

Travel

# 6 Alternative Travel Destinations to Visit This Year

This time, go where everyone isn't

BY KEITH FLANAGAN

6/9/17



Photo: Westend61/Getty Images

You've been pinching PTOs all year for this moment: **summer vacation**. So if you're going international, be rational. While the masses flock toward pricey hot spots like Paris and Bora Bora, there are thinner crowds and wallet-friendly indulgences worth exploring beyond the tourist circuit, including these seven destinations.

## ① Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

You won't need a [passport for Puerto Rico](#), an unincorporated United States territory, making it a no-fuss destination. From San Juan, take a 30-minute flight to Puerto Rico's under-the-radar Vieques Island, which virtually guarantees one of the most exotic, exclusive vibes in the country. Wild horses roam free, and there's not a single traffic light on the island to stop them. Spring is peak Caribbean, which makes summer rates reasonable and irresistible.



## ② Tofino, Canada

Travelers with deep pockets dip into summer destinations like the Hamptons, but there's a whole different vibe in Tofino, **Canada's version of Montauk**. Located on Vancouver Island, there's more to do than drink rosé all day; surfers can bob along zaggy shores, and hikers can explore the old-growth rain forest. There's less people-watching than whale-watching, and while Tofino is certainly home to Canada's in-crowd, a rather favorable exchange rate makes the resort town virtually on sale for Americans.



### ③ Guadalajara, Mexico

Mexico's rainy season has long rewarded travelers with steeply discounted rates at coastal resorts—if you're looking for a city, Guadalajara is a **less-crowded alternative to Mexico City**. This region is where tequila and mariachi were born, a combo that's tough to beat, particularly with such a favorable exchange rate. What's more, mountain ranges pair with Guadalajara's interior location, resulting in less rainfall than the coast.



## ④ Lisbon, Portugal

We agree: Paris and London are worth every penny. But **Lisbon is equally worthwhile**. The Portuguese capital is among the more affordable European cities with no less charm for your buck, and it's set on the Atlantic coast with squat buildings that hug its infamous hills. Beaches are a stone's throw away, and the country's famous fortified spirit, **port, pours freely**. And for what it's worth, Lisbon is among the sunniest cities in Europe, making it perfect for indulging in heavenly *pastéis de nata* while soaking in the rays.



## ⑤ Durban, South Africa

It might seem counterintuitive, but consider spending your summer in South Africa's winter. Cape Town is the country's darling, but Durban, located on its Indian Ocean coast, is a seaside gem. The exchange rate is already favorable, and the city's urban revival even rivals Johannesburg's—plus, there's surfing. Between May and July, a mass migration makes for the ultimate spectacle: **Silvery sardines** gather close to the shores, and fisherman scoop them into baskets and sell them right on the beach.



## ⑥ Bangkok, Thailand

It doesn't have the Michelin marvel of Tokyo or Singapore, and that's why **Bangkok is an underrated escape**—for now. Michelin will launch its guide later this year, which means Bangkok is still a star for your bank account this summer. While the capital brings a mélange of regional cuisine into the same fold, the city's highs and lows are legion, from climbing ancient temples to meandering vibrant street markets.

