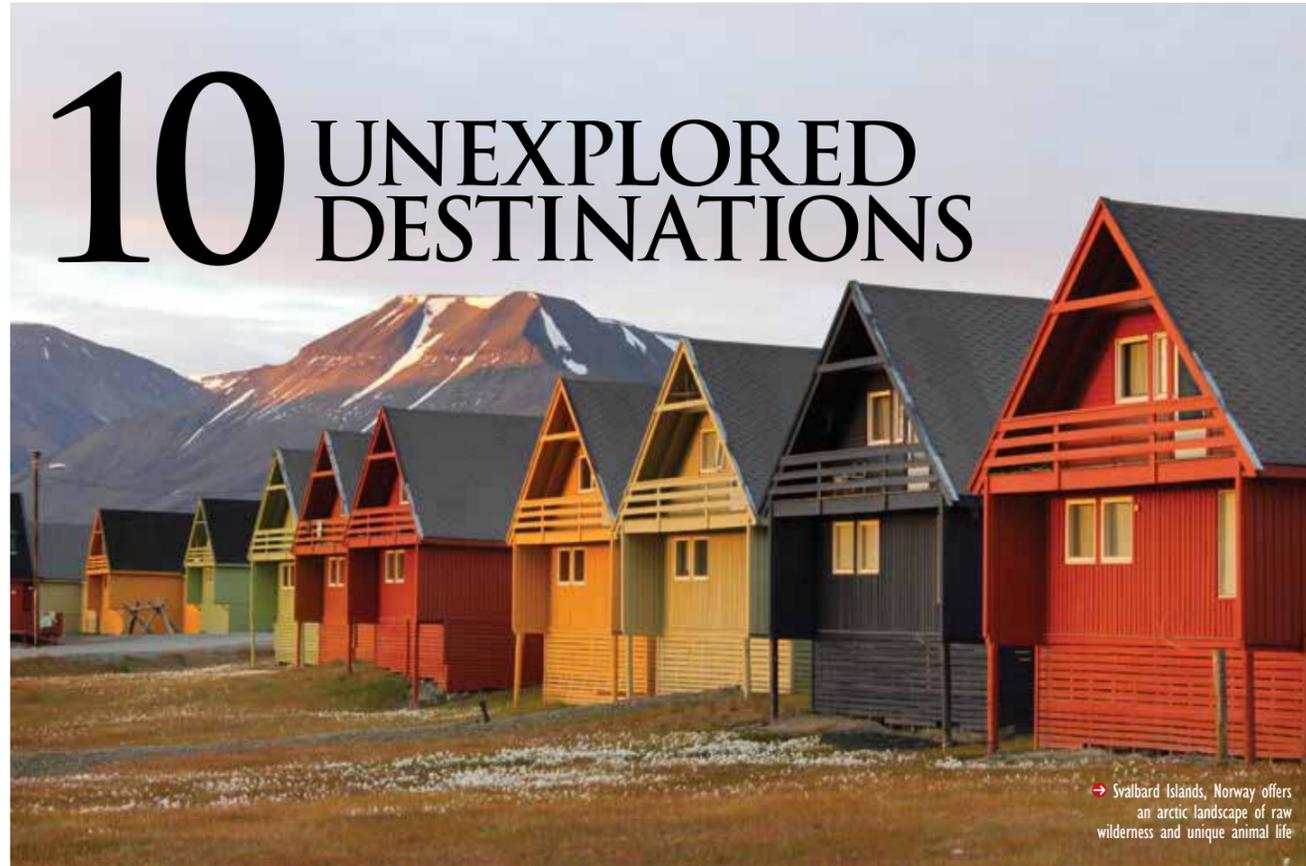


# 10 UNEXPLORED DESTINATIONS



→ Svalbard Islands, Norway offers an arctic landscape of raw wilderness and unique animal life



→ Utah has vibrant and historic spaces that are surrounded by natural beauty



→ Jawai, nestled in Rajasthan, is the most unusual and offbeat wildlife exploration in the country



→ Sindhudurg is surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the West, the Belgaum district (Karnataka state) and Goa on the South and the Ratnagiri district on the North, adding a lifetime memory to your travelogue



→ With history dating to over 7,000 years, Ras Al Khaimah is all about an authentic Arabian experience

...To watch out for. If you intend to make 2023 the year of travel, we have a curated list of destinations that will ensure that you can experience the best the world has to offer.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

Travel, in today's times, is all about experiences and going off the beaten path. Looking for unexplored destinations is high on the wish list for most people. Here is a list of destinations that experts believe will be popular in 2023.

## 1 SVALBARD, NORWAY

Svalbard Islands offers an arctic landscape of raw wilderness and unique animal life besides the energetic city of Longyearbyen. "For me, its international vibe, diversity of its residents, the various cultural offerings of shops, restaurants and bars in proximity to the North Pole stand out as the most unique experience available in the Arctic Archipelago region. Despite its remote location at 78°N, Svalbard can be easily accessed by a short flight from Oslo or Tromsø in Norway's mainland. Visitors are guaranteed a nature's real treat of majestic mountains, blue sea ice, endless glaciers all year round. The polar summers offer the midnight sun and an opportunity to see the most wildlife from May to August and intense winters make up for the spectacular Northern lights show besides the wildlife sighting of seals, walrus, and arctic foxes," says Mohit Batra, Country Head Scandinavian Tourist Board, India.



Offering the entire gamut of natural diversity makes Sindhudurg a rewarding destination for those who wish to tune out from the world in 2023 and enjoy awe-inducing vacation." -Aditya Gupta

(Karnataka state) and Goa on the South and the Ratnagiri district on the North, adding a lifetime memory to your travelogue.

"The coast is endowed with great natural beauty of serene beaches, picturesque mountains, lush green forests, and majestic forts. The region has very few luxury properties, but it does have some budget-friendly stays. Offering the entire gamut of natural diversity makes Sindhudurg a rewarding destination for those who wish to tune out from the world in 2023 and enjoy awe-inducing vacation. Travellers can enjoy everything from glorious beaches, majestic temples, mountainous trails and of course, the local culture," says Aditya Gupta, Senior Vice-President Hotels, Yatra.com.

## 2 SINDHUDURG, INDIA

Nestled in Maharashtra's Konkan coast, Sindhudurg is surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the West, the Belgaum district

## 3 UTAH, US

Utah, a landlocked state in West-



→ Finland and Nordic countries are becoming increasingly popular in India for both business and leisure

ern US, has vibrant and historic spaces that are surrounded by natural beauty. Home to the iconic Mighty 5 National Parks and the Greatest Snow on Earth, the city has nine national monuments, five national forests and 46 state parks. Access to skiing locations are easy, being near the airport. With its rugged landscapes that are dominated by red rocks, the city is known for its



The Jawai dam is one of the greatest gems, offering a superlative view of the river and the unending horizon dotted with crocodiles, flamingos, and other local birds." - Udit Kumar

film tourism and offers several kilometres of scenic drives. Having the highest concentration of certified International Dark Sky Parks in the world, this is the place to go for a full astro tourism itinerary.

## 4 JAWAI, INDIA

Jawai, nestled in Pali district in Rajasthan, is the most unusual and offbeat wildlife exploration in the country. The massive lava rocks here form natural caves that shelter a high population of leopards.

"While forging your own paths, driving from one boulder to the other, you are rewarded with epic sightings of the big cat and other wildlife such as striped hyena, wild fox, and nilgai. The Jawai dam is one of the greatest gems, offering a superlative view of the river and the unending horizon dotted with crocodiles, flamingos, and other local birds,"

says Udit Kumar, Co-founder, Brij Hotels.

## 5 RAS AL KHAIMAH, UAE

With history dating to over 7,000 years, Ras Al Khaimah is all about an authentic Arabian experience. With pristine beaches, lush mangrove trees and terracotta dunes as well as majestic Hajar Mountains, including Jebel Jais, the UAE's highest mountain peak where temperatures are around 10 degrees lower than sea level, Ras Al Khaimah is relatively off the tourist track.

World-class attractions include the world's first Bear Grylls Explorers Camp outside the UK featuring 16 cabins, as well as the highest restaurant in the UAE - 1484 by Puro. The Emirate is also home to the Jais Adventure Park, featuring exhilarating attractions such as the Jais Flight, the world's longest zipline; the Jais Sled-der, the region's longest toboggan ride; and the Jais Sky Tour, a series of six exhilarating zip lines.

Hemant Mediratta, Founder, One Rep Global that represents Ras Al Khaimah in India, says, "Ras Al Khaimah, just 45 minutes from Dubai, is the destination for Indians for 2023. Rightly called the 'nature emirate', the spectacular topography, ranging from the mountains to desert to ocean and beach, offers something for every kind of traveller."

## 6 LACHEN LACHAUNG, INDIA

These beautiful towns, also known as sister villages, are in North Sikkim. The emerald green river with white capped mountains takes you to a sight that is breathtaking.

The trekking trails of the place are not that easy, but it is natural to want to trek if the location is this beautiful. From walking on top of the ice-covered Lake Gurudongmar to indulging in the roadside chai and Maggi while being mesmerised by the snow at Kala Pathar, Lachen Lachaung is a perfect destination for adventure-filled holidays. Lachaung is less cold as compared to Lachen. Yumthang valley in Lachaung is another reason to visit the beautiful cities. The valley is blooming with flowers and feels like paradise on earth in summers, while in winters it is covered with snow with the sapphire blue water flowing from the white capped mountains.



◉ The emerald green river in North Sikkim holds white capped mountains which takes you to a sight that is breathtaking



◉ Hubli or Hubballi, nestled between Malenad and the Deccan plateau, offers a tropical wet and dry climate to its visitors



**Finland has a wealth of rare beauty and a truly unique ambience, with the summertime midnight sun and the wintertime Northern Lights."**  
- Sakari Romu

## 7 FINLAND

Finland and Nordic countries are also becoming increasingly popular in India for both business and leisure. From scattering islands in Europe's largest archipelago, to Finnish Lapland, the landscape is a pristine haven for nature lovers.

"Finland has a wealth of rare beauty and a truly unique ambience, with the summertime midnight sun and the wintertime Northern Lights. Finland is a year-round destination. Winters offer a great time for outdoor activities like hopping on ice-breakers, skiing and ice-swimming. Spring and fall are the best seasons to observe Northern Lights in Lap-



◉ Aletsch Arena in the Valais is a hub for family holidays with charming Alpine villages and three traffic free Alps



◉ Binsar is filled with birds, tall trees, solitude, and quaint villages at the fringes and its sanctuary

land. Foraging and vibrant fall foliage are best to be explored in late summer and autumn. Summer months are known for their white nights as the sun never sets, especially in Finnish Lapland. Big cities have interesting things to see and do all-year round as it's always sauna season," says Sakari Romu, General Manager, Finnair.

## 8 HUBLI, INDIA

Said to be the fastest growing city in the state of Karnataka, Hubli or Hubballi, nestled between Malenad and the Deccan plateau, offers a tropical wet and dry climate to its visitors.

"Apart from being known as an educational and industrial hub of Karnataka, the city is also famous for its beautiful hills and temples. It is also considered as a paradise for gastronomes due to its delectable food offerings. The rich past and architectural beauty of this city is alluring too," says Aditya Gupta, Senior Vice-President Hotels, Yatra.com.

## 9 ALETSCHE ARENA, SWITZERLAND

Aletsch Arena in the Valais is a hub for family holidays with charming Alpine villages and three traffic free Alps, and is a destination one should not miss in 2023.

Jungfrau-Aletsch Region is a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site and is a landscape with extraordinary beauty that offers striking mountain views. "With family-focused skiing options, extensive hiking paths, snowshoe trails and cross-country tracks, travellers can combine sport with sightseeing. The place also offers a 'First Ski Experience', where under guidance from skilled ski instructors, you get to race against your friends and family on the Aletsch Arena's powdery white slopes while soaking in the beautiful vistas all around. For travellers who love to be up on their feet, trekking across the longest glacier in the Alps over a two-day tour offers a close look at the eternal ice while hiking along the grand Aletsch Glacier over 23 kilometres. This hike starts on the 3,466-meter-high Jungfraujoch and leads to the Fiescheralp, taking in the Konkordiahütte on the way," says Ritu Sharma, Deputy Director, Switzerland Tourism.



**With family-focused skiing options, extensive hiking paths, snowshoe trails and cross-country tracks, travellers can combine sport with sightseeing at Jungfrau-Aletsch Region."**  
- Ritu Sharma

## 10 BINSAR, INDIA

One of the most picturesque destinations in the Kumaon region, Binsar is filled with birds, tall trees, solitude, and quaint villages at the fringes and inside the sanctuary that have their own stories to tell.

"The primeval forests of Binsar surrounded by the breathtaking views of Himalayas is the perfect destination to explore for a relaxed and rejuvenated getaway. Binsar is remote yet reachable, distinguishing it from any other hill station. It is away from the hustle bustle of the city, situated around one of the last virgin expanses of the wildernesses. Visitors will also take back fond memories of the local Kumaon culture and cuisine," says Siddharth Yadav, Vice President, MRS Group of Hotels whose portfolio includes Mary Budden Estate, Binsar. ■