. Some yachts now cost over 500 million euros, but this has not deterred Gulf emirs or Russian plutocrats until recently. Wealthy cruise lovers have also turned to yachts for a more exclusive experience, opting for smaller yachts that can accommodate up to a hundred people. These yachts are managed by experts from the most luxurious hotel chains, such as Aman. Prices start at 30,000 euros per week, depending on champagne consumption.

The hospitality industry appeared to have established a new format, but the pandemic suddenly arrived and accelerated a trend that had not been fully explored yet. The ultra-wealthy, who have become even richer in recent years, are still interested in the physical appearance of hotels, the quality of food, and even the level of service provided. What matters now is exclusivity - something only available to them at a premium cost rather than accessible to those with only a few million dollars.

Luxury travelers can choose from various unique travel experiences. These include trips to Antarctica, which involve staying in tents and braving harsh weather conditions to enjoy solitude amidst vast ice expanses. Such trips cost around 70,000 euros. Another option is space travel, which can cost roughly 200,000 euros. For those who seek adventure in the ocean's depths, there is the opportunity to explore the Titanic wreck. This experience involves sending three or four individuals down to the ocean floor, costing up to 500,000 euros. It is considered the ultimate experience for some.

Adventure trips to desert islands have become a popular option for those looking to start outdoor expeditions. These trips are designed to mimic the scenarios seen on TV shows like "Survivor." They are available in the Panamanian Caribbean, the Philippines, and Indonesia, starting at 5,000 euros per week. While most participants have no experience sleeping in tents, they are dropped off deep in the jungle with only a machete. They are challenged with returning to the base camp. This usually takes at least three or four days, and some participants may need to be rescued by the organizing team, comprised of former special forces members.

It can take up to 48 hours to learn how to make a fire or fishing instrument. Despite the difficulties, the feeling of accomplishment is priceless. As one participant explained, "This extreme experience is worth a million euros." Most participants are young executives who cannot pay for a more luxurious

adventure. However, they are keen to gain the skills necessary for the opportunity. Adventure tourism is a risky venture and often accompanied by additional cost, an essential component of the package. This type of experience is becoming more popular, particularly in the UK, where there is still a hint of historical masochism.

These trips share a common theme of luxury and discomfort, often with limited space. However, there are secret, more expensive options available that offer extreme experiences exclusively for insiders. It is known that the truly wealthy don't shy away from such challenges and prefer luxury tourism over what others view as dangerous and grueling.

One participant, still ecstatic about the experience, compared the camp to a 7-star hotel. They described the experience as worth a million euros while enjoying a coconut cut in half with a machete.

Generally, the participants of these trips are young executives who may not yet be able to afford a week of distress costing forty or fifty thousand euros. However, they want to be prepared for when the time comes.

Specialized agencies in Great Britain are increasingly focusing on adventure and luxury tourism. However, it is common knowledge that this kind of tourism involves risk, which is usually an essential package component and often comes with an additional cost.

The trips offered under adventure tourism share a common trait - they offer the luxury of discomfort or lack of space. Other trips, even more expensive, guarantee extreme experiences and are sold only to a select few. It is a known fact that the truly wealthy prefer luxury tourism, which others perceive as dangerous and arduous. This is because the real rich are not afraid of challenges and enjoy pushing their limits.

Date: 2023-10-05

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/extreme-experience-new-way-of-the-luxury-tourism-news13766>