

FILM festival

HOLIDAYS

Whether city slicker or beach bum, add a cinematic twist to your 2012 getaway...

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Foodies go on cooking holidays and animal lovers safari in Africa. Even paranormal enthusiasts go on ghost breaks, so why can't movie buffs incorporate their favourite pastime into their annual getaway?

If you're suffering from post-Xmas blues, already broken your New Year's resolution and are thoroughly fed up with January's drizzle, you might be eager to plan a holiday to cheer yourself up. If you've been completely uninspired by the plethora of travel features in the Sunday supplements, you could consider going on a film festival holiday.

There are hundreds of film festivals taking place all over the world every month of the year, and in relatively undiscovered destinations. Exploring a far-flung clime and catching a film that's unlikely to hit UK screens for months, if at all, could be the perfect holiday for a film fanatic. And at smaller festivals, there's a good chance you'll find yourself rubbing shoulders with one of the film's stars in a local restaurant.

Going on a film festival holiday will take considerably more organisation than your average charter flight to an all-inclusive, so planning ahead is the key to a successful trip. Remember that you will be in competition with locals, press and the film industry for tickets, so to increase your chances of getting into screenings, read the festival's website thoroughly. It should have all the information you need about their ticketing system, as well as helpful accommodation advice. Make sure you sign up to newsletters and e-bulletins, and as soon as the programme is released, take some time to decide which

films you ideally want to see. Make a reserve list in case your first choice is snapped up, and book your tickets the minute they go on sale.

Don't despair if your favourite film has sold out. Extra screenings are often added at the last minute, and you might even be able to bag a return.

When it comes to accommodation, book well in advance. The bigger and more famous the festival is, the harder it will be to find a bed for the night. Trying to get a room in a centrally located hotel during Cannes is about as easy as getting an audience with the Queen

if you don't work in the film industry, and that's why the beaches of the French Riviera are littered with sleeping bags two weeks in May every year. If you can't find a hotel room, consider renting an apartment with other film fans. Many locals vacate their homes and rent them out to tourists at festival time, and they are often more reasonably priced than hotels. Plus, you might make

some new friends.

There's a wealth of information already out there about the biggies like Cannes, Toronto and Venice, so we've put together a list of festivals you might not know about, taking place in some great holiday destinations.



Sundance □ Park City, Utah **JANUARY**

Sundance, alongside its surly little sister Slamdance, is America's biggest independent film festival and responsible for bringing us hits like *Precious* and *Reservoir Dogs*. Voted one of the best ski resorts by *Ski Magazine*, it's the perfect place to dust the cobwebs off your designer ski boots and strut the slopes. Park City is a Mecca for skiers with an abundance of incredibly light powdery snow. And you never know, one of your indie ski darlings out there might end up doing a *Chalet Girl* snowboard dive into the arms of James Marsden or Bradley Cooper, both likely to be attending to plug *Bachelorette* and *The Words*.

www.sundance.org
www.slamdance.com

Ann Arbor Film Festival □ Touring **MARCH/APRIL**

Get itchy feet if you stay in one place too long? Then hoist up your backpack and follow the trail of this long-running festival as it celebrates its fiftieth birthday this year. In Michigan for ten days, before taking an unusual selection of independent and experimental films around galleries, art house theatres and universities throughout the world from July.

www.aafilmfest.org

International Film Festival of Panama **APRIL**

Sip a cocktail under a palm tree or trek through fifty-thousand acres of rainforest, before checking out the latest hot film in South America's best kept secret. Chosen as the 2003 American Capital of Culture, Panama is showcasing its first ever International Film Festival in April, promising "the best of the international film scene" and the best recent cinema from Latin America. What more could a girl wish for?

www.iffpanama.com

Tribeca Film Festival □ New York **APRIL**

The attraction of a star-studded film festival in one of the greatest shopping cities on the planet needs little explanation. Robert de Niro's brainchild, set up to revitalise Lower Manhattan after 9/11, is a veritable feast for film loving shopaholics. It also attracts a glittering array of big name stars. In attendance last year were Eva Mendes, Naomi Watts, Olivia Wilde and Chloe Sevigny.

www.tribecafilm.com

Ischia Global Film Festival □ Italy **JULY**

Last year Kelly Brook, Michael Fassbender and Gerard Butler all experienced the delights of this intimate festival, located on the beautiful volcanic island of Ischia, just a few miles from Naples and Capri. Films are screened on floating boats and bands play late into the night. It's hoped that the sun will go to the heads of music and film industry bigwigs and great deals will be done during its many beach parties. "It's all about art and friendship," according to founder Pascal Vicedomini.

www.ischiaglobal.com

Melbourne International Film Fest. **AUGUST**
Sydney Underground Film Fest. **SEPTEMBER**

If you're going to spend a whole day on a plane to get to the other side of the world, you might as well stay for a while and catch both of Australia's biggest festivals. The MIFF includes underground, animation and queer strains, while SUFF is dedicated to screening unique, independent, experimental, provocative and uncompromising films."

www.miff.com.au
www.suff.com.au

Stockholm International Film Festival □ Sweden **NOVEMBER**

Scandinavia has been churning out darkly humorous gems for years, and this could be the opportunity to catch some of the best of Nordic Noir in its native setting. *Lonely Planet* named Stockholm the 5th Best City To Travel To in 2012, because Sweden's capital is a beautiful city surrounded by canals, and filled with over one hundred museums standing on narrow cobbled alleyways. The festival showcases big prestige films – *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* opened last year's – and small budget indies from Scandinavia and all over the world.

www.stockholmfilmfestival.se

International Documentary Film Festival □ **Amsterdam** **NOVEMBER**

If factual cinema is your thing, the world's largest documentary festival is just a short hop away. Watch a major international premiere, and soak up the quirky atmosphere of the world's most open minded and relaxed capital city. But beware of the mice that run around inside of the auditoriums.

www.idfa.nl