



Rapid rush: Bungee jump in Puyo, Ecuador.

Photos: Nellie Huang

# GOODBYE, COMFORT ZONE!

Looking for thrills? Try waking up in the Galapagos or in a Bedouin camp ...

BY NELLIE HUANG

TRAVEL can mean different things to different people. But an adventure might just be once in a lifetime. Whether you're climbing Mount Everest or diving with sharks in the Caribbean, a true adventure gives life new meaning. Exotic lands beckon with promise. Make a trip to Africa, South America, Europe and the Middle East to uncover adventures in every corner.

### Ecuador, South America

Trek through the thick foliage of the Amazon Jungle one day, swim with playful sea lions on the Galapagos Islands the next, and end your trip in the cool Andes. Like the locals say, Ecuador is like mini South America — packing all the continent has to offer into one country.

From the adventure hub in Banos, book an Amazon Extreme package that includes cycling along the Puyo valley, white-water rafting through Class III rapids in the Pastaza River, cruising in a dugout canoe and jungle trekking. A nocturnal hike in the Amazon jungle is the highlight — expect to be entertained by the jungle orchestra and spot creepy crawlies.

The Galapagos Islands are a playground for eco-tourists. Flirt with danger in shark-infested waters, or watch giant tortoises on land and climb volcanoes alongside land lizards. For a high, hit the Cotopaxi National Park to scale the world's highest active vol-

canoes which, topped with glaciers, offer a stark contrast to the lush greenery of the Amazon.

**Tour operators:** Rainforestur ([www.rainforestur.com.ec](http://www.rainforestur.com.ec)) has an excellent reputation for its Amazon Extreme tours (\$65). Moonrise ([www.galapagosmoonrise.com](http://www.galapagosmoonrise.com)) is a reliable and established operator that arranges dive trips and cruise tours on the Galapagos Islands, while non-profit Cotopaxi Tours ([www.cotopaxitours.com](http://www.cotopaxitours.com)) arranges one-day mountain trekking trips.



### Tanzania, Africa

To get a taste of the exotic African continent, Tanzania is the best place to start. With savannahs, abounding wildlife and numerous adventure spots, Tanzania is pulling in more eco-tourists than ever. From scaling Africa's tallest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro, to embarking on a 4x4 safari through the sprawling Serengeti Nature Reserve, thrilling rides and phenomenal sights for intrepid travellers abound in Tanzania.

At Ngorongoro Crater, the world's largest caldera, you're almost guaranteed to spot herds of wildebeests, rhinoceros, lions and elephants. Take a guided canoe safari on Momella Lake to observe the animals. Visit the villages of Maasai tribes, which still roam the reserves, to get an understanding of their way of life.

Diving enthusiasts should head out to Zanzibar:



The natives: Get up close with Tanzania's wildlife and Maasai.



Great scale: Wadi Rum's odd rock formations make for challenging climbs in Jordan.

An archipelago of crystalline waters and lush jungle islands. Here, you can go deep sea fishing, sail on a traditional dhow or hike in the Jozani Forest. A vast country with peaks and an endless ocean, there's so much to do in Tanzania.

**Tour operators:** Overland Africa ([www.overlandafrica.com](http://www.overlandafrica.com)) and Destination Tanzania ([www.detasa.com](http://www.detasa.com)) organise various tours, including wildlife safaris and climbing trips. Zanzibar Dive Adventures ([www.divezanzibar.com](http://www.divezanzibar.com)) specialises in Padi courses and dive trips.

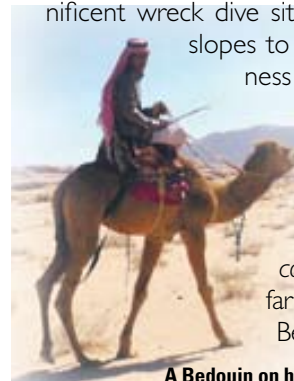
### Jordan, Middle East

Hidden within the country's haunting desertscape is an ideal topography for some adrenaline-pumping action. Beyond the archaeological sites is an oasis for adventure seekers.

With its psychedelic sandstone formations, the granite valley of Wadi Rum provides some of the best terrains for rock-climbing. Both experts and amateurs gather to scale the treacherous route, Towering Inferno. Many outdoors enthusiasts add on a Bedouin stay or camel trek around the red-rose monument of Petra.

On the east coast, the clear waters of the Red Sea offer world-class diving, thanks to over 1,100 species of fish and magnificent wreck dive sites. Cycling tours take you through steep slopes to see hilltop Islamic castles, the vast wilderness of Shaumari Nature Reserve and the Roman city of Jerash. History, nature and culture come together in Jordan.

**Tour operators:** Jordan Beauty ([www.jordanbeauty.com](http://www.jordanbeauty.com)) organises all the tours mentioned. Dive Aqaba ([www.diveaqaba.com](http://www.diveaqaba.com)) offers Red Sea dive trips. For desert safaris and camel trekking, check out Dead Sea Beach Tours ([www.dsbt.com](http://www.dsbt.com)).



A Bedouin on his camel

### Norway, Europe

Don't be fooled by the whimsical fairy-tale image that Norway conjures. Recently voted by *National Geographic Adventure Magazine* as one of the world's best adventure travel destinations, Norway promises a world of challenges for extreme sport junkies. Its proximity to the Arctic alone is its biggest draw — come face to face with giant icebergs and polar bears at Spitsbergen, then ride snowmobiles to Tempelfjorden to observe the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights).

In Norway, you are never far from the mountains or the sea. Stunning fjords and unexplored inlets are idyllic for a kayaking expedition or cruise. Bergen's fjords are said to be the country's prettiest. The Norwegian capital, Oslo, has a plethora of fjords and forests within minutes of the bustling city centre. Holmenkollen, an impressive ski arena just 20 minutes from downtown Oslo, is a skier's paradise. With endless snow-capped mountain ranges dotted around the country, Norway is the ultimate place to ski.

**Tour Operators:** Fjord Tours ([www.fjordtours.com](http://www.fjordtours.com)) offers fjord voyages around the country, Gap Adventures ([www.gapadventures.com](http://www.gapadventures.com)) are reputed for well-organised guided Arctic tours. Nordic Visitor ([www.norway.nordicvisitor.com](http://www.norway.nordicvisitor.com)) arranges ski trips to the best stations in Norway. [[traveller@mediacorp.com.sg](mailto:traveller@mediacorp.com.sg)]



Bay watch: Oslo's fjords are great for water sports or a cruise.

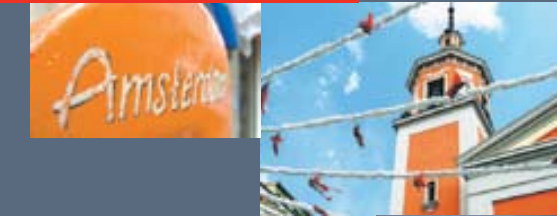
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