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How to make my stress-free Christmas lunch

WEEKEND



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King shares good news on cancer treatment

Video message tells of 'personal blessing' and urges Britons to go for life-saving screening

Kate Marney Assistant Editor

The King has delivered a video message to the nation with the "good news" that his cancer treatment will be dramatically reduced in the new year.

Describing it as "a personal blessing" and a "milestone" in his treatment, Charles said he hoped his experience "may give encouragement" to others.

Stressing the importance of early diagnosis, the King urged people not to avoid cancer screening "because they imagine it may be frightening, embarrassing or uncomfortable". He added: "Your life — or the life of someone you love — may depend upon it."

Speaking in a pre-recorded video, screened on Channel 4 as part of an evening of programming for the Stand Up To Cancer campaign, Charles said: "Today I am able to share with you the good news that, thanks to early diagnosis, effective intervention and adherence to doctors' orders, my own schedule of cancer treatment can be reduced in the new year.

"This milestone is both a personal blessing and a testimony to the remarkable advances that have been made in cancer care in recent years, testimony that I hope may give encouragement to the 50 per cent of us who will be diagnosed with the illness at some point in our lives."

He said that he had "learned some-

thing that troubles me deeply: at least nine million people in our country are not up to date with the cancer screenings available to them. That is at least nine million opportunities for early diagnosis being missed."

Charles added: "Throughout my own cancer journey, I have been profoundly moved by what I can only call the community of care that surrounds every cancer patient: the specialists, nurses, researchers and volunteers who work tirelessly to save and improve lives."

Wearing a pinstripe suit and a Stand Up To Cancer badge, Charles appeared with slightly bloodshot eyes as he delivered the first update on his cancer treatment in months.

The short film, recorded in the Morning Room at Clarence House in the last week of November, has been seen within the Palace as a huge step forward for the King. It does not, however, mean he is in remission from the disease, nor that he is free of cancer.

The Palace said: "His Majesty has responded exceptionally well to treatment and his doctors advise that ongoing measures will now move into a precautionary phase. This position will be continuously monitored to protect and prioritise his continued recovery."

The King was admitted to hospital in January 2024 for a procedure to treat an enlarged prostate. During it, doctors

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Joanna Trollope
1943-2025

The author Joanna Trollope, whose name became synonymous with Agatha sagas, a term she detested, has died at 82. **News, page 15; Obituary, page 78**

INSIDE TODAY



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Sheridan Smith

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Can we live on £100 a week?



The Oxford student and her £70m brand

Magazine



Travel



'Even the spa treatments come with a soundtrack of Mozart's and Strauss's piano sonatas'
Laura Jackson on Vienna's new Mandarin Oriental



Cook's Club B Gouna, Egypt

25 best spots for winter sun

From the Canaries to Cyprus, these places are less than six hours away and remain warm in the miserable months.
By **Leslie Dunn**

If "winter sun" to you means the Caribbean or forget it, let me persuade you that you can have a warm, sunny break less than a three-hour flight away. OK, in January and February it will be strolling-in-the-sun rather than flopping-on-the-beach weather, although I've had days in the low 20s in Malaga, Malta and the Algarve in Portugal.
I've given you the average January high for each destination, and though some may look a bit tepid, remember they're averages, so things can go higher (but also — mutters into his sleeve — lower). I decided on a 15C cut-off, so places including Corfu (14C) didn't make the grade. Besides, most Greek islands

have shut up shop by the end of October. In fact, I've made the bold decision to ignore Greece altogether and save you the weather gamble. This is strictly weather data-based and not a conspiracy against the Greeks.
Sunshine or no sunshine, if you're harrumphing "15 degrees isn't winter sun!" I hear you. That's why I've leant heavily into the islands of the north Atlantic: Madeira and the Canaries, which slightly cheat on the flight time limit but offer you low-20s temperatures and a swimable (for the hale and hearty) ocean. I've also found you under-the-radar spots to explore.
Consequently this list is a bit Spanish-



Iberostar Selection Fuerteventura Palace, Spain

skewed, but hey — do you want diversity or do you want warmth? Talking of which, I've included Cyprus. It's further south than Greece and Turkey and, in Nicosia, gives you a taste of those two cultures. In north Africa the mercury rises higher still, and there's a variety of options there.
If even the low 20s are Arctic-like in your book, I've sneaked in five destinations within a six-hour flight time, which brings in the ancient wonders and Red Sea lazing of Egypt, plus the otherworldly

Great trips next page

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▶ landscapes of Jordan. It may be cool in the desert, but elsewhere you'll be basking in regular highs of up to 35C (step forward our hands-down mid-haul temperature winner: Senegal).

One last thing: the prices are the lowest available in January and February, so not necessarily the lowest of 2026. Wishing you a sunny sojourn.

Malaga, Spain**Average January high 17C**

Andalusia's second city, revamped with new museums, galleries, a spruced-up old town and a buzzing marina, has been a victim of its own success in terms of the crowds it now attracts. Visit in winter, though, and you won't have to queue for the Picasso Museum (£11; museopicassomalaga.org), and the excellent tapas bars in town will have elbow room. The Coeo Santa Maria Signature Apartments, which opened this year, are beautifully designed, with bare-brick flourishes and sleek kitchenettes. If you can afford it, book a deluxe studio with views of the cathedral — it's a few metres away. You can walk everywhere from here: to the marina and sandy beaches, up into town, or east to explore the mighty Alcazaba fortress.

Details One night's self-catering for two from £132 (coeoohouse.com). Fly to Malaga

Marrakesh, Morocco**Average high 19C**

If there's ever a time to buckle up and face the joyful madness of the Marrakesh medina, it's in the less hectic winter months. Exploring Koutoubia Mosque and Madrasa Ben Youssef will be an airier experience too. Afterwards, retreat south of the city to the family-pleasing Fairmont Royal Palm, where the biggest pool in town (100m long) is heated year-round. Experience a traditional black-soap-lathered hammam in the spa or sneak in a round on the 18-hole golf course. The kids' club even has its own chef.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,470pp, including flights and transfers (jet2holidays.com)

Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, Spain**Average high 21C**

Although Iberostar hotels can't be called boutique, they have a distinct style ethos as well as a commitment to responsible tourism. On the vast golden-sand Jandia beach in the south of the island, and reassuringly sheltered from gustiness (cards on table: Fuerteventura means "strong wind" — although it can also mean "strong luck"), Iberostar Selection Fuerteventura Palace has just completed a big renovation and it's looking rather lovely. It also now operates on 100 per cent renewable electricity. There's a new open-air beachfront restaurant with squishy banquettes, and the spa has a "hydrowellness" circuit, complete with an ice fountain for the brave.

Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,015pp, including flights (thomascook.com)

Funchal, Madeira, Portugal**Average high 19C**

When you're not out and about in Funchal, exploring the old town, tasting madeira at Blandy's or admiring the gardens of the Jardim Monte Palace (£13; montepalacemadeira.com), you can be relaxing by the heated rooftop pool at the Castanheiro Boutique Hotel, which blends a modern, arty vibe with its heritage-rich architecture of connected historical buildings. There are great views over the town and bay. After a glass of the rum-based poncha you could even convince yourself you've spotted whales in the waves before you go on a trip to find them.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,522pp, including flights and private transfers (sunvil.co.uk)

Sierra de las Nieves, Spain**Average high 16C**

Fancy pretending you've gone long haul to southeast Asia while flying for fewer than three hours? Admittedly, the hills north of Marbella may not be as balmy in winter as the beaches of Koh Samui, but there's a good chance of blue skies. With its bamboo-lined pathways winding through gardens to a yoga pavilion, the 15-room Shanti-Som Wellbeing Retreat has a vibe that's as far away from the all-day breakfasts of the Costa del Sol as it is from the freezing drizzle of the UK.

Included are daily group yoga and meditation sessions, and the healthy cooking is an Asian-Mediterranean delight. **Details** Three nights' full board from £710pp, including private transfers (wellnessholidayboutique.com). Fly to Malaga

Nicosia, Cyprus**Average high 15C**

Cyprus's intriguing capital has influences from Turkish culture, such as Buyuk Han, a former caravanserai (trade route inn), with art galleries and craft shops as well as must-visits like the Cyprus Museum (free; culture.gov.cy). Within the medieval Venetian walls of the old town is Amyth of Nicosia hotel, which opened in March. The beautifully restored former school has ten rooms and a restaurant serving dishes including butter-roasted grouper, plus a great selection of Cypriot and Greek wines. **Details** B&B doubles from £250 (amythhotels.com). Fly to Larnaca

Palma, Mallorca, Spain**Average high 15C**

Mallorca's bijou capital has room to breathe during the winter months. Do a bit of shoe shopping, stroll with an almond ice cream from the trad shop Ca'n Joan de s'Aigo, and indulge in some culture at Es Baluard contemporary art museum (£5; esbaluard.org). Palma has been knocking out boutique hotels on a (tastefully artisanal) production line for 25 years. The newest, which opened in autumn 2023, is the Nobis Hotel Palma. A sensitive renovation of a ruined 12th-

JOHN KOLLERMAN/ALAMY, SEVIN FARBONBERT, PASCAL REYNALD



Alcazar Palace, Seville, Spain

century Moorish palace in the old town, it has a cocktail bar with low-key DJ tunes — a buzzing spot for a pre-dinner negroni.

Details B&B doubles from £280 (nobis.se). Fly to Palma

Valletta, Malta**Average high 15C**

The Maltese capital, built behind a spectacular fortified harbour, has centuries of history to discover — and you can do it with a lot less perspiration

in winter. The many churches are festooned with gold and marble, and in the cathedral there are two Caravaggio masterpieces to salivate over (£13; stjohncathedral.com). A five-minute walk from the cathedral, the Phoenixia hotel has pretty terraced gardens, nothing's-too-much-trouble service, a beautiful spa with heated indoor pool and two very good restaurants.

Details Three nights' B&B from £1,086pp, including flights, private transfers and concierge service (kirkerholidays.com)

Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain**Average high 21C**

If the word "ecofinca" isn't yet in your vocabulary, where have you been? Finca de Arrieta is on the quiet northeast coast of Lanzarote. The small resort has yurts and cottages all done with style, but for a group holiday you can book the volcanic-stone farmhouse, which has three bedrooms and sleeps up to six adults and three children. Little ones love collecting eggs from the resident hens and petting the donkeys. Kick back on the private terrace with its solar-heated pool (there's a bigger communal



Fairmont Royal Palm, Marrakesh, Morocco