



Black Forest food superstars



The town of Schiltach in the Black Forest is on the food-trip itinerary. (Shutterstock, Handout)

By Phil Marty,
Chicago Tribune

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Serious foodies would never stoop to scarfing down a schnitzel, but they might be tempted by a seven-day culinary adventure from Zicasso that focuses on Germany's Black Forest area. It promises five-course dinners every night at Michelin-star-studded restaurants. There are two three-star places, one with two stars and the others with one star each. Among restaurants on the itinerary are those of famous TV chefs Alfons Schuhbeck and Frank Oehler. In addition, all of the hotels in Munich, Stuttgart and Baiersbronn are five-star lodgings. Though the itinerary can be customized for any time of year, Christmas is recommended to include Stuttgart's Christmas market. The package, which also includes train transfers among towns, is priced from \$3,590 per person double occupancy. Info: tinyurl.com/q6gckse

Cruising the holidays

If the idea of spending the holidays in the Caribbean at a reasonable price sounds good, MSC Cruises has some interesting options. First up, if your Thanksgiving plans are still fluid, is a Nov. 22 departure from Miami that will include a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, a cooking class for kids 3-11 and a party for kids 12-17. The seven-night cruise is priced from \$379 per person double occupancy and will visit Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Mexico and the Bahamas. Info: tinyurl.com/mg6xer5. A seven-night cruise leaving Miami on Dec. 13 will be at sea part of Hanukkah, so there will be a nightly menorah lighting and traditional Hanukkah foods. Priced from \$329 per person, it will visit St. Martin, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas. Info: tinyurl.com/o74ttef. Over Christmas is a seven-night cruise departing Miami on Dec. 20, with stops in Jamaica, the Caymans, Mexico and the Bahamas. There will be lots of Christmas trees, decorations and food, along with activities for the kids that include cooking classes, Santa, scavenger hunts and more. It's priced from \$599 per person. Info: tinyurl.com/k8l8a3k

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Club Med for families

The days of simple vacations — fishing, road trip to Yellowstone, family reunion — seem as if they're waning. Bigger and better is what the marketing folks push, whether it's the cruise ship with a climbing wall or a diving adventure in a shark cage. So, it's not surprising to see Club Med's latest venture. The folks who pioneered the all-inclusive resort concept and targeted young singles and couples are very family-focused these days. In line with that, they've partnered with Cirque du Soleil for Creative, which will open in summer 2015 in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Acrobatics and the artistic will go hand in hand here. Among the acrobatics will be the chance for both kids and adults to get instruction in activities such as trapeze, tightrope and bungee. Artistic will range from juggling, to mask painting to dance. Cirque du Soleil is helping in the design of the venue and will train the instructors. Info: tinyurl.com/knd6o22

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