

How the ultra-rich are traveling during covid, according to their travel advisers

Forget about renting private yachts and jets. They're just buying them now.



(Illustration by Bea Crespo for The Washington Post)

By [Natalie B. Compton](#)

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Pandemic travel has looked a little different for the rich. While the everyman debated whether it was safe enough to visit family for the holidays, there was the Kardashian [who used a loophole](#) to go to Paris when the border was closed, or the other Kardashian who [rented out a private island](#) in Tahiti for her birthday.

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But brief backlash hasn't stopped the wealthy from returning to travel. After a year of being confined to their one, two or three homes, they are spending more than ever on vacations to make up for lost time. So what does a dream pandemic vacation look like when you've already been everywhere and bought everything? That's the question travel advisers for [ultra-high-net-worth individuals](#) have to ask themselves on a regular basis.

We spoke to three travel advisers about what kinds of trips they're planning for the 1 percent.

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It's more about the journey than the destination

At the luxury travel company [Brown and Hudson](#), founder Philippe Brown calls on the "art and science of luxury travel" to design vacations for the elite.

"We apply scientific principles to the travel that we plan — principles like hedonic adaptation," Brown said. For example, to combat hedonic adaptation, the concept of getting used to or bored of something (even a really, really good thing), Brown plans ahead to keep his clients impressed day after day. That may be as simple as changing a client's accommodation after a few days so the view doesn't become blasé.

Right now, Brown said, he is getting more clients who come to him with a desired feeling vs. a specific destination, which hasn't been the norm in past years.

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"Initial conversations are more interesting and a bit more fuzzy because people are talking about 'I want to feel energized' or 'I want to be vital again,'" Brown said. "People of a certain age ... they want to do stuff that makes them feel like they've achieved something beyond paying off the mortgage, having a jet, a car, whatever it is."

For a client to feel a sense of adventure, Brown has planned a "luxepedition" across Madagascar. For a dad to feel closer to his son, Brown planned a U.S. [road trip](#) that included pop-up drive-in movies in unexpected locations, and he arranged for them to meet celebrities in Hollywood.

They're pushing the boundaries of virtual experiences

To meet the needs of a few clients, Brown is working with a company in the United Kingdom called Immersive to create personalized virtual experiences that are far more engaging than staring at a screen.

The plan involves hiring people to follow a client during travel to capture footage of their trip, or gathering footage that already exists, that can be woven together to build a virtual experience coupled with physical stimulation delivered by haptic bodysuit.

"One client is interested in revisiting a place as they experienced it when they were young," Brown said. "So there it's a whole augmented reality experience where you're using footage of the place and turning it into an experience to live at home."

The cost of creating these virtual experiences starts around \$400,000. Brown said he believes these kinds of virtual experiences will continue to appeal to wealthy clients well after the pandemic.

"I envisage a time when our website will have two ways in," he said. "One will be virtual experiences and one will be physical experiences."

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