

# Room at the inn

It's not too late to sell a winter-sun break, writes Laura French

@laurafrench121

**W**inter is officially upon us, and while there's a lot to love about the festive season – namely food, food and more food – there's something to be said for a cheeky getaway that doesn't involve donning the long-johns.

For that there's the winter-sun break, and it's not too late to get booking for December and January. Whether it's the Caribbean or the Canaries that tempts your clients, you'll find plenty of resorts that still have availability for the winter season – and some that offer late-booking deals as an extra sweetener.

We've spoken to the experts to find out where exactly to suggest for those who like to leave things a little last minute. Let the bookings commence.

## ► THE CARIBBEAN

For snow-white beaches, lush-green landscapes and guaranteed winter sun without excessive flight times, the Caribbean is a no-brainer, and you can find some pretty

impressive last-minute deals – even on the most popular islands – if you look around.

Boutique, wellness-centric resort Zoetry Montego Bay in Jamaica is offering late discounts of up to 50% for bookings until the end of April. Prices start at £2,129 per person for a week's all-inclusive with Funway Holidays, based on two sharing and departing Gatwick on November 27.

But for the best chance of finding availability this winter, Malcolm Davies, the operator's product destination manager, suggests Grenada, Nevis and Curacao. "All three offer a good last-minute alternative to the better-known and busier areas," he says.

Family-friendly three-star Oualie Beach Resort, Nevis, and five-star Suncscape Curacao Resort, Spa & Casino still have availability in



Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa, Maldives



**Sandals**  
the Luxury Included holiday

## TRAVEL AGENT BOOKING INCENTIVE



**WE'VE GOT SIX  
TO GIVEAWAY**

December, with prices from £1,320 per person for a week for the former and £1,495 for the latter. Both prices include flights from Heathrow on December 12 and are based on two sharing.

Elsewhere, the islands of St Vincent and the Grenadines tend to have rooms available even in high season, according to Jenny Peart, head of product at Caribtours. Recommend Petit St Vincent for an ultra-luxury boutique retreat on its own island, or The Liming, which will open on the island of Bequia next month boasting nine villas and suites, each with its own pool or hot tub, themed around 'the art of doing nothing'. Both properties have availability in December and January, with prices from £4,499 per person for a week at Petit St Vincent and £2,699 at The Liming with Caribtours, including flights and transfers, for stays between November 1 and December 14.

### INDIAN OCEAN

For those looking to properly push the boat out, look to the Indian Ocean. The all-suite, colonial-style St Regis Mauritius Resort – boasting butlers, water sports, five restaurants and a kids' club, all set on a white-sand beach by Le Morne mountain – has space for late 2018 and early 2019, according to Carrier. The operator is offering savings of up to 45% for departures in January, with seven nights' half-board from £2,720 per person, based



**You don't have to fly to the ends of the Earth to catch some rays – Europe has its own winter-sun spots**

on two sharing, with flights from Gatwick on January 11.

In the Seychelles, Maia Luxury Resort & Spa, which has 12 hectares of forested gardens and is set on its own private peninsula off Mahé, is taking bookings for early December.

Raffles Seychelles, on the northeast coast of Praslin, meanwhile, has availability for most of November, December and January, offering reduced rates and complimentary half-board for stays between January 10 and April 12, 2019 – expect beachfront villas, seven restaurants and the signature Raffles Spa.

### EUROPE

You don't have to fly to the ends of the Earth to catch some rays – Europe has its share of winter-sun spots and a string of resorts that aren't fully booked.

For guaranteed warmth (highs of 20C in December) look no further than the Canary Islands. Prestige Holidays is offering a discount of £50 per person on winter bookings in Lanzarote at La Casona de Yaiza, a rural,



**ABOVE:**  
Novasol villa  
in Argaka,  
Cyprus

**ABOVE  
LEFT:**  
Raffles  
Seychelles

10-room hotel built in traditional Canarian style and set at the foot of a cycling circuit, that's a winner for active types. Prices are from £699 per person for a week, including easyJet flights from Gatwick on December 10.

Jet2holidays, meanwhile, recommends Turkey for the best availability. Among those taking bookings is the five-star Barut Lara in Antalya, which boasts 11 restaurants, six bars, a spa and separate sections for adults and families. Prices start at £469 per person for a week's all-inclusive, based on two sharing, departing from Manchester on December 8.

Cyprus is a perennial winter-sun favourite – Olympic Holidays' bookings are up 23% year on year – but that doesn't mean it's too late to book. The five-star Columbia Beach Resort in Pissouri Bay still has availability for this year and offers plenty to keep guests busy, from biking with former Swiss cycling champion Thomas Wegmüller to cooking classes with the resort's Michelin-trained chef.

But if finding space at a hotel on the island is a struggle, suggest a villa holiday. Novasol is offering a week at a four-star, two-bedroom villa with its own pool in the peaceful village of Argaka – overlooking the Akamas Mountains – from £490 (for up to four people) for various dates in December and January. Now that's one way to beat the January blues – and without burning a hole in the post-Christmas wallet. **TW**

## BEST OF THE REST

### Egypt

Tui rates the Red Sea for excellent availability. Suggest the five-star Magic Life Kalawy in Hurghada for a luxury stay on a budget.

### Goa

Olympic Holidays suggests the Bloom Suites and Radisson Blu Resort, which has plenty of space for the winter season.

### Thailand

Amari Hua Hin, a beachside resort a few hours' drive from Bangkok, is still taking bookings for the Christmas period.

**Beaches**  
Resorts for Everyone by Sandals

Enjoy a luxury included Christmas, courtesy of Sandals & Beaches Resorts, with £150 to spend at John Lewis or Waitrose – perfect for those last minute gifts or your festive food shop.

Simply book your client's next holiday to a Sandals or Beaches resort of their choice during the month of November to be in with the chance of winning.

**Applicable resorts:** ALL

**Applicable room categories:** ALL

**Valid for bookings:** 01 - 30 Nov '18

Our six winners will be announced w/c: 03 Dec '18.



**TO BOOK THE WORLD'S LEADING  
ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS**

Call 0808 164 3459

Visit [sandals.co.uk/agents](http://sandals.co.uk/agents) or [beaches.co.uk/agents](http://beaches.co.uk/agents)

Terms and conditions apply. Visit [winningresorts.co.uk](http://winningresorts.co.uk) for full details.