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## This is where you should travel in 2017



By [Christopher Muther](#) | GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 06, 2017

It may be a tad presumptuous, but I have a New Year's resolution you should add to your list for 2017. Stop scowling, because this one is more fun than losing weight, cleaning the basement, or digitizing that dust-covered shoe box of photos from 1992.

Please, add "Take a proper vacation" to your list of resolutions.

I've belabored the point [in previous columns](#), but Americans are horrible at taking time off. Last year was no different. Allianz Travel Insurance Vacation Confidence Index recently published a study that found 53 percent of Americans failed to take a day off within the past 12 months. Even more shocking, 37 percent of US workers haven't taken a vacation in two years.

Let's resolve to be more like the French, who get five weeks of vacation a year and aren't shy about using it. A recently enacted French law also allows employees the right to ignore work e-mail and text messages after hours, but let's not get too carried away.

By now you're scratching your head wondering, "Where should I go for my New Year's resolution vacation?" Thank you for asking. I've kindly compiled a list of suggestions for you. Some of these locales are far-flung and some are in your backyard. Even if you ignore me — don't worry, you wouldn't be the first — at least resolve to use more of your vacation time in 2017.

Where should you go? Here are a few ideas.



Old Montreal.

HANDOUT

**MONTREAL (and all of Canada)** — I spend an inordinate amount of time in Montreal. It's close, you can usually find an inexpensive flight on quirky [Porter Airlines](#) (or just drive), and it's vibrant year round. Also, the food scene is top-notch. This year, Montreal will see even more parties as the city celebrates the 375th anniversary of its founding. Meanwhile, 2017 marks Canada's 150th birthday. There will be celebrations tied to the occasion across the country. You can get even more out of your stay because of the strength of the US dollar.



ILAN DO UT

A view of ships on the water in Cartagena, Colombia.

**CARTAGENA, Colombia** — This South American gem is coming back into vogue thanks to an impossibly charming UNESCO World Heritage-preserved old town area. The miles of historic stone walls lead to beautiful beaches and cosmopolitan districts. There are fashionable areas, such as the hipster haven Getsemani, lush plazas, top-notch museums, fantastic street food, a restaurant scene that rivals Peru's, and a nightclub scene that puts other small cities' to shame.





CHITP RUEGEL

**WESTERLY, R.I.** — You know the old motto, “If it’s good enough for Taylor Swift, it’s good enough for me.” Or maybe that’s a new motto. Either way, Westerly (and Swift’s village of Watch Hill) is one of the most scenic spots in the state. Swimming at Misquamicut State Beach is a much more pleasant experience than it is at many other New England beaches thanks to summer water temperatures that don’t result in instant hypothermia. This is a place where you can either blow the bank with a weekend at the luxurious [Ocean House](#), or keep to your budget with a perfect cone from the timeless Dusty’s Dairy Bar. Or, ideally, do both.



CHRISTOPHER MUTH ER

**A view from one of the many beaches in the town of Albufeira, in the Southern region of Portugal.**

**ALBUFEIRA, Portugal** — Albufeira and the Algarve region of southern Portugal isn't an undiscovered gem. That's easy to see by the glut of British and German tourists and narrow streets filled with restaurants catering to English-speaking visitors. But vacation doesn't always need to be about finding the latest and most obscure destination. It can also consist of dropping a blanket on a beach and relaxing, followed by a hunt for the best calamari in town. The beaches in the Algarve are some of the finest and most scenic in Europe. The benefit to all those British tourists is plenty of good British pubs.



JORDAN TOURISM BOARD

**Petra, Jordan.**

**PETRA, Jordan** — In November British journalist Amelia Gentleman [wrote an eye-opening story](#) about travel to Jordan, a country overlooked by vacationers (tourism has dropped more than 60 percent in the past five years) as wars and skirmishes in neighboring countries have made headlines. The famous lost city of Petra dates to 300 BC and was an uncredited star of “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.” Massive structures are carved into rock formations in a manner so impressive that Smithsonian Magazine placed it on of its “28 Places to Visit Before You Die” UNESCO called it “one of the most spectacular locations in man’s cultural heritage.”



VISIT FINLAND

**A scene from a Marimekko fashion show in Helsinki, Finland.**

**HELSINKI** — After years of rule by the Swedes and the Soviets, Finland gained independence 100 years ago, and the country has big plans for celebrating. Design junkies will swoon at the Helsinki Art Museum's exhibition on [Finnish modernism](#), music lovers can join the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra for a city-wide singalong, chic private saunas are opened to the public on Sauna Day, and there are festivals and events running throughout the summer. If there are no organized parties taking place during your stay, hit one of Finland's 40 national parks or omnipresent saunas.

**ARUGAM BAY, Sri Lanka** — After years of strife and natural disasters, Sri Lanka is having a moment. The surfing is fantastic at Arugam Bay, but there's also amazing wildlife (leopards!) at [Yala](#) and Wilpattu national parks, the stunning Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, the spectacular ruins of Sigiriya, or urban relaxation at Galle Face Green park in Colombo overlooking the Indian Ocean.



ANDREAS VALLBRACHT

**Hamburg, Germany.**

**HAMBURG** — Welcome to northern Europe’s newest foodie haven. The 2017 Michelin Guide for Germany awarded 15 stars to 10 of Hamburg’s top restaurants. Kevin Fehling, Germany’s youngest Michelin-starred chef, claimed three of those stars. His restaurant, the Table, accommodates a maximum of 20 guests gathered around an open kitchen. Hamburg shows off its polish when its architectural gem of a concert hall opens on Jan. 12. The [Elbphilharmonie](#) is a striking, modern building with three concert halls, a hotel, and a public viewing area with 360-degree views of the city. Hamburg goes truly posh this fall when the Fontenay, a five-star hotel on the shores of Alster lake, opens. It’s Hamburg’s first new five-star hotel in nearly 20 years.



COURTESY OF VISIT NAPA

A Napa Valley vineyard at sunset in California.

**NAPA AND SONOMA COUNTIES** — There’s renewed interest in Napa County, a boozy valley of 400 wineries, thanks to the arrival of the hotel [Los Alcobas Napa](#), the California outpost of the sophisticated Mexico City hotel with stunning vineyard views. For those who are not fans of B&Bs, or corporate chains, Los Alcobas is an appealing option. [Single Thread Farm](#) in Healdsburg, opened by chef Kyle Connaughton, described by Eater as “the best chef you’ve never heard of,” offers 11-course tasting menus (make reservations two months in advance) and beautiful suites (make reservations a year in advance). Balance off the indulgence with a retreat at the 2,700-acre Ranch Sonoma, the soon-to-open outpost of the posh Ranch at Malibu.



OT MÉRIBEL / J.M GOUEDARD

**Les Trois Vallees, a ski region in France.**

**LES TROIS VALLEES, France** — The ski region in the Tarentaise Valley in the French Alps is the largest in the world, and thanks to its altitude has a ski season that runs well into May and June. The eight individual resorts that make up the Les Trois Vallees are all unique, but they're united by a European flair (the region is situated near Italy and Switzerland) that practically turns skiing into a cultural experience. How many ski resorts can boast 12 fine restaurants with a combined 18 Michelin stars? It's far superior to my usual apres ski meal of nachos and rose.

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