

Independent TRAVEL

TAKE A WINTER BREAK...

...to see the sun, moon, and stars!

FROM city breaks to visit Christmas markets, a family skiing holiday or some winter sunshine, there are all sorts of opportunities to take a break this winter.



The Christmas Markets...

THROUGHOUT Europe, cities come alive in November and December when their streets and centres fill with Christmas trees and market stalls offering deliciously scented stollen cakes and hot gluhwein and wonderful gifts often handmade by local craftsmen.

For culture enthusiasts, some cities have performances of ballet, concerts or opera for which tickets can be booked.

For an alternative Christmas, Vienna is at its best at this time of year, and we

have a 5 night escorted holiday including a performance of The Sleeping Beauty ballet on Christmas Day and Le Nozzi di Figaro Opera by Mozart on Boxing Day. (price from £1837 per person – call us for availability)

Take to the Slopes...

WHETHER skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing or simply winter walking, there are a huge range of destinations to choose from, catering for every interest. It is vital that the right resort is booked, with the right combination of hotels, ski runs, child care and non ski activities. Resorts such as Val D'Is-



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ere and Obergurgl remain popular year on year, but at Travel by Design we have a number of smaller companies offering newer destinations such as Norway, and luxury hotels in the resorts in the Italian Dolomites.

As we write, the snow is already falling in Banff, Canada with the season opening in less than 12 days time. As resorts go in North America, Banff is one of the smaller resorts, but it certainly makes for it in terms of the relaxed buzz and access to amazing slopes.

For families, Club Med now offers a fantastic range of quality hotels and includes childcare and tuition for all ages. Most of their hotels have recently been upgraded and some even have spas for relaxation after a taxing day on the slopes.

In search of Santa...

ONE of the most exciting adventures a family can have is to go to Lapland in search of Santa. Flying directly from Manchester, with carol singing on the plane to set the mood, you will arrive in Lapland, don the provided warm clothing and away you go ...

Day trips, one, two or three night stays are all pos-

sible, with overnight accommodation in traditional log cabins. Skidoo and sleigh rides will be taken to look for Santa, and each family with have their own private meeting with the great man, where Christmas lists can be discussed and an early Christmas present is taken early from Santa's sack.

Winter warmers...

AS the clocks go back and the dark nights are with us, it's good to think that somewhere in the world the sun is shining.

Just over 4 hours flying time from the UK takes you to the Canary Islands and one of our most popular hotels on Tenerife has been the Abama. Kristina visited this property in September, which is set in lovely botanical gardens, with fantastic restaurants, spa and golf facilities. We have booked many families to this property and the children have been able to take golf, tennis and horseriding lessons.

Further afield, 6 to 7 hours flying will take you to the Middle East. Dubai of course, is now well known and has wonderful beaches, excellent hotels and a magnificent choice for shopping and sporting activities, but there are other resorts now springing up widening the choice of destinations.



...or for grown ups, the Northern Lights

Oman is a short flight on from Dubai and is just a little bit different, with more history and tours available as well as boat trips and the usual sports and luxury hotels.

Club Med have recently opened a brand new property at Taba on the Red Sea coast. Large rooms, guaranteed interconnecting rooms for families, fully inclusive meal arrangement and a superb range of child care, sports, activities and a luxury spa make this a fabulous winter sun destination.

For the 'full on' winter sunshine experience, it's hard to beat the Caribbean: 9 to 10 hours flying from the UK, with beautiful beaches, fabulous hotels and wall-to-wall sunshine, the three items on most people's 'must have' list. At Travel by Design, we have our own list of 'preferred hotels' and we match our clients both to hotel and tour operator to ensure a perfect holiday.

THE Northern Lights are undoubtedly the greatest winter wonder of Scandinavia and the 2012 display are billed as being the best for years! Many will remember Joanna Lumley's recent documentary to this area which has had generated a huge amount of interest.

With a three or four night stay, there is time to seek out the lights by car, coach, snowmobile, husky safari, or by sea – the choice is yours. And for some added excitement, add a night at the Ice Hotel, built every year and includes an Ice bar and Chapel. Guests sleep in thermal arctic sleeping bags on reindeer skins, and have a choice of Snow rooms, Ice rooms or Art Suites which are decorated with ice sculptures.

If these rooms are just a step too cold, there is cosier accommodation located in log cabins in the grounds.

And with Christmas just around the corner, many of these ideas will make a lovely Christmas gift, or why not buy one of our Travel Vouchers.

For more information on these or many other winter break suggestions, call the team at Travel by Design on 01625 584195, or email info@travelbydesigngroup.com



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