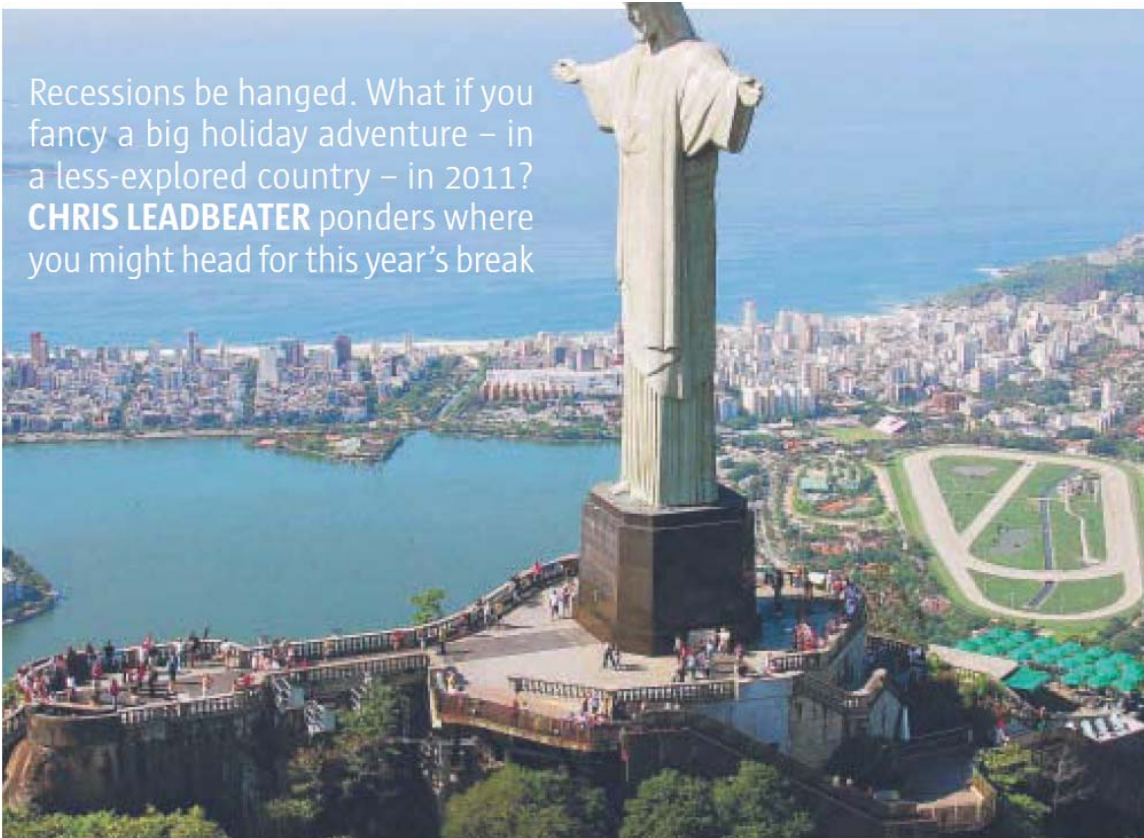


Recessions be hanged. What if you fancy a big holiday adventure – in a less-explored country – in 2011? **CHRIS LEADBEATER** ponders where you might head for this year's break



## **SYRIA**

**BARELY** a five-hour flight from Britain, Syria is a rising holiday option. Yet it retains an exotic appeal, the ambience of a place less visited. Damascus, the capital, is all contrasts. Gaze at the vast Umayyad Mosque and you can spot pillars from the time when it was a Roman temple, while Al-Hamidiyah Souq still has the whirl of an ancient market. Yet there is also a cosmopolitan edge to the restaurants and cafés. The second city, Aleppo, with its medieval citadel, is just as impressive. And Palmyra, where temples and theatres lie in the desert, is as glorious a set of Roman remains as you will find in Italy itself.

### **How to do it:**

Exodus (0845 8673405, [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk)) offers a 'Week In Syria' tour – Damascus, Palmyra, Aleppo and the Krak des Chevaliers. From £1,999 with flights.