



Travel

First Class Traveler

Duncan Greenberg, 11.20.09, 04:20 PM EST

From exotic train trips and private mega-yachts to spacious digs on commercial flights, Forbes and the Travel Channel give you ways to experience the heights of luxury travel.



[In Pictures: First Class Traveler](#)

Ever dreamed of dining among the Egyptian pyramids, roaming the ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru and basking in the golden glow of Myanmar's Shwedagon Pagoda--all in the span of a month?

Travel company Abercrombie & Kent can take you to see these world wonders--and six more--in a 26-day whirlwind tour, traveling between the exotic sites aboard a retrofitted 757. In the spirit of true comfort, the airliner's 260 densely packed seats have been replaced with ample accommodations for 52 guests.

Forbes teamed up with the Travel Channel to create a list of the world's finest first class travel accommodations, including private planes, tricked-out trains and high-performance sports cars.

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Abercrombie & Kent's Nine World Wonders trip and 10 other first class travel experiences will be featured on an episode of *Forbes Luxe 11*, which debuts on the Travel Channel and Travel Channel HD Saturday, Nov. 21 at 10 p.m. E/P.

Private flight outfit Talon Air is the answer for anyone looking to forego the hassle of airport security lines. Before boarding, Talon Air clients are invited to lounge in the company's VIP area, where they are treated to rich cigars and premium coffee. "Believe it or not, the VIP area is probably the most underutilized room in the hangar," says Talon Air vice president Jason Kaufman, "because if you're flying via private aviation you're not supposed to wait at all."

Some travelers are better off booking a transatlantic flight on Singapore Airline's A380 aircraft rather than jumping on a private jet. The A380 has three passenger tiers: economy class, [business class](#)--and suite class.

For the suite class, Singapore Air collaborated with yacht designers and celebrity chefs to incorporate a set of private cabins into the nose of the plane, where some passengers can sip fine wines while lounging on a double bed.

Want to take to the sky without really going anywhere? The Zeppelin NT (available for charter via West Coast start-up Airship Ventures), is a modern-day adaptation of the German airship that reached its pinnacle in the early 20th century. With room for 12, Airship Ventures' passenger balloons are well suited to small parties, offering panoramic views of the Bay Area's crystal-blue coastline at an altitude of 1,200 feet.

Enjoying first class accommodations on a train is a favorite of many travelers who like to move at a more leisurely pace.

On the storied Orient Express, guests glide past thatched-roof villages, ancient temples and magnificent palaces as they complete the 1,000-mile journey from Bangkok to Singapore.

"The train goes right through the heart of Asia," says Annette Pines, Orient Express' director of sales. "And we connect with two of the most vibrant cities in Southeast Asia." For high rollers, there are two 124-square foot presidential suites, which together occupy an entire railroad car.

In America, train aficionados can splurge on Virginia City's Baroque-style train car, which comes complete with a fireplace and chandeliers. For about \$5,000 a day, travelers can couple the three-suite car to any Amtrak train, turning a mundane commute into a plush adventure.

"It's more than luxury," says Virginia City's owner Wade Pellizzer. "You get service. You get waited on hand and foot."

Journalist and train historian Lucius Beebe bought the train car in 1955 and refurbished the interior with the help of a Hollywood set designer. He spent \$350,000 on the remodeling, and his lavishness shows: "The fireplace is Venetian marble. The chandeliers are Murano," says Pellizzer.

Those who want to stay on the ground and enjoy a sleek driving experience can rent the Saleen S7. Gotham Dream Cars leases them out, along with an array of limited production, high-performance vehicles. "In theory, the (Saleen S7) could probably go in excess of 240 miles an hour," says Gotham Dream Cars founder Noah Lehmann-Haupt. He adds, "We have not tested it yet."

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