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## Turning A Trip Into An Experience

### By Chic Retreats

Don't underestimate the difference that staying in a boutique hotel can make to your next journey.

How often do you hear someone say, "I can't wait to stay in the hotel"? Discussions about forthcoming holidays nearly always centre on the things we want to do, or the places we're looking forward to seeing, and the place where we're staying doesn't feature at all. All that changes once you've booked into a boutique hotel.

These hotels have been lovingly created by their owners in order to offer you an experience, not just a place to stay. The belief that your holiday or business accommodation should be well designed and provide great service is one that has resulted in hundreds of "boutique" hotels opening up around the world, to cater for the increasing number of travellers who want to stay somewhere special.

### Anticipation

Anticipating your holiday is one of the things we all love. In the weeks before we leave home, we get increasingly excited and really look forward to taking a break from our everyday lives and having new experiences. This anticipation can often be flattened when we reach the hotel, which turns out to be impersonal and indifferent; unless you've booked boutique:

- Welcoming - boutique hotels are designed to be welcoming, so you are looked after from the minute you arrive.
- Different - you'll notice lots of differences from regular chain hotels as soon as you arrive. From the way you check in to the design of the rooms and the public spaces, and the facilities on offer, you'll know immediately that you are staying in an individual hotel.

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- Design - all the things you want to do with your home but haven't had time to do. It might be polished wooden floors or spectacular artwork; Egyptian cotton bedding or funky armchairs. It's this design and detail that makes boutique hotels different from all other traveller accommodation.
- Facilities - large hotels have pools and spas, but they're impersonal. The facilities at small, individual hotels are designed to make you feel at home whilst indulging in treatments or taking advantage of concierge services.

### The experience

The low number of rooms at most boutique hotels defines your experience: you're one of a small number of guests who are benefiting from the great designs and flawless service that these hotels provide. You immediately feel more relaxed and you're able to enjoy your holiday as an all-round experience. Book again for next year, so that you can tell everyone how much you're looking forward to staying in the hotel.

Chic Retreats is a collection of small, individual hotels around the world that offer the traveller a true taste of luxury and service. Visit our website now by clicking on

<http://www.chicretreats.com>

## **Planning Your Adventure**

**By B.J.Baker**

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Planning your Backcountry Adventure at AdvenQuest

Finding Your Adventure

Survey your family or travel group and make sure everyone has the same expectations from the trip. Some things to keep in mind: trip length, degree of comfort needed (sanitary options), price, flexibility on trip dates, and the degree of adventure you are looking for – family, or high adventure, or somewhere in between.

Always Know What You are Getting

When talking to the outfitters ask questions about their company and staff. Sample Questions: How experienced is your staff? Is the trip price all-inclusive? Will you provide references of others that have been on this trip? Can you provide for special dietary needs? Can you tell me about other guests on my trip? Are there children? Other families? Are there any age or other restrictions? Always advise the outfitter of known medical conditions of persons in your group.

Reserve in Advance

Half-day or full-day trips may sometimes be reserved as late as the day before you want to go.

However, the more popular activities fill up fast, so call well in advance to get the most desirable trip dates. Long trips should be booked earlier. Understand the cancellation policy before you book the reservation! After reviewing the literature and your notes, book your trip. Note that restrictions may vary from outfitter to outfitter and trip options, including age limits, may vary by vendor and destination.

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B.J. Baker is an avid outdoor enthusiast who currently resides in The Woodlands, Texas. As a child, BJ accompanied his family on family excursions to Japan, China, South East Asia, Europe and to the Rockies snow skiing. Still traveling the world and instilled with a love for travel and adventure, today BJ is the owner of several travel websites. [www.placestosleep.com](http://www.placestosleep.com), [www.vacationresorttravel.com](http://www.vacationresorttravel.com), [www.advenquest.com](http://www.advenquest.com), and [www.snow-skiing.com](http://www.snow-skiing.com).

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