



By WSJ Off Duty
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All it takes is one big group trip to realize that not everyone goes on vacation for the same reason. To one traveler, a beach is a place to be horizontal, big hat on head, cocktail straw in mouth. To another, it's a stepping stone to adventure under and atop the waves. A new city can be a challenge—see, eat, experience it all—or an invitation to zoom in on one area and live like a local.

Read on for our annual compilation of the 10 very best places to go in 2026. We've got enough of everything that anyone will find trip inspiration, whether you're chasing your next solar eclipse, or your next Michelin star.

Andean Chocó, Ecuador



Most travelers to Ecuador looking for wildlife skip the mainland in favor of the Galápagos. But just an hour outside Quito lies the Andean Chocó, a vast cloud forest teeming with exotic birds,

pumas, ocelots and giant anteaters—and you no longer need to be an intrepid bushwhacker to enjoy it.



From top: Hummingbirds congregate at Mashpi Lodge, located in a private reserve; Copal Waterfall, a popular hiking destination in Mashpi Reserve. Mashpi Lodge (2)

In prime toucan- and condor-spotting territory, the 13 suites at the new [N'Cielo Adventure Lodge](#) come with volcano views and soaking tubs. Near the adventure hub of Mindo, the newly opened [Saloya](#) offers treetop lofts, an infinity pool and a fine-dining restaurant. Two hours northwest, [Mashpi Lodge](#) anchors a vast private reserve and will debut a suspension bridge in April that leads to a panoramic sunset perch.

Feel-good bonus: Your tourism dollars support sustainable local livelihoods, reducing reliance on forest-degrading activities like logging, mining and farming. —*N.W.*



Mashpi Lodge blends seamlessly into the surrounding cloud forest. Mashpi Lodge