

Vacationers who desire to optimize their travel experiences often plan their international holidays to coincide with the most favorable climatic season in the destinations they visit. Winter, 21 December - 21 March, is one of the best times to visit the following countries: Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf; India and Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka near the Indian continent; Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam in Southeast Asia; Libya and Tunisia in North Africa; and Ethiopia and the East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Until only a couple of decades ago the Arabian Gulf states of Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates might have seemed unlikely tourist destinations. Today, when one thinks of the Arabian Gulf, it is often the skyline of Dubai in the U. A. E. which first comes to mind. Dubai, with its famous luxury hotels, its creek and its well-executed and high-tech Dubai Museum built in and under an old fort, is rapidly developing into a world-class tourist destination. On the other hand, some places in Bahrain and Oman are also worthy of a visit during the winter season when both temperatures and humidity are relatively low in the Gulf. In Bahrain, for instance, one can spend an interesting day driving a rental car around the island's circular road. The Bahrain Museum and fort in Manama, oil wells and even prehistoric burial mounds can all be seen there. Likewise, the harbor and town of Muscat, Oman are very picturesque; and from there one can drive up a broad wadi into the interior of Oman to the old capital of Nizwa and back the same day.

The Indian subcontinent is also best visited during the winter. In India itself the so-called "Golden Triangle" is included in many tourist itineraries. The triangular route begins in the capital of New Delhi and leads to Agra, home to the Taj Mahal. From there travelers continue to Jaipur, Rajasthan's most



INTERESTING WINTER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS FROM EGYPT



renowned city with its Amber Palace and Moghul-inspired Palace of the Winds, before returning to Delhi. Tiny Bhutan, lying high in the Himalayas to India's northeast, is an expensive but fascinating Buddhist kingdom accessible for tourists by air from India. In contrast, one can take a very inexpensive winter holiday in warm Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), off India's southeast coast. Sri Lanka offers interesting Buddhist temples and ancient ruins in addition to good shopping and nice beaches.

But tourists who desire world-class diving and snorkeling should look no further than the Maldives, a republic consisting of nearly 1,200 islands stretching south beyond the equator from India's southwest coast. Over 90 resorts have been constructed now on islands in the Maldives. This underwater paradise is best reached by air from Cairo via Dubai or Doha.

The winter months are the best time to travel to diverse Southeast Asia. Thailand normally turns out to be one of most people's very favorite countries. Fabulous sightseeing and wonderful shopping in urban Bangkok combine well with marvelous beach hotels in the south and also with the rural north. In Chiang Mai and other northern towns not only can one view fascinating crafts being made by hand, but one can also take