

2026 EDITION • 50 COUNTRIES

When to Go

The Travel Timing Atlas

Every country. Every month. Scored.



Travel smarter. Every month.

WELCOME

A note before you start.

Thank you for downloading this guide.

What you're about to read is a 20-page taster of three full books we have spent the last year building at monthlytravelguide.com. Each book is a complete system for one specific travel problem: handling crises on the road, knowing when to visit anywhere, and getting more out of AI as a travel-planning tool. Together, the three books solve almost every practical problem a modern traveler runs into.

This starter kit gives you the most useful piece of each book — a real chapter, a real template, a real framework — so you can put something useful into practice today. Not a sample. Not a teaser. The actual material.

If, by the end of these 20 pages, you decide that the full system is worth having — the complete 311 pages, all three books — we have built a launch-week bundle that brings the total cost to **\$19.99 instead of the regular \$117**. There is a clearly-marked button at the end of each section and one final climactic page at the back. No pressure. The starter kit alone is worth your time.

Welcome aboard.

— *The editors at monthlytravelguide.com*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Your 20-page guide.

PART	FROM THE BOOK	WHAT YOU GET
1	The Travel Emergency Vault	The first-five-minutes framework for any travel crisis. The five compensation claims most travelers leave on the table. One full email template worth up to €600.
2	When to Go: The Travel Timing Atlas	The 4-factor scoring system. The 12-month sweet-spot calendar. A full country page (Japan) showing exactly how the atlas works.
3	The AI Travel Command Center	Why most travelers prompt badly. The Trip Brief framework. Five of our strongest ready-to-paste prompts.
★	The Complete Travel System	The launch-week bundle. All 3 books, 311 pages, \$19.99 instead of \$117.

◆ EXPERT NOTE

Read it in order or jump straight to the part that's most relevant to your next trip. Every section ends with a single — ungated, no email required — link to the full book. The final page has the launch-week bundle CTA.

PART 1

The Travel Emergency Vault

*Three of the most valuable pages from the 86-page
crisis-response system.*

THE FIRST 5 MINUTES

The universal protocol for any travel emergency.

Whatever has just gone wrong — lost passport, missed flight, theft, medical issue — the first five minutes determine how the next five hours go. Here is the universal protocol we teach throughout the Vault. It works whether you are alone in Tokyo at 3 a.m. or in a Madrid pharmacy with a fever.

MINUTE	ACTION
0:00-0:30	Stop. Sit down. The single biggest mistake in any travel emergency is acting in the first 30 seconds. Panic costs more money than the emergency itself. Sit. Breathe. Do not call anyone yet.
0:30-1:30	Document everything visible. Take photos. Note times. Capture names if relevant. The version of events you write down in the first minute is the one insurance companies and embassies will trust most.
1:30-3:00	Identify the resolution path. Is this a money problem (replaceable)? A document problem (embassy)? A medical problem (clinic/hospital)? A safety problem (police)? Each path has a different priority order.
3:00-4:00	Notify one external contact. A family member or trusted person at home. Not for help — for record-keeping. This becomes critical if the situation escalates.
4:00-5:00	Take the first action. One step toward resolution. Not all the steps. Just the first one. Make the first phone call, walk to the first counter, send the first email.

◆ EXPERT NOTE

The protocol works because most travelers compress the first hour of an emergency into the first five minutes — trying to do everything at once, making panicked decisions, calling the wrong people first. The Vault contains the full first-hour protocol for each of 13 specific emergency types: lost passport, stolen wallet, medical, denied boarding, missed connection, theft, hotel disputes, and more.

Five compensation claims travelers almost never file.

Most travel insurance, airline regulation, and credit-card benefit money goes unclaimed every year. Not because travelers don't qualify — because they don't know they qualify. Five specific examples:

CLAIM	TYPICAL AMOUNT	WHEN IT APPLIES
EU261 Flight Compensation	€250–€600 per passenger	Flight on or from an EU airline, departing OR arriving in the EU, delayed 3+ hours OR cancelled within 14 days, where the delay was the airline's fault.
Montreal Convention (Bags)	Up to \$1,700 per bag	Any international flight where checked baggage was delayed, damaged, or lost. Strict 21-day claim window after the bag arrives.
Credit-Card Trip Delay	Up to \$500 per trip	Hidden in many premium credit cards (Amex Platinum, Chase Sapphire, etc.). Triggered by 6+ hour delays. Almost no one claims it.
Chargeback for Fraud	Full amount + dispute fee	Any service paid by credit card that wasn't delivered as promised (cancelled tour, fraudulent hotel, undisclosed fees). 60–75% success rate with the right script.
Travel Insurance Trip Interruption	Up to 150% of unused trip cost	A surprising number of policies cover trip interruption due to specific reasons (illness, family emergency, weather). Most travelers don't read the fine print.

Want the full crisis system?

86 pages, 13 protocols, 40+ ready-to-send templates, 50-country reference.

Get the book →

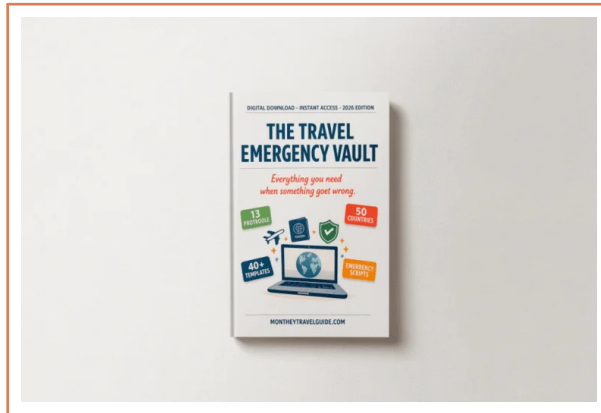
EU261 Flight Compensation Email.

Copy this template. Replace the bracketed variables. Send it directly to the airline. The Vault contains 40+ more — for delayed bags, denied boarding, hotel issues, insurance claims, chargebacks, embassy assistance, and lost-document recovery.

Subject: EU261 Claim – Flight [FLIGHT NUMBER] on [DATE] Dear [AIRLINE] Customer Relations, I am writing to claim compensation under EU Regulation 261/2004 for the delay/cancellation of the following flight: Flight Number: [FLIGHT NUMBER] Date: [DATE] Route: [ORIGIN] to [DESTINATION] Scheduled depart: [SCHEDULED TIME] Actual depart: [ACTUAL TIME] Booking ref: [PNR / RECORD LOCATOR] The flight was delayed by [X] hours, well beyond the 3-hour threshold that triggers Article 7 compensation. Under EU Regulation 261/2004, I am entitled to compensation of [AMOUNT] per passenger, given the flight distance of [DISTANCE] km. I am claiming for [N] passenger(s). I have attached: - Boarding passes (PDF) - Photographs of the delay information board - [Any other proof] Please process this claim within 14 days of receipt. If I do not receive a response within that window, I will be filing a formal complaint with the relevant national enforcement body and may proceed to small-claims court, where EU261 claims have a 99% plaintiff success rate. Please confirm receipt of this email. Sincerely, [YOUR FULL NAME] [CONTACT EMAIL] [PHONE NUMBER]

◆ EXPERT NOTE

Most travelers entitled to EU261 compensation never file. The airlines count on this. The success rate when the template is sent correctly is over 80%. The Vault contains 40+ templates of this calibre, each for a specific high-frequency travel issue.



★ THE FULL VAULT

The complete crisis-response system.

86 pages.

13 emergency protocols.

40+ ready-to-send templates.

50-country emergency reference.

20-language emergency phrasebook.

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PART 2

When to Go: The Travel Timing Atlas

*Three of the most valuable pages from the
141-page country-by-country timing reference.*

How to read any country, any month.

Every country page in the Atlas scores each month from 1 to 5 across four factors that actually determine whether your trip works. The factors are deliberately simple. The discipline is in scoring all four for every month, for every country, consistently. In all cases, **5 is best** — including for crowds (5 means quiet) and price (5 means cheapest).

FACTOR	5/5 MEANS	1/5 MEANS
Weather	Postcard conditions for the country's signature activities.	Hostile conditions — extreme heat, monsoon, deep cold, severe storms.
Price	Off-peak rates: 25-50% off high season.	Peak season; flights and hotels at their highest, often selling out months ahead.
Crowds	Quiet streets, available tables, short queues.	Busload tourism, hours-long queues, restaurant reservations weeks ahead.
Events	Signature cultural events or natural phenomena (cherry blossoms, aurora, migration).	Cultural lull, sites on reduced schedules, nothing of note happening.

◆ EXPERT NOTE

The 'overall' score lies in interesting ways. A 4.2 driven by perfect weather and low prices, with festivals at 2 and crowds at 5, is a different trip than a 4.2 driven by big festivals (5), good weather (4), busy crowds (3), and average price (5). The average tells you *whether* to go; the four individual scores tell you *what kind* of trip you will have.

Japan — the full scorecard.

BEST MONTHS · MAR-MAY · OCT-NOV

Japan operates on two unambiguous sweet spots: cherry blossom season (late March to early April) and autumn foliage (late October to mid-November). Both are unmissable but expensive and crowded. Summer is humid; winter offers world-class skiing in Hokkaido but cold-weather travel elsewhere.

MONTH	WEATHER	PRICE	CROWDS	EVENTS	OVERALL
Jan	2/5	3/5	4/5	3/5	3.0
Feb	2/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	3.2
Mar	4/5	1/5	1/5	5/5	2.8
Apr	5/5	1/5	1/5	5/5	3.0
May	5/5	3/5	3/5	4/5	3.8
Jun	3/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	3.5
Jul	2/5	4/5	3/5	4/5	3.2
Aug	1/5	3/5	2/5	4/5	2.5
Sep	3/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	3.5
Oct	5/5	2/5	2/5	4/5	3.2
Nov	5/5	1/5	2/5	4/5	3.0
Dec	3/5	3/5	4/5	3/5	3.2

★ SWEET SPOT

Late March to early April (cherry blossoms) or late Oct to mid-November (autumn foliage). Both unmissable but expect 30-50% higher prices.

✗ AVOID

August. Heat reaches 38°C+ in Tokyo, humidity is brutal, typhoons frequent, and Obon week crowds tourist sites.

◆ SHOULDER HACK

Mid-May to early June. Post-Golden-Week prices crash, weather warm-but-not-humid, crowds 40% smaller than cherry blossom peak.

◆ **EXPERT NOTE**

This is one of 50 country pages in the Atlas. Italy, Spain, Greece, Morocco, Egypt, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Brazil, Mexico, USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, and 32 more — each scored the same way, each readable in 15 seconds, each consultable for the next five years.

Five under-rated windows experienced travelers quietly book.

Every popular destination has a 'shoulder' — a window of weeks between high and low season where the weather is still excellent, but prices and crowds collapse. Five of our favorites:

DESTINATION	SHOULDER WINDOW	WHY IT WORKS
Italy	Last week of May; mid-September to mid-October	Heat manageable; wine harvest; Italians not yet on holiday or back at work. Prices 20-35% below July-August.
Greece	Mid-May to mid-June; mid-September to mid-October	Sea swim-warm; ferries running; islands fully open. Best two months of the year, full stop.
Morocco	Mid-March to late April; mid-October to November	Comfortable desert temperatures; spring wildflowers or autumn light; before/after the summer heat wall.
Japan	Mid-May to early June; late October to mid-November	Cherry blossom crowds gone but weather still warm; or pre-peak foliage with weeks of beauty ahead.
Iceland	Late May to early June; mid-September	Long days but pre-peak crowds; aurora returns in September; prices significantly below July-August.

Want all 19 shoulder windows + 50 country pages?
141 pages, every country, every month, scored. 2026-2030 edition.

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The Shoulder-Season Codex.

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PART 3

The AI Travel Command Center

*Three of the most valuable pages from the 84-page
guide to using AI for travel planning.*

Why most travelers prompt badly.

Watch a typical traveler use AI to plan a trip and you will see the same three mistakes repeated, almost word for word. None are about the AI. All three are about the prompt.

MISTAKE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	THE FIX
No context	'Best things to do in Tokyo.' The AI has no idea who you are, when you're going, what you like, or your budget. Output is generic.	Always answer four questions before prompting: who, when, what for, what to avoid.
One-shot question	Asking once and accepting the answer. The first response is always the worst.	Plan for at least three rounds. Round 1 asks. Round 2 corrects. Round 3 is what you'll use.
No pressure-test	Trusting the first itinerary the AI produces. Almost always weaker than the third.	Ask the AI to critique its own output before refining. The single highest-leverage AI move almost no one makes.

◆ EXPERT NOTE

These three mistakes alone are responsible for almost every 'AI is useless for travel' complaint. The fixes are simple and they compound. A traveler who applies all three goes from generic AI outputs to outputs that beat what most paid travel agents produce.

The single most valuable prompt in this book.

The Trip Brief is a 150-300 word paragraph capturing who you are, when you're traveling, what for, and what to avoid. Once written, paste it at the top of every new AI conversation. The AI inherits your full context — without re-explaining for each prompt. Save your brief; tweak only destination and dates for each trip. Compound across every trip you take for the next decade.

I am planning a trip with the following parameters. WHO: [Number of travelers, ages, relationship – e.g., 'Two of us, mid-30s, married, no kids']. Fitness level: [low/medium/high]. Constraints: [dietary, mobility, language – e.g., 'wife is vegetarian; I have a sensitive stomach for street food']. WHEN: [Specific dates or month + duration – e.g., 'May 14 to May 26, 2026 – 12 nights']. Departing from: [home city/airport]. Flexibility on dates: [yes/no, +/- how many days]. WHAT FOR: [Primary goal of trip – e.g., 'A balance of culture and rest. We want to come home feeling we saw the real country, but also actually rested.']. Sub-goals: [list 2-3]. WHAT TO AVOID: [Specific dislikes – e.g., 'Tourist traps. Resort towns. Heavy crowds. Days requiring more than 12 km of walking. Restaurants with menus in 5 languages']. TRAVEL STYLE: [budget/mid-range/upscale – be specific, not vague]. BUDGET: [Total trip budget – e.g., '\$4,500 total including flights, with willingness to add \$500-1000 for a single unforgettable experience']. EXPERIENCE LEVEL: [How well-traveled – e.g., 'We've been to 10 European countries, two Southeast Asian ones, never to South America'].

◆ EXPERT NOTE

Write this template once with your real details. Save it in your notes app. Paste it as the first message of every new AI travel conversation. Every subsequent prompt inherits this context. You will be astonished at how much sharper the outputs become.

Copy. Replace the brackets. Send.

THE ANTI-RECOMMENDER

I'm planning a [DURATION] trip in [MONTH/YEAR] for [BUDGET]. I've already considered [LIST OBVIOUS DESTINATIONS]. Suggest 5 alternative destinations that match the same vibe but that 80% of travelers wouldn't think of. For each: which 'obvious' destination it most resembles, why my list missed it, the specific trade-offs, ideal month to visit, one specific experience that justifies the choice.

THE ITINERARY CRITIC

Critique my itinerary above as if you were a travel agent who lived in [DESTINATION] for 20 years. Be brutal: what's overpriced? What's a tourist trap? What's missing that locals would suggest? Which days have bad pacing? Then propose v2 with the worst weaknesses fixed. Don't be flattering.

THE 30% TRIM CHALLENGE

My current trip budget is [TOTAL]. Cut it by 30% without dropping the destination. Show what changes: cheaper flights, different accommodation type, fewer paid attractions, lower-cost meals. For each cut, tell me what I lose in experience (be honest – some cuts hurt).

THE HIDDEN LOCAL DAY

Within my itinerary in [CITY], design a Day [N] with ZERO 'top 10 tourist attractions.' Build a day around: one local neighborhood, a market locals use, a non-English-speaking cafe, a small museum tourists skip, an everyday cultural ritual. End the day in a way locals would. Feel like one day of residence, not tourism.

THE SHOULDER HACK

I'm planning [DESTINATION] for [DATES] at [BUDGET]. Show me what shifting my trip 2 weeks earlier or 2 weeks later would change. Specifically: flight price difference, hotel price difference, weather, crowds. Recommend which shift gives me the best trip-quality-per-dollar. Be specific about the month boundaries where pricing shifts steeply.



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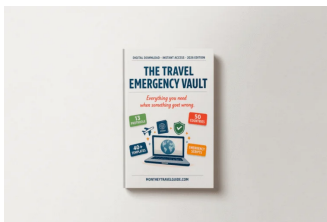
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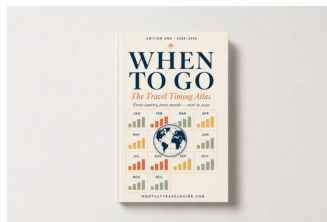
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Every month.

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