

DESTINATIONS

SELF-DRIVE HOLIDAYS | LEFT-HAND DRIVES



LEFT-HAND-DRIVE DESTINATIONS

Make a self-drive simpler by sticking to the same side as the UK, writes **Rhodri Andrews**



CYPRUS

Cyprus's size lends itself to a self-drive holiday – crossing from Paphos in the east to Ayia Napa in the west takes about two hours. Of course, the fun of exploring by car is the stops you make, and as a former British colony, Cyprus has inherited UK-style road signs, making it simple to navigate. Tania Peck, UK and Ireland sales and marketing manager for Visit Cyprus, says: "If you have clients staying in Limassol, it's only an hour to reach Larnaca, just over an hour to Paphos and about 45 minutes to get to the Troodos Mountains. There, clients can hike nature trails, visit ancient monasteries, enjoy wine tasting, stroll through pretty villages or even stop at an artisan's workshop for a pottery lesson."

IRELAND

Ireland and Northern Ireland's self-drive scene is underpinned by two legendary routes: the Wild Atlantic Way (pictured) and the Causeway Coastal Route. There's new signage, increased investment and clients can even take their own car across the Irish Sea by ferry – adding extra value. David Wood, acting deputy head of GB for Visit Ireland, says: "Self-driving means holidaymakers can visit rural areas, charming small towns and get off-grid. They also tend to stay longer, providing a great opportunity for agents to build longer itineraries."



AUSTRALIA

Australia's widescreen landscapes are perfect for clients seeking an epic self-drive adventure. But with a country this vast, the trick is to not squeeze in too much. Anzcro advises tackling one region at a time, whether exploring Tasmania's wild landscapes, the Red Centre or the sun-drenched east coast. Kuoni, meanwhile, picks out some of Australia's most remarkable routes, from the Gibb River Road, where 4x4s are a must, to the well-maintained highways of the Pacific Coast and Margaret River regions, where clients can focus more on absorbing the diverse scenery and unique experiences on offer.

SOUTH AFRICA

Roads along the renowned Garden Route and through the bucolic Cape Winelands deliver the kind of second-gear scenery clients have come for, putting the onus on driving slowly while admiring Mother Nature's finery. Eloise Hunter, South Africa specialist at Audley Travel, says: "Agents can help their clients design a trip that has only one long drive every couple of days, giving the perfect balance of seeing the sights and travelling around. We can share our extensive knowledge of South Africa with agents, so they can recommend details to their clients such as the best places to stop along the route for lunch, and the best time of day to drive."



JAPAN

The bullet train might spring to mind when navigating Japan, but self-drive holidays in the country are a severely underrated option. Kate Samuel, senior Japan tailor-made product manager at InsideJapan Tours, says: "We include car hire in the northern island of Hokkaido, where the drive takes you past mountain ranges, beautiful countryside and vast lakes. Even in rural Tohoku and the Japanese central Alps on the main island of Honshu and on the southern island of Kyushu, a car can take on mountain passes in Nagano or drive through the huge volcanic caldera of Mount Aso."



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