

# All new



## *BH Mallorca, Magaluf*

Craig David and Tinie Tempah on stage while Love Island stars bask in the pool? Only in Magaluf, reports [Rose Dykins](#)

Forget everything you thought you knew about all-inclusives. [Travel Weekly](#) tests three resorts making the concept cool again

**A**t 7am, I'm awoken by someone repeatedly hollering 'Scotland!' outside my window. The night before is a bit of a blur, but I look down and see the laminated orange band around my wrist, with 'BH Mallorca' printed on it, and remember.

The glitter cannons. The moshing. The on-site arena packed with thousands of bronzed, excitable party animals. Tinie Tempah screaming "Make some Noiiise!" into his mic. The crowd roaring in response. And all within the vicinity of the hotel.

By the afternoon, it's pool party time at BH Mallorca, where Alex and Olivia from *Love Island* pose for photos and pour shots into fans' mouths. And the next evening, back on stage, Craig David brings the house down with his treacly voice, doubling

up as DJ and MC, and it feels like 1999 all over again.

### ► PARTY ANIMALS

BH Mallorca hotel appeals to clients who want the Magaluf party experience, but are also tempted by an overseas festival or an Ibiza trip. This summer saw acts including Chase and Status, David Guetta, DJ Tiesto and Steve Aoki on stage every



You feel like you're going to a concert or a festival – and you don't even have to leave your hotel

Tuesday and Thursday between June 15 and August 24.

"The calibre of performers has to be pretty consistent as we are building the Stage brand as best-in-class for live music," says Kathryn Sayburn, managing director of Cursach Hotels, BH Mallorca's parent company.

These performances are offered as part of an all-inclusive package, with accommodation, food and drink, access to the on-site waterpark and four weekly pool parties, and return flights thrown in, though non-residents can pay €30-€50 to access the performances.

### ► MUSIC MATTERS

"I think it's fantastic," says Jessica Greaves from Hays Travel. "If I turn around to my customer





→ and say 'by the way, included in your price, you get to see Tinie Tempah, Craig David, and Alex and Olivia from *Love Island* at the pool party', it's a massive selling point.

"You feel like you're going to a concert or a festival – and you don't even have to leave your hotel. You can finish for the night and crawl back to your room, if you want to."

Tina Sweeney, of Independent Travel Experts, says: "You can see why it appeals to the younger crowd who are into music, and I imagine it appeals quite heavily to stag and hen dos as well. I think I could sell it to a younger client. I personally wouldn't recommend it to couples, though, definitely singles."

Targeted at 18 to 26-year-olds, BH Mallorca keeps its clientele firmly in mind. "We launched BH Mallorca in 2015, following a €15 million refurbishment," says Sayburn.

"We renovated 656 apartments, converting them into fresh, modern suites with free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, walk-in showers and flatscreen TVs with UK channels.

"On-site, we built the world's first 18-plus water park, complete with high-adrenaline slides, a wave pool



**DIVE IN**  
Go scuba diving in Puerto Pollensa or windsurfing and jetskiing in Puerto Calanova.

**SIGHTSEE**  
Wander through the streets of Calvia, Deia and Artá.

**WATCH**  
Ahoy, me hearties! Watch the Pirates Adventure dinner show for world-class acrobatics, dance and comedy.

and three giant Jacuzzis. We created Island Beach Club – home of legendary pool parties – and launched Stage, Mallorca's largest open-air music venue.

"We understand young people want an experience when they travel, so we listened to their feedback and launched a 'Disneyland' for young people. It's fun to stay here and definitely fun to work here!"

## ▶ THE LOWDOWN

The hotel's refreshed rooms are simple and functional, with a decent amount of space; they can comfortably accommodate four people sharing, with two in the bedroom and two in the lounge. They have balconies with seating, funky artwork on the walls, tiled floors, mini fridges and full-length mirrors with 'You Look Great!' and the hotel's social media tags at the top.

Rooms are serviced daily, and despite the antics throughout the night, its public areas are hosed down and spotless by breakfast time. The buffet has a great selection of food, with plenty of healthy options, a range of soft drinks, and San Miguel on tap. Some nights are themed to focus on Italian, Arabian or Mexican food.

The hotel feels pretty full even early

in the season. Finding a sunbed around one of its three pools isn't too difficult, though queues at the bar are rather lengthy.

The pool parties are well-managed and feel relaxed rather than raucous; the glamorous dancers and inflatables to play with go down well.

## ▶ ADDED EXTRAS

Hiring a pool party cabana for four people costs €160, and gets you the same amount of credit at the bar. Fans of *Towie*, *Love Island* and *Geordie Shore* will enjoy the celebrity meet-and-greets that take place at each pool party.

As for stage performances, there's an elevated VIP area close to the main stage – access is €250 for four people, with a premium bottle of Grey Goose and mixers thrown in. Or, for clients who really want a front-row seat, Stage-view apartments can be booked for a supplement, allowing guests to wander from their room to their balcony, look out over the crowd and enjoy the music from above.

**Book it:** All-inclusive rates start at €57 a night. BH Mallorca can be packaged up through operators including Thomas Cook, Jet2holidays and Expedia.

**bhmallorca.com**



**SELFIE CONTROL:** *Love Island* winners Kem Cetinay and Amber Davies at BH Mallorca

PICTURE: AMBIENT VISTA PHOTOGRAPHY





## Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya, Mexico

**Skiing? In the Caribbean? Kelly Ranson finds plenty of reasons to get off the sunlounger at this sporty resort**

**S**taying at the Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya, it's a given to live like a rock star, but now guests can amplify their skills and add 'skateboard legend' or 'BMX prodigy' to the holiday mix.

The 1,264-room music memorabilia hotel is renowned for offering the ultimate in all-inclusive holidays, so it seems the perfect fit to open an activity-laden sports centre at the resort.

It's a totally new experience in Mexico and the Caribbean, and a million miles from the stereotype of lazing by the pool or propping up the bar for two weeks solid.

If you have a client who is more into adrenaline-seeking than sunbed-lounging, but still loves the lure of an all-inclusive and Mexico's sandy shores, then you're in luck.

### SPORTING CHANCE

The gigantic Woodward sports centre, which has just opened at the resort, is a magnet for active kids of all ages – and they don't even need to be a pro on wheels to take part.

It is downright genius too; let's face it, on a rainy day in the Caribbean there really isn't

too much to do, so Woodward's indoor space is ideal for families twiddling their thumbs when the sun doesn't come out to play.



**There's trampolining and cheer sessions, and you can launch yourself into a foam pit like a superhero**

Packed with ramps and jumps galore, the lifestyle sports brand has built an impressive facility with indoor skateboarding, BMX biking, dry-land snowboarding and skiing all available for guests to try out. Snowboarding while it's 30C outside? Why not!

And the centre has been put through its paces by skateboarding hero Tony Hawk, who was on hand to show his skills at Woodward's grand opening last month.

There's also trampolining, cheer sessions, parkour (free running) space and you can



MEXICO: Hard Rock  
Hotel Riviera Maya





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## 3 OF THE BEST RIVIERA MAYA TOURS

### Chichen Itza

It's a full-day trip, but the centre of the once-great Mayan Empire is worth it. Walk among the giant pyramids and ancient ruins of this Unesco-listed site. Prices from \$145.

### Tulum

Tulum is just 30 minutes from Riviera Maya, making it ideal for a half-day trip. You'll be guided through the majestic ruins and learn colourful stories, and don't forget your swimwear – Tulum is right on the coast. From \$105.

### Cenotes

Discover these natural wonders of the Yucatan peninsula by heading underground to the cenotes (sinkholes) and underground rivers, seeing rock formations and a multitude of sea life as you swim around the calm caves. From \$140.

→ even launch yourself off a ledge into a giant foam pit like a superhero (or on a BMX bike, for those with skills). Outside, there's even more, including a ninja obstacle course.

All skill levels are welcome as guests have to complete a one-hour instructor-led session before some free play to nail that perfect flip or jump.

Woodward is available for guests aged seven and up, but instructors will offer 'micro sessions' for under-sevens.

Thanks to Hard Rock's Limitless Resort Credit package (up to \$1,800 per room for a seven-night stay and \$3,600 for 14 nights), the cost is included, so there's no extra hard-sell to your clients.

Guests pay \$129 for a 'stack session', which includes a one-hour introductory lesson, an hour's free play and a two-hour drop-in session. Take advantage of an introductory offer, though, for bookings made before June 30, 2018, and sports-mad guests will get a free double stack session per room, for a total of four hours in the activity centre (for travel by December 20, 2018, with Thomas Cook).

If that's still not enough action, guests can head to the beach for some paddleboarding, kayaking and snorkelling. They can even zipline into the resort's crystal-clear lagoon. For keen golfers, Hard Rock owns an 18-hole course just 15 minutes' drive from the resort.

### ▶ TIME TO RELAX

Activity makes for thirsty work, so it's a good job Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya has 10 bars and nine restaurants to help recharge. Dining options are a far

cry from the usual all-inclusive buffet fare; there's something for every palate, from Asian fusion to Brazilian rodizio, and French cuisine to sumptuous steaks.

The high-energy hotel is split across two resorts, and adults can roam freely between them. Heaven is the lavish and rather glitzy adult-only retreat, complete with three tempting pools, private beach, Heaven nightclub with its own pool, tequila-tasting sessions, beauty salon, gym and the Rock Spa, with a staggering 75 treatment rooms.

Over in family-friendly Hacienda resort, the activity programme is endless and kids will love hanging out with their favourite TV characters including Angelina Ballerina, Barney and Bob the Builder, while teens can drop in to the Cavern Club for some parent-free space. Kids and gadget-mad parents will also revel in the fact Xbox consoles and Fender guitars can be delivered to the room.

With music at the centre of the resort's heart, it's hard to hold back your inner rock god or goddess, so a visit to the Music Lab is a must. It gives wannabe stars the chance to form a rock band and perform on stage or create their own music video.

From skateboarding one day to rock concerts the next, Hard Rock certainly knows how to break the all-inclusive mould.

**Book it:** Thomas Cook offers a week at the five-star Hard Rock Riviera Maya Hacienda, from £1,389 per person based on two adults sharing on an all-inclusive basis, flying from Gatwick on June 17, 2018. [thomascoworld.com](http://thomascoworld.com); [hrhrivieramaya.com](http://hrhrivieramaya.com) →

**BELOW:** Woodward sports centre at Hard Rock Hotel Riviera Maya



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## White Palace Resort, Crete

Bored of buffets? Take all-inclusive eating up a notch with a new luxury package, writes **Rachel Roberts**

**T**he golden disc of Greek sun slips down the sky, signalling the end of another hard day of basking in its blissful rays on the sandy shores of the Aegean Sea.

Right now, the thought of running a bath ahead of an evening of famed Cretan revelry – all fine dining and fine tipping – is frankly exhausting. So I simply reach for my smartphone and ping a WhatsApp message to the concierge, asking them to take care of this Herculean task.

The innovative 24-hour service, the first of its kind on the Greek island, is the jewel in the crown of a new Luxury Made Easy concept. The 'Lux Me' package made its debut at the White Palace Grecotel Luxury Resort earlier this year and we're here

to test it out which, it transpires, mostly involves being spoilt rotten.

### ▶ ALL WHITE NOW

The five-star White Palace will give travel-weary clients a real 'wow' moment on arrival. The sleek resort is an hour's transfer from Heraklion airport or 80 minutes from Chania airport, and has a prime spot near the historic town of Rethymno on the northern stretch of coastline known as the Cretan Riviera.

As the name suggests, all is pristine white. The genial general manager Ioannis Zoulakis tells us the resort's upkeep is the Greek equivalent of Scotland's Forth Road Bridge: no sooner is the last lick of paint applied than it's time to start all over again.

“

I ping a WhatsApp message to the concierge, asking them to take care of running me a bath

The open-air entrance lobby is reminiscent of a modern-day Greek temple, with stunning views of the cobalt-blue Aegean.

Although the resort covers 263 rooms, seven restaurants and 17 swimming pools, it retains an airy elegance, thanks in part to the chic-yet-comfortable minimalist decor and the low-level accommodation wings.

### ▶ VERY IMPORTANT PACKAGE

The Lux Me package cleverly taps into the zeitgeist for all things celebrity and represents a long-overdue reboot of the traditional all-inclusive offering. It will appeal to clients looking for a taste of the VIP lifestyle on a mid-range budget: prices in the high season start at around £1,600 per person for seven nights and shoulder-season bookings can be made for less than £1,000.

Guests can get their VIP on at the Sunset Lounge Bar. With its superlative views of the ocean, this is the ideal place for lazy sundowners and is one of Crete's most-Instagrammed views.

Anyone with a horror of those naff plastic wristbands of yesteryear can opt for a



TREAT TIME: A gelateria at White Palace Resort

→ discreet white card or a stylish ribbon bracelet bearing the resort's own Pucci-style print. And Lux Me guests won't be fobbed off with watered-down cocktails, as minibars are stocked with premium-brand spirits.

## ► TIME TO DINE

A strong selling point is the five à la carte restaurants, all boasting sea views. These include fine-dining venue The White, offering dégustation menus with French, Italian and Greek influences. A sommelier is also on hand to recommend wines from an impressive 150-strong list.

Clients can choose from 15 room types, all with the signature 'all-white' decor. These include the Yali Collection, private suites on the edge of the sea boasting their own pools and residential-style living. These are a popular choice for honeymooning couples and small families.

A friend lamented she wouldn't be able to take her two boisterous boys for fear they'd ruin the upmarket vibe, but

families are well catered for.

The Lux Me package price includes a visit to the seriously fun Kingdom of Poseidon Aqua Park in sister resort Club Marine Palace & Suites, and a tour of the local Agreco farm, where children (and adults) can milk a goat or help shear a sheep. In resort, there are family-friendly shows and an open-air cinema where kids can tuck in to popcorn.

An online guest portal also keeps clients updated on the daily activities in resort. Fitness is a focus, with yoga, power walking and aqua workouts all on offer. Those in need of further pampering can head to the Hippie Spa, featuring a hammam, nail bar and caviar treatments for face and body.

## ► LOCAL LIFE

While the resort certainly does what it can to challenge outdated notions of all-inclusive properties, one of its greatest assets is encouraging guests to get out and explore, with a programme of 25 experiences around the island.



## We gave the 'Be a Local for the Day' tour a whirl, mingling with the locals in the market in Rethymno

These cover eight categories, including nature, culture and gastronomy, and offer an add-on experience at a reasonable extra cost. Several new experiences are also in the pipeline.

We gave the 'Be a Local for the Day' tour a whirl, heading to Rethymno's old town on market day. There we mingled with boisterous locals buying from stalls groaning with local produce, including cherries, tomatoes and courgette flowers, and tried the local 'liquid gold', the island's delicious olive oil.

Another highlight of the tour is a visit to Mr Hadjiparashos, a traditional filo-maker who shares the secrets of delicate pastry.

Environmental concerns aren't sacrificed at the altar of pleasure, either, so the luxury all-inclusive package has merits for the eco-conscious client too. Conservation of endangered loggerhead sea turtles is high on the agenda, with areas of the beach monitored by a team of volunteers. The beach itself has Blue Flag status.

And what of that WhatsApp request from the beach? I returned to my suite to find a freshly drawn bath strewn with rose petals, illuminated by flickering, softly scented candles.

It's too bad that our final cheeky WhatsApp request – to spirit lovely waitress Dimitra back to the UK with us – was politely turned down, with several smiley face emojis, hearts and kisses to soften the blow, of course.

**Book it:** Tui offers a week at the 5T-rated Grecotel White Palace, staying all-inclusive, from £768 based on two sharing, including flights from Gatwick on May 1, 2018, and transfers.

**tui.co.uk**

**FEELING BLUE:**  
Yali Collection  
private suite

