

THE BEACH IS BACK

Spring is here and summer is coming, which means it's time to dig out the flip flops. **Cathy Adams** scours the globe for its best beaches, whether you're after peace and quiet or a huge party





Wild beaches

CHITIMBA BAY, MALAWI

OK, we know it's not by the sea – but it sure feels like it is. Otherwise called the 'calendar lake' (it's 365 miles long and 52 miles wide), Africa's sprawling Lake Malawi has Chitimba Bay, which boasts everything you might expect from a traditional beach: golden sands, blue waters and, bonus, it's surrounded by the Nyika mountains. With beach shacks dotted all along the shoreline, it's about as wild a beach as you'll ever see.

How to get there: Flights start from around \$550 return with Ethiopian Airlines.

PIRATE'S BAY IN TOBAGO IS ALMOST EMPTY, ASIDE FROM THE STRAY GOATS THAT CAME ON THE HIKE TO THE BEACH WITH YOU

Where to stay: Make like Pumba and stay at the Hakuna Matata campsite on the banks of the lake. Basic dorm rooms start from \$5. hakunamatata-chitimba.com

PARATY, BRAZIL

Follow the **Costa Verde** three hours south of Rio and you'll find charming coastal town Paraty. It's a destination of two halves: the most picturesque parts are the sandy strips flanked by classic Portuguese architecture, but a few steps away are the rocky, unspoiled beaches of Praia Brava and Praia do Meio. They might be wilder and less picture-perfect, but the surfing's way better.

How to get there:

Flights start from around \$800 return with British Airways.

Where to stay: Cosy Casa Turquesa has just nine rooms and is handily located right by the pier. Doubles from around \$300 a night. casaturquesa.com.br

The Costa Verde comprises 350 miles of 'green coast' between Santos in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Its virgin forests are home to more than 1,000 species of bird.

PIRATE'S BAY, TOBAGO

Picture the classic beach scene – Pirate's Bay in Tobago probably isn't far off. Tucked behind the little village of Charlotteville on the northern end of the island, Pirate's Bay is only accessible on foot or via boat. When you get there, it'll be almost empty, aside from the couple of stray goats that accompanied your hike there. It's so isolated there's little in the way of beach vendors, but there's also some good snorkelling around the rocks – if you manage to get bored of your own private paradise.

How to get there: Return flights start from around \$500 with Caribbean Airlines.

Where to stay: Cholson Chalets, on the beach of nearby Charlotteville, are simple but well-equipped. Doubles from \$20.

cholsonchalets.com

Adventure beaches

SINTRA, PORTUGAL

Just outside of Lisbon, you'll find the coastal historic town of Sintra, where 19th-century romantic architecture is found alongside the natural artistry of huge, crashing waves and the dramatic peaks of the Serra Mountains. Welcome to the Estoril coast, which offers some of the best breaks in Portugal.

Package: Powder Byrne offers a seven-night package to Penha Longa hotel on a B&B basis, including transfers and in-resort service from \$950pp. Flights are separate.

powderbyrne.com



CLOCKWISE: Be sure to catch the sunset at one of Tobago's famously wild Caribbean beaches; marvel at the tropical shades of Africa's sprawling, stunning Lake Malawi; and Sintra in Portugal is renowned for its superior surf breaks and crashing waves



Experiences

BEACHES



MANCORA, PERU

Mancora on the north-west Peruvian coast is renowned as the kitesurfing capital of this Latin American nation. It's famed for its turquoise waters and bright white stretches of beach, but the real star of the Mancora show is its superior surf breaks. The waves often reach three metres, and constant year-round strong winds make it an ideal kitesurfing – or just standard surfing – destination that regularly draws both foreign tourists and homegrown **Lima** holidaymakers alike.

How to get there: Return flights to Lima start from around £500 with KLM, and include a stopover in Amsterdam.

Where to stay: Palm-fringed, Balinese-style Kimbas Bungalows is an Indonesian-inspired beach haven. Bungalows from around £10 a night. kimbasbungalowsmancora.com

Don't let the grey fog of Lima put you off. It's renowned as the gastronomic capital of Latin America – treat yourself to top eats at hot spot Malabar restaurant (malabar.com.pe).



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BORACAY, PHILIPPINES

White sand beaches and an emerging nightlife scene (try Jungle Bar's Full Moon Party) characterise this teeny-tiny island in the Philippines, but windsurfing is the real jewel in Boracay's crown. Perennially described as the best spot for windsurfing in Asia, Boracay's star-attraction beach is 2.5 kilometre-long Bulabog, which benefits from being windward facing. There's immaculate (and literally named) White Beach, too, for some post-windsurf relaxation.

How to get there: Return flights with Philippine Airlines start from around £600.

Where to stay: Surfers' Home is a collection of private bungalows set right on Bulabog beach, with a barbecue area and hammocks. Bungalows start from around £20 a night. surfershomeboracay.com

British beaches**TRESCO, SCILLY ISLES**

The Scilly Isles might look like the Maldives, but they actually lie 30 miles off the coast of **Cornwall**. Treско, the second-largest in the Scilly archipelago, has the pristine sand and turquoise blue sea you'd usually associate with a tropical island. Plus, with its unusually warm climate, you can pretend

you're in the Côte d'Azur (er, sort of).

How to get there: Skybus flies from Exeter, Land's End and Newquay to St Mary's. Return fares start from £140.

Where to stay: Sea

Garden Cottages are a set of stylish beach residences on the island. Rates start from £160 a night. tresco.co.uk

For a weirder sort of watersport, check out the bellyboard championships on Cornwall's Chapel Porth beach. Locals of all ages dive into the chilly seas every September.

ABOVE: Wales's much-loved Rhossili Bay.
BELOW: A tropical island? Nope, this is Treско, 30 miles from the Cornish coast



RHOSSILI BAY IN WALES HAS BEEN VOTED AS ONE OF THE TOP TEN BEACHES IN THE WORLD, AND IT'S NOT AT ALL HARD TO SEE WHY

RHOSSILI BAY, GOWER PENINSULA

This stretch of Welsh coastline was voted into the top ten beaches in the world in the TripAdvisor awards last month (it ultimately lost out to Baía do Sancho in Brazil, so not bad going, really) – and it's not hard to see why. Watching the sunset over its sweep of biscuit-coloured beach, you'll wonder whether you're really in Wales.

How to get there: The train journey from London to Swansea takes three hours, and costs around £80 return.

Where to stay: The Worm's Head hotel has been voted as having one of the best views in Wales, and overlooks the Gower. Doubles from £80. thewormshead.co.uk

CAMBER SANDS, EAST SUSSEX

Camber Sands probably conjures up memories of family camping holidays, but there's a reason your parents dragged you here every summer. It's host to hordes of walkers and sun worshippers, but Camber is also a great watersports hub, with plenty of windsurfing, kitesurfing and kitebugging going on to keep you entertained.

How to get there: Trains from London to Rye take an hour, and cost around £35 return.

Where to stay: If you're after good locally sourced food, head to The Gallivant, which is not far from nearby Rye. Doubles from £115. thegallivanthotel.com





City beaches

JUMEIRAH BEACH, DUBAI, UAE

Glitzy Dubai has the ultimate city beaches – think unspoilt stretches sitting mere steps from skyscrapers. Jumeirah Beach, as well as its sparkling seas and tan sand, boasts a great view of the seven-star **Burj Al Arab**, and burger bars line the beachfront. You might even spot the odd camel, too.

How to get there: Return flights to Dubai start from £388 with British Airways.

Where to stay: One&Only The Palm is the nearest to a boutique hotel that you'll find in Dubai. Doubles start from £344 a night.

oneandonlyresorts.com

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA

Confusingly, Gold Coast is a city and not an area – but it takes its name rather literally. Home to towering high rises, and some of the most beautiful beaches in Australia (sorry about that, Sydney), you'll find great surf breaks here. And, as they're all right in the middle of everything, you don't need to eat dinner at a beach shack – just stroll on downtown for your pick of a feed.

The cheapest way to see inside the Burj Al Arab without booking a room is to reserve a table at the Skyview bar on the 27th floor. Minimum spend £52. Per person...

How to get there:

Flights start from around £800 with British Airways.

Where to stay:

Hedonistic QT Gold Coast is moments from the beach.

Doubles start from around £70 a night.

qtgoldcoast.com.au

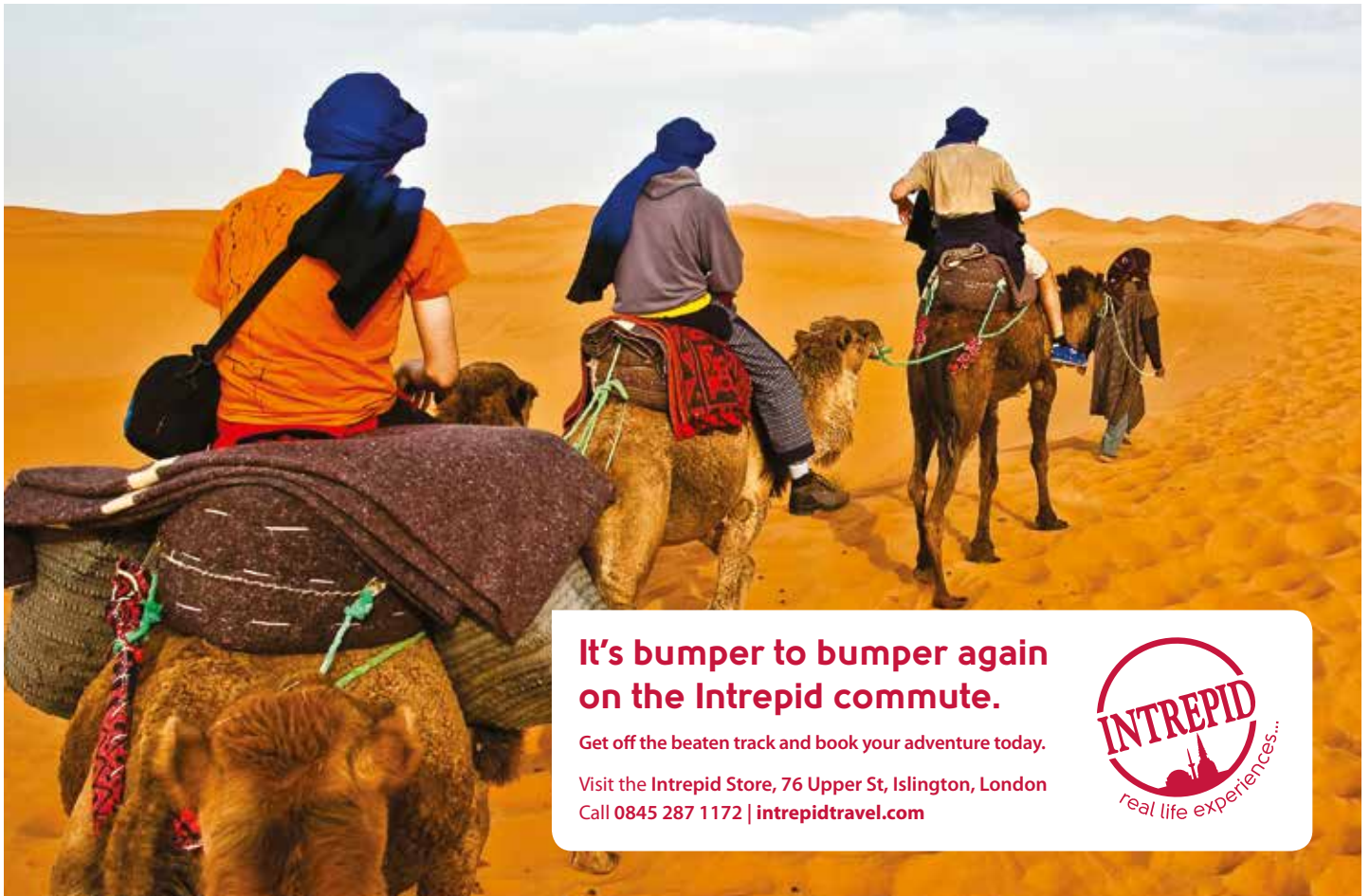
SAN SEBASTIAN, SPAIN

Yes, it rains more in San Sebastian than anywhere else in Spain (or at least it sure feels like it), but when the sun shines, the beach is pretty special. The huge, semi-circular La Concha Bay is breathtaking, and San Sebastian's world-class food scene (it's home to three Michelin-starred Arzak) means it's a stellar city/beach combo.

How to get there: easyJet flies to Bilbao from around £40 return.

Where to stay: Astoria 7 is built on the former Astoria cinema, with rooms named after film stars. Double rooms start from £75.

astoria7hotel.com



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DUBAI HAS THE ULTIMATE CITY BEACHES. THEY SIT STEPS FROM SKYSCRAPERS, AND JUMEIRAH BEACH BOASTS A GREAT VIEW OF SEVEN-STAR BURJ AL ARAB

Party beaches

MIAMI, USA

South Beach is an unbeatable party beach. From world-renowned DJs (including exiled British R&B star Craig David) and tiki bars, to high-end cocktail joints and all-day, all-night beach soirées, anything is possible in the Floridian Sin City. It doesn't hurt that the golden beaches are gorgeous, either.

How to get there: Return flights to Miami start from \$582 with British Airways.

Where to stay: Newly refurbished The Setai benefits from an original Art Deco design and beachfront location. Doubles start from \$406. thesetaihotel.com

LAS SALINAS, IBIZA

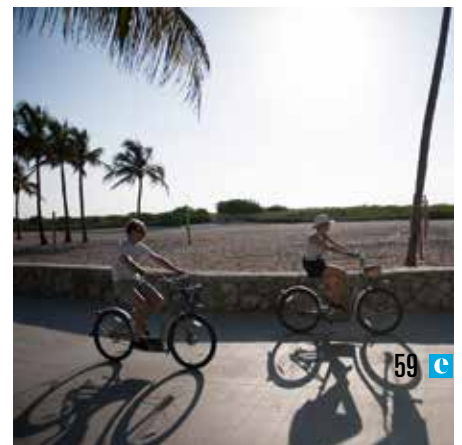
The Mediterranean clubbing mecca has plenty of party beaches, but Las Salinas is the most iconic. During the summer months, it's stuffed to the gills with partygoers, Ibiza hippies and even a minor celebrity or two. Head to Sa Trinxà Beach Bar for a liquid lunch, dinner and, er, brunch, if you stay there long enough.

How to get there: Return flights to Ibiza start from around £80 with Ryanair.

Where to stay: The Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza opens this summer on Playa d'en Bossa, and in true Hard Rock style hosts live music performances. Doubles from £200.

hrhibiza.com

CLOCKWISE: Gold Coast is home to some of Australia's best beaches, and you can enjoy surf that's never more than a few minutes away from a chic city bar; frolicking in the sea with beautiful people is a staple activity in Ibiza; and the lifeguard huts and boardwalk of South Beach, in Miami





SMALL WONDER: The beaches of Tuscany's Elba island are lapped by the Mediterranean and surrounded by unspoilt countryside. Its total area size is just 86 square miles, but it is the third-largest island in Italy, behind Sicily

TUSCANY'S ELBA ISLAND HAS GREEN HILLS AND MORE THAN 70 BEACHES, BUT IS ONLY HALF AS BIG AS THE ISLE OF WIGHT

GOA, INDIA

Probably the most laid-back of the party destinations, Goa is a tale of two states. North Goa is home to the best of the beach parties (Anjuna and Ashwem are where it all kicks off), while southern Goa, especially around Palolem and Patnem, is relaxed, with silent discos as hectic as it'll ever get. **How to get there:** Return flights to Mumbai start from around \$500 with British Airways. **Where to stay:** When in Goa, stay at a yoga retreat. YogaMagic in Anjuna is an oasis of calm after that all-night rave. Doubles from \$45. yogamagic.net

Honeymoon beaches

DIANI BEACH, KENYA

It's not all about safari in Kenya – the coastline is pretty lush, too – and it means you can hit both bush and beach in one go. Fringed by palm trees, Diani Beach is one of Kenya's best coastal resorts, and is plied with honeymooners – but who can blame them when it's a top-notch tropical spot, where the wilderness meets the coast? **How to get there:** Return flights to Mombasa start from around \$480 with Turkish Airlines. **Where to stay:** Laze in landscaped gardens and beach gazebos at the boutique lodge AfroChic Diani. Doubles from £150. elewanacollection.com

The Amalfi Coast draws thousands of tourists every year. It's most famous for the resort town of Sorrento but, while the landscape is picturesque, there are few beaches.

ELBA ISLAND, ITALY

Tuscany's Elba Island boasts more than 70 beaches, despite being half as big as the Isle of Wight. It's less frantic than the **Amalfi Coast**, plus there's more sparkling Med sea and green Tuscan hills. Looking for class? You found it. **How to get there:** Return flights to Pisa start from around £80 with easyJet. Ferries cross from Piombino, 90 minutes south of Pisa. **Where to stay:** Cernia Isola Botanica makes for a seriously serene Elba escape. Doubles start from \$47. hotelcernia.it

GRENADA, CARIBBEAN

The island of spice has some of the most beatific beaches in the Caribbean, and there are pretty villages, tropical gardens and top culture to boot. The Lance Aux Epines white sand beach is one of the most secluded on the island – perfect if you need to get away from it all. St David's is equally isolated, and is only accessible by car. **How to get there:** Return flights to Grenada start from \$593 with British Airways. **Where to stay:** Intimate Laluna is a romantic retreat right on the beachfront. Suites from around \$298. laluna.com