

The 8 best destinations to visit in December

(Courtesy of Jordi Lippe-McGraw, The Points Guy)

The holiday season is upon us, so many travelers will soon take to the roads and skies. According to new data from PricewaterhouseCoopers, almost 47% of Americans will travel this holiday season.

Unfortunately, more demand equals higher prices and busier destinations. In fact, new Priceline data revealed Thanksgiving and Christmas travel is on pace to be the most expensive year to travel ever (inflation, jet fuel prices).

Prices for domestic flights are up 35%, international flight prices are up 44%, and hotel prices are up 11%.

Don't worry, though.

If you're strategic with your bookings, you could score some savings. For example, Priceline's data also shows the cheapest days for airfare in the next three months will be the first five days of December.

You can also find lower-cost flights and discounts by traveling two to five days before or after each holiday. Additionally, there are still plenty of less in-demand destinations to visit if you want to warm up or get in the holiday spirit across the globe.

Of course, as COVID-19 and other respiratory infections like RSV are on the rise, it's important to read the latest recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and consider getting the new vaccine booster for added protection.

So, where should you go? Here are TPG's eight best places to visit in December.

Dubrovnik, Croatia

While Dubrovnik is mainly known as a summer destination, the destination is ideal for visiting in winter because of fewer tourists, mild weather, and local festivities.

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the 9th annual Dubrovnik Winter Festival returns with rich musical entertainment, gastronomic celebrations, children's activities and more. During the festival, travelers can soak in rich cultural entertainment as they enjoy the historic Old Town almost exclusively. Festive activities include live music, ice skating, art workshops and perusing traditional crafts made by local artisans.

TPG tip: Stay at Hotel Excelsior for about 13,000 [Chase Ultimate Rewards](#) points (\$198) per night. The landmark hotel overlooks the Adriatic and Old Town and is just half a mile from the Christmas Market. It also offers special holiday offers for guests with discounted rates and charming holiday decorations.

Belize

In December, Belize boasts long sunny days, temperatures of 80 degrees and lots of holiday cheer.

Like many other destinations, the country is plunged into a warm holiday spirit during December. The aroma of the traditional Belizean Black Fruit Cake fills the air, rum popo (an eggnog-like drink) flows freely and people generally seem giddier as they prepare for Christmas in Belize.

Holiday traditions include the San Pedro Lighted Boat Parade, the Wanaragua Jankunu Festival and the Deer Dance Festival. In addition, scuba and snorkeling along the Belize Barrier Reef are epic since it's the dry season.

Access to Belize from major U.S. cities via numerous airlines and nonstop flight options, make it a hassle-free travel destination. It's also the only English-speaking country in the region where the American dollar is widely accepted at the favorable exchange rate of 2 Belize dollars to \$1.

TPG tip: Book a room at the stunning Alaia Belize Autograph Collection, where you can get an Ocean Vista Studio from 47,000 [Marriott Bonvoy](#) points (\$342) per night. Upgrade to a two-bedroom suite for just 91,000 points per night.

Zurich, Switzerland

Zurich is the quintessential winter wonderland during the holidays. The city is adorned with classic decorations and lights, plus it has several traditional European Christmas markets, fondue chalets, as well as traditional events like candle dipping in the town square of Bürkliplatz and the Märli tram fairy tale tram.

A highlight is Christkindlimarkt at Zurich Main Station — one of the largest indoor Christmas markets in Europe — features 140 stalls. You also can't miss the 32-foot-tall Christmas tree decorated with thousands of sparkling Swarovski crystals.

TPG tip: This year, travelers can stay at the unique Hotel Noel, a pop-up experience running Nov. 24-Dec. 26, 2022, with 10 rooms in 10 hotels individually designed by different artists, reflecting creative contemporary interpretations of the Christmas season.

Participating hotels include Hyatt Place (\$269 per night or 15,000 [World of Hyatt points](#)) and the trendy B2 Boutique Hotel, with rooms transformed by artists selected for their work's broad spectrum and diversity.

Las Vegas, Nevada

While you might not get the desert heat that makes [Las Vegas](#) pool parties so popular, you can still enjoy pleasant temperatures in the 60s in December. The cooler temps make it possible to enjoy all the activities the bustling city has to offer without the crowds or sweating.

The month also marks the iconic Las Vegas Bowl, which college football fans will likely love. All the hotels get into the holiday spirit with over-the-top decorations like Bellagio's massive Christmas-themed displays.

Additionally, according to new Priceline data, Las Vegas is the top most affordable domestic destination in December for both round-trip airfare (\$303.29) and average nightly room rate (\$132.95).

TPG tip: Spend the night at the all-suite Palazzo At The Venetian Resort Las Vegas for 24,000 [IHG Rewards](#) points per night or \$119. The hotel features a spa, top-notch dining, a perfect location on The Strip and massive rooms.

San Diego, California

[San Diego](#) is a perfect choice if you're looking for someplace warm and sunny but want to avoid booking a trip to the busy [Caribbean](#).

You can still enjoy beach days with temperatures getting close to 70 degrees while not dealing with the summer crowds. There are also fun holiday festivities in which to take part. Enjoy the Snow N Glow Festival on the Del Mar Fairgrounds from Dec. 8-Jan. 1, 2023. Sip on hot cocoa while you take in the festive lights displays, or rent a private party igloo for you and your loved ones.

TPG Tip: Guests staying at Andaz San Diego can enjoy meals at The Rooftop by STK and STK Steakhouse, as well as parties by the rooftop pool. Take in views of downtown while working out in the rooftop fitness center. That's all from 15,000 World of Hyatt points or \$465 per night.

Quebec City, Canada

Québec City in December is simply magical. During that time, the annual German Christmas Market (Nov. 24-Dec. 23) features traditionally crafted wooden kiosks draped with lights filled with local products, Christmas music, performances, and more in historic Old Quebec.

For foodies, Le Grand Marché, the city's massive food hall, has its own Christmas market offering more than 1,000 local products throughout December. You can also warm up at famous museums like La Citadelle de Québec and other attractions like Observatoire de la Capitale that boast 360-degree views of the city.

TPG tip: An official Christmas Market event partner, the completely renovated Hilton Québec offers spectacular views for \$230 per night or 49,000 [Hilton Honors](#) points per night.

Bermuda

Sunny and 75? That's what December in Bermuda offers visitors seeking an escape from the chilling temperatures and snow in many parts of the U.S.

Besides pleasant weather, the month is filled with celebrations. For example, the City Christmas Boat Parade graces Hamilton Harbour every December, filling the water with twinkling lights.

Also, Bermuda is served by nonstop flights under three hours from major outbound markets like New York (it's only a 90-minute flight), Boston, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Miami and Atlanta.

TPG tip: Splurge with a stay at the [St. Regis Bermuda Resort](#), overlooking St. Catherine's Beach. Book this Category 8 property available from 85,000 Marriott Bonvoy points per night right now, cash rates are typically from \$735.

New York City

The Big Apple makes this list frequently thanks to all it has to offer every season. However, [New York City](#) is particularly charming in December.

The city shows its holiday spirit with elaborate window displays at well-known department stores like Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Barney's and Saks Fifth Avenue. The iconic Rockettes appear at the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, and you can ice skate around the massive Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center.

The Union Square Holiday Market, ice skating at Bank of America Winter Village in Bryant Park, and the holiday train show at the New York Botanical Gardens are also included. It's hard not to feel festive.

TPG tip: Stay in the center of it all at Courtyard New York Manhattan/Fifth Avenue (from \$369 per night or 60,000 Marriott Bonvoy Points per night). If downtown is more your vibe, The Beekman, A Thompson Hotel is available from 29,000 World of Hyatt points per night or \$519.