

## Best Tropical Destinations For Travelers On A Budget

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With the prospects of pleasant weather practically year round despite the notion of sweat inducing humidity, tropical destinations are often the top choice for backpackers and other budget minded travelers. On the other hand, a tropical climate can also represent some of the wettest places on the planet, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Columbia and much of Central America, making even popular vacation spots like Costa Rica and New Zealand a little less desirable and with fewer optimum days to visit.

Fortunately, there is a large number of other tropical or subtropical destinations that can make for the ultimate getaway regardless of the time of year. For a few suggestions, this following list of tropical or subtropical destinations may be far from complete and certainly up for debate, it does provide the prospective traveler to both familiar and not so familiar places that are well worthy of merit and affordable contenders for that once in a lifetime journey. Here then, are just five of the best tropical destinations for travelers on a budget.

### **Cabo San Lucas, Mexico**

Just a short flight from many American cities, [Cabo San Lucas](#) has long

been a popular tourist destination not only due to its proximity to the Continental U.S., but also because of a strong U.S. dollar. Situated at the very southern tip of Baja California and blessed year-round with a subtropical climate, Cabo offers a wide variety of places to stay, from low cost hostels and moderately priced hotels to luxury resorts and vacation rentals. While some Cabo hostels can be reserved for under \$20, such as [Baja Cactus Hostel](#) and [Ocean Tigers Dive House](#), some bargain prices can also be had at some of the best [all-inclusive resorts](#) when booked at the right time and possibly through leading last minute travel apps like [HotelTonight](#). This may include top rated spots like Cabo Azul Resort, Casa del Mar Golf Resort and Spa and the magnificent, yet remarkably affordable [Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Golf and Spa Resort](#), which recently unveiled its new Towers at Pacifica. The best times to visit Cabo San Lucas for the budget minded traveler are typically after Easter through May, as well as later in the year in October and November. But with mild temperatures all year, travelers can enjoy all sorts of affordable activities, including kayaking from Cabo Outfitters, snorkeling from Cabo Adventures and a boat ride to the must-see El Arco, (the Arch), the landmark rock formation at the southern edge of Cabo San Lucas.

*Related:* [Outdoorsrman's Guide To South America](#)

## **Durban, South Africa**

Known for its fabulous sun-drenched beaches and pleasant subtropical climate, [Durban](#) can be remarkably affordable for visitors on a tight budget. Once named the “Coolest City in South Africa”, this culturally rich city along the Indian Ocean features an exceptional collection of accommodations, including hostels priced under \$20 the itinerant backpacker like [Durban Backpackers](#) and [Curiosity Durban](#) and upscale hotels like Auberge Hollandaise Guest House, and Hilton Durban for under \$100. The top attraction in the city is also its most affordable – the Golden Mile – which actually stretches 3.7 miles along the golden sand beaches from uShaka Beach in Point Waterfront to Suncoast Casino next to Durban Beach. With a splendid, year round average water temperature in the mid-70s, swimming and snorkeling are among the most popular [outdoor activities](#) to enjoy in Durban and it's said that there isn't a better place in South Africa for surfers and certainly among the world's best. Visitors to South Africa's third largest city and the largest in the kwaZulu-Natal province can also enjoy low cost attractions like biking through Giba Gorge Mountain Bike Park, the Skycar at Moses Mabhida Stadium or a stroll through Durban Botanic Gardens.

## **Koh Chang, Thailand**

A solid choice for backpackers and other budget conscious travelers, [Thailand](#) always is part of the conversation when rating the world's most affordable destinations. Also known as the Land of Smiles, this fascinating country in Southeast Asia has a very favorable monetary exchange rate for international travelers and in particular Americans, who can enjoy hostels in Bangkok for just \$15 a night or even a moderately priced hotel in touristy

Phuket for under \$100. Yet one often overlooked vacation spot is [Koh Chang](#), one of the largest of the Thai islands and easily accessible by a short ferryboat ride from Trat, a village near the Cambodian border. While Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai are the most popular places to go in this tropical country, Koh Chang unsurprisingly offers even better lodging rates, with hostels often available at under \$10 nightly, such as [Lazy Republique](#) and [Pajamas Koh Chang](#), and many resort hotels like the [Spa Koh Chang](#) and [Mercure Koh Chang Hideaway Hotel](#) are often available for under \$50. However, the real payoff in choosing Koh Chang over a more popular and certainly more crowded tourist destination in Thailand are the wealth of affordable activities, such as watersports, a visit to Koh Chang Waterfalls or a hike through Mu Ko Chang National Park, as well the spectacular beaches all around the island, most notably White Sands Beach and Lonely Beach.

## **Nanjing, China**

Residing along the famed Yangtze River within the Jiangsu province of eastern China, [Nanjing](#), whose name translates to “Southern Capital”, is regarded as one of a handful of the country’s “Furnace Cities”, with particularly warm summer weather due to its subtropical climate. However, this fascinating city is also known as one of the Four Great Ancient Capitals of China, having served as the capital city of several dynasties over a period of nearly 2,000 years, as well as having served as the first capital of the Republic of China. Like many other notable Asian destinations, Nanjing is pleasantly affordable, with an efficient public transportation, inexpensive meals starting at under \$5 and dorm rooms starting at under \$10 at suggested places like [Time International Youth Hostel](#) and [Laomendong International Youth Hostel](#). Moreover, there are several affordable, yet upscale hotels for well under \$100, such as Sofitel Galaxy and Jingling Hotel, while five star hotels like [Shangri-la Hotel Nanjing](#), InterContinental Nanjing and Fairmont Nanjing offer rooms starting at around \$115. Of course, this fabulous ancient capital of China also has a wide array of world-class, yet affordable attractions to consider, such as the 600-year old Nanjing City Wall, the extraordinary Usnisa Palace at Niushou Cultural Park, the majestic Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum at Purple Mountain, the lively Confucius Temple shopping area and the must-see [Nanjing Massacre Memorial](#). While summer temperatures often reach into the high 90s, the falls months are quite pleasant, although some important festivals are held much earlier in the year, such as the world famous Qinhuai International Lantern Festival, the largest of its kind in China beginning at the end of the Chinese New Year and the Plum Blossom Festival in late February.

## **St. John’s, Antigua**

Home to some of the world’s most exclusive resorts including the uber-luxurious Jumbay Bay, the island of [Antigua](#) might not seem like the perfect tropical destination, especially in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Yet, unlike its sister island, Barbuda that together with Antigua primarily forms its namesake sovereign state, the latter was largely spared and most

businesses and luxury resorts like Carlisle Bay Antigua, Hermitage Bay and Sandals Grande Antigua have remained open or have since reopened. While these glamorous accommodations hardly meet the definition of affordable except for the rich and famous, there are numerous [lodging options](#) for the more budget conscious on this, the largest of the British Leeward Islands, particularly in St. John's, the capital and largest city. This includes the Inn La Galleria, Caribbean Holiday Apartments, Connie's Comfort Suites and Heritage Hotel, with prices averaging around \$70 nightly. Additionally, Carnival, Princess Cruise Lines, Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean offer Caribbean cruise trips with St. John's as one of the ports of call. But whether it's for a day or multiple days, Antigua can make for a truly exceptional tropical experience, with many free or low cost things to do, such as hiking, kayaking, snorkeling. swimming at any of the island's [365 beaches](#) including favorites like Dickenson Bay, Jolly Beach and Valley Church Beach and [sightseeing](#) at places like Devil's Bridge, Jolly Harbour, English Harbour or even Mount Obama National Park. Additional activities can include historic sites like the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda, St. John's Cathedral, Nelson's Dockyard, Fort James and Falmouth, the first town on Antigua, near English Harbour, with transportation provided by public or private services.