

{Destination}

Winter Travel Insider

Getting hotter, getting colder

Winter travel isn't just about snow – “summer” in exotic locales

Summer may be in season when it comes to vacations. But winter actually presents more choice in where you can go and what you can do after arrival. That's because the months between November and March offer both hot and cold possibilities. Read on to warm up or cool down this winter.

HOT PURSUITS

Shaped like the lucky number seven, **Cancun** is the star of Mexico's Caribbean coast. During spring break, the island can descend into collegiate chaos. But the water is just as warm and the weather even better during the milder winter months. From beaches that feel like talcum powder on your toes and limitless water sports to upscale shopping and Mexico's best nightlife, there's plenty to keep you occupied in Cancun. But the island's location astride the Yucatan Peninsula opens up even more possibilities. Scuba dive or snorkel in the world's second largest barrier reef (after that “great” one in Australia). Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Chichén Itzá and other ancient Mayan ruins. Soar over the jungle on zip lines or get adventurous on off-road tours.

Hawaii also sparkles beneath the winter sun — six islands to choose from, each with its own personality.

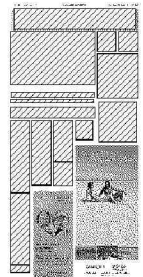
Try super-laid back **Lanai** (pronounced “La-nah-ee” by locals). Once home to the world's largest pineapple producer, the island is now devoted to preserving the native flora, fauna and customs of the Hawaiian Islands. You're more likely to hear native Hawaiian spoken in Lanai City than anywhere else in the state. Learn about ancient ways at the town's small but excellent museum. Beyond town, the island is largely unpopulated — a mosaic of forest, grasslands, towering sea cliffs, volcanic badlands and refreshingly empty beaches. Stay in town at the historic Hotel Lanai, opened in 1923 by pineapple mogul James Dole.

Our winter is actually summer in the Southern Hemisphere, so in places like **Chile**, the heat is definitely on between now and March. Santiago has evolved into one of the most modern, dynamic cities in South America, notable in its eclectic dining scene fueled by talented chefs. Looking for a pairing? Chile

offers more than a dozen different wine regions and some of the best vintages found anywhere, and given its German immigrant population; there are great craft beers too. The landscapes are even more diverse, ranging from the Atacama Desert in the north to way down south in Patagonia, where summer means trekking legendary routes like the “W” Circuit in Torres del Paine National Park.

COLD COMFORTS

There are plenty of places to ski in the Western U.S. and Canada, but none quite as charming as **Whitefish, Montana** — a one-time railroad town turned adventure sports center. Ranked as one of the top ten resorts in North America by readers of Ski Magazine, the slopes feature more than 3,000 acres of accessible terrain with an average of 300-plus inches of snow per year. Located just outside of Glacier National Park, Whitefish is also awesome



for après ski. Restaurants range from the New Orleans flavors of Tupelo Grille and the Spanish tapas of Latitude 48 to local hangouts like Buffalo Café. Spotted Bear Spirits shakes up craft cocktails from locally made vodka and berries harvested in the nearby mountains, while Great Mountain is one of the oldest craft breweries in the Rocky Mountains.

For urban adventure, consider a winter getaway in the Big (Frozen) Apple. There's nothing quite like **New York City** during the holidays: The huge Christmas tree at Rockefeller Plaza; the

flamboyant window displays at Macy's, Bloomingdale's and Saks Fifth Avenue; the holiday market at Grand Central Station. Central Park becomes a winter wonderland of ice-skating, snowman building and snowball fights. Stay at one of the historic grand hotels overlooking the park, like the Sherry-Netherland Hotel and its extravagant Neo-Renaissance lobby — recently restored to its 1920's glory after decades hidden under 13 layers of white paint.

For something *really* different, hop across the Pacific to the exotic island

of **Taiwan**. Although much of Taiwan is subtropical, its rugged interior rises to nearly 13,000 feet at Yushan (Jade Mountain) — the highest peak in East Asia. The summit is reached via an adventuresome day hike, but the view from the top — snow-covered ridgelines set against a deep blue sky with a sea of clouds all around — is well worth the effort. Afterwards, warm up on the beaches of the Hengchun Peninsula at Taiwan's southernmost extreme, strands that lie at roughly the same latitude as Honolulu.

— **JOE YGERST**
Custom Publishing Writer



Skiing with Glacier National Park in the background in Whitefish, Montana. Photo courtesy of iStock



Sweetheart Rock on the rugged Lanai coast. *Photo courtesy of iStock*

MORE WINTER TRAVEL

Take in Taiwan's 'Most Beautiful Bay'

Praised for its pristine coastal scenery and abundant marine life, the Penghu Islands were once home to successful fishermen. Today, the islands may depend less on fishing, but Penghu's beauty remains with a diverse ecology and slow-paced coastal lifestyle that attracts curious explorers. As the host of the upcoming "Most Beautiful Bay in the World" conference in 2018, Penghu's mysterious beauty is surely keeping its spirits alive.



This supplement was produced by LA Times Custom Publishing. It did not involve the editorial or reporting staffs of the Los Angeles Times. Contact us with comments or questions at brandpublishing@latimes.com. For advertising inquiries, contact **Eric Ma** at 213.237.7210 or email him at eric.ma@latimes.com.