



SundayTravel

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS
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Brave a new world

Our travel writer shares his top picks of where to go in 2018

BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER | GLOBE STAFF

Last summer, an online travel booking site released a study that was fascinating, not because it was about some kooky new millennials-only eco-adventure travel fad, but because it was an honest assessment of American travel habits.

The study, conducted by edreams.net, found that most US travelers were kind of boring. Actually, very boring.

The top three domestic vacation spots were Orlando (winning by a whopping 43 percent), followed by New York and then Las Vegas. Top international vacation spots were Mexico, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The Bahamas, coming in at number four, was about as exotic and adventurous as the majority of Americans got when it came to exploring the world.

I understand the Disney phenomenon, but Orlando as the top domestic travel destination? It's about as inspired as tepid oatmeal.

Another study released in November by the booking website Jetcost found that 61 percent of US

residents said they have never traveled outside of the 48 states. Many of the 5,000 Americans surveyed said that if they had been outside the country, it was to Canada, Mexico, or one of the nearby islands.

The expense of travel was the reason 43 percent of respondents said they hadn't traveled outside the United States, but half said they haven't vacationed outside the country because they don't know another language. Personal safety and distrust of foreign food were other reasons cited. The expense of travel is a very reasonable reason to stay local. Do you know what's not reasonable? Staying local because you distrust food in other countries.

What this information tells me is that it's time for me to grab a walking stick, slip into some Sherpa couture (does Hugo Boss make kitycows with coordinating chhubas?) and guide, nudge, and prod my fellow Americans to check out some places they may not have previously considered.

Here, in absolutely no particular order, is my list of top destinations you should visit in 2018. Please note that Orlando is not among them. Safe travels and please make it your mission to embrace exotic food in 2018.

San Antonio

The second most populous city in Texas celebrates its tricentennial this year with more than 500 special events. More importantly, San Antonio is finally stepping out of cooler-than-thou Austin's nearby shadow. The Pearl, once a 23-acre brewery complex, has been transformed into a neighborhood of local shops and restaurants. The River Walk (below), a formerly bland tourist trap, has grown into 15 miles of trails that connect the city's beautiful missions to the Pearl. There's also time for introspection at the newly expanded botanical garden.

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GRENADA

Underwater sculpture park (above)



Inside
NEW HAMPSHIRE
CULTIVATING
A SENSE OF
COMMUNITY
In Exeter,
the Word Barn is
housing creativity
M5

Secure options to protect your home

By Kari Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Leaving on a trip, whether for business or pleasure, should leave you with peace of mind that all is well at home. Little can stamp out great vacation memories more than coming home to discover your house has been robbed. As you plan your next adventure, prepare for holiday travels, or ar-

range for your next work trip, take some time to assess your home security.

You can take many steps to ensure your home remains safe, from beefing up lighting and making sure doors and windows are secure, to adding a simple do-it-yourself security system.

"Most people install a home security sys-

HOME SECURITY, Page M4



Wisenet D1 video doorbell

Protect your home while you are away

► HOME SECURITY *Continued from Page M1*

tem after their home is broken into,” says Robert Siciliano, a Boston-based security expert and CEO of idtheftsecurity.com. “Ninety percent of home security systems are installed after something happens. Most people understand what they’re supposed to do to protect their home, but they don’t do anything about it because they think it can’t happen to them. That’s denial. Two million homes are broken into annually.”

According to experts, most burglaries occur during the day when people are less likely to be home, and during the summer months and holidays. Protect your home by adding as many layers of security as you can.

Before you consider a home security system and the many products on the market, you

can take some basic steps to make your home more impenetrable. First, make sure you always lock your doors and close any windows that can be easily accessed from ground level or decks.

“The vast majority of burglars are amateurs, and the data shows that they go in through open or unlocked doors and windows,” says Leonard Sipes, a former senior specialist in crime prevention for the Department of Justice and the director of information for the National Crime Prevention Council. “When forcible entry is required, they kick the door down. These people are easy to defeat and deter.”

Ideally, install solid-core or fire-rated metal doors. “Older houses may not come with those,” says Siciliano. “If not, the next best thing is to invest in door reinforcement technol-



ogies, when you beef up the components of the actual door frame — the hinges and the jamb — so it’s not easy to shoulder the door or kick it in. You can install a steel plate into your door jamb, which is under \$100 and well worth the investment.”

Door Devil makes a door jamb reinforcement kit that includes a 48-inch steel anti-kick plate, hinge bolts, and door hardware made of 22-gauge steel, all of which makes your door able to withstand 2,000 pounds of force.

“With a lot of doors, it just takes one swift kick and it will swing open,” says security expert Chris McGoe, who runs Crime School, a security consulting firm in Los Angeles. “My door is so strong, you could kick it all day until your foot falls off and you won’t get in. I have a solid door with a Grade 1 deadbolt secured to a strike plate.”

Schlage makes the steel Schlage Sense Smart Deadbolt, a keyless lock that can be installed on your front door and offers easy entry by punching in your security code. Use the company’s free Android or Apple app to program up to 30 codes for friends or family. You can even schedule times when you allow trusted people to enter your home, and view the history to see when people unlocked your door. Add the Schlage Sense Wi-Fi Adapter to connect the lock to your Wi-Fi system, enabling you to control the lock from anywhere in the world using your smartphone. With remote access, you can double-check that you locked the door and lock it from afar when you’re on the road.

If your windows have old latches, McGoe suggests replacing those or putting a dowel or stick in the track to prevent the windows from being opened. Consider adding glass-break or open/close sensors on the windows. Also, think about adding motion sensor lights outside, and making sure the exterior of your home is well lit, including areas around hedges or trees where someone could hide. Lights that turn on or even sound an alarm when they sense motion can work wonders for spooking a would-be burglar.

When you leave home don’t put a spare key in any obvious places, such as under the front door mat or in the flower pot on the porch. It’s better to leave a key with a trusted neighbor.

“It’s important that your neighbors are engaged,” says McGoe. “We live in an age when people don’t know their neighbors anymore. My wife

and I are always sending food back and forth with our neighbors, giving each other lifts, and sharing things. If you’re neighbors care about you, they’re going to look after you.”

You can ask one of your neighbors to scoop up your mail and packages, remove any fliers left on your door knob, and even park a car in your driveway while you’re gone. Arrange for a neighborhood kid to mow your lawn or shovel snow off your front steps.

McGoe tells people to try to burglarize themselves or their neighbors, as a fun and informative exercise. He’ll have people stand outside their home or their neighbor’s house and try to assess what makes each house vulnerable.

“Then we’ll go into their home and rifle through their house,” says McGoe. “We’ll ask, ‘If I were a burglar, what would I do, what would I steal?’ The first place that burglars go is the master bedroom, because that’s where a majority of the valuables are, and they’ll go for the underwear or sock drawer. It’s an eye-opening thing.”

Walk into any hardware store and you’ll find a mind-boggling number of do-it-yourself home security products, including sophisticated cameras, motion and light sensors, alarms, keypad locks, electronic doorbells and peepholes, and more. Choose products that work with your lifestyle and tech threshold. Maybe you’re better off with old-school (but still totally effective) light timers, a beware-of-dog sign, exterior lights that go on when the sun sets, and security decals that can be purchased online, whether or not you have a security system (look on eBay). Or maybe you want to set up cameras, motion sensors, and other products that sync to an app on your smartphone, and let you control and monitor your home security gadgets while you travel.

When selecting products, Siciliano recommends using one main system.

“You don’t want to Frankenstein a home security system,” he says. “The core system needs to be from the same company, since all the components need to be able to talk to each other. Once you install that, you can add other components. Any system worth its salt has a backup battery that usually lasts five to 10 years.”

Nest, one of the more popular manufacturers of home security products, just released Nest Secure, which comes with a main security unit (Nest Guard), two key fobs (Nest Tags) that arm and disarm the

Nest Secure comes with a main security unit, key fobs that arm and disarm the main unit, and motion and open/close sensors.

main unit, and two motion and open/close sensors (Nest Detect) that easily stick on to window or doors. Once you install the system, you can arm or disarm it by waving a key fob over the Nest Guard, punching in a security code on the unit’s keypad, or using the Nest app. Give a Nest Tag to your dog walker, house cleaner, neighbor, or friend, and they can easily arm and disarm the system as they come and go.

You can control the entire system using the Nest app, and also program the Nest Tags to work at certain times of day — enable one to work during the window of time when your dog walker is coming. If the dog walker loses the fob, you can easily disable it. The app also keeps a record of which fob has operated the Nest Guard.

Both the Nest Guard and Nest Detect devices have built-in motion sensors that send you alerts if they detect movement. Set up the Dog Pass feature if you want the sensors to ignore dog-size animals (cats will likely still trigger the sensor).

Another bonus: Nest Guard has a 12-hour backup battery and built-in LTE antenna, so if you lose power — and therefore your Wi-Fi is down—you can get cell backup. This feature requires a subscription service with T-Mobile, but you can either get a one-year \$50 contract, or just pay \$5 for one month during a time when you know you’ll be traveling (you can sign up and cancel anytime).

The new NestCam IQ indoor camera works like many others — connecting to your phone via Wi-Fi and the app, and to the main unit — but it also has face recognition (meaning it won’t send alerts every time your friends and family members walk into the room) and the ability to zoom in and follow a person. Once armed, it can detect people talking or other out-of-the-ordinary sounds.

Even cooler, Nest has teamed up with Lutron and LIFX, so that a security breach in your home can trigger lights to come on and hopefully scare away the intruder. Lutron makes the Caseta Wireless dimmers, which either plug into wall sockets and work with dimmable standing lights or are hard-wired to your dimmable ceiling lights. Control the lights using the Lutron app. The company also makes a device that enables shades to go up and down, letting you further create the illusion that people are home.

LIFX’s Wi-Fi-enabled LED Smart Lights fit standard indoor and outdoor fixtures (try the A19 for inside and B30 for outside). They offer a wide spectrum of colors and have infrared night vision, helping your security cameras see farther in the dark. Easily connect the bulbs to your Nest security system via the app and then program each

lightbulb to turn on intermittently, according to a fixed schedule that you determine, or when a Nest or other compatible camera senses motion.

Wisenet and Ring make doorbells that monitor the front of your house 24/7, offer two-way audio so you can talk to the person standing on your doorstep even if you’re traveling on another continent, and provide one-way video so you can see the person or just check in live to see what’s happening in your front yard. Wisenet’s SmartCam D1 replaces your existing hard-wired doorbell, while the Ring Video Doorbell can be hard-wired or just run on its long-lasting rechargeable battery (it won’t make your doorbell ring inside if it’s not hard-wired, but you can add the Chime Pro, a Wi-Fi extender for all your Ring devices, which can emit an audible sound when someone rings your doorbell). Both the SmartCam D1 and Ring doorbell connect to your home’s Wi-Fi, and require a subscription to store video in the cloud. (Keep in mind that many cameras require an additional monthly fee for storing video to the cloud.)

These devices will help you capture photos and videos of anyone approaching your house, but a relatively new product called Package Guard will help fend off thieves who try to snatch the packages off your doorstep. This ingenious Frisbee-size device has a built-in sensor that triggers a 100-decibel alarm if someone tries to remove a package that’s placed on it.

Secure it to your front porch and sync it to your phone using the Package Guard app. The words “Place Package Here” tells your UPS and FedEx carriers to place packages on top of the device. When the package is delivered, you and anyone else you have added to your Safe Circle will be notified that a package has arrived. If someone tries to remove the package without disabling the alarm through the app, the alarm will go off. The Package Guard works with packages weighing 1 to 100 pounds. You can even get clever and use it to protect holiday yard displays and other objects.

Let’s say an intruder manages to get into your house despite all your devices and reinforcements. Hidden Secret Doors creates high-end custom-built doors that serve to hide a room or secure area in your home where you can hide your precious valuables. The idea: If burglars don’t know a space is there, they can’t rob it.

Finally, even though you may be tempted to post about your travels on social media, wait until you get home.

As you plan for future travels, remember to take multiple measures to protect your home, whether that means soliciting help from neighbors, making sure all doors and windows are secure, or adding gadgets galore to create an impenetrable home space.

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