

## Travel via the Moon

Submitted by the Editor in honor of the adventurous spirit of AGCM Moon Mullen, USN (Ret)

### The Many Benefits of Off-Season Travel

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Has the busy summer travel season got you down? Are high prices inspiring more armchair travel than taking an actual getaway? Why not pack your bags and take advantage of some of the many benefits of vacationing during the off-season, shoulder periods between peak travel times that still offer great experiences for less money and smaller crowds?

Travel during non-peak times can generate numerous benefits, among them, cost savings. Flights, accommodation, and attractions may be significantly cheaper during off-peak times, allowing you to stretch your travel budget further.

Another perk of traveling between seasons is that there are fewer people traveling at the same time. You can enjoy popular attractions, landmarks, and museums with smaller crowds, leading to a more peaceful and intimate experience. You'll have more space to explore, take photos, and truly appreciate your surroundings.

Savings and crowds are the most popular reasons to travel during the off-season, but another benefit is authenticity. Traveling in the off-season allows you to experience the local culture and way of life as it occurs more naturally. Without the overwhelming crush of visitors, locals are more likely to engage and interact with travelers, which can lead to unique insights into the local customs, traditions, and daily routines.

Fewer fellow travelers also means that visitors may receive more personalized service during off-peak times since hotels, restaurants and other service providers have fewer customers to deal with. There also tends to be more availability in popular hotels and attractions than can be found during peak travel times. This means, there is likely more flexibility for travelers to choose things like the best times to dine at popular restaurants, more options for selecting the best rooms at popular hotels, space at the pool or beach and more.

One thing to remember about traveling during off-peak times is travelers should check the local conditions and verify the availability of attractions or services during off-season periods, as some places may have reduced operating hours or temporary closures.

Overall, however, off-season travel can mean less stress and more relaxation. Traveling without the hustle and bustle can mean a more relaxed and laid-back vacation.

### A Few of the Best Off-Season Destinations for 2023

U.S. News Travel Advice



Savannah, Georgia

While spring lures visitors to Savannah with its arts and music festivals and colorful azaleas across its Historic District, fall is a best-kept secret. From September to November, temperatures settle into the comfortable low 70s and mid-80s, the summer crowds have dwindled and hotel pricing dips. Plus, there are a variety of festivals worth checking out, including the Savannah Jazz Fest in September, the Savannah Film Festival at the end of October and the Savannah Food & Wine Festival in November. For a memorable experience, time your visit around Halloween, when you can delight in spine-tingling frights and delights such as ghost tours and moss-covered strolls through Bonaventure Cemetery.



### **London**

With the declining value of the pound following Brexit, there are still great deals to be had across the U.K., including London, says Alex Howard, managing editor of travel publisher Lonely Planet. If you don't mind wearing a few extra layers to guard against the chilly temperatures in the 40s and 50s, mid-September through November ushers in an ideal time to check out vibrant cultural events, admire colorful fall foliage and seize upon lower airfare and hotel rates. Don't skip the annual Totally Thames Festival throughout September, which includes exhibitions, concerts, parties and free events, or the EFG London Jazz Festival in November. And of course, don't skip checking out lively outdoor stalls at Borough Market or Notting Hill.



### **Santa Fe, New Mexico**

Picture avant-garde art, vibrant street markets, Gothic cathedrals and graceful adobe buildings. These are just a few of Santa Fe's charms. In autumn, you can enjoy a break from blazing summer temperatures, with daily highs in the 60s and 70s through October. Plus, there are a variety of festivals jockeying for your attention, from the Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta at the tail end of September to the nearby Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in October. And no trip to Santa Fe is complete without strolling into the eclectic galleries along legendary Canyon Road or perusing the stands at the vibrant Santa Fe Farmers Market.



### **Amalfi Coast, Italy**

When it comes to enchanting Italian destinations, the Amalfi Coast, with its spectacular beaches, dreamy seaside towns and striking backdrops, is hard to match. And around mid-September, the summer tourists have come and gone and temperatures hover in the 60s and 80s through the end of October. Even better, you can snap up lower airfares and reasonable hotel rates thanks to lower demand at this time of year, especially in October. Don't skip taking in sweeping cliff and sea views, from Ravello's Villa in Rufolo to the ornate sculptures and gardens at Villa Cimbrone. Another must: soaking in Positano's colorful cliff-side villas, captivating beaches, famous ceramics and charming seaside restaurants.

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