

TRAVEL + LEISURE

NOVEMBER 2003

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Sunset at Anthony's Key, on the island of Roatán.

TROPICAL

Honduras The holidays here come in a thousand shades of green (the emerald La Ceiba jungle) and blue (the teal waters of the Caribbean, where Saint Nick arrives by surfboard in red-and-white trunks).

WHERE TO STAY Terra-cotta-tiled rooms ring the pool at **Hotel Marina Copán** in Copán Ruinas, a hill town just east of the Guatemala border. Pocket-sized nooks—perfect for impromptu privacy—are hidden throughout the property. **DINNER TO GO** On December 24, families travel from house to house, sharing traditional meals of tamales and eggnog until midnight. At the **Lodge at Pico Bonito**, a luxury outpost in La Ceiba, Julie Lafitte prepares succulent pork and chicken tamales. **FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY** Pico Bonito's on-site butterfly farm breeds more than 40 varieties of the colorful winged insect; lepidopterists offer free tours to lodge guests. **GREAT GIFTS** Intricately carved mahogany screens, dining tables, rocking chairs, and other furniture crafted by native artisans can be shipped home by **Imapro**, a local manufacturer. **COFFEE TALK** Intense, smoky coffee beans from the high-altitude plantations outside La Ceiba are available duty-free at Honduran airports. **DIVE IN** Sign up for a beginner's scuba diving course at the **Anthony's Key Resort** on Roatán island. In three days, novices learn to plummet to 80 feet for views of shipwrecks and one of the world's finest coral reefs. **TIME TRAVEL** Explore towering carved stelae, a hieroglyphic-adorned stairway, and newly excavated tunnels at Copán, a well-preserved eighth-century city and UNESCO heritage site considered the Athens of Mayan civilization for its advances in art and astronomy. Tour company **Hedman Alas** runs shuttle buses to the town of Copán Ruinas daily.

—HEIDI S. MITCHELL

Magical Markets

You've made your list, checked it twice, but you still haven't found the perfect present? These seasonal markets offer gifts found nowhere else.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania One visit to this annual winter market shows why the Pennsylvania town calls itself Christmas City U.S.A. More than 175 craftsmen sell ornaments, jewelry, pottery, and original stained glass under the heated tents of the Christkindlmarkt. After a walk through a forest of decorated trees, listen to performances by the von Trapp singers—the great-grandchildren of the family immortalized in *The Sound of Music*. (November 28 through December 21; 610/332-3378; www.christkindlmarkt.org)



Aubagne, France This town eight miles east of Marseilles specializes in *santons*, colorful clay figurines that depict the people and activities of Provence. Its Santon Fair displays thousands of the "little saints," from a shepherd with his flock and an old-time dairymaid to modern card players, jewelers, and lavender sellers; you can also buy embroidery, stoneware, and traditional Provençal desserts such as *pompe a l'huile*, a bread made with olive oil and orange zest. (November 22 through December 31; www.aubagne.com)

Dresden, Germany More than 60 exhibitors gather at Altmarkt Square for the Striezelmarkt—Germany's oldest Christmas market, dating to 1434—to display porcelain, handblown glass, and wooden nutcrackers. Satisfy your sweet tooth with *Dresdener Stollen*, the classic spice cake with almonds and raisins, or *pflaumentoffel*, prune candies shaped like people. (November 27 through December 24; www.dresden.de)

—CHERYL BRODY

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212/423-3211; jewishmuseum.org)

stackable menorah

