

# WINTER SUN

# 3 ways

Laura French looks at all-inclusive resorts for anyone seeking an escape from the cold

**C**old days, dark nights, cloudy skies – welcome to winter. And while cosy evenings huddled round log fires do hold a certain appeal, there's something quite satisfying about jetting off to some exotic land where the sun seems to blaze perennially, and where blustery days back home are nothing more than a memory.

Which is probably why winter sun holidays continue to boom year after year, and why all-inclusive resorts in those sun-soaked destinations are one of the biggest money-makers you can come across. So where do you start when it comes to selling this lucrative sector? We have the answers, with all-inclusive options to suit every budget.



## Save

Riu Tikida Palmeraie, Marrakech;  
Top right: Alborada Ocean Club,  
Tenerife; Above right: Gran  
Castillo Tagoro, Lanzarote

**Riu Tikida Palmeraie, Marrakech:** Morocco combines year-round sun with desert adventures, Bedouin culture and idyllic beaches, and there's excellent value to be had. For some of the best savings, look to Riu Tikida Palmeraie. A short bus ride from Marrakech's medina, it's been refurbished to shiny effect and boasts modern, airy rooms plus a wellness centre, multi-sports pitch and a huge outdoor pool with swim-up bar. There's also decent entertainment, from live music performances to art classes. **Book it:** Tui offers a week's all-inclusive from £397 per person, based on two sharing, with flights from Gatwick on November 29.

**Alborada Ocean Club, Tenerife:** The Canary Islands are just as generous at dishing out vitamin D, with dramatic landscapes and sandy beaches to boot.

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Olympic Holidays recommends three-star Alborada Ocean Club for holidaymakers on the hunt for a bargain, with apartment-style accommodation plus hotel-standard facilities – think huge saltwater pool, kids' mini club, playground and pool area, plus sparkling sea views. **Book it:** A week's all-inclusive with Olympic Holidays costs from £450 per person based on two sharing a Triple Standard Apartment, flying from Liverpool on December 7.

**Gran Castillo Tagoro, Lanzarote:** For those wanting to up the luxe level a little, suggest this elegant five-star, located across the sea in Lanzarote and set right on the Playa Blanca beachfront in a scenic, secluded part of the island. “Families, friends and couples will find outstanding facilities here,” says Elena Ahmadian, marketing executive for Cyplon. “There are six pools, beautiful gardens, a fitness centre and the unmissable VitaNova Spa, complete with water circuit, hydromassage jets and a range of treatments.” There's also a 5D cinema, an excellent kids' club and a medieval-themed splash park, while food choices include two à la carte options, an adult-only restaurant and a string of bars. **Book it:** Seven nights' all-inclusive with Cyplon costs from £62 based on two sharing a Double Superior Room, with flights from Gatwick on January 7. ➤



### MONEY-SAVING TIPS

Look out for early-booking discounts or promotional fares, which could mean hefty savings. If clients have missed out for this winter, suggest they book now for next year and pay in instalments.

Highlight any supplements on speciality restaurants so clients can budget for additional costs, or opt for a comprehensive package that won't leave them with any nasty surprises at check-out.

Check which drinks are available and when – some resorts only serve drinks with meals or only after 6pm – and if clients are partial to a certain brand, be sure it's included in the package.

Travel outside the peak winter-sun season – October, November, March and April can represent better value and quieter resorts in some long-haul destinations.





"Clients are attracted by the value for money of all-inclusive holidays. With meals, drinks and many activities taken care of, they get a lot of holiday for their cash. Also, there are no worries about exchange rate fluctuations or unforeseen costs. In some destinations there might not be easy access to local facilities, but at an all-inclusive, clients have what they need right on the doorstep. Agents should look for the variety of inclusions – the number of restaurants and whether any require a supplement, whether watersports or excursions are included, and if customers are travelling with children, the availability of kids' or teens' clubs."

Malcolm Davies, product destination manager, Funway Holidays



**Alila Diwa, Goa:** Clients looking to go farther afield? Goa has highs of 33C in December and activities from camel riding to waterfall trekking, scuba diving to flea-market shopping. Cream of the all-inclusive crop has to be Alila Diwa, set in a secluded spot surrounded by coconut groves and rice paddies, and designed in Indonesian style with water features, open-air courtyards and high-beamed ceilings, in idyllic grounds. An infinity pool overlooks the paddy fields, and the food is outstanding, with authentic Goan cuisine and complimentary cooking classes. Yoga sessions, a spa and

mini theatre add extra welly. *Book it:* A week's all-inclusive in a Terrace Room costs from £1,443 per person with The Goa Experience, including flights and private airport transfers.

**Dreams Vista Cancun Resort & Spa, Cancun:** You're certainly not short on options in Mexico, but for clients wanting to try something new, suggest this soon-to-open family resort. Set in the rather exclusive gated community of Puerta del Mar, it promises to be at the forefront of contemporary style, with ultra-modern architecture and a plethora of selling points, from its

“For a luxury stay within budget, offer this beachfront retreat set in a private cove

rooftop pool to comprehensive spa, surf pools to Spanish lessons and beach parties to tequila tastings, much of which is included in the brand's Unlimited Luxury deal. *Book it:* Funway Holidays offers seven nights from £1,250, based on two flying from Heathrow on December 12.

**St James's Club Morgan Bay, Saint Lucia:** Beyond Mexico there's plenty of year-round sunshine and Caribbean vibes, not least in Saint Lucia. For a luxury stay within budget, offer this beachfront retreat in a private cove. The rooms' bright decor reflects the environs, and activities range from wakeboarding to water skiing, sailing to jewellery-making, and more. Castries market is nearby, while the soaring Pitons beckon wannabe climbers. *Book it:* Prices start at £229 per room per night based on two adults sharing a Garden View Room in November, when booked through JTA Travel.

**Faarufushi, Maldives:** Turquoise hues so vivid they look Photoshopped, sand so perfectly white you can't look directly at it, sky so blue you feel you could dive in...the Maldives is the stuff of dreams, and new resort Faarufushi is one of its finest, with an understated approach that says luxury without pretence. "There's a focus on simple indulgences," says Kuoni product and purchasing manager Linda Pedler. "The minimalist design is a delicate addition to the island's natural beauty, and the fantastic house reef is perfect for snorkelling." There are five restaurants and bars, plus complimentary yoga and meditation, and every guest gets one included excursion – from a sunset cruise to a local island visit. *Book it:* A week with Kuoni costs from £4,379 per person, flying from Heathrow in May 2020.

**Sandals Royal Barbados:** Back in the Caribbean there's plenty for clients wanting to up the game, not least Sandals, whose Royal Barbados resort excels for dining, with 17 restaurants (when coupled with Sandals Barbados next door), five bars and multiple pools, including one on the roof. Each of its 272 rooms

and suites comes with butler service and inclusions are impressive, from two scuba dives a day for the Padi-certified, to unlimited sports on land and water – Hobie Cat and glass-bottomed boat trips included. Guests even get picked up in a Rolls-Royce from the airport. *Book it:* A week's all-inclusive in a South Seas Crystal Lagoon Club Level Barbados Suite with Balcony Tranquillity Soaking Tub costs from £2,099 per person, including flights from Gatwick and transfers, for departures August 28 to September 24, 2020.

**Jumby Bay, Antigua:** If the prospect of staying on their own private island sways clients, direct them to Antigua's Jumby Bay. Set on its own 300-acre isle and comprising rooms, suites, villas and entire estates, it offers access to three white-sand beaches alongside butler service and gourmet cuisine – served at the Estate House restaurant, an 1830s plantation house – and excellent snorkelling, with the type of seclusion that warrants its price tag. *Book it:* Caribtours offers seven nights' all-inclusive from £6,359 per person based on two sharing a Rondavel Room, flying in November. **TW**



## BEST OF THE REST

**Hard Rock Tenerife**  
Clients after something a little different? Travel 2 recommends Hard Rock's new, sleek Tenerife outpost for a jam-packed, music-themed stay that has families at its heart.

**Ikos Andalusia, Spain**  
Elsewhere in Europe, the Ikos family's newest resort, opening next May, brings the brand's dine-around programme, free use of a Mini, complimentary green fees and more to the Andalusian coast, with 400 rooms plus menus curated by Michelin-starred chefs.

**Labranda Coral Beach Resort, The Gambia**  
For guaranteed winter sun suggest The Gambia, where this beachfront resort, set among towering baobabs and swaying palms, offers a good-value all-inclusive deal with idyllic ocean views.

**East Winds, Saint Lucia**  
Caribtours recommends this secluded spot for extras such as champagne and chocolates on arrival, daily-changing menus and a self-service swim-up pool bar, plus a cocktail recipe book to take home.

