

ASK THE operator

Help golfing holiday first-timers choose the right destination with these top tips from three experts. Interviews by **Sasha Wood** and **Adam Shaw**



PICTURES: Tim Worrall; Michael Stavaridis

1 Groups

WHAT'S THE BRIEF?

A group of golf enthusiasts want to book a sun-soaked trip with access to world-class courses. They'd like to bring their own clubs and are keen to be close to bars and restaurants where they can get together in the evenings.



Tim Worrell
sales and product manager, Tee the World

“ WE SUGGEST

Portugal and Spain are always going to be strong for the club player, but I would suggest that golfers try to get away from the Algarve and Costa del Sol. Off the beaten track they will find affordability with great courses.

The golf at Praia D'El Rey near Lisbon is amazing. It features two of the top-four courses in Portugal, with deep bunkers, sloping greens, sandy dunes and lush fairways, meaning there's plenty of variety for all golfers.

The clubhouse is a lovely place to relax – you can even cook your own steak! And there are supermarkets nearby, so clients can stock up their apartments with refreshments.

It's great to see agents engaging with their local golf clubs to promote golf holidays and realising an additional revenue stream. Some agents have got some really nice groups travelling with us, with numbers of up to 48. We're also facilitating quite a few corporate and club captains' trips where golf is not the only requirement.

Book it: Tee the World's The Links Golf Package offers four nights' B&B in townhouses at Praia D'El Rey Golf Resort from £695 per person, based on groups of four or eight, between May 13 and July 7, and September 10 and October 29. The price includes flights with golf bag carriage, transfers, three rounds of golf and course shuttle.
teetheworld.co.uk

2 Experienced golfers

WHAT'S THE BRIEF?

Two highly experienced golfing friends aim to go on their first golf-focused trip abroad. They are used to high-quality courses and service, and expect access to great facilities when they're not on the greens.



Patrick McCaghy
managing director, Golf Travel Group

“ WE SUGGEST

Those who want something a bit different should look no further than Costa Navarino in Greece. It's not the cheapest, but it's a great golf holiday destination.

I'd say this is the most exciting new golf resort to have emerged in Europe in the past three decades, with top courses and luxury places to stay. There's great variety in the courses too – some are between sea and mountain, others surrounded by olive trees or overlooking rural villages – and they are all of a world-class standard.

Most rooms have views of the Ionian Sea. There's also a spa, plenty of countryside for relaxing walks, and an aqua park and kids' club to keep families happy.

It's important to be able to guide clients with as much or as little help as they need. You can still make suggestions to experienced golfers, as not everyone who plays has been on a golf holiday – look out for championship courses or ones that have specialist food and drink offers attached to rounds, for example.

Book it: Golf Travel Centre offers seven nights' B&B at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino and four rounds of golf at four courses from £1,395, departing October 1. Flights extra.
golftravelcentre.com

3 Couples

WHAT'S THE BRIEF?

A couple are looking to book their first golfing holiday. They'd like to be based in a peaceful, modern and scenic resort, close to beaches and restaurants, so they can combine days on the greens with eating out and exploring the coast.



Leah Marshall
sales director, Unique Vacations UK

“ WE SUGGEST

Guests staying at any of the three Sandals resorts in Saint Lucia can access the Sandals St Lucia Golf & Country Club at Cap Estate, which boasts an 18-hole, 71-par championship-calibre course, redesigned by retired golf pro Greg Norman.

When selling a golf holiday, it's important for agents to check the costs of items such as equipment and green fees, so that their clients can budget accordingly. Adding value where possible is also important. Green fees are complimentary for all guests of Sandals Resorts in Saint Lucia, Jamaica and Great Exuma, along with transfers between the resorts and the golf courses.

Guests can also join in with complimentary PGA-certified golf clinics that are hosted weekly. Alternatively, lessons with a PGA pro are available and can be reserved at Sandals' golf courses for an additional cost.

We'd recommend Sandals Grande St Lucian Spa & Beach Resort as an ideal base for a golfing holiday in Saint Lucia. Couples can also take advantage of Sandals' Stay at One, Play at All offering and try out the facilities at the other two Sandals resorts on the island.

Book it: Seven nights' all-inclusive at Sandals Grande St Lucian Spa & Beach Resort starts at £2,349, including flights, transfers, green fees and a free golf clinic, departing September 4.
booking.sandals.co.uk/fusion/agentlogin.pl