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# Condé Nast Traveler

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*Our editors' pick of the best travel specialists in the world*

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THE EDITORS' PICK

# THE WORLD'S BEST TRAVEL SPECIALISTS 2019

Booking a trip with an exceptional travel adviser has huge upsides. They remove the burden of the niggling details (the visas, the transfers, the reservations), but far more than that, they have the insider knowledge, the prolific contacts, the exclusive access, and the sharp instincts to transform a vacation into an experience of a lifetime, whether it's tracking Siberian tigers in Russia's Far East or celebrating Day of the Dead in Michoacán. Here's a taste of *Condé Nast Traveler's* Top Travel Specialists for 2019: the agents and fixers, explorers and connoisseurs, historians and naturalists, instigators and hand-holders we most highly recommend. For the complete list of all 185 of our trusted experts, go to [cntraveler.com/travel-specialists](http://cntraveler.com/travel-specialists).

BY ALEX POSTMAN AND CHRISTINE CANTERA





### MARC TÉLIO

ENTRÉE DESTINATIONS, CANADA

A city boy (Vancouver by way of Montreal), Télió fell hard for the Canadian wilderness, from the craggy shoals of Newfoundland to the pristine beaches of British Columbia's Clayoquot Sound. He'll reliably get your heart pounding while fly-fishing beside grizzly bears in the Yukon Territory, chasing the caribou migration and Northern Lights in Nunavut, exploring the lush foliage of the west coast's rain forests, or spying on polar bears and Arctic foxes at the most northerly lodge on earth (see page 46). His ardor steels your nerves. [entreedestinations.com](http://entreedestinations.com)

### LINDA ALLEN-SPEER

CRUISES BY LINDA, LARGE SHIPS

With 25 years of sailing savvy, Allen-Speer has major clout with lines like Celebrity, Norwegian, Seabourn, and Viking and dives deep into the fit, finishes, and fine print that even the most experienced cruisers don't think to question. [cruisesbylinda.com](http://cruisesbylinda.com)



### TOM MARCHANT

BLACK TOMATO, ICELAND



Marchant was ahead of the curve when he started running trips to Iceland in 2005, and today he's still pioneering immersive adventures to back-of-the-map regions like the Diamond Circle in the north, where his time-poor, cash-rich clients can meditate in glacial caves or do yoga atop a volcano. This brand of transformational travel is Black Tomato's M.O. on every continent, be it hiking to

Tiger's Nest in Bhutan or heli-skiing in New Zealand's Harris Mountains—all brought into sharp focus with its latest venture, Bring It Back, a program designed to spark existential epiphanies. "I view travel as a powerful tool that can provide answers to the questions we have, address frustrations, and prompt inspiration," says Marchant. [blacktomato.com](http://blacktomato.com)

### KATE DOTY

GEOEX, SUPERCHARGED TRIPS

The jetset has Doty, a cool-headed master logician, on speed dial, both for pack-it-in sprints and long fixed-wing journeys across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. She'll zero in on the right exclusive-use property with room for a security detail, or nab an audience with the Dalai Lama. Still, an anti-elitist streak keeps her just as jazzed about sleeping in a tent atop a crater in Virunga.



[geoex.com](http://geoex.com)

### ROSS PHILLIPS

TROPICSURF, SURFING

When Phillips started his tiny surf school on the beach of Noosa Heads, Australia, 30 years ago, "the surf-trip norm was a beach bungalow, mosquito net, rice and curry, and no A.C." So he conjured up a new market for luxury surfing. Today, he hires tightly vetted guides in places from Nicaragua to Bali to Papua New Guinea (with his own surf shacks in 17 top hotels). His instructors will do hands-on tow-outs for shaky novices, while for experienced shredders he'll charter a seaplane to hit never-before-surfed breaks in the Maldives or chase the swell charts to "wherever the waves are most pumping." [tropicsurf.com](http://tropicsurf.com)



### ZULYA RAJABOVA

SILK ROAD TREASURE TOURS, CENTRAL ASIA

The Uzbekistan native used to work for the tourism ministry escorting VIPs like Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright through the ancient Silk Road cities of Central Asia. Today, with teams in Bukhara and New Jersey, Rajabova decodes "the 'Stans" for her guests—their architecture, traditions, food, and landscape—while smoothing tricky border crossings. She'll rave about their storied heritage—Samarkand's tiled necropolis, the horse culture of Turkmenistan, the lush green gorges of Kyrgyzstan—and make everyone feel at home: One group of clients recently feasted and danced at her niece's wedding. [silkroadtreasuretours.com](http://silkroadtreasuretours.com)

