



On Andros, the northernmost of Greece's Cyclades, spring and fall are prime seasons for walking the island's many trails.

## GROUP CHAT

# Shoulder Season

Three T+L A-List advisors explain how to maximize the not-quite-peak months in their specialty regions.

### WHEN IT HAPPENS

**Cassandra Bookholder, Camelback Odyssey Travel:** "In Australia, May, October, and November are good months between peak and off-season." **Holly Monahan, Ilex Travel:** "There are two in Thailand. The first is roughly the end of March

through mid-May. The second is post-rainy season: September and October." **Mina Agnos, Travelive:** "For the Greek islands, it's April and October. Their off-season—November through March—is shoulder season for the rest of the country."

### THE PERKS

**MA:** "In the off- and shoulder seasons, island ferries operate on a minimal schedule and many coastal resort towns empty out. It's a deal breaker for some, but not for others, because we've got amazing classical sites (ancient Olympia, Delphi, Argolis, ancient Mycenae) that are open all year, plus culture and art cities like Thessaloniki and Athens. Harvest season, which starts mid-November, is a great time

to visit the wineries, and we also have plenty of ski resorts, mostly near the Macedonian and Albanian borders." **HM:** "The second shoulder season is my favorite time to travel in Thailand. After months of rain, everything is lush and water levels are high, so the scenery is very picturesque. Monsoon season isn't nonstop flooding; rather, it's one or two intense but brief storms most days. And in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Chiang Rai, travelers can enjoy cultural touring with fewer tourists and lower prices." **CB:** "Australia is an ideal choice for spring and fall because its varied climate makes for a range of experiences from the top of the country to the south—it just depends on what you want to do. You could dive the Great Barrier Reef in May, which skips cyclone season. In October and November, before it gets too hot or humid, you can go to the desert."

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### LEXICON

## hacker fare (noun)

A flight booking that consists of two one-way fares, rather than a single round-trip ticket.

It's a common misconception that making a round-trip reservation will result in the most affordable price. In fact, booking two one-way tickets, sometimes on different airlines, can occasionally yield a lower total cost. For domestic destinations,

travelers will typically see the greatest savings when booking one-way fares during the winter. For international trips, discounts are usually based on the destination's off-season. Both Kayak and Google Flights display these paired fares automatically

unless the user opts out. (Kayak tags them as "hacker fares," but Google calls them "separate tickets.") Just bear in mind: two separate flights means two distinct reservation codes, even if you depart and return on the same airline. — Talia Avakian