

FOR HOTEL PACKAGES,
SPECIAL OFFERS AND
TRAVEL DEALS.



The Seattle Times Company

[NWjobs](#) | [NWautos](#) | [NWhomes](#) | [NWapartments](#) | [NWsource](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [seattletimes.com](#)

The Seattle Times

TRAVEL / OUTDOORS



51°F

[Weather](#) | [Traffic](#)
[Today's news index](#)
[Low-graphic version](#)
[RSS feeds](#)

[Home](#) | [Local](#) | [Nation/World](#) | [Business/Tech](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Travel/Outdoors](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [NWsource](#)

[Movies](#) | [Restaurants](#) | [Today's events](#)
[Your account](#) | [Log in](#) | [Contact us](#)
 Our network sites seattletimes.com

Sunday, March 2, 2008 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

[E-mail article](#) | [Print view](#) | Share: [Digg](#) | [Newsvine](#)

These days, travel is an adventure — on purpose

By Megan K. Scott
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Forget the tan, the Mickey Mouse photos and the cliché souvenirs.

Increasingly, travelers want adventure.

Of course, an adventure is in the eye of the traveler, ranging from a walking tour to white-water rafting. But because of that, it remains relatively unaffected by the weak dollar and economic downturn, says David Larkin, managing director of [AdventureUs.com](#), a social networking and directory for adventure travelers.

Here, according to the experts, are some of the latest trends in adventure travel:

Girlfriend getaways: More women are leaving the men at home. More than 50 percent of adventure travelers are women, and most fall between the ages of 41 and 60, according to a 2006 survey by the ATTA. "We used to think of active holidays for 20-somethings," says Evelyn Hannon, creator of [journeywoman.com](#), an online travel resource for women. "Now it's not unheard of for 50- and 60-year-olds to be going kayaking, mountain climbing, surfing."

Volunteer vacations: Combining volunteerism with vacation continues to be a growing trend; Global Volunteers saw a 30 percent increase in participation last year, according to co-founder Michele Gran. Baby boomers still rule, she says, but the fastest-growing demographic in the last 18 months has been people under age 20, more than likely baby boomers who bring their children with them.

Expeditionary travel: More people are helping researchers through the Earthwatch Institute, an international volunteer organization supporting science. Expeditions include surveying coral reefs on a remote Bahamian island or feeding and caring for cheetahs in Namibia. Most of the trips are two weeks, and no special training is required. (Exceptions may be trips that require scuba-diving certification or a high fitness level). Other examples include conservation-minded tours to watch giant sea turtles lay their eggs in coastal areas of the Southeastern U.S., Mexico and Costa Rica.

Charity travel: Think an extreme version of a walkathon. Venture Expeditions, a Christian-based organization, sponsors trips to raise awareness and funds for various organizations, such as biking through Thailand to raise money for an orphanage. Travelers pay for the trip and then make a minimum donation to the charity.

Action-packed vacations: Some people call action-packed vacations "The Bucket List," for the movie starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, two terminally ill patients who want to complete a list of things to do before they kick the bucket. Ultimate 5 Lifetime Adventures packs five of what it calls the world's greatest adventures into one week: a military-developed Ropes Challenge Course, skydiving, Indy car racing, rappelling and piloting a primary combat trainer aircraft.

More Travel

NEW - 12:57 PM

[Air France tests in-flight phone service for passengers](#)

NEW - 01:25 PM

[Four more U.S. airlines under fire from FAA for missing safety inspections](#)

NEW - 12:53 PM

[Man charged with bringing explosives on plane wanted "to show off bomb-making skills"](#)

NEW - 02:46 PM

[More flights canceled at Heathrow: British Airways seeks help with thousands of misplaced bags](#)

UPDATE - 01:36 PM

[United Grounds 777s for Inspections](#)

Family adventure vacations: Some families (including multigenerational) are forgoing theme parks and all-inclusive resorts for "more genuine nature-based, cultural and education and learning excursions," says Doyle. He attributes this in part to baby boomers who have the means to travel "coupled with a strong interest in bonding more deeply with families." [GordonsGuide.com](#), a Web site on adventure and active travel, says the top vacation requests are all family friendly — dude and guest ranches, houseboat rentals, white-water rafting and horse pack trips.

Soft adventure vacations: More people are choosing a vacation that centers around a theme, such as a culinary tour in Asia or wine vacation in Israel. Yoga has also seeped into the mix. Best of Both Women's Adventures has yoga on all of its trips and a specific yoga and surf vacation in Puerto Rico. (Surfing is one of the top activities women want to do, says Dez Bartelt, co-founder of Best of Both Women's Adventures.) Other combinations include yoga and snowboarding or yoga and wine tasting.

Expedition cruising: Look for more people to take expedition cruises to Antarctica, the Galapagos and Alaska, three places that are hard to see without sailing there, says Carolyn Spencer Brown, editor-in-chief of [CruiseCritic.com](#). The cruises, while less glitzy than big-ship cruise lines, include lectures and presentations about the place. "On an expedition cruise, everything revolves really around what you see off the ship," says Brown. "On the big-ship cruises, everything revolves around what happens on board, and the ports are sort of an addendum."

Roots vacations: With more people swabbing their cheek to find their roots, some are taking it a step further and traveling to the places their ancestors lived. Discover Natural Ancestry ([amazingdna.com](#)) not only provides DNA analysis and genealogy services, it also puts people in touch with tour operators. "If they are breathing, then they have a genetic story hidden within them, and we help them to discover and explore the unknown secrets about their heritage," says Yvonne Walker, marketing director for Discover Natural Ancestry.

Copyright © 2008 The Seattle Times Company

 [E-mail article](#)  [Print view](#)