

# UNFORGETTABLE

From teary group hugs on the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro to a breathtaking flight above Victoria Falls, our team recall the memorable experiences that shook their worlds

Wadi Rum, Jordan



## Glen Mutel

DEPUTY EDITOR

**WHAT:** Seeing the monolithic Moai of Easter Island.

**WHY:** The initial appeal was the island's isolation, palpable as I stood on the shore, staring out onto thousands of miles of nothingness. This was soon eclipsed by the thrill of seeing the 15 Moai statues at Ahu Tongariki, lined up with their backs to the Pacific, staring at the distant quarry from which they were carved — especially the one with the huge rock topknot.

**HOW:** Journey Latin America offers an 19-day holiday to Chile including Easter Island, staying at the Explora Rapa Nui, from £7,537 per person. Price includes all flights, excursions and most meals. [journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://journeylatinamerica.co.uk)

**NEXT:** The Pyramids of Giza.



## Stephanie Cavagnaro

SENIOR EDITOR

**WHAT:** Riding the Eastern & Oriental Express.

**WHY:** The journey from Singapore to Bangkok revealed a blur of shifting landscapes: thick palm oil plantations, jungle covered hills and flooded rice paddies. The train itself was just as special: step aboard, and be transported to the golden days of rail travel. My cabin was enriched with cherry wood, Champagne was almost obligatory in the observation car, and the Piano Bar was made for cheery sing-a-longs in your finest frock.

**HOW:** Belmond offers the three-day Singapore to Bangkok trip on the Eastern & Oriental Express from £2,066 per person. [belmond.com](http://belmond.com)

**NEXT:** An expedition to Antarctica to explore this icy, isolated world.



## Pat Riddell

EDITOR

**WHAT:** Hiking and camping in Wadi Rum, Jordan.

**WHY:** The further we drove into the desert, the more magnificent the landscape became. Vast red-orange sand dunes swept up the side of the rocky cliffs, which surrounded us. As darkness fell we arrived at Mzied's Bedouin tent. Sweet yet bitter cardamom coffee, boiled over an open fire, was served while dinner was baked on charcoal under the sand. We lay out gazing up at the cloudless starry sky, before drifting off in the absolute silence of the desert.

**HOW:** Exodus Travels has a seven-night Petra & Wadi Rum Trek from £1,339 per person. [exodus.co.uk](http://exodus.co.uk)

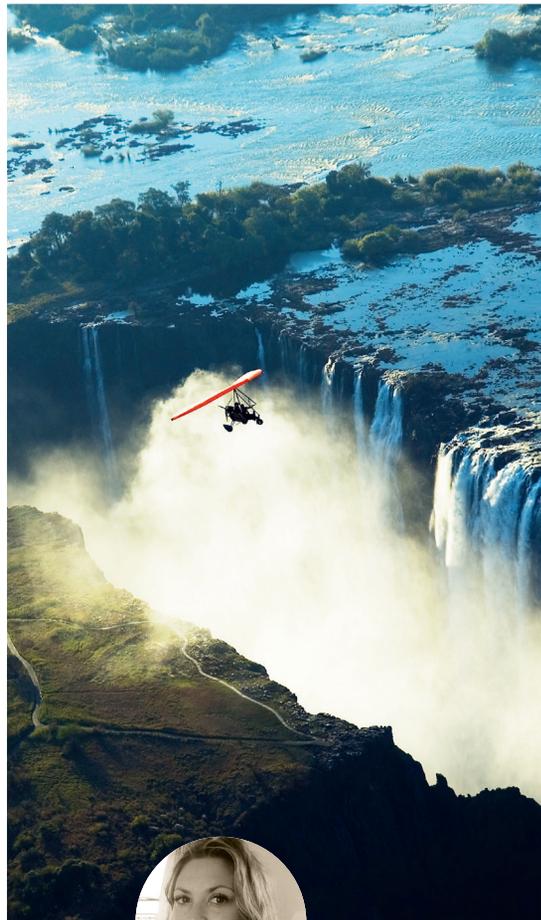
**NEXT:** Ascending the Andes to the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu.



## EDITORS' PICKS

Hikers approach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro at sunrise

**RIGHT:** Victoria Falls



**Nicola Trup**  
CONTRIBUTOR

**WHAT:** Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

**WHY:** After months of training, I flew to Tanzania last November. I was travelling solo, but — cheesy as it sounds — the group I joined clicked immediately; we had deep and meaningful chats along the way, and on summit night, when we were all exhausted and nauseous due to the altitude, we helped each other push through. I'll never forget the feeling of getting to the top and having a group hug — not a dry eye in the house.

**HOW:** Intrepid Travel's eight-day Kilimanjaro Rongai Route trip starts at £1,728 per person, excluding flights. [intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com)

**NEXT:** A long-distance kayaking and camping trip along a remote stretch of water in New Zealand or Canada.



**Sarah Barrell**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**WHAT:** Camping in the Siberian steppe.

**WHY:** I joined a small, volunteer conservation expedition in Russia's Altai Mountains, and found it one of the most extreme wildernesses I've ever experienced. It took over 72 hours to get there, through rapidly decreasing markers of civilisation. Our final camp was at the foot of vast mountains where we'd seek traces of the elusive snow leopard. Signs of life were few. Then, one day, I saw the smoking chimney of a yurt in the distance. It seemed such a determined domestic defiance against the expanse of wilderness, I almost wept.

**HOW:** Biosphere Expeditions now runs a similarly remote, conservation project in the Tien Shan mountains, Kyrgyzstan. [biosphere-expeditions.org](http://biosphere-expeditions.org)

**NEXT:** Overland, west to east across Russia, to the Kamchatka Peninsula.



**Helen Warwick**  
CONTRIBUTOR

**WHAT:** Microlight flight above Victoria Falls.

**WHY:** The wind was picking up by the time I arrived: I was in for a bumpy ride. Rising through the chill morning air, I dug my nails into the seat as we soared above elephants paddling in the Zambezi's shallows, and a lone giraffe picking at branches. I could hear the roar of the Falls before they came into sight: with flashes of rainbows, rising mist and unimaginable torrents of water, it's one of my most memorable travel moments.

**HOW:** Flights from \$179 (£138). [victoriafalls.net](http://victoriafalls.net)

**NEXT:** Hot air ballooning in the Atacama Desert, for a chance to enjoy one of the most magnificent views in the world.