

DESTINATIONS

CROATIA & THE BALKANS | VALUE



VALUE BALKAN BREAKS

From skiing in Bulgaria to exploring Unesco wonders in Albania, **Yolanda Zappaterra** rounds up top breaks for bargain hunters



HIT THE SLOPES IN BULGARIA

Voted one of the best-value ski resort for families in the Post Office Travel Money Ski Report 2022, Bansko's ski and snowboarding scene is also a firm favourite with big names in the sport. And with its 75km of uninterrupted ski runs and historic town set at the foot of the Pirin Mountains, it offers an excellent ski holiday at an affordable price.

Book it: Balkan Holidays offers seven nights from £605 per person, based on two sharing half-board accommodation at the four-star Hotel Pirin (pictured) from January 6, 2024. Includes flights from Manchester. balkanholidays.co.uk

EXPLORE MONTENEGRO'S BEACHES

Montenegro boasts some of the Balkans' best beaches, sandwiched between sweeping mountain scenery and historic fortified towns. Make a beeline for the Bay of Kotor for dramatic cliffs fringing the Adriatic; the Iberostar Herceg Novi (pictured) here faces the sea, with steps to a private beach and a water taxi on hand to whisk you to the nearby town. Jet2's all-inclusive package includes a free place for a child under four, and all meals and drinks.

Book it: Jet2holidays offers a week's all-inclusive from £1,049 per adult, based on two adults and one under-four sharing, flying from Stansted on August 22, 2024. jet2holidays.com



DISCOVER ALBANIA

Little-visited Albania is an unpolished gem, with a history and landscape that easily equals its better-known neighbours. Unesco-listed Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine remains are just some of the discoveries to be made on a Headwater tour, which also takes in Tirana, Korçë, Durrës, foodie-favourite Përmet and the charmingly old-school Albanian Riviera.

Book it: Headwater's 10-day Highlights of Albania tour costs from £949, including B&B, all transport, activities, a tour leader and transfers, but not flights. headwater.com

EAT YOUR WAY ROUND THE REGION

Intrepid Travel's Balkans Real Food Adventure starts in Croatia and ends in North Macedonia via Montenegro, taking in a dizzying range of culinary experiences along the way, including cooking classes, dinners with local families, market visits and encounters with food and drink producers. The region's landscape ensures plenty of variety in scenery as well as produce – not least in the stunning Mavrovo National Park.

Book it: From £1,614 per person for 12 days based on two sharing from June to September. Price includes 11 nights' accommodation, 16 meals, transfers and excursions. Flights are extra. intrepidtravel.com



GET CULTURAL IN BUCHAREST

For a budget-friendly city break, Bucharest beckons. Once nicknamed the Paris of the East for its opulent art nouveau palaces – remnants of which remain – there's plenty to charm. Browse contemporary art galleries, visit the cafes of the historic Old City and stop by the Palace of Parliament to see the world's largest parliamentary building, then head for Cișmigiu Gardens to amble around a tree-lined lake.

Book it: Osprey Holidays offers two nights' B&B at the four-star Hotel Christina from £239 per person, based on two sharing a Standard Room, with flights from Luton on November 14. ospreyholidays.com

