



## The Top 10 Trips to Take with Your High Schoolers Giving Them GREAT College Essay Material and Life Skills

If you're an empty nester or retiree—or soon to be one—then you may be dreaming of your bucket list with new vigor. After a lifetime of putting family and career obligations first, now is your chance to embark on the epic journeys you've long yearned for. But which experiences are truly worth being added to your bucket list? We're here to help you figure it out.

With our world more interconnected than ever—where a quick Google search turns up all you would ever want to know about a subject—it's hard to believe there are still places out there that can awe you.

But it's true. Once you go beyond the typical tourist traps and same-old, same-old vacation spots, there's a world of wonder still beckoning you to explore. Yes, you can still find the extraordinary, if you know where to look. That's why we've rounded up 10 inspiring travel experiences that are truly worthy of being added to your bucket list. These experiences are so special and singular, you may only get to enjoy them once in your life—but once is enough. Enjoy them with your family on a bond-building getaway, share the experience with your spouse as you re-connect with one another, or escape on a solo journey that stirs your soul to its core.

Ready to be astounded?

*Dive on in*

*Hi there!*

Thanks so much for downloading my bucketlist trips guide!

I put this list together to help you embark on a dream trip that truly WOWS! As a travel specialist, I've found that immersive out-of-the-box experiences tend to stay with you--long after the flight home.

So whether it's the "wildest" hotel stay in all of Africa, or learning how to spy the elusive Northern Lights AND stay toasty-cozy at the same time, here's to a bucketlist vacation that truly excites you. I hope these 10 ideas inspire you to add a few once-in-a-lifetime experiences to your bucketlist NOW.

*Share the journey,*

# Erin

Erin Smith

*Founder, Cultivating Connections Travel Planners*



Erin Smith | (405) 310-7588  
erin@cultivatingconnectionstravelplanners.com  
www.CultivatingConnectionsTravelPlanners.com  
**Follow Cultivating Connections!**

## 1 MEET A *WILD* VISITOR AT GIRAFFE MANOR IN KENYA



Waking up in an elegant manor house entangled in vines, in an indigenous forest on the outskirts of Nairobi, is dreamy enough. But add the world's friendliest giraffes into the mix and you've got a *real* bucket list experience! At Giraffe Manor, you share the grounds with a herd of endangered Rothschild's giraffes. Staff place baskets of delicious pellets (delicious to the giraffes, that is) along the windowsills of the rooms—so don't be surprised when one of the herd pokes its head in for a snack. You'll enjoy the company of these long-necked dining companions at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so get ready for plenty of photo ops.

## 2 SPY THE ELUSIVE NORTHERN LIGHTS FROM YOUR BED



Finland's perpetual winter has a major upside—your chances of spying the mysterious *Aurora Borealis* are quite high. While you *could* snowshoe your way through the ice and cold to a viewing spot, opt instead to get cozy beneath some blankets and just look up. In Lapland, the northernmost region of Finland, glass-enclosed igloos give you a frost-free, front-row seat to the electric light display above. A thermal roof keeps the glass free of fog, so you never miss a moment of the once-in-a-lifetime dancing waves of light.

## 3 PLAY COWBOY AT A LUXURY DUDE RANCH

Channel your inner John Wayne during a rugged and rustic—yet still luxurious—stay at an authentic dude ranch in the Wild West. A handful of very special properties dot the Big Sky landscape of the American West, including the breathtaking Brush Creek Ranch in Wyoming. Here, you can ride horseback through the mountains, fly fish on rushing rivers, try your hand at archery, shooting, ATViing, and more. At the end of the day, indulge in gourmet dining and a visit to the ranch's very own whiskey distillery. It's like summer camp for grown ups (though it's an amazing getaway for the whole family, too).



## 4 CRUISE YOUR WAY TO EUROPE'S MOST ENCHANTING CHRISTMAS MARKETS



What's better than perusing the wares at picturesque market stalls, a steaming mug of gluhwein in hand? Doing it all via luxurious river cruise—where a single trip can take you to a variety of charming towns all done up to the hilt for the holidays. Hop aboard your intimate vessel and sail down one of central Europe's most inviting waterways, like the Rhine or Danube. You'll dock right in the heart of market towns like Cologne, Germany, Strasbourg, France, and Basel, Switzerland. Each open-air market has its own flavor, but expect to always find artisan-produced souvenirs, delicious local delicacies (hot roasted potatoes are a favorite), and *plenty* of soaring cathedrals and twinkling lights.

## 5 STEP BACK IN TIME WITH THE GREAT CLANS OF SCOTLAND

Whether you have Scottish heritage yourself or you're simply in awe with the land of Braveheart, a clan tour reveals the most astounding sites imaginable in Scotland. Climb the turrets of centuries-old castles, wander the gilded halls of mysterious manor houses, and hike through mist-shrouded moorlands where heroic clans clashed long ago. There are many ways to crisscross the Scottish countryside in style, like via historic luxury train or with a private driver-guide. If your family does boast Scottish lineage, you could even embark on a custom-designed ancestry tour that brings you back to the places your very own ancestors once roamed.



---

## 6 CLIMB ABOARD THE ICONIC ORIENT EXPRESS



Start your European stay on one of the most storied trains in the world: The opulent Venice-Simplon Orient Express. The gilded interior, replete with fanciful carved wood accents, velvet touches, and crisp white linens, harkens back to the train's 1920's Art Deco heyday. In between gourmet dinners and afternoon teas, take a peek outside your window to watch indelible landscapes rush past. Stops include some of Europe's most romantic cities, including Venice, Verona, Paris, and London. Incorporate an overnight train ride into your itinerary to elevate what it means to get "from Point A to Point B."

## 7 JOURNEY TO THE EDGE OF THE EARTH ON AN ANTARCTIC CRUISE



The White Continent beckons to *true* explorers—those whose bucket list is largely already checked off. Just one major destination remains: the remote, otherworldly landscape of icy Antarctica. A luxury expedition cruise can get you there in style, with knowledgeable naturalists on board to guide you through it all. Get ready for sights unlike any other you've *ever* experienced, like a humpback whale breaching the water right next to your zodiac, or a huddle of penguins diving from an ice floe into the waves. Yes, you'll see wild and wondrous creatures aplenty—but then you'll get to enjoy all your favorite creature comforts back on board. Have your butler draw you a steaming bath; sink in, while you sip a glass of champagne, and let that Antarctic chill slip away.

## 8 GET A LITTLE LOST IN MYSTERIOUS MOROCCO



Fragrant spice souks, chaotic and colorful bazaars, the spine-tingling call for morning prayers—Morocco is a veritable feast for the senses. It can be a little overwhelming to navigate by yourself, so go with a private guide or small-group tour that can unlock all the special gems for you. One spot not to be missed: Chefchaouen, Morocco’s crown jewel Blue City in the north. A compact city nestled into the Rif Mountains, Chefchaouen boasts soft pastel blue and white hues washed all over its winding medina. You’ve probably seen the beautiful Blue City in pics on Instagram—immerse yourself in all its intoxicating charms on a bucket-list journey of your own.

---

## 9 SAIL ON A CULINARY ODYSSEY THROUGH GREECE

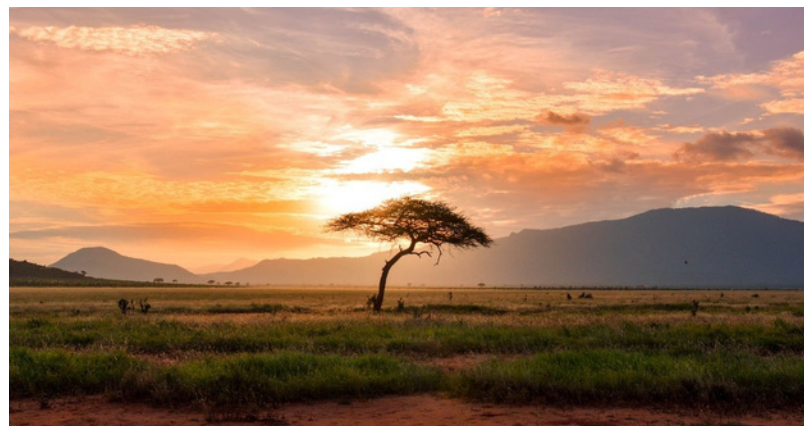
When you picture the Greek Isles, you may imagine Santorini’s epic sunsets or Mykonos’ party scene—but the islands are a top destination for foodies as well. Hop aboard a nimble small-ship cruise and let your taste buds lead the way. Tour a working vineyard with a third-generation vintner and taste the white dessert wine produced from Cyprus’s famously fertile mountain soil—one that’s hard to find outside Greece’s borders. Attend an outdoor cooking class in an olive grove, where your chef will show you how to sprinkle herbs into cucumber salad and douse it all, of course, with pungent, just-pressed olive oil. Or, simply post up on your ship’s deck to nibble fresh feta and watch as you sail past white-washed cliffside villages that tumble into the deep blue sea below. Life doesn’t get much better, or more delicious, than *this*.



## 10 EXPERIENCE FLORAL JOY IN THE NETHERLANDS



Every 10 years, something very special happens on a 60-hectare lot outside of Amsterdam—horticulturists from all around the globe gather to create spectacular floral displays for Floriade, an incredible flower expo. The Netherlands is already known as a floral powerhouse (think of those endless rows of tulips!), and Floriade definitely turns it up a notch. You can experience all the flower power for yourself on a river cruise down the Rhine River; luxury river cruise lines like AmaWaterways are offering their guests Floriade attendance on select cruise itineraries. Go ahead and mark your calendars for 2032. Since the spectacular expo only happens once every decade, it's not too early to earmark your bucket list trip to stop and smell the flowers!



***At Cultivating Connections Travel Planners,***

I plan travel experiences for culturally curious families and groups looking to deepen their bond. I help families and groups go way beyond the typical theme park or tropical vacation and find true magic by exploring the world together. If family is everything to you, then culturally curious travel should be your priority and I can make that happen seamlessly for you.

**Discover more at [www.CultivatingConnectionsTravelPlanners.com](http://www.CultivatingConnectionsTravelPlanners.com)**

**Erin Smith | (405) 310-7588**  
erin@cultivatigconnectionstravelplanners.com  
www.CultivatingConnectionsTravelPlanners.com  
**Follow Cultivating Connections!**