



The 6 Best Shoulder Season Trips to Book With Cash, Points and Miles

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Summer Fridays may be ending soon, and the kids heading back to school can certainly put a damper on family travel — but fall is actually the best time of year to take advantage of off-season savings. Places traditionally thought of as summer or winter destinations are often just as good (or better!) in autumn, when the weather cools off and less demand drives down airfare and hotel rates. Of course, there are some places where your dollars (and points) go even farther in the shoulder season.

To help you find the best fall getaway, we examined flight data from Skyscanner; reviewed Booking.com's extensive hotel rate data; rounded-up destinations with ample points properties; and studied airline award charts. The results of our *almost* scientific study? The six best places to plan a vacation — and to score a solid deal — this autumn.

Chicago

If you're traveling with cash

If you've been contemplating a trip to the Windy City, fall is the time to go. In an analysis of average monthly prices from 2017, the hotel booking site [Booking.com](#) found that the most inexpensive month to visit Chicago is November, with an average savings of 30% if you go in either October or November. Likewise, Skyscanner found that from Sept. 22 to December 21, flights to Chicago are on average \$20.95 less expensive than other periods. Fall is also the perfect time to visit Chicago's cultural attractions, such as the [Art Institute of Chicago](#) and the new [Chicago Architecture Center](#), which is moving from its long-time home across from Millennium Park to a new Mies van der Rohe building overlooking the river on Aug. 31.

The [Chicago Athletic Association Hotel](#) is celebrating its 125th anniversary with \$125 in gift cards to all seven food and beverage outlets — and a tote full of CAA swag — when you stay through Oct. 31. Just use the code 125WAYSTOPLAY when you book.

If you're traveling on points and miles

United saver award space is available from New York City-area airports or LAX to ORD for 25,000 miles (plus \$5.60) round-trip — as is American Airlines' economy MileSAver award space. Delta flights from Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) are available for only 12,000 miles (plus \$11.20) round-trip to Chicago Midway International (MDW) right now, or from LAX to either ORD or MDW for 19,000 miles (plus \$11.20). Both Delta options have stops.

To sweeten the shoulder season deal, the Category 5 [JW Marriott Chicago](#) (35,000 points per night) is also offering a daily food and beverage credit of up to \$250 when you book a suite through Dec. 31.



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