

# AITO Inspiration – *Winter Sun, Sea and Sand*



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Shrug off winter's gloom with these sunny holiday ideas from specialist members of The Association of Independent Tour Operators ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)).

From cruising the coast of South Africa to island-hopping in the Grenadines, and from a family getaway in Malaysia to discovering the highlights of Brazil or Laos, here is a selection of hot holiday escapes, all designed to warm up your winter:

Departing throughout the winter season 2017/18:

## **NEW: Family getaway to Malaysia – from £990 pp with Fleewinter**

Malaysia's west coast is a sunny destination with plenty of culture, art, wildlife, great food and beaches to explore. This [10-day trip](#) is designed with families in mind, and tours can be specially tailored to suit young guests. Highlights include suite accommodation at a heritage hotel in Penang – known for its food and vibrant history – plus private city and island tours, a visit to a former artist's retreat on the island of Pangkor, a wildlife-filled jungle exploration, family-friendly tours in Kuala Lumpur and time to relax and swim at glorious beaches. **Departing throughout the winter season**, the price is from £990 pp (based on two adults and two children sharing), including nine nights' B&B, three lunches, three dinners, excursions and entrance fees. International flights extra. Call Fleewinter on 020 7112 0019 ([www.fleewinter.com](http://www.fleewinter.com)).

## **NEW winter departures: family fun in the Galápagos Islands – from £2,795 pp with Activities Abroad**

Now available for winter bookings for the first time, escape to the incredible Galápagos Islands for a week-long family holiday. Enjoy spectacular scenery, incredible wildlife, unforgettable adventures and, of course, fantastic weather across the three extraordinary islands of San Cristóbal, Isabela and Santa Cruz. Guests can try a range of activities, from sea kayaking, snorkelling, and mountain biking up The Wall of Tears, to tours around the remarkable Kicker Rock landmark and the world-renowned Charles Darwin Research Station. Other excursions include hiking up and exploring an active volcano and encountering giant tortoises. **Departing between now and 10 February 2018**, [the trip](#) costs from £2,795 pp (two sharing), including six nights' full-board accommodation, one inter-island flight, transfers and guided activities. International flights extra. Call Activities Abroad on 01670 789 991 ([www.activitiesabroad.com](http://www.activitiesabroad.com)).

## **Discover the remote island of St Helena – from £858 pp with Discover the World**

Visit the remote tropical island of St Helena in the mid-Atlantic to soak up some winter sun and to discover its brilliant wildlife (top tip: January is the best time to spot whale sharks). This seven-night holiday allows guests to explore the island in depth, featuring a guided four-wheel-drive adventure tour of the island, a half-day marine cruise, hiking in Diana's Peak National Park plus ample time to discover remote villages and historic sites. St Helena is a beautiful island with a fascinating history, dramatic landscapes and wealth of unique wildlife. **Departing between now and December 2018**, [Discover St Helena](#) costs from £858 pp (two sharing), including seven nights' B&B accommodation, airport transfers, six days' car rental and excursions. Flights extra. Call Discover the World on 01737 218 802 ([www.discover-the-world.co.uk](http://www.discover-the-world.co.uk)).

## **Luxury South African safari, city and beach holiday – from £3,409 pp with Cedarberg African Travel**

Enjoy warm sunny days, golden beaches and spot 'The Big 5' on this 11-night luxury city, bush and beach safari in South Africa. Explore beautiful Cape Town at leisure before heading to the Phinda Game Reserve in Kwazulu-Natal. Here, enjoy activities including game drives, thrilling tracking walks and sunset boat trips. Finally, go swimming, snorkelling and spot giant leatherback turtles on the Maputaland coast, based at the Thonga Beach Lodge. **Departing between now and May 2018**, the luxury [South Africa and Safari trip](#) costs from £3,409 pp (two sharing), including four nights' B&B at The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa, three

nights at Phinda Game Reserve, four nights at Thonga Beach Lodge (both full-board) and selected activities. Flights extra. Call Cedarberg Africa Travel on 020 8898 8533 ([www.cedarberg-travel.com](http://www.cedarberg-travel.com)).

### **Relax on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe – from £3,204 pp with Archipelago Choice**

The little-known but spectacular islands of São Tomé and Príncipe are largely unexplored, despite their exclusive accommodation, amazing beaches and wonderful Jurassic Park-like scenery. During this 10-night adventure, stay at the fantastic Bom Bom Eco Lodge and Roca Belo Monte on Príncipe and the Omali Lodge on São Tomé. Highlights include access to gorgeous private beaches, boat trips which feature diving and snorkelling, visits to coffee and chocolate plantations and a jungle trek in search of monkeys and tropical birds. **Departing between now and December 2018**, a [Luxurious São Tomé and Príncipe](http://www.saotomechoice.com) holiday costs from £3,204 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), transfers, half-board accommodation and a São Tomé city tour. Call Archipelago Choice on 01768 721 017 ([www.saotomechoice.com](http://www.saotomechoice.com)).

### **Discover the highlights of Brazil – from £2,545 pp with Sunvil Latin America**

Thanks to its tropical climate, Brazil benefits from high temperatures and sunny weather all year round. Take advantage of its warm climes this winter and explore the country's highlights on this 10-day trip, discovering the best of Brazil without spending too much time travelling. Starting in Brazil's most recognisable city, Rio de Janeiro, visit the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain by cable car and the incredible statue of Christ the Redeemer. Travel along the coast to the picturesque colonial fishing village of Paraty, before heading to the stunning Iguacu Falls. In between these adventures, enjoy plentiful time to relax at each hotel. **Departing between now and December 2018**, [Brazil Express](http://www.sunvil.co.uk) costs from £2,545 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), internal flights, nine nights' B&B hotel accommodation, transfers, guides and sightseeing. Call Sunvil Latin America on 020 8758 4774 ([www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)).

### **Be inspired by Sri Lanka, a tropical jewel and cultural centre – from £2,620 pp with Pettitts**

Discover Sri Lanka's cultural triangle, exploring the world heritage sites of Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura – the ancient capitals of Sri Lanka – plus the rock fortress of Sigiriya and the cave monastery complex at Dambulla, during this two-week journey. Find the beautiful lakeside town of Kandy, the last capital of the Sinhala kings and site of the famous Temple of the Tooth Relic in the heart of the country. Continue with a visit to the old colonial hill station of Nuwara Eliva, almost always wreathed in dawn mist, before ending beside the Indian Ocean in beautiful Wadduwa. **Departing between now and December 2018**, [Sri Lanka – A Tropical Jewel](http://www.pettitts.co.uk) costs from £2,620 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), 13 nights' hotel accommodation, private transfers with an English-speaking driver-guide, sightseeing and entrance fees. Call Pettitts on 01892 515 966 ([www.pettitts.co.uk](http://www.pettitts.co.uk)).

### **Escape to Laos for sightseeing in the sun – from £3,075 pp with Mountain Kingdoms**

Visit Laos during its dry season and enjoy its warm weather, with temperatures reaching 30 degrees. This comprehensive tour combines cultural highlights with gentle walking, and relaxing journeys along the scenic Mekong and Nam Ou rivers. Explore the old city of Luang Prabang and impressive Pak Ou caves, travel to Luang Namtha and Muang Sing in the northern hill country, walk through traditional villages and fly to atmospheric Vientiane to enjoy the tree-lined boulevards, faded colonial grandeur and grand temples. **Departing between now and 10 February 2018**, this [15-day trip](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) costs from £3,075 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), 14 nights' B&B at four-star hotels and comfortable lodges, and all transfers. Call Mountain Kingdoms on 01453 844 400 ([www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com)).

### **Explore Gran Canaria, Tenerife and La Gomera in two sunny weeks – from £1,735 pp with Intravel**

Discover three of the best Canary Islands on this [two-week island-hopping adventure](http://www.intravel.com). The diverse islands of Gran Canaria, Tenerife and La Gomera all have fabulous walking opportunities and easy ferry crossings between them. Hike across the mountainous interior of northern Gran Canaria, before descending through pastoral scenery to the port of Agaete. Catch the ferry to Tenerife to discover expanses of black sand, green pine forests, red rock formations, crimson lava fields and the imposing snow-capped El Teide. Finally, head west to La Gomera to explore its lush green valleys, jagged peaks and deserted beaches. **Departing between now and May 2018**, the price is from £1,735 pp (two sharing), including 14 nights'

B&B, seven dinners, four picnics, luggage transfers, ferry crossings and car hire on Tenerife. Flights extra. Call Inntravel on 01653 617 000 ([www.inntravel.co.uk](http://www.inntravel.co.uk)).

### Departing in 2018 only:

#### **NEW: Cruise and Walk the South African Coast – from £4,349 pp with Ramblers Cruise & Walk Holidays**

Boarding in Cape Town, this 17-night holiday charts the stunning South African coastline, combining Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay, Durban and Mossel Bay with numerous wildlife adventures and opportunities to appreciate the country's unique landscapes. Among the highlights is a 4x4 adventure through the Addo National Elephant Park, a trip to Hluhluwe Game Reserve in Zululand, a walk along the superb beaches to The Cave of the Bats and guided tours of the province of KwaZulu's largest city and Natal's Kwa Mashu Apartheid Museum. **Departing 23 January 2018**, [South Africa Cruise Safari](http://www.cruiseandwalk.co.uk) costs from £4,349 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), meals onboard the cruise vessel, a guided walking programme, local guides and tips. Call Ramblers Cruise & Walk Holidays on 01707 386 767 ([www.cruiseandwalk.co.uk](http://www.cruiseandwalk.co.uk)).

#### **NEW: Enjoy an adults-only break in Mauritius – from £1,560 pp with Beachcomber Tours**

Mauritius is a top winter sun destination thanks to its hot, dry climate and glorious beaches. Adults can now enjoy a kid-free break at the superb [Victoria Beachcomber Resort & Spa](http://www.beachcombertours.uk), staying in its new wing designed exclusively for adults. Opening in early 2018, the area will feature 40 rooms, a swim-up pool bar and a new restaurant. Adults also have the luxury of access to all of the facilities at the main hotel. Situated between the Mauritian capital Port Louis and vibrant Grand Baie, this hotel is in the perfect location for those wanting to explore further afield. **Departing in February and March 2018**, a seven-night stay costs from £1,560 pp (two sharing) based in an Oceanview Room, including flights (London), seven nights' half-board accommodation and transfers. Call Beachcomber Tours on 01483 445 685 ([www.beachcombertours.uk](http://www.beachcombertours.uk)).

#### **Discover Oman's landscapes and culture – from £5,360 pp with Martin Randall Travel**

Uncover a different side of Arabia on this 11-day tour of Oman, exploring its history, culture and extraordinary natural beauty in the warmth of the Arabian winter sun. With a diverse population reflecting its mercantile past, visit traditional souqs, archaeological sites and remarkable hill forts, as well as spending a night in a desert camp. Guests will be accompanied by a social anthropologist, long involved in the Middle East. **Departing 6 January 2018**, [Oman, Landscapes & Peoples](http://www.martinrandall.com) costs from £5,360 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), one internal flight, private coach transfers, accommodation, most meals with drinks, lecturer talks and all taxes and tips. Call Martin Randall Travel on 020 8742 3355 ([www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com)).

#### **Bequia, Grenada and island hopping in the Grenadines – from £6,390 pp with Kudu Travel**

Enjoy glorious Caribbean weather on this relaxing two-week island hopping and walking tour of Grenada, the Grenadines and Bequia. Admire several superb private gardens during guided tours, join sailing trips to the Tobago Cays and Mustique plus explore the islands of Carriacou and Union. Stay in a villa set in tropical gardens on Grenada, spend two nights in a first-class hotel leading on to the white-sand beach on Union Island and, on Bequia, relax at an elegant four-star hotel, featuring two freshwater pools. **Departing 22 January 2018**, [Bequia and Grenada Island Hopping](http://www.kudutravel.com) costs from £6,390 pp (two sharing), including 13 nights' full board accommodation, private transfers, entrance fees and sightseeing as per itinerary, sailing trips and the services of a tour leader. Flights extra. Call Kudu Travel on 01225 436 115 ([www.kudutravel.com](http://www.kudutravel.com)).

#### **Escape to sunny Costa Rica and see incredible wildlife – from £1,579 pp with Llama Travel**

Costa Rica is a wildlife mecca, where visitors will have a high chance of spotting all manner of creatures, from capuchin monkeys and caimans to Quetzal birds and sloths. The winter months benefit from warm temperatures reaching 30 degrees, as well as warm welcomes from the people living there. During the trip, guests will explore the jungle reserve of Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast, the active Arenal Volcano, and

the vibrant world of the cloud forest. **Departing between January and March 2018**, the 11-day [Best of Costa Rica](#) tour costs from £1,579 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), nine nights' B&B and transfers. Two days are spent travelling from and back to the UK. Call Llama Travel on 020 7263 3000 ([www.llamatravel.com](http://www.llamatravel.com)).

### **Special access to the Great Pyramid of Khufu, Egypt – from £3,395 pp with Andante Travels**

Travelling with a specialist in Egyptian archaeology, explore the pyramids, tombs and mummies of ancient Egypt during this 11-day trip. Journey from Cairo and Giza in the North to the hidden El-Cab rock-cut tombs with their amazingly colourful interiors at Edfu, in the South. Featuring special access to the Great Pyramid of Khufu and to the rare treasures at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, other high points include a visit to the collapsed three-step pyramid at Meidum, Beni Hasan cemetery of tombs and the workers' village of Deir el Medina. **Departing 23 February and 23 November 2018**, [Egypt - Land of the Pharaohs](#) costs from £3,395 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), 10 nights' full-board accommodation, local travel, the services of a guide lecturer and tour manager, all entrance fees and tips. Call Andante Travels on 01722 713 800 ([www.andantetravels.co.uk](http://www.andantetravels.co.uk)).

### **Explore Sri Lanka by Rail – from £4,445 pp with Ffestiniog Travel**

For engineering excellence and breath-taking scenery, there are few rail journeys finer than Sri Lanka's Viceroy Special, the country's only steam train. Experience its delights by private charter on a 12-day escorted tour for rail connoisseurs that ticks off Sri Lanka's myriad attractions and basks in balmy day-time temperatures in the low 30 degrees. **Departing 28 February 2018**, [Explore Sri Lanka by Rail](#) costs from £4,445 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), rail/coach journeys and excursions as per the itinerary, 10 nights' B&B, welcome dinner, 10 lunches, and the services of a tour leader and local guide. One overnight flight. Call Ffestiniog Travel on 01766 772 030 ([www.ffestiniogtravel.com](http://www.ffestiniogtravel.com)).

## **Ends**

### **Note to Editors:**

AITO, [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com), is an alliance of over 120 of the best specialist holiday companies. AITO members collectively provide an unrivalled range of holidays to every corner of the world. They are passionate about what they do and pride themselves on their attention to every detail of their customers' holidays.

AITO members' joint aim is to offer personal, caring service, to look after the environment in the places in which they work and to provide holidays that deliver both good value and high standards. All AITO holiday companies are required, as a condition of membership, to take full financial protection measures on behalf of their clients via the appropriate industry bonding schemes.

Travel PR will happily email all AITO members with any queries that travel writers may have – it's a great way to receive speedy feedback or information from AITO experts via just one email request.

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