

# How to add far-flung destinations to your bucket list, without roughing it

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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Bucket lists are notoriously fickle things. Just when you think you've got it sorted something else comes along that bumps everything else off.

The whole point of a bucket list is to experience something extraordinary, right? I mean schlepping up Kili is almost passé nowadays.

Mine was upset by the thought of watching polar bears frolic at the North Pole, or mingling with descendants of Fletcher Christian and his merry men on Pitcairn Island. Just in case you don't know who Fletcher Christian is, he's the one who mutinied against Captain Bligh on the *Bounty* for a better life with nubile young things on a tropical island.



This kind of adventure is normally disregarded because of the hideous amount of money you need fork out just to get there, usually relying on some dodgy airline or tour operator.

So how am I going to get to see the polar bears, up close and personal? Well, let me tell you...

There's a French company called [Ponant](#). It operates a fleet of five star, and I mean five star, ships that sail all over the

world, visiting some of the most remote, unspoiled spots on the globe.

[Le Lyrial](#), the vessel I had lunch on recently, docked in Cape Town, having just taken 300-odd passengers to the ice in Antarctica.



Superior stateroom cabin

This is the kind of expedition takes 'roughing it' to a whole new level. Most of the cabins have their own balcony, as well as a full-on butler service. The meals are gastronomic feats, there's a spa and hair salon, lounges with wi-fi, a pool and sundeck, bars and a theatre – all the perks of a luxury liner.

The décor is inspired by the places the ships visit. So, the Lyrial was decked out in 50 shades of icy white and cool blues.

Bearing in mind, that even though the accommodation is top notch, this is still an expedition ship. And there is a team of naturalist guides and a fleet of Zodiacs on board for excursions onto the ice to get you up close and personal with the incredible bird life and creatures found down south.



Reception area

More importantly, the Lyrial and its sister ships are all 'green' with the most advanced environmentally friendly systems and equipment on board, which also help protect the fragile ecosystems of the places they visit.

The prices in the brochures and on the website are quoted in euros, which usually has us South Africans recoil in horror. But if you think about it, a 10-night trip to Antarctica, including flights to and from Buenos Aires (where you board the ship) and all your food and drink for the duration in December this year will only set you back about R95,000. I think it's a bargain for an adventure of a lifetime. Anyone know where I can get a fur-lined parka?

## ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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