

Short and sweet

Honeymooners wanting to stay short-haul?
Laura French looks into the options

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The Indian Ocean might be stealing the show on the honeymooner front right now, but clients don't have to go long-haul to sip pina colodas on white-sand shores and splash around in curacao-coloured waters.

The Med still has its fair share of pearls for newlyweds looking to sprawl out on sunloungers, while for those after something a little different, there are mountains to climb, ice fields to glimpse and culture-rich cities to browse. Here are some of our top picks.

▶ BEST FOR LUXURY: SANTORINI

Santorini is the stuff of dreams for those who want quintessential romance, and cream of the crop is Grace, an all-white, minimalist boutique perched on a cliff overlooking the caldera. It's Kuoni's top pick thanks to a generous honeymoon deal - which includes an in-room champagne breakfast, four-course set menu and sunset cocktail and canapes - and a plethora of other romantic lures, ranging from sailing trips to helicopter transfers, in-room spa treatments to drinks at the rooftop champagne bar.

But the highlight is The Villa, a 400sq metre luxury suite boasting its own spa, pool and gazebo, and postcard-perfect views over the surroundings; think sparkling stretch of cobalt blue by day, burning golden sunsets by eve.

Book it: Kuoni offers seven nights in a Honeymoon Suite with Plunge Pool from £3,149 per person, including breakfast, British Airways flights from Heathrow and transfers in May 2019. The honeymoon offer is valid from

April 15 to October 31, for stays of five nights or more.

kuoni.co.uk

Or try: Couples more into Crete? Lauren Ross, product and commercial manager for Simply Luxury by Travel 2, recommends Elounda Gulf Villas & Suites, set above the Gulf of Mirabello and a stone's throw from legendary island Spinalonga. "It's a family-run boutique hotel offering the highest standards of privacy and service, and it's perfect for honeymooners looking to recover from the wedding preparations," she says.

▶ BEST FOR VALUE: TURKEY

For couples wanting to make decent savings without sacrificing on luxury, look to Turkey. Tui Sensatori Resort Barut Fethiye is a good option, with adult-only as well as family-friendly zones, several swim-up rooms, 14 bars and restaurants and romantic options including a candlelit dinner under the stars.

It's all set on the Turquoise Coast, making it ideal for those looking to fly and flop, and for couples after added exclusivity there's The Residence, a new adult-only section promising butlers, free-standing bathtubs and wow-factor upgrades when it opens in May.

Book it: Seven nights' all-inclusive costs from £685 per person, based on two sharing with transfers and flights from Gatwick on May 5, 2019.

tui.co.uk

Or try: 'Island of Love' Cyprus knows a thing or two about romance, and it needn't

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Columbia Beach Resort on Pissouri Bay, Cyprus, has a honeymoon package that includes a consultation with 'Cupid' prior to arrival so their stay is tailored. Once there, they will get a welcome drink, champagne, bath bundle, candlelit dinner, in-suite breakfast and a suite upgrade (from £402).

Welcome package

Elsewhere in Cyprus, Anassa Hotel offers honeymooners a selection of free treats including fresh welcome flowers, a bottle of sparkling wine, candlelit dinner for two in the Helios restaurant and a room upgrade.

Treat for two

Guests celebrating their honeymoon at Domes Elounda, Crete, get a couples' spa experience alongside a rose-strewn bed, platter of Greek sweets and in-suite breakfast.



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ABOVE: Paros

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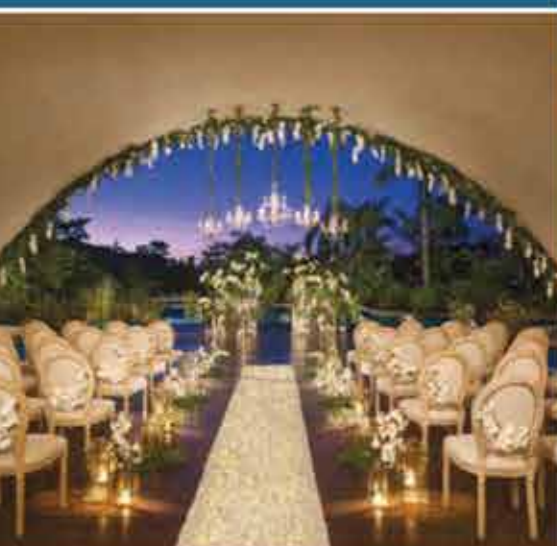
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mean breaking the bank. Olympic Holidays recommends Constantinos the Great, a beachside five-star near Protaras boasting good facilities and idyllic views, with prices from £866 per person for a week's half-board, including flights, in May 2019.

BEST FOR SECLUSION: PAROS

Clients wanting to get away from it all? Look to one of the lesser-known Greek isles. Pint-sized Paros (an hour from Mykonos) makes an excellent base, with Byzantine remnants, traditional villages and head-turning landscapes luring those who want culture without the crowds.

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Islands of Greece recommends honeymooners looking for a peaceful escape head to Lilly Residence, an adult-only retreat nestled on a hill above a sandy beach, home to several suites with private Jacuzzis and plunge pools. Mykonos is an hour's hop away, and the secluded island of

Anti-Paros can easily be reached by boat too.

Book it: A week in a Junior Suite Jacuzzi Sea View starts at £915 per person, including flights, transfers and a champagne breakfast.

islandsofgreece.co.uk

Or try: On the same island you'll find Mr & Mrs White, a simple, couple-centric hotel centred around 'laid-back luxury' and flaunting traditional Greek touches with modern spins.

BEST FOR ADVENTURE: THE ALPS

Honeymoons don't have to mean sun, sea and sand. For adventurous couples who want something a little different,

look to the Alps. Inghams recommends Chamonix for couple-friendly activities that range from paragliding over the mountains to hiking across glaciers, and it's not all about the extreme stuff - tag on the operator's Overnight Glacier Experience and clients will be whisked up to the remote Refuge du Montenvers, a mountaineering lodge built in 1880 at more than 6,560ft.

Here, they'll watch the sun set over the Mer de Glace glacier, enjoy a romantic three-course meal and stargazing beneath the inky sky, then venture to the ice caves the following day.

Book it: A week's half-board at the four-star Hotel Heliopic in

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→ Chamonix costs from £849 per person, based on two sharing and including flights and transfers, a free room upgrade and bottle of wine. The Overnight Glacier Experience costs from £105 per person, including accommodation, dinner and breakfast.

agents.inghams.co.uk

Or try: Suggest Iceland for mini mooners wanting to glimpse the aurora. Best Served Scandinavia offers a five-day, self-drive Romantic Iceland & the Northern Lights tour, taking in the Golden Circle - including the Gulfoss waterfall and snow-covered Thingvellir National Park - alongside the volcanic beaches of the south coast and the highlights of Reykjavik in a 4x4.

▶ BEST FOR CULTURE: MARRAKECH

Labyrinthine alleys, frenetic souks, ancient mosques, opulent tiled palaces...Marrakech is a

cultural treasure trove with its sense-overloading sights, smells and sounds, and while it can be a little in-your-face, it's also undeniably romantic, with riads offering character-filled stays, hammams dishing out intimate couples' treatments and roof terraces providing panoramic views over the city as it twinkles pink at sunset. Horse-drawn calleches, oasis-like gardens and excellent restaurants are all on hand to charm too, while camel rides through the Sahara are easy to tag on in addition.

Book it: Super Break offers a three-night stay in one of four boutiques by Marrakech Riads (the exact property is allocated on arrival) from £241 per person, including breakfast, transfers and flights from Stansted on February 11, 2019.


superbreak.com/agents

Or try: Does anywhere beat Rome in the romance stakes?



ABOVER: Marrakech

Riverbank strolls, exceptional cuisine and an infinite string of historic sights make this one of the most quintessentially charming cities on the planet. For honeymooners who want

an extra special stay, Osprey Holidays recommends the Inn at the Spanish Steps, a five-star boutique hotel filled with ornate interiors and traditional wrought-iron balconies. 



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