

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

CONDÉ NAST

SEPTEMBER 2015

Traveler

Optic 2000

242

ZENITH

**THE
STYLE
& DESIGN
ISSUE**

**Insider's Guides:
Rome / Fez / Berlin / L.A.**

12 Ways to Endless Summer

Your guide to summery getaways that are—secretly, blissfully— even better in autumn. Let the season begin again.

SO YOU MISSED your chance for that epic summer road trip, that languid island holiday, that family ranch vacation you'd been dreaming of all winter long. And now, suddenly, summer is over. Or is it?

In a few of our favorite retreats, September, October, and sometimes November are in fact better—dare we say, even summerier—than June through August. The crowds are fewer, the prices are lower, and the weather is perfect. Of course, for many of us, fall is also the busiest time of year, which is why we polled our editors and travel specialists for trips that maximize your experience in the shortest time possible (okay, along with a few longer breaks). Consider this your green light to slip away—and have another round of summer on us. —ANDREW BESSA *Continued on next page* ➔

An aerial photograph of a coastline in Channel Islands National Park, California. The water is a vibrant blue, transitioning from deep blue to turquoise near the shore. Several people are kayaking in the water. The coastline is rugged with steep cliffs and rocky outcrops. In the distance, a large island with a prominent peak is visible under a clear sky.

Channel Islands National
Park, California—just three
hours from Los Angeles.



1 Channel Islands, California

Unadulterated natural beauty and nearly year-round warm weather just three hours from L.A.

Why Now Despite having some 145 plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world, this five-island archipelago just off the Southern California coast has stayed oddly under-the-radar (Channel Islands National Park ranks forty-first out of the 59 designated national parks for visitation). It's especially great in fall, when water temperatures can reach a comfortable 70 degrees for snorkeling, diving, kayaking, and even swimming. Nature also gets into full swing in autumn as birds migrate and elephant seals arrive to mate.

What's New The National Park Service has big plans for low-impact expansion of trails, transport, and lodging thanks to \$62 million in funding. Meanwhile, park biologists just tagged their hundredth bald eagle.

Action Plan Add the islands onto a long weekend in L.A. by driving 90 minutes northwest to Oxnard and boarding a 70-minute Island Packers ferry for a day-trip to Anacapa Island. Or sign up for one of the company's kayaking journeys or camping overnights (islandpackers.com).

2 Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Deep shoulder-season action, without the crowds, for the outdoor adventurer.

Why Now These days, Rocky Mountain resorts can feel as overrun in summer as in winter, with climbing, fishing, and wildlife-watching as much of a draw as skiing and snowboarding. That makes relatively quiet September ideal for checking out Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks and the nearby national forests.

What's New The rustic-cool Hotel Jackson opened in June off Jackson Hole's town square (hoteljackson.com; from \$225). For live bands and dancing, hit the iconic Silver Dollar Bar at the Wort Hotel and its just-expanded music space (worthotel.com). The area's famed trail system has also gotten more expansive: Key routes (like the southwest portion of Jenny Lake) have been reopened and improved.

Action Plan Take a four-day jaunt in September or early October, devoting a full day to each of the two national parks as well as the nearby Bridger-Teton National Forest, leaving you one extra day to explore downtown Jackson Hole.

3 San Isidro del General, Costa Rica

A hacienda-style resort in Central America's inland mountains.

Why Now Far from the coastal areas that bear the brunt of the season's storms, Costa Rica's rain-forested southern mountains have just-right temperatures in the fall. The arrival of the 864-acre, 60-villa resort AltaGracia this June has also brought luster to the rugged terrain. Ride horses on the resort's private trails, take a flight in an ultralight, and make time for a hot stone treatment at Central America's largest spa (aubergeresorts.com; from \$325).

What's New After operating

independently, AltaGracia came under the management of Auberge Resorts (famous for Napa Valley's beloved Calistoga Ranch) this summer; that means plenty of upgrades, including a food festival in October featuring guest

chefs from Auberge's other properties.

Action Plan Make a long weekend of it: Fly to San José or Liberia, then take a three-hour drive to AltaGracia and settle in for three nights.



FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIAN GAUT; COURTESY ALTAGRACIA