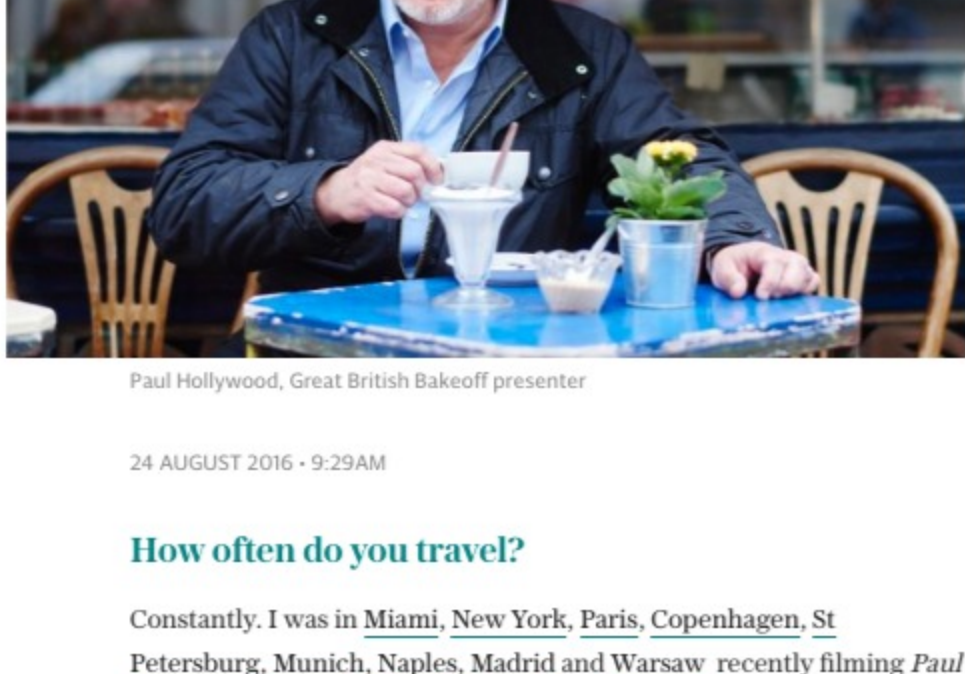


Travel | Celebrity interviews

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Travel - Celebrity interviews

Paul Hollywood: 'At last count, I've been to 47 cities in 12 months'



Paul Hollywood, Great British Bakeoff presenter

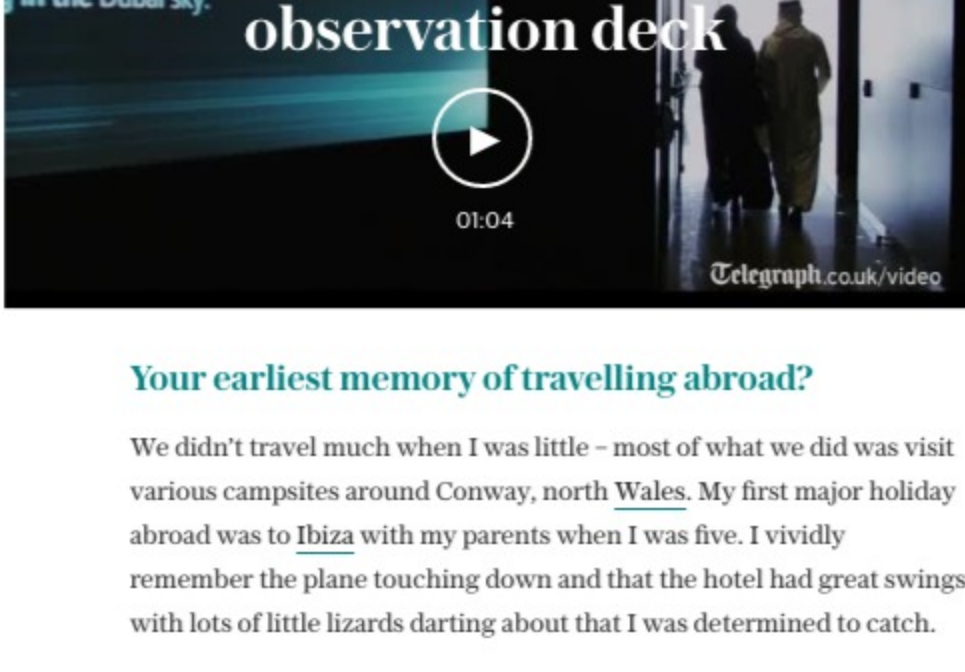
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How often do you travel?

Constantly. I was in [Miami](#), [New York](#), [Paris](#), [Copenhagen](#), [St Petersburg](#), [Munich](#), [Naples](#), [Madrid](#) and [Warsaw](#) recently filming *Paul Hollywood - City Bakes* for the Food Network a few months ago. I went to taste and make the specialities in each of those cities. At last count, I've been to 47 cities in the last 12 months. My jet lag when going to [America](#) isn't all that bad, apart from the west coast like [Los Angeles](#), because I'd been travelling for 24 hours by that time and was exhausted.

What do you need for a perfect holiday?

I like anything remote or quiet, whether it's in the countryside, up the west coast of [Scotland](#) or smaller boutique hotels that aren't crowded. Ironically, when I was in [Dubai](#) with the BBC Good Food Show, even though it's an urban area, when you see the vast panorama from the top of the Burj Khalifa, it feels remote, as if it's just sprung up out of the desert. I like Dubai. I didn't think I would, but the food and the people were great. The heat didn't really bother me - I was used to it as I lived in [Cyprus](#) for six years.

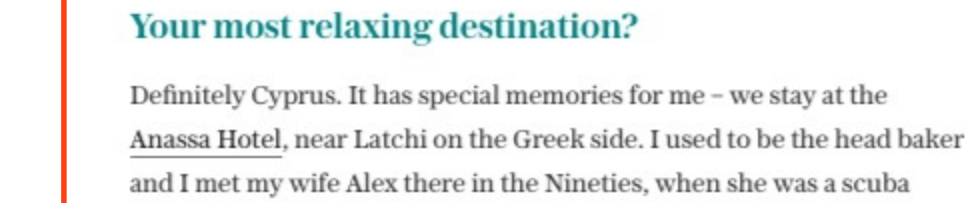


Your earliest memory of travelling abroad?

We didn't travel much when I was little - most of what we did was visit various campsites around Conway, north Wales. My first major holiday abroad was to [Ibiza](#) with my parents when I was five. I vividly remember the plane touching down and that the hotel had great swings with lots of little lizards darting about that I was determined to catch.

Most unusual place you've been?

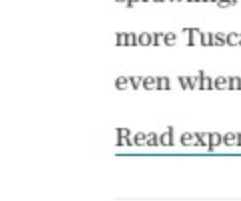
St Petersburg. I was filming there just after Christmas, and it was the most beautiful city I've ever been to. I was coming from Warsaw, which was cold at -10C, but in St Petersburg it was down to -25C. The winter and summer palaces were the most majestic and breathtaking buildings I've ever seen. It makes Buckingham Palace look like a two-up, two-down!



St Petersburg, Russia

Your most relaxing destination?

Definitely Cyprus. It has special memories for me - we stay at the [Anassa Hotel](#), near Latchi on the Greek side. I used to be the head baker and I met my wife Alex there in the Nineties, when she was a scuba diving instructor in [Paphos](#). We even got married there. The rooms are great, and there's a private beach. We can really unwind and it's nice that there are still some of the same guys working there, so it feels familiar. As an added bonus, the flight is less than four hours so you don't feel like you're travelling all day to get there.



Anassa Hotel
Polis Chrysochous, Cyprus

9/10 Telegraph expert rating

Flagship of the Thanos Hotels fleet that also includes the Almyra and Annabelle in Kato Paphos, the Anassa occupies sprawling, lushly landscaped grounds. The effect is somehow more Tuscan than Hellenic, and clever layout ensures that even when nearly full, the hotel doesn't feel so.

[Read expert review](#)

From **£322** per night

[Check Availability](#)

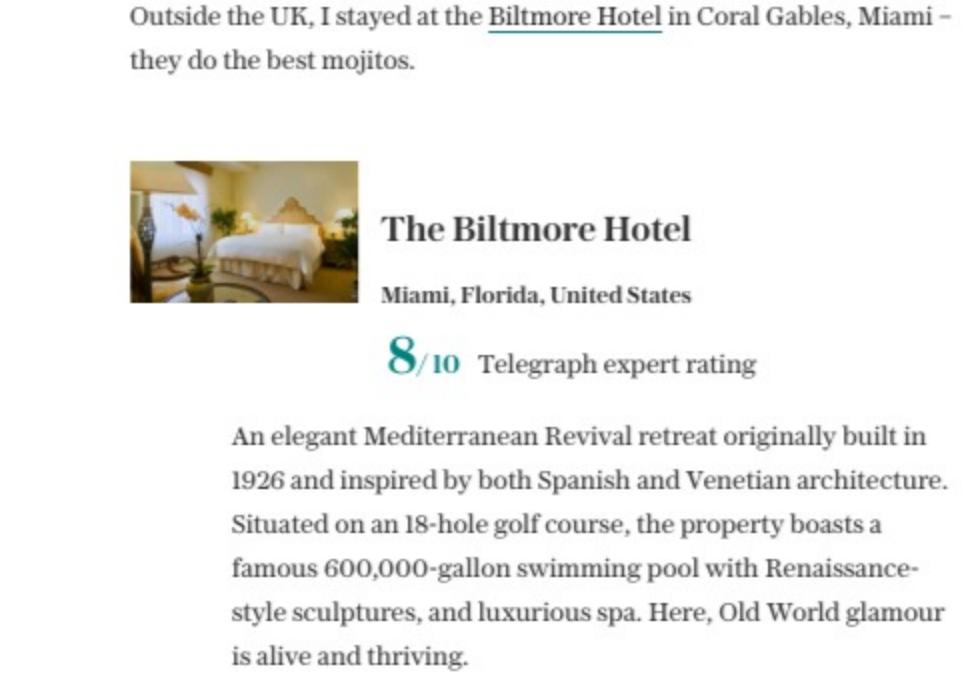
Rates provided by Booking.com

Most unusual meal you've had on your travels?

I think the sheer amount of cabbage and vinegar I had while filming in Warsaw. It was just too much for me. Even the rye bread was loaded. The dishes like the stews were great in small amounts.

Favourite city for food?

I love [Rome](#) for their calzones and New York City for the variety of quality eateries, but I absolutely fell in love with Miami for the stone crabs at Joe's just off Ocean Drive - the best I've ever had, and the Cajun food. The steaks out there are colossal - it's like having a shark and a cow on your plate. They don't do things small there!



Favourite restaurant?

Closer to home, I do love the Gavroche in [London](#) - what Michel Roux does there with French food is amazing and the service is impeccable. I love picking up tips from him when I see him at the food shows. Outside the UK, I stayed at the [Biltmore Hotel](#) in Coral Gables, Miami - they do the best mojitos.



The Biltmore Hotel
Miami, Florida, United States

8/10 Telegraph expert rating

An elegant Mediterranean Revival retreat originally built in 1926 and inspired by both Spanish and Venetian architecture. Situated on an 18-hole golf course, the property boasts a famous 600,000-gallon swimming pool with Renaissance-style sculptures, and luxurious spa. Here, Old World glamour is alive and thriving.

[Read expert review](#)

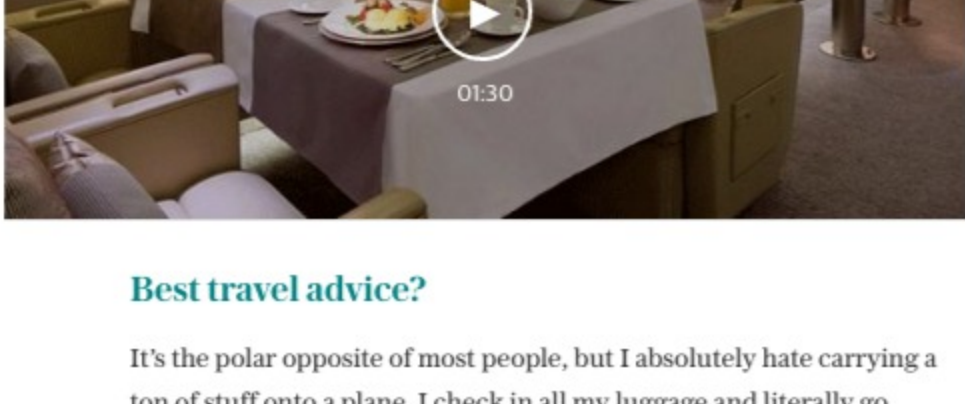
From **£189** per night

[Check Availability](#)

Rates provided by Booking.com

Worst travel experience?

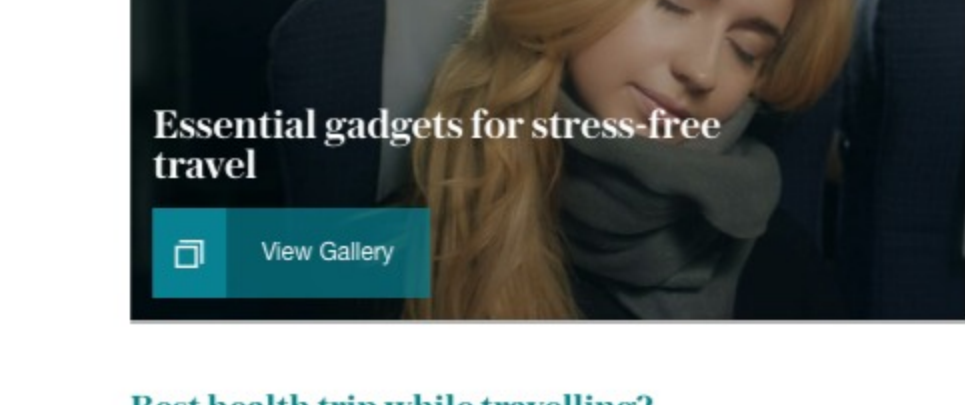
This was equal parts awful and comical. I was staying in Cyprus at a hotel I won't embarrass. The porter came to collect the bags from our room at the end of our stay, and he loaded my big one onto the trolley, which was on a slope outside, and the slope led to the pool. You can see where this is going, can't you? As he slipped inside to get another bag, the trolley took off at speed and crashed into the water. I raced after it and jumped into the pool to get my soaking wet bag out. Imagine the sight as we arrived at the airport, my bag like a sieve with water pouring out of it. Everything was ruined. I was not a happy bunny!



Nissi Beach, Cyprus CREDIT: PARASOLA.NET / ALAMY

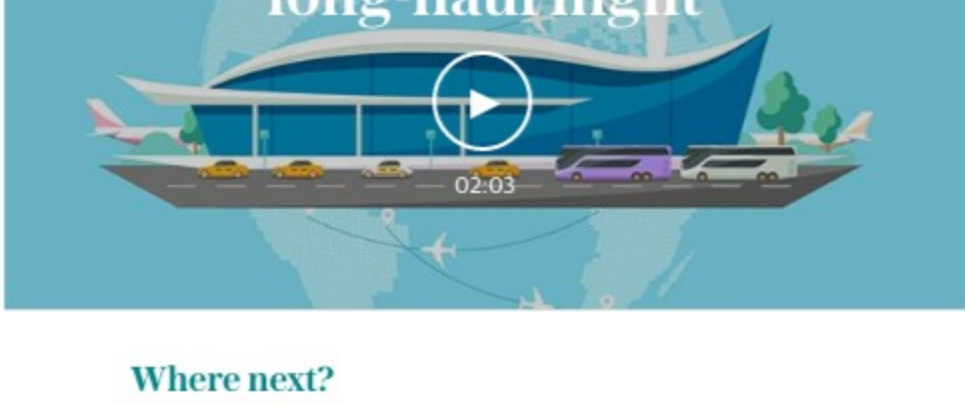
Favourite airline?

I love flying Emirates or Virgin when I'm flying long-haul. Their first-class service is just out of this world.



Best travel advice?

It's the polar opposite of most people, but I absolutely hate carrying a ton of stuff onto a plane. I check in all my luggage and literally go through security with nothing other than my coat in which I have my iPhone and iPad. This is despite me joking at the check-in desk that I'd like one bag to go to [Glasgow](#) and the other to [Paris](#), and see the look of confusion on their face when they say they can't do it, and I say, "Well you did it last time!"



Essential gadgets for stress-free travel

[View Gallery](#)

Best health trip while travelling?

I don't drink much alcohol on the plane, apart from maybe a glass with dinner, and I drink lots and lots of water.

What do you hate about holidays?

Queuing - to check-in, for security, to collect your bags, and especially to get off the plane. I just want to get a move on!



Five top tips to survive a long-haul flight

[View Article](#)

Where next?

[India](#), [South America](#) and [New Zealand](#) - I'd love to go [Down Under](#) but the really long flight puts me off. The rich culture and the incredible food in all three has me itching to find a reason to go - maybe there's my next programme!

The Australian outback CREDIT: MARCO SARACCO - FOTOLIA

Paul Hollywood will be cooking live at the BBC Good Food Show in Belfast, Glasgow, London and Birmingham. For more information, see [bbcgoodfoodshow.com](#). The new series of *The Great British Bakeoff* begins tonight on BBC One.

Interview by Sarah Ewing

