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NEWSLETTER

TRAVEL

Escapes: Some like it hot, some like it cold and either way, we have you covered



By CATHARINE HAMM
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An uninhabited coral island in the Solomon Islands (Comstock Images / Getty Images)



Having spent the last couple of days staring out the window (it's part of the writing process, OK?) at skies that bring deeper meaning to the phrase "sullen September gray," I am in need of something

sunny. But, then, the reality of walking out of the air conditioning suggests I also may be in need of something refreshingly cool.

This week, we have both, in case you also blow hot and cold: the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific and Franz Josef Land in the far northern reaches of Russia.

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We also have a couple of pieces that will make you hot (or not) under the collar: the reason you'll get kicked out of an unoccupied business or first-class seat if you try to move there, and the news that one cruise line has banned kids.

My name is Catharine Hamm, and I'm a Gemini, so I am always of two or more minds on any topic, whether it's weather, the airlines greed/need to survive or the question of children on board ... anything.

If you have an opinion on any or all of these topics, please drop us a line at travel@latimes.com.

You also might have thoughts on the changeover of the Mandarin to the Waldorf Astoria in Las Vegas, a family-friendly Weekend Escape that's close to home or the notion that traveling alone teaches you how to be lonely, which can be a good thing. Really.

All of this and more, plus a Readers Recommend item submitted by a smart traveler from San Diego who gets an extra woo-hoo for his ingenuity.

Gray skies are gonna clear up, so I'm putting on a happy face. After all, when your life is travel, how can you feel anything but exceptionally lucky? Except when you don't. There's that Gemini thing again. Forget that and go on to read this rich stew of travel stuff. See you again next week.

It's way more than World War II

You may know the Solomon Islands because of World War II. The Battle of Guadalcanal, on the largest of the islands in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, lasted 18 months. The Allies chased the Japanese from the island, and the tide of the war began to turn. Residents today appreciate the history, but they also say that shipwrecks and battle sites are just the beginning of a place whose culture is diverse and whose beauty is enough to attract all sorts of visitors, including Prince William and his wife, Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge. [Writer Anne Z. Cooke takes us on a tour.](#)



Fishermen paddle off Kennedy Island in the remote western province of the Solomon Islands, near where John F. Kennedy's patrol boat PT-109 was rammed by a Japanese destroyer. (Torsten Blackwood/AFP/Getty Images)



Way, way up north