

Best Deals, No Crowds: Where to Go in December

WendyPerrin.com
December 1, 2015

By Brook Wilkinson

While the last 10 days of December spell crowds and exorbitant prices throughout much of the world, the first two-thirds of the month—before holiday airfares and hotel rates go into effect—can be a serene, value-laden, and just plain lovely time to travel. Europe is all decked out for the holidays—with locals generally friendly and in high spirits; in the Southern Hemisphere, spring is in bloom; and in the Caribbean, Hawaii, and Mexico, hurricane season is over, the weather is gorgeous, and there are free upgrades galore.

Mexico City

Locals head to the beach during the Christmas /New Year's period, which means you'll encounter fewer crowds at Mexico City's cultural sites and much less traffic in this famously congested city. It behooves leisure travelers to visit over a weekend: Most hotels are full of business travelers during the week and typically offer lower rates from Thursday through Sunday. —Zachary Rabinor, Trusted Travel Expert for Mexico

Read Zachary's [Insider's Guide to Mexico City](#).

St. Barts

Though villas triple in price over Christmas and New Year's, the first two-thirds of the month are still considered “value season”: Prices are far lower, the weather is much the same, and the island is quieter and less crowded. —Peg Walsh, Trusted Travel Expert for St. Barts Villas

St. Martin/Sint Maarten



Sky Blue Villa, Sint Maarten. (Courtesy: Island Properties)

The temperature on [St. Martin](#) fluctuates only a few degrees throughout the year, but the first two weeks of December are considered low season, so villas are as much as a third less expensive. —Marilyn Pulito, Trusted Travel Expert for St. Martin/Sint Maarten Villas

Read Marilyn's [Insider's Guide to St. Martin/Sint Maarten Villa Vacations](#)

Athens, Greece

[Athens](#) is an ideal spot for a short break in December. Winters in Greece are mild, with only a few rainy days. Even if you're not brave enough for a swim in the brisk sea, places like Glyfada and Voyliagmeni, on the Athenian Riviera, stay lively year round and offer a wide choice of café and dining options. Only a short taxi ride from the city center, the Badminton Theater (originally built for the 2004 Olympic Games) always hosts interesting shows; this December, the Bolshoi Ballet is putting on the Nutcracker. —Christos Stergiou, Trusted Travel Expert for Greece

Mendoza, Argentina



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