



Clients missing out on a summer holiday? Switch-sell with a winter-sun break to the Caribbean, writes **Laura French**

Ongoing restrictions might be putting a question mark over travel this summer, but clients needn't give up on their holiday hopes just yet.

With low Covid rates across many Caribbean islands and several resorts already open and waiting, this diverse region might be just the ticket for a winter-sun break – and there's no time like the present to get selling its cerulean shores to those in need of some future respite.

Demand for the winter season is already strong, according to Paul Cleary, managing director for Caribtours. "Our forward business to the Caribbean for 2021-22 is up 97% on 2018-19," he says. "We're

seeing a great deal of compressed demand among those who haven't been able to travel in the past 15 months, and there's added interest as a result of many other important leisure destinations remaining off-sale. As a result, the Caribbean could see a once-in-a-lifetime year of unprecedented demand in 2022."

So how can you switch-sell to clients who haven't managed to book their usual summer escape and want to make up for it come winter? We've put together a guide to three of the best Caribbean alternatives to popular Europe trips, whether they're seeking a beach break, adventure trip or cultural getaway.



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## GREECE

For clients after a beach break, it's hard to beat Greece for choice. From the surf-friendly waves of Kos and the white sands of Crete to the red rocks of Santorini and the cerulean seas of Skiathos, there's plenty to please families and couples alike. A wealth of beachfront retreats ensures something for every budget, and itchy-feet types can opt for an island-hopping trip to mix things up.

## ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

The Caribbean has its fair share of beach-blessed islands, but for sheer variety, look to Antigua. Among its 365 beaches you'll find Dickenson Bay, a mile of talcum-white powder sloping into the blue; Galley Bay, where swaying palms frame swoon-worthy sunsets; and Half Moon Bay, known for its pink hues and windsurfing credentials. Those looking to island-hop can get a 90-minute ferry to Barbuda for more in the way of paradise-worthy shores, and check out the likes of Princess Diana Beach or 11 Mile Beach for a refuge away from the more-visited islands.

**STAY:** For an exclusive beachfront stay open to all the family, Elegant Resorts recommends Carlisle Bay, set on Antigua's south coast and offering six restaurants and bars, a spa, yoga pavilion, kids' club, watersports and more, all set around a calm, white-sand crescent.

**BOOK IT:** Seven nights' B&B in a One Bedroom Garden Suite at Carlisle Bay costs from £2,255 per person, including flights, private transfers and UK lounge passes, based on two adults flying on November 7. [elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)

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## ITALY

From the hills of Tuscany to the trails of Sicily via the splendours of the Amalfi coast, Italy isn't only about the food – it's an adventure lover's paradise, with Lake Garda offering the likes of windsurfing and canyoning, and the Dolomites (pictured) throwing hiking, biking and rock climbing into the mix. Add in cycling through the Italian Alps or walking up the side of an active volcano, and it's not hard to see what draws so many visitors each year.

## SAINT LUCIA

For an adventure holiday of a different kind, suggest Saint Lucia. Diving, hiking, ziplining and birdwatching all come together on this lush island, with the renowned Gros Piton greeting hikers up for a challenge, and neighbouring Petit Piton offering a strenuous climb for the yet-more-daring. Those after a calmer walk can head for the Tet Paul Nature Trail, a half-mile loop in the Soufrière region offering scenic lookouts, or the Enbas Saut Trail, which meanders through the rainforest to a tumbling waterfall.

**STAY:** BodyHoliday is an obvious choice for clients in search of sports and activities, but for those looking to combine adventure with eco-credentials and more laid-back pursuits, Caribtours suggests Anse Chastanet. "It's an environmentally sensitive resort and guests can book open-walled rooms to fully enjoy the island's beauty," says managing director Paul Cleary. "For snorkelling or diving there's a pristine reef just offshore, and it's also a good base for birdwatchers."

**BOOK IT:** A week in a Standard Garden View Room costs from £1,735 per person, including breakfast, flights and private transfers, for stays until October 31.

[caribtours.co.uk](http://caribtours.co.uk)

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## SPAIN

Brits might associate Spain with the beach above all else, but this diverse country is a hotspot for those curious about culture, with the likes of Valencia, Andalusia, Catalonia and Galicia all offering their own distinct traditions. Then there's the flamenco, the food and the fiestas, with tour operators offering trips to explore everything from vibrant festivals to family-run vineyards.

## CUBA

Suggest clients trade in flamenco for salsa and head to Cuba for a cultural break like no other. It might not have quite the infrastructure of Spain, but that's all part of its appeal, with horse-drawn carts still the main method of transport in rural areas, internet hard to come by even in the capital and communist rule providing a fascinating backdrop for cultural exploration. A good option for first-timers is the classic 'triangle', combining the colourful, crumbling buildings of Havana with the salsa-steeped streets of Trinidad and the copper-hued farms of Viñales. For those with more time, suggest adding Baracoa, located on the west coast and known for its quirky vibes and long-held legends; and Santiago de Cuba, a frenetic, Afro-Caribbean city from which Castro launched his revolution.

**STAY:** Intrepid Travel combines all of these with Camaguey and Cienfuegos on a Best of Cuba trip from Havana, with cycling tours, rum tasting, salsa dancing and more along the way.

**BOOK IT:** The 15-day tour starts at £1,575 per person including all breakfasts, transport, accommodation and guide. Flights not included.

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