

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Black Tomato helps consumers find themselves by getting lost

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*Black Tomato's Get Lost drops clients in remote locales. Image courtesy of Black Tomato*

By SARAH JONES

Bespoke travel company Black Tomato is helping affluent consumers get away from it all with a service that provides travel with a touch of the unknown.

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Travelers who participate in the agency's Get Lost program will not know where they are venturing until they arrive at their destination, requiring them to give up a level of control over their travel plans. Offering a taste of adventure and disconnection, the service revolves around remote points on the map, allowing a vacation to be a holistic physical and mental journey.

"As part of our service at Black Tomato, we spend a lot of time getting to know our clients," said Tom Marchant, co-founder of **Black Tomato**, New York. "We love getting to know exactly what their passions and ambitions are, and how we can help make these a reality.

"Recently we've been noticing a rise in some of our well-travelled clients coming to us requesting travel experiences that go well beyond the norm, that include mental and physical challenges that pull them out of their connected, wired reality and push their boundaries for the ultimate escape," he said. "They wanted to explore places that few others have set foot in and get totally off the radar.

"It became clear to us that there was demand for this sort of travel experience where travelers put their trust in Black Tomato to pick a location, curate a journey and to send them to an incredible and rarely explored part of the world, and then ask them to explore their way out of it."

### Mystery tour

The Get Lost experience can be undertaken by an individual, a couple, or a group.

Clients will begin the booking process with a Black Tomato Travel Expert by going over the degree to which they want to be lost. Reflecting the agency's bespoke approach to travel, each of the Get Lost experiences will be tailored to the client's needs.

While Black Tomato will take into account factors such as the length of a trip desired, the only other input allowed

from the client is which type of environment they are seeking. Consumers can pick from destination types including mountain, desert, jungle, polar and coastal.



*Black Tomato only lets GetLost clients pick their environment type. Image courtesy of Black Tomato*

Black Tomato then selects the exact destination for the client. Before heading off to their mystery location, travelers will either be advised on what kinds of training they will need or Black Tomato will set up training sessions once the traveler arrives.

The advisors will also outfit adventurers with the gear they need to complete their trip. Travelers will be sent to their destination by private transfer. From there, they will be guided on a path by a map, which includes check-in points developed using technology from what3words.

Rather than relying on longitude and latitude or other forms of navigation, what3words instead splits the planet up into spaces that are 3 square meters, or about 32 square feet. These points are then given a three-word address.

This is meant to make it easier to find your way anywhere in the world.

While travelers will have the feeling of being alone as they work their way through this unfamiliar territory, Black Tomato will have an expedition operations team traveling with them to keep an eye on them from a distance.



*Black Tomato's GetLost experiences give clients the feeling of exploring on their own. Image courtesy of Black Tomato*

At the end of the journey, there will be a reward that is customized to the client's interests, which the firm promises will be "indulgent."

"Since launching the service we've had an incredible response of travelers looking to embark on a Get Lost adventure," Black Tomato's Mr. Marchant said. "Our Get Lost travel team are working with clients on several trips to mountain, jungle and polar environments, which will set out to challenge and inspire."

Away from it all

The Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas helped consumers reshape their relationship with their mobile devices with its

first Digital Detox Weekend Retreat in 2016.

Those who participate got guidance from spa therapists, with a regimented time spent away from their smartphones. In today's increasingly connected society, providing a reprieve from technology may be just what guests need ([see story](#)).

While popular travel destinations still hold appeal, tour companies are speaking to affluent's desires for something different with trips to lesser visited locales.

TCS World Travel has announced its new Uncharted series of small-group private flights and trips to several little-visited and oft-forgotten destinations.

Starting later this year, customers can book a private flight with TCS and be taken on a 15 to 20 day tour of a specific destination. The move is an attempt to give customers the luxury treatment while still allowing them to visit places off the typical beaten path ([see story](#)).

"In our increasingly fast-paced and hyper-connected world we felt the need to offer our travelers the chance to really switch off and truly immerse themselves in the remote, hard to find regions they're traveling in," Mr. Marchant said. "Even when on vacation we find travelers are still connected to their lives back home in some way.

"We wanted to take the notion of a digital detox one step further, and for them to feel what it's like to be a pioneering explorer earning their experience and being challenged," he said. "Through Get Lost we're offering travelers an industry first experience, which allows them to find themselves under the watchful eye of Black Tomato's unrivaled support team."

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