

Travel the SNOW GLOBE

Take a city break in Winter and you'll find museums less crowded, restaurant tables easier to bag and – never to be underestimated – the locals very pleased to see you, says Travel Editor David Wickers

Picture perfect **ZURICH**

In Winter, the cobbled streets of Zurich's Old Town are as pretty as a picture. The neighbouring Niederdorf quarter is home to the city's 50ft Christmas tree and there are five Christmas markets serving up everything from toasted nuts and fondue to local Swiss crafts.

Order a glühwein or steaming hot chocolate and wrap yourself in one of the blankets that hang over the seats outside Zurich's cafés and gaze at the River Limmat and Lake Zurich as the Winter sun bounces

off the water. Then head to the Kunsthaus Museum of Modern Art, and the trendy Zurich West area.

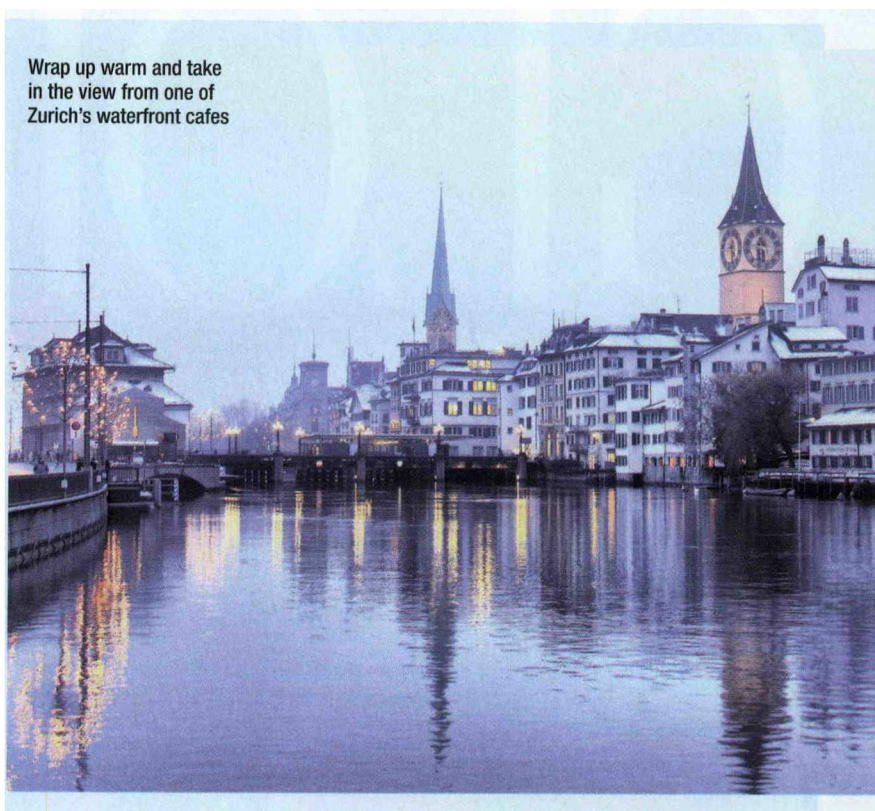
Zurich's very own mountain, the Uetliberg, stands 2,850 feet above sea level and offers superb views of the city's rooftops. Day excursions into the Alps are also available: to Mount Rigi, for example, and the mammoth Jungfrauoch (11,500 feet above sea level), which you ascend by cog train.

* The Kameha Grand Zurich (kamehagrandzuerich.com) has doubles from £136. Flights with Swiss (swiss.com) from £147 return. For more details, visit myswitzerland.com.

Nathalie Bonney

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Wrap up warm and take
in the view from one of
Zurich's waterfront cafes



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The Rhaetian Railway
meanders through
stunning alpine
scenery



Elegant **ST MORITZ**

They say you are on top of the world in St Moritz – and this most glamorous of Swiss ski resorts certainly makes you feel that way. Even the rail journey from Zurich airport is euphoric – what lies ahead is a trip for which the words Gob and Smacking were made, the little red trains of the Rhaetian Railway snaking their way around and through mountains, along viaducts and past glaciers.

At St Moritz, liveried chauffeurs jostle at the station to collect their well-heeled visitors. There are eight five-star hotels and the valley's restaurants boast a total of eight Michelin stars. Winter tourism was born in St Moritz 150 years ago and its genteel charm remains to this day.

Even if you've no intention of skiing its 350km of pistes, there's plenty to do, from dining on mountain restaurant terraces or walking the trails, to simply enjoying the old-fashioned elegance that makes St Moritz unforgettable.

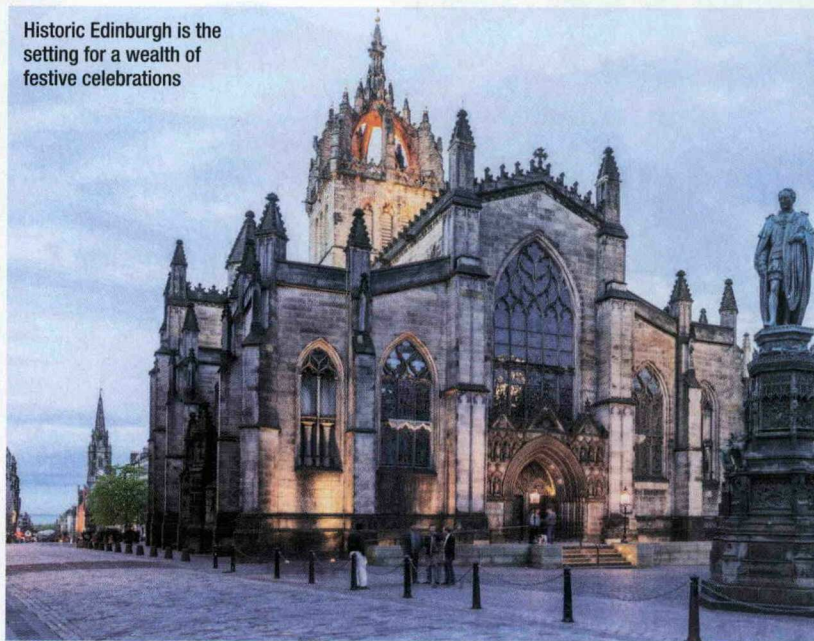
❖ The 100-year-old Carlton (carlton-stmoritz.ch) has doubles from 900 Swiss Francs B&B (around £600), including a 100 SF voucher pp for food and drink. *Michelle Hather*

Medieval **EDINBURGH**

Edinburgh's medieval Old Town, in the shadow of its awesome castle, combined with its passion for festive celebrations that keep going right through to Hogmanay, make the Scottish capital especially appealing in Winter, despite the short daylight hours. You'll find a traditional German market, an ice rink in St Andrew Square around the Melville Monument, and lots of action in Princes Street Gardens, with its street party and celebrations. The city also plays host to spectacular fireworks and a panto – although the planners keep the details under their hats until much nearer the time (and long after we go to press). And Edinburgh has a much better chance of a decent dusting of snow than anywhere down south.

* For more details, go to visitscotland.com.

Historic Edinburgh is the setting for a wealth of festive celebrations



Walkable **COLOGNE**

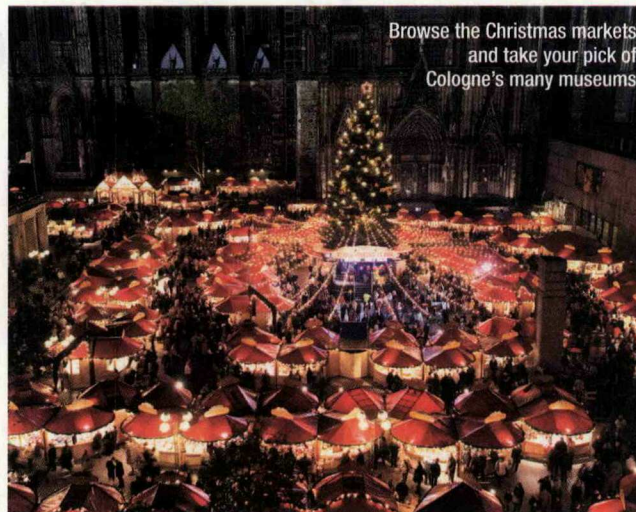
Cologne has been on the tourist map since the Middle Ages when pilgrims came to pay their respects to the bones of the Magi. Their skeletons are still intact and are housed in an ornate gold casket in Cologne's Gothic masterpiece of a cathedral.

Potter around the cobbled Altstadt (Old Town), take a cruise on the Rhine and choose from 40 museums with collections ranging from chocolate to Pop Art. Besides the Rhine, Cologne's equally famous 'Eau' is Eau de Cologne, created in 1709 by Farina, an Italian who wanted to create 'an Italian Spring morning after a shower of rain'. Buy yours from the Farina shop which, as you can probably guess, is also a museum.

Cologne has seven Christmas markets, scores of Nativity scenes, fireworks to welcome in the New Year and a costumed carnival (4-8 February). Rent a costume from Deiters (deiters.de) and join in the revelry.

* Fred Holidays (fredholidays.co.uk) has two nights at the Hotel Cristall from £219pp B&B, including flights. More details: cologne-tourism.com.

Browse the Christmas markets and take your pick of Cologne's many museums



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Fairytale city: Stockholm is shaped by the sea, main picture. Skating is one way of getting around town, inset



Islands of **STOCKHOLM**

Afloat on 14 islands in the Baltic, in deep midwinter Stockholm can seem more like a village than a capital city. Its fairytale skyline, pierced by church spires, overlooks silver seas.


Take a walk beside the icy waters of Nybroviken and over the bridge to the island of Djurgården, Stockholm's vast parkland that (hopefully) will be wrapped in a duvet of snow. It's also home to the Vasa, the Titanic of the 17th century, which sank on its maiden voyage. Then spend the rest of the day in the candlelit cafés, pubs (mulled wine a speciality), and restaurants hidden in the nooks and crannies of Gamla Stan, the historic old town.

* Sunvil Discovery (sunvil.co.uk/sweden) has three nights at the Hotel Freys from £622pp B&B, including flights and transfers.

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Mozart's **SALZBURG**

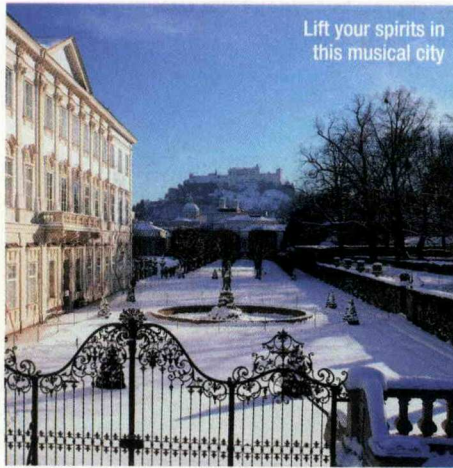
Even in the depths of Winter, Salzburg can feel like a breath of Spring, as its light, airy, playfully baroque architecture, graceful squares, statues, fountains, gardens, courtyards and weathered-green copper domes lift the spirits.

Much of what you see today is the Salzburg of Mozart. His birthplace tops the sightseeing menu, his music likely to be performed somewhere while you're in town. Or book a Mozart-themed dinner in the baroque hall of the St Peter Stiftskeller (stpeter-stiftskeller.at), Europe's oldest restaurant. ❄ Inghams (ingham.co.uk) has three nights at the NH Salzburg City hotel from £509pp B&B, including flights and transfers. 



Mozart is
never far
away

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Lift your spirits in
this musical city

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