In a giant leap to the new Covid-endemic world, travellers departing from 11 countries do not have to serve quarantine when entering Singapore - provided they are flying under the new Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) arrangements.

Conversely, these countries, except for Brunei, now offer quarantine-free travel for travellers arriving from Singapore. For South Korea, the VTL scheme begins on Nov 15.

Overnight, travel-famished Singaporeans have so many places to go and so many choices to make. For the festive wintry season ahead, here are some ideas to warm up your travel plans.

1. Canada - Vancouver (Seattle-Vancouver-Singapore)

Bustling Vancouver's varied winter can mean blue skies and sun one day, then the next day can turn wet and cold. Snow can accumulate overnight but that's a blessing for people headed to its Olympic-class ski slopes, which are about two hours from downtown.

For a rugged, back-to-nature experience, catch a ferry to the massive Vancouver Island and explore pretty towns tucked between creeks and ports.

With nutrient-rich waters, this is the best place in the world to do coldwater diving. I did my dry-suit scuba training there in February two years ago, just before the Covid-19 outbreak, and saw monstrous 2m-long wolf eels.

My ears got gently nibbled by playful sea lions and I wrangled briefly with a Giant Pacific Octopus.

What to do in 14 days: Cosmopolitan Vancouver, with its vast parks, rugged islands and ski slopes, can easily take up two weeks of your time.

For those yearning for big-city adventures, you can conveniently do a combination trip on Singapore Airlines which has a Seattle-Vancouver-Singapore VTL route.

This seasonal flight runs from 4 Dec 2021 till 12 Feb 2022. Start your holiday in Seattle and then make a Vancouver stop-over on the return leg.

2. Denmark - Copenhagen

Like all Scandinavian countries, Denmark is expensive. But it makes up for it with good-looking lanky locals and a minimalist, chic lifestyle.

Winter days are short and cold but Scandinavians avoid blinds and curtains. So we can't help but peek into their houses glowing with warm lights.

The windows are beautifully lit up and decorations hang on the doors - perfect for the cosy culture of the Danes who spend evenings savouring candle-light dinners and soothing music.

What to do in 14 days: My past four trips to Denmark had always included Greenland but I wouldn't advise going there in winter. (Another stunning Danish territory is the Faroe Islands but also keep this in mind for summer).

Nearby Sweden and Norway are both attractive add-on combinations, but unfortunately they are not yet part of the VTL arrangements.

Instead, make do with Denmark's Christmas markets, especially those dotted around the world's oldest amusement park, Tivoli.

Go bar-hopping around the pretty but touristy Nyhavn. Also explore the self-governing block of Christiania, which is centred around a peace-loving bohemian lifestyle.

Also, indulge yourself by dining at contemporary culinary icons such as Noma and Geranium.

Worthy side trips include the medieval town of Ribe and Odense, the birthplace of storyteller Hans Christian Andersen.

And don't go home until you have shopped at luxury department store ILLUM.

3. Germany - Frankfurt and Munich

Wooden huts sprinkled around folksy squares. Lots of half-timbered houses. Heady whiffs of hot spiced wine and sizzling sausages. This is the world of Christmas markets, German style.

Business destination Frankfurt has its fair share of this seasonal pleasure but Munich has more to offer, with its nearby mountains, lakes and dreamy castles.

What to do in 14 days: Fly into Frankfurt and move southwards to Munich for a 650-km road trip.

Along the way, stop over at the venerable university town of Heidelberg and cross its historical bridge; wander through the medieval town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber; soak in the architectural chic of automobile haven Stuttgart (home to Porsche and Mercedes).

End the trip with at least four days for Munich and its romantic countryside.

4. France - Paris

Enough said about C'est Le Vie Paris. It is simply one of the world's most romantic cities, overflowing with delights of lifestyle, fashion, food and history.

Add the architectural masterpieces, museums, galleries and scenic icons - and also the French language which sounds like smoothly flowing wine - and it is hard not to feel mushy in that city.

What to do in 14 days: Down south from Paris, and less than three hours by road or rail, the huge Alsace region features one of the world's prettiest Christmas markets.

Strasbourg's old town of half-timbered medieval houses, with teddy bears hanging from windows, will melt your heart.

Half an hour further south, smaller Colmar is big on charms as well - a Cinderella-meets-Snow-White fairy-tale setting.

Most Christmas markets in Europe end before the day itself, but they stay open until 29 Dec (check this website) in Colmar.

Then head back to Paris for the ritzy New Year's Eve Countdown and fireworks - if Covid restrictions are eased.

5. Italy - Rome and Milan

Snow is rare in both cities but when it rains, it is bitterly cold. Rome becomes quieter as it gets closer to Christmas, as shops and restaurants start to close amid the annual religious fervour and the return to tradition. Tourists are noticeably fewer.

What to do in 14 days: My favourite November-to-January itinerary for Italy focuses on an uncanny combination of gourmet and religious gratification.

It is truffle season, a delight for the umami senses. The season for prized winter white truffles peaks between November and December, and the "tartufo" haven of Alba and Asti are easy train rides from Milan.

Then, work your way south-east towards cultural Florence and Italy's kitchen of Bologna. Three years ago in Nov, I went truffle hunting - amongst thick oak forests an hour away from Florence - with sniffer dogs.

End with Rome with divine moments when you attend the midnight Mass at the Vatican, which welcomes everyone regardless of race, language or religion.

6. Netherlands - Amsterdam

If you are lucky, the canals of Amsterdam may freeze over and the locals will ice-skate between the boats and banks. Otherwise, just join one of the numerous rinks and waltz.

The Netherlands has its fair share of Christmas markets complete with mulled wine, similar to Germany, but its stalls line the canals. Boathouses spill over with merry-makers and may even open up for visitors.

What to do in 14 days: After Amsterdam, drop by lively Groningen for its WinterWelVaart festival, where you hop between historical ships converted into floating galleries and live music venues - all linked within its brightly lit harbour and canals.

And don't forget that the Netherlands, another VTL destination, is just a train ride across from Germany - trip combinations are aplenty.

7. Spain - Barcelona

The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plains - it is safe to say that the weather is sunny in Spain during Europe's winter. The mild weather makes Spain a great place to visit, especially when the droves of tourists are mostly absent.

Having walked the 790-km El Camino de Santiago four times, I have covered little towns from the French Pyrenees border towns of eastern Spain, across its plains and wine regions to the western towns that meet the Atlantic Ocean.

The food, culture and warm hospitality of the rural locals draw me back again and again.

What to do in 14 days: Barcelona is incredibly beautiful and ancient, but also a shade haughty, brimming with the confidence of a cosmopolitan world-class city.

Spend a few days basking in its "devil may care" culture, savour its Mediterranean influences, and figure out why Gaudi is a master even when his work is uncompleted.

Take a train ride or a flight to Bilbao with a short bus ride to the northern gastronomic bastion of San Sebastian.

This seaside town has the most Michelin stars per capita in the whole of Europe. One of my favourites is three-starred Arzak whose founder Juan Mari raved about Singapore Airlines' service and attractive cabin crew when I told him I hailed from the Little Red Dot.

And the old town's blocks of tapas bars - the finger food is called "pinxtos" there - are a stellar attraction for foodies across the world. I would like my last meal to be in San Sebastian.

8. South Korea - Seoul

Despite the sweeping Siberia winds in winter, South Korea will be the hottest destination amongst the current 11 VTL countries.

K-pop, spicy food, delicious BBQ, fashion, beauty, Asian culture, shopping for all ages, shapes and sizes. Most importantly, the country is safe. All these make South Korea an ideal family-friendly destination.

What to do in 14 days: Head out to Korea's largest ski resort Yongpyong, just three hours away by shuttle bus from Seoul. Defrost your limbs in a Jjimjilbang bathhouse.

Warm your soul with Korean chicken ginseng soup (samgyetang) after a night's partying in Gangnam.

And get lost in the fashion alleys of Myeongdong or pick up great bargains at 4am in Dongdaemun.

And my Korean contact confirms that two weeks is sufficient for a nose job.

9. United States - San Francisco; Los Angeles and New York; Seattle

The West Coast is all about sunshine and being carefree. It is associated with surfing dudes - with the exception of Seattle which will be probably wet and cold at this time.

New York on the East will be freezing cold - but its Christmas Day Parade, giant Christmas trees and ice-skating rinks make up for it.

What to do in 14 days: There is so much to do on either coast and two weeks will flash by. Fly into Los Angeles and drive along the Pacific Coast Highway to visit quaint towns.

Hop over to Las Vegas and rent a car, while humming along to Christmas carols on the radio on your way to the Grand Canyon. I once spent Christmas Eve in the Antelope Canyon and the play of light against its sandstone walls was inspiring beyond words.

10. United Kingdom - London

Due to the Gulf Stream, London's wintry weather mostly comes in seven shades of grey. But when the sun is shining and fluffy snowflakes drift onto snow-laden thatched roofs, it is a magical storybook scene.

What to do in 14 days: Catch a flight for less than $100 to Scotland, and spend a week there to take in its natural beauty. In Edinburgh, do a flight of five single malts for only £30 ($56) at the Whiski Rooms.

Rent a car to the enchanting Isle of Skye and marvel at castles, lighthouses, mountains and fairy-tale nooks.

Other notable side-trips from London include Bath, York and the Cotswolds. Then return to London to bookend the trip with regal exploration and Christmas shopping.

11. Brunei

An oil-rich country, pint-sized Brunei offers gleaming golden palaces and mosques, and equally bling hotels.

Its dense jungles are packed with wild animals and isolated tribal villages.

While it is part of the VTL arrangements offered by Singapore, the country remains closed to non-essential travellers.