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Book now

Sophie Butler suggests seven trips to start planning this week

Russian revelations with our experts

When: September 2016
Why book now? Our three Russia experts – broadcaster John Simpson, *War and Peace* screenwriter Andrew Davies and Moscow correspondent Roland Oliphant – have considerable pulling power, making this Telegraph Tour one of the most popular in our portfolio and likely to sell out fast.

What to book: The 15-day cruise aboard the boutique Scenic Tsar rivership begins in St Petersburg and sails to Moscow, with sightseeing in both cities as well as stops at Mandrogi and Kizhi Island (pictured), with their ornate wooden architecture; Goritsy, with its Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery;



and the ancient city of Yaroslavl, a Unesco World Heritage Site. In the two major cities and at points along the way, our experts will bring to life the politics of Russia and the opulence of the tsars. To book, call 03330 059164 or visit telegraph.co.uk/tt-russiacruise.

Winter sunshine in the Canaries

When: November and December 2016
Why book now? Take advantage of “book by” offers on winter departures, meaning you can look forward to a week of cut-price warmth when temperatures are turning chilly at home.

What to book: Classic Collection Holidays (0800 294 9323; classic-collection.co.uk) is offering seven nights' b&b at the five-star Princessa Yaiza Hotel in Lanzarote from £944 per person (a saving of £54 each), if booked before July 31 for departure on November 11.

Also available is seven nights' b&b at the four-star Hotel Colon Guanahani in Tenerife (above), costing from £672 per person –



a saving of £41 per person – and departing on December 11. These packages include flights from Gatwick and private transfers. Also consider Sovereign (01293 762400; sovereign.com) for winter sun discounts at luxury hotels in the Canary Islands.

Christmas and New Year in the UK

When: December 2016
Why book now? Christmas and New Year may seem a long way off, but rooms for the best festive packages offered by some of our expert-recommended UK hotels are being snapped up quickly. Some of them are already sold out.

What to book: More than half the rooms at The Priory Hotel in Wareham, Dorset (right; full review at telegraph.co.uk/tt-wareham-priory), are already booked for its three-night Christmas celebrations (from £826.50) and the hotel anticipates more bookings in early September when the schools go back, so act now if you are interested. There are no rooms left for the New Year celebrations,



though the hotel is running a cancellation list. The Grove of Narberth in Pembrokeshire (01834 860915; telegraph.co.uk/tt-narberthgrove) also reports that its Christmas Escape (from £725) is already booking well. Prices are per person, based on two sharing.

The Palio in Siena, Tuscany

When: August 2016.
Why book now? Holidays in Europe this summer are going to be more expensive because of reaction to the Brexit vote – but the pound is still stronger against the euro than it was five years ago, and there may be fewer crowds than usual at popular events.

The first of Siena's bi-annual horse races took place earlier this month and the second will be on Tuesday, August 16. Although standing room is free, seated tickets need to be booked well in advance. If you are willing to dig deep, there are still packages available staying at top hotels which include prime spots overlooking Piazza del Campo for a grandstand view of the race.

What to book: A Palio package at five-star Castel Monastero in Monastero d'Ombrone (0039 0577 5700 001;

castelmonastero.com – see also our review at telegraph.co.uk/tt-castelmonastero) starts at €600 (£500) per person per night including breakfast, dinner at the hotel, transfers and window seats in a house overlooking the square.

Five-star Castello di Casole (0039 0577 961501; castellodicasole.com – see our review at telegraph.co.uk/tt-castellodicasole), a 50-minute drive from Siena, offers a b&b package including suite accommodation, a three-course dinner at the hotel, a three-hour tour of Siena, dinner in a *contrada* (city quarter) and balcony seats near *la mossa* (the start and finish line) from €850 (£710) per person, per night.

Both based on two sharing and require a minimum stay of three nights.



Small group tours to Burma

When: October 2016 to March 2017.

Why book now: You need to visit Burma (Myanmar) between October and March for the best weather and to see the main festivals. Interest is high and on the rise, so it's essential to book early.

What to book: Ten of the November and January departures for the 14-day Burma Highlights tour offered by Explore (01252 888421; explore.co.uk) are gone or nearly sold out. But there are still departures in February, with prices from £2,349 (including flights).

InsideBurma Tours (0117 244 3265; insideburmatours.com) offers a 13-night Beautiful Burma trip from £2,675 (excluding flights)



which combines the highlights – Mandalay, Bagan (above), Inle and Yangon – with more offbeat cultural experiences. Kuoni (01306 747008; kuoni.co.uk) offers an 11-night Burma Encounter tour; departing on dates between October 9 and February 12 2017.

Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica for singles

When: February and March 2017.
Why book now? Solo travellers usually face off-puttingly high charges for single-room occupancy. Therefore, in those rare cases where the charge is waived, holidays are in high demand and tend to sell out very quickly.

What to book: Steppes Travel (01285 601751; steppestravel.co.uk) is offering a limited number of supplement-free places for solo travellers on a selection of its trips. These include three spaces remaining on the 14-day Guatemala (right) and Honduras – the Maya World group tour departing on February 25 2017. With prices starting at £3,995, this represents a saving of £495. Further no-



supplement tours will be announced later this year. Meanwhile, Cox and Kings (020 3582 7649; coxandkings.co.uk) is offering a 12-day Costa Rica Experience tour, departing on March 1, which costs £2,545 with no single supplement.

Round-the-world voyage

When: January 2018.
Why book now? Top suites and single cabins are the first to be snapped up on classic, once-in-a-lifetime world cruises. Book now, however, and you will still discover a reasonable amount of choice available on a range of 2018 departures.

What to book: Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines (0845 314 2924; fredolsencruises.com) offers a 108-night Wonders of the World voyage on Black Watch (right), departing from Southampton on January 5 2018. This 423-berth ship has 43 single cabins but availability is already limited for the Ocean View category. Balcony and Superior suites are selling out fast; prices



start at £9,999. P&O Cruises (0843 374 0111; pocruises.com) offers a 104-night circumnavigation on Aurora, departing January 9, from £16,399; while Cunard (0843 374 2224; cunard.co.uk) has a 120-night voyage aboard Queen Mary 2, which departs January 10.

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