



FAMILY HOTELS

Check out these Iberian hotspots for kids

@JoBooth_travel



Anyone remember when a sandy sandwich eaten while wrapped shivering in a towel was all kids expected from a holiday? Happily, times have changed, but now families' expectations are really rather high, being constantly boosted as hoteliers innovate and include more for youngsters from tots to teens.

Spain and Portugal are firm family favourites, and so the selection of hotels aimed at this market is huge. We've chosen 10 of the best, from budget to high-end, across the Balearics, the Canaries and mainland Spain and Portugal, to give your clients with kids some Iberian inspiration.

1 FAMILY LIFE ALCUDIA PINS, MAJORCA

Where could be more family-friendly than Majorca? This hotel is part of Thomson's Family Life collection, and ticks plenty of boxes for younger families looking for good-value fun. It's right on the Playa de Muro beach, with two large pools and a splash park with slides, plus a playground, soft play area and games room. Even twin rooms sleep four with either a sofa bed or bunks, and for more space there are two-bedroom apartments, which with extra beds can sleep up to six. There's a crèche for under-threes, and a kids' club for three to 11-year-olds, with two hours of free activities each day and evening clubs at additional cost. Evening entertainment centres

on the outdoor stage, with mini-discos, games and professional shows suitable for all ages.

The hotel can be booked on a range of board bases from self-catering to all-inclusive, with tapas and barbecue à la carte restaurants as well as buffet choices. It's 50 metres from the nearest bar, 100 metres from the nearest shop and about two miles from both Ca'n Picafort and Alcudia, for more dining options.

2 AQUASHOW PARK HOTEL, ALGARVE

Summer holiday fun for water babies is the name of the game at this Algarve hotel, recommended by Monarch. There's both a water park and a theme park on site that are free for guests, so kids can go back as much as they like without emptying the family wallet.

There are water slides to suit even the most courageous, with one that offers the highest freefall of any slide in Europe. The theme park includes rides and rollercoasters, and a range of wildlife shows including birds of prey and sea lions.

The park is open from May 1 to September 30.

The 148-room hotel has separate outdoor pools for adults and kids, a playground, and offers family rooms sleeping up to five in four beds. Cots, highchairs and babysitting are available, Wi-Fi is free in the lobby, and there's a free shuttlebus on weekdays into Vilamoura and Quarteira.

3 MARBELLA CLUB, COSTA DEL SOL

With everything from a Masterchef programme to an Aroma workshop, the kids' club at this hotel can cater for the offspring of high-spending parents whatever their interests. The club includes a dance studio, music room, library, art and pottery area, a kitchen, vegetable garden, computer room and entertainment area, and it runs throughout the year, welcoming children aged four to 14, although younger members can attend if accompanied by an adult. Staff are bilingual and kids can attend for half or full days.

This deluxe, beachside hotel has interconnecting rooms and suites, plus two, three and five-bedroom villas so families can choose the accommodation that suits them best. Restaurants feature children's menus and babysitters are available.

There's plenty for parents too. This hotel, once the private residence of a prince, includes a luxurious thalasso spa and, a short drive away, an 18-hole golf course and private riding stables.

4 HARD ROCK HOTEL IBIZA

At first glance this might seem a hotel far better suited to the original Ibiza clubby clientele than families. But by the time Europe's first Hard Rock Hotel opened in Playa d'en Bossa in May 2014, the shift that has seen Ibiza move from party

paradise to a much more diverse spot suited to families too was already established, and so the hotel's musical focus is pitched so that tuneful teens can enjoy it along with mum and dad, with family-friendly live music performances, 'Be a Rockstar' talent shows, 'Be a Popstar' dance competitions, and even a Fender guitar tournament.

There are all the usual facilities one would expect from a five-star suited to families: two pools, a playground, and two dedicated kids' lounges, Roxity and Teen Spirit, featuring games and chill-out zones. When it comes to food, there's snack bar Munchies as well as fine-dining from a two-Michelin-starred chef. Could this be the hotel that persuades grumpy teens that it's still cool to holiday with your parents?

5 PRINCESA YAIZA SUITE HOTEL RESORT, LANZAROTE

Lanzarote with a family? This is the spot, with two-bedroom family suites and duplex rooms sleeping up to five, and the huge Kikoland area packed with facilities for kids. These include a children's pool, tennis courts, climbing wall, football pitch with football school, beach volleyball, basketball courts, and playhouses for different ages from babies up to teens. There's a mini-disco every evening, and high season sees children's and family shows, musicals and

➔ themed dinners. Themed birthday parties can be booked with a choice of pirate, Hawaiian or fantasy. There's also a children's corner in the buffet restaurant, and a children's menu at the fine-dining à la carte, plus the Kikoland snack bar and an ice cream parlour serving a huge 26 flavours.

6 MARTINHAL SAGRES, ALGARVE

After launching in 2010 the Martinhal quickly set the benchmark for child-friendly luxury in Portugal, and the original Sagres hotel was followed by a villa resort in Quinta do Lago and further properties opening this year in Lisbon and Cascais.

The original property, set within a protected natural park near the fishing village of Sagres, has a huge amount to offer families, from accommodation built with safety in mind, with stair-gates, baby-proofing, pool guards, washing machines and dishwashers, to five kids' clubs for ages ranging from six months to teens and activities such as face-painting, T-shirt printing, cooking, dolphin watching and windsurf lessons. During the school holidays there are also football and tennis academies, again



Kids staying at the Sol Pelicanos Ocas can 'Yabadabadoo!' a whole lot at the Flintstones adventure park

split by age, plus swimming lessons. Accommodation is in the hotel and across a wide range of villas. Baby equipment can be pre-booked and baby products are sold in the shop.

7 ROCA NIVARIA GRAN HOTEL, TENERIFE

This Adrian Hoteles property can help parents entertain kids even before the holiday has started, with a free downloadable phone app featuring mascot Roni the whale and games that introduce the island.

The baby club and kids' club at the 289-room hotel cater for children from 10 months to 12 years, with a daily activities programme, games room, play area, television room and a heated pool. In the main restaurant there's a

pirate ship-shaped buffet for children's choices and a playroom next door. Older kids may enjoy the hotel's other activities, which include tennis, beach volleyball, giant chess and petanque.

Superior doubles sleep three, and junior and superior suites four, and all-inclusive stays are available. The hotel is 30 minutes from Tenerife South airport in the peaceful Playa Paraiso area of Costa Adeje.

8 SOL PELICANOS OCAS, BENIDORM

Kids staying at this Meliá hotel in Benidorm can 'Yabadabadoo!' a whole lot at the Flintstones adventure park, with rock climbing, trampolining, arts and crafts and cookery classes on offer. There are even mini-discos with Flintstones characters in high season and, for an extra charge, kids can have a themed birthday party or have breakfast with Dino. The Bam Bam Club for five to 12-year-olds runs in the summer holidays and, if the on-site fun isn't enough, the hotel is close to the Aqualandia water park and the Terra Mitica theme park.

There are five pools and the hotel is 300 metres from the beach, ➔



Seven nights with breakfast at Princesa Yaiza Suite Hotel in Lanzarote starts from £599, with Gatwick flights departing May 10 and private transfers, through Travel2.travel2.com

Seven nights' self-catering at Thomson's Family Life Alcudia Pins in Majorca starts at £459 based on four sharing and including flights from Manchester, departing July 4, and transfers. thomson.co.uk

Monarch offers seven nights at Aquashow Park Hotel in the Algarve from £235 based on three sharing and including flights from Gatwick on May 4. monarch.co.uk



LEFT: Martinhal Sagres, Portugal
BELOW: Roca Nivaria Gran Hotel, Tenerife



→ and activities and evening entertainment are family-friendly, with shows inspired by musicals from *The Lion King* to *Grease*. Family rooms sleep four in two singles and a sofa bed, and there's an all-inclusive package on offer. As well as two buffet restaurants, there's a snack bar serving burgers, pizzas, salads and sandwiches.

9 GRAN ATLANTIS BAHIA REAL, FUERTEVENTURA

This five-star will keep kids entertained while giving parents the chance to enjoy some of their pre-parenting holiday privileges – a treatment at the spa or perhaps a lunch or languid day hanging out at the new Coco Beach Lounge and Club, the only beach club in the Canary Islands.

Kids, meanwhile, will be kept happy at the Mini Club Arlequin, which offers games,

entertainment, a cyber-room complete with PlayStations and Wiis, and a mini disco in the evenings. Alternatively, there's babysitting on offer for a charge.

Family rooms – with one king-sized and two single beds and two bathrooms – come well-equipped with everything from cribs, baby bathtubs and bottle warmers to welcome gifts and child-sized bathrobes. Children's menus and homemade baby foods are available.

10 PINE CLIFFS HOTEL, ALGARVE

Formerly known as the Sheraton Algarve, this hotel's comprehensive renovation will be completed this summer, with sleek new rooms and new restaurants. Kids will love the Porto Pirata playground with life-sized wooden pirate ships, a bouncy castle, basketball court,



ABOVE: Pine Cliffs Hotel, Portugal

scooters, bikes, a kids' pool and a mini-golf course, which is open from April to October. Daily activities include finger painting, arts and crafts, treasure hunts, water games, face painting and sports, on offer to kids up to 13, with clubs for different ages at

extra charge. Junior suites sleep up to four, but the wider Pine Cliffs resort offers apartments and residences too. High chairs and children's menus are on offer in the resort's restaurants, which range from seafood and steak to a buffet and snacks. **TW**

A City Break for two to Cannes, plus plenty of wine up for grabs during January!

Find out more at www.railbookers.com/agents

2% COMMISSION UPLIFT DURING JANUARY!

Essential Galicia
8 NIGHTS FROM £679 pp

Explore an alternative side to Spain as you traverse the western coast from La Coruña to Portugal's Porto!

Inspire your customers with a tailor made holiday that is as much about the journey as the destination they visit!

- Rail holiday experts for the independent traveller
- A truly unique holiday experience with unrivalled flexibility
- Competitive agent commission
- Expert knowledge of destinations in over 50 countries
- Rail travel with free seat reservations, flights, car hire, sightseeing tours, excursions and hand-picked hotels all available to combine!

railbookers
Holidays inspired by you

For more information contact Joy Lacana:
email joy.lacana@railbookers.com or call 020 3780 2300
www.railbookers.com/agents

Prices shown are per person, based on two people travelling and sharing a room, subject to availability, correct as at 07/01/2016 and may vary seasonally. 2% commission uplift valid on holidays of four or more nights to two or more destinations.

