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# ADVENTURE

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## Trekking China's Great Wall

A Wild Journey Into the Past

BY MATTHEW POWER

**WHAT IT TAKES '05**  
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of Adventure

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Antarctica, Belize,  
Montana, and More

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# get SCIENTIFIC

"Science is a wonderful thing if one does not have to earn one's living at it." —Albert Einstein

IF YOUR INTEREST IN SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION GOES BEYOND WATCHING PUBLIC TELEVISION, JOIN ONE OF THESE HANDS-ON, VOLUNTEER VACATIONS THAT GET YOU CLOSE TO THE ACTION ALONGSIDE SCIENTISTS IN THE FIELD **BY MIELIKKI ORG**

## 1 CARRY CHIMPS IN UGANDA

Supported by the Jane Goodall Institute, the Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary ([www.ngamba-island.org](http://www.ngamba-island.org)) in Uganda is at the front line of primate research. You'll hike through the forest, recording observations in a diary as juvenile chimps swing from tree to tree alongside you. "Some of them want to be carried," says Liz Roodt, a staff member. Bring an extra camera battery. Year-round, one-week stays start at \$1,500.

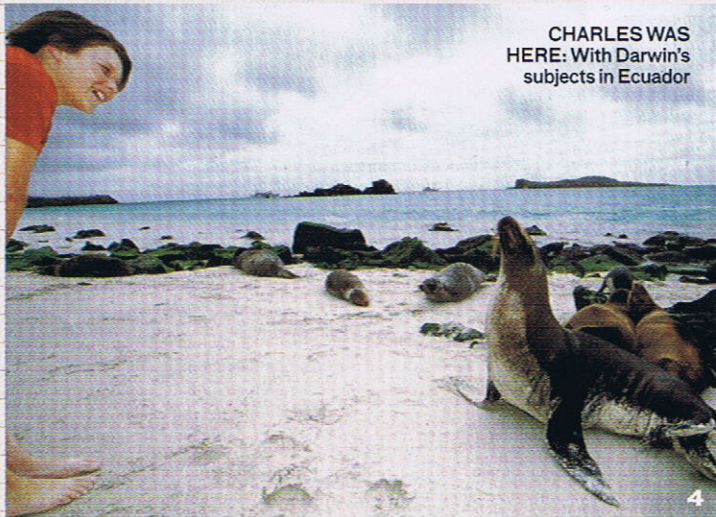
**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** Extensive inoculations, antimalarial pills

**Terrain:** Rain forest, grassland, ocean

**Group size:** Varies

**Launch point:** Entebbe, Uganda



CHARLES WAS HERE: With Darwin's subjects in Ecuador

Expeditions ([www.nationalgeographic.com/ngexpeditions](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngexpeditions)). See blue-footed boobies and giant tortoises as you explore coves and outcroppings by foot, Zodiac, and scuba. A ten-day trip in March 2006 costs \$3,650. For a six-month expedition, assist the Charles Darwin Research Station ([www.darwin-foundation.org](http://www.darwin-foundation.org)) with conservation and data collection. Participants pay for their own transportation, and food and lodging is roughly an additional \$30 a day. Some Spanish is suggested.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** None

**Terrain:** Ocean, beach

**Group size:** Varies

**Launch point:** National Geographic: Miami; Darwin Research Station: Varies

## 2 EXPLORE JURASSIC PARK, USA

Roughly 140 million years ago, a 6,000-foot-high plateau in Red Lodge, Montana, was a stegosaurus watering hole. During a dig with the Cincinnati Museum Center ([www.cincymuseum.org](http://www.cincymuseum.org)) you can lay trowel to the site, now chock-full of fossils.

The week-long trip in July 2006 costs \$1,200. The Wyoming Dinosaur Center ([www.wyodino.org](http://www.wyodino.org)) in Thermopolis, Wyoming, offers a similar, day-long program for \$125. Both sites are two hours from Yellowstone National Park.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** None

**Terrain:** Forest, desert, mountain

**Group size:** Cincinnati: up to ten; Wyoming: up to 15

**Launch points:** Red Lodge, Montana, and Thermopolis, Wyoming

## 3 SNOWBOARD WITH PENGUINS

Travelers with Fathom Expeditions ([www.fathomexpeditions.com](http://www.fathomexpeditions.com)) collect data on glacier recession and marine mammals in Antarctica (last year they studied a colony of emperor penguins living on Snow Hill Island) while snowboarding and kayaking. Activities can include everything from skiing the Danco Coast to exploring volcanoes with renowned Everest climber David Hahn. A two-week February expedition (during Antarctica's austral summer) starts at \$5,000.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** None

**Terrain:** Ocean, mountain, volcano, snow, ice, beach

**Group size:** Up to 40

**Launch point:** Ushuaia, Argentina

## 4 ASSIST EVOLUTION IN ECUADOR

Board a research vessel to the Galápagos and go back to where it all started, with National Geographic

## 5 RESEARCH REPTILES AND RUINS

At night, circle crocodile nests by boat to measure eggs and hatchlings. Spend days snorkeling at a nearby reef to assess the health of fish and coral. Eight-day Oceanic Society expeditions ([www.oceanic-society.org](http://www.oceanic-society.org)) in Belize's Turneffe Islands start in June 2006 and cost \$1,590. Inland, the Belize Institute of Archaeology ([www.bvar.org](http://www.bvar.org)) will direct a two-week, \$975 trip in January 2006 to excavate Maya ruins at the jungle caves of Caracol.

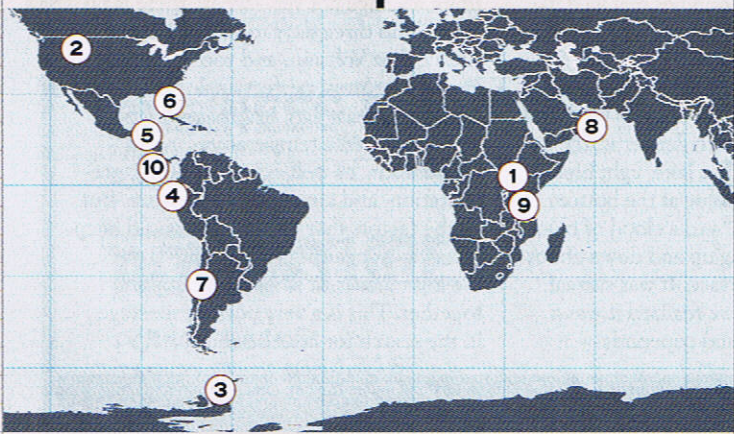
**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** Antimalarial pills

**Terrain:** Turneffe Islands: mangrove forests, ocean, and coral reefs; Caracol: jungle, caves, waterfalls

**Group size:** Turneffe Islands: up to eight; Caracol: up to 15

**Launch point:** Belize City, Belize





3

## 6 CATALOG CORAL IN THE KEYS

Everglades National Park is home to one of the most intricate—and threatened—coral reefs in the world. After morning lectures on ecology and conservation at a Key Largo marine lab, participants in a one-week expedition with the Sierra Club



OK CORAL: Squirrelfish in Florida

6

([www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)) snorkel among coral beds, identifying species and collecting specimens for analysis. The January 2006 excursion costs \$745.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** None

**Terrain:** Slough, grassland, marsh, reef, ocean, forest

**Group size:** Up to 20

**Launch point:** Key Largo, Florida

## 7 SURVEY PATAGONIA ON FOOT

This three-month, thousand-mile trek with Global Vision International ([www.gvi.co.uk](http://www.gvi.co.uk)) travels from the Atlantic coast through the most remote forests, deserts, and mountains of Argentina and Chile. "This is one of the few places on the planet that will make you feel like a true explorer," says GVI founder Richard

Walton. Team members monitor ecological health, build research camps, and collect data on local species. Participants spend the last ten days summiting icy 22,841-foot Aconcagua, the world's highest non-Himalayan peak. A September 2006 expedition costs \$5,460.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:**

Ability to trek 20 miles a day carrying 20 pounds

**Terrain:** Beach, grassland, desert, rain forest, mountain, ice

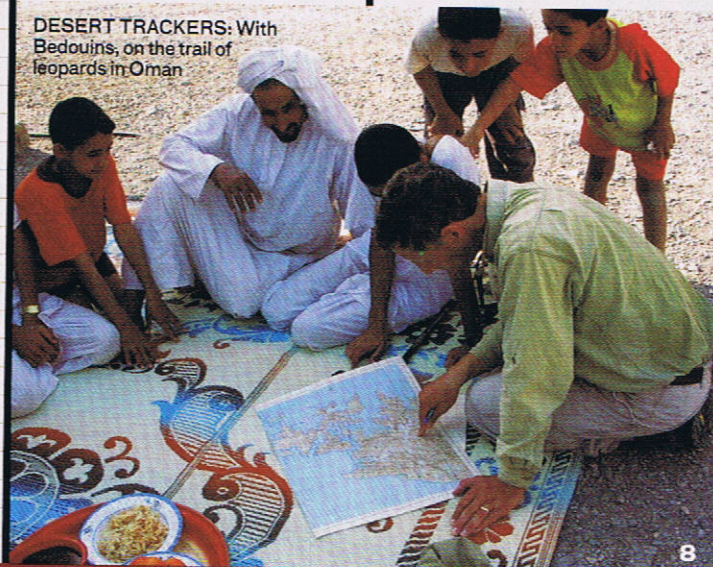
**Group size:** Up to 25

**Launch point:** Buenos Aires, Argentina

## 8 TRACK ARABIAN LEOPARDS

Pursue cats by jeep and on foot across deserts and mountains at the edge of the Gulf of Oman, bedding down each night in Bedouin tents. With scientists from Biosphere Expeditions ([www.biosphereexpeditions.org](http://www.biosphereexpeditions.org)), you'll be part of one of the first official surveys of this critically endangered feline. A

DESERT TRACKERS: With Bedouins, on the trail of leopards in Oman



8

13-day winter expedition for \$2,100 departs in January 2006.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** Ability to hike seven miles a day at altitudes of 6,000 feet in temperatures of 95°F; shots for diphtheria, hepatitis A, tetanus, and polio

**Group size:** Up to 12

**Terrain:** Mountain, desert

**Launch point:** Muscat, Oman

## 9 FIND SKULLS IN TANZANIA

After taking your morning coffee within sight of lions and elephants roaming the Serengeti Plain, you'll hike into the Olduvai Gorge (near the former home of anthropologists Louis and Mary Leakey) to help the Earthwatch Institute ([www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)) save 1.75-million-year-old fossils before erosion washes them away. Bring a solar shower for after-dig refreshment. A three-week trip costs \$2,595 and departs in June 2006.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** Ability



DIG IT: A *Homo habilis* skull from Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania

9

to dig for up to seven hours a day in temperatures of 95°F; shots for polio, tetanus, typhoid, yellow fever, and hepatitis A

**Group size:** Up to 14

**Terrain:** Arid plain

**Launch point:** Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

## 10 HELP TURTLES IN COSTA RICA

Tortuguero National Park's eastern beach is one of the world's oldest and largest green turtle nesting sites. Caribbean Conservation Corporation ([www.cccturtle.org](http://www.cccturtle.org)) enlists volunteers to record data as huge turtles lay up to 150 eggs apiece under the moonlight, then crawl to the sea. When the unattended eggs hatch in July and August, you'll be there to give the slower babies a helpful nudge as a new generation flops toward the water. A two-week expedition in July 2006 costs \$1,700.

**Level:** ●●●●●

**Physical prerequisites:** None

**Terrain:** Rain forest, ocean, beach

**Group size:** Up to 15

**Launch point:** San Jose, Costa Rica

