



Taking off

ynyshirhall.co.uk

Snow scene

Trade the dullness of the day job for the sparkling slopes of Morzine, France. Highlife Ski & Snowboard has packages from €529 per person for a three-night break, and from €689 per person for four nights. The price includes minibus transfers to and from your chalet – a cosy bolthole with a sauna, hot tub, host and chalet chef who will cook breakfast, bake post-piste snacks and prepare a three-course evening meal. Three-day ski packs including a lift pass, skis and boots cost €161, while an all-inclusive package starts at €690 per person for three days. Call 01 677 1100. highlife.ie.

No guilt trip

Take a luxury winter break – and assuage any associated first-world guilt – by volunteering as part of your holiday. Hands Up Holidays organises experiences that blend top-notch sightseeing and posh digs with hands-on volunteering in needy communities. It still has limited availability for trips to South Africa, Morocco, Kenya, Zambia, Italy, New Zealand and Cambodia. On the South Africa trip you can care for orphaned babies or renovate a day centre. For the rest of the time go sightseeing around Cape Town and Table Mountain and enjoy the Big 5 safari. The nine-day trip costs €10,000 per person (€6,350 for children under 12) including economy flights from Dublin. handsupholidays.com

A merry Michelin Christmas

If Christmas in Wales sounds poetic, Ynyshir Hall in the Cambrian mountains is a Michelin-starred option. Arrive on Christmas Eve to mulled wine and mince pies, pre-dinner drinks and a gourmet dinner; rise on Christmas morning to a full Welsh breakfast and have champagne before your gourmet lunch; and enjoy Christmas cake with afternoon tea before a light dinner buffet. On St Stephen's Day you'll have the full Welsh, afternoon tea, pre-dinner drinks and a lighter dinner, while on the 27th there's a buck's fizz brekkie. It costs €1,490 per person based on two people sharing a double room.

Pilots of the Caribbean

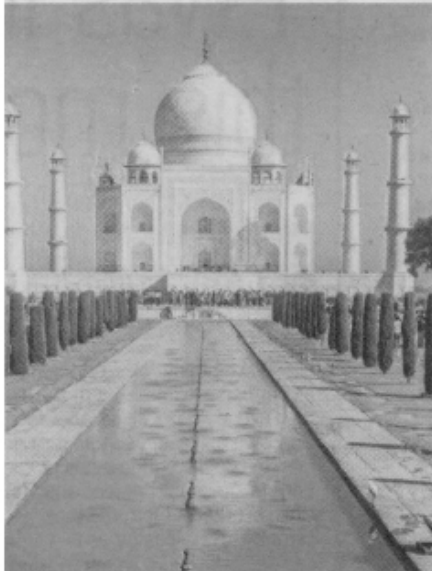
The new Boeing 787 Dreamliner now flies from Dublin to Jamaica – an experience in its own right – and when you get there stay at the island's child-friendly, all-inclusive Hilton Rose Hall. The hotel, once home to Johnny Cash, has a new private beach lined with cabanas. It's on the grounds of an 18th-century sugar plantation with Sugar Mill Falls, the largest water park in Jamaica. The price for 14 nights starts at €1,727 per person, all inclusive, based on two adults and two children sharing a room, including flights and transfers. You'll be flying out on July 10 next year. falconholidays.ie

Hardy "bah humbug" types seeking an alternative Christmas might fancy glamping at the East Coast Adventure Centre in Rostrevor, Co Down. The pods are waterproof, warm and cosy, and four people can sleep in them. The three-night stay costs a total of £180 (about €250, or roughly €20 per night if there are four of you). pitchup.com

Camino Ways has the Lighthouse Way, a new trail in Galicia passing fishing villages, sandy white beaches and megalithic sites. It costs from €741 per person half-board, with luggage transfers but not flights. Aer Lingus flies to Santiago three times a week from April. caminoways.com

Spend seven days taking in India's famed Golden Triangle on Insight Vacations' Luxury Gold tour. Depart on February 7 (although other dates are available) and start in Delhi, where a cycle rickshaw will take you through the bustling lanes of Chandni Chowk market; visit the Mahatma Gandhi memorial at Raj Ghat and explore India's largest mosque, the Jama Masjid. Next, it's off to Agra and the Taj Mahal, then to Agra Fort, a fortress of red sandstone. A jeep takes you up to the Amber Fort, then on to the famous Palace of Winds and finally, to the sleepy village of Samode where you'll enjoy the folk dances of Rajasthan. Dining experiences on this trip include a welcome drinks and meal, six buffet breakfasts, four three-course dinners and one celebration

dinner. Prices start at €1,525 per person sharing, not including flights but including guides, a concierge, baggage handling in hotels, tips and some airport transfers. insightvacations.com



The latest Spanish restaurant to win a Michelin star is Kabuki Raw, at Finca Cortesin resort in Andalusia, mixing traditional Japanese dishes with Mediterranean influences. Rates at Finca Cortesin cost from €464 per night, B&B, in a junior suite. The chef special at Kabuki Raw is the Barbate tuna (€55 for two people). fincacortesin.com



I think my hotel room may be haunted. What should I do?

If you've spent the evening bingeing on the Omen box set, then that ghoulish "presence" you felt is unlikely to hold much credibility. That said, if you're sufficiently terrified still to be gnawing the bedhead when the chambermaid arrives the next morning, you may want to have a chat about switching rooms. You'll likely be treated with sympathy – even if it is feigned. Screaming guests aren't great for business. But don't blame us if you catch the bellboy or bar staff furtively sniggering at you. Note to all would-be Mick Jagers: blaming the resident poltergeist for the defenestrated flatscreen and whisky-miniature-shaped dents in the wall is unlikely to gain much traction.





HAPPILY STRANDED

Picture it: endless white sandy beaches, burger and fries delivered to your deckchair and free golf, if you fancy a game. All are part of a seven-night stay at the five-star Constance Belle Mare Plage in Mauritius, where you can save up to €1,190 per person. The resort is set on an Indian Ocean beach with two championship golf courses (no green fees), a spa and a choice of restaurants, from fine dining to beach-side snacks. The offer means the holiday now starts at €1,659 per person, depending on your travel dates, and is based on two sharing on a half-board basis. It includes flights with Emirates, departing from Dublin between March 1 and 31, and private transfers. Book before December 18. tropicalsky.ie

BROOME AND BOARD

▲ The 14-day Perth to Broome adventure by Irish operator GoHop takes in Kalbarri National Park, Shark Bay, Monkey Mia, Coral Bay, Exmouth and Pardoo Station. Prices start at €1,375, including 13 nights' accommodation, 10 breakfasts, 13 lunches, 11 dinners, transport and activities. Flights are priced when you book to ensure the best airfares. Call 01 241 2389. gohop.ie

DO THE MATHS: STARSTRUCK TRAVELLERS

35% of people admit to having their choice of holiday destination influenced by whether celebrities have been spotted there

But of the 15% who have actually encountered a celeb on holidays,

46% were too shy to approach

Source: jetcast.co.uk