

Dreaming of a deserted island, all white-sand shores surrounded by clear blue sea? As temperatures take a nosedive in the UK, sun-starved clients will be planning their getaway to warmer climes.

But they don't have to spend their whole time on the beach: find inspiration with our round-up of island escapes that cater to all tastes and budgets, from romantic breaks to family holidays.

BEST FOR... WATER SPORTS

Where? Sal, Cape Verde Islands

Why? With its unspoilt palm-fringed beaches, lunar-like landscape and abundant sunshine, Sal has much to offer

holidaymakers seeking winter sun. Easily accessible, the volcanic island is less than a six-hour flight from the UK, with temperatures hovering around 24C in winter.

More than just a fly-and-flop destination, thrill-seeking clients will find a stash of high-octane water sports in Sal, particularly in the buzzing southern beach town of Santa Maria. Windsurfing enthusiasts from across the globe flock to Sal in the windy months of January and February, and there's a raft of rental shops and schools that cater to all ability levels. It's also a top draw for scuba divers who favour its lava tubes and shipwrecks, as well as its abundance of decent diving




Cape Verde has become one of the go-to destinations for water sports as the conditions are ideal

operators. Other water sports on offer include kitesurfing, wakeboarding, snorkelling, sports fishing and sailing.

The Cape Verde Experience's in-resort representative Tracey Hall says: "Cape Verde has become one of the go-to destinations for water sports as the conditions are ideal for

both windsurfing (off shore) and kitesurfing (on shore)."

Book it: The Cape Verde Experience offers seven nights' bed and breakfast at the three-star Hotel Pontão in Sal from £657, including flights from Manchester, transfers, visa and UK airport lounge access, departing on November 22 or 29. capeverde.co.uk

Or try: The calm, reef-protected beach at Montego Bay in Jamaica is perfect for every type of water sport. Clients who stay at Sandals can indulge in a huge range of motorised (including waterskiing and sailing) and non-motorised water sports, all of which are included in the all-inclusive package price. 

Treasure islands

Find a sunny island escape to suit any holiday style, says Janine Kelso

➔ BEST FOR...NIGHTLIFE

Where? Phuket, Thailand

Why? Phuket has a full-on party scene with a bounty of go-go bars, live music venues, cabaret shows and nightclubs with big-name DJs. It's also prime winter-sun territory with the period between November and March being the driest and sunniest time to visit.

Tessa Dunmall, commercial and product senior executive at Kuoni, recommends clients avoid staying in busy Patong and holiday in the more laidback resorts of Karon Beach and Kata Beach. Promising a more sedate night out, Karon and Kata are abuzz with chilled-out reggae bars and live music venues. "Kata has beautiful beaches and Patong is just a 20-minute drive if clients want a lively night out," Dunmall adds.

Book it: Kuoni offers seven nights' bed and breakfast at the four-star Mom Tri's Villa Royale, Kata Beach, from £1,205, including flights and private transfers, departing in December. kuoni.co.uk

Or try: Night owls can find winter sun without the long-haul flight in Gran Canaria, where temperatures rarely



Many hotels set up special romantic dinners for couples on honeymoon, or if someone wants to pop the question

dip below 20C. Buzzing nightlife hubs include Playa del Ingles and Maspalomas, both of which throb with jumping bars and cavernous clubs.

▶ BEST FOR...ROMANCE

Where? The Maldives

Why? Popular with loved-up couples, the Maldives' romantic image is well deserved thanks to its seductive mix of white-sand beaches, turquoise waters and luxury resorts. And with many resorts imposing a 'no shoes, no news' policy, the Maldives is literally a barefoot paradise. The best time to visit the archipelago is between November and March when there's little rain, low humidity and blue skies, making it an ideal destination for a

romantic winter voyage. Couples can crank up the romance by exploring the islands' magical underwater world by snorkelling or scuba diving together, or by watching the sunset while tucking into a meal for two.

"Many hotels set up special romantic dinners in private locations for couples celebrating a honeymoon, or if someone wants to pop the question," says Travel 2 senior product manager Deborah Wadhams.

Book it: Travel 2 offers seven nights' half-board at the adult-only Centara Ras Fushi Resort & Spa for £1,929, including flights and speedboat transfers. Valid for travel from November 1 to December 12.

travel2.com

Or try: Ticking all the boxes for couples is Saint Lucia, where winter temperatures reach the mid to high 20s. Beyond the indisputably beautiful beaches, there are rainforest waterfalls, botanical gardens and the Piton Mountains that invite exploration. "Couples after adventure can enjoy zip-lining, mountain biking and horse riding," says Gold Medal's assistant product manager Ashley Pilkington. ➔



Anse La Raye, Saint Lucia



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WINTER SUN ISLANDS DESTINATIONS

BEST FOR... FAMILIES

Where? Tenerife, Canary Islands
Why? Just a four-hour flight away, Tenerife has a winning formula for families seeking winter sun thanks to its perennial sunshine, abundance of child-friendly hotels and comely beaches offering a glut of water sports. Away from the beach, there's plenty to keep little ones entertained. Take the cable car to the top of Mount Teide, Spain's highest mountain, which offers fabulous views, or enjoy a splash about in Europe's biggest water park, Siam Park.

Prestige Holidays' general manager David Skillicorn says that Tenerife is particularly popular for a Christmas family getaway, with December temperatures averaging 22C with six hours of sunshine every day. "Most hotels have beautiful Christmas trees in their receptions and special meals for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day lunch, which are normally included in the package price."
Book it: Prestige Holidays

offers a week's half board for a family of four at Roca Nivaria Gran Hotel from £5,719 per family, departing December 22, including flights from Gatwick and private transfers.
prestigeolidays.co.uk
Or try: For families who fancy a far-flung destination and aren't restricted by budget, suggest the Seychelles, where children will love snorkelling and feeding giant tortoises. Often hyped as the original Garden of Eden, the Seychelles has a verdant landscape with tropical forests and golden beaches. In winter, temperatures hover around 28C with seven hours of sunshine a day. Operators such as Kuoni feature a range of family-friendly resorts.

BEST FOR... BEACHES

Where? Turks and Caicos Islands, the Caribbean
Why? Turks and Caicos is blessed with heavenly, uncrowded beaches with bone-white sand, crystal-clear water and coral reefs that offer spectacular snorkelling and



Turks and Caicos is home to some of the best beaches in the Caribbean, due to the island's coral reef

diving opportunities. A haven for winter sunshine, peak season runs from mid-December to mid-April, when temperatures average 27C-29C and water temperature is a toasty 23C-26C.
 "Turks and Caicos is home to some of the best beaches in the Caribbean, due to the islands' huge coral reef system that protects the white sands and keeps the sea waters calm," says Funway Holidays product executive Jade Andrews.

Most visitors stay on the island of Providenciales (Provo), home to the 12-mile Grace Bay beach, frequently named as one of the world's best beaches. Andrews recommends

clients snorkel and dive among impressive coral reefs and sea turtles at Smith's Reef and the Bight Reef. Away from the beach, other must-see attractions include a flamingo sanctuary on North Caicos; the world's only conch farm in Provo; and rock iguanas on Little Water Cay. Humpback whales can be spotted around Grand Turk and Salt Cay from late January to early April.
Book it: Funway offers seven nights' room-only accommodation at the four-star The Sands at Grace Bay from £1,729, including flights departing December 4.
funway4agents.co.uk
Or try: For clients seeking a dream beach destination, suggest the paradise island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa, where winter temperatures sizzle around the high 20s. As well as boasting beaches with powder-white sand and turquoise waters, wildlife lovers can swim alongside dolphins, manta rays and giant tortoises. **TW**



Playa El Socorro, Tenerife



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