

FAMILY HOLIDAYS



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

so if your child is happy to be left there, you may be able to spend a few hours reading a book on your own, too. A couple hundred yards' walk from your villa is the splendid Gerakas beach where, in late May and June, loggerhead turtles haul themselves out of the sea in the middle of the night. Visit two months later in the season and you may see the babies hatch and flip-flop their way back to the sea.

Harry de Quetteville

- A week in a villa costs from £727 per person, based on four sharing, including flights, car hire and seven nights' self-catering accommodation, travelling in June (simpsontravel.com). Childcare costs per week are: £170 per child aged six-23 months for five half-day sessions, and £145 per child aged two to 10 years for five half-day sessions.

Primary age

Once children are in full-time education, holidays can seem more important than ever: this is the uninterrupted family time you all crave. What you want is easy-access fun – a house by the sea, manageable waves, organised activities – and straightforward travel, so you can focus on having fun with your family.

Quintessential Cornwall

The charming fishing village of St Mawes is the ideal spot for a nostalgia-tinged seaside holiday: the waterfront has but one chain shop, and there is space aplenty on the docks for crabbing. Still, while it may look like the Fifties from the outside, this village has access to sophisticated food, water sports and charm that rivals the best of the rest of Britain. There are two beaches to explore, and Henry VIII's castle at the end of the Roseland Peninsula, looking across to St Anthony Head and Falmouth (don't miss the National Maritime Museum there). On the trip to the end of Cornwall, visit the fabulous Eden Project (edenproject.com). In St Mawes, stay at Penolva, a beautifully decorated waterside house ideal for two families of four (it sleeps eight). Penolva epitomises family luxury: the wardrobes are filled with dressing-up clothes, the formal dining room is the ideal setting for a



sophisticated meal (the concierge can get Jamie Oliver's former pastry chef in), and the glorious vertical gardens lead down, with drama, to the sea, where you can swim or wade through rock pools.

Sally Peck

- A week at Penolva costs from £4,500 in low season, rising to £6,950 in summer, via St Mawes Retreats (stmawesretreats.co.uk).

Forest fun

If you are a family that loves organised outdoor activities, Center Parcs is your best UK option. Set in Bedfordshire countryside, the Woburn Forest campus is well designed, giving a sense of rural escape while accommodating thousands of visitors. The lodges are high quality, if a little homogenous, and all feel sufficiently private and set back from the flow of bicycle traffic on the resort's roads – and dogs are welcome, too. Center Parcs offers an embarrassment of activities for outdoorsy types, from archery lessons to fencing, though nothing extraordinary for preschool children. All cost extra, with the exception of the Subtropical Swimming Paradise, the jewel in the resort's crown, which is a futuristic-looking bubble with a range of pools, wave machines and some great slides. There is also the on-site Aqua Sana spa, filled with parents thrilled to have escaped their children.

Jolyon Attwooll

- A three-night weekend stay in a two-bedroom lodge costs from £629.

Croyde under canvas

Whether it's the prospect of marshmallows for breakfast, or hours to climb trees and explore, a bid at frugality, or even just the chance for uninterrupted family time, camping is enjoying a

Surfing in Devon, above; archery lessons at Center Parcs Woburn Forest, below



resurgence in popularity. It would be hard to imagine a more idyllic spot to pitch your tent than the shores of Croyde Bay. This wide sweep of dune-backed sand is fantastic for surfing. Anyone lucky enough to secure one of the 50 spots at Ocean Pitch (formerly Mitchums) will know all about the spectacular views from this enviably elevated spot. Facilities are first rate, with hot showers, clean toilets, Wi-Fi and outside cold showers for washing wetsuits. From pop-up beachside bars near beach volleyball to old-fashioned cream teas, Croyde is a study in contrasts – which makes it a great destination for a lively family seeking adventure without flying.

Jonathan Knight

- Adults £13-£15 per person per night, children aged five-12 half-price (07581 024348; oceanpitch.co.uk).

Adventure in Wales

A blossoming of attractions in recent years has made Wales a serious contender for "adventure playground of Britain". Given the abundance of scenery crammed between the peaks of Snowdonia and Pembrokeshire's 200 miles of beaches along its ragged coast, this may not be surprising – within a stone's throw of almost anywhere is a wealth of beaches, castles, woods, walks and wildlife parks. But Wales also offers adventures to help you discover it in entirely new ways, from zip wires (zipworld.co.uk – note: most activities are for children aged seven and up) to surf lakes (surfsnowdonia.com).

James Stewart

- Clydey Cottages, with its rural setting, swimming pool, on-site farm and 20 acres to run around in, offers everything a family needs. A two-bedroom self-catering house costs from £900 per week in the low season, rising to £3,100 in the summer (clydeycottages.co.uk).

Head to the Highlands

Explore the hills, glens, coasts, forests and marshes of the Highlands, encountering golden eagles, ospreys, otters and deer, at the Aigas Field Centre, in Inverness-shire, which specialises in themed wildlife holidays. Expect bug hunts, hikes and loch-side picnics. Run by the nature writer Sir John Lister-Kaye and his family from their restored Victorian hunting lodge, accommodation is in seven log cabins and an African boma-style house for two adults and two



CENTER PARCS; REX FEATURES; GETTY IMAGES

Get well off the beaten track with your own cottage in Sweden, above; Chia Laguna's kids' club in Sardinia, top right

children. Home-cooked food is served in the baronial hall of the main house.

Sally Peck

- A Nature's Child all-inclusive week runs from August 5-12, for children under the age of 16, and costs £1,275 per adult and £499 per child, fully inclusive (aigas.co.uk).

Swedish safari

Ockelbo, 90 minutes north by train from Stockholm, is the perfect destination for anyone looking to get off the beaten track – and out of the blazing sun – this summer for an old-fashioned forest and lake adventure. While mid-Sweden isn't known for tourism, its densely forested countryside offers adventures aplenty. You may see bears and wolves, and experience a new level of family bonding when you stay overnight on your own island

– perhaps even skinny-dipping like Scandinavian families do. Pair this with a bit of culture in Stockholm, and you'll have a perfectly balanced family break.

Sarah Barrell

- The Escape – Swedish Style package costs from £1,460 per adult and £660 per child, including return flights from the UK, return train transfers to Ockelbo, or car rental, two nights' b&b in Stockholm, two nights' full board on the private island, and two nights' full board at a charming rural b&b (simplysweden.co.uk). For an additional £210, you can go on a bear safari.

Majestic Majorca

The largest of the Balearic Islands, Majorca is perfect for children: it's lined with fantastic beaches and filled with a range of family-friendly hotels and villas. From exploring a 14th-century

BROUGHT TO YOU BY TOURISM AUSTRALIA AND ETIHAD AIRWAYS

A three-course adventure rich in local flavour

For a holiday that combines great food and great scenery, head for Melbourne, Brisbane and the Great Ocean Road, Sarah Gordon writes



Adventure on the menu Etihad's Business Class hospitality, above, is a prelude to scenery such as the 12 Apostles, and delights like cocktails at the Noosa Boathouse, right

Australia has all the ingredients for a perfect foodie holiday. It's not just the glorious coastline, acres of vineyards, fresh produce and exciting coffee culture. The passion of local producers, experimental chefs playing with native ingredients and some spectacular settings down under all help to ensure a unique experience.

The food scene has reached such heights that people are starting to shape their itineraries around the impressive cuisine. The country has become the world's greatest tasting menu thanks to the variety that can be squeezed into a two-week road trip.

If you love the idea of fine wine, learning to cook with the best chefs and an amazing coastal drive, try this mouthwatering menu.

STARTER

Your culinary adventure begins before you set foot on Australian soil with your Etihad Airways flight. Enjoy restaurant-quality dining – there are dedicated food and beverage managers in Business Class – and an expanded wine list showcasing some of Australia's best vintages.

Three daily departures from Heathrow, two from Manchester, and five weekly from Edinburgh to Abu Dhabi, with fast onward connections to four Australian gateways – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth – ensure your journey will be as easy as it is stylish.

Land in Melbourne, Australia's culinary capital, in time for The World's 50 Best Restaurants



4CORNERS IMAGES

awards on 5 April, only the second time that they have been held outside London. As the planet's best chefs descend on the city you too can get involved in the local food scene as the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival is on at the same time, running from 31 March to 9 April.

This celebration of the best of Victoria's produce is the perfect introduction to Australia's culinary heartland, with cookery classes, grazing trails and long lunches hosted in some of the city's most picturesque spots.

MAIN COURSE

The heart of your holiday is an outstanding trip along the Great Ocean Road. One of the



world's most scenic coastal drives, it takes you past the towering 12 Apostles and through pristine rainforests. You'll stop at unspoilt beaches, quaint coastal towns and national parks, getting up close to koalas, emus and kangaroos.

Along the way your culinary journey will continue – you will also be able to find time to stop at vineyard cellar doors, sample fresh local produce at farm gates and visit farmers' markets – as well as take in all the sights and sounds as you continue your journey.

Travelling at your own pace means that you can stop off at any spot that takes your fancy. You are guaranteed a warm welcome and fabulous food.

DESSERT

A short flight from Melbourne to Brisbane and soon you will be in the ultra-stylish coastal town of Noosa, two hours' drive from the capital of Queensland. Expect spectacular restaurants, picture-perfect beaches and lush rainforests. For jaw-dropping views with amazing food and wine, try Sails at Laguna Bay. Noosa Boathouse Bistro and Bar serves sophisticated seafood on the Noosa River. Or for sundowners and oysters, there is the beachside Bistro C. The Italian-inspired Locale mixes cosy ambience with industrial-chic decor, and Noosa Beach House by Peter Kuruvita celebrates coastal riches.

This tasty two-week trip will live long in the memory. And with plenty more culinary itineraries to choose from, you can start planning your next Australian taste tour.

To find out more, visit tgr.ph/tasteofaustralia

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE AUSTRALIA

الإتihad ETIHAD AIRWAYS