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£600

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from
£135*
per night



The World Cruise 2012 aboard Saga Ruby

Date	Destination
Jan 6	Southampton, England
Jan 10	Funchal, Madeira
Jan 17	St John's, Antigua
Jan 19	La Guaira, Venezuela
Jan 20	Willemstad, Curacao
Jan 23	Puerto Limon, Costa Rica
Jan 24	Transit the Panama Canal
Jan 25	Balboa J., Panama
Jan 28	Paia, Peru
Jan 29	Salaverry, Peru
Feb 4	Easter Island J.
Feb 7	Pitcairn Island J.
Feb 11	Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia
Feb 12	Bora Bora, French Polynesia
Feb 16	Cross the International Date Line
Feb 19	Bay of Islands J., New Zealand

Date	Destination
Feb 20	Tauranga, New Zealand
Feb 21	Auckland, New Zealand
Feb 25	Sydney, Australia
Feb 29	Cairns, Australia
Mar 5	Bitung, Sunda Islands, Indonesia
Mar 8	Manila, Philippines
Mar 12	Nagasaki, Japan
Mar 13	Jeju Island, South Korea
Mar 15	Tianjin Xingang (for Beijing), China
Mar 16	Tianjin Xingang (for Beijing), China
Mar 18	Shanghai, China
Mar 20	Hirao, Miyako Island, Japan
Mar 21	Keelung (for Taipei), Taiwan
Mar 23	Hong Kong
Mar 24	Hong Kong
Mar 27	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Mar 28	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Mar 30	Singapore

Cruise code: RU500

Date	Destination
Mar 31	Port Kelang (for Kuala Lumpur), Malaysia
Apr 4	Colombo, Sri Lanka
Apr 7	Mumbai, India
Apr 10	Muscat, Oman
Apr 12	Salalah, Oman
Apr 17	Aqaba, Jordan
Apr 18	Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt
Apr 19-20	Port Suez J., Egypt
Apr 20	Transit the Suez Canal
Apr 23	Valletta, Malta
Apr 27	Lisbon, Portugal
Apr 30	Southampton, England

Days not detailed are at sea.

J. Land by launch or tender.
• Passengers do not go ashore.
Days not detailed are spent at sea.

If you can't join the whole voyage...

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quoting **TTCR4** or visit **saga.co.uk/times**

*Per person, per night based on two people sharing a 1 grade inside cabin including any relevant booking discount. Fare quoted is the lowest available at the time of going to print and is subject to availability and change. This is not a brochure. Terms and conditions apply. SHA6388.



SAGA
Cruising done properly

Travel

On page
30

'Each round house has
its own small flock of
edible guinea pigs'
Peru's other ancient Andean city



Mud hut, outside loo, nice view: why basic is the new luxury

Remote and wild —
real luxury is about
the simple life, says
Ian Belcher. Just
ask Wills and Kate

hyenas, leopards and glorious isolation rather than paparazzi.

It is high-profile proof that luxury no longer means six-star bling, butlers and 24-hour room service. Now it's all about getting back to basics. We want a remote cabin, a desert tent — admittedly we like it with bells and whistles — or a wilderness lodge with elegy-inducing views. Food should include local ingredients, local flavour and a local chef. Forget fusion.

Perhaps it's a reaction to our manic, sanitised, over-branded age. For a true escape we desire walls of stone, wood or canvas to be warmed by flames rather than central heating, with fresh air on tap and a night sky drenched with stars. It need not cost the earth, but it must be high on nature and low on fellow guests.

Take the Ark Hotel in Swedish Lapland. You can't get farther from the madding crowd than the five-wood huts huddled like nervous reindeer in the middle of the frozen Lake Torneträsk. Hotels are rarely more elemental. When I was there the in-room entertainment consisted of lifting



The Mud Hut (9) in Sri Lanka, main picture, offers tropical simplicity, but for glorious isolation The Secret Ranchito (5) in Chile is hard to beat

a trap door, drilling a hole in the ice and dropping a baited hook into the icy depths. Supper was moose sausage and reindeer washed down with vats of schnapps — and when the aurore borealis writhed across the sky, we left the sauna to sprint naked across the ice. If I hadn't been howling like a werewolf, I'd have proposed. To anyone.

I experienced the same release, albeit fully clothed, at Tyrconnell in Australia, a 19th-century gold mine enveloped by Queensland's rolling bush. It was a double act: nature delivered silence and solitude, Tyrconnell supplied period cottages with paraffin lamps and claw baths. Shortly before I arrived, Kylie Minogue and her Spanish lover had stayed there, undisturbed by the international press.

Nowhere, no matter how remote, is immune to this royal-endorsed travel trend. While crossing from Chile to Argentina, I stopped at a goat herder's hut, 11,500ft up in the Andes. The adventure experts Explora had pimped it with cactus roof beams, slate floors and alpaca-hair blankets. It was ridiculously cosy, yet still a lonely goat herder's hut, a tiny pinprick in the vast South American wilderness. And at that moment, as a cruel wind whipped down the valley, I wouldn't have wanted to stay anywhere else. It was simply perfect.

For 15 more small but perfectly formed hideaways with that vital streak of authenticity, read on...

15 places for a wild time

1 Little Tom's Cottage, North Island, New Zealand

This tiny hideaway scores major points for its location and style, with a fabulous alfresco bath thrown in. Overlooking the Tukutuku River near Hawke's Bay, the coolly renovated old cottage has squishy sofas in the petite living room, and a bedroom with french doors opening on to the valley. Waimarama Beach is close, as is food and vino at Craggy Range winery. **Details** £58pp per night with Turquoise Holidays (01494 678 400, turquoiseholidays.co.uk)

2 Ooraminna Homestead, Northern Territory, Australia

Ooraminna is the Outback with the rough edges knocked off. Sitting on Deep Well Station — a mere 500,000 acres near Alice Springs — the bush cabins have four-poster beds hewn from desert oak. There are cattle-hide rugs and private verandas where you can kip beneath the stars. Either join in the station's working day or kick back and watch the red Outback crags ignite in the setting sun. **Details** £155pp per night half-board (0061 89530170, ooraminnahomestead.com.au)

3 Old School, Lundy Island

It might have the rich blue façade of a Mexican courtyard but the super-snug Old School is washed by Bristol Channel gusts rather than South American sun. The two-person corrugated-iron bolt hole, dubbed "the blue bung", has period furniture and wall charts. It makes the perfect base for cliff-top hikes. **Details** From £224 for three nights through the Landmark Trust (01628 825925, landmarktrust.org.uk)



4 Dumton Hot Springs, Colorado

If Ralph Lauren were let loose in the Rockies he would come up with something close to this. The gloriously restored ghost town near Telluride contains several revamped miners' cottages in a dreamy valley overlooking meadows and mountains. Two-person Echo Cabin, with its artfully battered furniture, tasteful weaves and photogenic outside shower, should carry a government snuggle warning. There's acclaimed food, heli-skiing and horse riding to enjoy. **Details** £507 a night full-board with Bon Voyage (0800 316 0194, bon-voyage.co.uk)



5 The Secret Ranchito, Patagonia, Chile

The clue's in the name. Nestling beneath snow-licked peaks, it sits on the road less travelled and can be reached only by foot, horse or helicopter. Your luggage arrives by ox cart and chefs hike in with your meals. Decor, naturally, is wood-heavy with cowhide chairs, rugs and local throws over the bed. There are widescreen views of the Tres Monjas peaks. The luo is outside, the shower's in a tree trunk, and isolation is rarely so glorious. **Details** £289 a night all inclusive with i-escape (i-escape.com)

Clockwise from top left: KuanguKuangu (7) in Namibia; Little Tom's Cottage (1); New Zealand; Blencathra shepherd's hut (8); Cumbria; and the Roundhouse (6), France

6 The Roundhouse, Dordogne, France

Seriously quirky and romantic, the Roundhouse is tucked into a hillside outside the village of Villetoureix. Handmade from earth (green turf covers a wonderfully curling beamed roof), logs, glass bottles and reclaimed double-glazing, it looks across a gentle valley without a neighbour in sight. Its outside kitchen and shower might test your mettle in winter, but this is an escape for romantics, dreamers or keen greenies. **Details** £289 a night with One Off Places (oneoffplaces.co.uk)

7 KuanguKuangu, Namib Desert, Namibia

Another slice of African wilderness that would have suited a royal proposal, KuanguKuangu overlooks a multi-hued valley. Seamlessly blending with the landscape, the one-room hideaway with alfresco kitchen and bathroom fuses logs, canvas and stone with earthy colours and vast windows — a formula for solitude, sitting and staring. The name comes from the Ovambo people's word for the Milky Way, a nod to the astonishing night sky. **Details** £93 a night (kuangukuangu.com)



8 Blencathra, Cumbria

This shepherd's hut gazing across Cumbria's fells is so ludicrously cute — all tiny windows, curved roof and smoking chimney — that it could be made of gingerbread. With a separate kitchen and bathroom near by, it resists the North West's inclement weather with a wood-burning stove, sheepskin rugs and heavy-duty bedding. In summer the hut, for two to four people, opens on to a gorgeous landscape. **Details** From £65 a night with Canopy and Stars (01275 395447, canopyandstars.co.uk)



9 The Mud Hut, The Mudhouse, Sri Lanka

Tropical simplicity is the watchword of this gaggle of wattle-and-daub thatched huts laced through 60 acres of forest in northwest Sri Lanka's ancient wetlands. What the two-person Mud Hut lacks in electricity and boiling water it makes up for in atmosphere, with open sides letting the forest in (its birdlife is incredible). Nights are illuminated by oil lamps and fires, while your food comes from the Mudhouse's organic farm. **Details** £117 a night full board and excursions with i-escape (i-escape.com)

10 Ghillie's Rest, Alladale, Scotland

It might be new but this sturdy cottage with its reclaimed or locally sourced wood, stone and fabrics, slips effortlessly into Alladale's muscular Highland landscape. Offering style as well as wilderness views, it has a deer-antler chandelier and wood-burning stove. There is off-road driving, hiking, stalking and shooting. **Details** From £87pp per night full board (01863 755 338, alladale.com)



The price of simplicity

Sometimes it costs the earth to go back to basics. . .

11 Erg Chebbi Dunes, Sahara, Morocco

Ask any film director: the Sahara delivers romance like few other locations. Among the dormant volcanoes and endless dunes of Erg Chebbi, a chic bespoke camp with wall-to-wall rugs and handcrafted furniture can be erected on demand, giving you the sensation of first footsteps in the sand. You can visit the 1,200ft walls of Todra Gorge before returning for top-notch food. **Details** £2,000pp for two nights' full board and excursions, with Abercrombie & Kent (0845 618 2200, abercrombiekent.co.uk)

12 Shakti Village Houses, Ladakh, India

The tasteful renovation of three village houses along the Indus Valley has bought



high-level comfort to the high-altitude desert drama of Ladakh. Expect handmade furniture, toasty stoves and organic toiletries — and rooftop pagodas overlooking the mountains and monasteries. A team, including guide and chef, follow you between the houses, allowing you to hike, raft and explore. **Details** Eight nights from £3,687, including flights, with Cazenove & Loyd (020-7384 2332, cazloyd.com)

Sleep outside in a Kiboko star bed at Loisaba Wilderness (15); top, home comforts at Aman-i-Khas (14); above, and a bespoke camp in the Sahara at Erg Chebbi Dunes (11), below

13 Redoubt Bay Lodge, Alaska

Redoubt Bay, 50 photogenic miles southwest of Anchorage by floatplane, has space. Oodles of it. As the only accommodation within 171,000 acres of a "critical habitat area" — millions of birds migrate and nest here — it's a recipe for contemplation, not claustrophobia. Overlooking a chain of lakes backed by snow-covered peaks, the comfortable stove-heated cabins offer excellent bear viewing, fishing and the acclaimed Alaskan cuisine of owner Kirsten Dixon. **Details** £800pp per night with Bon Voyage (0800 316 0194, bon-voyage.co.uk)

14 Aman-i-Khas Rajasthan, India

Aman's cool elegance isn't exactly back-to-basics, but there's no doubt that the ten vast tents of Aman-i-Khas offer serenity and sensuous style. Pitched each October to April on the edge of Ranthambore National Park, a tiger-viewing hot spot, they offer air-conditioned rooms, surrounded by tall grass, scrub and trees. **Details** £712 per night plus \$125pp board charge with Aman (amanresorts.com)

15 Loisaba House, Loisaba Wilderness, Kenya

Location, location, location. The four-person house on the edge of the Kenyan escarpment has unforgettable views across the Laikipia plains to Mount Kenya — is that a prince I can see kneeling? The real place to pop the question, though, is when you are lying under the stars in a Kiboko star bed. **Details** From £2530 for two people and two nights' full board with Abercrombie & Kent (0845 618 2200, abercrombiekent.co.uk)



“The Sahara delivers romance like few other locations”

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