

GEAR & GUIDES

12 Zika-Free Destinations to Travel to This Year

There are still a plethora of countries free of the mosquito-born virus.

JUDY KOUTSKY AND MEREDITH CAREY

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While **Zika reached its peak** in 2016, the virus is *still* out there and continues to pose risks to pregnant women and couples looking to become pregnant. With **each warning about the dangers of the Zika virus**, it may be tempting to postpone your trip to Central or South America, or the Caribbean. But keep those vacation days blocked off on your calendar: All three locales are home to at least some countries not currently affected by the outbreak, making them a safe choice a vacation without Zika for worried travelers. Check out these getaways across Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific, which are all Zika free as of today, and keep an eye out on the **CDC's website** for updates.

This article has been updated with new information.



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Azores

This **Atlantic island chain** two-thirds of the way to Portugal appeals to adventure travelers, beach bums, and Europhiles alike. The nine volcanic islands use the euro and speak Portuguese, but more importantly, offer hikes through hedges of blue hydrangeas, wine-tasting tours, and breath-taking whale-watching lookouts. Really, you can't go wrong.



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Cyprus

European tourists have flocked to Cyprus's beaches for years, and Americans are finally catching on. With average daily temperatures in the 80s, Cyprus is beach-friendly as late as October—but pack a sweater, as nights can get chilly. If you tire of the Mediterranean sun and sand (yeah right), you can head further inland into pine- and almond-filled countryside.

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Madagascar

If you seek an indulgent African beach vacation, opt for [Madagascar](#). With opulent new resorts like Time + Tide Miavana and strong tourism infrastructure falling into place, the world's fourth-largest island is one of those spots you'll want to visit before your friends catch the hint. Plus, the bug-eyed lemurs, geckos, giant moths, and other exotic fauna make it a hot spot for environmental travelers, too.

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Bermuda

With pink sand beaches and pastel-colored homes, Bermuda is a pristine island with a decidedly British feel. The beautifully preserved town of St. George, Britain's oldest town in the New World, is a World Heritage Site that *also* happens to have world-class shopping. Looking to practice your swing? The island is known for its golf, boasting some of the most challenging—and scenic—courses in the world. Action junkies will also want to snorkel around the shipwrecks off Elbow Beach, and hit Bermuda's 22+ miles of bike trails.

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Uruguay

Head to Uruguay's interior and stay in an “estancia”—a working ranch—to experience **gaucho life** in the pampas. You'll get an insider's look at how these famous cowboys ranch cattle and herd sheep in what are essentially the dude ranches of South America. Also head to the coast where the city's capital, Montevideo, boasts a beautiful 19th-century opera house, Teatro Solís, on the outskirts of the old town, Ciudad Vieja, also rich with beautiful old churches, Art Deco buildings, and museums.

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Chile

Chile really does have something for everyone. Sightsee in urban Santiago, drive into the nearby Andes for world class skiing, head into the [Atacama Desert](#) to stargaze with astronomers, or pass through Chile's vineyards to get to the coastal towns of Viña del Mar and [Valparaíso](#) Oh, and did we forget to mention trekking in Patagonia or visiting Easter Island? This South American country is about as diverse as it gets.

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Seychelles

It's hard to go wrong on this Indian Ocean archipelago, due north of Madagascar. Traipse over the dramatic rock formations along Anse Source d'Argent on La Digue Island, explore the dense tropical forests of Praslin islands, snorkel with sea turtles, or zen out at [private island resorts like the new Six Senses Zil Pasyon](#). If you were thinking about heading to the Maldives (where Zika is endemic), the Seychelles are a comparable but Zika-free option.

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San Diego, California

You don't have to go far to enjoy a beachy vacation. Thanks to average temperatures in the 60s, you likely won't spend your day in [San Diego](#) tanning in the sun or [splashing around in the Pacific Ocean](#). But with the right packing (bring layers and light sweaters), you can make an easy and warm-ish escape from the brutal winter weather. Make sure to stop by Stone Brewing, the second most-visited destination in the area after San Diego Wild Animal Park.

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Maui, Hawaii

The diversity of activities, from lounging on the beach with no plans to snorkeling, hiking, and swimming in waterfalls all day, means there's something for everyone on [Maui](#), the second-largest Hawaiian island. Beach bums should check out the [#1 resort in the state](#), the [Hotel Wailea](#), while the outdoorsy types should head out on the [Road to Hana](#), a 68-mile scenic route that hits most of Maui's most striking natural features, like the Seven Sacred Pools.

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Sydney, Australia

Looking for a more urban beach adventure? Head to **Sydney**, where you'll want to **check out the rock pools** in addition to the classic sandy beaches like Bondi (pictured). Australia hasn't seen the spread of Zika like its Southeast Asian neighbors, so you'll be able to enjoy the **serious food scene** out on the patio without worrying about mosquitoes ruining your vacation. Doesn't hurt that while we're bracing for winter weather, Aussies are enjoying the heat of the summer—all you have to do is master the **14-hour flight**.

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Mallorca

In the summer, Mallorca is packed with European tourists. But, in the winter, you'll find the classic Mediterranean blue waters, mountain views, and quaint cobblestone streets without the crowds. The lowest temperatures of the year hit in January and fluctuate in the 50s, so it still won't be too frigid for beach walks and boat rides.

David Kleyn / Alamy Stock Photo

New Zealand

New Zealand's South Island is seeing a big boom in tourism [thanks to some breathtaking Instagrams](#) of the mountains, but the beaches and [wine regions](#) have caught our eye. You may want to skip this if you're looking for a relaxing babymoon, but adventurous