

THE BOCA RATON observer

THE ESSENTIAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE



KRINGLE ALL THE WAY

FOUR SANTAS (AND
A MRS. CLAUS) ARE
COMIN' TO TOWN

EIGHT CRAZY NIGHTS

PUT ON YOUR YARMULKE,
IT'S TIME FOR HANUKKAH

THE CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE CRAZE

SOUTH FLORIDA'S
CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK

UNFORGETTABLE TRIPS TO
RING IN THE NEW YEAR

THE
HOLIDAY
ISSUE

Life is SWEET

DECEMBER 2011

CANDY QUEEN **DYLAN LAUREN**
CHATS ABOUT FASHION, FAMILY
AND HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

ROCK *Around The* CLOCK

By Cheryl Blackerby

Six Unforgettable Trips To Ring In The New Year

1) Mount Kilimanjaro | 2) Times Square | 3) Musha Cay, Bahamas
4) Vienna's Imperial Ball | 5) The Orient-Express | 6) African Safari





New Year's Eve rarely lives up to expectations. Excitement builds for the big night, which generally ends with the anticlimactic countdown in Times Square on TV, a perfunctory glass of Champagne and *yawn*... onto bed.

But what if—and this is strictly hypothetical—your new year was influenced by the way you welcomed it? If you had a fabulous over-the-top celebration, would it help bring a fabulous over-the-top year? Would a wild adventure in the hours around midnight jump-start 2012, that mysterious blank slate so full of promise and potential?

With that possibility in mind, here are six incredible New Year's Eve trips that are sure to raise the bar for the days to come. How about waltzing with aristocrats in a European palace? Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro on safari? A midnight ride on the famed Orient-Express? Renting a private island owned by David Copperfield in the Bahamas? Or starring in your own documentary on a helicopter tour in Africa? And, OK, watching the ball drop at Times Square—but in person and with room service and a bathroom, and with Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber performing live. And see how the year unfolds.



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Reach For The Clouds At Mount Kilimanjaro

You want to reach new heights in 2012? Perhaps you should start the year with a climb to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa at 19,340 feet, rising dramatically out of the flat plains in Tanzania near the border of Kenya. The mountain's iconic ice cap is disappearing, but still visible, a sight that never fails to steal the breath.

International Mountain Guides' trip includes a seven-day climb to the summit (December 19-January 2), which allows for more fun and less chance of altitude sickness, and a four-day safari tour in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro game parks with stays in luxurious safari lodges and deluxe tented camps.

"There is more to a Kilimanjaro climb than simply standing on the roof of Africa," says Adam Angel, a veteran Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Everest expedition guide. "No doubt the mountain is impressive, but there is also a vibrant and organic quality to the whole experience. This includes the hardworking porters and guides that accompany our climb. These great friends carry our gear, set up tents,

cook for us and provide boundless inspiration. They are a huge part of the experience, and one of the reasons that we like to go back again and again."

The climb starts in pastures and grasslands, then winds through the rainforest past orchids and giant heathers that grow up to 30 feet tall. Buffalo, elephants and big cats have been seen, and birdlife is especially abundant on the Shira Plateau. Only lichens (plants consisting of fungus and alga) survive on the upper mountain. The guides and porters are local people from the Chagga tribe who live at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro.

"It's so rewarding to start the climb in a lush rainforest and climb into the Arctic conditions on the summit," says Angel. "Every day is a new experience and dramatic contrast from the day before."

And picture it: On the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, you'll be in a luxurious lodge on the rim of the spectacular Ngorongoro Crater.

For more information about International Mountain Guides' Mount Kilimanjaro trip, 360-569-2609 or visit mountainguides.com.





Have A Ball (Drop) In Times Square

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If you insist on watching the ball drop in New York City's Times Square, at least do it right.

Book a room with a view of Times Square at the Marriott Marquis and watch the event from the comfort of your own fashionable suite with access to room service and a bathroom.

Turn on the TV so you have a soundtrack of the events and concerts. Then dress up and go to the hotel's premier New Year's Eve party for food, music and an open bar.

Or, check into the hotel the day before so you can line up outside along with

1 million other people for primo views of Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga at the 40th annual "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest."

People start to gather in the afternoon in the middle of Times Square and stay there all the way through midnight. All the live performances that are produced by the TV networks are free to the public; no tickets are required, just patience and a willingness to stand outside for a long time to get a great spot. Just hope the weather is decent.

After midnight, you can duck back into the hotel for warmth and food.

If you want to stay in the hotel for New Year's Eve, don't miss the Ultimate

New Year's Eve Party in Times Square in the hotel's Broadway Lounge, with live music, open bar, a buffet and party favors. Wear a mask for this masquerade theme party. Or dine at the hotel's The View, New York's only revolving rooftop restaurant located 48 stories above Times Square (the revolving floor makes a 360-degree turn every hour).

At this downtown location, you're in a great position to enjoy Manhattan during the first days of 2012. Not a bad way to start the New Year.

For information about New Year's Eve at the Marriott Marquis or to make party reservations, call 212-704-8747; for room reservations, call 800-843-4898 or visit nymarriottmarquis.com.



3 Go Island Hopping At Musha Cay, Bahamas

How's this for a great New Year's Eve: You and 20 or so friends ensconced in five beachfront villas with the run of 11 tiny Bahamian islands to call your own. You are there for five days—swimming, snorkeling, fishing, working out in the resort's own private gym, with massages, yoga, tennis and scuba diving on the agenda. Or you can hang out under a palm tree on a pristine beach with no one in sight.

Musha Cay, and its five villas, and another 10 uninhabited islands in the Exumas are owned by magician David Copperfield. Other guests before you have included Penelope Cruz and Bill Gates.

"When I acquired these islands, I made a personal commitment to transform this already perfect place into the most magical vacation destination in the world," says Copperfield in his welcome letter to

guests on his island. Many of his own treasures are on the island; you can even play on Houdini's championship billiards table.

The villas have a total of 12 bedrooms and each house has a private beach, living and dining areas, flat-screen satellite TV and butler service. The largest villa is the 10,000-square-foot Highview, a dramatic hilltop building with a soaring living pavilion, two grand master bedroom suites, a loft and 360-degree views of the island.

The smallest house is the romantic one-bedroom Beach House, a thatched-roof open-air cottage facing a private beach.

Something for everyone.

Dining can be a candlelight dinner on the main dock or at The Landings with windows on four sides. Or you can dine at the Musha Cay Balinese

Beach Pavilion with billowing white fabrics, teak beams and lights from hundreds of candles.

Following dinner, you can relax in the games area or the karaoke theater, or take a midnight stroll on one of the white-sand beaches. Or go for a midnight dip in the pool. Or watch a movie on the big outdoor screen.

Your stay is sure to be magical.

For more information about Musha Cay, call 208-309-1106, e-mail mushacay@kurtzahlers.com or visit mushacay.com.



Waltz The Year Away At Vienna's Imperial Ball

It's New Year's Eve and look at you, gorgeous in your Cinderella gown waltzing under the crystal chandeliers with your princely mate in Vienna's magnificent Hofburg Palace. The orchestra plays Johann Strauss' *The Blue Danube* and the bell of St. Stephens Cathedral rings at the stroke of midnight.

The Imperial Ball (Kaiserball) is the official start of Vienna, Austria's social season. More than 2,500 guests from 30 nations walk through the palace gates for one of the most anticipated events of the European winter calendar.

"For me, the most exciting moment is when guests are arriving at the Hofburg and you see their glittering eyes when they are entering the palace, being overwhelmed by the historic ambience of the Hofburg," says Regina Macho, Imperial Ball organizer.

The Hofburg Palace, the former home of the Habsburg dynasty and now the official residence of the President of Austria Heinz Fischer, is one of the largest secular buildings in the world. The state rooms, open for guests, offer a rare chance to stroll through history—the

oldest wing of the palace was built in the 13th century.

Guests are greeted by footmen dressed in livery who give the ladies small gifts. The historic changing of the guard is performed by the Imperial Guard in the palace's entrance hall, and cocktails are served to the strains of the Hofball Orchestra.

The Viennese Operetta Gala, which takes place shortly after midnight, features singers and dancers from the Vienna State Opera and the Volksoper. After midnight, everyone is invited to join in the

popular public quadrille, a dance performed by four couples in a square formation, to the strains of Strauss' *Fledermaus-Overture*.

You can attend the four-course dinner, where waiters in livery serve a sumptuous dinner that ends with Viennese Dandies from the Court Bakery.

For more information and tickets to the Vienna Imperial Ball, call 011 43 1 5873666 or visit hofburg.com (click on Kaiserball). Allegro Holidays offers Imperial Ball/hotel packages; call 800-838-6860 or visit allegroholidays.com.

Ride Back To The Future Aboard The Orient-Express

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All aboard at Victoria Station in London to depart for a midnight ride on the famed Venice Simplon Orient-Express.

You will celebrate the New Year with a festive dinner, Champagne and fine wines aboard the British Pullman's ornate carriages. Shortly before midnight, the train will make a stop at a station, where you will disembark and welcome the New Year with a traditional Scottish piper. After all, *Auld Lang Syne* is a poem by Scottish poet Robert Burns.

Seated in vintage carriages that once ran on legendary 1920s services such as the Brighton Belle and Golden

Arrow, you will be served a five-course gourmet feast with music and entertainment by a musician.

But a tour through the historic carriages, some used extensively by the British royal family, is entertainment enough. Each has its own story to tell. The Audrey carriage, for example, was damaged by an air raid in 1940, but repaired and carried the Queen, Queen Mother and H.R.H. Prince Philip to review the Fleet in 1953. Two cars were part of Winston Churchill's funeral train. All of the cars have been restored to their 1920s splendor.

Unfortunately, the train doesn't continue onward to Istanbul, but this

six-hour special event that departs from and returns to Victoria Station gives you a wonderful taste of one of the most glamorous train trips in the world. Elegant evening attire is a must.

Other Orient-Express New Year's Eve events: A six-hour round-trip journey on the Northern Belle, leaving out of Liverpool, also with dinner, Champagne, fine wine and entertainment. The six dining carriages display marquetry, fabrics and brass fittings specifically commissioned from British craftsmen.

You can go farther afield on the three-night Eastern & Oriental Express' New Year's Eve journey

from Bangkok to Singapore. You will travel across Thailand to the River Kwai and onwards to Malaysia, colonial Georgetown and Fort Cornwallis before crossing the causeway over the Straits of Johor to Singapore.

For more information about Orient-Express and its New Year's Eve events, call 800-524-2420 or visit orient-express.com.





Photos courtesy of Brown + Hudson © The Uganda Safari Company

★ Star In Your Own African Wildlife Documentary

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Appear in your own East African wildlife documentary, shot and produced by Academy Award-nominee Alan Root while traveling for 14 days in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania by helicopter.

Besides spotting the Big Five (lion, African elephant, cape buffalo, leopard and rhinoceros) on travelers' wildlife-most-desired-to-photograph list, you will track some of the rarest creatures on Earth including mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. You will go behind the scenes with a leading elephant conservationist, accompanying him on a collaring and de-tusking mission, and meet other world-famous scientists.

The Eurocopter pilot flies BBC documentary crews around Africa, so you are in good hands. Root, who grew up in Kenya, has won some 60 awards (including Emmys) for his wildlife films. He has walked the Serengeti with Robert Redford and showed Dian Fossey her first gorilla. And on your trip, he films you on your African journey. Whether or not the film is submitted to Sundance Film Festival is up to you.

On the first day, you'll circle Mount Kenya before landing in the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. If you have the energy, you can go with Root and your pilot to the slopes of Mount Kenya and fly-fish for huge rainbow trout.

While in Kenya, you'll take a majestic sunset flight over Lake Bogoria and see thousands of pink flamingos, and stay at the romantic Desert Rose on Mount Nyiru. With a little luck, you will catch up with Richard Leakey's daughter Louise as she continues her father's paleontological research.

The bad roads in Uganda make travel difficult, but by helicopter seeing the country's glacier-topped mountains and remote villages is a breeze. You can take a walking safari with Root to photograph lions, leopards, cheetahs, elephants, giraffes, zebras and more. You also will visit the Kibale Forest National

Park for encounters with its famed chimpanzees.

In Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, you'll come face to face with some of the 330 mountain gorillas—about half the population left in the world.

This is a trip to remember, and it will be easy with your own documentary.

For more information about the East Africa Helicopter Trip: Brown + Hudson, call 011 44 203 358 0110 (London office), e-mail enquiries@brownandhudson.com or visit brownandhudson.com. ○