

NEW YORK Weddings

THE HONEYMOON

You'll Go Far

Eight once-in-a-lifetime trips, plus nearby alternatives for the vacation-day deprived.

BY FIORELLA VALDESOLO

The Quiet Desert Retreat

20 HOURS FROM NYC

FAR AND AWAY

OMAN

OMAN'S MUSANDAM peninsula may be only two hours from Dubai, but it has little in common with its flashier neighbor. The northernmost province is a visual feast framed by the craggy Hajar Mountain range and the tranquil waters of the Arabian Sea. Swim, dive, and snorkel in the temperate waters; take a relaxing cruise around the gulf aboard a dhow, a traditional Arab sailboat; or simply decompress in the infinity pool at your villa at Six Senses Hideaway Zighy Bay (from \$830; sixsenses.com). Paraglide off

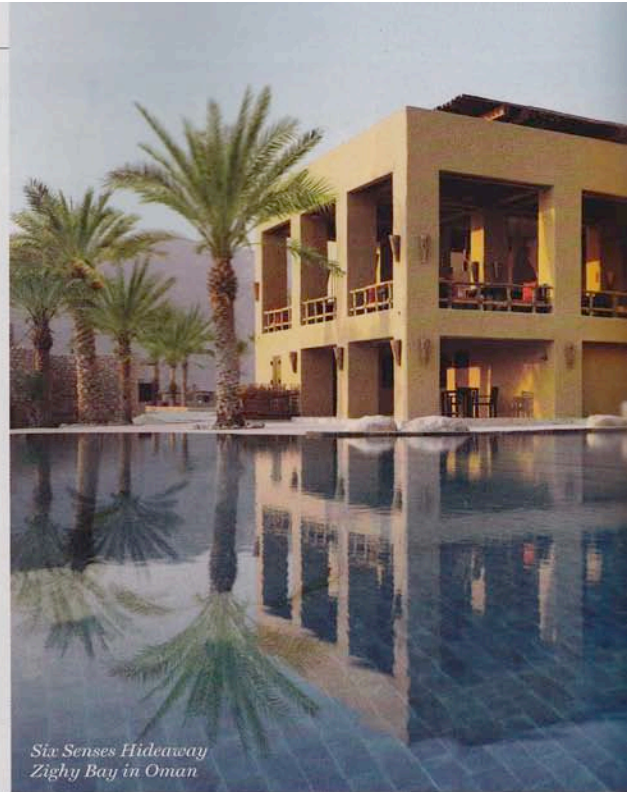
the top of Zighy Mountain and look for the elusive golden eagle on your way down. If you have time, head south to explore the capital, Muscat (don't miss the Bait Al Zubair Museum), and Salalah, where frankincense is famously harvested from the trees in Wadi Dawkah park.

6 HOURS FROM NYC

CLOSER TO HOME

NEW MEXICO

SLED DOWN THE PEARLY rolling hills of White Sands; explore the jaw-dropping natural wonders of the Kasha-Katuwe tent rocks and Carlsbad Caverns; and hike the Tsankawi trail in Bandelier National Monument. To relax, you can soak in therapeutic hot baths at spa Ten Thousand Waves. Book a room at El Paradero (from \$95; elparadero.com), a tranquil spot on the edge of downtown Santa Fe.



Six Senses Hideaway Zighy Bay in Oman

The Animal-Lovers' Escape

20 HOURS FROM NYC

FAR AND AWAY

SRI LANKA

MUCH OF THE CIVIL unrest that long plagued Sri Lanka has settled down, so the exotic island off India's southern coast is now far more inviting. Start your trip in the provincial capital of Kandy, where you will be surrounded by tea plantations, lavish temples (Temple of the Tooth is a must-see), and tropical forests filled with birds. Book the Black Rajah suite (it includes a secret garden with a hammock and a soaking tub) at Kandy House (rooms from \$195; thekandyhouse.com), a restored 206-year-old villa. Nearby is the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage, where you can get close to the massive creatures. To dip your toes in the Indian Ocean, head south and stay at the newly redesigned Villa Bentota (from \$200; villabentota.com), just a couple of hours from Uda Walawe National Park, where you can spot monkeys, leopards, fish owls, peacocks, and, yes, more elephants.

7 HOURS FROM NYC

CLOSER TO HOME

BELIZE

SURROUNDED BY CLEAR turquoise waters, Belize's Ambergris Caye Espanto (from \$1,095; ambergris caye.com/cayoespanto), a boutique property on its own island, is the ultimate home base for underwater exploration. Once you've had your fill, book a cabana at the Cotton Tree Lodge (from \$109; cottontreelodge.com) and go monkey spotting in the forest reserves nearby.

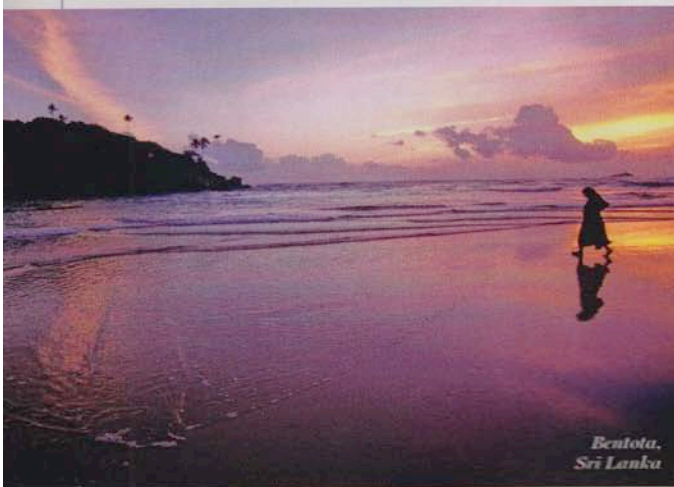
The Sultry Tropical Island

24 HOURS FROM NYC

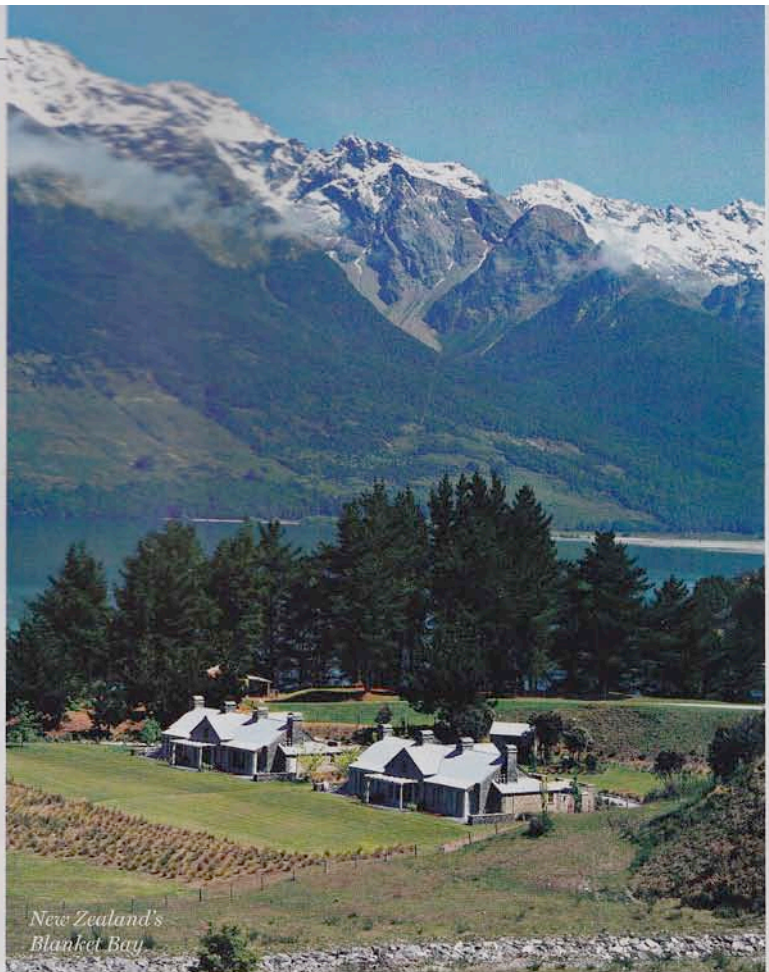
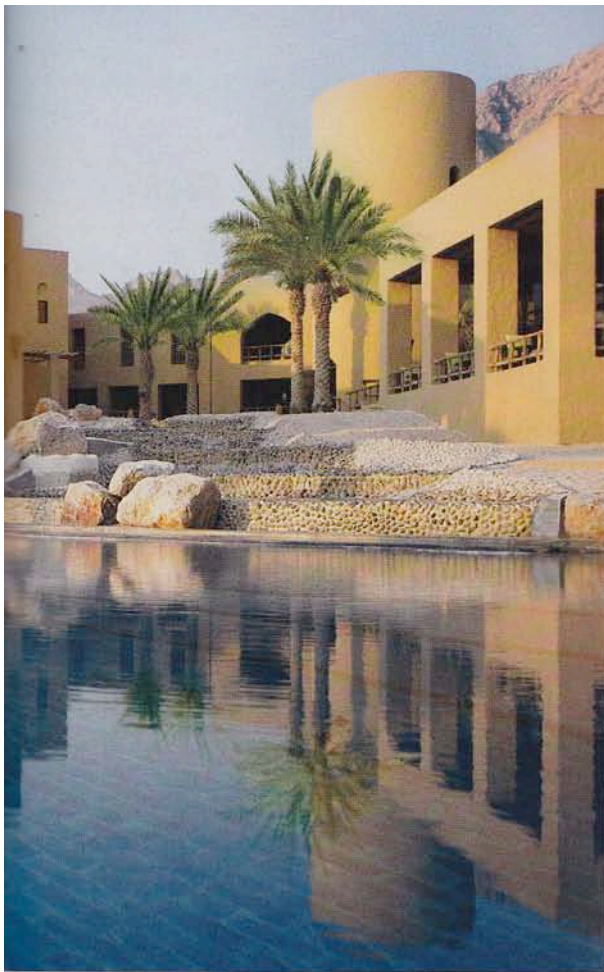
FAR AND AWAY

RATUA

AMONG THE ISOLATED group of islands known as Vanuatu, off New Guinea, exists the 146-acre private isle of Ratua. Fly into Brisbane, then take another two-and-a-half-hour flight and a 30-minute boat ride to get there. The retreat is pure Blue Lagoon fantasy—you'll find waterfalls, an active volcano, and



Bentota, Sri Lanka



New Zealand's
Blanket Bay

untamed natural beauty. There are only fifteen villas (from \$437; ratua.com.au) on the island, each with a private terrace and beach access. Snorkel the warm waters alongside sea turtles, ride horseback, or canoe among the twisted lagoons.

6

HOURS FROM NYC

CLOSER TO HOME
MUSTIQUE

THIS CARIBBEAN ISLAND has long been a hideaway for the rich, famous, and royal (Mick Jagger, David Bowie) and, unsurprisingly, it comes with a hefty price tag. After jetting to Barbados, you'll take a charter plane (from \$495) to Mustique's only hotel, the seventeen-room Cotton House (from \$700; cottonhousesort.com); book one of the airy seafront suites for your own plunge pool and killer views of the ocean.

The Road-Trip Adventure

24

HOURS FROM NYC

FAR AND AWAY
NEW ZEALAND

TO EXPERIENCE THE country's famously spectacular scenery, head di-

rectly to South Island (the ferry takes three hours from Wellington). Expect serene lakes, a craggy coastline, rain forests, and towering mountain peaks. Stay among nature, literally, in one of the treehouse rooms at the Hapuku Lodge in Kaikoura (from \$282; hapukulodge.com), where you will have the snow-capped peaks of the Seward Kaikoura Range behind you and the rocky coast of the South Pacific at your door. From your private deck, look skyward for albatross and the endangered Hutton's shearwater. Drive south through the verdant mountains—stop along the way at the Franz Josef glacier hot pools—and check in at Blanket Bay (from \$691; blanketbay.com) beside the cobalt-hued Lake Wakatipu. Hike along the Milford Track, which meanders past the imposing Sutherland falls (one of the world's highest) and ends at the popular fjord, Milford Sound.

6

HOURS FROM NYC

CLOSER TO HOME
WASHINGTON

FLY INTO SEATTLE, rent a car, and head northwest for a trip around the stunning Olympic Peninsula—3,600 square miles of lush rain forests, colossal mountains, and rugged coastline. Stay at the homey Lake Quinault Lodge in Olympic National Park (from \$81; [\[nationalparks.com\]\(http://nationalparks.com\)\) and seek out waterfalls in the park's vast \(1,441 square miles\) wilderness. Hike the two-mile trail to the serene Shi Shi Beach, or relax in the hot springs at Sol Duc. Leave plenty of time to wander wide-eyed around the Hoh rain forest, where twisting hemlocks create a Tolkien-esque fantasy world.](http://olympic</p>
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The Big-and-Bustling Capital

15

HOURS FROM NYC

FAR AND AWAY
NEW DELHI, INDIA

VISUAL OVERLOAD is inevitable in India's madcap capital. Beat the surge of tourists with a morning visit to Rajghat, the park along the (relatively) quiet Yamuna river, where Gandhi's remains were scattered; have your picture taken at India Gate, Delhi's ode to Paris; and admire the Qutab Minar, the city's best example of early Islamic architecture. Follow the narrow streets (or hail a rickshaw, but settle on a price before taking off) to one of the many bustling open-air markets—Dilli Haat has local arts and crafts; Khan features books, fabric, and music;

and the market alongside Hanuman Temple sells a rainbow array of bangles. At Sagar a few dollars will buy you a tray of South Indian dishes (dosas, sambar, rava idli), while the elegant Bukhara has some of the best tandoori in town. Stay at the serene Aman New Delhi (from \$550; amanresorts.com). The hotel can book a three-hour drive to see the famed Taj Mahal.

6

HOURS FROM NYC

CLOSER TO HOME
BOGOTÁ

AFTER YEARS OF DRUG-related violence, Bogotá has emerged as the new capital of South American cool. Stay in the heart of the colorful Candelaria at Abadia Colonial (from \$70; abadiacolonial.com), where the twelve simple, colonial-style rooms overlook three central courtyards. Ride the funicular up to the peak of Monserrate for the best city views, or rent a bike—the city is incredibly bike-friendly, with extensive bike lanes, and car-free roads on Sundays—and explore at ground level. On Sunday, go to the flea market at the Mercado de San Alejo, or embark on a neighborhood food crawl: The quaint Casa Vieja is a local favorite, as is the frenetic, always-packed meat palace Andrés Carne del Res.