

25 FAMILY HOLIDAYS for 2025

From short-haul sunshine to far-flung adventures, **Alice Barnes-Brown** and **Lina Molloholli** ask the travel trade for recommendations from their favourite family trips to help you sell a holiday this year



PICTURE: Shutterstock/wavebreakmedia

Best for under-fives • Top picks for primary • Dream trips for teens |||▶

Under FIVES

Travelling with young children means the chance to make family holiday memories that parents will treasure forever – but get it wrong and you'll end up with crying kids, stressed-out parents and a trip they'd rather forget. Going on holiday with a baby or toddler can be especially daunting if it's their first time away.

Happily, this is where you can lend a helping hand. Choose the right pushchair-friendly destination, ensure baby equipment is in the room or pick a resort with pre-school entertainment and parents will be so glad of the break they'll keep coming back to book.

There are savings to be found too: under-fives can steer clear of school holiday prices, while children under two can often fly, stay and eat for free.



1

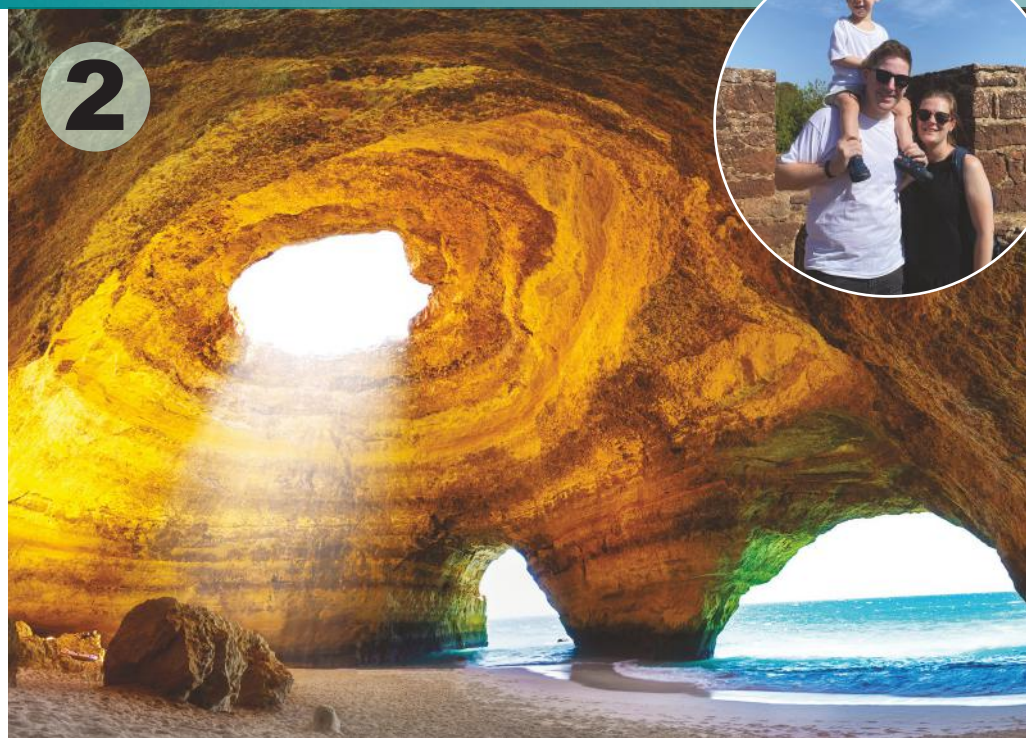
Kid-friendly Corsica

"My favourite family holiday was to Corsica in August last year, with my mum and little boy. We stayed in Calvi, a town in the north of the island. Every morning, my two-year-old loved going to the beach to play in the sand and paddle in the warm, shallow water. Staying in a self-catered property was ideal as for my family. Not only did this give us the flexibility to eat whenever we wanted, it also gave us the opportunity to try foods we might not at home."

Hayley Smith, trade relations executive, Serenity Holidays

Book it: Serenity Holidays sells a seven-night self-catered stay at the Maisons Bervily from £599 per person, based on four sharing. Includes transfers and flights departing June 15. serenity.co.uk

2



Amazing Algarve

"For a family holiday with our three-year-old son, we found the Algarve to be the ideal location. We stayed at Ukino Palmeiras Village, which has a handy land train into Armãçao de Pêra outside the hotel entrance, as well as a brilliant kids' pool with shady spots to rest tired toddler legs. The staff never failed to high-five our son Dylan whenever he walked past. The Algarve had plenty of places that were exciting both for Dylan and for us as parents. We had hours of fun wandering the Moorish castle

of Silves, exploring caves that honeycomb the coast and skimming the waves on an exhilarating speedboat ride."

Rhodri Andrews, special projects editor, Travel Weekly

Book it: EasyJet holidays offers seven nights at the Ukino Palmeiras Village on an all-inclusive basis for £668 per adult (including a free child place), plus 23kg luggage per person, transfers and flights departing Luton on May 6. easyjet.com/holidays

3

Mediterranean magic

"My husband and I have been avid cruisers for years. When our daughters came along, it was a natural choice to look at family-focused cruise lines, and we did our first cruise when Ruby was still in a pushchair. Over the years they have grown to love the larger, fun-filled MSC Cruises ships."

Vickie Towey, regional sales manager for the northwest, MSC Cruises

Book it: MSC Cruises offers a seven-night Mediterranean voyage on MSC World Europa from £5,296 cruise-only, departing from Barcelona on July 25, based on two adults and two children sharing. Price includes tips and hot drinks. msccruises.co.uk



Greek hospitality

"Our 19-month-old, Max, loved it so much at Mousses Crèche and Kids' Clubs in Lefkada that we stayed an extra week. An easy 30-minute drive from the airport got us off to a great start. Mousses is totally set up for families, with childcare that even met the exacting standards of my wife, Eva [Vidak, a product executive also at Simpson Travel]. Her background is in childcare, so this was no mean feat. We weren't sure how Max would adapt to the kids' club environment, but he loved it so much he didn't want to leave."

David Conitzer, trade sales specialist, Simpson Travel

Book it: Simpson Travel offers seven nights at Mousses Crèche and Kids' Clubs, including breakfast, from £675 per person, based on four sharing. Includes car hire and flights departing May 2025. simpsontravel.com

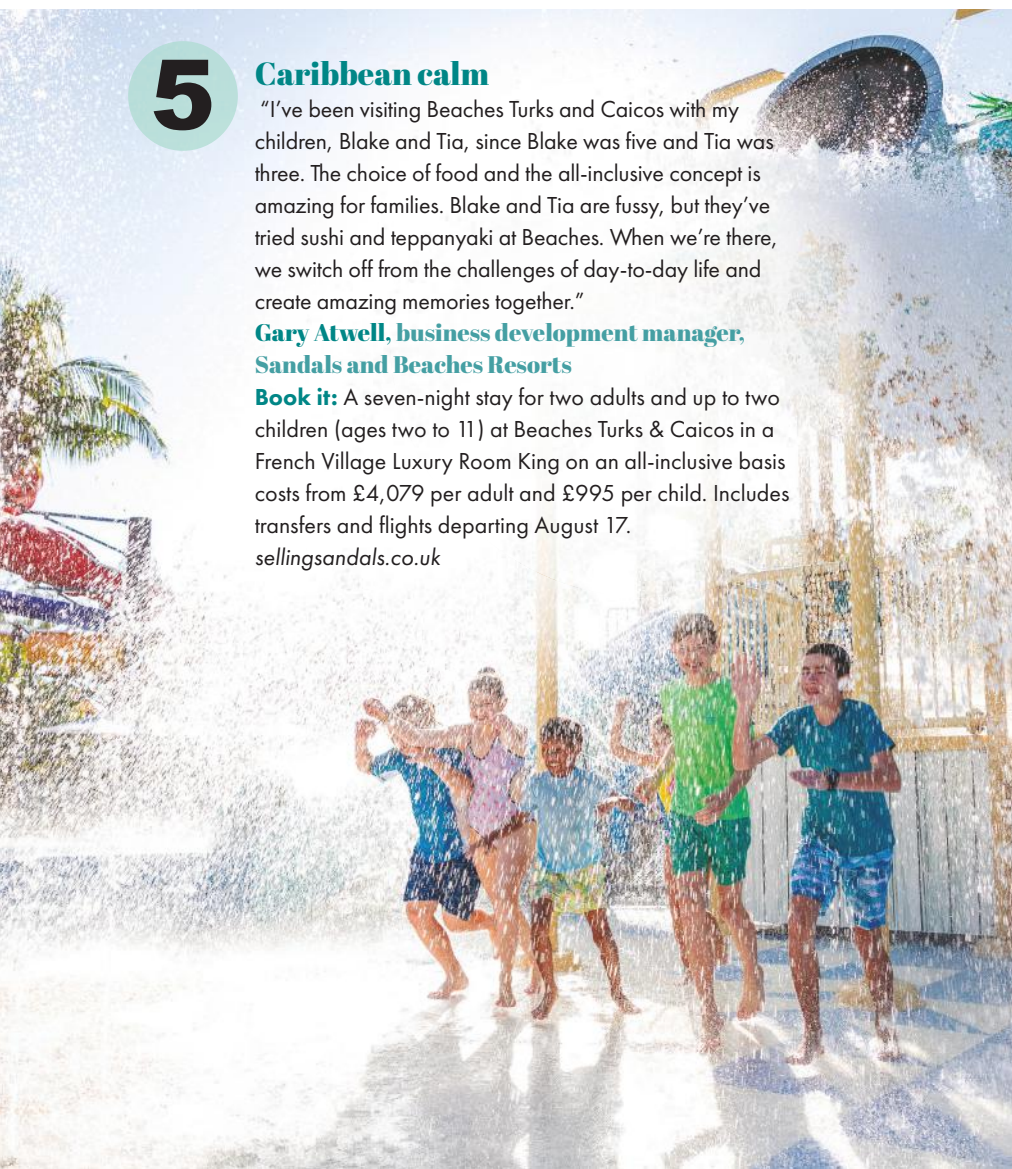


5 Caribbean calm

"I've been visiting Beaches Turks and Caicos with my children, Blake and Tia, since Blake was five and Tia was three. The choice of food and the all-inclusive concept is amazing for families. Blake and Tia are fussy, but they've tried sushi and teppanyaki at Beaches. When we're there, we switch off from the challenges of day-to-day life and create amazing memories together."

Gary Atwell, business development manager, Sandals and Beaches Resorts

Book it: A seven-night stay for two adults and up to two children (ages two to 11) at Beaches Turks & Caicos in a French Village Luxury Room King on an all-inclusive basis costs from £4,079 per adult and £995 per child. Includes transfers and flights departing August 17. sellingsandals.co.uk



6

Spanish charm

"Estival El Dorado in Cambrils, Spain, was fab for our first family holiday. The complex was so spacious and ideal for infants. We upgraded to a Junior Suite, which meant we had ample room for our pram, travel cot and toys. The adult-only pool was quiet, the splash park was in a different part and the main pool was made for relaxation – just perfect with our five-month-old."

Rebecca Hope, senior marketing publications executive, Jet2.com and Jet2holidays

Book it: Jet2holidays sells a seven-night, all-inclusive-plus stay at Estival El Dorado Resort from £589 per person, based on two adults and two children (aged two and four) sharing. Includes 22kg baggage, transfers and flights from Manchester on April 22. jet2holidays.com



Under FIVES



Family-friendly Malta

"Having visited Malta before, I knew it was an incredible holiday destination. We decided to go back with my three-year-old son, and I'm pleased we did. The aquarium was perfect for his age – he loved looking at the lights and colourful fish. We also went to Popeye's Village, which was a great day out for all of us, my husband included! From the great beaches (Mellieha Bay was our favourite) to the charming island of Gozo, we got the perfect balance: history, great food and amazing hospitality."

Samantha McCormack, travel specialist, Out Of Office & Travelgay

Book it: Cyplon Holidays sells a seven-night stay at the Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Malta Golden Sands, from £3,600 in total, based on two adults and two children sharing. Includes breakfast, luggage, transfers and flights departing October 26. cyplon.co.uk

Thai trails

"We enjoyed our first long-haul holiday as a family in Thailand. My son was a toddler, but we didn't let that stop us and travelled around three different areas. A personal highlight was our stay at Kata Thani Phuket, as it had an amazing splash park and kids' club. The beach has shallow calm waters perfect to paddle in. We loved dining out with the locals and my little boy still reminisces about that holiday now."

Faye Gallacher, destination expert, Kuoni

Book it: Kuoni offers a nine-night trip to Thailand – including three nights at the Kata Thani Phuket Beach Resort – from £4,799 in total, based on two adults and one infant sharing. Includes luggage, private transfers and flights from Heathrow in November. kuoni.co.uk



Stress-free Sani

"Being one of our bestsellers, I had to experience Sani Resort – not as an agent, but as a paying guest. Jetting in from Manchester, London and Marbella, my whole family descended on Sani, ranging in age from nine months to 77 years. From being greeted like royalty by Sergio and the front office team, our trip to Sani surpassed all our expectations. Everything just worked. That holiday is still discussed at family gatherings."

Sam Mond, managing director, Reserve a Hotel

Book it: Carrier offers seven nights at Sani Asterias from £13,220 in total, based on two adults and two children sharing a One Bedroom Residence Private Garden Marina Front View. Includes breakfast, private transfers, Fast Track service at Gatwick and flights departing May 25. carrier.co.uk



Tot travel tips

Book flights in the evening so tired little ones can fall asleep on the plane. Window seats are better as the baby won't be disturbed by passing trolleys or other passengers



As well as the essentials (nappies, dummies, formula, bottles and sterilisers), suggest packing favourite toys, a blanket and other home comforts to offer familiar smells and fabrics in new surroundings



Advise parents to ask the cabin crew for activity packs designed for young flyers – this will add novelty and help toddlers feel involved in the journey



If clients have any long journeys to take, try to time these around nap and feeding times, if possible, and take lots of breaks so children can get fresh air

PRIMARY schoolers

Taking under-11s away can be wonderful – they’re old enough to appreciate their surroundings, but young enough to find wonder in the little things. Kids’ clubs are well set up for this demographic and children can make friends with others their age. Many operators also have ‘kids go free’ offers for this cohort, which can make a family getaway in the school holidays more cost-effective.

Amazing Antigua

“One of my family favourites is Jumby Bay in Antigua. There are no cars on the island and bikes are available for the whole family (even stabilisers for new riders) so they can explore. My daughter, who was nine at the time, loved it and the staff are amazing. When they found out she loved the goats on the island, they organised for a small wooden box with hand-painted goats to be delivered to the room.”

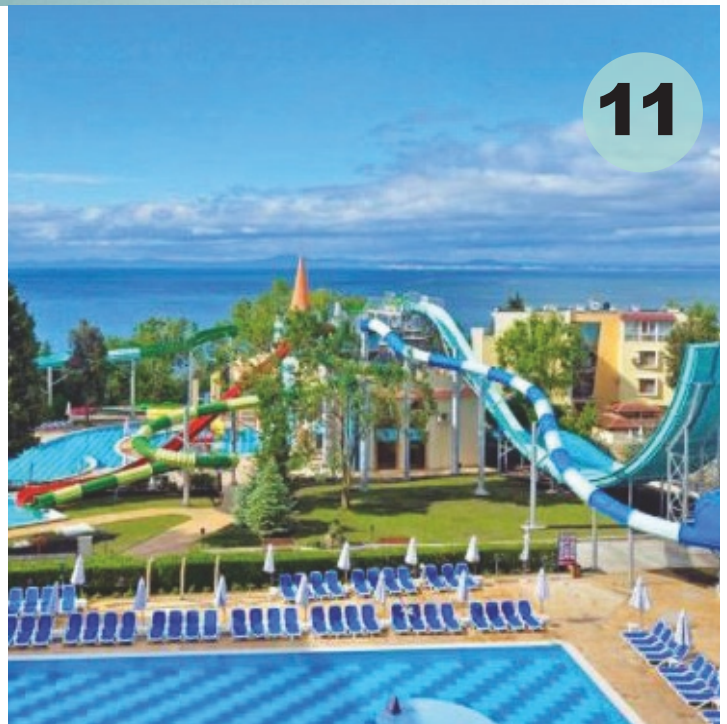
Judie Hinkson, chief operating officer, ITC Travel Group

Book it: Inspiring Travel sells seven nights’ all-inclusive in a Pool Suite from £27,495, for two adults and two children sharing with transfers and flights departing August 17. inspiringtravel.co.uk

10



PICTURES: Stefano Candilio, Universal Studios Florida



11

Bulgarian sun

“Every year, my six-year-old daughter and I pack our bags and head to Sol Nessebar Resort. From the moment we arrive, she’s racing down slides in the water park, splashing in the pool and reuniting with the friends she’s made over the years. I love the beach, and from there we take the water taxi to Nessebar old town. Sol Nessebar isn’t just a resort; it’s our escape, our laughter, our reset button. As long as she wants to keep coming back, so will I.”

Stoyan Georgiev, digital manager, Balkan Holidays

Book it: Balkan Holidays offers a seven-night all-inclusive stay at Sol Nessebar Resort from £1,534 for one adult and one child. Includes transfers and flights from East Midlands on May 24. balkanholidays.co.uk

Enchanting Egypt

“Me and my now-husband met when we worked in Holiday Villages together. Our children really love all the kids’ clubs and have refused to go in other hotels! My son, now 11, has been taking part in Football Academy since he was four or five years old. We have been to the Holiday Village in Sharm el-Sheikh for the past two years – the kids loved it so much they wanted to go back.”

Gemma Wilcox, product and proposition executive, Tui Holiday Villages

Book it: Tui offers a seven-night stay at the Holiday Village Red Sea on an all-inclusive basis from £1,327 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing a Deluxe Select Double Room with Balcony or Terrace. Includes 25kg luggage per adult, transfers and flights departing August 24. tui.co.uk

12



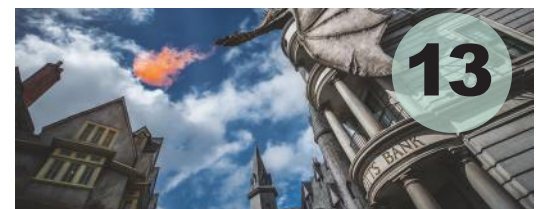
Fun in Florida

“My two children, Nathan and Izzy – who were 12 and nine at the time – are Harry Potter fanatics, so Diagon Alley at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Universal Orlando was the highlight. We also hired a car and headed to the coast to explore New Smyrna and Cocoa Beach.”

Samantha Mayling, reporter, Travel Weekly

Book it: Ocean Florida offers 10 nights at Universal Cabana Bay Beach Resort in a Standard Room from £1,529 per person room-only for a family of four. Includes Early Park Admission and flights from Gatwick departing on July 31. ocean-florida.co.uk

13



PRIMARY schoolers



Maldivian magic

"Last May half-term we went to Sun Siyam Iru Fushi with my 10-year-old son who loves watersports. He loved the slide and diving platform on the arrival jetty, as well as snorkelling around Nemo's Garden. We booked all-inclusive and dined in different restaurants every night. Unfortunately for me, I couldn't drag him into the spa to try one of the kids' treatments, complete with a chocolate milkshake!"

Deb Wadhams, head of long-haul product, Gold Medal

Book it: Gold Medal offers a seven-night holiday to Sun Siyam Iru Fushi from £8,199 in total, based on two adults and two children sharing a Deluxe Beach Villa. Includes a free upgrade to all-inclusive, seaplane transfers, free child places up to 15 years old (when sharing with two adults) and flights departing May 23. goldmedal.co.uk

NO-FLY SWAPS

Cool Britannia

"We spent three nights at Oban Holiday Park, Scotland. The park considered everything a family might need, from a smart TV with a karaoke app to underfloor heating in the bathroom. Every detail was aimed at making our holiday as comfortable as possible."

Gemma Brown, general manager, Hoseasons

Disneyland Paris

"My family take full advantage of the Extra Magic Time for Disney hotel guests, starting the day with an early breakfast before enjoying the parks. Sleeping Beauty Castle is my little girl's dream; she loves the fairytale setting. My nephew's favourite is the Marvel Avengers Campus as he loves being a superhero."

Gemma Hague, branch manager, Hays Travel

Elegant Emirates

"My wife, two daughters and I had a magical holiday to the Middle East – it was a road trip taking in Oman, Ras al Khaimah and Dubai. Oman offered warm hospitality and stunning scenery, Ras al Khaimah had desert and wildlife and, of course, a couple of nights at Dubai's Atlantis the Palm for water park nirvana."

Jim Robertson, senior regional product manager, Kuoni

Book it: Kuoni sells a 10-night break with stays at Six Senses Zighy Bay in Oman, The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah Al Wadi Desert and Atlantis The Palm from £11,349, based on two adults and two children sharing. Includes luggage, transfers and flights departing May 23. kuoni.co.uk



Winter wonderland

"When in Lapland, we base ourselves in Harriniva. It's ideal as husky rides and snowmobiling all take place from the hotel. Huskies are our favourite; there is always an adrenaline rush as they bound out of the dog yard and the kids love cuddling the dogs afterwards, as they really are quite soppy."

Sue McAllinden, general manager, Best Served Scandinavia

Book it: Best Served Scandinavia sells the three-night Harriniva Santa Break from £2,550 per adult and £2,115 per child, based on full-board with a December 20 departure. Includes indirect flights, 23kg luggage, transfers, excursions and thermal clothing. best-served.co.uk



New heights, new sights

"We cruised with Royal Caribbean from Cape Liberty aboard *Symphony of the Seas* during October half-term. My 11-year-old daughter liked ziplining and playing mini-golf while her adrenaline junkie younger brother raced his dad down the Ultimate Abyss! We loved every second of our action-packed day at Perfect Day at CocoCay and swimming with the pigs in Nassau."

Emma Otter, Gold Travel Counsellor, Travel Counsellors

Book it: Royal Caribbean International sells a seven-night Bahamas & Perfect Day Cruise on *Symphony of the Seas*, round-trip from New York, from £4,160 cruise-only for two adults and two children sharing an Interior Stateroom. Based on an August 10 departure. royalcaribbean.com



Teenagers

Giving teens the travel bug from an early age can inspire a lifetime of adventure, but convincing them to look up from their screens or social media apps to appreciate somewhere new isn't always the easiest task.

They'll need plenty of activities that get their blood pumping or enriching cultural experiences that broaden their horizons. Teens like a little freedom, so places they can explore independently but safely will help them learn valuable life skills in how to navigate a new environment. And if they just can't resist logging on to social media to stay in touch with friends, a destination with views worth capturing on camera is a bonus.



18

Active in Montenegro

"Last summer I took my family to Montenegro. We weren't sure what to expect, but we had such a good time; my 14-year-old son was ready to stay there and not come home, probably because he was so well fed! He's an active boy, so he got really into the hikes in Prokletije and rafting down the river. He even enjoyed being away from the Wi-Fi in a remote mountain eco-village. I'd go back in a heartbeat."

Sam Buck, product manager, Families Worldwide

Book it: Families Worldwide sells a seven-night Montenegro Adventure tour from £2,245 per adult and £2,045 per child. Includes all meals, transfers, listed activities and flights, based on select August departures.
familiesworldwide.co.uk

Turkey for teens

"The Paloma Finesse in Antalya has my heart, from its sprawling private beach complete with elegant cabanas to its cluster of fine-dining restaurants. When my teenage kids were looking to have some thrills away from the water, they found plenty of arcade-like amusements via the hotel's impressive games centre."

Natasha Marson, head of trade distribution, easyJet holidays

Book it: EasyJet holidays offers seven nights at the Paloma Finesse on an all-inclusive-plus basis for £1,905, including 23kg luggage per person, transfers and flights departing May 25.
easyjet.com/holidays



19



20

The Italian job

"During a family holiday at the Poiano Resort in Lake Garda with my teenage twins, we took lots of trips to explore: a cable car ride to the top of Mount Baldo to drink in the views at the lake's northern tip, a coach to Verona to marvel at its amphitheatre and a ferry to the charming town of Sirmione. We alternated these with playing tag in the Olympic-sized pool, games of padel (who knew this was so much fun?) and wandering through Garda's colourful markets, gorging on the most delicious ice creams we'd ever tasted."

Juliet Dennis, chief reporter, Travel Weekly

Book it: Jet2holidays sells a seven-night, half-board stay at Poiano Resort from £1,659 per person, based on two adults and two children (aged 14 and 15). Includes 22kg luggage, transfers and flights from Manchester on August 23.
jet2holidays.com



21

Cruising for all

"My girls, aged 11 and 15, really enjoyed the offering for children on board P&O Cruises' Arvia. It's good for multigenerational holidays – there's something to suit everybody. There's plenty of space and lots of activities going on."

Katie Bennett, personal travel agent, Travel Counsellors

Book it: P&O Cruises offers a 14-night Mediterranean – Spain and France cruise onboard Arvia from £1,299 per adult and £1,119 per child (aged two to 16), cruise-only, sharing an Inside Cabin. Departs from Southampton on August 17.

pocruses.com



22

Awesome Andalusia

"Our most recent stay at Ikos Andalusia was nothing short of exceptional, celebrating our daughter's GCSE results with two of her friends. We absolutely loved it there; it caters to all age groups, with outstanding dining options that rank among our favourites across the Ikos resorts. Everything is conveniently within walking distance, making it easy to relax and enjoy. We are already looking forward to our next visit!"

Jennifer Lonergan, company director, The Luxury Traveller

Book it: Olympic Holidays offers seven nights at Ikos Andalusia from £3,074 per person, based on two adults and two teenagers in two Double Rooms on an ultra-all-inclusive basis, in August. Price includes flights from Gatwick and transfers.

olympicholidays.com

23

Bequia's the way

"My teenagers felt at home in the tranquil setting of Bequia in St Vincent and the Grenadines, with its turtle sanctuary and abundance of wildlife, coconuts cut straight from the tree and fresh seafood barbecues. With the children content flopping around the pool and dipping in the sea with minimal distractions, everyone was able to relax and switch off – a rare commodity that made this one of our most memorable family holidays."

Phil Davies, reporter, Travel Weekly

Book it: Caribtours sells seven nights at Bequia Beach Hotel from £2,999 per adult and £2,499 per teenager, sharing a Classic Two Bedroom Family Room. Includes breakfast, private transfers, UK lounge access and connecting flights via Barbados departing from Gatwick on August 5.

caribtours.co.uk



Sublime Sardinia

"We've visited Baia dei Mori Beach Club in Sardinia twice with our 16-year-old daughter. Set within a peaceful pine forest, the resort is a short walk to the beach. The activities are fantastic: I loved cycling through the Sardinian hills, my wife enjoyed yoga and fitness in the forest, while Lily spent her days mastering windsurfing, paddleboarding and wing foiling with the help of enthusiastic instructors. Meals were a highlight, whether a relaxed lunch in the sun or a long, sociable dinner under the stars."

Simon Davies, operations director, Neilson Beach Clubs

Book it: Seven nights at Neilson's Baia dei Mori Beach Club costs from £1,600, based on two adults and one child sharing a double room with extra bed. Includes breakfast and lunch, four dinners, activities, transfers and flights departing from Gatwick on August 24.

neilson.co.uk



24

Cool Croatia

"My wife, teenage daughter and I travelled on Explore's Family Dubrovnik and Croatian Islands itinerary last summer. The highlights were the watersports: three days of kayaking around Lopud and Sipan as well as daily opportunities to swim and snorkel. The pace of this trip is relaxed, so there's plenty of downtime to go out for meals and enjoy Lopud island. The city tour of Dubrovnik was excellent too."

Andy Gallagher, customer experience manager, Explore

Book it: Explore has a seven-night Family Dubrovnik and Croatian Islands Adventure from £1,395 per adult and £1,245 per child up to 16 years old. Includes B&B accommodation, but excludes flights. Based on an August departure.

explore.co.uk



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Aleksandr Lupin; Denis Moskvinev; Mark Badier; Vedran Forko