



With summer holidays around the corner, which are the most popular holiday destinations? **Danny Gocs** asks travel agents about the latest travel hot spots.

ADVENTURE holidays in Africa and South America are growing in popularity among members of the Jewish community, according to a survey of travel agents.

Safari trips to Kenya, South Africa and Botswana that offer luxury in the wild are very popular, as are trips off the beaten track to explore the Amazon in South America.

As the cruising boom continues, travellers are looking to more exotic destinations such as the Galapagos Islands and the polar regions.

However, most people are planning to spend their summer holidays in Bali, Thailand, Hawaii, Europe and Israel, which have all ranked among the most popular destinations in recent years.

Mark Chaskiel, CEO of FBI Travel in Caulfield North, says that holidays in Bali

and Thailand are very popular and offer great value for money.

"In the past few years Hawaii has also been at the top of the list, especially the islands of Maui and Lanai," he says. "Vietnam and Cambodia are great for those wishing to mix their beach holiday with a more cultural adventure."

Chaskiel says many people want to experience the culture of a country and are heading to Europe (Italy, France and Spain) as well as India.

"Cruising is very popular with a marked shift towards smaller boutique-style ships and European river cruises."

Anthony Goldman, managing director of Travelcall in St Kilda Road, Melbourne, says Bali and Hawaii are popular summer holiday destinations.

"Bali is only a short flight away and you can experience exotic locations and stay in luxury villas," he says.

"There has been a trend towards different generations travelling together, often to celebrate a special family birthday or milestone."

Goldman says that cruising is popular for all ages. "It used to be for the oldies! Now families are taking advantage of this easy way to travel, as there is no need to unpack more than once."

The FIFA World Cup next year has

focused attention on Brazil and other South American countries, according to Vicky Gonda, managing director of Jetset Travel Rose Bay.

"Many families are taking their holidays in South America, while Thailand is always popular," she says.

"Sri Lanka and Burma are the newest hotspots."

Gonda notes a growing trend towards multi-generational holidays, especially on cruises where there are plenty of activities for children.

Wayne Ackerfeld, manager of Travel Associates of Elsternwick, says that Israel remains a favourite destination at this time of year, while the United States, South America, India and Cambodia are high on the list.

Yvonne Lazarow, managing director of Impact Organisation – Travel, says Hawaii and Bali are popular destinations for families.

"Within Australia, Margaret River is in demand along with the perennial favourites of Port Douglas and the Gold Coast," she says.

"Our leisure clients are looking at all forms of cruising – the more exotic the better. The idea of unpacking once is very appealing, and many people are doing back-to-back cruises for up to 21 days."

Lazarow says India and Sri Lanka are ideal for travellers looking for a different destination.

Barbara Gross, managing director of Sabra Travel, Bondi, says a popular new holiday hot destination is the island of Mauritius, situated off the southeast coast of Africa.

"Our most popular places for the summer holidays are Fiji, Bali, Phuket, South Africa and Hawaii."

Gross says that safaris are popular in many parts of Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Namibia.

"Namibia is a wonderful destination; besides seeing the animals, there are the spectacular red dunes of Sossusvlei that you can climb up."

Yvonne Verstandig, director of Executive Edge Travel & Events of Caulfield, says skiing in Europe and the United States is popular at this time of year.

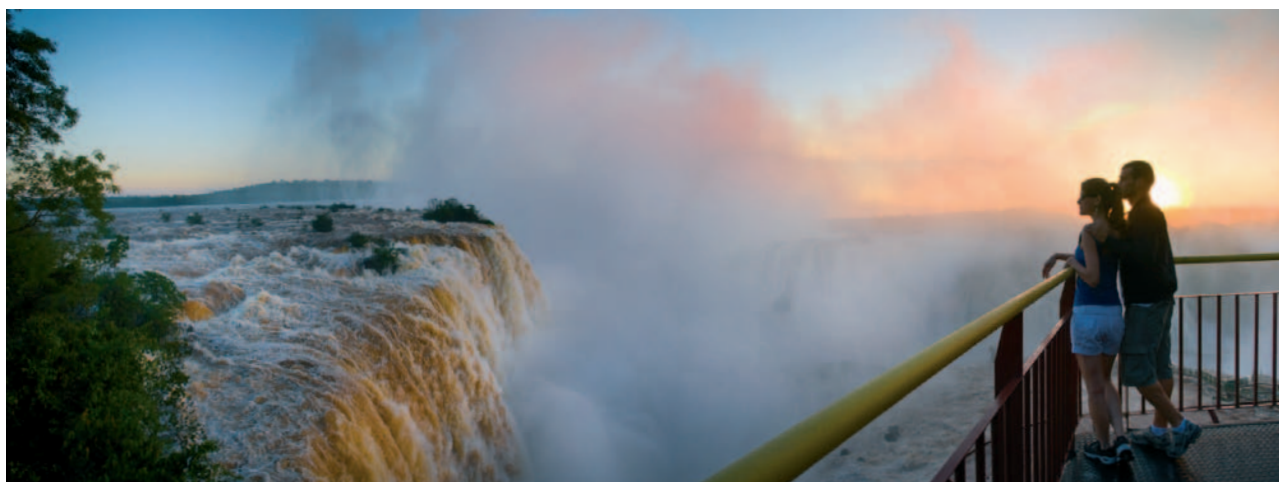
"Mexico is ideal for beach breaks, especially the beautiful Chiapas area which has some extraordinary archaeological sights," she says.

"For spiritual journeys and off-the-beaten-path adventures, Bhutan – the magical kingdom of happiness bordered by China and India – is a new destination that is coming on the radar."



Exploring Antarctica on the Silver Explorer.

Photo: Silversea



The spectacular Iguazu Falls in Brazil.

Photo: Orient Express