At the beginning of the year, a lot of travelers start to plan their vacation and ask themselves where to go and when. Of course, ideal climate and season play an important role, but other factors influence the decision for a destination as well: sustainability is becoming more and more important, as a study of 2017 conducted by the TUI group demonstrates. Travelling sustainably does not only
mean choosing an appropriate accommodation, but also respecting the local culture and nature. In 2015, 86% of travelers between 18 and 30 stated in a survey conducted by Topdeck Travel that they wanted to discover the culture of their destination during their vacation. Green Pearls® provides tips for the first half year: sustainable travel that supports local people as well as their culture and protects the environment.

January: the exotic colors of the tropics

Deep blue sea, soft white beaches and sunshine throughout the whole year: the Maldives is the perfect spot for sun-seekers – and for discovering a breathtaking underwater world with colorful tropical fish and coral reefs. Here, even snorkelers have the chance to get close to the really big sea creatures: Hanifaru Bay is one of the most famous places for watching manta rays and whale sharks. Only a short boat trip away, Reethi Beach Resort welcomes its guests in villas built traditionally in a typical Maldivian style using local materials. With its numerous green initiatives, Reethi Beach has been committed to the protection of the delicate ecosystem for a long time. Reethi Faru Resort, which has just recently opened, additionally uses latest technology to
reduce its impact on the environment as far as possible, for example photovoltaic or a biogas plant that transforms food waste into gas for cooking.

February: Carnival on Curacao

Carnival on Curacao is one of the biggest and longest Carnival events in the Caribbean. Its colorful activities last almost a whole month; bands and dancing carnival groups fill the streets and the crowd is dazzled by the fanciful parades and costumes. The final parade is the absolute highlight of this event and charms spectators with its illuminated wagons rolling through the evening streets. Those who want to join the crowd should stay at Morena Eco Resort. Situated right at Jan Thiel beach, Morena Eco Resort is the perfect starting point and an oasis for gathering new energy due to its furnishing with environmentally friendly fair-trade-materials and its tropical garden.
March: a trip through the Atlas Mountains

Rugged peaks, spectacular canyons and bright green fields: due to the pleasant temperatures, spring is the perfect season for discovering the wild beauty of the Atlas mountains on hiking or biking tours. The Kasbah du Toubkal is located in a former Berber fortress at the heart of the national park Toubkal, at the foot of the highest peak of the Atlas Mountains (4,167 meters). Its guests get acquainted with the local community as well as with the Berber’s culture and lifestyle – and experience their famous hospitality enjoying a glass of sweet peppermint tea. The idea is that the Kasbah du Toubkal equally benefits guests and local people. Therefore, the staff consists almost exclusively of local people and a part of the hotel’s income is invested in projects for nearby villages.
April: celebrating Thai New Year

Songkran is the name of the Thai New Year festival, when the whole country is out and about on the streets and beaches. On this day, water plays an important role. Originally, the water used to clean Buddha statues in temples was collected and sprinkled over family members as a symbol for spiritual purity and luck. Due to the Thai’s party spirit and the warm temperatures, this custom has developed into high-spirited water fights involving everyone present. The perfect place to recover after this spectacle is the Tongsai Bay on Koh Samui. Sipping a cocktail from a drinking straw made of lemon grass and enjoying an impressive sea view is a wonderful way to start into Thai New Year.
May: spring cleaning for body and soul

In spring, people do not only get their houses in shipshape-condition, but also want to rejuvenate their body and soul. Located in a peaceful area at the shore of Lake Senftenberg, the wellness hotel Seeschlößchen is the perfect place for relaxation. Due to its focus on Ayurveda, a holistic health concept and sustainability play an important role. The hotel mainly uses regional ingredients for its Ayurveda food, natural products and oil for its spa treatments – herbs from its own garden for the herbal sauna infusion. After a vacation at Seeschlößchen, guests are perfectly prepared for summer.
June: heading South

Sunny places are not only to be found at Southern latitudes, but also in the South of Germany. For example, Freiburg is said to be the German city with the most hours of sunshine per year. **Green City Hotel Vauban** is located in the heart of Vauban, Freiburg’s greenest district with car free zones, roof gardens and passive houses. Due to the hotel’s architectural concept – including not only the latest technology, but also climbing plants at the facades – it is highly energy-efficient. Social responsibility is another important issue at **Green City Hotel Vauban**. Food and beverages originate, whenever possible, from the region or from integrational businesses like the Green City Hotel Vauban. 20 employees with or without handicap dedicatedly work together. A relaxed and friendly atmosphere is the reward for this concept.

The German Green Pearls GmbH with place of business in Darmstadt, Germany unifies international tourism companies that support environmental protection and demonstrate social commitment. Thereby, Green Pearls is the first holding company worldwide that consolidates sustainable hotels, destinations and restaurants in a global data source.

Among the criteria of admission to Green Pearls® Unique Places, are a sustainability plan on management level, sustainable architecture, comprehensive water, energy saving and waste recovery measures, the use of seasonal and regional ingredients in the kitchen, as well as a large commitment for the social balance in each of the vacation regions.

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