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THE SUMMER VACATION

FOUR WEEKLONG, ADVENTUROUS OPTIONS
TO BOOK NOW.

BY LARRY OLMSTED

Combine an epic adventure with an epic destination to achieve the greatest summer vacation. Whichever outdoor pursuit you choose, there's a world-class way to enjoy it this summer, from the ultimate whitewater adventure to golfing in Greece, a five-star cowboy experience to the cyclist's dreamy *la dolce vita* itinerary. Each of the following recommendations sets a high bar for foodies, from Michelin stars to private wilderness barbecues to the world's finest wines. It's not just a summer vacation, it's THE summer vacation, and this year you can have it all. →

Kalamaris Waterfall,
Greece

Courtesy Costa Navarino



Courtesy Costa Navarino (6)



GOLF WITH THE GODS

Greece is famous for its many temples and monuments honoring mythological figures such as Zeus, Apollo, and Athena. It has also been one of the hottest travel destinations on Earth for the last several years, and many top spots are now overcrowded. But there's a new temple in Greece that not many visitors know about – a temple dedicated to golf, luxury, food, and good living. It's **Costa Navarino**, a gorgeous and extensive beachfront resort community on the stunning Bay of Navarino, where the decisive battle for Greek Independence was fought.

The fantasy of a bold local developer, Costa Navarino spans 2,500 acres and has changed the country's entire travel paradigm. Four world-class golf courses are there by renowned designers Bernhard Langer, Jose Maria Olazabal, and Robert Trent Jones II, along with four luxury hotels: Mandarin Oriental; The Romanos, A Luxury Collection Resort; W Costa Navarino; and The Westin Resort Costa Navarino. If those lodging choices don't suit, choose from an array of private villas to rent. Guests play through olive groves on their way to and from the stunning Mediterranean coastline, and there

is now more standout 18-hole golf in Costa Navarino than in the rest of the country combined.

But you do not have to love golf to love this resort, which has two pedestrianized villages full of cafés, restaurants, shops, and bars; gorgeous beaches; and a vast pool complex, spa, and fitness center at each hotel. Sporting facilities include branded academies for tennis (Serena Williams' coach Patrick Mouratoglou), basketball (NBA), and soccer (FC Bayern), plus a scuba center, miles of mountain biking and hiking trails, a marina with sailing and watersports, rock climbing, beach yoga, pickleball, padel, and even a water park for the young at heart. There are few other resorts in the world that rival the quality and quantity of outdoor activities at Costa Navarino – and none in Greece.

Enjoy local specialties like lamb, octopus, and fresh seafood or dip into global cuisines at more than 40 bars and restaurants. Many products, from honey to extra virgin olive oil, are produced on-site, and all of this is on the main Peloponnese peninsula, located three hours from Athens.

costanavarino.com →



ITALY BY BIKE

If you are a cyclist, there may be no destination on Earth that's more desirable than Italy. Of course, even if you are not a cyclist, the same holds true. But the pace of exploring on two wheels (whether under your own power or with the help of a motorized e-bike) is a perfect pairing with the laid-back "sweet life" that Italy is famous for and the slow food movement founded here. Because cycling is a national obsession on par with soccer, drivers are ultra-respectful and it's just a fabulous place to ride, even for the inexperienced.

DuVine Cycling + Adventure Co. is one

of the active travel industry's most acclaimed luxury tour operators. They are especially good for Italy because of their focus on gastronomy and wine. (The company's name is taken from French for "some wine.") This is key in a country where some of the best riding is in regions producing Chianti, Barolo, Barbera, Super Tuscans, and Brunello di Montalcino.

The classic ride is a six-day Tuscany trip, visiting Montalcino, Pienza, Siena, Florence, and small hill towns in between, with VIP winery tours, tastings, and luxury lodging, such as Borgo San Felice. But DuVine has a ton of options for Italy, including the Amalfi Coast,

Dolomites, Piemonte, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily, the less-visited Tuscany Coast, Verona, and Lake Garda – and for the avid cyclist, an epic seven-day crossing of the entire country, from the Adriatic to Ligurian Sea. For the culinary-obsessed, they offer two Chefs on Wheels Tours, riding with guest chefs and dining at their homes and eateries (including Michelin-starred standouts), plus cooking lessons and deep dives into local wines. All the trips are available as privates for your group, and for those who don't want to pack and unpack, they have a unique weeklong trip in Tuscany based entirely out of a private villa. duvine.com →



Courtesy Images: From Top: DuVine Cycling/Rupert Shanks; DuVine Cycling/Gwen Kidera. Opposite, Courtesy Images From Top: DuVine Cycling/Rupert Shanks; DuVine Cycling/Gwen Kidera (3).



Courtesy OARS/Dylan Silver (2). Opposite: Rob Asetline (5).



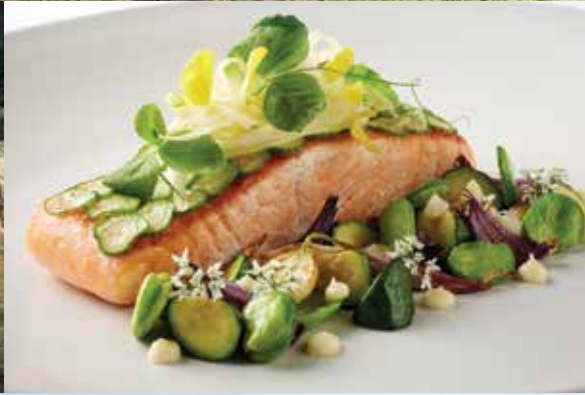
WET AND WILD IDAHO

Unlike heli-skiing, mountain biking, or many adventure sports, whitewater rafting is a rare adrenaline rush anyone can enjoy, no experience required, and it is at its best in stunning and pristine natural settings, from the Grand Canyon to Zimbabwe. But for river junkies, the mother of all raft trips is the legendary Middle Fork of the Salmon River, through Idaho's Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the largest federal wilderness area in the Lower 48 (as pristine as backcountry gets). It's remote, but you're not alone. The banks are popular with bears, elk, bighorn sheep, cougars, moose, deer, and bobcats; the rivers teem with otters and the skies with eagles and osprey.

"I always say, the Middle Fork of the Salmon is the best river trip in the country," says Steve Markle of **OARS**, America's most revered river outfitter, since 1969. "I first experienced the Middle Fork in 2002 and even after dozens of other river trips since then, it stands above the rest for its crystal-clear water and varied terrain that includes alpine forest, rolling grasslands, and the stunning Impassable Canyon where granite walls rise over 3,000 feet above the river. The whitewater is virtually nonstop, but super approachable, and the wildlife abundant. It truly is the crown jewel of the

National Wild and Scenic Rivers System."

Unlike many top rafting trips, the Salmon offers numerous opportunities to go ashore and enjoy side hikes to hot springs, waterfalls, and historic sites such as Native American petroglyphs, and it has world-class fly-fishing. The Middle Fork is usually done in six days and sits on or atop just about every list of world's best whitewater trips, with more than 100 Class III and IV rapids in 100 miles (almost nonstop action every day), plus great spots to camp and very clean water. OARS has won countless awards, including "Best River & Sea Outfitter on Earth" from *National Geographic Adventure*, and they also offer special themed trips here with an extra focus on wine, hiking, or fly-fishing, as well as private charters. The company carries well-maintained tents and camping equipment, and guides cook deluxe dinners each night, with hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and entrées such as grilled Northwest salmon, prime Idaho beef, and much more. For many first-time rafters, the quality of the moveable feast is as surprising as the scenery. For those who want a little less adrenaline, OARS has multiday rafting trips on the Lower and Main Salmon Forks, the same great scenery with calmer waters. oars.com →



THE BEST OF THE WEST IN WYOMING

There are working ranches, dude ranches, guest ranches, and luxury ranches, and then there is Wyoming's **Brush Creek Ranch** — on an entirely different level. Stunning lodging, food, and spa options are just the beginning, because there's also 30,000 acres' worth of outdoor activities. These include a full Wild West equestrian array, from trail rides to cattle drives, plus archery, shooting, ATV tours, many kinds of yoga in varied settings, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, llama hikes, and a ropes course. Make selections from a huge menu of fly-fishing options, including guided float and wading trips. (Winter adds snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; Brush Creek even has its own private ski and snowboard mountain.)

There is so much to do in the beautiful Wyoming outdoors that you may struggle to find time for indoor pursuits, many of which revolve around gastronomy. You can learn to make cheese in the standalone dairy creamery, bake breads and pastries in the bakery, bottle your own whiskey in the resort's full-scale distillery, take cooking classes, or enjoy guided wine tasting in a football-field length underground tunnel that houses one of the 10 largest wine collections in the world. You can tour the huge greenhouse farm that provides the resort kitchens with 80 different crops year-round, and the ranch raises its own high-end Wagyu beef. There's a hidden speakeasy, and as one of the most luxurious all-inclusive resorts in the world, gourmet food, wines, and spirits

are always included, but there is also a slate of specialty epicurean events, from visiting vintners to a James Beard Chef weekend. Choices are also tough when it comes to where to stay. Choose between Western-themed rooms in the main lodge and freestanding log cabins. Or there's a hidden, African safari-style glamping resort, plus two separate private retreats: the single-party French Creek and the resort-within-the-resort Magee Homestead with its own spa, restaurant, and bar. The Main Lodge has a fabulous spa and fitness center with a large slate of wellness activities, such as HIIT and guided meditation classes. If you thought a Wild West ranch experience meant roughing it, think again. brushcreekranch.com ♦

Courtesy Brush Creek Ranch (2); Opposite, Courtesy Images Counter-Clockwise From Bottom: Brush Creek Ranch/Nathan Kirkman (2); Brush Creek Ranch (3)

