



PASSPORT

A KIWI COLLECTION PUBLICATION

# A CULTURAL SPRING BREAK

- Darren Dunne, Kiwi Collection

Millennials have earned scorn for their impact on a number of institutions. They're **killing soap**, they're disinterested in **The Olympics**, and they're even guilty for declining **fabric softener** sales. While these accusations may or may not be true, this generation has also been earning plaudits for their love of experiential travel, a trend reflected in their eschewing of the stereotypical hard-drinking Spring Break vacation.

Instead, this week-long rite of passage is undergoing a renaissance, bolstered by the desire for more substantial vacations in more culturally rewarding locales. We're all for this development, and this week on the blog we're taking a look at seven destinations for a cultural Spring Break getaway.

*Pages of travel tales gathered from visits to hotels, hammams, beaches, boutiques, bars and everything luxurious in between*

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## Barcelona, Spain

*Where to stay:* [The Wittmore](#)

Catalonia's capital, Barcelona is widely recognized as Spain's most cosmopolitan city, while still retaining a strong regional identity, culture and language. It's the spiritual home of Spanish surrealist Pablo Picasso, and the Picasso Museum houses one of the most extensive collections of his works. Barcelona's skyline is dominated by the iconic Sagrada Familia church, a building on which construction commenced in 1882 and is expected to finish in 2026, the centenary of architect Antoni Gaudí's death. Fringed on one side by the iconic La Rambla boulevard, the city's Gothic Quarter is a center for Art Nouveau architecture and ideal for an aimless stroll. For those into sport, a tour of FC Barcelona's storied Camp Nou stadium comes highly recommended.

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### **Kilkenny, Ireland**

*Where to stay:* [Mount Juliet](#)

Far too often a trip to the Emerald Isle is centred around the capital, Dublin, and while its tourism chops are well known, there's a treasure trove of towns a little off the beaten track. One such unheralded gem is Kilkenny, an ancient city roughly 90-minutes drive from Dublin. It's home to an imposing castle, cathedral, and surrounding remnants of a medieval wall. Known as one of Ireland's cultural capitals, it plays host to an Arts Festival, Comedy Festival and Food Festival. In a happy coincidence, Ireland's national holiday, St. Patrick's Day, takes place during the Spring Break period, making Ireland and Kilkenny a great option for a cultural break.



### **Florence, Italy**

*Where to stay:* [Hotel Brunelleschi](#)

Birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence is intrinsically linked with the arts. The city is home to such variety of palaces and squares it's sometimes referred to as a living museum. That period of artistic awakening left an array of works in its wake – fountains, museums and art galleries galore. Look up, and you'll likely be confronted by the iconic dome of Cathedral di Santa Maria del Fiore. This famous feature was designed by architect Filippo Brunelleschi, who coincidentally lends his name to the hotel mentioned above. At the center of Florence lies Piazza della Repubblica, a focal point for dining, entertainment and culture, while the Chianti region to the south is one of the world's premier wine-producing regions.



### **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

*Where to stay:* [Hotel Billini](#)

There's no reason a cultural getaway can't be combined with a sunshine one, and Santo Domingo cheerfully ticks both boxes. The city was founded in 1493, marking the site of the first European settlement in the New World. Since then, a plethora of influences have left their mark - African, native Taíno, European - creating a fusion unique in the Caribbean. The remnants of the first settlement can still be found in the city in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ciudad Colonial. This area is home to a wealth of landmarks like the colonial mansion Alcázar de Colón, the 16th century castle Fortaleza Ozama, and the oldest cathedral in the Americas, Cathedral Primada de America.



### **Machu Picchu, Peru**

*Where to stay:* [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#)

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983, the ancient city of Machu Picchu stands sentry nearly 8,000 feet above sea level in Peru's Sacred Valley. It was built in 1450, and represents the most iconic locale of the Inca civilization. The site was abandoned a century later during the time of the Spanish conquest, and fell out of public consciousness until American explorer Hiram Bingham (often cited as a basis for the Indiana Jones character) made it famous once again in the early 20th century. Since then, the site has become the largest tourist attraction in Peru welcoming over one million visitors for the first time ever in 2012.



## Madrid, Spain

*Where to stay:* [Hesperia Madrid](#)

At the cultural and geographical heart of Spain, Madrid offers plenty to love for those seeking a more cultural Spring Break. The city boasts one of Europe's strongest art scenes, helmed by the world famous "Golden Triangle" of Museo del Prado, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia. Here, exhibits by the likes of Picasso, Goya and Salvadore Dali are sprinkled among impressive statues and more modern works. The city itself is constructed of a beguiling mix of palatial Spanish homes and modern glass towers, with the spectacular 19th century opera house a particular highlight.



## Istanbul, Turkey

*Where to stay:* [A'JIA HOTEL](#)

A former capital of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, Istanbul straddles the border between Asia and Europe, packing a wealth of history and culture into each twisting avenue. The city's awe-inspiring Grand Bazaar should be high on the list of priorities, as it boasts over 4,000 shops within the largest and oldest covered market in the world. The neighbourhoods of Bebek, Arnavutköy and Yeniköy are world famous for their seafood restaurants, while the city's hamams have been a staple of life for centuries. Istanbul contains a massive 69 museums, including the majestic Hagia Sophia. Finally, a visit to Yıldız Palace places visitors at the site of Turkey's first movie screening (1896) and former lodging of Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle.

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