

**Margie Goldsmith** braves sea, sky and canyon for the world's top adventure travel thrills



# BRAGGING RIGHTS

If you've already climbed mountains, rafted the big rapids, zip-lined through canopies and kite-buggied on sand dunes, it's time to change it up. Here are some heart-pumping, adrenaline-filled top adventure thrills that guarantee you ultimate bragging rights.

## **DEPELLING** at Grand Falls Gorge in New Brunswick, Canada

For the ultimate in Gs, try upside-down rappelling, known as Deepelling. (Rappelling is a controlled rope descent when a cliff is too steep and dangerous for a climber to descend without protection.) Deepelling was invented by the Australian army—not as an adventure, but so soldiers could see where they were going as they descended on ropes down cliffs.

You can try it with Open Sky Adventures in the spectacular Grand Falls Gorge, New Brunswick, Canada. Here, you'll scale down a 135-foot-high rock wall, upside down, toward the thundering gorge below. Raymond Paquet, Open Sky's owner, will outfit you with a helmet

and harness, clip you onto the safety rope, and talk you into stepping off a rock ledge into air. Walk (or run) off the ledge until you are upside down. Just as in rappelling, you'll control the speed with your hand as the brake. Fly like a bird or jump your way down by kicking and swinging out from the cliff, or even spin around like a whirligig. Then, climb up the endless stairs and do it again—with Open Sky, you can do two hours' worth or six jumps. For more information, call 506-477-9799 or visit [www.openskyadventures.com](http://www.openskyadventures.com).

## **KITEBOARDING** in Ke Ga Bay, Vietnam

Ke Ga Bay in southern Vietnam not only has 300 days of sunshine a year, but also is one of the windiest places in Southeast Asia. It's a perfect place for wind sports, especially kiteboarding, in which you stand on a surf board in the water, while being pulled by a giant kite. Here, the winds gust from 40 to 46 mph in November through March, and up to 17 mph March through November. Except for a few

resort guests on nearby lounge chairs (Princess d'Annam is the only resort on this secluded bay), the one-mile-long beach is deserted, so you won't smash into other kiteboarders.

Nguyen Thanh Trung, instructor of the Princess d'Annam's wind-sports program, will teach you how to kiteboard either during one five-hour lesson or spread out over two or three days. He'll start with a small training kite, and once you learn to control it, you'll don a life vest and harness and try a Naish kiteboard sail. (Trung will determine if your sail should be 6, 9 or 12 meters.) After, you'll learn to fly the kite with one hand, so the other is free to hold the kiteboard. Finally, while holding the airborne kite, you'll sit at the water's edge, slide onto the kiteboard, and let the sail fly you across the water. Sixty percent of Trung's clients manage to get up. For more information, call 84-62-3682-222 or visit [www.princessannam.com](http://www.princessannam.com).

## **ZORB GLOBE RIDING** in Rotorua, New Zealand

ZORB Globe Riding originated in New Zealand, the paradise of adventure sports and adrenaline junkies. At the top of a steep hill, you crawl inside an 11-foot-high inflatable ball and then tumble down a zigzag track. The ride produces such an adrenaline rush that they call it the "astronaut-in-training" ride.

Try it where it started, at ZORB Rotorua on New Zealand's North Island. Make sure you wear your bathing suit or take an extra set of clothes, because you're going to get soaked. Choose the wildest ride, the ZYDRO,



Powerchuting with Arizona Powerchutes, Scottsdale, Ariz., and deepelling with Open Sky Adventures, Grand Falls, New Brunswick (left)

a globe filled with a few feet of water. Enter, and you are pushed off the launch pad to roll down the track. You'll splash around in the water, twisting and turning sideways, forward, backward, but never upside-down. The feeling is akin to being inside the womb, with your mother galloping on horseback. As you descend, you'll pick up speed (you are a rolling ball), giving you the same sensation as a loopy-loop roller coaster ride. You won't know where you're going, because the water will have you splashing all over the ball. When an attendant finally stops the ball, the ride is over. Climb out. You're now a ZORBONAUT. For more information, call 64- 9-306-8070 or visit [www.zorb.com/rotorua](http://www.zorb.com/rotorua).

### **POWERCHUTING** in the Sonoran Desert, Scottsdale, Arizona

In Powerchuting, you soar through the air in a three-wheeled two-passenger go-cart, with an engine, propeller, and large parachute. It's neither a plane nor a hang glider, but it's considered one of the safest aircraft in the world. Head for the Sonoran Desert long before dawn with pilot Randy Long, owner of Arizona Powerchutes, who has over 2,000 hours of flight time. Don a jumpsuit, strap on your helmet, and buckle into the passenger seat behind Long. You'll ascend at 600 feet per

minute as the 40-foot-long parachute billows and arcs above you. In no more time than the snap of a finger, you'll be airborne. Fly around 2,000 feet up (the Powerchute can rise to 10,000 feet) at around 28 mph. Long will point out the wildlife below—maybe you'll spot coyotes and javelinas—as he dives through the narrow canyon like Luke Skywalker. Now it's your turn. Long will give you a flying lesson, and you'll take the controls. On landing, you'll receive a "First Flight Certificate," plus one half-hour of flight time and one landing in the pilot's log book. (All you need is 11.5 more hours, and you'll be a certified sport pilot.) For more information, call 480-502-7640 or visit [www.arizonapowerchutes.com](http://www.arizonapowerchutes.com).

### **CANYONING (RAPPELLING DOWN WATERFALLS)** in La Fortuna, Costa Rica

Canyoning is associated with a technical descent and often requires rappelling in remote and rugged settings. Pure Trek Canyoning will take you on a canyoning adventure, where you'll do five rappels down four waterfalls and one canyon wall. Head out by 4X4 to a spectacular rain forest slot canyon in La Fortuna, Costa Rica. Begin the adventure by trekking through the forest trail leading to some of the most spectacular

waterfalls in Costa Rica. Don a helmet and climbing harness, then step off the cliff face and rappel down, smack inside the center of the waterfall to the pristine canyon below. Hike to the next three waterfalls—each one different—and do it again. Finally, rappel down the canyon wall before trekking out of the canyon, and driving back to the base camp for a delicious *tipico* (typical) Costa Rican lunch. If you're lucky, all along the way, you'll catch glimpses of the famous Arenal Volcano. For more information, call 1-866-569-5723 or visit [puretrekcostarica.com](http://puretrekcostarica.com).

### **MOUNTAIN BIKING** on the Bay of Fundy in St. Andrews, New Brunswick

If you want the toughest trails in New Brunswick, Canada (think: wet, rooty, rocky, hilly, slippery, muddy and foggy), join Geoff Slater and Kurt Gumushel of Biking Off-Kilter in St. Andrews-by-the-Sea. The twosome and their biking gang ride in kilts, because it looks cool, and they live in a place with the same name as the famous Scottish golf town. They'll loan you a kilt. (Don't worry, you wear your bike shorts underneath.) If you didn't bring your bike, they'll lend you a high-end Cannondale. Ride either privately or with the group.

Intermediates can choose the ride to Ministers Island, the largest tidal island in the world. To get there, you ride the ocean floor during low tide on the famous Bay of Fundy, which has the highest tides in the world. (The tides in St. Andrews rise and fall 30 feet, twice daily). Advanced riders choose the "Epic Ride," eight hours of grunting along exposed cliffs on Grand Manan Island. (Take a ferry to get there, and you better ride fast, or you'll miss the last boat home.) Buy your kilt, and you'll be added to the official Off-Kilter Registry. For more information, call 506-466-8388 or visit [www.ripplefitness.ca](http://www.ripplefitness.ca). ■



Biking Off-Kilter, St. Andrews, New Brunswick