

LUXURY

LUXURY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2015





ROAM

If You Want To

by JENNIFER ASHTON RYAN

Circumnavigate the globe this winter to discover the dramatic overlooks, surreal landscapes, and verdant valleys reached on these eight virtually snow-free hiking destinations. ▶

South Island, New Zealand

SONORAN DESERT, Arizona

Snowbirds flock to the Southwest for winter, and the Sonoran Desert surrounding Tucson, Ariz., is one of their greatest refuges.



TERRAIN: Among the greenest deserts in the world, this dusty environment supports 50-foot saguaro cactus, a range of bushy edible plants, and more animals than you might expect. Snakes brumate in the Sonoran Desert in winter, and hikers following rocky, uneven trails through Wild Burro Canyon can spot rabbits, javelina, and an occasional bobcat. Snowfall is infrequent and melts in a few hours.

HIKE: Outside Tucson, **The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain** (above, inset) accommodates a range of hiking options through the adjacent Tortolita Preserve. The resort's own Ranger Ron Brink developed a diverse hiking menu for guests who can join daily group hikes lasting a few hours (\$65 per person) or hire one of the property's five full-time guides (\$50 per person, per hour). Experiences range from an Ancient Rock Art Tour to a nighttime Scorpion Hunt.

The state park system manages the preserve, so 26 miles of trails are well maintained and color-coded by difficulty for guests looking to set out on their own.

ADVENTURE: For fitness buffs, a 10-mile loop moves through four elevation changes up to 4,000 feet and takes about six hours to complete. Families can try The Ritz-Carlton's geocaching programs (from \$60 per family), which are like wilderness scavenger hunts using GPS units.

REST: The 5-year-old **Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain's** 253 rooms, suites, and casitas (from \$300; ritzcarlton.com) overlook the surrounding mountains and canyons. The 850-acre property also includes 95 residences (available for sale from \$1 million, theresidencesdovemountain.com), swimming pools, 27 holes of golf designed by Jack Nicklaus, tennis courts, and an award-winning spa. ▶