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Features

## Exploring new frontiers through adventure travel in retirement

Article By: Helen Burnett-Nichols

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Adventure travel among retirees and baby boomers is growing. Here's a look at some of the top trips and things to consider before you book.

For some people, retirement is all about adventure — trying new hobbies, starting a business or visiting places you've never been before. If you crave a different experience and a chance to venture off the beaten path, you're not alone. Increasingly, many retirees and baby boomers are looking at adventure travel.

According to an August 2010 *Adventure Tourism Market Report* by George Washington University, the Adventure Travel Trade Association and Xola Consulting<sup>1</sup>, baby boomers are one of the main categories of adventure travellers today. Xola Consulting notes that 19% of adventure travellers are aged 50 to 74.<sup>2</sup>

Ben Weiher, global operations manager for [Gap Adventures](#), says interest in adventure travel from this particular demographic has been growing considerably.

“People are generally living healthier, [and] longer over the last several decades, and these individuals are wanting to travel,” he says. “And they’re looking for other options instead of your cruise and all-inclusive type packages,” he adds.

Here’s a look at the top adventure trips often chosen by retirees:

- **Polar expeditions to Antarctica and the Arctic:** Differing from what you can expect on a standard cruise ship, travellers board an expedition ship to experience the mountains, icebergs, glaciers and wildlife in a dynamic environment where wind, weather, scenery and wildlife can differ day to day. “It’s a bit of an adventure to get to these regions and then while there, you’re able to get off the ship into Zodiacs,” says Weiher, “to cruise around the channels to get an up-close look at wildlife and scenery.” (Fodor’s also named Antarctica as one of its top 7 *Adventure Travel Without the Adrenaline* trips for 2010.)<sup>3</sup>
- **Galapagos/Ecuador:** With the opportunity to check out wildlife, natural history, geology, scenery and even swim or snorkel, Weiher says this is a top destination for retirees. This type of trip also provides interpretive lectures, organized walks through the island and a chance to see the wildlife up close.
- **Peru:** Sites such as Machu Picchu, the Andes Mountains, the jungle and Lake Titicaca are of incredible interest to archaeology and history buffs, says Weiher. While hiking the famous Inca Trail has been a big hit, so have other travel options involving trains, sightseeing along the way and a guided tour of Machu Picchu, for example.
- **Egypt:** Egypt is a classic tourist destination, with retirees heading to the country to visit the pyramids, the archaeology, the temples, the White Desert and even the beach for some relaxation incorporated into part of the trip.
- **Other top destinations include Southeast Asia** (the culture, food and temples of Vietnam and Thailand), **Costa Rica** (the rainforest, jungle and beaches) and **Tanzania/East Africa** (one of Fodor’s picks, safari excursions are top of the list for photography and wildlife enthusiasts).

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[Bill](#) 5 days ago

Interesting that your post features a photo of Machu Picchu. For when my wife and I retired, we moved to the Peruvian Andes and there lived in a poor community doing volunteer work. Yes, we traveled throughout Peru and elsewhere in South America, and our travels were wonderful. But more wonderful was actually living among the Peruvian people and working with them side by side. That experience gained us, not only friends from another culture, but a new dimension in our lives. Bill

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