

GO

BERMUDA REVISITED • MOST LUXURIOUS HOTELS IN THE WORLD

BY KIM-MARIE EVANS



Destination: Bermuda

Think Bermuda is all about tourists riding around on scooters? Think again. It's decidedly more hip than you may realize. The island is full of history, beauty and, yes, adventure

1 Bermuda has more shipwrecks per square mile than anywhere else in the world. It is one of the few places where divers can explore wrecks dating from the 1600s until as recent as 1997. A Confederate blockade-runner, *Mary Celestia*, sank there in 1864. Bermuda recently made international headlines after a cache of previously unknown treasures—including still-sealed wine and perfume—was uncovered. The historic perfume found was meticulously recreated by Lili of Bermuda and a limited edition is being sold to the public.

2 Bermuda is not a lone island, it's made up of 181 islands, islets and rocks. Most are uninhabitable, but eight are linked by bridges and causeways forming the Bermuda we know. Though it's only twenty square miles, Bermuda has thirty-four of what some call the world's most beautiful beaches.

3 Cliff jumping is one of the most popular sports on the island. Climbing junkies rave about the deep-water solo diving in Bermuda. What exactly is deep-water soloing? We're glad

you asked. It's a form of solo rock climbing, practiced on sea cliffs at high tide where the climber's only protection is the water below. If you possess nerves of steel, go cliff jumping at Admiralty House Park, which was recently named one of *Men's Journal's* "20 Most Adventurous Beaches."

4 Golf first came to Bermuda in the late 1800s when British Army officers brought their clubs to the island. Today, Bermuda boasts the highest concentration of golf courses in the world. >>

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5 Though it's often included in the list of Caribbean islands, Bermuda is actually in the Atlantic Ocean directly east of Charleston, South Carolina. In fact, most of the limestone in Charleston comes from Bermuda.

6 The thirty-fifth America's Cup will be hosted on the Great Sound in June of 2017. Oracle Team USA has set up its home base there and is currently on the water training to defend the cup.

7 St. George Bermuda, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town was named after the legendary dragon slayer and patron saint of England, St. George. Today about 65 percent of the buildings in the town are pre-1900. It is the oldest continuously inhabited town of English origin in the New World.

8 In June 1980, John Lennon docked his yacht in Bermuda. Not having written a song in almost five years, he sailed from Rhode Island looking for inspiration. During his almost two-year stay, he wrote twenty-two songs including those that would make up his final masterpiece, Double Fantasy. The title was borrowed from a flower he saw at the Bermuda Botanical Gardens.

9 The iconic Bermuda shorts were originally borrowed in the early twentieth century from the British military's uniform for hot climes.

10 Humpback whales pass Bermuda in the spring on their way to northern feeding grounds. Lucky observers can see them breach, fin slap, wave their tails, and sometimes do the back float.

The Lap of LUXURY

Three of the most luxurious hotels in the world



OBEROI UDAIVILAS INDIA

Guests of Oberoi Udaivilas in India are whisked to this traditional Mewari palace across the waters of Lake Pichola via private boat from the airport. Guests have described the hotel, which sits on former hunting grounds along the shore of the lake, as deserving seven stars. It's no wonder—the dome and arches, illuminated at night, reflect on the waters; the rooms are tucked in private walled courtyards and feature Victorian bathtubs, Indian decor, and views of Udaipur, an ancient city that was carved into the desert landscape by Mewari royals in the sixteenth century. For those who really want to go over the top, book the Kohinoor Suite with a 20-meter private pool.

Suite with semi-private pool, \$1,000 night; Kohinoor Suite, \$11,000 night

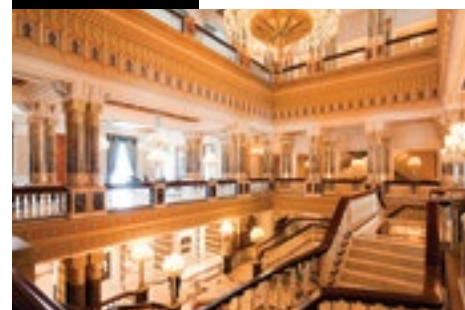
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CIRAGAN PALACE KEMPINSKI ISTANBUL

Straddling Europe and Asia, Istanbul sits at the historic crossroads between East and West, a city of minarets with remnants of the Ottoman and Byzantine empires at every turn. The grand dame of the city, Ciragan Palace Kempinski, is perched on the European strait of the famed Bosphorus River. Guests can take in the sights from the heated waters of the hotel's infinity pool right on the strait's shore. Some hotels describe themselves as palatial—this property actually is a former sultan's palace. The grounds are perfectly manicured with gazebos and palm trees, live music fills the air, and Turkish afternoon tea in the Gazebo lounge is a must-do.

One-bedroom Sea View Palace, \$3,300 night; Sultan Suite, \$32,000 night



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Superior Suite, \$1,000 per night; Peninsula Suite, \$18,000 per night

THE PENINSULA HONG KONG

Built in 1928, The Peninsula is Hong Kong's oldest hotel. Affectionately called "the Pen" by locals, the place drips with colonial decadence, from the palm-filled lobby where guests nibble on petit fours at teatime to the string quartet in the gallery. The iconic property has earned so many "Best Hotel in the World" accolades that printing them would take the entire page. Perhaps the ultimate sign of the hotel's classic pedigree is that guests are chauffeured around in custom Rolls Royces, sleep in modern state-of-the-art rooms, dine in exquisite restaurants (Gaddi's, a legendary French restaurant and the Verandah) and are provided impeccable service by bellboys in white pillbox hats and uniforms (guests of the Peninsula suite enjoy 24-hour butler service). What more is there to say, really?