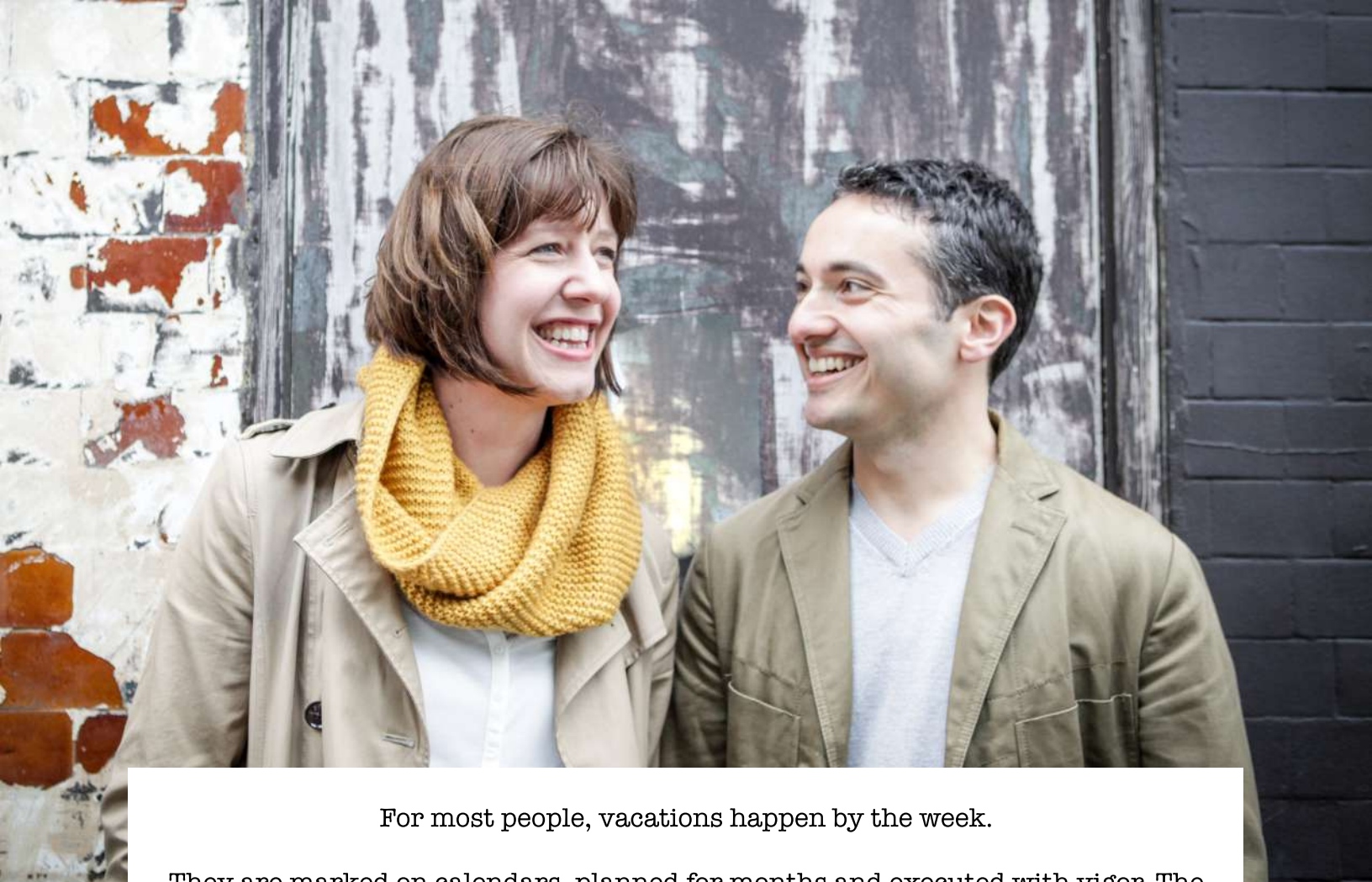




52 Week long Vacations

Julie Smith and Drew Seaman

Drive  ON THE LEFT



For most people, vacations happen by the week.

They are marked on calendars, planned for months and executed with vigor. The hallmarks of every week-long holiday I've ever taken are: meticulous plans, long days, and coming back home feeling tired, and probably like another vacation is needed.

But you know what? We love traveling by the week. Thanks to busy work lives and a home in one of our favorite cities in the world, we get out of town on weekends and one week at a time. We enjoy those spurts of travel planning, outlining our days, booking restaurant reservations, scouring hotel reviews online.

It's no surprise that over the years, we have become a go-to resource for many, MANY friends and family members as they plan their precious weeks of holiday. We get desperate emails about how best to cover corners of Europe while battling jet lag and having no language skills. We have been asked about how to dive deep in a place, what to skip and what to savour, given limited time. We have planned honeymoons, and family reunions and trips a state away and a continent away.

To save you an email to us asking about your next vacation, we thought we'd do some of the work for you. Here are 52 completely achievable week-long holidays around the world. What is feasible for you will depend on your location, your willingness to spend time in a plane, and of course, your budget. Our week-long holidays usually include two weekends, so these itineraries are based off of roughly 8 days 'on the ground.'

It's probably worth disclosing that we tend to travel fast and furious - it's not uncommon for us to see several states or small countries over the course of a week. Therefore, if you travel like us, these itineraries will be completely your speed. If it seems like too much, feel free to simplify.

52 Week Long Vacations

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North America







Pacific Coast Highway, USA

The Pacific Coast Highway, also known as Route 1, stretches for almost 125 miles along California's Central Coast. The road hugs the coastline for almost the entire distance, starting outside of San Luis Obispo and ending near Monterey, just south of San Francisco. The journey may only take 5 hours, but it is far more enjoyable to go at it leisurely, and spend a week seeing the sites. This road trip is all about the coastline, nature, and taking it slow.

Beginning in the scenic and rocky Morro Bay, head north along the coast, passing fun and funky towns like Cambria and Harmony. Don't miss San Simeon, the jumping off point to head up to the magnificent Hearst Castle, with its sprawling grounds and 125 rooms. San Simeon is also the beginning of Big Sur, the famous park that runs for almost 90 miles along the coast. This provides many great opportunities for hiking, bird watching and beautiful vistas along the journey. The road trip wraps up in two of the prettiest towns in California: Caramel-by-Sea and Monterey. Don't forget to visit Cannery Row, home of the fabulous Monterey Bay Aquarium, one of the finest in the country.

Seattle, Washington & Portland, Oregon, USA

If you have a week, why not take in two of the most fun cities in all of the US? Starting in Seattle, head down to the water and explore Pike Place Market, known for a fish stall where fish are literally thrown between staff members, or head to Chihuly Garden and Glass for a dose of spectacular glass sculpture from the world renowned artist. Seattle is perfect for outdoor lovers, so take time to go for a hike in the forests around the city or hop on one of the Washington State Ferries to explore the islands around Seattle.

A quick 3 hour drive south brings you to Portland, Oregon, the epicenter for hipsters! The food scene here is amazing, so from food trucks to fine dining. With a few online searches, you are almost guaranteed to eat well. Like Seattle, Portland is surrounded by plenty of places to spend time outdoors, with Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge just outside the city. Alternatively, head west to the Willamette Valley, home to our favorite Pinot Noir wineries in the States.

US National Parks: Arches, Canyonlands, Grand Canyon

If you love to drive and pack your days to the fullest, you can squeeze in three amazing US National Parks in one week, with plenty of time for hiking, climbing, or rafting. Begin in the fun town of Moab, Utah, with its quaint downtown, full of shops and cafes. Just outside of the town is the entrance to Arches National Park, one of the smaller National Parks, but one of the most stunning. The naturally occurring stone arches are quite a sight to be seen, and the compact size means seeing a majority of the park is easy to access.

The entrance to Canyonlands is just outside of Moab, so you can stay in one town and explore both parks. Canyonlands offers more opportunity to enjoy water sports, from canoeing to white water rafting on the Colorado River. From Moab, head south through the desert to the Grand Canyon, about a five hour drive. The Grand Canyon Village is a common starting point for visitors, though you could also enter the park from the east, and snap some photos of the significantly less busy East Rim, before planning a couple days of in-park activities. After a long journey, you don't have to go far for accommodations, as there are a few places to stay within the park itself, especially if you want to camp for a night or two.

Boston to Washington DC, by train

Train travel in the US is not one of the most popular modes of transport, save for one region: the northeast corridor. Begin the week in Boston, chock full of history and culture. The North End is the historically Italian area of Boston, full of narrow, winding streets, and small trattorias, perfect for a fabulous meal. It is also home to Mike's Pastry, famous for its cannolis. Boston is also home to fantastic museums, as well as the Freedom Trail, a free walking route, marked with a red line on sidewalk, that leads to 16 significant historical sites.

Hop on the train, and head 3 hours south to NYC and explore the Big Apple. With only a few days, there is a lot to see and do. Our recommendation? Stay in Downtown Manhattan or Brooklyn and walk through fun and exciting neighborhoods like Greenwich Village, Tribeca, Carroll Gardens, and Cobble Hill. Make sure to save time for some serious shopping, especially in SoHo, and don't forget to sample some of the best restaurants in the country, like Cosme, Mission Chinese Food, and Roberta's.

Only 3 hours further south on the train takes you to the nation's capital, Washington DC. Explore the monuments and museums, like the Smithsonian and Holocaust Museum. There is more to do than just monuments though, so head to Georgetown for some shopping, dining, and a little nightlife.

Nashville & Memphis, Tennessee, USA

Memphis and Nashville are two of the best music and food cities south of the Mason-Dixon line. Begin in Memphis, the home of Elvis, Southern soul music, and arguably the best traditional barbeque in the country. You can spend an afternoon visiting Elvis's Graceland, and party all night on Beale Street. Your BBQ deep dive should include Central BBQ, Bar-B-Q Shop, or Leonard's Pit for pulled pork topped with coleslaw, and "dry" ribs, smothered in spices and served with sauce on the side.

From Memphis, head 3 hours down the road to Nashville, the home of country music and so much more. These days, Nashville seems blowing up in popularity, attracting an ever-increasing number of visitors. You can head downtown to Honky Tonk Highway, where live music venues line the street, filling the air with music day and night. For food, there is a growing restaurant scene, with restaurants like Sean Brock's Husk and Burger and beer joint Pharmacy. Of course, you can't miss the local speciality, Nashville hot chicken at Prince's Hot Chicken Shack.

San Francisco & Napa Valley, California, USA

San Francisco is one of the prettiest and most food-centric cities in the US. Begin by exploring the city by foot, which can be challenging at times with all of the hills. You can have lunch in one of the nation's largest and best Chinatowns, or head down to the waterfront and the Ferry Building Marketplace, packed with stalls selling the city's best artisanal food. If you want to get some fresh air, walk over to Golden Gate Park for green space, or the Presidio for views over San Francisco Bay.

After a few days of city living, rent a car in San Francisco and head over the Golden Gate Bridge, towards Napa and Sonoma County, truly a mecca for any wine lover. You can take organized wine tours, or simply pop into a few wineries a day for tastings. In the evenings, you can't go wrong with the town of Yountville, which has some of the best restaurants around. If you find yourself 'wined out' (is that possible?), work off the excess with a hike along the Napa River.

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Montreal & Quebec City, Canada

When we used to live in the US Northeast, Montreal was one of our favorite weekend getaways. It's deceptively close by, yet it just feels so...foreign. In the best way. Given a full week to explore Quebec, we'd suggest starting with several full days in Montreal. The highlight of this city, in our eyes, is the fantastic food. We had the first bowl of pho in our lives at Pho Bac 97, and it remains the gold standard. Au Pied de Cochon is the place to go for the biggest pig-out session of your life. Add on to that Montreal-style bagels, tapas at Tapeo, horsemeat (ahem!) at Joe Beef, and a meal from now famous Chuck Hughes at his new restaurant Bremner and you've got yourself fed.

Less than three hours from Montreal is Quebec City, located on the St. Lawrence River. It has quite a history, dating back to the 1600s. Old Quebec City is a highlight, if you're into fortresses and castles, and the city boasts a ton of green space as well, in Battlefields Park and Montmorency Falls. The city is divided up into an Upper Town and a Lower Town, and a funicular connects the two. Quebec is the perfect place to get a little dose of the exotic, all without leaving North America.

The Florida Keys

The Florida Keys are ideal for a holiday because they feel like the Caribbean, with its quirky villages and local characters, but you can travel the distance by car. The beauty of the Keys is that you can explore at a slow pace - without stopping, the whole stretch can be covered in under 2.5 hours. Given a full week, we'd recommend a night or two in each of the major keys: Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon and Key West.

Start your journey in Key Largo, the easternmost key in the chain. There is an unwritten rule (say us) that having a daily piece of key lime pie is basically a requirement, and there are plenty of online resources to direct you to the best spots for your sugar fix. Other Keys highlights include the Turtle Hospital in Marathon which has been rescuing and rehabilitating sea turtles for decades and Ernest Hemingway's house in Key West. Sprinkled up and down the Keys are funky outdoor restaurants and bars, lots of kitschy gift shops full of seashells and a plethora of ocean-front hotels to call home. You're guaranteed to leave the area refreshed and revitalized...and also with an extra few pounds thanks to all that pie.

The Americas



British Virgin Islands by Boat

We decided to drop in this luxurious holiday idea because it's something we've always wanted to do. Here's how we envision the perfect week sailing the BVI: along with 8 or 10 of your closest friends, arrive in Tortola, a jumping off point to the string of islands known as the British Virgin Islands. Hire a large sailing vessel, along with a captain and on-board chef, and spend a week island hopping. Wake each day to a beautiful new vista, lounge, relax, talk, snorkel, eat, drink, nap, repeat. And repeat again.

Some of the highlights of the BVI include: The Baths, a geological oddity and amazing swimming area, hiking on Jost Van Dyke, snorkeling in Horseshoe Reef, watching live music at Foxy's Taboo in Diamond Cay, seeing the inspiration for Treasure Island on Norman Island, and swimming at Dead Man's Bay. After a week on the sea, head back to Tortola for departure.

Nicaragua

Central America is a great place to spend a week because destinations are nice and close together. Arrive in Managua and spend a day getting your bearings before moving on. On the one hour drive to Granada, the oldest city in the New World, stop at Masaya Volcano National Park for a good dose of nature. Granada is worth a day or two on its own, with its bustling markets, boating on Lake Nicaragua and taking in the unique and varied architecture.

Travel by car to San Jorge Ferry Port, and catch a ferry to Ometepe Island, located in the center of Lake Nicaragua. The whole journey will take less than three hours. On Ometepe, there is lots to do, including two volcano hikes, touring plantations, relaxing in natural springs, or seeking out ancient petroglyphs.

South of Lake Nicaragua is San Juan del Sur, a beach town and surfer's paradise, full of funky yoga studios, catamaran cruises and fantastic photo worthy sunsets. If you're in San Juan del Sur over a weekend, you can participate in one of Central America's most notorious parties: Sunday Funday. We're guessing there's more to this crazy party than brunch and naps, our usual activities on a Sunday.

Costa Rica

We planned a lovely honeymoon in Costa Rica with this exact itinerary for some lucky family members. They said it was a fabulous time, so hopefully a similar plan will work for you. Fly in and out of San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. Given length of flights, we recommend a night in San Jose at the start and end of the holiday. Base yourself in the neighborhood of Avenida Central, centrally located and with good access to many attractions, museums and great restaurants.

We've heard great things about the Contemporary Art Museum, National Artisans Market, and National Theater.

Pick up a rental car in the capital and drive to Arenal Volcano National Park. Here, deep in the forest, you'll find all kinds of quirky eco-lodges and spas which offer many activities within the rainforest, including rafting, horseback riding, bird watching and much, much more. After a few days inland, it's time to head to the beach. We suggest Playa Tamarindo, a 3-4 hour drive. There are plenty of relaxing beach resorts in the area where the most difficult decision you'll make each day is when to have your next smoothie. Wrap up your holiday with a drive back to San Jose, where you'll drop off your car and spend a last night reveling

Cartagena & Bogota, Colombia

For US-based travelers, Colombia is one of those destinations that should be much more popular given its proximity to the States. Arrive in Cartagena, a colonial walled city that is a great introduction to the country. Wander the Old Town, and sample the fabulous food (Carmen restaurant gets consistently great reviews). After a couple days soaking in the history of Cartagena, take a bus to Tayrona National Park, which is home to one of the highest coastal mountain ranges in the world, right on the sea. You don't see that combination too frequently!

Hike, explore and spend the night in the park (in a hammock!), or head to nearby Guachaca, home to lovely pristine beaches and small family-run inns. After you have had your fill of beach, travel back to Santa Marta where a short flight will take you south to Bogota, Colombia's capital. In Bogota, be sure to visit the Paloquemao Market, where you'll find exotic local fruits like feijoa, araza, guanabana, maracuya and lulo - many of which are seldom found outside of Colombia. The gold museum also comes highly recommended. For that quintessential panoramic photo, take a cable car up Montserrat to get a great

Buenos Aires, Argentina & Montevideo, Uruguay

Buenos Aires is one of the most vibrant, exciting cities in South America, known for its European flair. You will need a handful of days to explore this gem. From the frenzied nightlife to the cultural heritage, time in Buenos Aires will not be boring! Exploring neighborhoods like Recoleta will bring that European feeling close to home. Make sure to indulge in delicious steak dinners, a speciality of the area. And if you are a sports fan, try to get tickets to a Boca Juniors football match. Football in South America is unlike other places: intense, crazy, and a lot of fun.

Montevideo, Uruguay is just two hours by ferry from Buenos Aires, and is a great second location to this week-long holiday.. Explore this compact city by taking a walk on La Rambla, a 22km path that separates the city from the sea. Montevideo has fantastic, clean beaches and great weather for a beach day or two. Don't forget to head to the Mercado del Puerto for the Uruguayan speciality "parrilla."

Patagonia

Patagonia, that most Instagrammable region of South America home to mountains and crystal blue lakes and lots and lots of hikers, is a perfectly viable one week vacation. Fly into Buenos Aires, Argentina, the jumping off point for the region, and catch a second flight to El Calafate, the gateway to Glacier National Park. Spend one full day exploring the Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the world's few advancing glaciers. Hiking is how days are spent in this region and there is plenty to keep you occupied.

A three hour bus ride will take you to El Chalten, a great meeting point for hikers everywhere. Two important day hikes, Laguna de los Tres, and Laguna Las Torres, start from here. After a few days, head back to El Calafate by bus and then back to Buenos Aires by plane. If you have an extra day or two to spare, checking out the sights in Buenos Aires would be well worth your time!

Santiago, Chile & Mendoza, Argentina

Santiago is an often overlooked destination in South America, but this city, set at the base of the Andes but close to the Pacific, offers travelers a lot of options! Head to Cerro San Cristobal to take in the magnificent views of the Andes above the Santiago skyline. To dive into the Chilean food scene, visit Mercado Central for a glimpse of the best fish and shellfish available in the city. If you are a history buff, head east to Quinta Normal, the museum district, packed with options to explore. To relax, the Bohemian neighborhood Barrio Lastarria is a great place to hang at a cafe or grab a bite to eat.

To get to Mendoza, book a bus journey (6 hours) that will take you up and over the Andes and into Argentina. It is best to make the trip during the day, when you can enjoy the fabulous views as you climb up the mountains. Once in Mendoza, head to Vines of Mendoza to sample wine from a variety of area producers. The restaurant 1884 from famous chef Francis Mallmann should not be missed for its mastery of wood-grilled meats! For a little exercise between wine tastings, rent bikes and head to Parque General San Martin, a 1200 acre oasis of landscape architecture.

Peru

There are lots of people who will tell you that visiting Peru, with all of its natural beauty and wonders, cannot be done in just a week...but we must disagree. Here is one itinerary that is definitely manageable. Fly into the capital, Lima. Most international flights arrive in the evening, so check into a hotel in the Miraflores neighborhood. On day two, spend the day exploring Lima. Check out the famed churches (La Catedral de Lima or Iglesia de Santo Domingo), visit a museum (Museo Larco is frequently mentioned as the best) or relax with a walking or sightseeing tour.

The next day, fly to Puerto Maldonado and get your fill of the Peruvian Amazon. We recommend being based at a local eco-lodge, spending your days zip lining, kayaking and maybe taking a boat trip down the river. After a few nights in the jungle, fly to Cusco, the jumping off point to Peru's most famous attraction, Machu Picchu. Spend a day getting adjusted to the altitude, and take the train to Machu Picchu (treks are 4+ days), which can be explored in a day. A final flight will get you back to Lima.

Galapagos Islands

To explore one of the world's most revered natural landscapes, look no further than Darwin's famous Galapagos Islands. Please note that you must be part of a group to explore the Galapagos, but there are plenty of itineraries out there in the 7-8 day range. Prices typically include internal flights and start and end in Quito, Ecuador, the capital.

Arrive in Quito a day early to adjust to the altitude and explore one of the urban gems of South America. A short flight will take you to San Cristobal, where boats of all shapes and sizes depart to explore the islands. In San Cristobal, there is a protected area of giant tortoises that is worth a visit even though it can be a pricey excursion. Once on your boat, tours last multiple nights, docking at islands for exploration and animal watching. Depending on your tour provider, the focus will be on education, self-exploration, and varying amounts of time spent sailing. After days of taking amazing photos and falling in love with sea lions (or is that just us?), reverse your journey back to Quito.



A tropical resort scene featuring a large swimming pool in the foreground with two covered lounge areas. Beyond the pool is a grassy area with several white umbrellas and lounge chairs. In the background, a sandy beach meets the ocean under a clear blue sky, with several tall palm trees framing the view.

Asia







Thailand Islands

Thailand is an amazing destination and many travelers' favorite country. But Bangkok is insane. For this holiday, arrive into Bangkok and give it a day or two of your time. There are lots of highlights here, from Wat Arun to Wat Pho to the Grand Palace.

After a few days of city life, take a sleeper train overnight to Surat Thani and wake up in paradise. A connecting bus will take you to Ao Nang, a lively beachside town where you be stationed for a few relaxing days. From this point, there is a lot to do.

Scuba abounds here, as well as rock climbing, or you can hire a bicycle to ride around, or take a cooking class, or even take a boat trip out to one of the outlying islands. Your next beach destination is Ko Yao Noi, about two hours south of Ao Nang. This island is off the well-trod tourist path and is home to stretches of empty beach, plenty of good snorkeling and the opportunity to hire a boat.

Finally, make your way to Phuket, the final destination of the holiday. Phuket is Thailand's largest and most visited island. Here, you can splurge out on a fabulous resort, or steer to more budget accommodation. Stop by the Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary, or use your time to see a Thai boxing exhibition. The various beaches around the island have different vibes, so do some research and find your perfect final resting place.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia & Singapore

This is a holiday for the city lovers among us. We once spent a week in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and its very close neighbor Singapore and got our fill of city life for the next six months. Between them, these two locations have everything - street food, museums, shopping malls (!), skyscrapers, urban gardens, temples, and much more. They also are very distinct from each other, so the dichotomy is interesting as well.

Arrive in Kuala Lumpur (KL), and jump right into Malay life - head straight to a shopping mall. Seriously, the malls here (in blissful air conditioning) are so massive that they really must be seen to be believed. Their food courts are a virtual heaven for a food lover, as you can sample to your heart's content. Chinatown is a secondary shopping bazaar filled with kitsch. For amazing food, stop by Jalan Alor, a street lined with food vendors. We came here every evening to get our fill of curries and cheap, local beer. For a break from the crowds, head to the National Mosque or the Lake Gardens, the city's biggest park. Oh, and don't leave without getting a good look at the Petronas Towers, they used to be the tallest in the world.

Vietnam, North to South

This itinerary provides a great overview of a fascinating country. Start in Hanoi, the northernmost large city, making stops at the Temple of Literature and the former home of Ho Chi Minh. Stick to the small street side restaurants for your meals, with dishes like pho and bun cha being whipped up on nearly every block. You can walk through the frantic Old Quarter, where the narrow streets and alleys are arranged by trade. There are also a variety of water puppet shows that are popular in Hanoi.

From Hanoi, fly to Danang, and hire a taxi to drive to Hoi An, one of the prettiest towns in Vietnam. This port town has influences from Europe, China and Japan in its Old Town, with many French style buildings surrounding the Chinese Assembly Hall and a Japanese covered bridge. Hoi An is famous for its tailors, so if custom clothing is your thing, you can get fitted for a new outfit for an affordable price.

To finish the trip, fly from Danang to Saigon (or Ho Chi Minh City) to explore the city and learn about its history around the Vietnam War. Check out the Reunification Palace, home to South Vietnam's surrender, and the War Remnants Museum. Saigon also has beautiful French colonial architecture, including the Notre Dame Basilica.

Bangkok & Chiang Mai, Thailand

Thailand is an exciting, thrilling country with much to see and eat! Begin the trip in Bangkok, the capital and largest city. You could spend a day exploring the various food markets dotted around the city, or tuck into some of the famous Thai street food. Definitely don't miss the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. To get around, hop on the fast and efficient ferries that run along the river, or hire a tuk tuk to zoom through the city streets. If you like massages, try a Thai massage, which are intense and extremely affordable.

Hop on an overnight train from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, one of the most beautiful cities in all of Southeast Asia with a historic old town center. Renowned for its cuisine, make sure to eat plenty of the local specialities like Som Tam and Khao Soi. Or better yet, take a cooking class and get to know the ingredients first hand. Head out into the countryside to visit the Doi Suthep temple complex and be prepared to climb the 300-step stairway, that affords stunning panoramic views of Chiang Mai, making all the stairs worth it.

Bali, Indonesia

Bali is an Indonesian island known for its volcanic mountains, rice paddies, beaches and coral reefs. It's also famous enough that most people have heard of it, either as a honeymoon destination or a backpackers' paradise. Given a full week on the island, you can certainly cover a lot of ground and experience the best that Bali has to offer. Base yourself in the lovely area of Nusa Dua, which has its share of upscale resorts, but is also a nice backdrop for the mellow evenings you'll want to have after exploring like crazy during the day.

Temples abound on Bali, and some of the more well-known temples are Tanah Lot, Besakih and Uluwatu. If you can arrange to visit any temple around sunrise or sunset, the amazing photos will be worth it! In Ubud, the central city, visit Ubud Monkey forest, the Tegalalang Rice Terraces, and Pasar Seni, a lovely art market. In Kintamani, home to Mount Batur and the Caldera Lake you can take a hiking tour that starts around 4am to climb the volcano for sunrise. If you want to see a totally different side of Bali, check out Kuta Beach, a grittier side of the island known for its insane parties, spring break vibe, and global selection of good food at any budget.

India's Golden Triangle - Dehli, Agra, Jaipur

Following India's Golden Triangle is a great introduction to the country. Arrive in New Dehli, and take a few days to orient yourself to the speed and heat of the city. Make sure to explore Old Dehli, the Lotus Temple, the Red Fort, taking breaks from the city chaos in Lodhi Park, one of the most peaceful in town. An express train will take you into the state of Rajasthan to the capital of Jaipur, about a five hour ride. Jaipur is home to many tourist favorites including the Jai Mahal, Hawa Mahal, the Amber Fort and the City Palace. Two days for basking in the elaborate architecture and opulent buildings should suffice.

Once you've had your fill of Jaipur, it's time to journey to the epic culmination of the trip in Agra, home of the Taj Mahal. Take a train directly to Agra from Jaipur, or if you have some extra time, hire a driver for the ride and stop off midway in Fatehpur Sikri, the one time capital of the Mughal empire. In addition to visiting the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort is also worth a visit. A single night in Agra should be plenty, and then it's back to Dehli, completing the famous triangle.

Phnom Penh & Siem Reap, Cambodia

Cambodia has one global can't-miss-highlight: the temples of Angkor Wat. This massive temple complex is located in the area around Siem Reap and should be the number one priority for any holiday in Cambodia. Any hotel or hostel can help arrange a personal daily tuk-tuk driver into the ruins. While we explored for one (very) long day, many visitors choose instead to spread their Indiana Jones fantasies out over 3 days or so.

Before and after a few days in Siem Reap exploring temples, the capital city of Phnom Penh also has a lot to offer. Prioritize the Central Market, and the Grand Palace & Silver Pagoda. If you have the stomach for it, there are two sites in and around Phnom Penh dedicated to the atrocities caused by the Khmer Rouge not long ago. The first, a school-turned-prison called S-21 is located in town. Further afield are the Killing Fields, an area of mass graves. Both can be visited in a single afternoon.

Tokyo, Nikko, & Kyoto, Japan

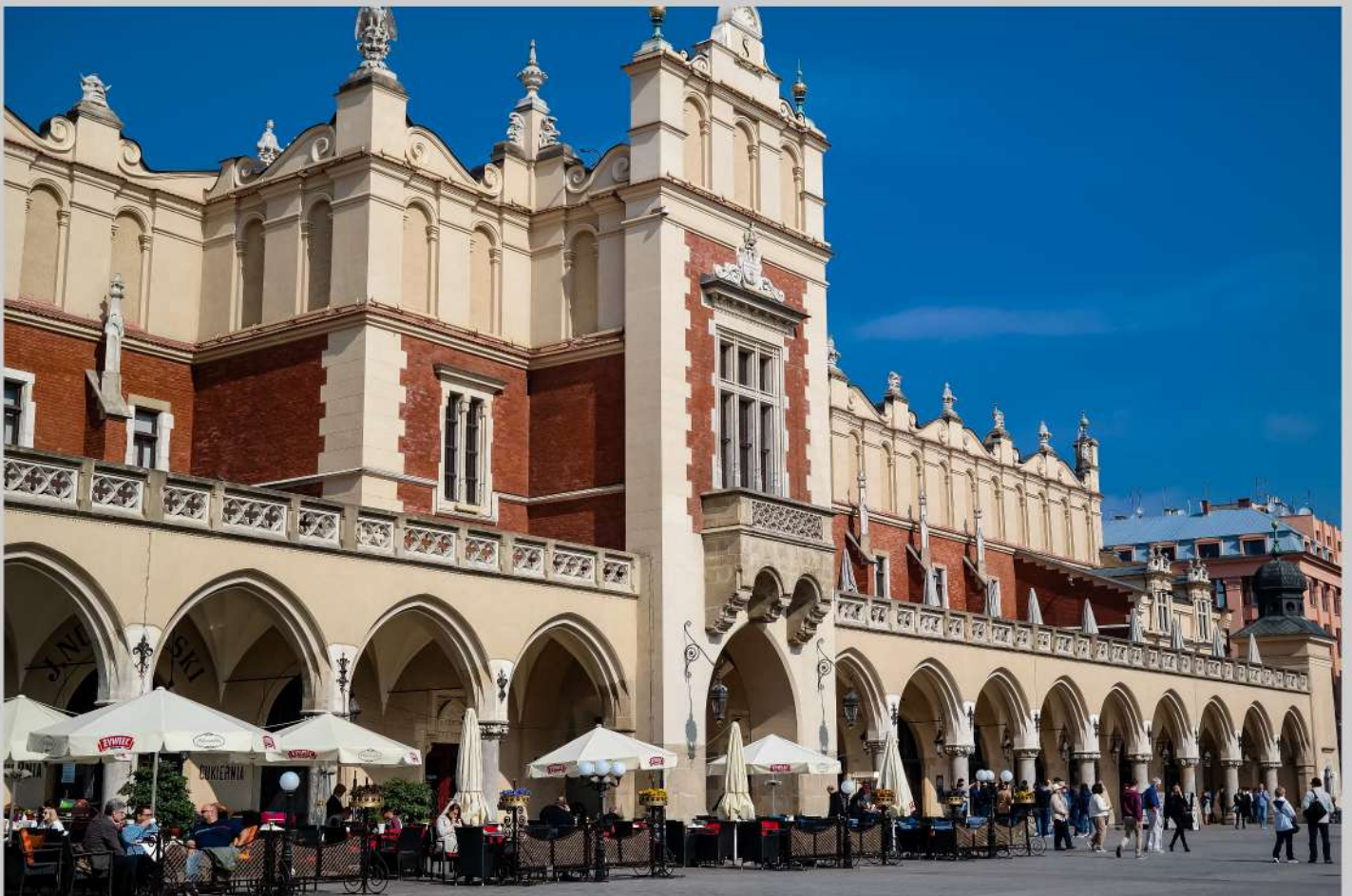
There is a lot to see and do in Japan in only a week, so the options are almost limitless! To hit some of the highlights of Japan, start in the capital, Tokyo. You can explore the famed Tsukiji Fish Market if you are an early riser, or Shinjuku's Memory Lane, packed with tiny restaurants and bars down a narrow alley, if you want some late night fun. We'd also recommend the Imperial Palace, a tour of the National Museum, or enjoying downtime in the many parks.

From Tokyo, hop on a two hour train to the sacred city of Nikko, with history dating back almost 1,200 years! You can walk amongst the various temples and shrines scattered around the city, and see the red-lacquered Shin-kyō bridge, one of the town's most famous landmarks.

The final destination is Kyoto, a three hour bullet train ride from Nikko, which has no shortage of history either. Formerly the capital of Japan for almost 1,000 years, there are thousands of temples around the city. You can learn about geishas in Gion district or enjoy a break at a traditional Japanese tea houses. Kyoto is also the site of the Nijo Castle, once home to Tokugawa Shoguns. For food, make sure to indulge on a kaiseki, the traditional Kyoto-style multi-course meal.

Europe













Ireland by Car

There is something so romantic about driving across a green dale, Irish tunes playing on the radio, while a cosy B&B waits for you after a day of brisk and windy sightseeing. Fortunately, there are lots of people with the same idea, and a whole industry has popped up to support it. The simplest way to make your Irish driving dreams come true is to rent a car in Dublin and spend a week circumnavigating the country, booking small hotels or B&Bs at points around the perimeter. Some of the highlights to explore in Ireland are Blarney Castle, the Ring of Kerry, the Cliffs of Moher, and Giant's Causeway.

Alternatively, if you'd rather not be in charge of all bookings, there are lots of small companies who can help you organize, providing on-ground support, maps, and bookings at recommended locations. Or do what we do and check out those itineraries online and book it yourself, resulting in a (usually substantial) savings!

United Kingdom by Train

This should be the easiest itinerary for us to rattle off because over the years we've received many requests from family and friends who want to visit the UK, see a lot, and do it all in a week. But, we almost know too much about the UK, and its various nooks and crannies, to keep it simple. That said, here's one holiday plan that can be modified endlessly, but where we would start.

Fly into London and spend at least one full day exploring the city. Base yourself in Zone 1, the central zone, or at least close to a Tube stop so that you can easily jet around. Visit one of the many free museums, grab some food at a market, see a show, have afternoon tea, etc. There is something for everyone. The UK train system is wide ranging, but we like to stick with rides that are two hours at the most. Thus, our go-to destinations are: Oxford (1.5 hours), Cambridge (1 hour), and Brighton (1.5 hours). These are all self-contained towns which can be explored on foot, and don't require pesky car rentals or learning how to drive on the other side of the road. Spend a night or two in Oxford, head back to London, out to Brighton, repeat, until you run out of time.

Paris, France & Surroundings

Like most enthusiastic travelers, we love Paris. I mean, who doesn't? It is one of our most often-visited European cities and frankly, we know that a week vacation can easily be spent within the city limits. However, we love a good day trip and like to break up our time by getting outta town at least once.

Once you've spent a few days in Paris visiting the Louvre (you didn't ask but the Mona Lisa is one of the most overrated things in the world, in our opinion), the Musee d'Orsay, the Eiffel Tower, and the Arc de Triomphe, it's time to take a day trip to Versailles. Versailles is hugely popular, the former home of King Louis XVI. Frankly, it's the most ridiculous castle we've ever seen in person, and it provokes awe and a little bit of disgust when room after room of gold and glitter pass by.

Another favorite day trip is to Chartres, a nearby town and home to the magnificent Chartres Cathedral. The cathedral is over 500 years old and exceptionally well preserved, but the big draw is the unbelievable stained glass. Alternatively, if you fancy another castle day trip, join with a tour to see the most popular castles in the Loire Valley - Chambord, Chenonceau, etc. While it is certainly possible to rent a car for a day to explore the beautiful chateaux, an organized day tour is probably easier.

Barcelona, Spain & Surroundings

We try not to pick favorite itineraries but this is how we spent our honeymoon a million years ago, so we'll just deem it as one of the best ideas on this list. Barcelona is a great home base for a week - lovely apartment rentals and cute hotels are abundant here. In the city, we recommend exploring the many examples of Gaudi's architecture, going to La Boqueria every day to drink fresh juice and lazing around on the beach. Embrace the late night Spanish culture and have dinner at 10pm just like the locals. Tapas bars abound if you need a little snack to get you through the evening.

There are several easy day trips from Barcelona, all by train. We spent one day in Tarragona to see ancient Roman ruins. Another day we went to Girona to have lunch at (now famous) El Cellar de con Roca. Finally, we had to see Salvador Dali's pink museum for ourselves, so we went to Figueres for that.

Prague, Vienna, & Budapest

Why not see three of Europe's coolest capitals all in a single week? Arrive in Prague, Czech Republic, and plan for two or three days exploring. Don't miss the Old Town, a trip up to Prague Castle, and at least one walking tour of the city where you'll learn why this city was spared much damage during World War 2. Fill up on pilsner beer and eat as many doughy dumplings as you can manage.

Vienna, Austria is a short train ride away, but feels like a different world. The Habsburg empire was in full swing here for over 300 years and the results are obvious. Grand boulevards, ornamental and gilded architecture - if this city was a birthday cake, you wouldn't need any icing! One of the most Viennese things to do here is to visit a coffeehouse, where people have come to think, gossip, visit, write, read and socialize for generations. We loved the beautiful pastries and decadent coffees, and fantastic people watching.

Continue by train to Budapest, Hungary's capital. Here, visit one of the famous thermal baths, eat langos at the Central Market, and get at least one view of the city from Buda Castle (you don't need to go in any of the buildings to explore the top of the hill). Budapest is particularly beautiful at night when the city lights up, so make sure to rest up enough to take at least one evening stroll.

The Baltics

We loved our week in the Baltics and can personally vouch for the ease of travel here. Fly into Vilnius, Lithuania and spend two or three days in this small, unassuming city. We took a great, free, walking tour and also enjoyed exploring Uzupio, a neighborhood that has declared itself an independent republic. The food is also worth mentioning - a great variety. Special note to Rene, 7 Fridays Bar, and Cozy.

After Vilnius, a short bus ride (3 hours on an amazing luxurious bus) will take you north to Riga, Latvia. Riga was a center of the art nouveau movement and examples of the fantastic architecture can be seen all over town. The massive central market and nearby Gouja National Park round out a few pleasantly busy days.

Another bus ride takes you north to Tallinn, Estonia. Tallinn was restored before the Moscow Olympics (back then it hosted the sailing competition), and it is gorgeous. It's a pretty small city and can be covered in a day or two. Fly out of Tallinn or take a short ferry ride north to Helsinki, Finland and depart from there (and visit another country while you're at it!).

Moscow & St Petersburg, Russia

For those interested in seeing the white nights of summer, have a special love for Russian ballet or who can't drink vodka fast enough, a holiday in Russia is definitely worth your time. There is a process to acquire a visa for most international visitors, but once that's in hand, it's time to go! Fly into Moscow, Russia's capital city. There are plenty of city highlights to occupy a few days - the Red Square (including a visit to see embalmed Lenin if that is of interest), the Kremlin, St. Basil's Cathedral, GUM (a massive department store) and the Bolshoi Theater, to see a ballet if possible. Russian food is delicious and goes far beyond borscht and pickled fish. In Moscow, a meal at Cafe Pushkin is practically required. We also loved Dr. Zhivago and White Rabbit.

Travel by train to St. Petersburg. In the past, this was done by overnight sleeper trains, but in 2009, a high speed service was introduced that makes the journey in just under four hours. Real Russia is the online booking system for all things train travel and is easy to navigate. Once in St. Petersburg, the cultural capital of Russia, spend the rest of your week seeing the highlights here: Mikhailovsky Castle, Smolny Cathedral, and the Aurora battle cruiser. Take a river cruise to get a good view of the city, and if you visit in June, during White Nights, St. Petersburg is where locals celebrate the most.

Copenhagen, Denmark & Gothenberg, Sweden

For lovers of the European television show The Bridge, you already know that Copenhagen, Denmark and Malmo, Sweden are connected by a single beautiful bridge that rises out of the sea. It's easiest to fly in and out of Copenhagen for most visitors, and a few days exploring coastal Sweden by car will give you a taste of the country.

Copenhagen is well known in Europe as a food lover's paradise. Noma, one of the world's most famous restaurants, put Copenhagen on the map, and these days the city is speckled with restaurants run by former Noma chefs. We planned our entire visit to Copenhagen around the food! We enjoyed long walking tours, the Tivoli Gardens, a visit to Carlsburg brewery, and the many museums.

With a rental car, cross the famous bridge into Sweden and head north to the nearest large town, Gothenburg (about a three hour drive in total). It's a city that is the perfect size for two or three days. Highlights include the Gothenburg Museum of Art, the gorgeous local opera house and Liseberg Amusement Park, Sweden's most popular tourist attraction (3 million visitors per year!). For food, look no further than the Saluhallen Market Hall, home to 40 vendors and small restaurants.

Greek Islands

Based on the content of our Instagram feed, the world's beauty begins and ends with the Greek Islands. White on blue on white - from the looks of things, you might arrive and never leave. The many islands and their various personalities can be daunting to make sense of but here is an easy itinerary that won't take more than a week.

Fly into Athens, and spend a night, before heading out to sea. In the morning, take a ferry to Naxos, an island with a reputation of being less 'party-filled' and more lush than others. Days are spent beach-hopping, eating and when some exercise is called for, a walk around Naxos Old Town, the Temple of Demeter, or Kastro will do. Spend a couple nights in Naxos before taking a ferry on to Santorini.

Santorini, one of the most famous Greek Islands, is large, and can be explored in a few days as well. Spend an afternoon on a wine tour, take a sunset cruise in the Aegean Sea, see the sunset in Oia, walk around Thira's Old Town. There's plenty to do. A ferry back to Athens rounds out the voyage.

Istanbul, Turkey

In this entire list of holiday inspiration, Istanbul is in a category all its own. It's the only destination that we are limiting to a single city for a full week of vacation. We visited Istanbul once for about 10 days, and even with that amount of time, we felt we just scratched the surface. Adding in a day trip or a second Turkish location would be possible, but we'd recommend saving that for another visit.

With a full week in this amazing city, you can see all the highlights. At the top of that list are the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, the Topkapi Palace, the Grand Bazaar and the Spice Bazaar. You'll have plenty of time to walk across the Galata Bridge, take a ferry to Asia and back to Europe in under an hour, stuff yourself silly with Turkish food, and go to a traditional Turkish bath. During your downtime, you can take a tram around the city, walk down Istiklal Street to Taksim Square, and pet the many (gorgeous, well fed) stray cats. In this enchanting city, East meets West and it's a magical mix.

Slovenia & Croatia

This trip is all about stunning natural beauty, both in Slovenia and Croatia. Spend at least two days in the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana. Start with a walk through the historic city center, take a funicular up to the Ljubljana Castle, and relax at the many cafes that line the river which cuts through the center. Rent a car and head an hour north to Lake Bled, one of the prettiest lakes in all of Europe. A full day rowing on the lake and trying the famous Bled cake (basically an explosion of custard cream and whipped cream), should be sufficient.

About 3 hours from Lake Bled, Istria is a must-visit region of Croatia, and during the shoulder seasons, it will be blissfully devoid of tourists. Base yourself in one of the small villages that dot the region, and during the days, take short trips to all of the other villages. The scenery is stunning most everywhere and the short car drives become part of the fun. We'd recommend Rovinj, Motovun, Opatija, and Porec. While the coastal villages are picturesque with bustling harbours, the interior of Istria is where the best food and wine reside. It's very similar to parts of Tuscany, but with far fewer crowds!

Bucharest & Transylvania, Romania

Romania is one of our favorite under-the-radar holiday destinations. It's a great value, there is a ton of fascinating history, and where else can you claim to learn the secrets of Dracula? Bucharest is the obvious jumping off point to explore Romania. While Paris has cafes and London has pubs, Bucharest is famous for the hundreds of terrace, outdoor drinking/eating spaces that are hidden in plain sight, down alleys, and in courtyards. They are open all hours so you can have breakfast in one and late night cocktails in another. Around all the eating and drinking, spend plenty of time in the Old Town, and treat yourself to at least one walking tour that help make sense of this widely unknown city.

After getting your fill of the capital, rent a car and drive north, up the famous twisty Transfagarasan Highway and into Transylvania. The whole trip, while short in distance, can be savoured over the better part of the day. Make your base in Brasov, in the heart of Transylvania. Spend your days exploring the castles and massive summer manors in the area, and come back to Brasov at night for hearty Romanian eats. We propose skipping Bran Castle, the completely inaccurate home to the real life Dracula and a huge tourist trap. There are plenty of other beautiful castles to explore.

Florence & Tuscany, Italy

Florence is one of the most popular destinations in Europe, and for a good reason. The compact city center is easy to walk around and it's always a treat to get lost in the narrow, back alleys of the city. The Duomo and Uffizi Gallery are must sees, as is the Mercato, which has a fantastic pork sandwich stall in the far corner that makes for a perfect lunch. You can also see the famous statue of David, but make sure to book your tickets online in advance, to avoid the legendary lengthy queues.

Outside of Florence is the Tuscan countryside, which can be reached by public transit or by car. Rolling hills, small villages, and plenty of food and wine make this region a favorite for tourists around the world. Sienna is a perfect town to be based in, with its stunning Piazza del Campo. From there you can explore smaller towns like San Gimignano with its numerous towers, which is best done by car or on a guided tour. The walled city of Lucca is also worth a visit, with its 16th century fortification and its well regarded olive oil production.

Rome & Naples, Italy

There is a lot to see and do in Rome, so you certainly won't be bored. The Coliseum, the Roman Forum, the Pantheon. And don't forget about the Vatican.

Rome is best explored by foot, wandering through the winding streets of the central core of the city. For food lovers, make sure to try some fantastic pizza at Pizzarium and some of the famous Roman dish carbonara at Roscioli's.

After a few days soaking in the capital, hop on the train at Rome Termini and head an hour south to the southern Italian city of Naples. Naples is a little less polished, a little more rough around the edges, but in a fun and exciting way. (If you're a reader, the Neapolitan series by Elena Ferrante brings Naples to life beautifully.) Obviously, Naples is home to Neapolitan-style pizza, so make sure to grab one of the best at Di Matteo. Besides pizza, don't forget to tour Mt. Vesuvius and the famous town of Pompeii. For nightlife lovers, there is plenty going on at the beach clubs dotting the city's coastline.

Lisbon, Portugal & Surroundings

One of our favorite cities in Europe, the Portuguese capital is full of charming streets, incredible food, and decorative tiles adorning nearly every blank space. Spending time getting a feel for Lisbon is a must, and the Sao Jorge Castle is a great place to start, with views over the entire city. We'd recommend planning one evening to listen to haunting Fado music and you can't leave town without sampling the tasty pastis da nata pastries in the waterfront area of Belem.

The compact country of Portugal has lots of great towns and attractions within day trip territory. , About 45 minutes from Lisbon, the village of Sintra is a UNESCO site, and home of the Pena National Palace, a 19th century castle with a truly whimsical design. About 2 hours east of Lisbon lies the town of Evora, which features a storied history dating all the way back to the Roman era. It is one of the best preserved cities in all of Portugal, enclosed by 14th century walls.

Marseille & Provence, France

An often over-looked city, Marseille is one of the oldest towns in all of France and sits right on the Mediterranean. With a major influx of money for infrastructure improvements, following its designation as the European Capital of Culture in 2013, Marseille is worth a visit. The nearby beaches are perfect for a day or two of complete relaxation, and there are a variety of museums and historical buildings to explore, like the Cathedrale de la Nouvelle Major. The Old Port is the heart of the city, so you'll likely find yourself there frequently, for meals and drinks and great people watching.

You can rent a car or hop on a train and be in Aix-en-Provence in well under an hour from Marseille city center. This is the perfect town to relax and enjoy the slow pace of Provencal life. From the base of a small hotel or apartment in Aix-en-Provence, you can tour the Provence countryside, including the legendary lavender fields or the village of Arles, once home to Van Gogh. The small village of Antibes is a must as well, and the views along the Gorges du Verdon are truly impressive. Just make sure to relax with a nice bottle of wine at the end of each day!

Piedmont & Milan, Italy

Milan is a vibrant city, full of some of the best food and shopping in all of Italy. It's one of the fashion capitals of Europe, so this is not the place to be seen in public in your sweatpants and sneakers. The massive, ornamental Duomo is the symbol of the city, and a highlight of many a university art history class. We'd also recommend the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, and the Castello Sforzesco for your fill of culture. At night, head to the Navigli neighborhood for a classic dishes, like risotto alla Milanese.

Just a few hours away by car sits the Langhe Hills and the wine region of Piedmont. Full of small, photogenic Italian hilltop villages like Barolo and La Morra, this is a food and wine lovers paradise. If you can plan for it, try to visit this area in the fall during the White Truffle Festival, which takes place in the town of Alba. The whole city turns into an outdoor festival celebrating the expensive, locally sourced, white truffle!

Geneva, Switzerland & Burgundy, France

Fly into Geneva via one of the prettiest flights in the world, as you cruise around the Jura Mountains and French Alps and circle Lake Geneva. While Geneva is beautiful and historic, it's not exactly party central, so spend a few days meandering around the Old Town, seeing the sights. One such attraction is 'The Fountain' on the lakefront promenade, and one of the world's largest fountains. Also in the Old Town, you'll find the 15th century (still in use) City Hall, the Old Arsenal, and St. Pierre's Cathedral. Take a break from the sightseeing at La Clemence, one of the city's most popular bars.

To get some a taste of the countryside, head 2 hours to the west, into France, to the wine region of Burgundy. The village of Beaune is centrally located and the perfect jumping off point to tour vineyards and eat some rustic Burgundian food, like snails, beef bourguignon, and the famous Bresse chicken. There are many wineries in the area, so each day can be spent near a different village, tasting and then heading home to Beaune in the evening. It goes without saying that special effort should be made to choose a few delicious bottles of red and white Burgundy to take home!

Oslo & Bergen, Norway

Norway is shockingly pretty, with its fjords and rough terrain. While many people head straight for the fjords, we'd argue that the capital city of Oslo should not be overlooked, as it has a lot to offer visitors. The seaside setting is striking, as are some of the modern structures like the Opera House. The city has fantastic public transportation too, making getting around easy. You can even enjoy a hike around the nearby lakes, all within city limits and therefore, just a short walk from the city metro system.

After a few days exploring Oslo, head off to city of Bergen, on the western coast of Norway. The Oslo-Bergen train line takes about seven hours, but affords some of the best views of any train journey in Europe for almost the entire trip.

Wander around Bergen Old Town, chock full of colorful, Scandinavian houses and buildings. Hop on a boat for a tour of the fjords around Bergen, or enjoy a walk up the hills and forests around the city. This holiday is one for the outdoor adventurer in all of us.

Berlin & Hamburg, Germany

Germany is a great place to spend a week because there are so many world class cities close to each other. Our favorite city in Germany is Berlin and for that reason, we always recommend it to include in an itinerary. Make sure to visit the East Side Gallery, the longest remaining stretch of the Berlin Wall. On centrally located Museum Island, all of the major museums are clustered in one place, so pick one or two that strike your fancy. Evenings are reserved for funky bars and dance halls, for which Berlin is famous.

Less than two hours by train from Berlin is Hamburg, Germany's northernmost large city. Get a view of the city by climbing the 400+ steps of St Micheliskirche's church tower to get a lay of the city. One of the big museum highlights in town is Kunsthalle, full of classic and contemporary art. Hamburg is also known for its live music venues, so if this is your thing, check out what's playing at one of these top picks: Zwick, Molotow, Grosse Freiheit 36, Übel & Gefährlich, Logo, and Marktzeit in der Fabrik.

Iceland

We visited Iceland briefly, in the dead of winter. We spent a lot of time in semi-darkness dreaming of a second visit during the summer. Our ideal week in Iceland would be in the height of summer, when daylight lingers well into the night and all country roads are free from pesky snow.

A week is just enough time to circumnavigate the country via the Ring Road, starting and ending in the capital, Reykjavic. The capital is small and walkable, so a day exploring when you arrive in Iceland should be plenty. The world's 'most famous hot dog stand' is in town and it is definitely worth a visit. We'd also recommend a stop at the Blue Lagoon either at the beginning or end of your journey as it's located right near the airport!

There are many natural wonders in Iceland, with all of the strange land formations, glaciers and the geyser (Geysir) after which all others are named, so we'll give you a list of highlights. Make sure to visit: Geysir, Gullfoss, the Black Beach, Skogarfoss, Jökulsárlón (a Glacier filled Lagoon), whale watching in Husavik, Hraunfossar, and Kirkjufell Mountain. Please let us know if this itinerary is as amazing as we suspect - we'd love to do it properly next time around!

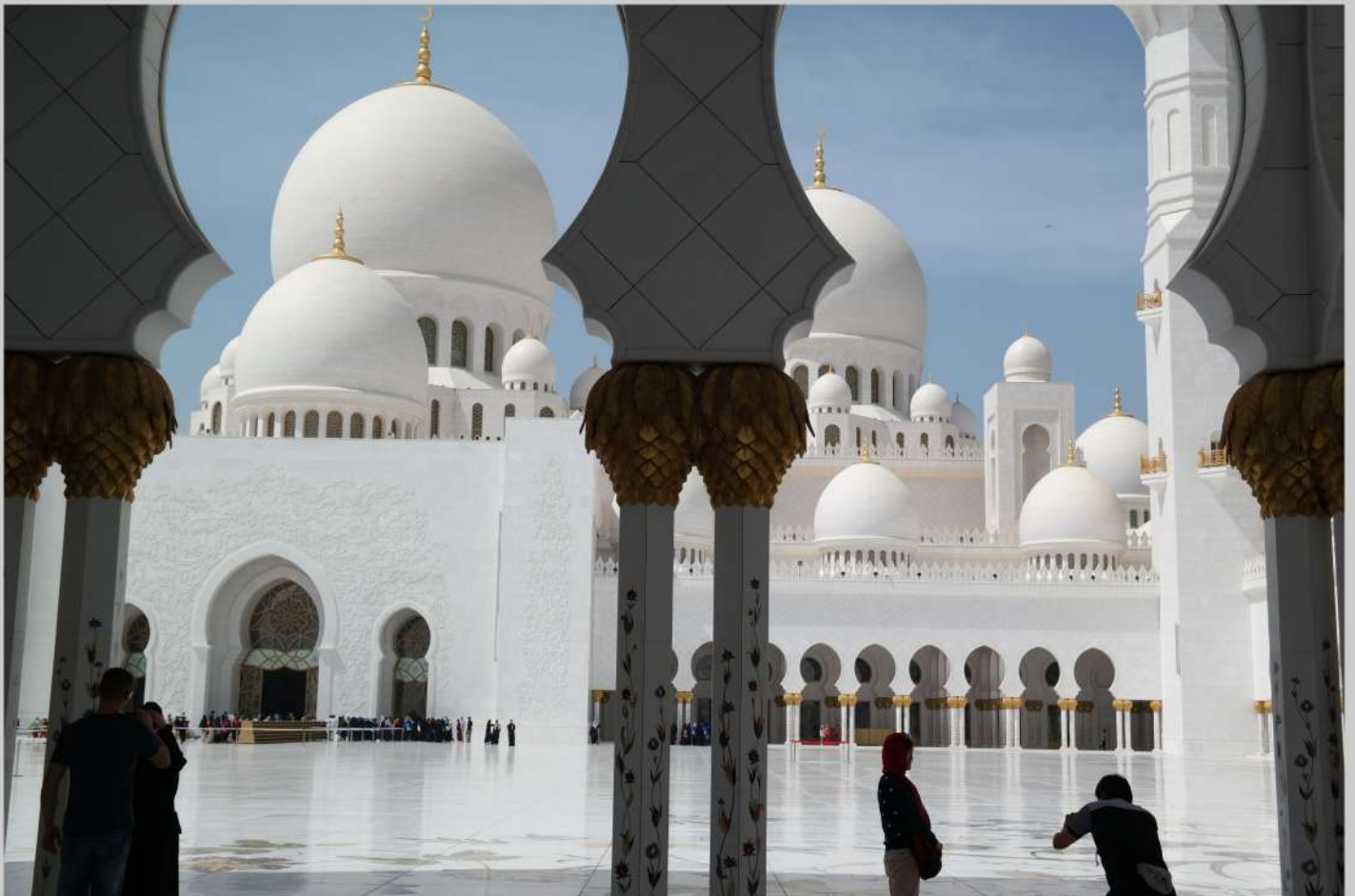
Sardinia & Corsica by Boat

This is the beach vacation for the Europe lover. Sardinia (belonging to Italy) and Corsica (belonging to France) are two islands off the Italian mainland which are known for their beaches and chill Mediterranean vibe. Over the course of a week, you can split your time between the two islands, take a ferry between them (about three hours), and spend your days beach hopping.

In Sardinia, the best beaches include La Cinta, the beaches near the village of Chia, the sand dunes near Porto Pino and the hidden beaches reached only by boat from Cala Gonone. In Corsica, because now we're speaking in French, some of the beach highlights include Plage de Loto (Plage du Lodu/Lotu), Plage de Saleccia (accessible by the port in St. Florent), Marinella beach, and La Palombaggia (one of the most famous beaches in Europe and therefore can be quite crowded). In both Sardinia and Corsica, a rental car is recommended to get to the lesser known beaches away from resorts and tourists. Also, aim for the shoulder season of June or September as the islands flood with European tourists at the height of the summer.

A large, bright sun is positioned in the upper center of the frame, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the sky with a warm, golden-yellow light. Below the sun, a dark green rectangular box contains the word "Africa" in a white, serif font. The bottom half of the image shows a vast desert landscape with rolling sand dunes and scattered small, dark shrubs under the same warm, hazy light.

Africa





Climb Mt. Kilimanjaro

Some people dream of summiting the world's tallest peaks. We're not those people. But Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is a trek that is feasible for those who dream of climbing but don't want to deal with pesky things like ice sheets and massive oxygen deprivation and crevasses that will eat you alive. Or something like that.

Fly into Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Spend a night there and pick up a flight the next day to Kilimanjaro Airport, in Moshi. There, you will meet up with your guide. Yes, it's true - the ascent to Kili must be done in the company of a licensed guide and porter. Fortunately, there are lots of companies who offer the service, from the rugged to the (somewhat) luxurious. The time on the mountain differs by trek, but the minimum is five days. If you are prone to altitude sickness (or just want to be on the safe side), choose a six day trek. Upon your return to Moshi and Dar es Salaam, spend any remaining time exploring the city, and relishing in your feat of climbing the tallest mountain in Africa.

Kenya Safari

An African safari is an experience that every traveller should have at some point in life, but the logistics can be daunting. Here's a relatively simple itinerary, done with the help of a guided tour, that is on offer from many providers around the world.

Fly into Nairobi, Kenya, where you will meet up with your guide and fellow travelers. The next day, travel into the heart of the Masai Mara Wildlife Reserve. Most game drives are done in the evening and early morning when the animals are at their most active, so even on long travel days, there will be time to see animals when you arrive at a destination for the night. Another likely stop on your itinerary will be Nakuru National Park home to some of the world's most rare rhinos.

Finally, many Kenyan safaris will stop in Amboseli National Park, at the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro. The snow capped peak provides a fantastic backdrop for photos, and the abundance of animals continues here. Finally, make your way back to Nairobi, where you depart for home.

Rwanda & Uganda Gorilla Trek

For the truly adventurous spirit, a week spent trekking gorillas in the jungle may be the perfect holiday. Like safaris, this type of activity is available with licensed guides only. This should be organized ahead of time, to assure plenty of space on a tour and a reputable company.

Fly into Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Spend a day adjusting to a new time zone by immersing yourself in this surprising city. It's incredibly clean, for one, and has several fantastic attractions and restaurants that are worth a visit. Caplaki Craft Village houses 20-30 permanent booths from local artisans. A visit to Kigali Genocide Memorial should also be on the itinerary, and a well done memorial and museum commemorate the 1994 atrocities here. Heaven Restaurant and The Bistro both score big from visitors.

On the designated day, meet up with your tour guide and head to Volcanoes National Park. From there, daily treks will take you to see golden monkeys, a rare breed, and of course, the famed gorillas. The time spent near these giants is limited to spare them the constant observation. Some trips move on to Queen Elizabeth National Park (in Uganda) where further safari game drives await. Your trip will wrap up in Entebbe, Uganda, or back down in Kigali, from where you will depart.

South Africa Road Trip

It is possible to see the highlights of Africa without an official tour, and a self-guided drive in South Africa is just one of those adventures. Start and end your journey in Cape Town. There, you can visit Table Mountain, take a swim with seals or sharks (or both, who are we to judge?), see Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was jailed), or even take a local cooking class.

After a couple of days in the city, pick up a rental car (we've seen rates as low as £20/\$30 per day). The major scenic driving route in South Africa is called The Garden Route. A five-day round trip is sufficient to drink, eat and sightsee comfortably. Drive east to Knysna during the first day. On day 2, take a day trip to Plettenberg Bay and Tsitsikamma National Park, returning to Knysna in the evening. The next day, head inland via the scenic Outeniqua Pass to Oudtshoorn. Up here you can visit an ostrich farm, those crazy looking dinosaur birds that fascinate us. Take a long day to drive from Oudtshoorn to Karoo National Park, stopping at Cango Caves on the way for a walk around. On the way back to Cape Town the next day, stop at the Victorian village of Matjiesfontein and consider a winery visit (or two!) in Breede River Valley.

UAE & the Seychelles

The UAE is now positioning itself as the gateway to the world, with the Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports growing at an alarming pace, making it a perfect destination for an extended stopover. Dubai and Abu Dhabi are only a few hours apart by car, so you could visit both over the course of a few days, or spend the whole time in just one. In Abu Dhabi, make sure to take in the Grand Mosque and tour the Emirates Palace hotel, complete with an ATM that dispenses gold bars! In Dubai, you can enjoy luxurious in the shadow of the ever-changing skyline or have afternoon tea at the top of the world's largest building, Burj Khalifa.

Using the excellent airline connections, hop on a 4 hour flight south to the remote islands of the Seychelles, lying in the middle of the Indian Ocean. It is a true paradise, with turquoise waters and pristine beaches. It's likely you will spend lots of time relaxing at one of the many beautiful resorts that dot every scenic point of the main island. But, if you choose to get offsite, every beach on the island is public by law so spend some time beach hopping around the island. Make sure to check out Anse Intendance next to the Banyan Tree Resort, or Sunset Beach for quality snorkeling. The sun can be intense, so make sure to bring plenty of sunscreen!

