**The Hobbyist’s Guide to Exploring the World**

***12 Fantastic Destinations for Special Interest Groups***

Hi there!

Thanks so much for downloading my free guide, *The Hobbyist’s Guide to Exploring the World*. I put this guide together because I truly believe that traveling is the BEST way to fuel our passions. Through travel, you can explore the birthplace of your hobby, make historical connections, and discover how your interests are being kept alive by artisans, scholars, and practitioners today.

Plus, as a group travel specialist, I’ve found that groups centered around a shared hobby get a *ton* out of traveling together. You not only strengthen your bonds through a group travel experience, you become even more invested in your shared passion. That’s powerful stuff! In this guide, you’ll find 6 common special interests and my personal travel recommendations for exploring each of those interests further.

Happy travels,

— Randy

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**1. So you’re interested in … Military History.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Normandy, France.** For WWII buffs and veterans, the beaches of Normandy are a must-visit pilgrimage, a sober reminder of the brave men and women who sacrificed their all for our future. But Normandy is so much more than the D-Day beaches—explore the American Military Cemetery to discover connections to the states and punch a ticket at small yet in-depth museums in the area.
2. **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.** Break out your muskets and button-lined military coats—a trip to the City of Brotherly Love is in order to celebrate America’s founding. In addition to Philly’s iconic sites—like the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall—save time for trips to Valley Forge National Historic Park and Brandywine Battlefield Park to get a glimpse of key Revolutionary War battlefields.

**2. So you’re interested in … Wine.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Bordeaux, France.** Any wine connoisseur worth his or her weight in grapes must make the trek to world-famous Bordeaux. Wineries here are home to what many consider some of the best wines in the world. Make reservations at iconic châteaux including Château d’Agassac, Château La Dominique, Château Franc-Mayne, and Château Gruaud Larose. Hire a private driver to class up your winery tours—and to make sure you can imbibe freely without having to think about navigating curvaceous French country roads!
2. **Mendoza, Argentina.** The wine world is shifting to … the New World. And Mendoza, the largest producer of wine in all of Latin America, may just be ground zero for imminently sippable Malbecs and other spicy reds. What’s more, the city is gorgeous, replete with art deco architecture set against the foothills of the Andes. The wine isn’t the only thing you’ll fall in love with on your Argentine adventure.

**3. So you’re interested in … Hiking.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Machu Picchu, Peru.** It’s the definition of a once-in-a-lifetime, bucket-list trip—and for hiking enthusiasts, it’s a total no-brainer. Climb ever higher at Machu Picchu to take in incredible vistas out over the ancient ruins and experience Peru’s unique flora and fauna (like the famously friendly llamas here). Machu Picchu trails only allow 500 trekkers a day to help preserve this special place for generations to come—so booking early is essential.
2. **Swiss Alps, Switzerland.** Channel your inner Maria von Trapp and soak in the crisp air and jagged peaks of the Swiss Alps. You can do several different day hikes in Zermatt, in the shadow of the world-famous Matterhorn. For even more of a challenge (and less crowded trails), pack up for a multi-day guided adventure across the Swiss Alps and into Chamonix, France. Stay at inns along your route to recoup in cozy surroundings.

**4. So you’re interested in … World Religions.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Rome, Italy.** As the seat of Catholic power for more than 1,000 years, Rome still pulsates with religious fervor. Take in the splendor of Vatican City, home to the Pope, ancient Roman sculptures, and Michelangelo’s jaw-dropping Sistine Chapel. Many of Rome’s most famous tourist stops are actually important religious sites. For example, the Pantheon still operates as a church today, and you can even attend Mass on Saturdays and Sundays.
2. **Jerusalem, Israel.** Jerusalem holds interest for travelers of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths—all three religions consider it a holy city. Here, you can walk in the footsteps of Jesus, climb to the top of the Mount of Olives and Temple Mount, and feel the weight of sorrows at the Wailing Wall. With so much religious history to take in, Jerusalem is best experienced with a knowledgeable guide.

**5. So you’re interested in … Food and Cooking.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Portugal.** With culinary influences from across Europe—and even farther afield from Morocco—Portugal is a food lover’s dream. In sun-baked Lisbon, seafood reigns supreme. Don’t pass up a chance, though, to start your morning with a *pastel de nata*, a delicious custard pastry invented by monks in the 1700s. Travel northward to Porto to indulge in rich roasted and cured meats, and wash it all down with a visit to one of the city’s many picturesque port houses.
2. **Belize.** From marinated pork to corn-wrapped tamales, you can find many of your Latin American favorites in Belize. But seafood is the real standout. There’s *sere*, the fish soup flavored with coconut and sweetened with plantain. There’s fish-filled *panades*, Belize’s answer to the empanada. And so much more—including succulent in-season lobster and conch and abundant red snapper.

**6. So you’re interested in … the Dance.**

**What you should add to your bucket list:**

1. **Vienna, Austria.** It’s no surprise that Vienna is the birthplace of the waltz. The splendid architecture and gilded palaces seem to reflect the elegance of this ballroom staple. While in Vienna, take in a ballet at the gorgeous state opera building, then take a class—or better yet, don your finest for a fancy ball—so you can get your waltz on.
2. **Miami, Florida.** Things heat up down south—*way* south. Book your trip to Miami to sizzle and step your way through the salsa-loving city. Most of the action is centered around Little Havana. When the sun goes down, get in the velvet-roped line to enter one of Miami’s hottest Latin dance clubs, like Ball & Chain or Hoy Como, where greats like Billie Holliday and Frank Sinatra once crooned. Many clubs offer salsa dancing lessons earlier in the evenings!