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Why The World's Elite Are Yachting To The Edges Of The Earth

Luxury travelers are increasingly swapping iconic sailing destinations like the Mediterranean for far-flung places that still feel genuinely wild.

By Rebecca Ann Hughes | May 20, 2026



On the deck of Lamima, one of the world's largest wooden sailing yachts at 65.2 meters long, cruise director Ali is overseeing the lowering of a jet ski into the deep turquoise water below. Two guests are already gliding towards a nearby mangrove on paddle boards, while another group are donning snorkel gear, ready to head to a nearby reef.

The yacht is moored in a wide bay in Raja Ampat, an archipelago of over 600 islands dubbed 'the last paradise on earth'. There's not a single other boat in sight—or person. But there is a wealth of spectacular nature, from the vegetation-clad karst pinnacles teeming with birds to the water beneath hiding kaleidoscopic coral reefs.

Sailing through this bounty of biodiversity has long been popular, but it's seeing even greater interest now as the yachting crowd has started to shun overcrowded hotspots like the Mediterranean for quieter, remote escapes.

Yachting to the edges of the earth

EYOS Expeditions, a company that specializes in 'expeditions to the ends of the earth', has seen a marked uptick in demand for its far-flung destinations.

"We've seen interest in polar regions, remote island chains and conservation-focused itineraries as travelers prioritize experiences that feel rare, authentic and far removed from traditional tourism," says CEO Ben Lyons via email. "There's also growing interest in journeys that offer deeper engagement with the destination, whether through wildlife encounters, exploration or time spent with scientists, guides and expedition experts."



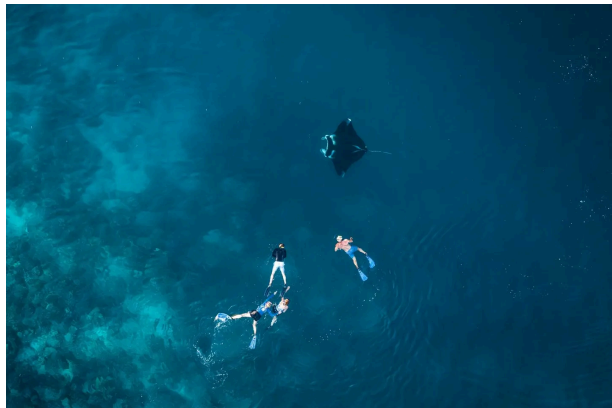
Luxury travelers are increasingly swapping iconic destinations like the Mediterranean for places that still feel genuinely wild, according to Lyons. "That might mean kayaking among icebergs in Antarctica, swimming alongside sperm whales in Dominica or witnessing a total solar eclipse from the fjords of East Greenland."

The Arctic has also topped must-visit lists, where travelers glide through icy landscapes of majestic glaciers and deep fjords, populated by wildlife like polar bears, walrus, whales, reindeer, and Arctic foxes. Depending on the season, the high-latitude expeditions might sail beneath the midnight sun or be treated to celestial displays of the Northern Lights.

“[These destinations] offer a real sense of connection and fulfillment in a way that staying within more conventional destinations just can’t—this depth of experience comes from getting outside one’s comfort zone,” Lyons adds.

A Remote Reset In Raja Ampat

Indonesia is seeing “tremendous demand” for yachting expeditions, Lyons says, particularly in Raja Ampat. Dominique Gerardin, managing director and co-owner of Lamima yacht, concurs. “Many guests have already chartered yachts in more traditional destinations and are now looking for something entirely different, somewhere that combines exceptional wildlife, cultural richness and true remoteness,” he says in an email.



But given that there are various permits, fees and conservation contributions required to sail through the protected marine park, it’s hardly crowded (plus foreign-flagged yachts are permitted to cruise in Raja Ampat only for private use with the owner onboard). You could go days without sighting another human being, especially if you have an expert, local team like that on board Lamima who have insider knowledge of the lesser-known treasures.

cleaning station, a coral underworld known as Melissa’s Garden and window-like swim-throughs. Between diving and snorkeling, you can spend hours a day marveling at the creatures and critters underwater, from dolphins to clown fish.

The waters around the archipelago are brimming with one-of-a-kind dive sites, including a manta ray

Timing is also key to side-stepping any possible encounters with crowds. At the crack of dawn, the Lamima team lead guests on hikes up the jungle-clad karst formations for views of pale turquoise lagoons and birds of paradise mating before any of the live-a-board boats can disgorge their passengers. The crew know tiny Castaway-style islands where they set up a table beneath strings of lights for a barbecue on the beach and dark caves for kayak explorations.



Clients who venture to remote regions like this usually come not just for nature’s spectacle, but to learn about its protection and conservation. Lamima often stops by the Misool Resort and the Raja Ampat Research and Conservation Centre (RARCC) on Kri Island, where endangered leopard sharks are being raised in nurseries and returned to the area’s waters. The projects benefit

biodiversity—as well as communities by training and employing local staff.

On board Lamima itself is also an exclusive way to experience the region. The yacht is chartered in its entirety, so a maximum of 14 guests have a vast deck equipped with sunloungers, an expansive indoor saloon and bar, and a spa area all to themselves. There's a wealth of toys, including jet skis, a wakeboard, paddleboards and inflatables. Plus the 20-strong crew includes masseuses, a yoga instructor and a dive master.

From Komodo National Park To Chilean Patagonia

Lamima is also sailing through Komodo National Park this summer, an Indonesian destination Lyons says is also notably on the rise. The itinerary includes diving and snorkeling in some of the country's most biodiverse reefs, with frequent sightings of manta rays, reef sharks and dolphins, as well as swimming alongside whale sharks in Saleh Bay. On land, guests trek across Komodo's dramatic islands, including guided encounters with Komodo dragons and hikes to panoramic viewpoints.

Another remote destination that's capturing attention is Chilean Patagonia. EYOS will organize expeditions aboard OCTOPUS in late 2026 and early 2027, during which guests can explore the majestic fjords, hike through glacial landscapes and lenga forests, and encounter wildlife including sea lions and condors. Scenic helicopter flights give an alternative, striking perspective over Patagonia's vast ice fields and mountain ranges, while Zodiac excursions provide access to areas unreachable by larger vessels.

In August this year, EYOS's Eclipse Expedition aboard Aqua Lares offers travelers the rare opportunity to witness the total solar eclipse from East Greenland's remote Scoresby Sund. The voyage is available on a book-by-cabin basis and legendary NASA astronaut Dr Kathy Sullivan will be onboard to provide expert insight into the science and wonder of celestial exploration. Renowned expedition photographer David Wright will also be joining to help guests capture the eclipse in one of the world's most dramatic Arctic settings.

EYOS isn't the only company to be honing in on the Arctic. In 2025, COMO Hotels debuted Svalbard itineraries, which sold out. HX Expeditions has doubled its voyages to the northern region for 2026, while Atlas Ocean Voyages has added 27 new Arctic ports for 2027.