

# Travel

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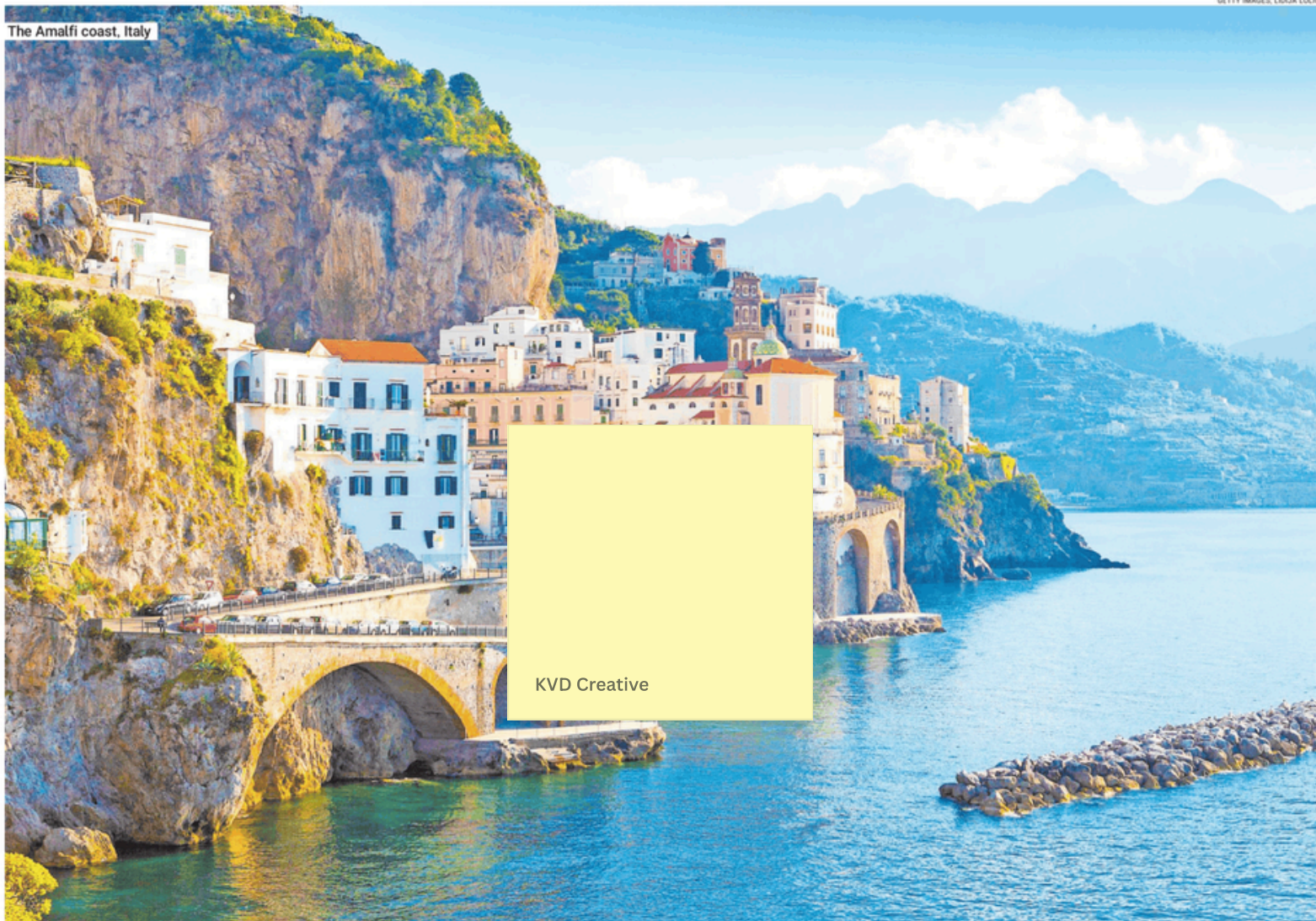
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'I fell asleep listening to hyenas' laughs reverberating in the moonlit valley'

Lisa Grainger on safari in northern Zimbabwe

GETTY IMAGES, LIDIA LOLIC

The Amalfi coast, Italy



KVD Creative

## Late sun: where to go in Europe

Seek out the last of the sunshine with **James Stewart's** pick of the trips — from walking the Amalfi coast to a city break in Seville

A few years ago I went to southern Greece in late November. That hadn't been the plan — I'd wanted to go in October but, well, work, life... You know how it is. I arrived fearing the worst, but drifted happily around towns where hoteliers had time to chat. Jumpers came out only in the evenings. Winter sun traditionally means the Canary Islands, the Azores or Madeira. Yet I've taken hugely enjoyable winter trips in southern Croatia, the Algarve, the Balearics, Crete and Sicily. And it seems I'm not the only one. Under the snappy title "Global warming to reshuffle Europe's tourism demand", a report by the European Commission's

Joint Research Centre in August noted that 9 per cent of travellers had shifted Mediterranean holiday season to late autumn, when temperatures (and prices) were more friendly. It's no coincidence that Tui will fly to Crete until mid-November this year (it was late October last) and now offers southern Turkey all year round.

From November to early March southern Europe reinvents itself. Historic towns empty and hotel prices plummet. Visiting destinations synonymous with overtourism, such as Mallorca and Dubrovnik, feels like time travel. For walkers and cyclists, temperatures in the mid-teens don't come any better.



Villa Nai, Croatia

Sure, many resort hotels close — which is why most in this list are urban — but you're coming for authenticity: to admire destinations without the hard-sell hustle or jostle of tour groups, to eat in restaurants that are open because they're popular with residents. It might be cloudy — so what? No one moans about occasional dull days during a Nordic summer. In fact, maybe we should reframe southern European winter breaks as coolcations. Actually, given how popular they've been this year, let's not.

Great trips next page

# Amazing Australia

Choose from thousands of luxury hotels on our website

## Tastes of Southern Australia group tour 4\* Save £250



This ultimate foodie trip gives you the chance to sample some of **Southern Australia's** craft beers, wines & cheeses, as well as spectacular landscapes from the **Twelve Apostles** to **Kangaroo Island**.

**10 nights fr £4,129pp**  
Flights, hotels & transfers

## Rainforest, Reef & Beautiful Beaches 4\* 1 free night



Stay at the boutique Daintree Ec Lodge in the 180 million year old **Daintree Rainforest**, then you're off to the 58 hectare **Thala Beach Nature Reserve** in **Port Douglas**, and finally an Outer Barrier Reef Cruise.

**8 nights fr £2,689pp**  
Flights, hotels & transfers



## Sydney & Luxury Whitsundays 1 free night

For an all-encompassing experience, this twin centre is ideal. Begin at **Parkroyal Darling Harbour** in view of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge, then explore the natural beauty of **Hamilton Island** at **Qualia**.

**11 nights fr £4,635pp**  
Flights, hotels & transfers

## Melbourne & Great Ocean Road fly drive 4\* Save 10%



Stay 4 nights in vibrant **Melbourne**, then begin your memorable drive from **Melbourne** to **Adelaide** along the stunning **Great Ocean Road** seeing the sights of **Victoria** including the **Twelve Apostles**.

**11 nights fr £1,879pp**  
Flights, hotels & car hire

## Perth & South West highlights fly drive 4\* Save 10% + 1 free night



Begin in **Perth**, drive through **Margaret River** and **Albany**, and along the way you will see pretty towns, national parks, magnificent forests, a stunning coast with great surfing beaches and vineyards.

**9 nights fr £2,029pp**  
Flights, hotels & car hire



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## 68 Travel

### Late deals

# Escape to Bali, Morocco, Iceland or Tanzania

#### UK

#### Halloween house in Yorkshire

If you're looking for a crackling fire around which to tell your ghost stories, **Low Swinton House** can oblige. Available for a three-night Halloween weekend from October 29, this stout, 17th-century house ten miles northwest of **Ripon** has had a classy revamp — with an Aga, a wood-burner and an open fire. In between your apple-hobbling and storytelling, big walks beckon in the **Yorkshire Dales** as well as **Theakston** brewery tours in **Masham** and a spooky visit to the **Druids Temple** at **Swinton Bivouac** for the kids. The price is down 19 per cent too — to a less scary £1,956 for eight, self-catering (cottages.com).

#### A hiker's hotel in Shropshire

**Shropshire's** hills will soon be turning yellow and brown as autumn takes hold. Brush the summer's dust off your boots and book a walking break at the **Castle Hotel** in **Bishop's Castle** so you can enjoy them at their most wistful. This Welsh borders refuge built in 1719 is brimming with route-planning tips and has just added six new bedrooms to its mix of doubles, family rooms and cottage suites. It's also cutting its rates by 25 per cent for stays during October, November and December. Doubles start from £90 B&B (thecastlehotelsbishopscastle.co.uk).

#### See the Bayeux Tapestry in London

If you haven't bagged tickets to the **British Museum's Bayeux Tapestry** exhibition, the **Londoner** hotel on **Leicester Square** can help. Only 15 minutes' walk from the museum, this central hotel is offering two tickets and a 15 per cent price cut on a one-night stay, so you can add **William's** epoch-defining expedition to your own conquest of the capital's cinemas, theatre and restaurants. You might want to pop into the **National Gallery** nearby as well. The aptly named **King rooms** start from £499 B&B. Call 020 7451 0101 for details (thelondoner.com).

#### EUROPE

#### Half-term villa in Cephalonia

Earlier this week it seemed like summer was going to last until Christmas — so it was a shock to realise that the season for Mediterranean villa rentals is almost over. Late booking discounts abound, including 20 per cent off half-term week at **Azamara**, a handsome three-bedroom property near **Cephalonia's** northern tip. Inside, a chic mix of greys, whites and browns awaits, with sunset sea views

from the pool terrace as well as cliff-top walks along the coast. With **Vintage Travel**, seven nights' self-catering for six from October 24 starts from £1,131 (vintagegetravel.co.uk). Fly to **Cephalonia**.

#### Cruise the Canaries and Morocco

**Celebrity Cruises'** autumn sale includes this **Canaries, Spain & Morocco** route on board the **Celebrity Infinity**. With **Barcelona**, **Tangier** and **Casablanca** on the menu, there's a lot more to its appeal than island-hopping. Even better, the November 6-18 sailing is among the discounted 2027 dates. Imagine: just as the clocks go back you'll be cruising into a world of still-bright sunshine and balmy breezes. It'll feel like you're sailing back into summer. Twelve nights' full board in **Concierge Class** — with an outside balcony cabin — starts from £2,606pp, which represents a £1,407 saving (celebritycruises.com). Fly to **Barcelona**.

#### Walk the Amalfi coast

The adventure travel specialist **Exodus** is having a flash sale. Add the code **27SMILE20** when booking before October 16 and you'll get 20 per cent off hundreds of guided 2027 trips — including its **Walking the Amalfi Coast** itinerary. Despite its luxury hotels and Hollywood mystique, **La Costiera** is essentially a meeting place of mountains and sea and the holiday cherry-picks its footpaths to give you a proper sense of its variety. The final walk follows the **Path of the Gods**. Seven nights' B&B starts from £1,211pp, including most meals (exodus.co.uk). Fly to **Naples**.

#### Action-packed Cyprus

Inland from its beach resorts, on a plateau in the **Troodos mountains**, the **Agora** is a small luxury hotel that likes to get guests active. So on the menu besides group yoga sessions are **Pilates** classes,



Agora Hotel, Cyprus