



# 15 Warm Places to Visit in January

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By LINDSAY COHN | DEC. 19, 2019

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January 1 may usher in a new year full of excitement and possibilities, but a few weeks in that positive attitude quickly fades as the snow piles up. If you can't stand the cold for another moment, join the club. We've been staring out the window and fantasizing about going somewhere warm since the thermometer dropped below 40°F. At this point, we're ready to ditch heavy-duty winter jackets and bust out floaty caftans. Who's with us?

The good news? January is a great month to travel. With the holiday rush in the rearview mirror, rates begin to drop, ushering in the perfect time to jet off to greener (and sunnier) pastures. Whether you're ready to take the plunge and actually book your ticket to paradise or just need some inspo to get you through the frosty foreseeable future, here are 15 warm places to travel in January.

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## 1. CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Average daily temperature in January: 87°F

Cartagena is the epitome of a steamy escape. January delivers tropical temperatures, minimal humidity and the lowest chance of precipitation. You'll certainly appreciate the gentle breeze while walking around this picturesque port. Its UNESCO-listed old town is an Insta-worthy maze of cobblestone lanes, Spanish colonial buildings with balconies covered in bougainvillea and glorious churches that dominate the tree-lined plazas. When it comes to tasty eats, find your way to a *palettas*, a fruity and refreshing mid-afternoon snack. You gotta try *pescado frito* (fried fish) with green plantains and coconut rice. For the best beaches in the area, book a day trip the magical Islas del Rosario, where you'll feel like the only person on the island (don't worry, you won't be). If you're in Cartagena toward the tail end of the month, check out Hay Festival.

## Where to Stay

\$\$\$ Casa San Agustin

\$\$: Sofitel Legend Santa Clara

\$: Casa Allegra Airbnb



LUIS ROSSI/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

## 2. ARUBA

**Average daily temperature in January: 86°F**

Aruba, the happy island 48 miles west of Curaçao, welcomes hordes of repeat travelers—especially in the winter when consistently warm weather, endless sunshine and cooling trade winds sure beat the forecast in most of the U.S. Sandy beaches, friendly locals and copious amounts of rum punch add to the carefree vacation vibe. Of course, all this amazingness comes at a cost. Room rates tend to be higher during peak season. However, in exchange for shelling out a little more in January, you'll enjoy Carnival Season—weeks of events, parades and festivities. Bonus: Unlike many Caribbean destinations, Aruba is located outside the hurricane belt, so you can plan a trip a few months in advance without fear that something catastrophic might happen. Or, leave it to the last minute. Just don't be shocked if you have to pay a premium.

## Where to Stay

\$\$\$ Ritz-Carlton Aruba

**\$\$\$:** Palm Beach Villa Airbnb

**\$:** Aruba Tropic Apartments



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### 3. PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

**Average daily temperature in January:** 71°F

Sunshine. Highs in the low 70s. Yeah, January in Palm Springs is total perfection. The hip Sonoran Desert oasis is known for its mid-century design cred, iconic architecture and salacious tales from Tinseltown's golden age. That raises the question of where you're going to stay. Whether you're a fan of retro glamor or contemporary aesthetics, stylish hotels abound. We also love the idea of renting a fabulous house erected by a famous architect. Of course, a pool and Jacuzzi are nonnegotiables regardless of where you shack up. Round out your itinerary by doing a historical walking tour to see where the Rat Pack used to party, snapping pics in front of #thatpinkdoor, indulging in spa treatments, shopping for vintage treasures and communing with nature on a day trip to Joshua Tree National Park.

#### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Mid-century Airbnb

**\$\$:** Palm Springs Rendezvous

**\$:** Colorful Oasis Airbnb



THEPALMER/GETTY IMAGES

#### 4. CANCUN, MEXICO

**Average daily temperature in January: 82°F**

It's all about sun and fun in Cancun. This south-of-the-border hot spot truly has something for everyone—from hard-partying college students and bachelorette parties to honeymooners and families. You'll undoubtedly spend the bulk of your trip on the beach (hello, Playa Delfines). For a dose of culture, venture to the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza or El Rey Archaeological Zone. Have a hankering for authentic Mexican food? In addition to scarfing down tacos al pastor and tamales, sink your teeth into *sopes* at La Destileria. TripAdvisor reviewers rave about El Rinconcito de Puebla and Los Caporales. To beat the spring breakers and save mucho dinero, jet off to Cancun in January, when the average price of a round-trip flight is just \$363. Deals extend to accommodations too.

##### Where to Stay

\$\$\$: Le Blanc Spa Resort

\$\$: Omni Cancun Hotel and Villas

\$: Casa Turquesa



KORAWEE RATCHAPAKDEE/GETTY IMAGES

## 5. CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

**Average daily temperature in January: 85°F**

Dubbed the “Rose of the North,” Chiang Mai is a continual reminder that there’s more to Thailand than the islands of Phuket (though we’ll get to that later) and Koh Samui. The capital of the ancient Lanna Kingdom charms tourists with its relaxed pace, rich culture, vibrant markets and scrumptious street food. What else could you possibly ask for in a Thai city? How about hundreds of opulent Buddhist temples, including the gilded Wat Phra Singh? You’ll also discover lush rainforests, majestic mountains and elephant sanctuaries within driving distance. Since Chiang Mai has a slightly cooler climate than Bangkok, you can clock more sightseeing hours without sweating through your gauzy printed pants. Let’s be honest, it’ll still feel quite balmy. That’s why we suggest filtering your search by hotels with a pool and air conditioning.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Raya Heritage

**\$\$:** Le Meridien Chiang Mai

**\$:** Airbnb Apartment in Chiang Mai



KORAWEE RATCHAPAKDEE/GETTY IMAGES

## 6. BORA BORA, FRENCH POLYNESIA

**Average daily temperature in January: 82°F**

What makes this South Pacific island one of the most sought-after travel destinations? Sandy beaches, translucent lagoons, glorious sunsets and world-class scuba diving. We'll admit the weather in January tends to be a tad unpredictable (it rains approximately half the month). If you're a betting woman or a bargain hunter, you might be keen to take those odds. Of course, with temperatures hovering in the low 80s and a solid probability of experiencing clear skies, it's not that big of a gamble. The chance of showers keeps the throngs of tourists to a minimum. Plus, we can think of a billion worse places to wait out a few passing showers than some swanky overwater bungalow. It should also be noted that Bora Bora's most unique and celebrated cultural ceremony, the Taurua Varua, happens in January.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Conrad Bora Bora Nui

**\$\$:** Airbnb Bungalow

**\$:** Maitai Polynesia Bora Bora



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## 7. GRENADA

**Average daily temperature in January: 86°F**

Part of the Lesser Antilles, Grenada is a leading producer of nutmeg, cloves and cinnamon, and it's easy to sniff out how the "Spice Isle" got its moniker. Of course, its aromatic exports aren't the only selling point. Grenada also boasts flawless weather and wild beauty in spades. Think forested hillsides, 300-year-old plantations, pink blooms, hot springs and cascading waterfalls. This striking two-mile stretch dazzles with its perfectly golden sands, crystal-clear water and colorful fishing boats, while almond trees and coconut palms create natural shady spots for travelers endeavoring to avoid UV rays. Laid-back bars and resorts occupy prime oceanfront real estate. St. George's features pastel houses and a picturesque harbor. A 20-minute drive from the capital sits Grand Etang National Park, a phenomenal spot for hiking. Besides all that, January has temps in the high 80s and Grenada Sailing Week.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Silversands Grenada

**\$\$:** Mount Cinnamon Resort & Beach Club

**\$:** Ocean Front Villa Airbnb



JESSE KRAFT / EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

## 8. CAMPECHE, MEXICO

**Average daily temperature in January: 82°F**

The Yucatan Peninsula shines as a hotbed of tourism thanks to Cancún, Playa del Carmen and Tulum. But you likely haven't heard of Campeche. (That's OK, we didn't know much about it either until recently.) We have it on good authority that this under-the-radar locale on the Gulf of Mexico is about to blow up—Campeche surfaced on Expedia's 2020 travel trends report as one of the fastest-growing destinations, with demand up 95 percent last year. This less-frequented port city oozes charm and heritage. Mild weather makes January the perfect month to visit since you'll want to spend time exploring the cobblestone streets, sherbet-hued colonial buildings, UNESCO-listed walled historic center and hilltop fortresses. The waterfront promenade is a lovely spot for a morning jog or a sunset stroll. History buffs can admire ancient artifacts at Fort de San Miguel and nearby archaeological sites such as Edzna.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Casa Limón Airbnb

**\$\$:** Mikita Airbnb

**\$:** Home & Garden Airbnb



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## 9. FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

**Average daily temperature in January: 76°F**

Snowbirds searching for blue skies and warmer weather in January will find excellent bargains on airfare to Florida. A round-trip ticket to Fort Lauderdale is only \$209 (at the time of publishing)! With its golden shores, moderately priced hotels and scenic waterways, it's one of the best—and most budget-friendly—seaside destinations in the country. Fun fact: 165 miles of canals run through Fort Lauderdale, hence its nickname, the “Venice of America.” A sightseeing cruise is a great way to glimpse all the key attractions, from Millionaires Row to Bahia Mar Marina. Get your daily dose of vitamin D on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Afterward, swing by The Strip for some post-holiday shopping deals. With the money you saved, treat yourself to a decadent seafood dinner at 3711 Beach Side or Wild Sea Oyster Bar & Grille (both are highly rated on TripAdvisor). While Fort Lauderdale is more mellow than Miami, if you're looking to let loose, there's no shortage of bars and clubs along Las Olas Boulevard.

**Where to Stay:**

**\$\$\$:** Las Olas Home Airbnb

**\$\$:** Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort

**\$:** Tropical Oasis Pool Cottage Airbnb



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## 10. PHUKET, THAILAND

**Average daily temperature in January: 88°F**

From backpackers and spring breakers to honeymooners and celebs, everyone loves Phuket. It'll downright blow you away with its white sands, swaying palm trees and turquoise tides, but the stunning scenery is hardly the only draw. Thailand's biggest island also has legendary nightlife, delicious local eats, Buddhist temples, fabled diving sites and hundreds of hotels. Despite its status as a full-fledged tourism darling and January being the preeminent time to visit, you can still score legit deals. For instance, a deluxe room at the Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa—an attractive oceanfront property with swish decor and stellar service—will run you less than \$250 per night. Couples in the mood for romance will fall hard for Trisara, which woos with its Michelin-starred restaurant, plush spa and private beach. It's on the pricier side, but definitely worth it for an unforgettable anniversary trip or your first getaway as husband and wife. On the opposite end of the spectrum, hostels in the lively town of Patong start at \$8.

**Where to Stay**

**\$\$\$: Trisara**

**\$\$: Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa**

**\$: The Yama Hotel Phuket**



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## 11. ORLANDO, FLORIDA

**Average daily temperature in January: 72°F**

Did you know that the busiest week at Walt Disney World is between Christmas and New Year's? But if you push back your trip just a few days, it's a totally different story. With \$165 round-trip flights (thanks for the scoop, Hopper), affordable room rates and fewer crowds, January is the time to pop down to Orlando—especially if you plan on visiting the dozens of theme parks. Bank on shorter lines and tons of hassle-free amusement. We're guessing Walt Disney World is your first stop? (Insert images of you captaining the Millennium Falcon at the brand-new Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, posing for selfies next to the Insta-famous purple wall and cooling off in Typhoon Lagoon.) Next up? Universal Studios to meet superheroes, embark on *Jurassic* expeditions and throw back a pint of butterbeer at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Of course, Orlando has stuff beyond thrilling rides and beloved fictional characters. You can play 18 holes at one of the championship golf courses or peep exotic animals at the Central Florida Zoo just 20 minutes from downtown. Hotel spas provide a serene sanctuary to escape the kid-fueled chaos for a few hours.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando

**\$\$:** Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate

**\$:** Orlando Condo Airbnb



DAVID SHVARTSMAN/GETTY IMAGES

## 12. BIG ISLAND, HAWAII

**Average daily temperature in January: 81°F**

The Big Island earns our vote as the picture-perfect place to kick off your adventures in the Aloha State. Blessed with an unimaginably diverse landscape, this tropical paradise is teeming with hiking trails, waterfalls, giant lava rocks and jaw-dropping shores in colors you've never imagined. On the southernmost tip, Papakolea Beach displays dazzling green sand as a result of a mineral called olivine. Basalt gives Punalu'u Beach its black hue. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is truly unlike anywhere else on the planet. You can also swim alongside gentle manta rays with massive 16-foot wingspans. If you're into java, be sure to book a Kona coffee tour! January falls within the rainy season for Hawaii, but the upside is that everything looks so green and the flowers are blooming. Plus, it's not too humid. Rates tend to be on the higher side at the beginning of January, but by the middle of the month prices drop back down to average.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Mauna Kea Beach Hotel

**\$\$:** Fairmont Orchid

**\$:** Bali Cottage Airbnb



OMAR DAKHANE/GETTY IMAGES

### 13. RAS AL KHAIMAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**Average daily temperature in January: 77°F**

Seeking somewhere incredible and outside the purview of most U.S. travelers? Ras Al Khaimah is one of the unexpected beach destinations that appeared on Expedia's 2020 travel trends report, after posting a 255 percent increase in 2019. And during January, five-star hotels like the Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa ring in under \$115 a night. Seriously! To experience that level of luxury on a budget makes the long-haul flight totally worth it, don't you think? When you're not lounging by the pool, frolicking in the glistening waters of the Arabian Gulf, steaming in hammams, sipping tea and puffing shisha, hit the National Museum of Ras Al Khaimah or the 19th-century Dhayah Fort.

#### **Where to Stay**

**\$\$\$:** Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah

**\$\$:** The Cove Rotana Resort Ras Al Khaimah

**\$:** Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa



RICHARD HONAMI / EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

## 14. MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

**Average daily temperature in January: 78°F**

Sydney is Australia's capital and has tons of famous attractions, so it's no wonder it habitually dominates basically every list of must-see places in Oz. That said, there are plenty of other awesome city-breaks in the land down under. A mix of street art, contemporary galleries, trendy boutiques and waterfront entertainment, Melbourne is quickly emerging as the epicenter of cool. It also offers oodles of Insta-worthy eateries such as Pinchy's, a new Champagne and lobster bar that serves sustainably sourced seafood in a chic space that proves thinking pink majorly pays off in the aesthetics department. Don't forget dreamy hotels like Zagame's House on Lygon Street and Coppersmith a short drive from the central business district. Ample opportunities for people watching, windsurfing and sipping specialty coffee await in the palm-fringed seaside suburb St. Kilda. By now we're guessing you're sold on Melbourne. Your only lingering question might be what makes January such a terrific month to visit? Our answer is this: pleasant weather and airfare deals galore.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Treasury on Collins

**\$\$:** Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne

**\$:** Forest-Themed Airbnb



LISA CHAVIS/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

## 15. GRAND CAYMAN

**Average daily temperature in January: 84°F**

Known for calm waters, coral reefs teeming with marine life and most famously the spectacular beauty of Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman is the quintessential Caribbean getaway. Catching rays, snorkeling, stand-up paddleboarding in a bioluminescent bay and fishing are among the most popular pastimes. Need a break from the sun? Head over to George Town to watch the massive cruise ships dock in the port. The capital is also home to the ruins of a colonial-era fort and the Cayman Islands National Museum. Foodies won't want to pass up the chance to attend the 12th annual Cayman Cookout (January 16 to 19). Held at The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman, the mouthwatering event brings together leading chefs, sommeliers and spirit aficionados from all over the world. The lineup of activities includes lionfish culling, cooking demos and rum cake workshops. "For gourmands, this is the place to be in January," confirms Olivia Link, an adviser at Lake Shore Travel, a Virtuoso Agency.

### Where to Stay

**\$\$\$:** Kimpton Seafire Resort + Spa

**\$\$:** Palm Heights

**\$:** Sea Palm Villas

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