

# The A1 team

Nightclubs or golf clubs? **Tom Huxley** discovers how Gen Z travellers are reinventing the post-A-levels escape

It's a post-A-levels rite of passage – to celebrate the end of exams and spend some time together before moving on to university, work or further training. So my friends and I were among the thousands of school leavers who set off this summer on our first trip abroad without our parents. But we weren't looking for foam parties and booze-fuelled nights out – with some welcome advice from the agents at Designer Travel, who booked our trip with Tui, we opted for the Algarve's mix of soft adventure, sandy beaches and the best golf course I've ever seen.

## AGE OF ADVENTURE

We travelled from Gatwick to Faro, and with the rugged coastline of the Algarve at our disposal, what better way to get the adrenaline pumping than with an afternoon of coasteering? We had pre-booked with Albufeira Surf and Sup (€41) in Praia de São Rafael, and after donning wetsuits and lifejackets, spent two hours with an instructor exploring the terrain and

jumping into the sea from varying heights. It was the first time we had been coasteering, and it's definitely not for the faint-hearted.

The activity involved a lot of climbing up rockfaces – and praying for dear life – but it was a great way to start our trip. We had certainly earned our first beers and pizzas at the Trattoria Toscana on the seafront, a 15-minute walk into town from our apartments.

Although the Algarve might be known for its watersports, it's even more famous for a rather more relaxed activity – golf. A 25-minute drive from Albufeira, Pine Cliffs resort has a spectacular links course that offers stunning panoramic views of the Atlantic. A winding driveway took us past tennis courts, pools and blocks of white-washed rooms and villas, before we finally reached the clubhouse, which serves a nine-hole course and driving range.

Residents or guests must wear golf shoes to play, but clubs can be hired. Unlike many nine-hole courses, there were several long holes, and even ➤

# DESTINATIONS

## MILLENNIAL & GEN Z TRAVEL | PORTUGAL



**Recommend a tour:** the support of a group and a guide can make exploring much less daunting, especially for first-time travellers or a more-adventurous trip. Contiki and Topdeck cater exclusively to a younger market, while G Adventures and Intrepid Travel have 18 to 30-something ranges. A group of friends could even book a private departure – although half the fun is meeting new people.

**Sell the support:** agents are a vital point of contact in case things go wrong, which is even more important for younger, less-experienced travellers. Ask your existing clients about their kids' (or grandkids') trips and offer to book for the group so parents can have peace of mind.

**Book transfers on arrival:** finding your way around a new place can be fun, but not when you land at midnight in an unfamiliar airport and your Uber app doesn't work. Pre-booking a transfer on arrival and activities for the first day gives younger travellers a chance to get their bearings.

**Seek sustainability:** a recent Advantage survey\* found this cohort very conscious about its impact on the environment, with 39% saying they are taking the train more often. Have flight-free or community-minded options ready for those who want to travel more sustainably.

\*Source: Jetsetting Into Tomorrow, a report from The Advantage Travel Partnership, based on a survey of 2,000 UK adults by OnePoll, published May 2024.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Adrenaline rush at Aquashow Water Park in Quarteria; Pine Cliffs Resort; the group of school leavers exploring Albufeira



the shorter ones were pleasantly challenging – including Devil's Parlour, playing across a deep ravine to the green and overlooking the windswept shores below.

We played two rounds over about four hours, the red cliffs and long sandy beaches providing a beautiful backdrop to our efforts and making for some of the most incredible holes of golf we'd ever seen. Two rounds on the nine-hole course costs €49, plus €28 per set of clubs.

Afterwards, we strolled into the heart of the resort to a bustling courtyard of shops and restaurants. Lunch at the alfresco Corda Café finished the experience off perfectly, with a choice of burgers, steak sandwiches and sizzling fajitas for €25-€30 a head.

### WATER WORLD

Next, it was time to reduce the post-exam stress at the vast Aquashow Water Park in Quarteria. We spent five hours riding log flumes and slides, barely scratching the surface of how much there was to do. A day pass costs €30 if pre-booked online.

We still managed to get some chill-out time on the beach at Praia dos Pescadores and the pool at the Brisa

Sol Aparthotel, where our group of seven was split across two apartments that were clean and functional, though with no view to speak of. Each apartment had a small kitchenette featuring a hob, toaster and fridge, so we were able to keep costs down by stocking up at the large supermarket just two minutes away – essential for students who are saving money for the start of university.

That also meant we could splash out on our last night at the popular La Terrazza del Mare restaurant. There were queues to be seated, but it was worth the wait for the food, drinks and stunning ocean views.

For a good-value, first-time trip with friends, we managed to pack plenty of memorable activities and fun experiences into our five days. Now we just need to plan the reunion trip next year. **TW**

### BOOK IT

Tui offers five nights at the Brisa Sol Aparthotel in Albufeira from £515 per person. The price includes easyJet flights from Gatwick (hand luggage only) and transfers. [tui.co.uk](https://www.tui.co.uk)

## Gen Z travel in numbers

38%

use TikTok and Instagram for travel inspiration\*

34%

want to visit lesser-known or unusual destinations

25%

want travel that engages local communities

63%

would go off-season to save money or avoid hot weather