



RESORT TO LAURA MADRID

EXPERT TRAVEL PLANNING

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Dear Loyal Travel Enthusiasts,

Welcome to 2022! How good does that sound? While I have so enjoyed navigating this ever-changing world with you in 2021, I'm confident that most of us are ready for a fresh start and a new narrative as we embark upon a new year with infinite possibilities!

Based on the trends that my team and I are seeing, I've compiled a list of **TIPS** to help you navigate travel in the coming year, which you'll find on the right.

If you are yearning to make up for lost time and need a bit of inspiration, please read on for recaps on my 2021 travel research to Little Palm Island, Miami, Cashiers and Highlands, Turks & Caicos, Spain, France, New Orleans, and Costa Rica.

I look forward to planning all your 2022 and 2023 trips as soon as you're ready! My team and I will be able to provide our best and most efficient service when you reach out to us well ahead of time. Our computers are already on overdrive, planning chic couples retreats with friends, belated milestone birthdays, anniversary celebrations, and family holiday bucket-list adventures. Don't miss out!

Lots of love,

Laura with the Resort to Laura Madrid Team –
Celeste, Holly, Jacqueline, and Bre

LAURA'S TIPS FOR 2022

- 1 DON'T WAIT!** And that's not a sales tactic — demand for travel and especially for the most sought-after destinations is off the charts. Many top destinations are already selling out so if you intend to travel in 2022, let's solidify your plans!
- 2 TIMES ARE DIFFERENT:** Luxury hotel companies are reporting a reverse trend: where they previously would sell out their lowest category rooms first, it's their top suites and multi-bedroom units that are now selling first. We cannot expect these coveted units to be available later, as was often possible in the past. Since this trend also means last-minute complimentary upgrades may not be available, it's important to book the category with which you will be happiest at time of reservation.
- 3 EXPECT YOUR TRAVEL INVESTMENT TO INCREASE** across the board. We're already seeing how higher fuel, labor, and material costs affect every segment: bespoke touring, yacht rentals, flights, luxury hotels, and insider experiences.
- 4 CONSIDER TRAVELING IN THE SHOULDER SEASON,** as you'll find that many places are so much more beautiful and authentic when there is a lower tourist-to-local ratio. Your travel experience is enhanced and your travel dollars are spent more responsibly, getting to locals when and where needed, and without the surcharge of peak season.
- 5 TRAVEL OFF THE BEATEN PATH.** Allow me to suggest cities, islands, ski towns, or even countries that you might not have considered before!
- 6 STAY LONGER IN A DESTINATION.** When you spend more time in one country rather than "country collecting," you get the chance to really feel like a local, enjoy some downtime, and experience more than just the perceived highlights. In fact, the adventures you do not expect often end up being the highlights!
- 7 OUR NEW NORMAL:** Technology (including digital health passports, testing capability, and international vaccine cards) has come a long way in 2021. As borders continue to open and close, their entry protocols seeming to change weekly, my team and I work tirelessly to help you navigate these changes every step of the way. I believe we will continue to see enhancements that allow us to travel more efficiently and safely in our new world for the foreseeable future!
- 8 THE VERY BEST ACCESSORY YOU CAN PACK IS YOUR FLEXIBILITY.** Trust me, it looks great on you! While the labor shortage has caused service and schedule volatility from airlines to hotels to dining, we do expect this to improve in 2022. My team and I are always here to develop a Plan B with the best possible solutions to keep your travel plans enjoyable, meaningful, and hassle-free.



*The rooftop restaurant
at the stunning new
Four Seasons Hotel Madrid*

LAURA'S 2021 TRAVEL

WINTER 2021

MIAMI: The Beach & Beyond

In recent years, some of the most glamorous resorts have opened up in Miami. Forget everything you might conjure up about “spring breakers,” as these two properties are all about respite.

Faena Miami Beach is a cultural outpost of art, fashion, theatre and gastronomy, and offers so much more than a hotel stay. Glamorous indeed, the striking decor with an abundance of red in the fabrics, furnishings, and art makes quite a statement. Faena is close to but just north of the hustle and bustle of South Beach, in its own more sophisticated universe.



Just steps away from the ocean is the phenomenal Faena Miami Beach

The iconic and historic Surf Club Miami has reopened as the seductive **Four Seasons Resort Surfside at the Surf Club**, which may be the most beautiful hotel in Florida! An escape to the Four Seasons Surfside feels immediately calming, cultivated, and civilized. Guests here feel like they are in the know and have uncovered a hidden timeless gem, perhaps the way members of the original Surf Club felt in a bygone era.

LAURA'S TIP: *Both of these hotels have DESTINATION restaurants that transport you somewhere else and are worth even one overnight stay. Thomas Keller, Francis Mallman, Paul Qui, say no more — but do have us book your dinner table at the same time we reserve your room.*

“Getting Lost” on Little Palm Island, where it feels more Bora Bora than the Florida Keys



ISLANDS: A YEAR IN REVIEW

LITTLE PALM ISLAND: The Keys

Exclusive, private, romantic, adults-only **Little Palm Island** is the American equivalent to Bora Bora or the Maldives. Located 45 minutes north of the Key West airport, and a 15-minute boat ride off of Little Torch Key, the motto at Little Palm Island is “GET LOST.” Thirty beachfront bungalows are inspired by a British West Indies esthetic with a modern twist. Authentic thatched roofs and vaulted ceilings are complemented by private outdoor showers, vibrant ocean views and plush, all-new interiors. Indulge in island isolation where champagne is poured by mid-morning, the sea sparkles in the sun, and the only decision is whether to wake up for an early morning snorkel or to lounge in a hammock on the beach. It’s just you, four acres of beach, no phones, no TVs, and no distractions. Expensive but worth it!

LAURA’S TIP: *From Key West, hop a seaplane right to Little Torch Key or “escape” the islands’ serenity and seaplane back into Key West for some live music.*

SPRING 2021

HIGHLANDS & CASHIERS, North Carolina

In Cashiers, a landmark property has just reopened after a full-scale refresh. The beloved historic **High Hampton Inn** is being thoughtfully managed by the team behind Tennessee’s revered Blackberry Farm and Blackberry Mountain. This equates to outstanding food, a stellar beverage program, and service that is spot on.

In addition to Cashiers, Highlands is the other adorable town making up this chic mountain destination. Here the classic **Old Edwards Inn**, a Relais & Châteaux property, has been taking care of Resort to Laura Madrid clients for many years.

Half-Mile Farm, Old Edward’s sister property just outside of town, is another spectacular place to stay with a slightly more serene lakeside setting, yet it offers daily shuttle service into the heart of Highlands for indulgent shopping and dining.

LAURA’S TIP: *It’s not all about the resorts. Spend time in the adorable towns of Cashiers and Highlands for authentic antique shopping, art galleries, terrific clothing boutiques, and fun dining!*



Enjoying the good life in Turks & Caicos on a chartered yacht

TURKS & CAICOS: Shore Club & Wymara Villas

Turks & Caicos has no shortage of luxury resorts and fantastic dining options, from local beach bars to five-star dining. Scuba diving sites include a 14-mile barrier reef on Provo’s north shore and a dramatic 2,134m underwater wall off Grand Turk Island. With nonstop flights from most of the US gateways, it is no wonder that T&C is one of the most highly requested Caribbean destinations for my clients.

The **Shore Club on Long Bay Beach** is the location for shallow, calm waters and endless and not overly-crowded beach walks.

Wymara Villas are all equipped with their own infinity-edge ocean-front pool, a courtyard waterfall pool, and an over-the-water swim platform with direct access to the shallow bay. Book a multi-bedroom villa at Shore Club and Wymara and have all of the benefits of a luxury home and a full-service resort — housekeeping, dining, spa, fitness, security and concierge services.

LAURA’S TIP: *Turks & Caicos consist of 40 different islands and cays, most of them uninhabited. Some of the most popular small islands and cays include Big Ambergris Cay, Parrot Cay, Little Iguana, Pine Cay, and Water Cay. Your captain is sure to show you some of his favorites, so spend at least one day on your own chartered yacht!*



A SPECTACULAR SPANISH SUMMER! *Clockwise from top left:* Our driver in Madrid let me take the wheel on his 1989 Mini Cooper; A 4x4 Jeep safari tour of Menorca with a terrific local guide; A never-ending field of sunflowers in Costa Brava; About to enter the #1 restaurant in the world, El Cellar de Can Roca in Girona; and the stunning Binigaus Nou boutique villa in Menorca.



SPANISH SUMMER 2021

Madrid: Sophisticated & Authentic

Madrid has always been one of my favorite European capitals, and no, it's not just because of the name! Madrid is elegant, sophisticated, understated, and authentic. This ancient capital previously lacked any top five-star hotels, but that has all changed with the opening of three amazing properties: **Four Seasons**, **Mandarin Oriental**, and **Rosewood**!

I stayed at the fantastic **Four Seasons Hotel Madrid**, whose contemporary design with seven historical buildings has transformed the bustling neighborhood and this dynamic European capital. With rooftop dining by Spanish celebrity chef Dani García, a four-level spa, and a sun-splashed pool terrace, the Four Seasons brings a new level of luxury and service to Madrid.

LAURA'S TIP: *If you love history, ambiance, and sherry wine, don't miss **La Venencia**, a decades-old watering hole and local favorite, just a short walk from Four Seasons Hotel Madrid.*

VINO: Spain's Priorat, Ribera del Duero, and La Rioja Wine Regions

Many food and wine enthusiasts agree that Spain is one of the most exciting gastronomic countries in the world, with a vibrant passion for producing and enjoying outstanding culinary and oenological experiences. On this trip, we traveled with dear friends who are fellow wine lovers. We met up with some of the most passionate winemakers I have ever known in Priorat, Ribera del Duero, and La Rioja, where Tempranillo and Garnacha grapes rule!

In Priorat, we stayed at the gorgeous **Terra Dominicata**, a tranquil boutique hotel and winery with 12th century monastic roots in Catalonia. A sense of peace seems to settle over you the moment you arrive.

In Ribera del Duero, we were the lucky guests at the captivating, not-to-be-missed luxury hotel and winery, **Abadía Retuerta LeDomaine**.

LAURA'S TIP: *Allow us to arrange immersive wine days with local producer/winemakers who are creating some of the best wines in the country — you won't find these characters on your own!*

MENORCA: Gem of Spain's Balearic Islands

Menorca is the most laid-back and tranquil of Spain's popular Balearic Islands — less clubby than Ibiza and less touristy than neighboring Mallorca. Authentic towns filled with locals and Spanish, unreal beaches, nature, active adventures and wonderful little restaurants make this

a paradise for those lucky enough to holiday on this “hidden gem”! After several weeks of hotel-hopping throughout Spain, we ended our Spanish adventure by settling into villa life with friends and family — the perfect complement to an immersive holiday.

The exceptionally private **Binigaus Nou** villa is a delightful, authentic Menorca retreat with spacious bedrooms, terrific entertaining areas, and a gorgeous pool. The villa has a desirable location on an undisturbed UNESCO-protected biosphere reserve, boasting sea views and its own direct access to one of the most seductive beaches on the Mediterranean.

LAURA'S TIP: *Menorca is the place to come for a week or a month or more. We have access to wonderful villas and this is an island where you can truly become a “local.”*

BARCELONA: Beyond the Basics

Most people who travel to Spain time and again never miss Barcelona. It is fun, artsy, trendy, fashion-forward, and oh so alive. That said, it is also often overwhelmed with English-speaking travelers, which is why experiencing it in 2021 was such a treat. We heard Spanish — or actually Catalan — being spoken in bars, on the Ramblas, and in the markets. We stayed at an RTLM favorite hotel, **The Serras**. This 27-room, family-owned and -operated hotel is in my absolute favorite location of the city, nestled between the Barceloneta, Gothic, and Born neighborhoods. Of course, Gaudi's architectural highlights are everywhere and the Sagrada Familia is a must-do, but as this was my twelfth visit, we opted to tour the city with a couple of locals — a sommelier with the best nose for wine and tapas, and a lifestyle expert who introduced us to where the stylish Catalans shop.

LAURA'S TIP: *Have you noticed that when a great culinary find gets published online, it can suddenly lose its mystique? I know my newsletter is incognito, but ask me about my five MUST-NOT-MISS restaurants in Barcelona and I will do my best to get you in!*

THE COSTA BRAVA: From the Coast to the Countryside of Catalunya

Just a 90-minute drive north of Barcelona is the beautiful seaside and countryside of the Costa Brava and Empordà. We stayed at the idyllic **Mas de Torrent Hotel & Spa**, one of the many stunning 14th and 15th century farm homes that liken this region to Tuscany. Cycling through tiny Medieval hamlets and hilltop villages or hiking the endless seaside trails is why travelers come. But for foodies, a meal at **El Celler de Can Roca** in Girona — the #1 restaurant in the world twice and on the *Best of the Best* Hall of Fame — did not disappoint!

LAURA'S TIP: *I can highly recommend a visit to the city of La Bisbal d'Empordà, where the region's gorgeous ceramic shops are located. You will want to redecorate your house so plan to ship items home!*

FALL 2021

FRANCE: Champagne, Anyone?

Land in Paris and catch a 45-minute train directly to Reims, the heart of France's most northerly and most famous wine region, Champagne!

I stayed at **Château du Sacy** in the tiny town of Sacy on a vineyard on the Champagne route. With 12 rooms and suites, a spectacular restaurant, and a wonderful little spa, it is the ideal spot to unwind in wine country after a long flight. Another option, **The Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa** is a slightly larger, contemporary and glamorous property near Épernay with a huge pool and spa and views of the valley below.

LAURA'S TIP: *Champagne is not just an apéritif or meant to be pulled out only for celebrations. In Champagne, this effervescent liquid gold is enjoyed every day and with all meals!*



Walking the sparkling UNESCO-protected Avenue of Champagne

NORMANDY & CHANTILLY: Spending Time in the Regions

Many of my clients ask me to plan a day trip from Paris to Normandy. I will now push back on this idea as much as possible, as the region is so outstanding with history, picturesque towns, and wonderful gastronomy that a simple day trip really is a missed opportunity. Spending quality time on the beaches, cemeteries, and monuments that commemorate the impossibly brave humans who changed the trajectory of World War II and won us the freedoms we enjoy today is worth so much more than a day. Special hotels — **La Ferme Saint Siméon – Relais & Châteaux** in Honfleur, **Château d'Audrieux** near Bayeux, and **Domaine de Primard**, Catherine Deneuve's former mansion — made for an unforgettable tour of the best of Normandy!

LAURA'S TIP: *End your trip in Chantilly (where the Chantilly cream is indeed sinful), tour the royal horse stables, the many châteaux, and have a wonderful meal and sleep at **Auberge du Jeu de Paume**, just a 30-minute transfer to Charles De Gaulle for your flight home!*

*Here: Châteaux de Chantilly is a wow Royal castle without the crowds of Versailles
Below: The port of historic Honfleur, a must-visit town in Normandy*



PARIS — Always a Good Idea!

I attended Duco, a small luxury conference where I was able to connect and deep-dive into all things *à la Français!* My colleagues from the top hotels of France all gathered in Paris for *tête-à-tête* meetings and delightful meals were set up at the chicest hotels of Paris —

- Airelles Château de Versailles
- Cheval Blanc
- Four Seasons George V
- Hôtel Lancaster
- Hôtel Le Royal Monceau
- Hôtel Lutetia
- Hôtel Plaza Athénée
- JK Place
- La Réserve
- Le Bristol
- Le Meurice
- Mandarin Oriental Paris
- Monsieur George
- Pavilion de la Reine
- The Peninsula
- Relais Christine
- Ritz Paris
- San Regis
- Shangri-La
- St. James

— and that’s just to name a few!! There is no shortage of wonderful places to feel ooh, la, la! Right or Left Bank, palace or boutique, see and be seen or hide away? So many questions, so little time.

LAURA’S TIP: For fashionistas, check out the newest luxury department store in the historic La Samaritaine. Clients of RTLM enjoy exclusive access to **L’Appartement at La Samaritaine** — a prestige lounge reserved for VIP shoppers. RTLM guests at La Samaritaine enjoy VIP meet and greet, a private shopping session in the exclusive Parisian apartment, a personal stylist on request, complimentary drinks and snacks, and delivery of shopping purchases to your hotel. Just let us know what we can arrange in advance of your Parisian shopping spree.

The view from my balcony at the Hôtel Plaza Athénée



FOUR SEASONS NEW ORLEANS: A New Level of Luxury in the Big Easy

I was honored to be included among Four Seasons top agency Preferred Partners to celebrate the opening of the spectacular **Four Seasons Hotel New Orleans**, the anchor of the renaissance of this impossibly resilient city! I know I am biased, but there is no global brand who does it better and consistently gets it right. New Orleans is always a celebration and this celebrated new luxury hotel gives you reason to “*Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler*” again!

LAURA’S TIP: Before you hit the oysters, bloody marys, and Second Line parades, spend a few hours at the New Orleans Museum of Modern Art (NOMA). You’ll be completely taken with the art installations inside and the sculpture garden and architectural features on the outside. There’s an incredible Children’s Museum here, too!



Feeling rejuvenated after an incredible morning hike through Quartz Mountain

THE RETREAT: A Women’s Wellness Adventure in Costa Rica

I capped off the year with 20 fabulous ladies on a five-day women’s wellness journey to Costa Rica at the 13-room **The Retreat**. This boutique wellness resort and spa, intimately perched on 65 acres of Quartz Mountain, is uniquely situated within “One of the Best Unique Micro-Climates in the World.” The week featured gourmet organic vegetarian meals, yoga, hikes, workouts, Ayurvedic and other healing spa treatments, hand-crafted cocktails, digital detox, and nourishing female camaraderie — and nobody wanted to leave!

LAURA’S TIP: There are more women’s retreats in the works! Watch this space for my future enrichment trips for women to Sri Lanka, Malibu, Spain and more. Register at www.lauramadridtravel.com to receive my e-newsletters so you can be the first to know about upcoming trips!

A FEW OF LAURA'S 2022 PLANS:

If you enjoyed my travel research in 2021, just wait 'til you hear what I have in store for 2022:

RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO: Everyone needs to chase the sun this winter and who doesn't need a margarita now? I'll be crossing the border to check out the new Auberge Resort in the Riviera Maya, Etéreo. Gracias, mi amor!

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO: A girls' trip to the new Auberge Bishop's Lodge outside of Santa Fe (do you see a trend?). This group is one to watch and Santa Fe offers it all — art, culture, gastronomy, nature, history, and active adventures.

BORDEAUX, FRANCE: A top-tier insiders' trip to experience wines from some of the most historic and acclaimed châteaux on earth with a group of fun-loving fellow oenophiles.

UGANDA & RWANDA: Venturing deep into the heart of Africa with special friends to meet mankind's closest relatives — chimps and gorillas — in the spell-binding mountains.

NORTHERN ITALY: We'll kick off this trip on the shores of Lake Como and concludes exploring Piedmont's most prolific wines — Barolos, Barbarescos, Barberas (see a theme?) — while hunting for the region's treasured truffles.



WHERE IS YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE?


If any of the destinations mentioned in this newsletter or from years past are on your travel wish list, I invite you to read my complete recap of each destination and check out the photos on my blog at www.lauramadridtravel.com. Or simply contact me to organize your perfect trip! I always appreciate your calls as well as your referrals — they are truly the biggest compliment you can give me and my team!

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THE
WORLD
IS YOURS



Miami: A highlight of my visit was a private tour of the Wynwood Art District. The world is yours — where do YOU want to go next?