



Whether you're an intrepid **back-packer**, a **seasoned traveller** or just a pleasure seeking **holiday maker**, the number one **chill out** destination for just about everybody has got to be the beach and whatever your **tastes**, your dream beach awaits, the **trick** is finding it.



If there's one golden rule to beach **hopping** it's got to be: know when to go, so we decided to put together a month by month guide to some of the world's best beaches. Helping in the investigation, will be travellers Ian Wright, Shilpa Mehta, Neil Gibson, Megan McCormick, Mark Crowdy "... and me Justine Shapiro."

- For most people in the Northern Hemisphere, the month of January is cold, depressing and a great time to spend somewhere else. Well there is a place that it is hot, sunny, **affordable** and with white sands, and **turquoise** waters.

JANUARY

The climate in January at the Mexico's Yucatan peninsula can be perfect in places like the **ancient** city of Tulum, built by the Mayans, thousands of years ago. Tulum is not just the **site** of a **stunning** beach but home to some very impressive ruins. The city was built between the XI and XV centuries when the Mayan civilization was already in **decline**. Tulum was one of the few cities still occupied when the Spanish arrived.

- Oh! Es la "paradisio", paraíso de México. People like to sleep on the beach.. Oh! Sand! ...
- I really like **zinc** outside all over my body.
- Watch it.
- I love sleeping in a **hammock**, I tried it now and I'm getting used to, it's beautiful, you have to do it.



One of the best things about Tulum is that you can live right on the beach, Dona Mando's Beach Cabannas are only \$10 a night, **washrooms** and other **facilities** are shared, but the neighbours are very friendly.

The best part of this whole room is the carpet, a little sandy carpet and here is my Jesus altar that I bought in Merida and my **mosquito coil** and my mosquito **jungle repellent**, a little travellers **tip**, creating a little mosquito death poison barrier.

FEBRUARY



The Central America and the Caribbean coast lines are **carpeted** with fantastic beaches with just about every description and by February, the **dry season** is **in full swing** making it the perfect time to go.

Despite being one of the loveliest and most peaceful countries in Central America, Costa Rica has only recently become a popular travel destination, and as Neal Gibson discovered, the beaches around the fishing village of Montezuma, are some of the finest.

- Morning in Montezuma, come out here for only two dollars a night, not bad for a sea view.

Determined **to hang on** its natural **asserts**, Costa Rica has maintained a strict eco-friendly policy, the beaches are clean, **laid back** and so far **unspoilt** by big tourist developments.

- There's over 800 miles of coast line in Costa Rica. In the Caribbean side they've got white sand, but here in the pacific side, it's black volcanic sand.
- Montezuma is a fabulous place, I've just come down from Canada, and having lived in the deep freeze for the last 20 years it's like coming home for me.
- All I want to do is just relax, and just.. just to be with part of nature, and not have any stress around me and there is no stress around here.
- Yeah, it is quite good, it's **dirt-cheap**, you can come camp on the beach for nothing... Erm... which we've done right.
- You walk, and you swim and you just enjoy the environment.
- The men here are a little bit *macho* but they're very... very friendly towards ladies.
- People are friendly, people are good.
- Compared to Blackburn, Costa Rica is just... it's just a **brilliant** paradise. It's nice to be here.