

Where are the best remote destinations for superyachts?

By Lorna Titley

Are there any destinations on earth left to discover? The first accurate scientific world map was drawn up in the early 1500s by Diego Ribeiro, a Portuguese cartographer. The Padrón Real, as it came to be known, was the secret master template used for maps kept on all Spanish ships during the 16th century. Now, centuries later, with every nook and cranny of the globe mapped out and apparently accessible to international travellers, it's easy to believe that there are no hidden treasures left to find.

The good news for the superyacht community, however, is that there are still lesser known, pristine gems that are perfect for exploring by yacht. It takes a bit more effort to reach places where nature is still firmly in charge but the rewards, by all accounts, are unimaginable.

“Most of these locations are once-in-a-lifetime experiences,” explains Henry Cookson, whose company, Cookson Adventures, specializes in exploring the planet's most remote corners and building tailor-made adventures for superyacht charter clients. “We find new and exhilarating ways for our clients to explore the destination by yacht, so they leave feeling they have had the richest experience possible in each location.”

Ahead of the Cookson Adventures` **Remote Superyacht Destinations webinar on 15th September**, we asked Henry Cookson, the company's CEO & Founder, and his team, to offer a sneak preview of some of the spectacular, yet little known superyacht travel locations that should appear on every intrepid traveller's wish-list.

First up is **Socorro, part of the Revillagigedo Archipelago Socorro**, a range of volcanic islands and underwater mountain ranges so remote – and with no accommodation - that visiting by yacht is the only option. Located far off the coasts of Central and South America, the area is dubbed the 'superhighway' of the Pacific after scientists were astonished by the vast number of pelagic species riding its currents. It is also home to some of the largest aggregations of sharks in the world including Galápagos, silky and silvertips.

Neal Bateman, Head of Yacht Projects at Cookson Adventures, explains how the company's approach to providing immersive experiences works in

locations like Socorro. “Some clients want to get involved in helping to preserve the rich marine life,” he comments, adding, “In Socorro, we have a network of marine biologists aboard a research vessel, so that clients can help spend time shark-tagging and checking underwater cameras.”

Heading towards the West African coast, scene-stealing wildlife is a major draw for visitors to **Bijagós in Guinea-Bissau**. Located 3 hours from the mainland, visitors to this sprinkling of 68 uninhabited islands can enjoy sighting of roaring hippos and giant tortoises that populate Bijagós. The hidden archipelago boasts untouched beaches, old-growth forests, uninterrupted water sports and intriguing glimpses of its colonial past seen in crumbling facades and thatched cottages.

For those looking for intrigue, then **Socotra, Yemen** could be the place. With its history mired in territorial dispute, there are virtually no tourists visiting this secretive Arabian island. However, the reward for reaching its hypnotically blue - and now peaceful - shores is almost unimaginable. “There’s no other place like it on Earth,” says Henry Cookson. “It hasn’t received half the stardom of the Galápagos, yet left to evolve over millions of years, Socotra’s collection of species has one of the planet’s highest levels of endemism.” Highlights of this notoriously hard-to-reach destination include outlandish dragon trees that seep a blood-like resin, alien landscapes and the opportunity to race sand boards down dunes for hundreds of metres towards the beach.

By contrast, the **Sub-Antarctic Island of South Georgia** offers vast penguin colonies amongst its show-stopping scenery. What’s more, visitors travelling by private yacht to this part of the planet’s southernmost continent can actively take part in vital conservation projects. “Our guests don’t just have a front row seat to this epic show” explains Henry Cookson. “They can join researchers to monitor the penguin population, which has some of the world’s largest colonies of black-banded chinstraps, long-tailed gentoos and yellow-crested macaronis. Or they can observe the graceful wandering albatross at sea or help count the recovering population of southern right whales.”

For anyone interested in evolution and ecology, **Aldabra in the Seychelles** offers a spectacular coral reef that is a UNESCO-listed natural wonder and, due to its isolation, a perfect model of an untouched ecosystem. Visitors can expect to see white sands, a forested interior and idyllic waters that are home to everything from prehistoric flightless birds that are otherwise extinct to giant coconut crabs, coral “mushrooms” and over 150,000 roaming giant tortoises. “Aldabra is the last place on the planet to be dominated by reptiles and one of only two

saltwater breeding sites for giant flamingos” says Neal Bateman. Highlights include “getting in the water with rare dugongs, schooling mantas and blacktip reef sharks in numbers that wouldn’t be seen anywhere else.”

Even those who have already visited Fiji may not be familiar with **The Lau Group**, the country’s least visited and largely uninhabited islands. Accessible only by seaplane or yacht, The Lau Group has little or no tourism. A visit affords a rare opportunity to support research into the manta rays, which have never been studied here before. Very little is currently known about their population, their behaviour and demographic in the region. “We are developing new ways for our clients to experience traditional Fiji” explains Henry Cookson, “Our guests can head out with scientists to set-up underwater cameras and capture data that will hopefully lead to their protection and make a big impact on marine conservation.”

We have certainly come a long way since Ribeiro first tied together the mysteries of the globe’s remotest corners in his Padrón Real. But happily, for the curious yacht traveller, there are still many tucked-away locations to discover.

Join Cookson Adventures on 15th September at the Remote Superyacht Destinations Webinar. Staged by Quaynote Communications, this one-hour virtual production will take you on a journey around the world’s best remote superyacht destinations. www.cooksonadventures.com

To register your place at the Remote Superyacht Destinations Webinar visit www.quaynote.com or contact alison@quaynote.com