

The Intelligent Traveler

TIPS AND TRICKS TO HELP YOU TRAVEL SMARTER

Edited by SARAH BRUNING

Members Only

Subscription services like Netflix, Spotify, and Birchbox have changed how we watch TV, listen to music, and shop for beauty products. Now a handful of companies are applying the same idea to travel—with the goal of revolutionizing the way we explore the world.

BY SIOBHAN REID

The travel club Marchay can score members deals at hotels like One&Only Reethi Rah, in the Maldives.

LIKE MANY YOUNG professionals, Web engineer Jason Mayes wanted to travel more often, but couldn't carve out enough time to properly research options. So when the luxury travel club **Inspirato** (*inspirato.com*) began enlisting trial participants for its new subscription plan, Pass, he leaped at the opportunity. The premise: for \$2,500 per month, members can reserve unlimited back-to-back stays in luxury vacation homes and five-star hotels without any additional nightly rates or fees. (For \$500 more per month, there's an option to share the base membership with friends or family.) Since the pilot program rolled out in June, the California-based Mayes has booked three trips, including five nights at the Taj 51 Buckingham Gate Suites & Residences, in London. "Committing to a monthly spend forces me to travel regularly and helps me maintain work-life balance," he says.

During the past decade, the monthly-subscription model has proliferated in many industries—from fitness (FabFitFun) to fashion (Rent the Runway)—but so far it has mostly involved receiving products in the mail. Setting pricing structures and predicting supply and demand made the idea challenging to apply to trips and accommodations. Now companies are figuring out how to make it work, allowing travelers to book premium services and experiences with unprecedented flexibility and relative affordability.

Several travel clubs are focusing on rarefied experiences. The advisors at **Marchay** (*marchay.com*) tap their deep connections to arrange private

tours of hard-to-access sites, like the Vatican archives. Though one-off services are available for \$1,750 per trip, travelers can sign up for a \$4,500 annual Premiere membership to receive unlimited trip planning and execution from a dedicated team that can also score special rates on flights and hotels. Art aficionados can turn to the **Cultivist** (*thecultivist.com*). For \$5,000 a year, members gain front-of-line entry into top museums, galleries, and art fairs. For a separate fee, a concierge can organize visits to the studios of notable artists.

The trend has also come to private aviation. **NetJets** (*netjets.com*) gives travelers fractional ownership of a specific aircraft and access to a fleet of more than 750 jets worldwide—though it requires a 36-month commitment. There's also **FlyXO** (*flyxo.com*), operated by VistaJet. After paying the annual \$5,000 fee, passengers can ride-share on chartered flights in the company's network, which includes more than 45 routes throughout the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East. 🌱

▲ *Inspirato Pass members get exclusive access to luxe homes, including this five-bedroom in Aspen, Colorado.*



The Global Entry Perk Not Enough People Know About

If you're only using the expedited reentry program stateside, you're missing out. Here's how to get more out of your membership. **BY HANNAH WALHOUT**

You likely know that enrolling in **Global Entry** (*ttp.dhs.gov*) will speed up the process at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) checkpoints upon returning from an international trip. What might come as a surprise: CBP has

negotiated reciprocal agreements with several other countries, which means American airports aren't the only places where Global Entry can be a time- and sanity-saver. In Australia, U.S. citizens aged 16 and older

who are registered for Global Entry can use **SmartGate** (*abf.gov.au*), the country's automated border system, without an additional fee or registration. In New Zealand, there are dedicated lanes for U.S. Global Entry members arriving in Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington.

Global Entry membership also grants holders the ability to apply for several countries' trusted-traveler programs, including Mexico's **Viajero Confiable** (*gob.mx*) and South Korea's **Smart Entry Service** (*ses.go.kr*), though both require an application fee,



on-site interview, and collection of biometric data. Many international airports where travelers must go through U.S. customs before boarding also have Global Entry kiosks, including Abu Dhabi International in the United Arab Emirates, Dublin and Shannon airports in Ireland, and several in Canada and the Caribbean.

How LGBTQ Families Are Spurring More Inclusivity in Travel

LGBTQ parents eager to show their kids the world are helping usher in a more diverse and welcoming era in hospitality. **BY DAVID DODGE**

“YOUR KIDS ARE SO SWEET!” a waitress exclaimed while I was vacationing with my family in Oregon recently. “Which one’s your wife?” she then asked, gesturing to the two women seated beside me. For my family, which consists of three kids, their married lesbian moms, and me, travel often means fielding dozens of inquiries from waiters, hotel staff, and tour guides curious how our little tribe came to be. At best, this kind of questioning is invasive, but at worst, depending on where you are, it can be unsafe.

Historically, finding a vacation spot that was queer-friendly often meant sticking to well-trodden LGBTQ destinations like Miami Beach and Mykonos, Greece, that don’t offer much in the way of entertainment for anyone under the legal drinking age. But during the past decade, new options for the LGBTQ parents raising an estimated 2 million to 3.7 million children in the United States have begun to emerge, thanks in part to greater social acceptance. New data also shows that “pink-dollar travel” (a term used to describe LGBTQ travel) is an important revenue source for the travel industry. According to the research firm Community Marketing and Insights (CMI), 77 percent of LGBTQ people have a passport, compared with only 36 percent of Americans overall. Gay parents are also more likely to take family vacations than their straight counterparts. Eighty-five percent planned a trip for their crew this year, according to CMI.

While a handful of LGBTQ-focused travel businesses have rolled out in the

past several decades, the most notable have focused on adults: tour operator **Olivia** (olivia.com) in 1973, cruise line **Atlantis** (atlantisevents.com) in 1991, and home-sharing marketplace **Misterb&b** (misterbandb.com) in 2013. Despite the growing need, few operators specifically targeted the gay parenting community. Gradually, luxury brands have started to change that. In 2011, **Preferred Hotels & Resorts** (preferredhotels.com) launched Preferred Pride, a collection of more than 200 gay-friendly hotels worldwide. Participating properties like Arizona’s **Mountain Shadows** (mountainshadows.com)—which has family-friendly features like full kitchens and multi-bedroom suites—have taken steps to market themselves to LGBTQ parents.

The goal, says International Travel Management founder **John Clifford** (john@internationaltravelmanagement.com;

619-299-2359), a member of the A-List, T+L’s guide to the world’s top travel advisors, is to ensure LGBTQ families are treated like any other. The **Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Walt Disney World Resort** (fourseasons.com) has welcomed more such parents in recent years thanks to popular events like **Gay Days** (gaydays.com). The staff also makes sure that touches like robes are gender-appropriate.

Parents are even vacationing in places not normally thought of as queer-friendly, such as the African continent. **David Rubin** (david@davidtravel.com; 949-427-0199), an A-List advisor whose specialties include this market, said more LGBTQ parents are seeking out customizable luxury experiences, such as tours of Egypt and safaris in East Africa. Over the years, he has cultivated a select group of tour operators and hoteliers in countries with hostile laws to help ensure the security of his clients. These partners know how to avoid minor mishaps, he said—like asking a gay dad which of his lesbian friends is his “wife.” 🍷



► Many resort towns in Italy, including Caorle, welcome LGBTQ families.



Going Along for the Ride

Electric scooters aim to solve the last-mile problem—those gaps between public-transit stops and a person's final destination. Some locals consider them a nuisance, but for travelers, they offer a new sense of possibility. **BY MARK HEALY**

WHEN MY FAMILY visited Portland, Oregon, a couple months ago, we spotted the city's new electric scooters everywhere. So, after walking around and eating like gastro royalty on our second day, we grabbed a few. In minutes, we'd crossed the Willamette River, rolled through a sweet neighborhood we'd glimpsed earlier from a car, stopped for a leap off a pier to cool down, then headed back to the hotel. The sense of adventure and satisfaction of pack mobility made those the best 90 minutes of our day—all for less than the cost of a cab ride.

Over the past 18 months, dockless electric scooters have been appearing en masse in major American cities (though not yet New York) and college towns, and in Europe, Asia, and South America—all you need to find and rent one is an app and a credit card. The two biggest players, **Lime** (*li.me*) and

Bird (*bird.co*), now operate in more than 100 international destinations. A third, **Jump** (*jump.com*), is in close to 15. In most of these places, the cost of a ride is a mere \$1 per scooter plus 15 cents per minute of use. This affordability is, perhaps, one reason for the current boomlet. A report from the National Association of City Transportation Officials showed that, last year, use of e-scooters outpaced that of bike shares for the first time. Uber is so bullish on the trend that it invested in both Lime, which riders can rent through the Uber app, and Jump, which it acquired in April 2018.

Even so, dockless scooters are widely mocked and are particularly loathed by anyone who has had to step around one left in the middle of a sidewalk or dodge one speeding through a park. And locals' frustration with them is entirely understandable,

◀ The e-scooter company Lime launched service in Rio de Janeiro in July.

given the unregulated way they've been used. But for someone visiting a new city, it's one of the best ways to travel.

We spend so much time and energy obsessing over where to go, but we forget to consider how we're going to get around once we get there. Many argue that the ideal way to explore a city is by foot, and if you have a week to stroll through Vienna or Seattle, it is. Yet everything we love about walking—the sunshine, the sight lines, the flexibility to follow your nose down a random alley—is true of scooters, too. There's no hunting for parking, and no need to master an arcane public transit system. It's a low-cost, low-emission way to travel, with an unrestricted range of motion, unlimited stops, starts, and wander backs.

For the business traveler, riding a scooter can mean getting to a meeting on time, regardless of the traffic. For the weekend explorer, it can mean whizzing a half-mile out of the way to a flea market, gambling only a few minutes and a fraction of a euro if it turns out to be a bust.

Lime, Bird, and their ilk have new initiatives aimed squarely at travelers. Lime, which has investment from Alphabet, the parent company of Google, has partnered with Google Maps to help riders locate scooters, calculate distance and cost, and find the best route. Bird, meanwhile, coordinated with Hilton on two high-profile sporting events earlier this year. During the Super Bowl in Atlanta and the NBA All-Star game in Charlotte, North Carolina, select Hiltons placed 10 or 15 Bird scooters outside to give guests easy access to them.

But what won't always work are the scooters themselves. As we neared our hotel, one started losing steam, while another slowly broke down, beginning with an ever-loosening handlebar. We reported the issues on the app, thanked the scooters for their service, and left them on a patch of grass in a park without a care in the world. After all, there's more where those came from. 🍌



1

1. FOR BRIGHTENING AND BEATING BLEMISHES
I tried the **Skin Inc. Optimizer Voyage Tri-Light++USB** (iloveskininc.us; \$295) after waiting out a four-hour flight delay with too much greasy pizza and Chardonnay. When I arrived home at 4 a.m., all of my skin issues—acne, inflammation, discoloration, unevenness—were out in full

force. It seemed like a prime time to bust out the palm-size device, which uses low-frequency stimulation and LED chromotherapy to treat various concerns: red light promotes firmness and smooths wrinkles, blue light reduces inflammation and acne-causing bacteria, and yellow light evens tone and brightens dull skin. After applying a hydrating mask, I massaged my face in slow circles for 10 minutes. Later, after some sleep, my skin looked refreshed and even. I skipped wearing makeup to work for the first time in years. — *Hannah Walhout*



2

2. FOR DEEP CLEANING
Whether I'm driving, flying, or hopping a train, a certain griminess sets in after a few hours that doesn't dissipate after the usual splash of water and manual sudsing with my favorite face wash. Most cleansing tools are awkward to hold and leave my skin feeling pummeled and stripped. But I finally found the wandlike **ReFa Clear** (refausa.com; \$300). The Japanese device relies on a combination of 3-D sonic motion (moving horizontally and vertically at the same time as it vibrates) and negatively charged ions to draw out dirt, makeup, and dead skin cells. The tool's narrow but dense head of ultrasoft bristles maneuvered easily and gave my skin a gentle polish. Each session lasts about 60 seconds. I had to practice a bit before I could move it around quickly and

cover my entire face before it automatically shut off. Now that I've mastered the timing, the ReFa has both sped up my routine and resulted in a healthier-looking complexion. — *Sarah Bruning*

3. FOR DEPUFFING AND TIGHTENING

After a long-haul flight, my complexion would take days to bounce back, no matter which expensive creams or moisture-packed masks I applied in-flight. Then I came across **ZIIP** (ziipbeauty.com; \$495), a device that uses tiny electrical currents to brighten and sculpt. The wireless product, which looks a bit like a computer mouse, can be paired with a phone or tablet to sync with eight treatments, including one for targeting puffiness around the eyes and another for all-around lift and glow. On my summer vacation in Canada, I started by slathering my neck and face with the brand's 24-karat-gold conductive gel (one bottle comes with the device), which also contains skin-refining ingredients like hematite and snail-venom peptide. Then I moved the device horizontally outward, working from the base of my neck to my face. It took several tries to get the hang of it (watching the in-app instruction videos helped), but my skin's just-back-from-the-spa glow and firmer appearance convinced me to make the ZIIP a regular part of my regimen, both on and off the road. — *Siobhan Reid*



3

If You Could Pack Your Facialist

T+L editors test three devices that act as portable aestheticians to perk up travel-weary skin anytime, anywhere.

55

Percentage of global travelers who said they were more intent on making sustainable travel choices this year than they were last year, according to a recent report from booking.com.