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magazine

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HOLIDAY HOTLIST

2 different ideas for 2011

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Where shall we go?

Who says holidays are just for summer? From Norway husky safaris to shopping in Marrakech, **Francesca Syz** chooses a fantastic trip for every month of the year ahead

Crystal clear:
the beautiful
Southern Alps
of New Zealand

January

Camper van across New Zealand
Chronicles of Narnia fans can celebrate the cinema release of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by exploring some of the film series' most beautiful locations in true pioneering Kiwi style – by luxury camper van. Just an hour north west of Auckland, for example, is beautiful Woodhill Forest, which was transformed into the White Witch's camp, while 90 minutes from Christchurch, in the extraordinary Southern Alps of South Island, the Great Battle took place in the dramatic valleys known as Flock Hill. And don't miss the ancient Elephant Rocks near Dunroon, also on South Island, which was once home to Aslan's Camp. **Bridge & Wickers** (bridgeandwickers.co.uk) offers a 10-day package trip to New Zealand, including flights and accommodation in a two-berth camper van with shower and toilet, from £1,499 per person. You can upgrade to a more spacious four-berth camper van for an extra £45 per person.



February

Polarjazz Festival and Husky Safari with Basecamp Explorer, Svalbard archipelago, Norway
For an Arctic experience like no other, lovers of jazz and polar exploration should head to Longyearbyen this month, Svalbard's capital in the heart of the Arctic Circle. Spend two nights at the Trappers Lodge enjoying music from Norway's best jazz musicians, before heading into the wilderness on husky-pulled sleighs for a two-night stay on a ship frozen into the icy fjord. Look out for the Northern Lights, too – this is the month when they're at their best. **The Polarjazz Festival** is from 2-6 February. **Activities Abroad** (activitiesabroad.com) offers five days from £1,845 per person. Return flights from London Heathrow to Longyearbyen (via Oslo) cost from £387.40 per person with SAS (flights.sas.com). ▶

March

Skiing and surfing holiday in Whistler and Hawaii

Combine the ultimate in snow and seascapes with a Whistler/Hawaii two-centre holiday. Spend a week in a log cabin in the Canadian Rockies, skiing and snowshoeing, right, then transfer to Hawaii, far right, for a further week, where you can lounge on gorgeous beaches and hit the waves in the world's surfing capital.

■ **Ski Safari** (skisafari.com) offers 14 nights from £1,750 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, transfers and accommodation.



April

Walk Peru's Inca Trail

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Machu Picchu, left, by embarking on an Inca Trail Hike with Explore. The trip takes in Cusco, the Sacred Valley and the full four-day Inca Trail Trek - all in just a week.

■ **Explore** (explore.co.uk) offers seven nights from £1,898 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, transfers, B&B and the services of an Explore guide.

May

Life-changing wellbeing break on Turkey's Lycian coast

Learn to manage stress and genuinely unwind on a Method Putikisto Break in the glorious canyon-top setting of the super-stylish Dionysos Estate on Turkey's Lycian Coast. A legendary, life-changing technique developed by Finnish-born dance and movement specialist Marja Putikisto, Method Putikisto is a revolutionary take on Pilates, and now has a re-education programme of stretching and breathing to rebalance muscles, detoxify, energise, and tone and strengthen your body, leading to overall wellbeing. Classes are held each morning and early evening with additional private tuition also available.

■ **Exclusive Escapes** (exclusivescapes.co.uk) offers seven-night half-board breaks from £1,300 per person, including flights and transfers. No single supplement applies.



hotel to the more affordable Chalet Gerard), join a series of guided hikes to eight different mountain huts, each showcasing a chef and local culinary speciality - from cured ham and cheese to milk and honey - and enjoy fantastic food in gorgeous mountain settings. For more information on accommodation and events, visit altabadia.org or suedinol.info.

■ **British Airways** (ba.com) flies return to Verona from £97; three-course meals as part of the Peaks of Gastronomy event cost from £20-£100 per person.

June

Gastronomic adventure in the Italian Dolomites

Foodies will be flocking to the Alta Badia valley in Italy's South Tyrol this summer, home to three Michelin-starred restaurants, to tick in to Peaks of Gastronomy - a three-month epicurean programme of pop-up fine dining events held between mid-June and mid-September.

From a base to suit your budget (there's everything from the spectacular Rosa Alpina

July

Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, Kent

Go on safari - in Kent. Port Lympne Wild Animal and Safari Park has a 100-acre recreation of the African bush, replete with lions, antelopes and more. Spend a night in a luxury safari tent, then go on a game drive the next day. ■ **One-night experiences** cost from £115 per adult and £110 per child (aspinalfoundation.org/portlympne).



August

Family adventure in Nicaragua

Explore has just launched a new family adventure programme with a range of trips geared towards everyone from toddlers to teenagers. The 16-day family trip to Nicaragua, Central America's most exciting new destination and thankfully now one of its most peaceful, is geared towards families with teenagers and includes surfing lessons, kayaking on Lake Nicaragua, right, horse riding around volcanoes, visits to chocolate factories and much more.

■ **Explore** (explore.co.uk) offers the 16-day Active Nicaragua trip from £1,839 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, accommodation, most meals and the services of an Explore tour guide.



September

Snorkel, dive and whale watch on São Tomé & Príncipe

This tiny Portuguese-speaking island nation in the Gulf of Guinea off the northwest coast of Gabon, is the new must-visit beach destination for intrepid travellers. A true tropical paradise, these tiny islands are home to spectacular white and black sand beaches, stunning coastal roads, above, some of the world's best reefs and primary tropical rainforests that spill over with tropical plants and flowers. São Tomé is also a nature lover's paradise and new species of orchid are regularly discovered here. There is also some fantastic food to enjoy, from gourmet chocolate and delicious coffee to an abundance of fresh seafood and fruit. What's more, it's right on the humpback whale migration route and September is the best month for both whale sightings and weather. ■ **Original Travel** (originaltravel.co.uk) offers seven nights from £2,400 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, transfers and accommodation.

October

Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF), in India (13-16 October)

Music fans looking for something different should check out RIFF, a hip Indian event held in Jodhpur's amazing 15th-century Mehrangarh Fort, below. The festival attracts musicians from all over the world and this year's guests include classical singer Sonu Mohapatra (David Bowie's favourite).

■ **Greaves Travel** (greavesindia.com) offers a seven-night trip from £1,999 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, festival and accommodation.



November

Kite surfing on Isla Sal, Cape Verde archipelago

Cape Verde's Isla Sal, 500 kilometres off the coast of Senegal, has no less than five excellent places to kite surf, above, plus volcanoes, lush forests and fantastic food. ■ **Waveriders** (waveriders.co.uk) offers seven nights from £1,000 per person, based on two sharing, including flights, B&B, kite-surfing tuition and equipment.



December

Shopping in Marrakech

Why battle on the high street for your Christmas shopping, when you can pick it up at a fraction of the price in Marrakech - and enjoy an exotic break at the same time? Stay at the romantic Dar Les Cigognes hotel and let the concierge create your very own luxe-for-less shopping itinerary.

■ **Audley** (audleytravel.com) offers five nights at the Dar Les Cigognes from £950 per person, based on two sharing, including flights and guided tour. ♦

