



The 12 Top Destinations Of 2017



Waikiki, Photo Credit: Hawaii Tourism Authority and Tor Johnson

Berlin can tell you exactly what having a moment feels like. The German capital city is still in the midst of one that has lasted a solid three years. While locals will say their hometown has been cool all along, a perfectly timed confluence of hotel openings, new restaurants and cultural happenings made Berlin an impossible-to-ignore destination for global travelers.

The following cities, a mixture of once-fabled places starting to regain their mojo and budding spots that are just getting their feet wet, are all aiming to become 2017's version of Berlin, and they're doing it with a host of hotel debuts, a slew of exciting events and the aroma of just-opened kitchens.

Oahu

Big things are happening on this 608-square-mile island. Oahu commemorated the 75th anniversary on the attack on Pearl Harbor in December. Hawaii will introduce its underappreciated contemporary art scene to the international community with its first Honolulu Biennial (March 8-May 8). Iconic **The Royal Hawaiian, A Luxury Collection Resort** will hit 90 years in February (try its **90th Anniversary Package** with a \$90 resort credit and more perks).

Major Waikiki thoroughfare Kuhio Avenue is undergoing a revival as well. Leading the effort is [The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Waikiki Beach](#), the brand's first outpost in Oahu. It brings contemporary apartment-like accommodations with kitchenettes or full kitchens, washer/dryers, balconies and beach views. The hotel also boasts Waikiki's highest infinity pool (on the eighth floor), and in-demand dining options, like Sushi Sho and Hawaii's first Dean and DeLuca.

Outside of congested Waikiki, [Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina](#) recently opened its doors on the island's rugged western coast. An idyllic location between a nature preserve and lagoons, the luxurious hotel is a true escape. Relax in the elegant five-floor Naupaka Spa & Wellness Centre, dine at romantic Italian restaurant Noe or embark on an outrigger canoe ride.



Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit, Photo Credit: Velas Resorts

Riviera Nayarit

Mexico's Pacific coast isn't a new entry on travelers' radars by any stretch. But because of the region's 2017 calendar, it should get more than the casual consideration when families start planning their vacations.

Be it with nature (XIII International San Blas Festival of Migratory Birds, January 29 to February 5), sports (International Beach Polo Cup, May) or high-end hotels ([Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit's Family Vacation Package](#), through April) this exclusive swath of Puerto Vallarta beachfront certainly has earned our attention.

Montreal

Canada marks its 150th anniversary this year, but Montreal celebrates its 375th. The city kicks it off with Les Hivernales (through March 11), a festival featuring cold-weather activities, such as snowshoeing, curling and winter biking.

Don't miss the food component of another winter festival, Montréal En Lumière (February 23-March 11). Some sure-to-be-delicious events are the Jérôme Bocuse and Christophe Muller Honorary Co-President's Dinners, where master chef Daniel Boulud and executive chef Riccardo Bertolino will curate meals at Four-Star [Maison Boulud](#) at [The Ritz-Carlton Montreal](#) (February 24-26), and the All-Day Black Truffle Brunch (February 25), where chef Normand Laprise will craft four courses at Four-Star [Toque!](#)

To honor the city's anniversary, Forbes Travel Guide Recommended [Hotel Le Crystal](#) created a permanent lobby exhibition about the city's beginnings with vintage photos and filmed YouTube capsules about Montreal.

Raleigh-Durham

We've screamed of the charms of North Carolina's capital city before, but now that eight restaurants (including James Beard-nominated chef Scott Crawford's Crawford & Son and the 22,000-square-foot Morgan Street Food Hall and Market) have decided to open their doors by spring, we can back up our fawning with a bit of flavor.

But just as new places around town start to find their culinary groove, Raleigh-area standards are keeping their kitchens cooking with a commitment to fresh ingredients and a calendar stuffed with epicurean fun (Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star [Herons'](#) four-course Valentine's Day dinners, February 10 to 14).



Bogota, Photo Credit: ©iStock- DC_Colombian

Bogota

As the city (and Colombia as a whole, really) continues shedding unsavory images from the 1980s and '90s, people are slowly realizing just how special Bogota is.

With ambitious offerings at hotels (W Bogota's new interactive music experiences), the continued growth in the restaurant industry (Four Seasons Hotel Bogota's year-old Kuru Japanese restaurant) and exciting attractions (the National Museum of Colombia), the increasingly safer capital city is on the cusp of becoming the hottest destination in South America.

Washington, D.C.

All eyes are on D.C. as our new president settles into office. But there are other reasons the U.S. capital is a worthy destination.

D.C. will revitalize its waterfront with the October opening of The Wharf, a hub with shops, restaurants, parks, piers, promenades and a new InterContinental Washington D.C. at The Wharf.

The hotel scene continues to thrive. The area snagged **MGM National Harbor**, its first casino hotel and, of course, President Trump's **D.C. property**. Four-Star **The Ritz-Carlton, Washington D.C.** just wrapped up a stylish redesign starring refined textures, bold fabrics, graphic floorcoverings and brass accents. **Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C.** refreshed its elegant rooms in celadon and Tiffany blue to complement the earth tones and the dark wood furniture. And Four-Star **Hay-Adams** updated its accommodations with new 50- to 55-inch Samsung smart TVs, Bluetooth Soundlink speakers and mobile charging stations.

The Watergate Hotel unveiled Argenta, a sleek spa that includes a restored indoor pool, a whirlpool, saunas, a gym, steam rooms, a nail salon and more.



Arizona's Cactus League Baseball, Photo Credit: Hyatt Corporation

Phoenix

Being the host city of college basketball's biggest event, the men's Final Four (March 31-April 3), warrants Phoenix's inclusion on this list alone.

The sizzling Arizona metropolis confirms its place on our roster with a year's worth of other sports (MLB spring training, February 24-April 1), new dining opportunities (Scott Conant's Mora Italian, Matt Carter's Fat Ox) and luxury hotel fun (Scottsdale's Four-Star **The Phoenician's** I.Fly trapeze activity, through April 30).

Los Angeles/Beverly Hills

Much like **Paris** or **New York City**, no one would bat an eye if Los Angeles made it onto this list every year. But 2017 is special.

Though changes around Beverly Hills (Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, opening in June), Hollywood (Columbia Square's continued reinvention) and downtown Hollywood (NoMad Hotel, opening later this year) probably will sway things much in L.A.'s favor when the International Olympic Committee decides on the host of the 2024 Summer Games this September, they certainly can't hurt, either.



Santa Barbara Wine Country, *Photo Credit: Jay Sinclair*

Santa Barbara

Napa may be California's preeminent wine region, but the American Riviera is its most innovative one. Taste your way through more than 220 wineries in the emerging area. Cruise through the picturesque Santa Ynez Valley where boutique wineries like [Refugio Ranch](#) and [Grassini Family Vineyards](#) are creating great pours.

Another reason the city is on our list is that the fabled [Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara](#) observes its 90th anniversary. While details aren't yet confirmed, the Spanish Colonial-influenced Four-Star hotel will undoubtedly celebrate in style (and we can reveal that a special wine will be a part of the festivities).

Elsewhere in the city, explore the trendy Funk Zone neighborhood. And for dinner, go to Four-Star [Bacara Resort & Spa](#)'s new steak-and-seafood restaurant Angel Oak, which keeps a 12,000-bottle wine cellar.

Houston

When Houston last hosted the Super Bowl, it was marred by a wardrobe malfunction. But when the game between the Atlanta Falcons and New England Patriots kicks off at NRG Stadium in February, the city will be the star.

The U.S.'s fourth-largest city is preparing for its close-up with the brand-new River Oaks District, which brings luxury shops like Harry Winston and Dior; Avenida Houston, a new entertainment district; the prized Menil Collection's soon-to-open \$40 million drawing institute; and Emancipation Park, which will get a \$33 million facelift in time for the Juneteenth celebration.

Come in March for the popular Livestock Show and Rodeo, the world's largest such event. Forbes Travel Guide Recommended [Hotel Derek's rodeo package](#) will get you set up with chauffeured service to the show and craft beers beforehand.

Or stop and smell the azaleas at [The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa](#). The Four-Star hotel welcomes the blooming flowers with the Azalea Trail Package (March 10-12), which includes a home and garden tour and a three-course dinner.



Lisbon, Photo Credit: Turismo de Lisboa

Lisbon

Similar to European hot spot Croatia, Portugal overflows with rich culture, Old World charm and beautiful beaches. See Lisbon's modern side with [Four Seasons Hotel Ritz Lisbon's Street Art Tour](#). Hop into a vintage sidecar to discover cutting-edge murals, like a chiseled face from Portuguese artist Vhils, during a private four-hour tour.

Some other upcoming attractions: The landmark 25 de Abril Bridge, often compared to San Francisco's Golden Gate, will open a viewing platform in the fall overlooking the Tagus River. And a Jewish museum will debut in the first half of 2017 in the popular Alfama neighborhood.

Bali

Visitors flock to the island to take in views like those you'll find at [Mulia Villas – Nusa Dua, Bali's](#) brand-new Unity Garden, which overlooks the Indian Ocean and the Balinese Geger Temple sitting atop the cliff of Nusa Dua bay.

But there's more to this destination than sun and sand. Try an all-encompassing wellness getaway at [Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort](#). Its Art de Vivre program tailors an itinerary with spa visits, gym sessions (try Navy SEALs-designed TRX or Jetlag Liberation therapy) and Vietura Artisan of Anti-Aging beauty clinic, which provides everything from detoxification to laser hair removal.

Travelers tend to avoid visiting during Nyepi, the day of silence that inspired Earth Hour (it falls on March 28, 2017). [Ayana Resort and Spa Bali](#) invites you to take part in the unique festivities, including the *ogoh-ogoh* ceremony, which involves an on-property parade of papier-mâché statues of skeletons and ghouls, and a 24-hour silence ritual, where you must stay quiet but can indulge in a two-hour Aquatonic Seawater Therapy Pool Treatment and go stargazing during a picnic on the resort's lawn.

[Viceroy Bali](#) also celebrates the sacred holiday with a [package](#) that gives you a Balinese massage and the chance to witness a fire battle and an ogoh-ogoh tour in its local village.