

LUXURY TRAVEL

Have Vacation Days Left? Here Are Six Inspirational Trips Perfect for Right Now

Photographer: WIN-Initiative/WIN-Initiative RM

The year is already two-thirds over!

By **Nikki Ekstein**

August 28, 2017, 10:05 PM GMT-7

If you still haven't checked into the Silo Hotel in Cape Town or snapped an Instagram shot underneath the hammerhead shark exhibit at Miami's new Frost Science Museum, you've got some work to do. And fast.

Earlier this year, Bloomberg anointed the [20 most exciting destinations for 2017](#). Given that the year is two-thirds over, it seems a good time to take stock of your adventures—and figure out how to use your remaining vacation days.

Where to begin? Use this cheat sheet as your guide.

Miami



Underneath the three-level aquarium at the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science in Miami. Photographer: Joe Raedle/Getty Images North America

Art Basel means that December is always an exciting month in Miami. But go a little earlier and you'll find that these days, the South Florida art world is in full swing, full time. An exhibition about dominoes at the Pérez Art Museum Miami sounds odd until you consider how the game has become an emblem of Cuban culture; the Bass Museum reopens in early October with a [technicolor retrospective](#) by Swiss mixed-media artist Ugo Rondinone; and in September, Faena Art will become [part-roller skating rink](#), part-art installation, with a floor and DJ booth covered in massive, psychedelic murals.

If that feels like a lot to take in, consider this: The brand-new Frost Museum of Science has an exhibit dedicated to [the science of looking](#). It'll make you think twice about your perspective, in ways that are both figurative and literal.

Cape Town



Dream hotel room, realized. Source: The Silo

After checking into the Silo last month, I'm happy to report that one of the year's most hotly anticipated hotel openings has somehow exceeded the hype. The geodesic, dome-like windows! The crystal decanters with complimentary brandy! The layer cakes at tea time! Even if weather shuts down the stunning rooftop pool, you'll never want to leave. Which is just fine, because come September, the ground floor will transform into the continent's first contemporary African art museum, the Zeitz MoCAA. Inside will be the world's largest collection of its kind, with nine floors of exhibition space that will include works from such cutting-edge artists as Swaziland's Nandipha Mtambo and South African Wim Botha. Cape Town minus the epic outdoor adventures? It's suddenly an appealing proposition.

Finland



The Arctic Treehouse Hotel is made up of cube-like suites that hover over the snowpack. Source: Arctic Treehouse Hotel

The Northern Lights are in a dimming cycle, which means that they've been progressively appearing less frequently since 2015 and will continue to decline for an additional eight or so years. (The decade-long trend is part of normal solar cycles.) Even so, sightings are still easy to come by in Finland's northern Lapland, starting in September and stretching all the way through March.

Avoid going during the festive season, since the town of Rovaniemi explodes with Santa Claus—everything around then—it's dubbed itself the "official hometown" of the bearded gift-giver, with an amusement park dedicated to bringing the Christmas spirit to life. But keep an open mind about Santa Park if you go in the fall: it contains the Arctic Treehouse Hotel, one of the most striking places to see the skies light up in greens and purples. Its striking suites have panoramic windows and whitewashed interiors, creating an illusion of continuity into the snow-covered countryside.

Feeling cold just thinking about it? Warm up at Loyly, a newly minted sauna on the Helsinki coast that's restoring glamour to a once-ubiquitous tradition: open-to-the-public bathhouses.

Myanmar



Fishermen on the wide expanse of Inle Lake. Photographer: ketkarn sakulnap/Moment RM

Visiting Southeast Asia during the summer months isn't an ideal strategy: The temperatures climb far past the point of reason. So if you missed your chance at a trip early this year, consider booking for late 2017.

Already, the temple-filled, historic city of Bagan is reaching a tipping point for travelers. Myanmar natives are discovering domestic tourism after many years of political conflict; ever-growing numbers of Chinese are arriving on tour buses; and backpackers from Europe are there seeking great value. You should still go: Just ask your tour guide to take you to Shwesandaw Pagoda for sunrise, rather than sunset (when the crowds are at peak saturation), and head to a different spot to watch the sun cast its glow on hundreds of brick stupas.

Pursuits

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Inle Lake is where you'll still get Myanmar to yourself. The [Sanctum Inle](#) hotel is far more beautiful in person than its website would suggest, with what may be the only five-star rooms in the area (and service to match). Once you're zipping around the floating villages in your own longboat, you'll rarely see another traveler—and the few modern businesses that have sprung up have retained a strong sense of local identity.

Take the [Inthar Heritage House](#), a restaurant and hospitality school for Inle youth; it serves fresh, flavorful tea leaf salads and Myanmar curries, which you'll scarcely find anywhere else.

Egypt



Visitors riding camels near the Great Pyramid. Photographer: Bruce Yuanyue Bi/Lonely Planet Images

Visits to Egypt are on the rebound—which is great news for Egyptians and a mixed bag for travelers. Some rough numbers to consider: Six years after the country clocked 1.5 million monthly arrivals, tourism plummeted to 329,000 last May. Now, the figures are surpassing 700,000 for the first time since October 2015.

In other words: Plan a trip—soon, if you're interested in getting the pyramids all to yourself. And if you really want to guarantee some space and privacy, get out of Cairo and onto a Nile River cruise—the 27-cabin [Oberoi Zahra](#) is offering two sailings each month for the rest of the year, starting and ending in Luxor and Aswan.

Sri Lanka



Hot air ballooning over Yala National Park, with Wild Coast Tented Lodge visible in the distance. Source: Wild Coast Tented Lodge

Want to ride in a hot air balloon over parades of elephants and pods of blue whales in the morning, then go spotting leopards in the afternoon? That's the type of safari you can take in Yala National Park, in southeastern Sri Lanka—and it's the central premise behind [Wild Coast Tented Lodge](#), opening this October with 36 opulent, pod-like tents. Go for three days to get your fill of land and sea animals, then pair that with a couple of blissed-out beach days in the Maldives. (Our hotel pick there? [Soneva Jani](#), some of whose overwater bungalows have waterslides that plunge into the Indian Ocean.)