

19 events worth traveling for in 2015

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(CNN) Still haven't filled your 2015 travel calendar?

Whether you're a lover of the arts, a sports fan or just looking for a fantastic party, here are 19 global events worth hitting the road for next year.

Elvis's 80th birthday celebrations

Dates: January 7-10

Where: Graceland, Tennessee

Story highlights

In January, Graceland is hosting events in honor of what would have been Elvis Presley's 80th birthday

On the Day of the Dead, Formula 1 will return to Mexico for the first time since 1992

August 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the U.S. bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima

Big Elvis Presley fan?

There's no better time to head to Graceland to celebrate would have been the King's 80th birthday.

Events include a private tour of Graceland, an Elvis Presley Day proclamation by Memphis County officials and birthday cake.

Fans can sign up for Elvis-themed city tours and attend at a live concert at the Memphis Cannon Center for the Performing Arts.

"A very special event will be an auction of third party-owned Elvis artifacts," says Kevin Kern, director of communications at Graceland.

Graceland.com has more information.

Red Bull Crashed Ice

Dates: January 22-24

Where: Saint Paul, Minnesota

Combine speed skating with an obstacle course and you get Crashed Ice, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2015.

The race sees some of the world's top downhill skaters negotiate a frozen course littered with obstacles, while hitting speeds of up to 60 mph.



And you thought skating on a flat surface was hard.

The Minnesota event will be the first in a series of eight taking place in 2015.

"The sight of extreme athletes careering down an ice track outside Saint Paul's iconic cathedral is an awe-inspiring spectacle -- and one great big party," says Terry Mattson, president of Visit Saint Paul tourism.

Redbullcrashedice.com has more info.

FIS Alpine Ski World Championships

Dates: February 2-15

Where: Vail, Colorado

In 2015 the FIS Alpine Ski World Championships return to the United States for the first time since 1999, taking over Vail and Beaver Creek, Colorado.

In addition to world-class skiers on the slopes, highlights of this biennial event include a high-altitude gig by DJ Decimo on February 14.

The Vail Winter Beer Camp (basically an enormous outdoor beer garden) will welcome

sports fans for the duration.

"The ski races are going to be great entertainment but there are so many other things to do," says Mikaela Shiffrin, a racer for the US Ski Team.

"Aspen is already a great ski destination, and to have two weeks of amazing events provides even more reason to visit."

More info at Vailbeavercreek2015.com.

Lunar New Year

Dates: February 19-21

Where: Macau

Sure, you could head to any given Chinatown in the world to enjoy Lunar New Year festivities.

But historic [Macau](#) is where you'll find some of the most colorful celebrations on earth -- and enjoy fabulous Portuguese cuisine while you're at it.



Traditional Chinese celebrations with a side of Portuguese.

A-Ma Temple, one of the city's oldest, hosts some of Macau's best Lunar New Year's eve events.

The lions are more energetic, the dragon dances more lively and the firecrackers just seem louder than at other celebrations.

Naturally, the crowds are bigger, too.

Bicentennial of Napoleon's landing

Dates: February 28-March 1

Where: Golfe-Juan, France

On March 1, 1815, Napoleon landed in Golfe-Juan (now a seaside resort on France's Cote d'Azur), having just escaped from exile in Elba.

It was from here that he set out on a journey -- known as "Route Napoleon" -- that would see him return to power a few weeks later when he cruised into Tuileries Palace in Paris and made it his home.

A historical enactment will be held in Golfe-Juan to mark the occasion, but if you miss the main event you can visit later in the year to cycle, walk or drive the Route Napoleon.

"It was the road Napoleon took north to Paris via Grenoble for his big comeback," says Eric Dore, managing director of the Cote d'Azur tourist board.

"It's historically unique and easy to navigate, and those who attempt it will get superb vistas

over the surrounding countryside of glorious Provence and the Riviera."

More info at Vallauris-golfe-juan.fr.

Gnaoua World Music Festival

Dates: May 14-17

Where: Essaouira, Morocco

African music festivals are seriously underrated, and the Gnaoua World Music Festival in Essaouira is one of the best.

Held in Morocco's windsurfing capital, the event offers an irresistible combination of jazz, pop, rock, hip-hop and contemporary world music.

The festival has been taking place since the late 1990s and acts come from all over Africa to perform.

If you live in Europe, getting to Essouria is easier than ever thanks to the recent additions of new flights by various budget airlines.

Full event lineup is available on the official festival website, Festival-gnaoua.net.

Songkran -- Thai New Year

Dates: April 13-15

Where: All over Thailand

Thailand's massively popular Songkran Festival -- held in celebration of the new solar year - - is basically one nationwide water fight.

But it didn't start out that way.

Originally, families and friends celebrated Songkran by visiting temples and pouring water on each other's hands and Buddha statues as a blessing, to start the year filled with good luck.

Though these traditions continue, over the years people started to engage in water fights in the streets -- a welcome form of relief given that April is the hottest month of the year.

Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, has a reputation for holding the wildest Songkran festivities.

Though Thailand's New Year celebrations are the most well known, attracting tourists from around the region, Songkran is also celebrated in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos.

Cheung Chau Bun Festival

Dates: May 22-26

Where: Hong Kong

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) a plague killed thousands of people on Cheung Chau, an island south of Hong Kong.

Islanders built an altar, performed Taoist rituals and burned effigies in an effort to drive off the evil spirits they believed were to blame -- their efforts are remembered with the annual Cheung Chau Bun Festival.

It's named after the most popular event, which sees locals scramble up a bamboo tower and collect as many "lucky buns" as possible.

"The Bun Scrambling competition is the only one in the world," points out Mr. Yung Chi-ming, chairman of the Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee.

"Afterward, buns are given out as a gesture of peace and happiness."

Discoverhongkong.com has more info.

Cunard's 175th anniversary

Dates: May 24-26

Where: Liverpool, UK

Today's cruise ships might have robot bartenders and water parks, but in 2015 visitors to Liverpool will be far more interested in a trio of slightly more historic vessels.

The three Queens of cruising -- the Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria -- will arrive in Liverpool in May to mark the 175th anniversary of the [Cunard Cruise Line](#).

"Two of Liverpool's proudest assets are its waterfront and its culture, and Cunard's 175th anniversary is the perfect time to see them," says Claire McColgan, director of [Culture Liverpool](#).

"The meeting of the three Queens will be a one-off event, and they'll get a reception like no other when they arrive."

[MORE: 14 amazing cruises setting sail in 2015](#)

Expo Milano 2015

Dates: May 1-October 31

Where: Milan, Italy

Milan will host the Universal Exposition for the second time in 2015 (it first hosted the event in 1906).

The theme is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life," and there's been a huge amount of urban regeneration going on in preparation for the expo, much of which has been overseen by Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas.



Graphic rendering of Qatar's Expo Milan pavilion.

Must-sees are expected to be the Future Food District, where visitors can find out how food will be produced, distributed, prepared and consumed in the future, and the Arts and Foods exhibition, which takes a look at everything from food packaging design to the aesthetics of kitchen utensils.

Full event info at Expo2015.org.

Jeff Koons Exhibition

Dates: May 9-September 6

Where: Norwich Castle, Norfolk, UK

[Jeff Koons](#) might be an American artist -- famous for his quirky reproductions of everyday objects -- but in 2015 the best opportunity to take a closer look at his work comes at an exhibition in the UK's beautiful Norwich Castle.

"This will be the biggest Jeff Koons exhibition in Britain for a decade and an unmissable opportunity for visitors to see the work of such an important, influential and fun artist," says William Galinsky, artistic director of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival.

"It's the only chance to see his work in the UK in 2015."

Singapore's Golden Jubilee celebrations

When: August 9

Where: Singapore

Singapore celebrates 50 years of independence in 2015, with events being held throughout the year.

But the best time to visit is on August 9 for National Day, as this year's celebrations are expected to be bigger and better than ever.

There will be fireworks, parades, shows, youth rallies and the opening of a new walkway from the Civic District to Marina Bay.

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial

When: August 6 and 9

Where: Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan

If you've ever wanted to visit Japan to learn more about its World War II history, now's the time to go.

The year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the U.S. bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Memorial events will be held in both cities on August 6 and 9, while a number of special arts



Happy 50th, Singapore.

projects will be held throughout the year.

[MORE: Hiroshima atomic bomb attraction more popular than ever](#)

World Indigenous Games

When: September 18-25

Where: Porto Nacional, Brazil

Though the 2016 Olympics in Rio are hogging the spotlight, Brazil is hosting a smaller but arguably much cooler event in 2015 -- the first [World Indigenous Games](#) in Porto Nacional.

More than 2,000 athletes from indigenous groups from more than 30 countries will be traveling to the municipality of Porto Nacional to take part in a wide range of disciplines, including archery, javelin, tug-of-war, canoeing, log racing, wrestling, football, xikunahati (headball), swimming and other athletics.

Though the games have taken place for more than 10 years, this will be the first time the event is open to athletes from outside Brazil.

More info at the official games website, www.i-games2015.com.

World Puppet Festival

When: September 18-27

Where: Charleville, France

Charleville is regarded as a major international center of puppetry and has one of the world's top marionette schools.

At this annual event, 150 professional troupes from as far afield as Burma, Mali and Jordan put on up to 50 shows a day.

"The event is a huge celebration and of great importance to locals, because the region has such a long tradition with puppets and marionettes -- or les petits comediens, as we like to call them," says local restaurant owner Guy Barbara.

"The excitement builds before the grand parade, and then there are 10 days of fun on the pavements and sidewalks of Charleville. There really is nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world!"

More info at Festival-marionnette.com.

Cannstatter Wasen (Stuttgart Beer Festival)

When: September 25-October 11

Where: Stuttgart, Germany

Munich's Oktoberfest hogs the limelight when it comes to beer festivals, but



As if puppets weren't spooky enough.

the [Cannstatter Wasen](#) (Stuttgart Beer Festival) is becoming a worthy rival.

The event lasts for two weeks and first took place in 1818.

It's the world's second largest beer festival.

In addition to numerous beer tents, there's a huge Ferris wheel, carnival rides, live music and

plenty of sugared almonds -- a Stuttgart specialty -- to soak up the alcohol.

Rugby World Cup 2015

When: October 3, 9 and 10

Where: Newcastle, UK

Another one for sports fans.

One of 2015's biggest sporting events, the [Rugby World Cup](#) will hold three of its most important matches in Newcastle.

"The Rugby World Cup is the third biggest sporting event in the world and it will be the largest sporting event in England next year," says Eric Fry, a member of the American team who also plays for Newcastle's local rugby union team.

"Some of the best teams in the world will be playing at St. James' Park, including New Zealand -- the current world champions."

Mexican Grand Prix

When: November 1

Where: Mexico City

In 2015, Formula 1 will return to Mexico for the first time since 1992.

The big racing event will take place on Mexico's Day of the Dead, when family and friends gather to pray for friends and family members who have died.

The course is incredibly historic.

The Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez circuit was named after two racing driver brothers, Ricardo and Pedro Rodriguez, and has also hosted several NASCAR events.

Tickets available at [Tickets.formula1.com](#).

MORE: [Formula One: Mexico GP given green light for 2015 season](#)

Hogmanay celebrations

When: December 31

Where: Edinburgh, Scotland

There's no better way to finish the year than with a visit to one of the largest New Year's Eve parties on the planet.

Almost 100,000 people will attend the annual Hogmanay event, which is manned by 1,000 volunteers.

It begins with a torchlight procession involving more than 25,000 locals, led by Shetland's Up Helly Aa Vikings, with their pipes and drums, and culminates atop Calton Hill, when more than five tons of fireworks will blast into the sky.

On New Year's Eve, as many as 100,000 people will take to the streets to sing "Auld Lang Syne" -- apparently the biggest and loudest rendition of the song in the world -- and party.

Live footage from the celebration is beamed to more than one billion people in 150 countries.