

# TOP

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If you're in need of a little wanderlust inspiration, the experts at **Flight Centre** have rounded up the hottest destinations for the upcoming twelve months. You won't see any mention of Cuba, Iceland or Sri Lanka – they're so 2016! It's time for some brand new adventures.

# TRAVEL DESTINATIONS FOR 2017

## 1 Nha Trang, Vietnam

Nha Trang is set to become Vietnam's next "it" destination, thanks to recently launched direct flights from HK Express. Once a quiet sleeping village, this popular resort town is home to one of the most beautiful bays in the world – think pristine beaches, turquoise waters and fantastic scuba dives. Find your inner Zen at the ancient Po Nagar Cham Towers, with its intricately carved Buddhist temples, before heading for a mud bath in Nha Trang's famed hot springs.



## 2 Okinawa, Japan

Say *konichiwa* to a whole new side of Japan in the shape of Okinawa, with Dragonair and HK Express offering direct flights to Naha and Ishigaki respectively. This series of islands has its own laidback charm, with a sub-tropical climate that promotes an array of flora and fauna. Snorkelling and diving opportunities abound, with manta rays, hammerhead sharks and stunning coral reefs all waiting to be discovered, while captivating elements of Okinawa's past include the magnificent Shuri Castle and the fascinating Prefectural Museum.



## 3 Lisbon & Porto, Portugal

Portugal is the latest hipster hotspot du jour, a creative and cultural hub with a sun-soaked Mediterranean climate to boot. Discover the *azulejo*-tiled delights of the country's capital Lisbon, with its scenic hillsides, stunning architecture and vibrant markets. Portugal's second biggest city, Porto, is just as captivating, with spectacular baroque churches and lively tavernas waiting around every cobble-stoned corner. Foodies rejoice – Portuguese cuisine is divine and a freshly baked *pastel de nata* (egg tart) is a must-eat.

## 4 Palawan, The Philippines

With its beaches often voted the best in the Philippines, Palawan is an island idyll that plays host to alluring aquamarine waters, soft white sands, secret lagoons and dramatic limestone cliffs – the kind of tropical paradise you thought only existed in your imagination. Go diving amongst WWII shipwrecks in the awe-inspiring Coron reefs, befriend amazing exotic creatures in the wildlife sanctuaries or get the adrenaline pumping with a kayaking adventure.



## 5 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Turn your Europe-bound Etihad Airways' stopover into something more special with a stay in Abu Dhabi. Sprawling malls and bustling markets provide plenty of shoppotunities, but there's definitely more to Abu Dhabi – including the sweeping Corniche waterfront and striking Sheikh Zayed Mosque. For something totally different, have a flutter at the camel races or brave a rollercoaster ride on the dunes with a desert safari.



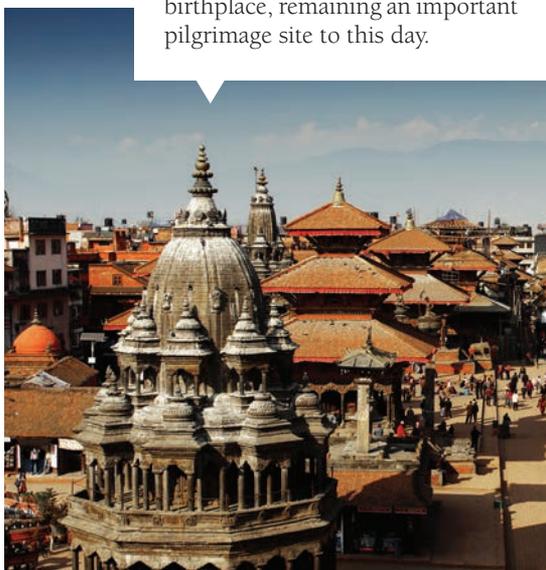


## 6 Java & Komodo Island, Indonesia

There's more to Indonesia than Bali's beaches. Culture vultures should add Central Javanese temple Borobudur to their relic Rolodex; it's a UNESCO World Heritage site as compelling as Angkor Wat, but more serene. Meanwhile, East Java's Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park boasts Indonesia's only sand sea, alongside Mount Bromo, an active volcano within the Pacific Basin's "Ring of Fire"; and Komodo Island is home to the eponymous "Dragon" (actually the world's largest lizard) and some of the world's best diving.

## 7 Nepal

Nestled on the world's rooftop, Nepal offers visitors an experience that is literally breathtaking, due to both its stunning scenery and its high altitude. Eight of the world's ten tallest mountains, including Everest itself, can be found in Nepal, so pack your hiking boots for a trek led by a fearless and knowledgeable Gurkha guide. Elsewhere, the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lumbini is known as Buddha's birthplace, remaining an important pilgrimage site to this day.



## 8 Hawaii, USA

Aloha! Rightly famous for its jaw-dropping sunsets, rugged island landscape and pristine beaches, gorgeous Hawaii has been a US state since 1959, but proudly retains its own distinct culture. Whether you're looking to sharpen up your surfing skills, relax on a family bucket-and-spade beach break, get romantic on your honeymoon or test your limits with some adrenaline-soaked activities (shark-diving and zip-lining, anyone?), Hawaii has all you need.



## 9 Luang Prabang, Laos

With HK Express set to launch a direct service to Luang Prabang soon, there's never been a better time to plan a short trip to Laos. Luang Prabang's well-preserved traditional architecture sits cheek-by-jowl with its French colonial buildings, resulting in a serene and atmospheric city stroll. Go temple-hopping and take in the iconic bird-shaped roof of Wat Xieng Thong, or set an early alarm and catch sunrise at Mount Phousi, before breakfasting on the freshest fruit of your life from the town's vibrant morning market.



## 10 Tel Aviv, Israel

With the news that Cathay Pacific is launching direct flights to Tel Aviv in 2017, we have yet another dynamic destination for our Middle Eastern bucket list. This vibrant metropolis boasts a sun-soaked coastline, hip and happening art scene and gourmet delights galore. Top of the to-do list is a free walking tour around the city's incredible Bauhaus architecture, balmy beaches for satisfying your inner sun-seeker, and the abundance of galleries, museums, cafés and boutiques.

### ... And one for the diary: Palau

If ten destinations aren't enough to sate your wanderlust, then the eleventh may! This far-flung archipelago in the western Pacific is accessible from Hong Kong via connecting flights in Japan, Korea or Taiwan. Palau merges Japanese, Micronesian and Melanesian influences into a unique cultural blend, with unforgettable flora and fauna to boot. Head to Jellyfish Lake – without the threat of predators, the lake's jellyfish population has evolved without stings, making this the most memorable swim of your life. *α*

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