



Flight club

Kavi Shah catches the breeze on a sporty break to new resort Robinson Club Cabo Verde

The wind is whipping at the purple parachute-style kite above my head. I'm trying to steer it, turning the bar in my arms slightly to the left and right, to keep its strings taut.

"I'm going to let go now," warns Fabio, my kitesurfing instructor, who has a caramel tan and muscular arms. He's been guiding me, but within a second of him releasing the bar, I realise I've underestimated the power of the wind. I keep it in the air for 10 seconds, before it flops on the sand before us. "Good try" says Fabio, grinning.

I'm in Sal, an island in the Cape Verde archipelago and one of the best kitesurfing destinations in the world – so good that it hosted the Global Kitesurf Association World Cup again last year.

Fabio leads the watersports team at the newly opened Robinson Club Cabo Verde on the island. Of the 25 German-run Robinson Clubs across the world, this one has the biggest watersports station, and 15 crew manning it. It's plain to see why: year-round sun and breezy conditions between December and May are ripe for wind sports.

"To learn to kitesurf, guests spend 10 hours with us over three days, doing a mix of theory and practical," explains Fabio. The best time to learn is between April and November, as the wind is lighter. There's a

written test, after which you're issued an international licence and can use the club's GPS-enabled equipment without a fee.

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MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Both on and off the beach, the Robinson Club Cabo Verde has sport at its core. Gym kit-clad guests can be seen power walking around the grounds, and the high-tech fitness centre runs classes every day from alfresco spin classes and TRX (total body resistance exercise) to aquafit in the pool and yoga on the beach. Classes are well led, with bubbly instructors explaining first in German, then in English. Guests can even wash their kit in the free-of-charge laundry room.

The programme changes daily, and is packed with sporting opportunities (catamaran sailing, beach soccer, scuba demos and more) and games (backgammon, bowls, chess and the like). There's ➤

DESTINATIONS

ACTIVE RESORTS | CAPE VERDE

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:

Kettlebell workout in the WellFit area; sunbathing by the Sports Pool; Sea View Suite



WHAT TO DO IN SAL

Go shark spotting: Wade into Shark Bay on the east coast with a marine biologist as your guide, to learn about the resident yellow-tinted lemon sharks.

Float in a salt mine: Sal's once-booming industry was salt mining. The Pedra le Lume salt mine, in the crater of an extinct volcano, permits visitors to bob in its soothing waters.

Kite watch: On a windy day, Kite Beach is an unmissable spectacle; the sky is full with rainbow colours as kitesurfers zigzag across the ocean, and spectators look on.

Meet the friendly locals: Stroll to the colourful fishing village of Santa Maria, where locals sell their catch of the day by the pier – or come night-time, taste the local grog against a soundtrack of morna music at the bars and restaurants.

See turtles: Loggerhead turtles lay their eggs on certain beaches between July and October, and hatching season runs from September to December; take a catamaran tour to see them in the water.

nightly entertainment, and guests can dance till the early hours, with music booming across the resort – and occasionally into our rooms.

TIME OUT

Being active isn't compulsory, and there's a relaxing atmosphere overall – 'no stress' is Cape Verde's motto. The chilled vibes peak during the daily 'sundowners' session by the beach, where guests lounge on bean bags strewn over the sand while a DJ pumps zen tunes as the sun sets. There's a feel-good vibe in the 'No Stress Bar' too, and every Friday, aka Gala Night, everyone pulls on their glad-rags and lets their hair down.

When it comes to pampering, guests can pick from the 10-page WellFit Spa menu, or head to one of the three saunas, two of which are 'naked' (beware, prudes) that overlook the Atlantic Ocean.

Of the two swimming pools, one is a 'relaxing pool' away from the music. You're liable to find

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a few towels on sunbeds, so get there early, and pack a snug hat, because Sal's gusty winds take no prisoners – although when you're there for the kitesurfing, that's exactly what you need. **TW**



ROBINSON CLUB CABO VERDE

This is an all-inclusive, adult-only, low-rise beach resort on the southern tip of Sal, 20 minutes from the airport. The 307 modern rooms come with pod coffee machines, and there are amenities dotted around its palm-tree-lined grounds. The resort has a mini village feel with two pools, three restaurants, a watersports station with GPS-equipped kit, fitness centre, spa, two bars and a beach club, plus a long stretch of muscovado-coloured sand with sunloungers and windbreakers. Guests, mostly European and Scandinavian, can keep an eye on what's going on with the handy Robinson app, which they can also use to make restaurant and spa reservations.

Book it: Seven nights' all-inclusive in a double room at Robinson Club Cabo Verde starts at £517 per person. Return flights from London to Sal with Tui start at £380.