



SWITCH-SELLING

Clients don't need to leave the UK to enjoy different kinds of architecture and activities, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**

On the dreariest of British days, it can be easy to assume the grass is always greener somewhere else (though, thanks to our country's wet, maritime climate, it probably isn't). It's tempting to think there's more culture on the Continent, better scenery in Switzerland or finer food on farther-flung shores.

But clients with their hearts set on experiencing something new don't need to go to a foreign land – and agents can sell a domestic trip by highlighting those close-to-home getaways with USPs that are usually the preserve of holidays

abroad. Whether it's surfing, enjoying Mediterranean-esque architecture or hiking in rugged hills, a staycation can offer plenty of excitement with the added advantage of shorter travel time.

Visit England research estimated that 10.6 million Brits were planning to take an overnight break in the UK during the long Easter weekend – and, with another bank holiday around the corner, clients could be searching for inspiration for their next long-weekend jaunt.

Ready to start selling? These three holiday hotspots are an enticing prospect for a great British break. ➤



LIKE THIS?

PORTOFINO

Italy's colourful Ligurian coastline is a classic choice for lovers of bella Italia. The town of Portofino is a stalwart of postcards, easily identified by its cluster of red, yellow and orange townhouses bordering a scenic marina. Clients can spend days getting lost in little alleyways, marvelling at ornate Catholic churches, shopping for designer treats or even wandering through Mediterranean woodland up to a turreted castle.

PORTMEIRION

Inspired by Portofino, Portmeirion in north Wales was the brainchild of architect Clough Williams-Ellis, who wanted to demonstrate how a place of natural beauty could be developed for tourism without being spoiled.

The labour of love was completed over a period of 50 years, between 1925 and 1973, but the first hotel at the site opened as early as 1926. Today, Portmeirion is the perfect place to savour light Italian dishes at Caffi Glas, take a wander in the subtropical gardens (pictured) or snap photos by brilliant blue fountains sprinkled throughout the village.

Just Go Holidays' Great Little Trains of North Wales and Portmeirion itinerary provides a convenient way to explore the region. As well as a morning in Portmeirion, they will ride spectacular heritage railways, from the Ffestiniog Railway in Snowdonia to the Great Orme Tramway in seaside Llandudno.

Book it: Just Go Holidays' four-night Great Little Trains of North Wales and Portmeirion trip is priced from £529 per person, based on two sharing, including coach travel, breakfast and dinner, plus listed excursions for departures in July and August. justgoholidays.com/agents

TRY THIS



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Sina Elmer Photography, BBA Photography

DESTINATIONS

BRITISH ISLES | SWITCH-SELL



LIKE THIS?

TAGHAZOUT

Surf fans might make tracks for Taghazout, Morocco's surfing capital, to catch the swells and a few warming rays. Just 15 miles from Agadir, this sleepy fishing village, with its sweeping Atlantic shoreline, offers accommodation ranging from humble guesthouses to high-end resorts. When taking a break from the sea, clients can do yoga or pamper themselves in a hammam.

CORNWALL

Like Taghazout, Bude in Cornwall is situated on a long coastal stretch facing the Atlantic. It attracts surfers from all over the country; travellers can rent boards and join lessons with local operators, who will tailor their tuition to suit your clients' ability.

Although sunshine isn't guaranteed, Bude is an all-year destination. The best conditions for surfing tend to be in the chilly winter months, with waves up to 3.5 metres high. Beginners might prefer summertime, when the swell is smaller and the county's coastal scenery and sun-kissed beer gardens come into their own.

Away from the surf, Bude has beach huts that wouldn't look out of place amid the eccentric aesthetic of a Wes Anderson film, plus a quirky heritage museum filled with treasures, from medieval muskets to railway memorabilia.

The Atlantic Farm Surf Pods are perfectly situated for surfers, just a 10-minute drive from Widemouth Bay. They may look like Hobbiton, but inside these grass-covered boltholes are memory foam mattresses, underfloor heating and a kitchenette.

Book it: Hoseasons sells a three-night stay at the Atlantic Farm Surf Pods from £240 per pod, which is based on a self-catering stay in September.

hoseasons.co.uk



TRY THIS



LIKE THIS?

SWITZERLAND

For fresh air and exercise, the Alps are hard to beat. Switzerland has 13,600 miles of mountain hiking paths, at varying altitudes, so clients can enjoy serene strolls through wildflower-filled meadows or take on challenging summit climbs. History lovers will revel in the fortresses set deep in the valleys, while Switzerland's mix of languages will delight the culturally curious.

SCOTLAND

To wander through Caledonian pine-clad glens and along stone ridges on a clear day is a delight – multi-day hikes through the Highlands include the 96-mile West Highland Way and the 34-mile Three Lochs Way. However, there are plenty of shorter hikes to sell to clients who want to mix it up with visits to isolated castles and whisky distilleries.

HF Holidays' guided walking holidays feature walks ranging between six and 11 miles each day. There are five versions of the itinerary to choose from, with several featuring hikes in Glen Coe (pictured) – a deep, verdant valley that bears the scars of history, being the site of a clan massacre that occurred in 1692. Other hikes take in the steep-sided north face of Ben Nevis and views of cobalt lochs.

Alltshellach country house will be your clients' base for four nights, offering a daily full Scottish breakfast and an indoor pool with a hot tub in which to soak tired legs.

Book it: HF Holidays sells the four-night Scottish Highlands Guided Walking Holiday from £765 per person, based on two sharing. Includes full board, a guide and transport for select departures in July and August.

hfholidays.co.uk



TRY THIS

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Clem Hencher-Stevens, Natalie Hara, swuerfel, bilebkyevgeniy.com