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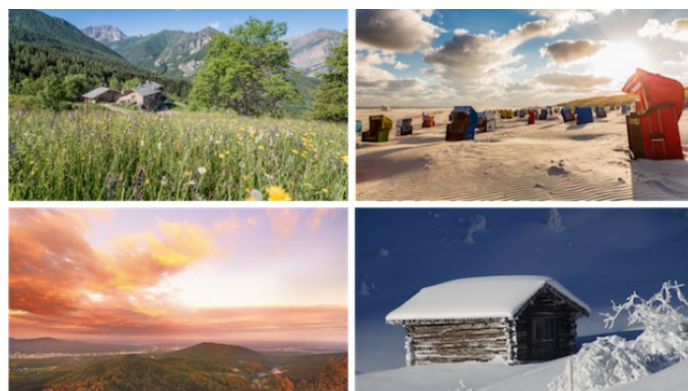
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## Off-season travel: evade mass tourism

November 20, 2018



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The number of tourists has steadily increased in the past decades. Worldwide, more than 1.3 billion people travel annually, domestic travel excluded. An all-time increase of 7 %, representing round 1,322 million people, was achieved in 2017, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Africa and the Asian and the Pacific regions recorded significant growth. In Europe, particularly Mediterranean destinations counted more visitors.





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The consequence is overflowing beaches, crowded hiking trails, packed city parks and marketplaces, the phenomenon is known as over-tourism. The increasing numbers and overflowing holiday regions leave lasting damage: Nature and animals suffer from the crowds and their traces, which often consist of plastic bottles and cigarette butts. Destinations are exploited to entertain tourists, while locals lose affordable housing and the destination its authentic charm. Hence, off-season travel has many benefits for the environment, locals and travelers.

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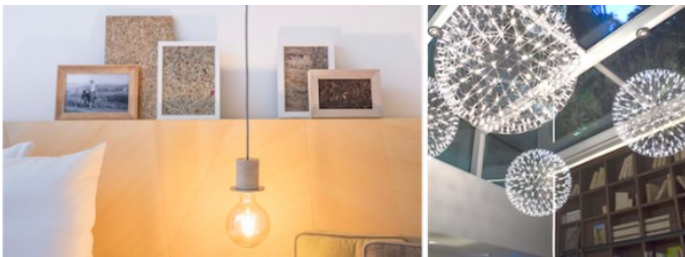
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### City trip: Hot chocolate instead of iced coffee

Visiting cities is popular during summer when sitting outside in cafes or parks resulting in more waste, an increase of environmental pollution and a tight rental market for residents. Queuing in front of the Eiffel Tower for hours and being unable to see the attraction due to numerous selfie sticks is neither pleasing for travelers. Thus, visiting cities during the off-season is worth considering: Whether romantic winter days in wintery Paris staying at the Hôtel Le Pavillon, a warming mulled wine at the Christmas market in Erlangen combined with a relaxing stay at the Creativhotel Luise, or spring in Milan enjoying the rooftop terrace of the Hotel Milano Scala. A perfect city trip does not require high season!



### Beach vacation: building snowmen on the beach

Spending the winter months on northern beaches does not include swimming, but is best for tranquility and slowing down. After a long walk on Juist's beach, vacationers can warm up in a Thalasso bath and the extensive spa area at the Strandhotel Kurhaus Juist. A winter holiday on the North Sea Island has other advantages: Since air pollution is worse in winter, guests breathe pure, dust-free and low-allergen air on the car-free island in the cold season. In spring, the climate therapy is available strengthening the immune system and improving the self-healing powers and digestion.

Guests of the Lifestylehotel SAND on Timmendorf beach enjoy breathtaking views of the Baltic Sea from the hot whirlpool on the rooftop terrace in winter. Lake Ziegelsee in Schwerin invites visitors to take long walks. Afterwards, the excellent restaurant *aurum* at the Hotel Speicher am Ziegelsee pampers its guests with selected regional and organic dishes.



### Hiking vacation: Gold mountains

Those yearning for seclusion and solitary hikes should avoid the mountains during summer. Why not escaping grey November marveling Indian summer in the Alps? The Berghotel Rehlegg is the starting point for various hiking and cycling trails in the Berchtesgaden Alps. Guests enjoy the last warming sunrays best at the Dolomites: surrounded by mountains and nature, the Dolomit Boutique Hotel is the ideal starting point for outdoor activities and yoga in fall. Those still planning to hike in summer should consider the highlands. The Black Forest and the Bavarian Forest are less crowded than



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### Holiday during the monsoon season: Lush greenery

Not traveling countries during the monsoon period is often recommended. Consequences are overcrowded and polluted holiday regions resulting in closure of beaches, for example, such as Maya Bay in Thailand famous from "The Beach."

The monsoon seasons differ in time and region in each country. So, traveling Thailand during the monsoon is worthwhile between September and December on Koh Samui at the green hotel The Tongsai Bay and on Phuket at the Keemala Resort between April and October. Moreover, the rain often times is weaker than expected and usually lasts only last for a couple of hours per day. Thus, vacation does not fall through.

Besides: The more it rains, the greener it is – areas rich in nature, in particular, such as Asia and South America, are most impressive during the rainy season. In Peru, nature around the luxurious eco-cottages of Inkatererra Reserva Amazónica flourishes most due to the rain December through May.



### Ski vacation: Escape the slopes

Off-season travel has one advantage above all: Exploring a destination without mass tourism. And that is what holiday is about – enjoying a peaceful vacation. From a sustainable perspective, skiing off-season does not make sense since supplying ski slopes artificially uses up many resources. An alternative to crowded slopes could be snowshoe hikes through the National Park Hohe Tauern guided by the Naturhotel Outside, or cross-country skiing in the Maira Valley. Winter athletes subsequently relax at the sauna in the vaulted cellar of the historic eco-village of Sagna Rotonda.



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