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The Dominican Republic: If you visit in winter, you won't want to go home!

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I'm sick and tired, literally. I wasn't sick and tired a week ago. In fact, all of my maladies immediately went on hiatus as soon as I stepped on the first plane from San Sebastian to Madrid. As I stepped off the last plane home from Madrid to San Sebastian, they all came back, punched me in the stomach and kicked me in the shins. Usually my colds last about 24 hours. This one so far has lasted 120. I take allergy medicine and stomach medicine daily; I didn't need either in the Dominican Republic, not once.

I am a northerner, through and through. My childhood winters reached lows of -30° . Now I shudder when I see anything below about 12° (Celsius!). I only need cold once a year: December. The rest is totally unnecessary. The older I get, the more I hate the cold. I used to think four distinct seasons was ideal. I am beginning to think I was wrong. I suppose spring is OK in May and autumn is OK in September and, as I said, winter is OK in December, but that's enough. I don't need

October, November, January, February, March, and April.

So anyway, I went to the Dominican Republic for a week. I got all the rest I needed, I got all the sun I needed, and I got all the food I needed. I recommend a mid-winter tropical trip to anyone. Sure, the homecoming is hard, but I think it's worth it. The winter gets us down; it gets me down. It's cold, it's dark, it's boring, and after Christmas, offers basically nothing but Carnival, which I am not a fan of. The first three months of the year are the purgatory that lead up to the glory of Easter vacation.

I also think we need all kinds of vacation throughout the year, not just the run-around, sight-seeing, museum-hopping type and certainly not just the lazy on-the-beach-all-day type. We need both. So many times I have gone on vacation only to come home more exhausted than when I left (though true, it is a different kind of exhaustion). And more than physical rest, we need psychological rest, a time not to think about anything. The Dominican Republic was perfect for this. The only stress I encountered was in choosing what to have for breakfast or trying to find an unoccupied deckchair near the pool. We went out to see a little of the country but mostly just enjoyed ourselves.

Cultural observations? These people don't stop dancing!

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