

When the sky is not the limit.



Turn astronaut for a day

Sir Richard Branson has come a long way since he launched his first successful business in 1966. Among his latest ventures is Virgin Galactic, which launched in 2004, and is the result of his vision to make sub-orbital space travel by non-professional astronauts an affordable possibility.

The world's first private purpose built commercial spaceport, Spaceport America, is nearing completion in New Mexico's desert. The Spaceport is designed to capture the thrill of space travel for first-timers, making a minimal impact and blending in to the desert landscape. Spaceport America will double as Virgin Galactic headquarters and the first port of call for one heck of a trip of a lifetime!

The spacecraft, VSS Enterprise (SpaceShipTwo), is about 20 metres in length and is designed to carry six passengers and two pilots into space. And with the \$200,000 price tag, you can be sure there's no fighting over seats; every passenger gets two large windows, one at the side and one overhead, just to ensure you don't miss out on seeing anything.

So what can you expect for your buck? After two to three preparation days with the crew you'll be cleared for take off. To begin with there's a 16km climb with the mothership (the carrier and launch craft VSS Eve (aka WhiteKnightTwo)). Then comes an exhilarating countdown to prepare you for entering the unknown. A surge of immense power pins you to your seat while the VSS Enterprise is propelled into space at three times the speed of sound – around 4,000km/h!

The VSS Enterprise then continues to travel through the earth's atmosphere and at the Karman Line (the place where the atmosphere meets outer space at an altitude of around 100km), you

IF THE SKY'S THE LIMIT, WHERE WOULD YOU GO OR WHAT WOULD YOU DO ON YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY? OR MORESO, IF THE SKY WAS **NOT** THE LIMIT, WOULD YOU TRAVEL BEYOND IT JUST FOR KICKS?

If there's something left over from your lucky lottery ticket win and extravagance is the middle name on your passport then here are some ideas to help fill your diary this year.

'There are over six billion people on earth, so to be one of six astronauts in space looking down on them, will be a very special thing.'

– Michiel Mol, future astronaut.

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can officially consider yourself an astronaut! At 110km it's time to turn around and admire Mother Earth in all her glory, right before you begin to retrace your steps and head back to base. At 21km from sea level you glide home, landing on the airstrip like... well, a glider! Sound pretty good?

The experience takes around three and a half hours from lift-off until touchdown, with the sub-orbital flight itself being only a small fraction of that total time. And, of course, during the flight there is time for weightlessness play, which is six minutes of unbridled (literally) fun, where you can release yourself from your seat and really feel like an astronaut by floating around the cabin due to zero gravity.

Remember that 'Space is Virgin Territory', but it won't be for long. So before the space race begins book your \$200,000 seat, simply by whacking down your fully refundable \$20,000 deposit (USD) and sitting tight for the program to be finalised. Space tourism is the new black, so get on board!

For full details visit www.virgingalactic.com

Charter a Mega Yacht

If you love to travel in style, surrounding yourself with opulence and going wherever the tide may take you, then why not charter a fully crewed first-class yacht?

With mega yachts available in every ocean, your imagination is



likely to be your only boundary when it comes to finding an area to drop your anchor in.

There are a tonne of cruising options available, from the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean to the party and 'high life' of the Mediterranean.

For a luxurious and elegant atmosphere, why not choose a motor yacht? They travel faster and are larger, making them ideal for all those parties with new friends that you make in port.

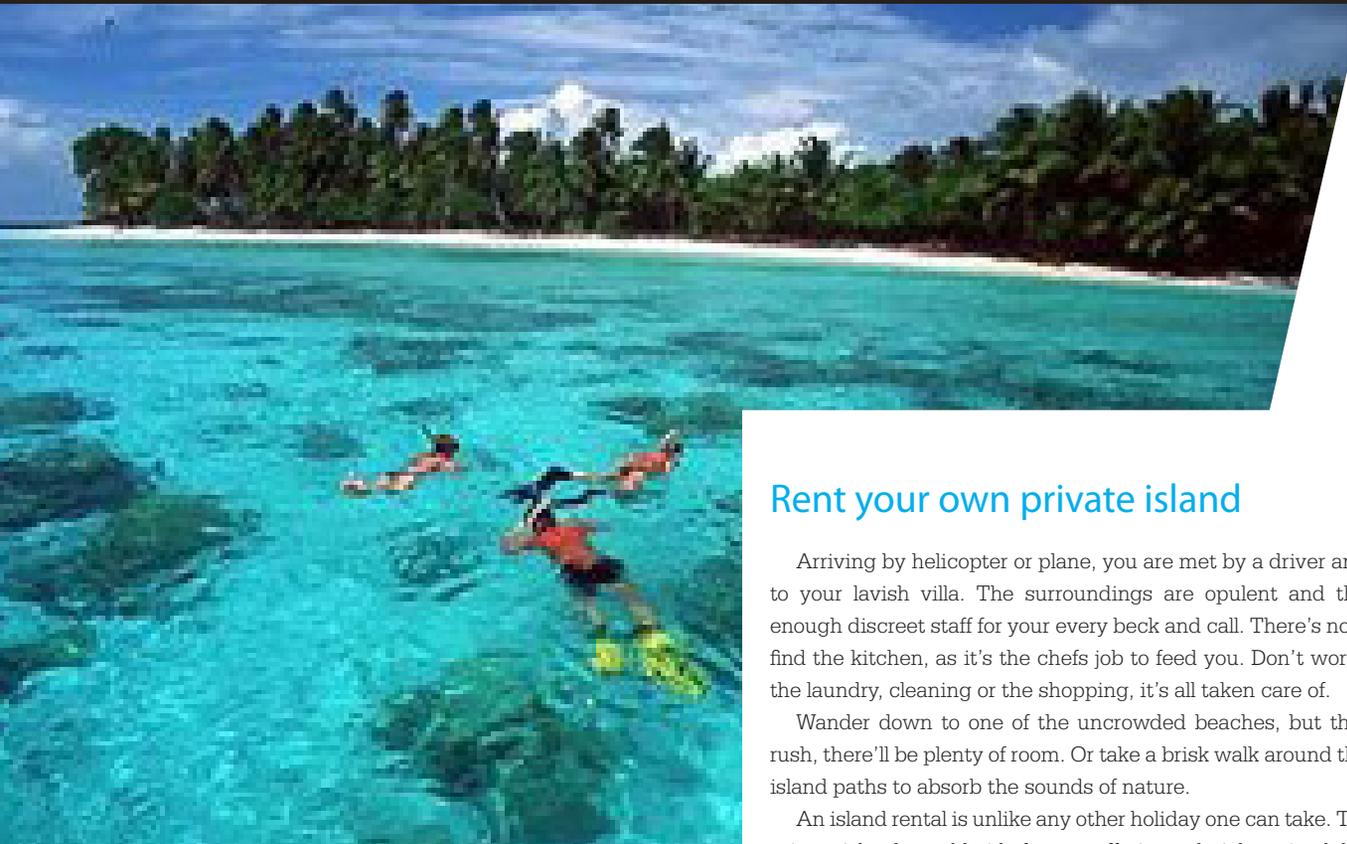
Of course, if you're into smaller crowds and wish to feel the wind in your hair and the swell of the seas, then go with a sailing yacht. Whatever you choose, both are big players in the decadent travel stakes.

Logistically, the beauty of chartering is the ability to customise your trip. And it's all about you, because the captain and crew are there to create an unforgettable experience just for you!

Most yachts have a multitude of equipment on board, such as wakeboards and water-skis, surfboards, windsurfs, kayaks, jet skis, and crazy pull toys, so make the most of the water sports on offer. Or, if that sounds way too hectic then you can simply hit the sundeck or Jacuzzi and soak in the serene surrounds. Of course, if you're really travelling in style then perhaps you can even have the onboard helicopter take you for a spin!

The fees for mega yacht charter hire will vary according to the size of your vessel, but a base weekly fee is around \$500,000 (USD). And on top of that remember there will be additional expenses such as fuel, food and gratuities.

For more information go to www.internationalyachtchartergroup.com or www.charterworld.com



Rent your own private island

Arriving by helicopter or plane, you are met by a driver and taken to your lavish villa. The surroundings are opulent and there are enough discreet staff for your every beck and call. There's no need to find the kitchen, as it's the chefs job to feed you. Don't worry about the laundry, cleaning or the shopping, it's all taken care of.

Wander down to one of the uncrowded beaches, but there's no rush, there'll be plenty of room. Or take a brisk walk around the many island paths to absorb the sounds of nature.

An island rental is unlike any other holiday one can take. There are private islands worldwide for rent offering palatial serviced dwellings and all the necessary toys to keep you and your friends amused during your stay.

So whether you plan to rent an island for 100 guests or just a few of your closest, there's something swish for whatever the occasion. Check out this extravagant property and you'll get the idea.

Musha Cay and The Islands of Copperfield Bay are hidden in the Exhuma Chain, in the southern Bahamas. Privately owned by illusionist David Copperfield, the place is so magical you'd think that the man himself waved his magic wand to create such a perfect paradise.

If its exclusivity and privacy you're after, this is it. The only guests you'll dine with are any of the 23 you've invited. This perfect combination makes it a favourite with celebrities and affluent business travellers.

Imagine having the choice of five dining experiences from candlelit dinners at The Dock, to lunches on one of the eleven islands forty secluded beaches or a three kilometre sandbar, which is dubbed 'heaven on earth'.

If turquoise seas and powdery white sand gets a bit tired, then hit the state-of-the-art outdoor movie theatre on Coconut beach at night which simulates a drive in movie experience, or play a game of billiards on Houdinis own champion table.

Rental rates are US\$37,500 per day for upto 12 guests, including everything you'll need apart from your swimmers and a toothbrush. However, if you require a yoga lesson or a massage, and extra activities like scuba diving or deep sea fishing, and what about those fireworks after dinner, ask them to put it on your tab!

For more information visit www.mushacay.com or for details about renting an island go to www.unusualvillarentals.com/private-islands/ or www.privateislandsonline.com

'They say renting is for chumps! But does that apply when your rental is an entire deserted island?'

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