

# Thanksgiving Getaway: Going Someplace Other Than Grandmother's House

There's no place like home for the holidays. But there's also no place like a half-empty beach resort in shoulder season, or a European city right before Christmas.



Instead of Thanksgiving dinner at home, take in the views of Rome. By November, regions up and down Italy have settled into one of their most tranquil period of the year, meaning less crowds at cheaper prices. Susan Wright for The New York Times

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For millions of Americans, Thanksgiving means Dad’s famous gravy, tryptophan-fueled naps and chance encounters with former high school classmates. For others, Thanksgiving means tropical cocktails and butter-soft sand.

Although there’s no place like home for the holidays, as the song goes, there’s also no place like a half-empty beach resort in shoulder season or a European city right before Christmas. Just be mindful about when you fly: According to Google, flight searches over the last two years indicate that Friday, November 22; Wednesday, November 27; and Sunday, December 1 will be the busiest airport days.

Here are five ideas for bucking tradition, ponying up for plane tickets and taking advantage of a short workweek to plan an unforgettable destination Thanksgiving— in many cases, without sacrificing the turkey, stuffing or gravy.



The view over the Roman Forum, towards the Arch of Titus and the Colosseum, in Rome. Hotel rates in the Italian capital drop at the start of November. Susan Wright for The New York Times

# Italy

**WHO SHOULD GO** Anyone in search of the unfamiliar in a well-trodden destination will find magic in off-season Italy.

**WHY NOW** By November, regions up and down Italy have settled into one of their most tranquil periods of the year. Hotel rates in Rome tend to drop starting November 3, two days after All Saints' Day; booking a hotel around Thanksgiving instead of four weeks prior can yield savings up to 32 percent, according to Google.

**HOW TO GET THERE** Alitalia and its SkyTeam alliance partners (Delta, Air France) operate multiple daily flights from major East Coast cities (New York, Boston, Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Miami) to Rome, Venice and Milan. Once you arrive, Trenitalia makes rail travel a breeze, and sites like Omio (formerly GoEuro) can cobble together domestic itineraries from trains, busses and flights.

**WHERE TO STAY AND PLAY** Ski families can get a head start on the season in the Aosta Valley, in Northwestern Italy. A high altitude gives the Alpine resort Breuil-Cervinia good snow as early as October, all against the backdrop of Monte Cervino, what Italians call The Matterhorn. The range of accommodations there include [Aux Pieds Du Roi](#), a self-described “eco maison” with funky interior design and easy access to the lifts (rooms start around \$461/night).

Farther south, in Rome, the [Roma Jazz Festival](#) runs from November 1 to December 1. Book one of the 18 art-filled rooms and suites at [Hotel Vilòn](#), a renovated 16th-century palazzo; the hotel (from around \$646 a night) will offer a Thanksgiving alla Romana dinner at Adelaide, its restaurant. Also in Rome, large families can rent dreamlike private accommodations — say, a palace with Italian Renaissance frescoes or a penthouse overlooking Piazza Venezia — from [The Grand House](#) and hire the Michelin-starred chef Cristina Bowerman to cook Thanksgiving dinner.

Finally, in the town of Fasano, in Puglia (one of The Times's [52 Places to Go in 2019](#)), three- and seven-day wellness retreats at [Borgo Egnazia](#) (from around \$296 a night) include therapeutic sessions with a “Master of Laughter,” spa treatments and more. Around Thanksgiving, a twinkly holiday market opens in the resort's on-site piazza. In Gagliano del Capo, visitors can immerse themselves in Apulian culinary traditions through orecchiette-making classes and vineyard and olive-grove tours at [Palazzo Daniele](#). In November, rates at the new nine-suite boutique hotel, which is housed in a 150-year-old palazzo, start around \$260 a night — less than half the summertime price tag.