

Solo season

Classic coach breaks and off-the-beaten-track adventures are among the new tours to sell to solo travellers this Christmas, discovers Alice Barnes-Brown

As the festive season approaches, time is ticking for anyone keen to book a Christmas getaway and solo travellers are a key demographic to target. After all, exploring somewhere new, meeting like-minded people and escaping Christmas commitments are a tempting prospect for those with time, money and freedom to spare.

Responding to demand, many touring operators have introduced new holidays for solos this year. Whether your clients want to be guided around charming cities as the Christmas lights twinkle or enjoy an exotic long-haul escape without worrying about single supplements, these tours are a gift they're unlikely to forget.

TURKEY AND TINSEL

If your clients are keen on a warm and welcoming Christmas close to home, there's plenty

of hot domestic product to sell. Solo specialist Just You has launched two UK tours for the festive season this year – a four-night Christmas in Bath tour and a three-night New Year in Stratford-upon-Avon itinerary, both departing December 23 – with visits to castles and stately homes, fascinating museums and plenty of festive fizz.

Rachel Mould, Just You's head of UK trade sales, says: "We're seeing strong demand for solo tours in the UK, particularly those visiting Bath and Harrogate. It's important to note that travelling over the festive period doesn't have to mean busy crowds or the need to compromise – sometimes the best gift clients can give themselves is the freedom of a solo holiday."

Newmarket Holidays is also offering two new festive departures dedicated to solos: ➤

DESTINATIONS

SOLO TRAVEL | FESTIVE BREAKS

BEST OF THE
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NEW FESTIVE TOURS



For clients who want to explore festive markets without missing out on Christmas at home, **Leger Holidays'** new five-day Aachen, Koblenz and Bonn Christmas Markets for Solo Travellers coach break departs on December 1 and is priced from £829 per person. leger.co.uk



Kirker Holidays' five-night Christmas in Paris tour, which reaches the City of Light via Eurostar, is ideal for Francophiles, as it's led by an art historian and Paris resident. The tour costs from £3,896 and departs December 22. kirkerholidays.com

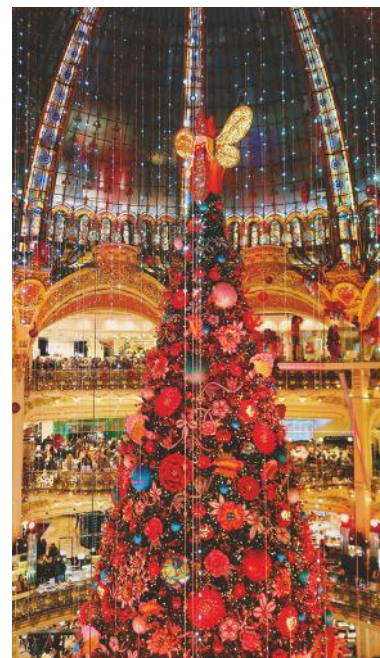


G Adventures' 10-day Solo-ish South Africa itinerary is new for this year. On Christmas Day, clients will arrive in Johannesburg and enjoy a cooking class and dinner, then they'll ring in the new year on safari in Kruger National Park. From £2,459 per person, departing December 25. gadventures.co.uk



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Durham Cathedral and the River Wear; Galeries Lafayette store, Paris; Varanasi, India
PREVIOUS PAGE: Prague PICTURES:

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Christmas in The Beatles' Liverpool and Manchester, along with Christmas in Cambridge and Warwickshire, each offering cultural delights as well as champagne brunches and Christmas lunches.

Meanwhile, Grand UK Holidays revealed that sales for its autumn and festive programmes are up 37% year on year in 2025, and it has released six festive domestic holidays for November and December this year. They include the popular seaside towns of Bournemouth, Torquay and Llandudno, as well as scenic cities such as Chester and Durham.

A four-night Christmas in Tyneside itinerary combines all the festive fun of a Boxing Day pantomime and turkey Christmas lunch with misty Christmas Eve tours of Durham.

Lyn Arnold, Grand UK Holidays' trade manager, says: "For many solo travellers, a domestic adventure over the festive period offers the perfect balance of exploration and connection without the stress of long-haul travel. It particularly appeals to customers who value shared experiences and companionship and the reassurance of travelling with like-minded people, yet still want the independence of going solo."

Book it: Grand UK Holidays' Christmas in Tyneside trip costs from £699 per person, half-board. The price includes coach travel, a mulled wine reception, Christmas lunch, one afternoon tea and listed excursions, based on a December 23 departure. grandukholidays.com

ADVENTUROUS ADVENT

In addition to its new UK trips, Just You has introduced three international tours for 2025: Christmas in Croatia, Christmas in Budapest, and Spirit of India at Christmas. If your clients are keen to spend two weeks of the festive period immersing themselves in another world, then the colours, cultures and cuisines of India could be just the ticket.

The tour begins in Delhi, giving clients time to recover from the long-haul flight and explore the exciting Indian capital, before tackling the Golden Triangle route and tiger-filled Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan. On Christmas Day, clients head for the lesser-known city of Lucknow, where they can browse for (belated) gifts in the buzzing Mughal-styled bazaar and enjoy a perfumery experience at a family-owned fragrance house. Then, it's on to spiritual Varanasi, where sacred bathing sites and Hindu and Buddhist temples line the banks of the Ganges.

Book it: Just You's 13-day Spirit of India at Christmas escorted tour costs from £3,999 per person, half-board. Includes listed excursions, flights, luggage and transfers, based on a December 17 departure. justyou.co.uk

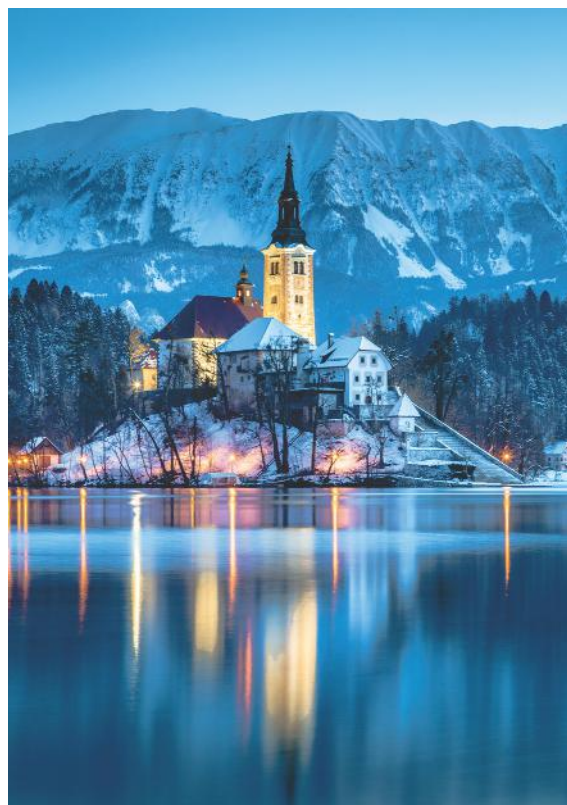
CULTURAL CHRISTMAS

Agents will also find a batch of new European tours to sate a customer's Christmas appetite. For no-fly clients, coach operator Just Go Holidays



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Stratford-upon-Avon; Taj Mahal; Christmas market stall, Bath; Lake Bled, Slovenia

PICTURES: Shutterstock/1000 Words, canadastock, Alexey Federenko, leonov.o



ASK THE EXPERTS



"September and October are key months for selling festive holidays, so you want to ensure clients are aware of what's on offer. My top tip for agents would be to focus on sharing festive-related content on social media."

Rachel Mould, head of UK trade sales, Just You



"Travel during the festive period can be frantic with busy airports and public transport disrupted by the holidays, so agents can suggest that it's easier and more reliable to take a coach trip from a local joining point."

Ashley Dellow, head of retail sales, Leger Holidays



"The festive season can be a wonderful time for solo travellers to join an escorted tour, as it offers ready-made companionship and a chance to share memorable moments with like-minded people."

Hayley Morris, head of trade sales, Newmarket Holidays



"Our guides ensure solo travellers have a very social and special time. Imagine spending Christmas Day seeing rhinos or cycling through Waterberg Plateau National Park."

Ben Colbridge, commercial and product director, Exodus Adventure Travels

has introduced seven six-day festive tours in Europe, and has also substantially revamped its seven-night Christmas in Prague – Going Solo itinerary this year.

After arriving in the Czech capital in comfort on a new JG Explorer coach, clients can stretch their legs on a Christmas Eve walking tour, with stops by twinkling pine trees, open-air skating rinks and festive light shows.

Christmas Day brings lunch served Czech-style in a local restaurant, then a dinner boat trip on the Vltava River.

Keen to book? Zoe Tasker, Just Go's group product director, says: "There is still limited availability for this Christmas, but we encourage agents to act quickly because places are expected to fill fast."

If clients are craving those chocolate-box Christmas markets or snow-capped mountains, Newmarket Holidays is also launching Christmas in the

Slovenian Alps, a new Exclusively Solos itinerary. Beginning in the baroque Slovenian capital Ljubljana – laced with fairy lights and with the aroma of mulled wine wafting on the breeze – solo travellers will explore the delightful Christmas markets along the river.

A trip to beautiful Lake Bled is included on Christmas Eve, where they can wander in and out of picturesque churches and bite into sweet, spiced *potica* cake – a traditional treat – before heading to the snowy ski resort of Kranjska Gora in time for midnight mass. Christmas Day is spent at leisure, with spas, snowy walks and saunas on the cards.

Book it: Newmarket Holidays sells the five-night Christmas in the Slovenian Alps from £2,555 per person. Includes half-board accommodation, listed tours and excursions, plus flights from Gatwick departing on December 22. newmarketholidays.co.uk **TW**