

A WORLD OF ORIGINAL TRAVEL IDEAS

# lonely planet

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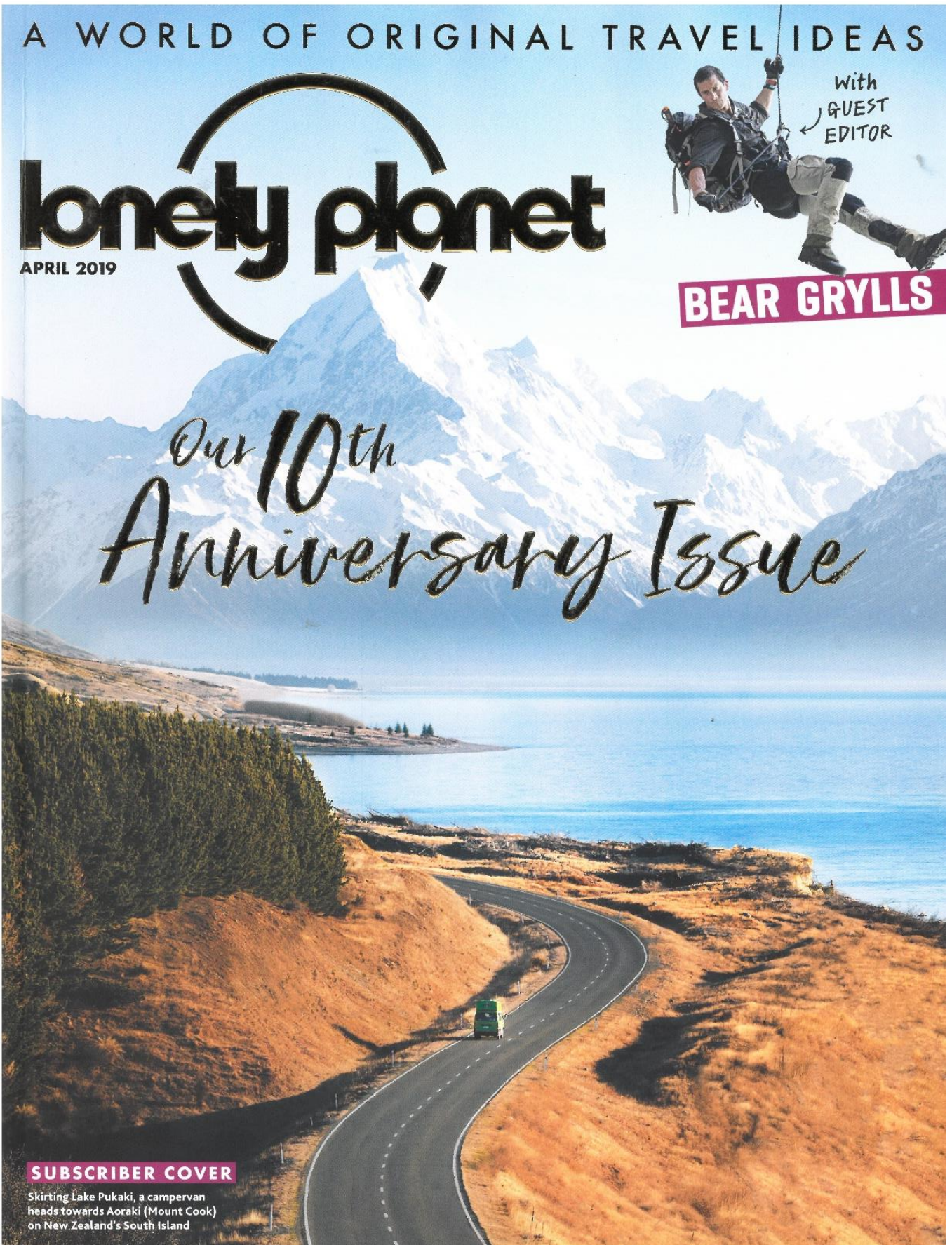
With  
GUEST  
EDITOR

**BEAR GRYLLS**

Our 10th  
Anniversary Issue

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Skirting Lake Pukaki, a campervan heads towards Aoraki (Mount Cook) on New Zealand's South Island



# 10 EXCEEDINGLY COMFORTABLE ADVENTURES

## Sail down the Peruvian Amazon

There's not a single porthole to peer out of on the Aria Amazon miniature cruise ship – its 16 suites all have polished floor-to-ceiling windows, to ensure passengers don't miss the three-toed sloths and pink dolphins winking at them as they pass. Several excursions a day – by customised motorboat and on foot – down labyrinthine tributaries mean you might meet creatures such as red-bellied piranhas, spectacled caimans and furry titi monkeys. Back on board, pleasing design offers soft lighting and wood floors, and the gastronomic menu is based on river and rainforest produce.

Three-night cruise from £3,125,  
[aqualexpeditions.com](http://aqualexpeditions.com)

*'In the rainforest there's a constant sense of other creatures around you'*

*Christo Larwood, Lonely Planet video producer*



## See a Himalayan kingdom in style

Bhutan is a small and entirely mountainous country that sticks famously close to tradition (it was a hold-out against television until 1999) but there's no law against a little luxury when it's in keeping. The two Comos hotels in the kingdom follow locally inspired architecture, and guests can add on experiences such as a guided hike to lofty Paro Taktsang ('Tiger's Nest Monastery'), a helicopter ride through Himalayan valleys or a class in Bhutan's national sport of archery.

Half board from £380;  
[comohotels.com/en/bhutan](http://comohotels.com/en/bhutan)



### Island-hop by dhow

Humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins, dugongs and turtles are among the inhabitants of Mozambique's Quirimbas archipelago, largely untouched by humans until independence in 1975. Look out for them on a no-effort jaunt on a traditional dhow, from which you can swim, snorkel or kayak in the green-blue Indian Ocean. The itinerary takes in tiny islands such as Matemo and Quisiva, and coastal relics including the crumbling colonial ghost town of Ibo. By night, retire to well-appointed beach camps or a guest room at Ibo Island Lodge, a pair of historic mansion houses with tropical gardens.

*Five-night safari, from £2,080; [iboisland.com/dhow-safaris](http://iboisland.com/dhow-safaris)*

### Carry on glamping

Oman specialist Hud Hud offers deluxe hikes in the Al-Hajar mountains that start hardy (you'll trek through date palms into spectacular gorges and up rough, tough tracks) then provide creature comforts at camp, miles from the nearest source of light pollution. Treats include your own bathroom tent, an open-air sitting-room strewn with cushions, and a petanque piste scratched out in the desert.

*Three-day hike from £3,760; [hudhudtravels.com](http://hudhudtravels.com)*

### Heli-hike in Lapland

In the icy far north of Sweden, roads aren't really a thing. The sensible way to hike in the Kebnekaise massif, where every feature of the terrain has a Sami name, is to drop in by helicopter, with a clued-up guide and a hipflask. Your hosts at Niehku Mountain Villa include an award-winning sommelier, expert spa, sauna and massage administrators.

*Four-day hike from £1,210; [niehku.com](http://niehku.com)*

### Dive deep in Belize

The Great Blue Hole is not for novices: it's a deep, dark marine sinkhole, festooned with stalactites up to 150,000 years old. Experienced divers can heli-jump in to explore, as well as diving coral reefs, and along 185 miles of gorgeous coastline. Hungry? Spear fish for lunch. Curious? Canoe through caves to a Maya burial site. Still awake? Time for a night dive.

*One-week trip from £7,750; [pelorusx.com](http://pelorusx.com)*

### Learn to fly-fish

You don't need to cast a line like Brad Pitt to star in your own version of *A River Runs Through It*. After breakfasting on ricotta lemon blueberry pancakes, don waders and get amongst it. Rock Creek in Montana offers four miles of private-access riverbank, and a stay in one of its cabins means you can fish from your front door and soak in a hot tub under the stars.

*Three nights from £2,000; [theranchatrockcreek.com](http://theranchatrockcreek.com)*

### Hike around the Highlands

The more dreich (bleak) the weather, the better – if you're striding across Kilmartin Glen towards the mystical and strangely atmospheric hillfort of Dunadd in Argyll. On a 10-day adventure that also takes in Glencoe, St Kilda and the Isle of Skye, you'll hike on lonely coastal paths and lochside trails, and take to the seas in a Zodiac boat. Lodgings tend towards the baronial, and refreshments include a whisky tasting somewhere secret.

*From £8,750; [blacktomato.com](http://blacktomato.com)*

### Follow a treasure map

It's a pirate's life for you (for a prince's ransom) with the eight-day X Marks the Spot tour that island-hops through the Grenadines. A stay on Mustique is 'interrupted' on day four with the arrival of a stranger bearing a treasure map. A yacht trip through the Tobago Cays follows, perhaps casting ashore on Petit Tabac, the island where Captain Jack Sparrow and Elizabeth Swann were stranded in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

*Eight-day trip from £4,650; [niquesatravel.com](http://niquesatravel.com)*

### Let the train take the strain

The green and gold livery, the cherrywood panelling and Thai silk in the compartments – it's as though Thomas the Tank Engine married into money. Running on two-night journeys between Singapore and Bangkok, the Eastern & Oriental Express is part of the same family as Europe's Orient Express, though with a few differences: the menus in the E&O's dining cars have more spice to them, and there's an observation car from which you can watch the tropical greenery and village life of Malaysia and Thailand unfold, with the promise of a Singapore Sling close to hand.

*From £2,470; [belmond.com](http://belmond.com)*

