

# TRAVEL



## NOT BOOKED FOR SUMMER?

We're here to lend a hand, with four pages of last-minute escapes

### ANOTHER SIDE TO FLORENCE

The shops, sights and restaurants of the city's coolest new district | p6

### FROM LASER COMBAT TO SPA INDULGENCE

We test the newest Center Parcs to its limits | p14

### THE SMALL SCRATCH THAT CUT DEEP

Jon Holmes vents his rage at his hire-car company | p4



# SAVE YOUR SUMMER

It's June already. Got your holiday sorted? Thought not. Luckily, **Jeremy Lazell** has found these 44 last-gasp trips

## FRANCE

### Hilltop stay, Provence

Think you're too late to snaffle a bargain? Think again. A&K Villas has 15% late-booking discounts on a number of its properties, including Lou Roucas, a 17th-century villa seemingly carved from the cliff-face in the spectacular hilltop village of Gordes. Split over three levels, the villa has three bedrooms, a pool and sunbathing terraces with views of the Luberon mountains. Seven nights cost £2,262 (0845 618 2205, akvillas.com). EasyJet, Ryanair and British Airways fly to the nearest airport, Marseilles.

### Valley villa, Dordogne

There are grander villas in the Dordogne than Maison Maria, but, *mon dieu*, quel panorama. The three-bedroom villa, above the market town of Le Bugue, near Bergerac, has views from the pool and a shady terrace looking out over the Vézère valley that'll make loafers of the most avid explorers. Simply Perigord, run by a pair of Dordognophile Brits based in Le Bugue, has a week here for £1,460 (00 33 5 53 54 54 31, simply-perigord.com). Ryanair, Flybe and Jet2 all fly to Bergerac.

### Walking tour, the Alps

Trek between remote Savoyard villages in the shadow of Mont Blanc, with luggage transferred between chalet-hotels and *chambres d'hôtes*. Starting in St Gervais and ending in Chamonix, this is a seven-night self-guided trip, where you'll walk for up to six hours a day and make a spectacular traverse of the Grand Balcon Nord. It's £995pp, including most meals, with On Foot Holidays (01722 322652, onfootholidays.co.uk). EasyJet, Jet2 and BA fly to Geneva.

### Beach campsite, Brittany

Yes, you're in a mobile home, but Camping de l'Atlantique, near Finistère, has a water park with fun slides and flumes, and a footpath down through forest and across dunes to a beach that wouldn't look out of place in St Lucia. Canvas Holidays has seven nights for £1,246, including ferry crossings from Portsmouth to St Malo in a four-berth cabin (01383 629024, canvasholidays.co.uk).



Where you see this symbol, it means the trip is family-friendly and has availability for the school summer holidays. The price quoted is for the school summer holidays.



### Whitewater canoeing, the Ardèche

Family Adventure Holidays still has availability at its watersports base on the Med, but what we fancy most is its Ardèche White Water Adventure. The trip, for ages eight and above, is based at a camp site with a pool near Lablachère, and packs in a riot of outdoorsy adventure, from climbing and weaselling – essentially, squeezing between rocks – to high-ropes fun and a two-day wild-camping, whitewater canoeing expedition. The week starts at £330pp, including chalet accommodation and all activities (01273 803030, familyadventureholidays.com). Ryanair flies to the nearest airport, Nîmes, or try Flybe or CityJet to Avignon.

### Gastro hotel, Bordeaux

Elasticated waistbands essential on this one. Le Saint-James is a small but stylish Relais & Châteaux design hotel surrounded by vineyards, on the edge of Bouliac, complete with a Michelin-starred restaurant and a cookery school. Expressions



Grady Reese/Getty

**Did somebody say swimming?** Above, canoeing in the Ardèche, and take a break during a bike tour of Catalonia

### Kids' club, Corsica

Wondering how to wear out the kids this summer? We have two words for you: Club Med. With kids' clubs for children aged four months and upwards, the 80 resorts also offer a huge menu of outdoorsy activities for older kids, ranging from diving and windsurfing to riding, tennis, mountain-biking and sailing. Set back from a superb sandy beach near Ajaccio, Club Med Cargèse, on the west coast of Corsica, has one of the best locations. Seven nights' all-inclusive costs £1,609 for adults, and £1,235 for children six and older, including flights and transfers. Under-6s go free, but pay £556 for flights (0845 287 7248, clubmed.co.uk).

## SPAIN & PORTUGAL

### Cycling tour, Catalonia

Few Brits have heard of the lower Emporda plain, but Spanish cyclists will tell you this is a pedaller's Promised Land, a place of rolling hills, secluded beaches and medieval villages, wedged between Girona and the Med. Inntravel has a five-day, easy-paced, self-guided cycling tour, with luggage transferred between *agroturismos*, and time aplenty factored in for your junior Froome to muck around in hotel pools. The six-night Bikes, Back Roads & Beaches trip starts at £1,105 for adults and £815 for





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→ children, half-board, including bike hire and Eurostar/TGV returns (01653 617000, inntravel.co.uk).

## Pad for two, Ibiza

The European villa specialist Vintage Travel only added Villa Atzi II to its books this year, and it still has good availability. Our advice? Get in now. A five-minute drive from the sleepy town of San Carlos, with little to disturb your poolside slumber but the tinkle of sheeps' bells, the one-bedroom villa is wonderfully remote, yet only a 15-minute drive from the best of Ibiza's northeast beaches. Seven nights start at £1,071pp, including flights and car hire (01954 261431, vintagetravel.co.uk).

## Family villa, Minorca

We don't get it. On the cliffs above the cobalt cove of Calan Bruc, with a 50ft swimming pool, three bathrooms and a dining terrace overlooking the bay, Villa Rocamar, which sleeps eight, is normally one of the hottest properties on Meon Villas' books. This summer, though, it has slipped under the radar. Don't ask why, ask how much. Seven nights from £979pp is your answer, including flights and car hire (0844 879 7388, meonvillas.co.uk).

## Pilgrim's route, Galicia

Trek the last 60 miles of the Way of St James, starting in Sarria, finishing at the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, sharing the trail with pilgrims from around the world. The five-day self-guided walk follows quiet country lanes and forested footpaths between small towns and hilltop hamlets, with luggage transferred between guesthouses. Walks Worldwide has the seven-night trip from £770pp, including most meals, route notes and flights (0845 301 4737, walksworldwide.com).

## Forest, Estoril

Penha Longa, seven miles from the beaches of Estoril, in Portugal, is one of four Powder Byrne summer resorts — the others are in Elba, Sardinia and Crete — still with good availability. In the dewy forests above Sintra, the resort has clubs for children as young as four months, and academies for teenagers focusing on sailing, surfing, diving and tennis. Seven nights for a family of four cost £5,300, B&B, including flights, transfers and shuttle buses to the beach (020 8246 5300, powderbyrne.com).

## Beach break, Costa da Prata

Not for nothing does Costa da Prata mean "silver coast" — the beaches in this quiet corner of Portugal gleam in the summer sun and shimmer against the blue waters of the Atlantic. Fora a Caixa is a five-bedroom villa, five minutes from one of the most child-friendly beaches on the Obidos lagoon. It has a large pool and gardens, and seven nights through Real Holidays cost £3,100 (020 7359 3938, realholidays.co.uk). BA, easyJet and Ryanair all fly to the nearest airport, Lisbon.



## ITALY

### Restored farmhouse, Sicily

Best way to bag a villa this late in the day? Find a new one and get in quick. Better still, find an old farmhouse that's been lovingly restored by its artist owner and only put up for rent this summer. In other words, find La Masseria, a five-bedroom villa near Ragusa that sleeps nine and has a pool. A week booked through The Sicilian Villa Company starts at £4,395, with 20% reductions on groups of seven or fewer, until August (020 7207 0785, thesicilianvillacompany.com). Ryanair flies to the nearest airport, Comiso.

### New apartment, Tuscany

Another new property, Montecristo is a two-bedroom apartment in the cypress-studded hilltop hamlet of San Vincenti. Effectively the ground floor of a centuries-old villa, the apartment is newly restored, with local terracotta tiles, exposed beams and a shared 50ft pool with mighty views over central Chianti. It costs from £751 a week through To Tuscany (0121 286 7782, to-tuscany.com). CityJet and BA fly to the nearest airport, Florence.

### Fun resort, Puglia

Carlsberg don't do family resorts, but if they did, Borgo Egnazia is what they'd look like. Styled on the whitewashed masseria that dot the surrounding hills, the resort has an excellent kids' club next to the vast family

pool, armies of local staff eager to play football or tennis with your kids, junior cookery classes, a golf course and a free shuttle bus to the private beach club. Seven nights for a family of four with Citalia cost from £7,199, B&B, including flights and car hire (0843 770 4443, citalia.com).

### Luxury cruise, Ligurian Sea

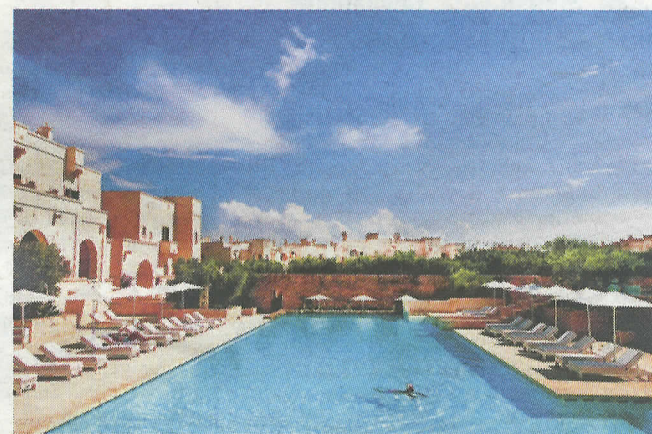
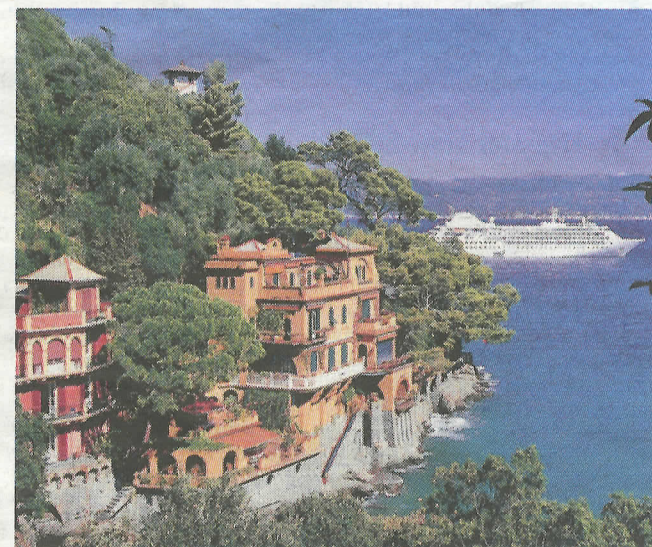
There's still decent availability on Europe's cruise ships this summer, with Silversea offering discounts on flights to help shift empty berths. Its 296-guest — and very glam — Silver Wind sets sail from Rome on August 18 for a seven-day cruise to Monte Carlo that takes in Olbia on Sardinia, Calvi on Corsica, Portofino near the Cinque Terre, Livorno (for day trips to Florence) and Cannes. It starts at £2,850pp, including all meals, drinks, flights and transfers (0844 251 0837, silversea.com).

### Camping, Sardinia

Eurocamp has more than 160 parks in Europe, and an excellent website where you enter your dates and up pops the full range of options available, from a tent on the Costa Brava to an air-conditioned mobile home in Switzerland. One of its best is Torre del Porticciolo, bang on the beach in northwestern Sardinia, where six nights in a two-bedroom mobile home cost just £942 per party (0844 406 0552, www.eurocamp.co.uk). Ryanair and Thomson fly to the nearest airport, Alghero.

### Get high, Dolomites

Ski resorts are always a good bet for summer-holiday late bookings: it's low season



**Med for it** Above left, windsurfing at Cosmos Beachclub in Lefkada. Top right, your Ligurian cruise calls in at Portofino. Above, Borgo Egnazia in Puglia. Left, the cool green grounds of the Penha Longa hotel in Estoril. Below, waiting for some service in Lefkada

for them, so availability is wide open. At 5,000ft up, in a secluded corner of Val Rendena, the pretty resort of Madonna di Campiglio has stacks of outdoorsy options for active families in summer. Zenith Holidays has seven nights in a self-catering apartment that sleeps four from £2,780, including rafting, riding, mountain-biking, via ferrata and a high-ropes adventure course (020 3137 7678, zenithholidays.co.uk). Fly to Verona with BA or easyJet.

## GREECE

### Watersports, Lefkada

Watersports all-inclusives generally make you pay for the posh stuff, such as water-skiing: not Neilson. Cosmos Beachclub, on the beach at Vassiliki, is one of nine Neilson resorts in Greece and Turkey offering an all-inclusive buffet of sports, from windsurfing and dinghy sailing to kayaking and tennis, with two free water-skiing sessions per week. Seven nights for a family of four cost from £3,686, including all meals, and flights from Manchester (0844 879 8155, neilson.co.uk).

### Multiactivity week, Peloponnese

A new kid on the ever-growing family-adventure block, this Peloponnese multiactivity holiday, for ages seven and above, crams a year's worth of adventure into an action-packed seven nights, including visiting a 3m-year-old cave, hiking the Loussios gorge, cycling the Tripoli plateau, whitewater rafting, sailing and other watersports. Activities Abroad has the trip from £1,195, →





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→ B&B, for adults, and £995 for children, including flights, transfers and activities (01670 789991, [www.activitiesabroad.com](http://www.activitiesabroad.com)).

## Five-star stay, Halkidiki

Oceania Club does have kids' clubs, but with a beach this good and shallows this warm, if you can't entertain the little lovelies yourself, well, frankly, get a nanny. Better yet, use the hotel Babewatch service, where staff take kids off weary parents' hands for 30-minute blasts, leaving you to feast on all-inclusive piña coladas, watersports and spa treatments, though possibly not in that order. Classic Collection Holidays has seven nights for a family of four from £5,189, all-inclusive, including flights and transfers (0800 294 9315, [classic-collection.co.uk](http://classic-collection.co.uk)).

## Stylish villa, Cephalonia

Villas book up fast on Cephalonia — blame Captain Corelli — so it pays to scout for new ones. The three-bedroom Blue Bay Villa, which reopened last summer after a refurb, is still flying under the rental radar, with good availability. It can't last: beautifully finished, with a 40ft infinity pool pointing towards Lourdas beach, the villa now has the high-spec stylish interior its commanding location deserves. Seven nights with Unique Villas start at £1,676 (020 7183 5383, [uniquevillaskefalonia.co.uk](http://uniquevillaskefalonia.co.uk)). Ryanair, easyJet and Fly Thomas Cook all serve Cephalonia.

## Ancient hamlet, Crete

You want peace, a pool, a sandy beach 15 minutes by car and tavernas just a stroll away? Villa Kontis is your place. The stylishly restored three-bedroom traditional stone villa, which sleeps eight, sits in an ancient hamlet four miles from Georgiopolis beach, with a lush, shady garden surrounded by olive groves. GIC the Villa Collection has a week from £1,053pp, including flights and car hire (020 8232 9780, [gicthevillacollection.com](http://gicthevillacollection.com)).



## Join a flotilla, Ionian Sea

No problems with availability on flotilla trips with Sunvil Sailing: they run every week from now until the middle of October, and if they need extra boats, they just charter more. Sailing from Lefkada, the seven-night live-aboard trips are open to anyone older than seven, with beginners shown the ropes as they go. The trips cost from £780pp, including flights and transfers. Meals are bought from supermarkets and restaurants along the way, and each evening you have dinner in a different port (020 8568 4499, [www.sunvilsailing.co.uk](http://www.sunvilsailing.co.uk)).

## TURKEY

### Activity break, Lycia

Most tourists come to the Lycian coast for one thing: cheap beaches. However, the landscape around Kas is riddled with canyons, caves and coastal trails, with Roman ruins and remote mountain villages the cherries on the cake. Exodus has a seven-night Lycian Activity Week from £779pp, B&B, including canyoning, mountain-biking, two dives, guided hiking and sea-kayaking over the sunken ruins at Kekova. The group trip includes three dinners, flights and transfers (0845 287 3647, [exodus.co.uk](http://exodus.co.uk)).

### Mountain hideaway, Kalkan

Exclusive Escapes specialises in high-end Turkish villas and hotels, so when it says Rana Evi is the most romantic and private villa in its entire portfolio, you need to take note. Clinging to the hillside above the remote village of Islamlar, the villa is fashion-shoot fabulous, with plump terrace sofas and floor-to-ceiling french windows opening onto a balcony with a pool. It actually sleeps four, but nowhere this stylish should be wasted on kids. A week starts at £1,250pp, including flights and transfers (020 8605 3500, [exclusiveescapes.co.uk](http://exclusiveescapes.co.uk)).

### Yoga retreat, Fethiye

The pine forests above Gocek are like Primrose Hill-on-Sea over summer, when instructors from NW3's hip Triyoga shift their mats to the Huzur Vadisi retreat. See the full list of courses at [huzurvadisi.com](http://huzurvadisi.com) — availability is still good on the Scaravelli week (September 8 to 15) with Catherine Annis. The seven-night course costs £725 in shared yurt accommodation, including all meals — vegetarian, natch. Book through Relax and Release (07747 196914, [relaxandrelease.co.uk](http://relaxandrelease.co.uk)). Monarch and Fly Thomas Cook serve the nearest airport, Dalaman.

### Make a splash, Dalaman

It's hard not to love Oludeniz — the bone-white spit and turquoise lagoon is a Turkish holiday icon — but, boy, it gets hot in summer. Best way to visit? Stay at Perdikia Hill instead, a hillside all-inclusive in the pine forests nearby, taking the free shuttle bus down to Oludeniz, assuming the kids can be prised from the hotel pool and waterslides. Anatolian Sky has seven nights, all-inclusive, for a family of four for £2,536, including flights and transfers (0844 273 1009, [anatoliansky.co.uk](http://anatoliansky.co.uk)).

### Beach huts, Antalya

Ever wondered what Turkey looked like in the 1970s? The Arcadia Hotel is your answer. Gloriously anti-boutique, it

**Blue-sky thinking**  
Above, bag a bargain at Constance Ephelia in the Seychelles. Below left, the view from Norway's Brakanes Hotel



comprises five simple, air-conditioned wooden chalets, each sleeping four, right on Cirali beach, with only the odd tortoise to trouble you as you lounge about among the lemon trees. No TVs, no loud music, no set time for meals (often served out under the stars), it's old-school holiday bliss. Couples pay £700pp, a family of four £1,960; both prices include seven nights' half-board and airport transfers from Antalya. Book with Journey Anatolia (020 8761 5605, [journeyanatolia.com](http://journeyanatolia.com)). Fly there with easyJet, Thomson or Monarch.

### Hip hotel, Bozburun peninsula

Gloriously brat-free — children under 14 are not allowed — Marti Hemitheia opened last summer and instantly became the coolest corner of the Dalaman coast. You're only half an hour's drive from Marmaris, but this is a lifetime away from package-holiday hoi polloi, with just 30 stylish rooms, a private beach club, pool and spa. Elixir Holidays has seven nights from £1,390pp, B&B, including flights, transfers and a massage (020 7722 2288, [elixirholidays.com](http://elixirholidays.com)).

### Gulet, Turquoise Coast

Explore describes availability on its eight-day Blue Cruise as "limited", but with eight departures still open between now and the end of September, book this week and your chances are good. And what rewards: leaving Fethiye on a traditional wooden gulet, you'll explore the secluded coves and uninhabited islands of the Turquoise Coast, with time aplenty for sea-kayaking, snorkelling, gorge walks and Roman ruins, not forgetting G&T sundowners on deck. Seven nights cost from £749pp, full-board, including flights (0843 636 8419, [explore.co.uk](http://explore.co.uk)).

## REST OF EUROPE

### Fjord walk, Norway

The Brakanes Hotel, in Ulvik, is on the shores of Hardangerfjord, at the heart of Norway's mighty western fjords. It's the perfect base for a superb walking trip with HF Holidays. The week starts at £1,249pp, half-board, including flights, transfers and a daily menu of guided walks, from gentle strolls along the orchard-covered slopes above Ulvik to lung-busting yomps on the rugged Hardangervidda plateau (0345 470 7558, [hfolidays.co.uk](http://hfolidays.co.uk)).



### Activity break, Gozo

Fly'n'flop families should look away now: the eight-day Active Gozo trip from Families Worldwide does exactly what it says on the tin — kayaking, climbing, mountain-biking and snorkelling from its beach-resort base in Marsalforn. The group trip, recommended for ages eight and above, costs from £1,229 for adults and £1,199 for children, including breakfast, two lunches, flights, transfers and activities (01962 737560, [familiesworldwide.co.uk](http://familiesworldwide.co.uk)).

### Cool kids' club, Croatia

My kids hated kids' clubs until they found one run by Scott Dunn. With Xbox 360 Kinects and Apple TV, its Explorers clubs are run by mostly British staff with at least four years' training and nursery experience, and sports coaches are flown out in summer for the over-5s. The newest club has just been rolled out at Sun Gardens, a hotel with a spa and pebble beach, just outside Dubrovnik, where seven nights for a family of four cost £7,363, B&B, including daily kids' club, flights and transfers (020 8682 5040, [scottdunn.com](http://scottdunn.com)).

### Learn to sail, Croatia

Most learn-to-sail holidays do a quick daily outing from port, then it's back to the classroom, quiet at the back, please. Activity Yachting is different: all learning happens on board as you join a flotilla out



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## Flights, ferries and trains: what's the state of play?

Availability is still good on planes, trains and ferries this summer, but you'll need to be quick, and flexible, to snag a bargain. The first two weeks of August are particularly busy, but even then, if you can travel midweek and drive a few hours to an airport offering cut-price flights, and maybe spend an extra £25pp on an airport hotel to secure the cheaper early-morning flights, deals can still be found. Travel outside the school holidays and the world is still your cut-price oyster.

### FLIGHTS

EasyJet has a handy Inspire Me tool: enter your holiday profile — city, beach, romance, family — budget, airport and dates, and up comes a map of suggested flights. For example, Gatwick to Pisa, even in August, starts at £90 return (easyjet.com).

If you can be flexible with airports, Ryanair has some superb deals. Even during the school holidays, you can fly from Bristol to Bergerac from £52 return, Prestwick to Carcassonne from £58 and Leeds Bradford to Venice from £62 (ryanair.com). In the same period, Monarch has Leeds Bradford to Palma Majorca from £80 (monarch.co.uk).

Visit airline websites for the latest sales. Book today and Virgin Atlantic has discounted summer fares on flights after August 17 — Heathrow to New York starts at £559 (virgin-atlantic.com).

### FERRIES

Check individual ferry operators for deals. Condor Ferries has caravans-go-free on Sunday crossings from Portsmouth to Cherbourg this summer and toddlers-go-free on bookings made before June 10; www.condorferries.co.uk. Or visit specialist consolidators, such as ferrysavers.com and seaviewferries.co.uk, which round up the deals from all operators across the board — we found August fares from Dover to Calais from £91 return for a family of four and car with MyFerryLink.

### TRAINS

The best Eurostar fares get snaffled up the second they're published, 90 days ahead of travel. However, even before the end of August, St Pancras-Paris returns are still widely available from £69. Again, flexibility is key: European Rail expert Voyages-sncf.com suggests routing via Lille instead of Paris. More availability and no changing stations across the capital.

converging at water holes. It's the best time to see the park's wild dogs, who hang out close to the water, sometimes trying their luck with the 12ft crocodiles. You'll also see lions, leopards, elephants and hippos. Audley has 10 days in Tanzania from £2,458pp, including four nights' full-board in a tent with private plunge pool at Selous Riverside Safari Lodge, and four nights' half-board at Breezes Beach Club on Zanzibar. The price includes flights, safari activities and transfers (01993 838545, audleytravel.com).



dizzying numbers, and whale and dolphin sightings are at their most common. Inevitably, availability is scarce. But this summer, a luxury ecolodge — Pikaia Lodge is the first carbon-neutral hotel on the islands — is opening on Santa Cruz, and not only is availability good, it's also offering more than £2,000-a-week "new opening" discounts. Steppes Travel has a week from £4,170pp, full-board, including flights from mainland Ecuador, excursions on the hotel's yacht, lectures, snorkelling, kayaking and biking (0843 636 8319, steppestravel.co.uk). Add £930 for flights with Iberia from London, via Madrid, to Quito.

### Cut-price luxury, Seychelles

Constance Ephelia may be the largest resort in the Indian Ocean, with two beaches, four pools, five restaurants and six bars. But with villas scattered across nearly 300 acres of beach-fringed forest, it feels high-end and boutique. Until you study its prices: as five-star Seychelles luxury goes, it's an absolute steal, especially with its 15% summer discount. Just Seychelles has seven nights, half-board, from £1,789pp (or from £6,996 for a family of four), including flights and transfers (01707 371000, justseychelles.com).

### On the ranch, Montana

In the Saddle has rides for galloping greenhorns and gymkhana junkies alike. Best of the bunch is Hidden Hollow Hideaway, if only because ranch-owner Kelly Flynn is a big kid himself and fantastic with children. It's a 25,000-acre cattle farm on the edge of the Rockies in southwest Montana, offering trail rides, cattle drives, gold-panning, fishing and moose-spotting. Six nights in a log cabin start at £1,890 for adults and £1,649 for under-13s (recommended for ages seven and above), including all meals, activities, flights and transfers (01299 272997, inthesaddle.com).

### Theme parks, Florida

Beaches and burgers, theme parks and pools — there must be kids that don't love this stuff, but we've not met one yet. Virgin Holidays has seven nights at the Courtyard Orlando Convention Center hotel for a family of four from £1,199pp, including flights and car hire. Universal Orlando 3-Park Bonus Tickets cost an added £501.10 per family, giving admission to Universal Studios, Universal's Islands of Adventure and Wet 'n Wild (0844 557 3859, virginholidays.co.uk).

### Sand and safari, Tanzania

The southern-hemisphere winter is dry season in the Selous Game Reserve, a wilderness larger than Denmark, with vegetation low and animals

of Murter island, sailing with an instructor between clear-water coves and ancient villages along the Dalmatian coast. A week starts at £470pp, excluding meals, which you buy in and cook on the boat, or pop out for dinner in ports along the way (01243 641304, www.activityyachting.com). Ryanair flies to the nearest airport, Zadar; transfers arranged for about £40pp return.

### Pool view, Bulgaria

They love a bit of concrete, those Bulgarian developers, but Nightingale House, in the hills above Dryanovo, is as lovely as any Tuscan villa — and a fraction of the price. Renovated by local craftsmen using local materials, the two-bedroom oak-beamed house sleeping six is thrillingly quiet, with balcony, terrace and private poolside views over the Stara Planina mountains, and a glut of monasteries and medieval villages nearby should you tire of the tranquillity. HomeAway has seven nights from £450 per couple, plus £25 per additional guest (homeaway.co.uk; ref 431156). Ryanair flies to the nearest airport, Plovdiv.

## REST OF THE WORLD

### Boutique riad, Morocco

There's a vast beach only a short stroll from Rebal Riads in Sidi Kaouki, while 25 minutes by taxi and you're sipping mint

tea on Essaouira's ancient sea walls. But good luck dragging your kids away: this peaceful complex of six boutique villas is a bougainvillea-clad pocket of family-holiday heaven, with friendly tortoises in the gardens, communal and private pools, tennis and table tennis, and home-cooked tagines brought to your villa. Bliss. Seven nights in a two-bedroom villa start at £575pp, B&B, through Rebal's owner, Fleewinter, including flights to Marrakesh and transfers (020 7112 0019, fleewinter.com).

### Kids go free, Antigua

Curtain Bluff has one of the most exclusive locations in the Caribbean — smuggled away on a private peninsula, it lords it over two magnificent beaches from a gloriously panoramic clifftop perch — but there's nothing snooty about its attitude to kids. Now with a new club for children aged 3 to 10, the resort also has a kids-go-free offer on bookings made before August 13, with seven nights for a family of four from £6,299, all-inclusive, including flights and transfers, through Tropic Breeze (01752 880880, tropicbreeze.co.uk).

### New lodge, Ecuador

Our summer is high season in the Galapagos: seabirds are nesting, the nutrient-rich Humboldt Current attracts marine life in

Sunny stays Top, Rani Evi, in Kalkan. Above left, your 1970s-style beach hut in Antalya. Above, Rebal Riads in Morocco. Below, hang out with iguanas in the Galapagos

