

# Wild weekends

Adventure trips don't have to mean a big time commitment. Laura French looks at active escapes you can slot into a long weekend

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**Weekends might be short and sweet, but get it right and you can squeeze in some pretty wild adventures – and we're not just talking about a Friday night out on the town.**

From climbing North Africa's highest mountain to hiking an Alpine glacier, hang-gliding in New York to hunting down the northern lights, you'll be surprised at what can be fitted into a few action-packed days – and your clients will be too.

We've rounded up some of the best breaks for those who are short on time but big on adventure, with commission-boosting packages on hand to impress your clients and plump up your purse in the process.

## ► GO OFF ROAD IN ICELAND

Steaming geysers, bubbling hot springs, multicoloured lava tunnels and luminescent-blue glaciers – when it comes to extraordinary, winter-wonderland sights accessible over a weekend, nothing quite beats Iceland.

The gateway to it all is Reykjavik. You'll find plenty of tours from the city, but for something a little different, suggest Super Break's full-day Super Jeep tour of the Golden Circle, which takes guests to all the key sights – the geysers, Gullfoss waterfall, Thingvellir National Park and beyond. It also throws in a snowmobile experience on the enormous Langjökull glacier, plus a caving

adventure in the kaleidoscope-like lava tunnels.

Osprey Holidays also offers a Super Jeep tour and plenty of other activities, including horse riding, whale watching and the famous Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater spa, while Dive Worldwide takes it up a notch with a three-night package featuring diving at the Silfra site – a series of underwater ravines, tunnels and caverns, where the water temperature gets no warmer than a chilly 2-4C.

**Book it:** Super Break offers a three-night trip to Reykjavik including the full-day Golden Circle, snowmobile and caving on two sharing at the Radisson

Blu Saga hotel, with breakfast, flights and transfers, in October. [superbreak.com/agents](http://superbreak.com/agents)

## ► CLIMB MOUNT TOUBKAL

If the idea of popping over to North Africa for the weekend to climb its highest mountain gets your clients buzzing, look no further than Mount Toubkal. Peeping out from Morocco's High Atlas Mountains and stretching to an impressive height of 4,167 metres, it's by no means an easy challenge, but it's perfectly doable as a long weekend thanks to tours by the likes of KE Adventure Travel.

Clients on the operator's three-night trip will have an evening in Marrakech's historic medina



**LEFT:**  
Mount  
Toubkal,  
Morocco

**RIGHT:**  
Brown bear,  
Finland

**BELOW:**  
Paragliding in  
the Alps



PICTURE: EXPLORE

→ before trekking through scenic valleys, tranquil villages and silent slopes across two active days, experiencing traditional Berber culture and mountain hospitality along the way. At the summit they'll be rewarded with spectacular views over the surrounding peaks, the sands of the Sahara glowing orange in the distance and tumbling down in soft, velvety waves – now that's a productive weekend.

**Book it:** From £255 land-only, departing from Marrakech, including transfers, land transport, accommodation, all meals, equipment and a local leader (flights not included). [keadventure.com](http://keadventure.com)

## ▶ SOAR OVER NEW YORK

Picture New York City and soaring over the treetops on a

hang-glider probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. But clients can do just that thanks to Funway Holidays' full-day excursion from the city. The trip combines a half-hour flight over the scenic Hudson Valley with a visit to an apple orchard for some freshly brewed cider and a hearty lunch.

"The experience offers a glimpse into the exhilarating world of aero-sports, offering amazing views over the beautiful valley," says product destination manager Malcolm Davies, who recommends tagging on a helicopter flight over Manhattan the following day to complete the aerial-infused weekend.

**Book it:** The full-day Hang Gliding and Orchard Adventure costs from £265; the New York City Scenic Helicopter flight costs from £125. [funway4agents.co.uk](http://funway4agents.co.uk)

## ▶ PARAGLIDE IN THE ALPS

The Alps are one huge adventure playground and it's not just

in winter that its hills are alive. Hiking, mountain biking, paragliding and a string of other up-top adventures in Europe's highest mountain range are also available in the warmer months.

The French winter resort of Chamonix makes an excellent base for trying them out over a long weekend, with flights whizzing you over in around an hour and a half. For an Alpine experience with a difference in the region, suggest Inghams' Ice, Air & Rapids package. It features a full-day guided hike over the huge, jagged glacier that is the Mer de Glace, combined with a tandem paragliding flight over the mountains and an adrenaline-



pumping white-water rafting excursion in neighbouring Italy.

**Book it:** The Ice, Air & Rapids add-on costs from £260.

Inghams offers four nights' half-board at the three-star Hotel Pointe Isabelle in Chamonix, France, from £544 per person in September, including flights and transfers.

[ingham.co.uk](http://ingham.co.uk)

## ▶ SEE BEARS IN FINLAND

Around 1,200 brown bears roam the vast, untouched wilderness that is eastern Finland. The region's remoteness makes it something of a haven for wildlife lovers – and anyone looking to surround themselves with pristine nature for a few days.

Glimpsing these elusive creatures isn't easy, though, so for clients wanting some help from an in-the-know guide, look to Explore. The operator offers a three-night Brown Bear Weekend, combining evening viewing sessions from hides in the forest with nature walks, Finnish sauna rituals and optional canoeing excursions in Finland's picturesque Kainuu region.

**Book it:** From £875 per person including flights, most meals, transport and a guide.

[explore.co.uk](http://explore.co.uk)





LEFT:  
Canoeing  
on the Spey,  
Scotland

➔ CANOE IN SCOTLAND

You don't have to cross the Channel for adventure. The UK is an outdoor paradise if you know where to head, with the Scottish Highlands at its scenic heart.

For clients wanting to explore the region in a unique way, suggest a canoe trip. Wilderness Scotland offers a three-night, wild camping experience riding the rapids of the River Spey with

pine forests, heather-covered hills and whisky distilleries along the way as you meander through some of Scotland's most extraordinary landscapes.

**Book it:** From £675 per person based on two sharing, including three nights' wild camping, all meals, transport from Aviemore, tents, camping and canoeing equipment, and a guide. [wildernessscotland.com](http://wildernessscotland.com) **TV**

✓ Best of the rest



**Sleep under the aurora:** Best Served Scandinavia combines viewing the northern lights from an Aurora Dome with wild foraging, a Lappish food experience, campfire nights and optional fishing trips on its four-day Finnish experience.



**Cycle from Florence to Siena:** UTracks offers cycling enthusiasts a four-day self-guided trip through Tuscany via rural vineyards, rolling hills and picturesque towns to reach charming Siena and its cobbled streets.



PICTURE: ASAF KLIGER

**Get adrenaline pumping in Cornwall:** The Eden Project isn't just gardens. It has heart-racing attractions including England's longest zipwire, a 50mph gravity swing, and 10-metre freefall and 12-metre jumps. Attraction World combines them all in one package for £55, available April to November.

**Inghams**  
*Lapland*

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\*Price correct at time of print. Based on 4 share in Ylläs Log Cabina, departing from Gatwick in January for 7 nights including transfers.

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