The Islands of the
BAHAMAS
fly away
THE ISLANDS OF THE bahamas
BRITISH AIRWAYS

SUMMER 2021

# The best family holidays in Europe for summer

**Double-jabbed and itching to get away with the children? We pick the best breaks — no quarantine required**

Porto Katsiki beach on Lefkas
ALAMY

Oliver Berry | Saturday July 17 2021, 12.01am, The Times

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## 1. Follow Odysseus

Island-hopping through the Ionians is a dreamy way to leave pandemic troubles behind. Loosely based on the adventures of Odysseus, this seven-day catamaran trip starts in the mainland port of Preveza and sails out to islands including Lefkas, Cephalonia and Ithaca Odysseus's home. Boats have three, four or five en suite cabins, plus a skipper and hostess, so all you have to do is sit back and soak up the scenery — unless you fancy some snorkelling, a spot of archery or cheese and wine tastings.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £2,355pp (responsibletravel.com). Fly to Preveza

Porto Moniz, Madeira
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## 2. Go wild on Madeira

The Portuguese island of Madeira, 400 miles off the coast of Morocco, has a spectacularly wild side, with jagged mountain ranges, beautiful coastline and areas of subtropical laurel forest — the last fragments of the great rainforest that once cloaked the island. On a week's holiday you will visit botanical gardens, take an off-road 4x4 tour into the mountains and enjoy a guided walk along the Madeiran *levadas*, the 16th-century aqueducts that were built to transport water around the island. Accommodation is in the Castanheiro Boutique Hotel, in Madeira's main town of Funchal.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £845pp (artisantravel.co.uk). Fly to Madeira

Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, northern Spain
ALAMY

### 3. Peaks to sea in Spain

Northern Spain is the setting for this fun family road trip, during which you will travel from the foothills of the Pyrenees to the Catalan coast. It's a varied adventure packed with activities: guided hikes, canyoning, e-biking, rafting and vulture-spotting in the mountains, followed by swimming, snorkelling and paddleboarding along the Costa Brava and Cap de Creus Natural Park. A private sunset cruise on the last day makes a special end to the trip.
**Details** Fourteen nights' B&B from £2,200pp, including car hire and activities (pura-aventura.com). Fly to Barcelona

The Annabelle hotel on Cyprus

### 4. Chill out on Cyprus

On the southwest coast of Cyprus the Annabelle hotel sits in six acres of lush island gardens, and is steps from the beach and a short walk from the lively town of Paphos, with its archaeological site, medieval baths and seaside bars. The hotel is a good launchpad for exploring the island, but you probably won't feel much like leaving it — a lagoon-like pool snakes through the resort, its glass-fronted restaurant offers a knockout ocean view and the Ouranos spa provides pampering aplenty.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £418pp, including flights (cooptravel.co.uk)

Pine Cliffs Resort in the Algarve
INNTRAVEL

### 5. Active in the Algarve

Perched above the four-mile stretch of Falesia Beach, Pine Cliffs Resort is among the Algarve's top family hotels. It offers dedicated activity programmes for younger children as well as teenagers, encompassing beach volleyball, paddleboarding, high ropes and surfing (all supervised), and cooking lessons for all ages in the Mimo culinary school. Rooms, suites and garden villas are spread around the delightful pine-filled grounds, so the place doesn't feel crowded.

Many rooms feature hand-painted tiles and murals created by local craftspeople.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B in a garden residence from £2,500pp, including flights and transfers (scottdunn.com)

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The quiet lanes of Mallorca
INN CRAVEL

### 6. E-biking on Mallorca

Cycling on Mallorca is hot work, but e-bikes have opened up a different way to see the island — especially the rural corners that many never visit. From the salt flats and sand dunes of the Migjorn, the undeveloped part of southern Mallorca, this self-guided itinerary carries you inland to the agricultural area of Es Pla, with its working farms, quiet villages and vegetable gardens. You'll be staying with local families in agroturismos.
**Details** Six nights' half-board from £1,045 per adult and £850 per child, including bike hire and luggage transfers; £70pp extra for e-bikes (inntravel.com). Fly to Palma

GK Beach Hotel, Crete

### 7. On the beach in Crete

Backdropped by trees and the peaks of the Lefka Ori (White Mountains), the GK Beach Hotel feels really private; nothing stands between it and the sea save for the hotel's lawns, pool and beachfront taverna. All 23 suites and the two-bedroom penthouse are spacious, with kitchenettes and sea views. There's also a great spa. It's a 20-minute walk to the town of Kalyves, while the hotel's private minibus service offers guided excursions to inland villages, local wineries, historic Chania and beauty spots including the Samaria Gorge.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B for four from £920pp, including flights and transfers (simpsontravel.com)

Fiskardo, Cephalonia
ALAMY

### 8. Peace in Cephalonia

James Villas has decent late availability on Cephalonia throughout July and August. Villa Vasilikades is situated in its namesake village, a quiet place a short drive away from the town of Fiskardo — the island's prettiest port, with ranks of Venetian houses and fancy yachts lined up along the waterfront, and a bevy of lively restaurants and bars. The two-storey house offers super views of hills, coast and sea, and the outside space includes a patio barbecue, a small garden and a cracking hillside pool.

**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for six from £1,999 (jamesvillas.co.uk). Fly to Cephalonia

Kalami Bay Apartments, Corfu
SUNVIL

### 9. Coastal Corfu

On the horseshoe-shaped bay of Kalami — one of Corfu's loveliest — these apartments make an attractive base on the island's northeast coast. They are a small complex of studios and one-bedroom apartments, all open-plan with compact kitchens, private balconies and a freshwater swimming pool (our pick are the ones with views over the pool and bay). A path leads down the hill to Kalami, with its clutch of tavernas and beachside bars.

**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for two from £712pp, including flights (sunvil.co.uk)

Ikos Olivia has its own beach on the Halkidiki peninsula

### 10. Luxury in Halkidiki

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Ikos Olivia spans 22 acres of landscaped gardens and has its own white sandy beach on the Halkidiki peninsula, southeast of Thessaloniki. It's stylish (the swim-up pool bar is a fancy touch), and like other hotels in the Ikos group has a unique take on the all-inclusive concept: instead of dining in, you can borrow the hotel's Mini for the day and eat out at a recommended local restaurant. There's an academy for football-mad youngsters, and a beachside childcare service so parents really can switch off.
**Details** Seven nights' all-inclusive from £1,281pp (ikosresorts.com). Fly to Thessaloniki

Marbella Club offers a range of activities and children's entertainment

## 11. Fun in Marbella

Yoga, archery, cookery, pottery, painting, paddleboarding — even flamenco dancing and perfumery. You name it, chances are the children's entertainment team at the Marbella Club will have it somewhere on their activity list. While the kids are being entertained (activities from £51 per half-day), parents can get thoroughly pampered; this is, after all, one of the Med's longest-standing luxury hotels, once favoured by film stars including Brigitte Bardot and Cary Grant.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £2,330pp (marbellaclub.com). Fly to Malaga

A room at the Kiotari Beach Mitsis Rodos Maris Resort

## 12. Save big on Rhodes

Many hotels on Rhodes are tempting holidaymakers with big discounts this year. The Kiotari Beach Mitsis Rodos Maris Resort on the island's southeast coast is offering up to 30 per cent off bookings made by the end of this month. The five-star resort is family-focused, with loads of activities — water polo and windsurfing among them — as well as a separate children's pool and playground. It's huge, with 432 rooms and bungalows, which makes it feel a little impersonal, but it serves families well and is perfectly placed for jaunts along the coast.
**Details** Seven nights' all-inclusive from £739pp, including flights (travelrepublic.co.uk)

Casa Olea is a former olive farm in Andalusia
CASA OLEA

## 13. Low-key Andalusia

The Subbetica is an under-the-radar corner of Andalusia that's superb for family adventures. Set deep in the countryside, on the edge of the Subbetica National Park, Casa Olea is a former olive farm that's run by an English couple, along with their dog, Ruby — the chief hiking guide. The whitewashed farmhouse has been beautifully restored, with rustic rooms offering views of the groves and rust-red hills. There's loads to do: visiting *pueblos blancos* (whitewashed villages), cycling along old drovers' trails and hiking in the hills — perhaps with Ruby in tow.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £980pp, including flights and car hire (sunvil.co.uk)

Angsana Corfu has a private beach, an infinity pool and kids' clubs

## 14. Corfu luxury

Angsana Corfu, up on a hillside above the east coast, is celebrated for its Ionian panorama, with blue horizons unfurling from every window. The hotel, with its private beach, infinity pool and kids' clubs, is brilliant for families. It's elegant, with wood floors, temple-like courtyards and a rooftop bar. Hillview rooms are cheaper, but it's worth paying extra for the sea.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B in a sea-view suite from £2,196 per adult and £1,837 per child, including flights (kenwoodtravel.co.uk)

Panagia Tripiti beach, Crete
ALAMY

## 15. Cretan adventures

Lounging on Cretan beaches is lovely, but this activity-packed small-group holiday, based at a beach hotel in Kissamos, in the west of the island, is great if you want to do more besides. You'll get to go snorkelling to a shipwreck, kayaking and paddleboarding on the west coast, cycling in the mountains, hiking in a gorge with griffon vultures flying overhead, swimming in a sea cave — there's even the chance to learn to dance like a Cretan.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £1,699pp, including flights and activities (familiesworldwide.co.uk)

Villa Perseus, Paxos

### 16. Villa on Paxos

The Ionian island of Paxos isn't as well known as neighbouring Corfu, but attracts a loyal band of regulars looking for a relatively quiet Greek experience. It's just seven miles long and three miles wide, with three main coastal villages: Gaios, Loggos and Lakka. Unspoilt pebbly beaches are the main draw, and there are more than 30 to choose from — for white sands hop on a boat to sister island Antipaxos. Villas with pools abound, but Villa Perseus — a stone house near Fontana village — is a particular charmer with its wooden shutters, pool and lovely walled courtyard perfect for sundowners.

**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for four from £950pp, including flights, car hire and transfers (gicthevillacollection.com)

Lopud 1483, Croatia

### 17. Serenity in Croatia

This retreat takes seclusion to another level. A monastery built in the 15th century on the Dalmatian island of Lopud, it's been restored under the stylish eye of the Croatian architect Rujana Markovic. With minimalist stone rooms (13 cells have become five suites), tranquil gardens and a rooftop terrace that's ideal for sunbathing and stargazing, it feels a world away. Naturally, you get your own chef to serve meals in the former refectory. The monks might have raised their eyebrows at the expense; you may start praying for a lottery win.

**Details** One night's full board for ten from £9,000 (abercrombiekent.co.uk). Fly to Dubrovnik

Hydra in the Saronic Islands
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### 18. Stylish Med cruising

They may not be quite up to Roman Abramovich's standards, but the private motor yachts offered by Sam Boats offer a taste of the super-rich lifestyle without the sky-high costs. With an experienced skipper, and the option of a host on board to cook meals (from £130 a day), these small boats allow you to

skim around the Med in search of quiet beaches and snorkelling spots — a couple of hours from Athens are the Saronic islands of Hydra and Aegina or traffic-free Spetses, for example.
**Details** Seven nights' self-catering from £1,510pp, including flights and skipper (samboat.com)

Magnolia Hotel, Quinto do Lago

### 19. Quinta do Lago chill

Quinta do Lago, the sprawling Algarve beach estate, has been a favourite haunt of footballers and celebs for decades. Check in at the Magnolia Hotel, which is within striking distance of the resort's golf courses, shops and restaurants, as well as the Campus — a state-of-the-art sports centre. The hotel's seven new detached cottages are the choice for those with children; each has two bedrooms, a small self-catering kitchen and living room, and they're a little more removed from the busier parts of the resort.
**Details** Seven nights' room only from £1,994pp, including flights and transfers (jet2holidays.com)

Porto Sani, Halkidiki

### 20. Active Halkidiki

The family-favourite Sani Resort in Halkidiki consists of five hotels clustered around a marina. You want Porto Sani at the centre of the resort, with 98 suites and a private nanny service. There's also a children's club, football academy and cookery courses, and kids-only pools, while frazzled parents can seek refuge in the spas or a choice of more than 20 restaurants. Day trips include the spectacular cliff monasteries of Meteora or the Bousoulas bird reserve.
**Details** Seven nights' full board for a family of four from £7,875 (sani-resort.com). Fly to Thessaloniki

Calilo resort, on the island of Ios

### 21. Escape to Ios

Island escapes don't get much more idyllic than Calilo, a chic, quirky hideaway on the southeast coast of Ios. With its cave-like bedrooms, mosaic-tiled walls, tiki-style sun loungers and rock pools, the hotel looks as if it were designed by Fred Flintstone. Book yourself a day in one of the private grottoes that come with hammocks, plunge pools and views over Papas Beach, one of the Cyclades' most beautiful patches of sand.
**Details** Eight nights' B&B for a family of four from £2,922 (calilo.com). Fly to Santorini and catch the ferry

The Parklane Resort, Cyprus
LUXURY COLLECTION

## 22. Chic Cyprus

The luxury Parklane Resort on Cyprus has a super location on the island's south coast. Beside Aoratoi beach and surrounded by 25 acres of palm-filled gardens, it's sophisticated enough to please adults — Cypriot-inspired decor by Harrods Interiors, four pools, the indulgent Kalloni Spa — but also has loads for children, not least the summer football academies led by ex-Premier League footballers such as Danny Murphy. A sea-view room is essential here, but for the fanciest family accommodation, book one of the detached, timber-and-stone Park Villas, which all have their own private pools.

**Details** Seven nights' B&B for a family of four from £3,890, including flights and transfers (elegantresorts.co.uk)

The botanical gardens in Funchal, Madeira
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## 23. Old-world Madeira

Quinta Da Bela Vista is a celebrated heritage hotel in the hills above Madeira's main town, Funchal. Once a manor house, it still retains an air of old-world elegance — particularly in the lounge bars and delightful gardens. The sumptuous suites are filled with antiques. The hotel is within walking distance of Funchal's shops and restaurants, or there's a minibus shuttle. Further afield, the Jardim Botanico de Madeira is a must-see, and can be reached by cable-car, while the Parque Ecologico de Funchal offers spectacular hikes.

**Details** Seven nights' half-board for a family of three from £643pp, including flights (broadwaytravel.com)

The Blue Lagoon in Iceland
GETTY IMAGES

### 24. Icelandic road trip

Waterfalls, glaciers, geysers and a soothing spa session at the Blue Lagoon are all included on this five-night self-guided road trip around Iceland. Starting in Reykjavik, the trip includes stays in a guesthouse on the banks of the River Varma, at the smart Hotel Ranga near Hella in the south, and a final night in the capital, where there's the option to join a whale-watching trip. For an added thrill, you can also snorkel at the Silfra fissure in Thingvellir National Park — a flooded fracture in the earth's crust, where the Eurasian and American tectonic plates meet.
**Details** Five nights' B&B from £1,325pp, including flights and car hire (artisantravel.co.uk)

Villa Padierna Palace Resort, Marbella

### 25. A taste of Andalusia

There's a new focus on Andalusian heritage and traditions at the hilltop Villa Padierna Palace resort near Marbella, where day trips (from £189pp) include e-biking around villages such as Pujerra and Genaguacil, learning about herbal medicines at a *cortijo* (traditional village house), and hiking and canyoning in the dramatic Rio Guadalmina — you could even spend a day learning how to be a shepherd and making goat's cheese. The hotel's family package includes accommodation in a two-bedroom villa with private pool, a cooking class, golf lesson, two massages, babysitting and a tasting-menu dinner.
**Details** Two nights' B&B for a family of four from £3,059, including transfers (anantara.com). Fly to Malaga

Evora Farm Hotel, Portugal

### 26. Explore the Alentejo

Less visited than the Algarve and all the more alluring for it, the Alentejo covers a huge area of central Portugal — nearly a third of the country. A landscape of plains, fields and hills, it's pastoral Portugal at its most beautiful. Stay at the Evora Farm Hotel for insights into local farming practices, including olive-growing, viticulture, pottery and arboriculture, as well as activities ranging from horse riding to stargazing. The surrounding countryside may be rugged, but Évora is a celebration of modern architecture with simple yet chic interiors, plus a deluxe spa and infinity pool.

**Details** Seven nights' B&B from £1,071pp (evorafarmhotel.com). Fly to Lisbon

Snorkeling in Gozo, Malta
ALAMY

### 27. Gozo's wild side

Malta's little sister island has plenty of potential for wild pursuits, and you will get the full complement on this seven-day group trip to Gozo — scuba-diving, snorkelling, sea-kayaking, climbing and abseiling are all available as well as a day visiting craftspeople and food producers to learn more about the island's culture. You'll be based in the village of Xaghra, at the small and very welcoming Cornucopia Hotel, a cosy former farmhouse owned by a local family, with two pools and a handsome bar serving Maltese and Gozitan wines.

**Details** Seven nights' full board from £1,245 per adult, £1,145 per child, including transfers (activitiesabroad.com). Fly to Malta

Historic Ponte de Lima, Portugal
GETTY IMAGES

### 28. Relax in Portugal

Casa do Bosque, a modernist house in northern Portugal, is a real find for summer, with its wooded location, sliding doors on to a decked patio and lovely pool. The open-plan house has a sleek timber-and-render façade and panoramic glass windows looking out into the woods; the outside deck makes a fine spot for evening drinks. You're 20 minutes' drive from the coast, and historic Ponte de Lima — with its bridge and fortnightly market — is ten minutes in the car.

**Details** Six nights' self-catering for four from £796 (vintagetravel.co.uk). Fly to Porto

Bahia del Duque, in Tenerife

### 29. Tenerife splash-out

Turrets, bridges, cascading lagoon pools and gardens filled with palms and jacaranda trees make Bahia del Duque feel like an all-singing Spanish theme park. However, with five pools, nine restaurants, a great spa and a well-equipped fitness centre, this is no bargain-basement resort — it's more like a boutique hotel, with huge rooms offering a choice of garden or sea views (the grand villas have private heated pools). And there's a brilliant beach on the doorstep.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B for four from £8,578, including flights (kuoni.co.uk)

Villa Erin, on Cephalonia's south coast
CV VILLAS

### 30. Villa on Cephalonia

A strikingly modern villa on Cephalonia's south coast, near Spartia village, Villa Erin is all about the open-plan kitchen, the glass doors swishing open on to the timber-decked terrace, and the infinity pool with its views of cypresses, pines and distant hills. The three en suite bedrooms will keep *Grand Designs* fans happy — they are all gleaming tiles, industrial render and steam-bent wooden mirrors. It's handy for the airport, about eight miles from the island's capital, Argostoli, and Spartia's secluded beach is a ten-minute walk away.
**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for six from £4,852 (cvvillas.com). Fly to Cephalonia

A villa in Anassa, Cyprus

### 31. Cyprus village resort

On the northwest coast of Cyprus, Anassa is a little world of its own, a resort laid out to resemble a traditional Cypriot village, with its own Byzantine-style chapel on the square. Rooms come in a number of styles — whitewashed bungalows, sea-view suites, villas with plunge pools — all decorated in tasteful creams and taupe. There's an excellent children's club, a fine beach near by, and family excursions including bike rides, pottery lessons and SUV tours onto the Akamas Peninsula. Restaurants include fine-dining Helios, with its romantic olive-tree-planted terrace.
**Details** Seven nights' B&B for a family of four from £7,999, including flights and transfers (abercrombiekent.co.uk)

Ca'n Isabella, Mallorca
CV VILLAS

### 32. Finca on Mallorca

A cypress-shaded terrace with a courtyard pool is the highlight at this cosy Mallorcan finca in the northeastern hills above the port of Alcudia. With five bedrooms and four bathrooms, Ca'n Isabella has bags of space. Unlike many of the island's villas, it still feels like a traditional Mallorcan house, with rough beams, big stone fireplaces, terracotta-tiled floors and hand-carved wooden furniture. Expect hush: you're on a private 20-acre estate, although within easy driving distance of the attractive village of Pollensa and the east coast.
**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for ten from £5,023 (cvvillas.com). Fly to Mallorca

Agios Stefanos Beach, Mykonos
ALAMY

### 33. Modernist Mykonos

Mykonos is one of the liveliest of the Greek islands, well known for its nightlife, buzzing bar scene and fashionable beaches. The hotel Nimbus Mykonos is near the popular sands of Agios Stefanos just north of the port, with a grand view of the town and the bay. It's an attractive white cube with clean concrete lines, uncluttered rooms and a sleek plunge pool; several of the superior rooms and maisonettes have hot tubs overlooking the Aegean. It's a short step to the beach for water sports, bars and restaurants.
**Details** Five nights' B&B from £495pp (travelzoo.com). Fly to Mykonos

Korcula, Croatia
ALAMY

### 34. Croatia's islands

How about a private yacht to shuttle you and your family between some of Croatia's most beautiful islands? Departing from Dubrovnik, you might stop off at Mljet, Hvar, Vis and Lastovo, as well as secret beaches and secluded coves where it's just you and the starfish. You should also get in a visit to Marco Polo's supposed birthplace on Korcula. The high-end yachts vary in size from single-cabin boats sleeping two and can have an on-board chef; fishing kits mean you might catch your own dinner.
**Details** Seven nights' full board for six from £3,399pp, including flights and transfers (abercrombiekent.co.uk)