



CHRISTMAS IN TANZANIA

An African beach safari for all the family

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MOUNTAIN MAGIC

Ski the Californian way in the Sierra Nevada

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THE BIG SIX

Mexican hideaways to suit every budget

P.13

BEIJING BLING

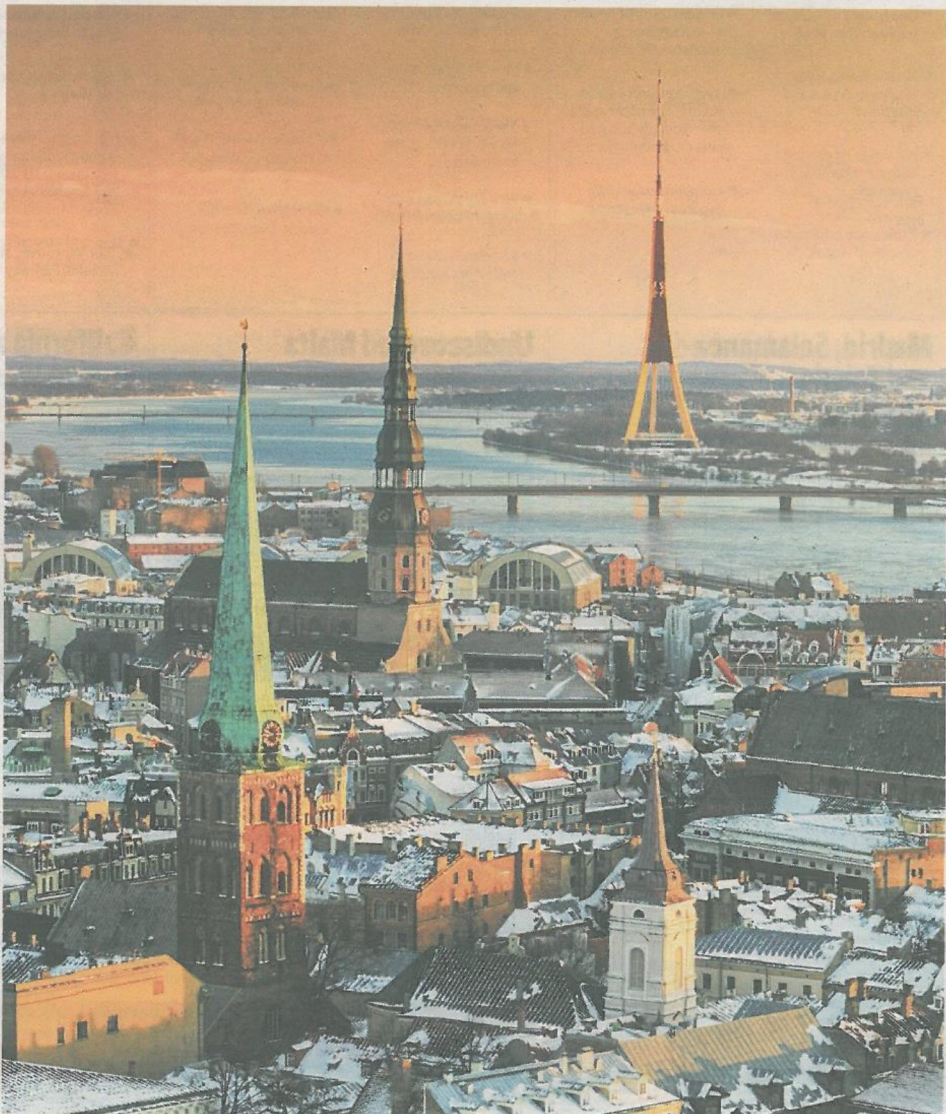
A deluxe stay in the Chinese capital

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LOOKING UP IN LATVIA

Spend 48 hours in Riga: European Capital of Culture for 2014

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Travel Agenda

Where to go and what to know



1. Canada fly

Hot on the heels of WestJet's air link from Dublin to St John's in Newfoundland, Canada, the French budget airline Europe Airpost has announced a summer link from Glasgow to Halifax. The Scotland-to-Nova-Scotia route will be served by a narrow-bodied 737. Tickets, from £499 return, are due to go on sale early in January.

europeairpost.com

2. Oz Link

Competition to the Western Australian capital, Perth, will intensify from 15 July when Etihad launches a non-stop daily service from its hub in Abu Dhabi in competition with Emirates and Qatar Airways. There are connections from Heathrow and Manchester. Perth is the airline's fourth Australian destination after Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

ethad.com

3. Cruise news

Aqua Expeditions has opened reservations for its third luxury vessel, the *Aqua Mekong*, which will start cruising South-east Asia's main waterway from September. The boat is the company's first foray into Asia, following on from its two existing Amazon vessels. Three-day cruises from US\$3,000pp (£2,000). To book, call 0808 189 0361.

aquaexpeditions.com

4. Rail rebrand

As *The Independent* revealed earlier this month, Rail Europe has become Voyages-sncf.com, with a re-designed website that claims to make it easier to book train travel across the Continent. The rail-booking service has been the UK representative of the state-owned French company, SNCF, for more than a century. A UK-based call centre and booking office in London will remain.

uk.voyages-sncf.com

5. Wild side

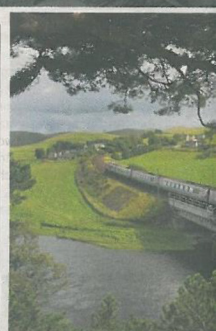
Naturetrek has announced a range of new wildlife tours for 2014 that span from a 12-day "Western Madagascar" trip, where you'll encounter lemurs and the Malagasy mongoose (departs 28 October; £4,695pp), to the 15-day exploration of the birds and mammals of India's Ladakh region (departs 3/4 July; £2,895pp). Flights included.

naturetrek.co.uk

6. Island life

Thai hotel chain, Anantara, has opened its first luxury resort in Africa. Located in the Bazaruto archipelago – 30km off the coast of Mozambique – it offers 44 thatched villas, with four-poster beds and sunken baths, surrounded by tropical gardens. The Portuguese-influenced Golfinho Restaurant promises to be a centrepiece.

bazaruto.anantara.com



TRAVEL CHALLENGE WINTER SUN IN BARBADOS

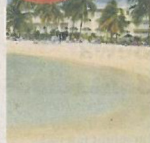
Each week we invite three companies to offer their best deal for a specific break. Today: winter sun in Barbados after Christmas. Prices are per person, based on two sharing. Each includes a week's accommodation and Virgin Atlantic flights from Gatwick on 25 January.

£1,048
Virgin Holidays



Includes flights, transfers and room-only accommodation at the Silver Point Hotel. "Set on Silver Rock Beach, the hotel is a great choice for watersports enthusiasts due to the trade winds from the Atlantic east coast," says Hazel Fordham (0844 557 3859; virginholidays.co.uk).

£1,164
Kuoni



Includes flights, transfers and room-only accommodation at the Amaryllis Beach Resort. "This winter-sun escape lets you relax on an enviable stretch of sandy beach, with the capital Bridgetown only five minutes away," says Nicky Betts (01306 747008; kuoni.co.uk).

£2,399
Caribbours



Includes flights, airport lounge access, transfers and an all-inclusive stay at Crystal Cove. "This wonderfully warm and vibrant resort oozes Caribbean charm and offers you excellent value for money," says Katherine Hobbs (020 7751 0660; caribtours.co.uk).