

Quiet Greek islands
all within easy reach P.12

TRAVEL

Czech, please

Best known for its fairy-tale cities, the Czech Republic offers stunning landscapes and charming towns beyond Prague's tourist trail, discovers Paul Sullivan



A new report from Amadeus has found that the Czech Republic – also officially known as Czechia since 2016 – is one of Europe's fastest-growing tourist destinations, with bookings up 18 per cent year on year. While most British holidaymakers will be acquainted with the fairy-tale charms of Prague, many have yet to explore beyond the capital: a crying shame, since the country offers a wonderful variety of smaller cities, historic towns

and stunning landscapes that have somehow remained under the radar. Fans of the Czech capital will find the same compelling blend of Central European architecture and culture in university cities such as Olomouc, with its baroque squares and monumental Holy Trinity Column, and lively Brno, the Moravian capital which is home to a thriving café, restaurant and cultural scene as well as soaring

▲ A river runs through it: medieval Český Krumlov hugs the Vltava river in Czechia's South Bohemia region

churches, handsome squares and interesting museums to explore. Then there are medieval towns such as Český Krumlov on the Vltava River, dominated by a highly photogenic castle and a red-roofed old town; and the elegant spa town of Karlovy Vary, all colonnades, grand hotels and mineral springs. Lesser-known destinations such as Mikulov and Kroměříž also have their own distinctive atmos-

pheres, minus the bustling Prague-level crowds. Beyond and between the cities and towns lies Czechia's countryside: an ever-changing, often undulating patchwork of rolling hills, dense forests, winding rivers and vineyards. Of special note are the wine-growing landscapes of South Moravia and the wooded hills of Bohemia. Hiking

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All aboard the world's most scenic ferries

These 10 renowned routes deliver million-pound city, harbour and sea views for pocket-change prices, reveals Christopher Beanland

Ah, the holiday ferry journey – the excitement of surging out into a still harbour at dawn, or settling down in your bunk as the black inky seas pass by your porthole. For years, many of the world's romantic ferry routes were in decline, facing the threats of fixed-link bridges and hyper-efficient tunnels – like the crossings over the Pearl River Delta, the Oresund Strait, and the English Channel – not to mention increasingly ubiquitous low-cost air travel.

But now, thank heavens, ferries are back in fashion, as travellers embrace the joys of the journey itself, keen to more deeply experience the places they're visiting. As a result, new routes – like that planned between Swansea and Devon, and one launched in June from Cyprus to Lebanon – are popping up all over the place, meaning there's never been a more exciting time to incorporate one into your next trip.

To help inspire you, we've selected 10 renowned ferry routes around the world that promise not only safe passage from A to B, but some pretty spectacular views along the way, from striking cityscapes to glistening coastlines.

Sorvagur to Mykines, Faroe Islands

One of the most exhilarating ferry journeys for wildlife lovers, this 45-minute trip is peak puffin. Sometimes the seas are heaving between the main Faroese archipelago and Mykines, and sometimes millpond flat. On clear days, sheer cliffs rise dramatically from the sea. You can witness puffins diving en route before the main attraction on the tiny island of Mykines – thousands of these adorable birds nesting and flopping out of the sky

then waddling around like colourful avian clowns.

Where to stay The grass-roofed Hilton Garden Inn in Torshavn, which has a restaurant serving excellent local roast lamb ([hilton.com](#)).

Fly on Atlantic Airways twice weekly flights from Edinburgh and London Gatwick to the Faroes ([atlanticairways.com](#)).

How to do it Book this £40 return ferry trip at [mykines.fo](#). A bus drives to the harbour from Torshavn.



▲ Puffins call the Faroe Islands home in the North Atlantic



Sydney to Manly, Australia

Tap your contactless card for a cheap and breathtaking ride all the way across the incredible harbour from Circular Quay, passing the Harbour Bridge, Opera House and Kangaroo Island before skirting the Heads protecting the end of the harbour from the sea and arriving in bohemian Manly.

A fair dinkum day out.

Where to stay Establishment, just a short walk from Circular Quay ([merivale.com](#)).

Fly to Sydney with Qantas from London Heathrow ([qantas.com](#)).

How to do it Circular Quay to Manly, £5 with NSW Ferries ([transportnsw.info](#)).



▲ Return to Oz: the Sydney Harbour Bridge near Circular Quay



Copenhagen, Denmark, to Oslo, Norway

DFDS' former ferry from Copenhagen to Norway has been rebranded as Go Nordic Cruiseline, and the journey itself has been marketed as a "minicruise" – though with a deck full of cars and lorries, it is very much a ferry, just an upmarket 13-hour one.

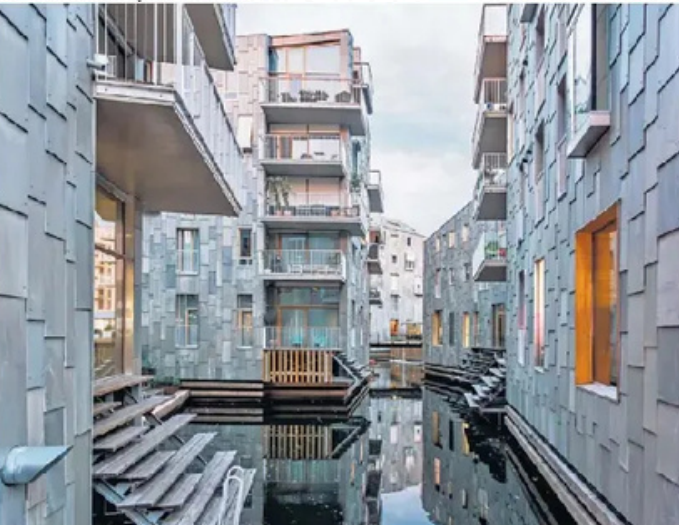
Enjoy the delights of Copenhagen's waterfront with open-water swimming and Paper Island's new attractions before your voyage up to the Oslo Fjord. Oslobukta is the cooler neighbourhood to check out in the Norwegian capital, with tons of trendy restaurants.

in the Norwegian capital, with tons of trendy restaurants.

Where to stay The impressive, design-focussed Park Lane in Copenhagen ([parklaneceph.com](#)). In Oslo, try the cool new Hobo Hotel ([hobohotel.no](#)).

Fly to Copenhagen and Oslo from London Heathrow with SAS ([flysas.com](#)).

How to do it There are daily departures in both directions and you can take a car. One-way foot



▲ Scandi style: waterfront living along the Oslo Fjord in Norway's capital, connected to Copenhagen by ferry

Lisbon to Cacilhas, Portugal

The ferry from the busy Cais do Sodré transport hub over the Tagus estuary to Cacilhas is an absolute must on a weekend getaway in Lisbon.

The views of the Portuguese capital and the Golden Gate-lookalike 25 de Abril Bridge are fabulous and, although it's all over in about 15 minutes, it's just the start of a fun day out.

Walk the couple of miles up the hill from the vibrant Cacilhas Harbour to the 360ft high Sanctuary of Christ the King statue, from the top of which the views back across the Tagus towards Lisbon are even more spectacular.

Where to stay The Four Seasons Ritz, which is a glorious modernist marble monument next to Lisbon's beautiful Edward VII Park ([fourseasons.com](#)).

Fly to Lisbon with TAP from Manchester, London Gatwick and London Heathrow ([flytap.com](#)).

How to do it The TTSL ferry is a turn-up-and-go affair, and costs just under £2 each way ([ttsl.pt](#)).

