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# Luxury Escapes

HOLIDAY TRAVEL

*GETAWAYS SURE TO SATISFY  
YOUR WINTER WANDERLUST*

INSIDE

MIAMI • PUERTO RICO • HAWAII • CANCÚN



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COURTESY OF JETSUITE

**T**here is absolutely no reason to endure the deep, dark depths of winter when the nearest plane awaits to whisk you away to one of the world's ultimate warm-weather destinations.

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No matter how you choose to get to your destination, you will be faced with dilemmas that are much more pleasurable than wondering whether you should shovel the driveway or don another sweater. In these glorious lands of undying sun, your thoughts turn to whether you should shimmy up to the plein-air bar for a mini-parasol cocktail, glide through gin-clear waters among multi-hued fish, hit the seaside links for 18 holes or take your downward dog to a breathtaking bluff at sunrise. Should you browse designer boutiques? Visit ancient pyramids and other

archaeological sites? Learn to surf?

If that weren't stress enough, you will then tackle tougher decisions such as whether dinner should be enjoyed on a quiet terrace facing a sparkling-sea sunset, at a table in the restaurant of a globally noted chef or with your toes in the sand at a beachfront seafood barbecue.

And come bedtime, as you rest your head on your plush, plumeria-scented pillow, you can dream of being in paradise. The best part: waking up and realizing you are already there.



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COURTESY OF THE ST. REGIS BAL HARBOUR  
RESORT & RESIDENCES

## miami beach & bustle

**B**almy in the heart of winter, when daytime highs hover in the mid-70s, it's no wonder that South Florida is a favorite subtropical retreat of snowbirds. Miami, in particular, shines like a resurrected jewel. Dusted off over the last two decades, it reigns as an epicenter of the arts, lux living and cosmopolitan swag. Miami hangs with the cultural best thanks to such treasures as the Frank Gehry-designed New World Center, home to the New World Symphony with conductor and composer Michael Tilson Thomas at its artistic helm. Eclectic and edgy, the 18-block Miami Design District fuses fashion, art and home furnishings with more than 200 showrooms, galleries and eateries to explore. Stop by Jonathan Adler, Armani/Casa and Christian Louboutin; then stop for lunch at Chef Michelle Bernstein's bakery/café, Crumb on Parchment, an homage to shabby chic décor, or chi-chi Wine Bistro, featuring more than 200 wines primarily from small wineries and organic growers.

For anyone in a rush for the sun, Miami Beach — dubbed the American Riviera — beckons with its dazzling sweep of azure-blue shallows, posh hotels and your pick of swish restaurants. On South Beach, surfers hang ten on aquamarine waves, models cavort on honey-hued sand and über-bronze celebrities (and wannabes) sip seen-and-be-seen cocktails at sidewalk cafés and bars be-

fore heading to dance-till-dawn nightclubs.

For something more demure, there's Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park perched on the very tip of Key Biscayne. At this one-mile-long, breeze-swept Atlantic beachfront, rent kayaks or hydrobikes, walk up the historic lighthouse's 109 steps for a 360-degree view of palm-sprinkled splendor and end the day at one of two Cuban-influenced restaurants

overlooking the jade-green sea. An escapist fantasy, the Miami Beach Botanical Garden is an urban greenspace just steps from the ceaseless, neon-lit flurry of South Beach's Art Deco quarter. Delve into a peaceful world of red mangrove and pond apple trees, an expansive water garden, and an everywhere-you-look collection of palms, cycads, orchids and bromeliads.



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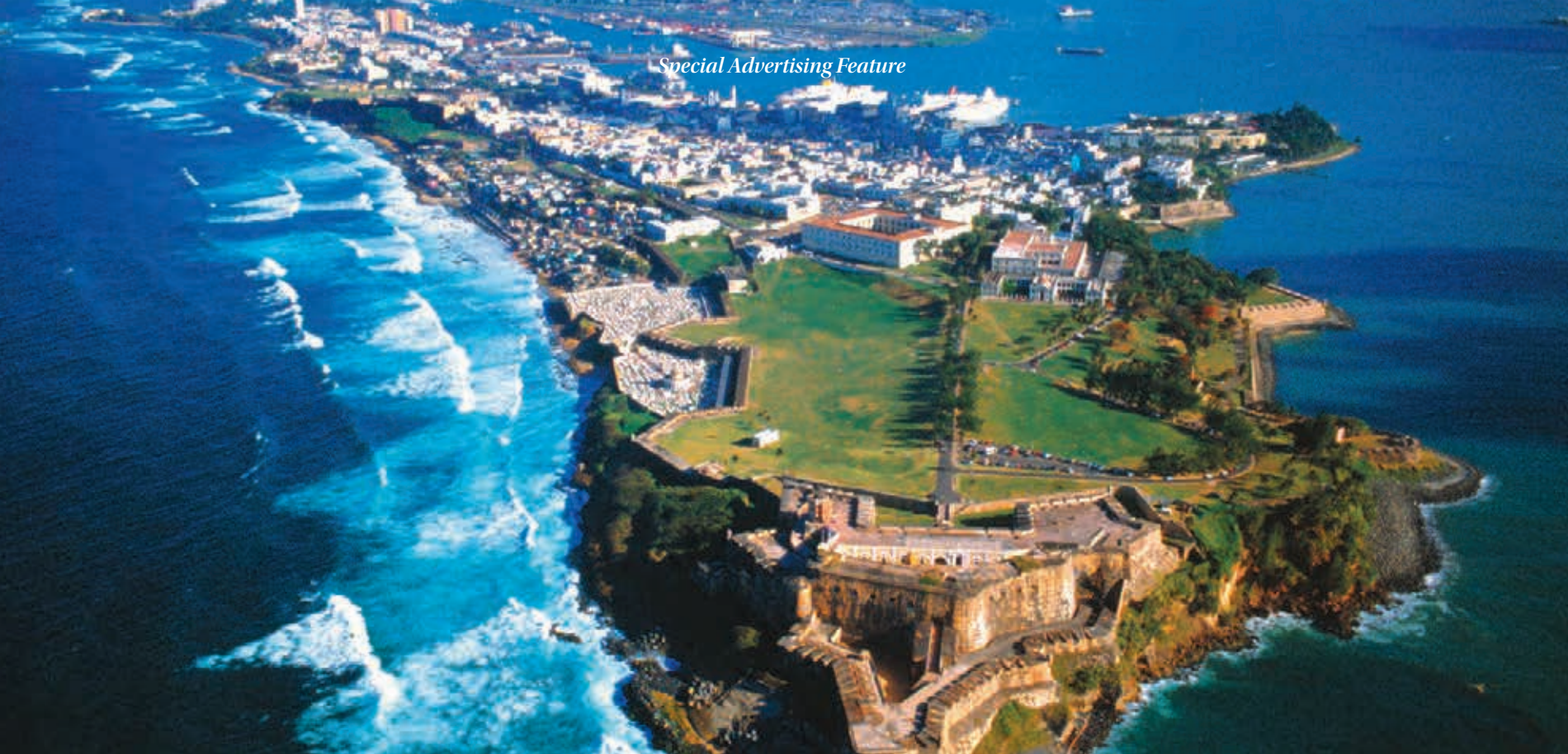
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COURTESY OF PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

## puerto rico island wonder

**T**hough Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States — meaning English is widely spoken, the dollar is its official currency and there's no need for a passport — you'll find a definite Spanish heart throughout its glorious mountain scenery, coconut palms waving slightly in the tropical breeze and alluring blue seas. Old San Juan recalls its colonial past, with its blue-toned cobblestones, wrought-iron balconies, and Forts El Morro and San Cristóbal standing sentry through the centuries. In SoFo (south of Fortaleza), modern, inspired dining sizzles at restaurants like Dragonfly, with its Latin-Asian fusion fare. Grab a patio table and sip a ginger-infused Dragon Punch as you feast on small-plate specialties such as Peking Duck nachos and octopus ceviche, then finish with a delicate white chocolate and lime Napoleon. The night still young, stroll down the street to the cool calm of Marmalade's wine bar or live salsa at Rumba on San Sebastian.

Thirty miles east of San Juan, Playa Luquillo is just one of Puerto Rico's many exceptional beaches — check out the 50-plus food stands on its western end. Isla de Viques, just off the mainland's east coast, has several postcard-perfect beaches, including the shimmery-sand Blue Beach with little paths cutting through sea grapes to solitary crescents of sand. By day, explore the

isle's bougainvillea-scented hills, dense tropical jungle and beaches on a smooth-gaited Spanish Paso Fino horse; later, take a clear-bottom kayak out on the bioluminescent bay that glows magically on mostly moonless nights.

The country's southwest corner remains happily undiscovered. Capture the sunset vistas atop the cliffs at the Cabo Rojo light-

house or paddle to Gilligan's Island, a wee little isle near Copamarina Beach Resort, speckled with seashells and mangroves. The week-long winter festival Carnaval de Ponce (Feb. 6-12) fills the city's main square with costumed parades, *bomba y plena* music and authentic Puerto Rican *criollo* cuisine, culminating in the traditional "Burial of the Sardine."

**PUERTO RICO  
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### Puerto Rico does Christmas better

Celebrate a Caribbean "White Christmas" in Puerto Rico, which hosts the world's longest holiday season. The festivities start the day after Thanksgiving and run through mid-January with an abundance of local traditions. Whether it's being serenaded by *parrandas* (carolers) or drinking *coquito* (the Island version of eggnog), visitors are sure to feel the Island's truly unique spirit. And, Puerto Rico now has three new luxury properties for discerning travelers. The super-premium Ritz-Carlton Reserve, Dorado, boasts a history dating to the Rockefellers. Royal Isabela, located on the northwest coast, features a golf course that has been called "the Scotland of the Caribbean." The exquisite Olive Boutique Hotel in San Juan's Condado neighborhood modeled its rooms in Spanish and Italian styles.

**To book your holiday of indulgence, see your travel professional or visit [SeePuertoRico.com](http://SeePuertoRico.com)**



# PUERTO RICO



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# hawaii pacific paradise



COURTESY OF WESTIN

It's no wonder Hawaii consistently rates high as a favorite winter getaway: Sun-kissed year-round and caressed by warm trade winds, this tropical archipelago just five hours off California's coast is the epitome of accessible paradise. You can't go wrong with where you hang your sun hat, but favorites include Oahu's bustling Waikiki, in the shadow of legendary Diamond Head; Lahaina on Maui, an old whaling village with extensive beaches, buzzing nightlife and nearby natural splendor; and magical Hanalei on Kauai, situated near the real-life Bali Hai.

The major draw to Hawaii, of course, is the beach. And this in itself poses a problem. With six major islands and a coastline of 750 miles, harboring beaches small and large, bustling and serene, white, black, and pink, how do you find the right one for you? Three that are top rated include Lanikai Beach on Oahu's windward coast, with snow-white sand and a pristine coral reef just offshore; Kauai's peak-edged Lumahai Beach; and Maui's Kaanapali Beach, which is vibrant, lively and chic thanks to its nearby resorts.

Hawaii's waterside activities are non-stop. Take surfing lessons on Kauai's Poipu Beach. Snorkel in Maui's Molokini Crater, a half-sunken volcanic crater accessible only by boat, or the Big Island's isolated Kealahou Bay, an underwater marine sanctuary where spinner dolphins cavort in the morning. An equally enticing option: go deep-sea fishing out of Maui's Lahaina or the Big Island's Kona to catch mahi-mahi, tuna, or, if you're really lucky, marlin.

Honolulu has some top-notch cultural

offerings: Visit 'Iolani Palace, the only royal palace located in the United States; admire contemporary works by nearly 300 local artists at the Hawaii State Art Museum; or stroll through the Arabian-Night fantasy rooms of tobacco heiress Doris Duke's five-acre estate, Shangri La. Or simply slow down the pace a bit and pamper yourself to a rejuvenating spa treatment — Hawaiian touches include a Wahi Olliahi wrap infused with sandalwood powder and lemongrass tea.

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HOTELS & RESORTS

## Westin Hotels Hawaii

Escape to Hawai'i and experience the island pleasures of Westin's four distinctive resorts. Located in some of the state's most breathtaking settings, each property offers signature amenities, intuitive services and endless activities. The Westin Maui Resort & Spa is a rejuvenating getaway featuring an award-winning spa and aquatic playground. The Westin Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Villas in Maui and The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas in Kauai offer a unique blend of resort and homestyle living, from upscale comfort and convenience to an abundance of outdoor and water adventures. The Moana Surfrider, a Westin Resort & Spa, offers world-class accommodations — an elegant landmark on legendary Waikiki Beach.

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COURTESY OF Le BLANC

## cancún caribbean jewel

**T**he glitzy, ultramodern enclave of Cancún takes all-inclusive resorts, five-star dining and designer shopping to the next level of cosmopolitan luxury — all within a *huarache's* throw of pure-white sands and a sapphire sea. Spend the day paddleboarding on pellucid waters and indulging in a Maya-influenced, *temazcal*-style spa treatment, or shop within the glass-and-marble Luxury Avenue, an upscale brand bonanza of a mall where the café always has Veuve Clicquot on ice. For the best Mexican fare in town, head to stylish, spirited La Joya for dinner, featuring romantico mariachi serenades and a tequila sommelier. Try the grilled beef prepared Tampíqueña-style or the catch of the day wrapped in maguey leaves. At Casa Rolandi, Italian-Swiss cuisine shapes the creative menu. Choice dishes include veal cheeks in wine served over polenta and fresh seafood tagliolini draped in black ink.

More peaceful times await at nearby Isla Mujeres, a sultry, five-mile-long isle most easily traversed by golf cart. Go turtle spotting in bathtub-warm waters or simply plop down on unpopulated Playa del Norte. Artist and conservationist Jason deCaires Taylor has created a monumental underwater gal-

lery here — scuba divers and snorkelers can take in more than 400 astounding sculptures of human figures (this vast “museum” also touches on Cancún and Punta Nizuk). Half-way between Cancún and Playa del Carmen is the quaint fishing village of Puerto Morelos, where locals gather every Sunday at the

waterside restaurant La Suegra de John Gray for a no-frills, absolutely delectable barbecue featuring the daily catch, ribs and vegetables.

Farther south along the coast, don't miss Tulum's mysterious seafront ruins dating from pre-Columbian times — its pristine beach is nothing short of spectacular.



### Le Blanc Spa Resort

The adults-only, all-inclusive Le Blanc Spa Resort beckons you from the white sand beaches and sparkling waters of the Mexican Caribbean. The AAA Five Diamond property is nestled between the Nichupte Lagoon and the glistening Caribbean Sea in Cancún, a stunningly beautiful resort where luxury reaches its pinnacle and service is intimate and outstanding. A ratio nearing one staff member per guest ensures that your every desire is anticipated and fulfilled. With five international restaurants, two infinity pools, an Asian-inspired spa, in-room Jacuzzis and a butler ready to do your bidding, Le Blanc is a tropical paradise culled from your most vivid dreams.

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