



Exploring MORE

sharing a window to the world

Issue 1 October - November 2025

Rail Holidays of the World



Discover the Journey, Embrace the Destination ~ 2026 Brochure Now Available

EUROPE

Baie de Somme Festival ~

Departs 24 April 2026 - 5 days from £1,150pp

Join us on this short break to enjoy this spectacular steam festival in northern France, staying in Abbeville, an important town in the Somme area and well known for the Collegiate Church of Saint-Vulfran.

Harz Explorer ~

Departs 30 May 2026 - 7 days from £1,665pp

Our escorted tours to the world famous Harzer Schmalspurbahnen (HSB) are particularly popular. With daily steam trains and over 140km of narrow-gauge line to explore the HSB is a delight and one not to be missed.

Scandinavia by Rail ~

Departs 4 June 2026 - 15 days from £3,375pp

This new tour journeys by rail to Copenhagen, via Germany, and on to Oslo. Ride on both the Dovre and Rauma lines - two of the most scenic railway lines in Europe - before continuing to Östersund and Stockholm in Sweden.

Denmark & Northern Germany ~

Departs 6 July 2026 - 12 days from £3,050pp

We journey to Denmark via northern Germany and include journeys on the Mollibahn and Rasender Roland. We will visit the Danish National Railway Museum, cruise on a paddle steamer and take a journey on Denmark's longest narrow gauge steam railway before crossing the Baltic Sea by ferry.

Swiss Mountains & Lakes ~

Departs 2 September 2026 - 14 days from £4,330pp

Spend two weeks touring and ascending the famous peaks of the Swiss Alps - by train! Enjoy the stunning views from the top of some of Switzerland's most impressive mountains courtesy of engineering excellence and gravity defying railways.

Behind the Scenes in Central Europe ~

Departs 14 September 2026 - 15 days from £3,145pp

Explore some of Europe's most beautiful areas by rail, combining the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany with journeys on scenic railways, chartered tram rides and museum and depot visits.

WORLDWIDE

The Very Best of New Zealand ~

Departs 4 March 2026 - 27 days from £9,495pp

We return to New Zealand with this epic 27-day rail tour exploring both North and South Islands. Experience iconic journeys on the Northern Explorer, Coastal Pacific, and TranzAlpine trains, cruise the breathtaking Milford Sound, enjoy special highlights and vibrant city culture.

Mexican Rail Adventure ~

Departs 5 March 2026 - 16 days from £8,120pp

Our exciting new rail tour of Mexico blends thrilling train journeys with rich cultural experiences. Ride the legendary Copper Canyon Railway in First Class, enjoy scenic journeys aboard the new Tren InterOceanico and Tren Maya, and soak up local flavour on the Tequila Express. Plus ancient ruins, canal cruises and city sightseeing.

BRITISH ISLES

Wales: Culture, Steam & Heritage ~

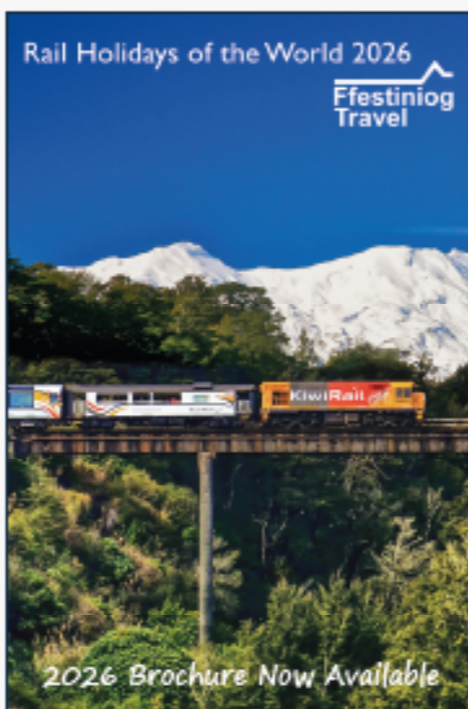
Departs 4 Sept 2026 - 11 days from £2,695pp

This comprehensive tour takes you to the must-ride independent railways of North and Mid-Wales, along with a relaxing canal boat cruise and a good dose of history.

Isle of Man Driving Experience ~

Departs 14 Sept 2026 - 8 days from £1,595pp

The Isle of Man is a hidden gem for steam travel and vintage transport. This tour will indulge your passion for old-fashioned transportation as you go behind the scenes of working railways and trams whilst touring this pretty island in style.



Order brochure and see all 2026 tours at www.ffestiniogtravel.com

* Tel: 01766 512400 * Email: info@ffestiniogtravel.co.uk * Book Online at www.ffestiniogtravel.com *



Ffestiniog Travel is owned by a charitable trust and profits go to support the world famous Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways every booking helps preserve the railways.



Your team

Editor

David Pike

Editorial

Chris Pike

James MacDonald

Get in touch

Exploring More magazine is produced bi-monthly, sharing news, features and story lines that inform, inspire and help the travelling public with the all important task of planning ahead

Exploring More magazine is free of charge and e-mailed to desktops everywhere. Make sure of a regular copy by getting in touch at the editor's e-mail below.

m 07970 811 831

e davidpike55@googlemail.com

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Exploring MORE

Join us on a new journey

I have always considered it something of a privilege to be able to travel - and writing about it is a double bonus.

From the earliest times we have gazed at the horizon and wondered what lay beyond.

The desire to travel and discover is instinctive - and today it's never been easier, more exciting or enjoyable.

Travel opens the door to new experiences, meeting people and develops an appreciation of the amazing world we live in.

Mark Twain summed travel up perfectly...

Explore - Dream - Discover

We live in a digital age where destinations can be delivered to screens in seconds - the team of writers at www.exploringmore.co.uk have been doing just that, serving up ideas and information on-line designed to help the travelling public plan ahead.

The arrival of **Exploring More** - delivered free of charge to desktops, mobiles and iPads everywhere - is a natural next step.

Exploring More Magazine will complement and enhance content carried on its sister website, presenting travel news and in-depth features designed to inform and inspire.

Happy travels.

David Pike

Editor

sharing a window to the world

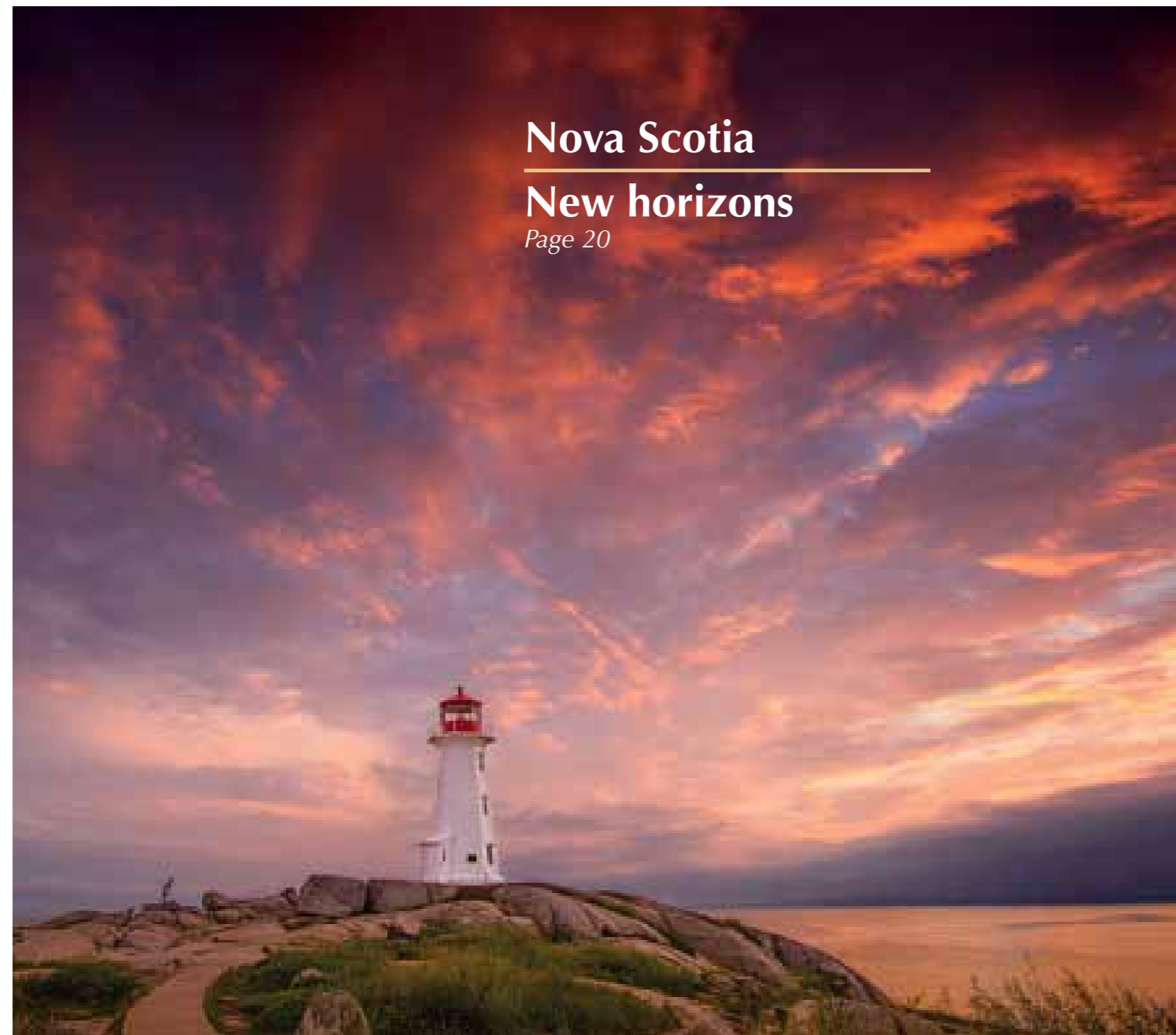
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Exploring
MORE
sharing a window to the world

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We would love to hear about your travel experiences ...

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A captivating city



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Enjoying the great outdoors



Taking a slow boat to a world of discovery

by James MacDonald

Cruising at just four-miles-per-hour aboard a canal boat is often described as the ‘fastest way to slow down.’

As a relaxing way to take a break and explore new locations a canal holiday is hard to beat.

And Britain provides a backdrop to some of the best on offer with a 3,000-mile network of peaceful inland waterways that wind through the countryside and into historic waterside towns and cities.

Drifters Waterways Holidays (drifters.co.uk), representing 10 hire boat companies, offers over 500 boats for hire from 40 locations across England, Scotland and Wales.

Here’s a taster of what’s on offer...

Ashby Canal to Shakerstone and back (95 miles, 8 locks, 37 hours)

On a week’s holiday from Drifters base at Braunston on the Grand Union Canal in Northamptonshire, boaters can cruise a section of the Oxford Canal and explore the beautiful Ashby Canal. The route passes the historic town of Market Bosworth and the site of the Battle of Bosworth Field, and takes in a six-mile stretch designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Kennet & Avon Canal to Bath and back (39 miles, 16 locks, 18 hours)

A journey that takes boaters over the magnificent Bath stone Avon-cliff and Dundas aqueducts. Once at Sydney Gardens boaters can moor up and take a 15-minute walk into Bath city centre to visit world famous attractions, including the Roman Baths and the Royal Crescent.

Market Drayton and back (42 miles, 12 locks, 20 hours)

A cruise to the historic market town of Market Drayton taking boaters through the peaceful Staffordshire countryside, past villages with historic pubs, including the Boat Inn at Gnosal.

Birmingham city centre and back (22 miles, 0 locks, 10 hours)

The route takes boaters through Edgbaston Tunnel and into the heart of Birmingham where there are over-night moorings at Gas Street Basin. From there, it’s a short walk to Brindleyplace and city centre attractions, including the Sealife Centre, Planetarium and Thinktank Science Museum.

More

For more information about Drifters boating holidays call 0344 984 0322 or visit www.drifters.co.uk.

For information about visiting the canal network go to

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk



New flights to Canaries

Jet2.com and Jet2holidays has announced the launch of their fifth destination in the Canary Islands, with brand-new flights and holidays to La Palma.

As a result, the leading leisure airline and UK’s largest tour operator have lifted the curtain on the Canaries’ most tranquil treasure, offering services to La Palma from London Stansted and Manchester Airports, starting in Winter 26/27 and Summer 2026, respectively.



Cruising with Viking

Viking has unveiled 14 new ocean itineraries exploring the Mediterranean, United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavia in 2026 and 2027.

Ranging from 15 to 36 days, each of the new voyages combines two or more of Viking’s most popular itineraries to allow for more in-depth exploration.



“Viking guests are curious travellers interested in enriching their lives by exploring and learning about the world. Our voyages have always been designed to bring guests closer to their destination and provide opportunities for cultural immersion. These new voyages offer even more choices for guests,” said Torstein Hagen, Chairman and CEO of Viking.

Viking offers more than 100 itineraries across all five oceans, and new ocean voyages visit celebrated cultural capitals—as well as emerging destinations—throughout Europe and beyond.

More: www.viking.com



The Royal Mansour Casablanca

It's a name that goes hand-in-hand with distinction.

In Marrakesh, the Royal Mansour has become a byword for hotel excellence. a reputation it is now sharing with a sister development in the heart of Morocco's vibrant city of Casablanca.

The Royal Mansour Casablanca marks the rebirth of a legendary address from the 1950s, and comprises 149 rooms, suites, and private apartments.

Three restaurants - including one on the 23rd floor with a 360° view across the city and ocean - sumptuous fitness and spa areas spanning two floors, a conference centre and a ballroom complete the offering.

The opening of the Royal Mansour Casablanca follows the re-emergence of the "White City" on the international tourism scene.

Morocco's economic capital is undergoing an extraordinary transformation and embodies an authentic and pleasure-seeking contemporary Morocco, where business, art, and culture, as well as a sense of festivity, coexist with the age-old traditions of the Medina.

"This new hotel in Casablanca has its own personality, consistent with the identity of the city. As in Marrakesh, the Royal Mansour signature is here: you will find the excellence of service, all in an exceptional setting," said Jean-Claude Messant, General Manager of the Royal Mansour Collection.

Avant-garde interiors feature marble, wood inlays, opulent fabrics, and a remarkable art collection.

More information at www.royalmansour.com/en/casablanca/



They came - I saw ... and they conquered

by David Pike

There's something immeasurably inspiring and infinitely fascinating about the Romans.

For me it's become a timeless bond that started with school trips to the Roman Wall and its fortifications and then brought alive through Rosemary Sutcliff's wonderful books - to this day *The Eagle of the Ninth* is still on my favourites list.

Over the years I have been privileged to visit and experience some outstanding Roman sites; a ticket to travel back in time to touch history and treasure.

Highlights include...

In the UK - Hadrian's Wall, Housesteads and Chesters forts and Vindolanda (just south of the wall) where I was fortunate to be in the first wave of journalists to report on documents, footwear and household items dating back 2,000 years, that had been wonderfully preserved thanks to tiny blue vivianite crystals; the marvellously preserved City of Chester and the Roman baths at Bath.

In France - Amphitheatre of Nîmes, Pont du Gard aqueduct, Saintes amphitheatre and the Arch of Germanicus.

In Spain - Aqueduct at Segovia, Tarragona amphitheatre.

In Italy - The Colosseum, Trajan's Column, the Forum and the Pantheon, the temple of Minerva at Assisi.

As bucket lists go that's not a bad collection but there's one glaring omission - and that's about to be rectified this summer.

During August I shall be making a long overdue trip to Pompeii and Herculaneum where history continues to come alive year after year.

It's a journey that will celebrate the launch of Exploring More magazine and follow a route via France, Germany, Austria and Italy; one that will open the door to gather material for future issues of the magazine.

Exploring More magazine, working alongside its sister website, www.exploringmore.co.uk, will partner with the travelling public to provide information, ideas and inspiration.

Exploring More magazine will be delivered free of charge to desktops and available to download from the website. If you would like it delivered free of charge to your desktop drop a line to davidpike55@googlemail.com.

Happy travelling



Pompeii...this way

Hail Pompeii - bringing the past back to life

However many TV programmes, documentaries you have watched, articles you have read about Pompeii, nothing quite prepares you for the real thing.

For almost 300 years, when serious archaeological investigations began, this ancient Roman town, lying south-east of Naples in Italy's Campania region, has been delivering an unfolding and compelling story of life and death.

Decimated when nearby Vesuvius erupted on August 24, 79CE, Pompeii has gradually been brought back to life; offering today's visitors - *it's a draw for almost 4m of us a year* - an amazing time travelling experience.

As Pompeii disappeared under waves of ash and volcanic debris, the populace tried to flee or shelter only to be killed by wave after wave of pyroclastic clouds and 700°C gas.

Many thousands died in the eruption, including philosopher Pliny the Elder, best known for his Natural History encyclopedia.

Grand public buildings, the world's first Roman amphitheatre, temples dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Venus, streets, opulent villas, homes and businesses were buried under more than 20ft of volcanic rubble.

And there they stayed, frozen-in-time, until systematic excavations began in 1738, a move that marked the beginnings of the modern science of archaeology.

Digging unearthed the preserved remains of people sheltering from the eruption; others lay buried as they fled and loaves of bread were found still in the ovens at bakeries

Wandering down streets and into homes, baths and businesses - including brothels with their famous frescoes - is to follow in the footsteps of the original residents of Pompeii.

Walking around Pompeii, covering a 163-acre site and surrounded by two miles of walls, and soaking in a uniquely revived environment is an unforgettable experience.

Our visit was heralded by extensive and persistent forest fires on Mount Vesuvius - a constant reminder of the power of Mother Nature.

Designated a UNESCO World

Heritage Site in 1997, about a third of Pompeii still remains untouched by the archaeologists.

But it's a time capsule that is still giving up secrets.

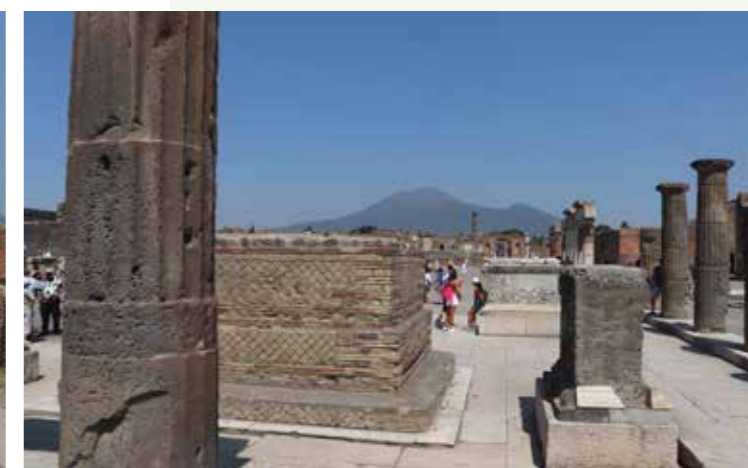
Earlier this year archaeologists discovered a sumptuous private bathhouse - potentially the largest ever found there - complete with hot, warm and cold rooms, exquisite artwork, and a huge plunge pool.

The Pompeii Archaeological Park has just unveiled the restored Garden of Hercules, named for a statue of the mythical hero uncovered at the site.

It has been freshly planted with 1,200 violets, 1,000 ruscus plants, and 800 antique roses, as well as vines and cherry and cotton apple trees.

The botanical display is intended to mirror how the garden appeared 2,000 years ago, based on the findings of botanist Wilhelmina Jashemski, who identified pollen, spores, and plant fossils in the area in the 1950s.

If you get the chance to visit Pompeii - don't hesitate.



Hotel Caserta Antica



A family run hotel with high standards and first class hospitality.

Perfectly located in a quiet community overlooking the Naples area.

Food (breakfast and restaurant) were excellent and it's a great base for exploring the surrounding region - including Pompeii and the Amalfi coast.

Hotel Caserta Antica
Via Tiglio, 75 - 81100
Casertavecchia di Caserta

+39 0823.371158
+39 339.8280026

info@hotelcaserta-antica.it
www.hotelcaserta-antica.it/it/servizi

We Recommend

More on Pompeii

Independent travellers will find plenty of parking opportunities near to the official entrance to Pompeii.

General information can be found here ...

<https://pompeiiites.org/en/visiting-info/timetables-and-tickets/>

Inspirational trips that explore the world by train

by Chris Pike

If it were possible to turn back the clock and reverse controversial political decisions, it's a safe bet that the railway closures of the 60s would be at the top of the list.

Sixty years on and an undiminished nostalgia for steam is now coupled with a growing demand for rail experiences.

Both are excellently catered for by specialist rail holiday company Ffestiniog Travel whose newly launched 2026 programme sees the company branching out to offer train journeys in Mexico, Thailand, Norway, Denmark, Puglia and Turkey.

It's a travel success story that began with a young man's passion for railways, when founder Alan Heywood first encountered the Ffestiniog Railway in North Wales in 1955, on a school trip to mark the reopening of the narrow-gauge line after nine years of closure.

He stayed on as a volunteer and by the late 60s Alan had joined the staff to become Traffic Manager, helping to run what would become one of the world's most admired heritage railways.

Following the de-staffing of Cambrian Station, Ffestiniog dipped into the world of selling UK rail tickets and expanded into Sealink ferry crossing and continental train tickets - one stop way from including accommodation and the first escorted tour to Switzerland in 1974.

Enter Ffestiniog Travel and from small beginnings new destinations were added throughout Europe, North America, India and New Zealand. Countries that passed scenic route and culture hurdles became a candidate for the Ffestiniog itinerary.

In 1992, Ffestiniog joined with the railway and is now owned by the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highlands Railways Trust.

Every holiday booked directly supports the preservation and development of the historic Welsh

lines; a link between modern travel and heritage conservation that has resulted in donations of over £1m.

Responding to evolving travel tastes, Ffestiniog Travel's portfolio falls into several categories:-

- **Connoisseur Tours** - crafted for enthusiasts combining steam charters, heritage railways and behind-the-scenes access
- **Grand Tours** for those seeking scenery, culture and discovery
- **Tailored Rail** services, building bespoke rail-based holidays for independent travellers, couples and private groups

The company also offers a Small & Traditional collection, travelling to destinations away from mainstream tourism and focusing on rural communities and authentic experiences; a chance to step back in time

Romania was the first stop and, under the guidance of General Manager Maria Cook, has now been joined by Georgia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan, Montenegro and Albania.

"As a specialist rail tour operator, established in 1974, we are experts in rail travel across the globe.

" We can provide informative advice to the travelling public about helping them plan train journeys and memorable travel experiences," said Maria.



More

Ffestiniog Travel has launched its 2026 Rail Holidays of the World brochure, packed with inspiring escorted tours and journeys for those who love to explore the world by train.

The new programme features classic favourites and brand-new itineraries, to Mexico, Thailand, Norway, Denmark, Puglia and Turkey, offering travellers the chance to enjoy unique railway experiences while immersing themselves in diverse cultures and landscapes.

W www.ffestiniogtravel.com

E info@ffestiniogtravel.co.uk

T 01766 512400

An adventurous new way to discover northern Spain

The spectacular skyline of the Picos de Europa region of northern Spain has held a special draw for centuries, signalling to sailors that they were nearly home, and now beckoning hikers from around the world.

The new route, across the Polaciones and Liébana valleys, is packed with rural hospitality encounters and traditions and comes courtesy of On Foot Holidays.

After the bustling little town of Potes, follow the final section of the Camino Lebaniego pilgrimage route to the monastery of Santo Toribio, an important pilgrim site before the landscape becomes more rugged towards massive cliffs at Espinama and Fuente Dé.

The route has been designed for On Foot Holidays by Aznar Fernandez de Pinedo.

"My route visits totally off-the-beaten-track valleys and towns that no other tour operators have considered. It is a great 'Crossing of Green Spain' to reach the magnificent Picos, all the time through extremely beautiful scenery," he said.



"Foothills of the Picos de Europa" - price: from £975 (based on two sharing), including 7 nights B&B accommodation, 2 evening meals, luggage transfers, taxi transfer from Torrelavega to first accommodation and from final accommodation to Potes, and local telephone support.

Full walkers pack and/or navigational app provided, including a personalised itinerary, background information and travel advice.

Walking specialist On Foot Holidays offers self-guided trips, offering a unique take on classic destinations and the lesser-known corners of Europe and the UK.

Find out more at www.onfootholidays.co.uk

• On Foot Holidays features 38 self-guided walking holidays to European and UK destinations - Italy, Spain, France, England, Wales, Greece, Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey. All walks have been tested by On Foot staff, who are glad to offer their personal knowledge of each route.



Croatia's coastal appeal

Sail Croatia has extended its 2025 season by popular demand.

The announcement has added two additional departures for the newest addition to the Elegance fleet, Romantic Star, that will now sail seven-night cruises from Split to Split, departing on both 19th and 26th October before ending her season on 2 November.

"Our Elegance cruises are particularly popular with our older guests, many of whom prefer to travel outside of the peak season."

"Temperatures in October are still pleasant, but we find the cooler weather makes for the perfect time to explore some of the most popular attractions Croatia has to offer, with fewer crowds."

"Our guests have been asking for more departure dates, and we have listened," said Helle Seuren, Managing Director and Co-Founder of Sail Croatia..

The 47 metre Romantic Star offers a spacious top deck, multiple lounges and accommodates a maximum of just 38 guests.

Prices for the final departure of 2025 start from £1,579 per person, including overseas transfers, daily breakfast and lunch, welcome reception, Captain's Dinner evening and local village dinner, as well as a walking tour of Split.

For more information www.sail-croatia.com



Newmarket Holidays has added to its quickly expanding tour & cruise collection with an 18-day adventure exploring the Panama Canal, Costa Rica and the southern Caribbean.

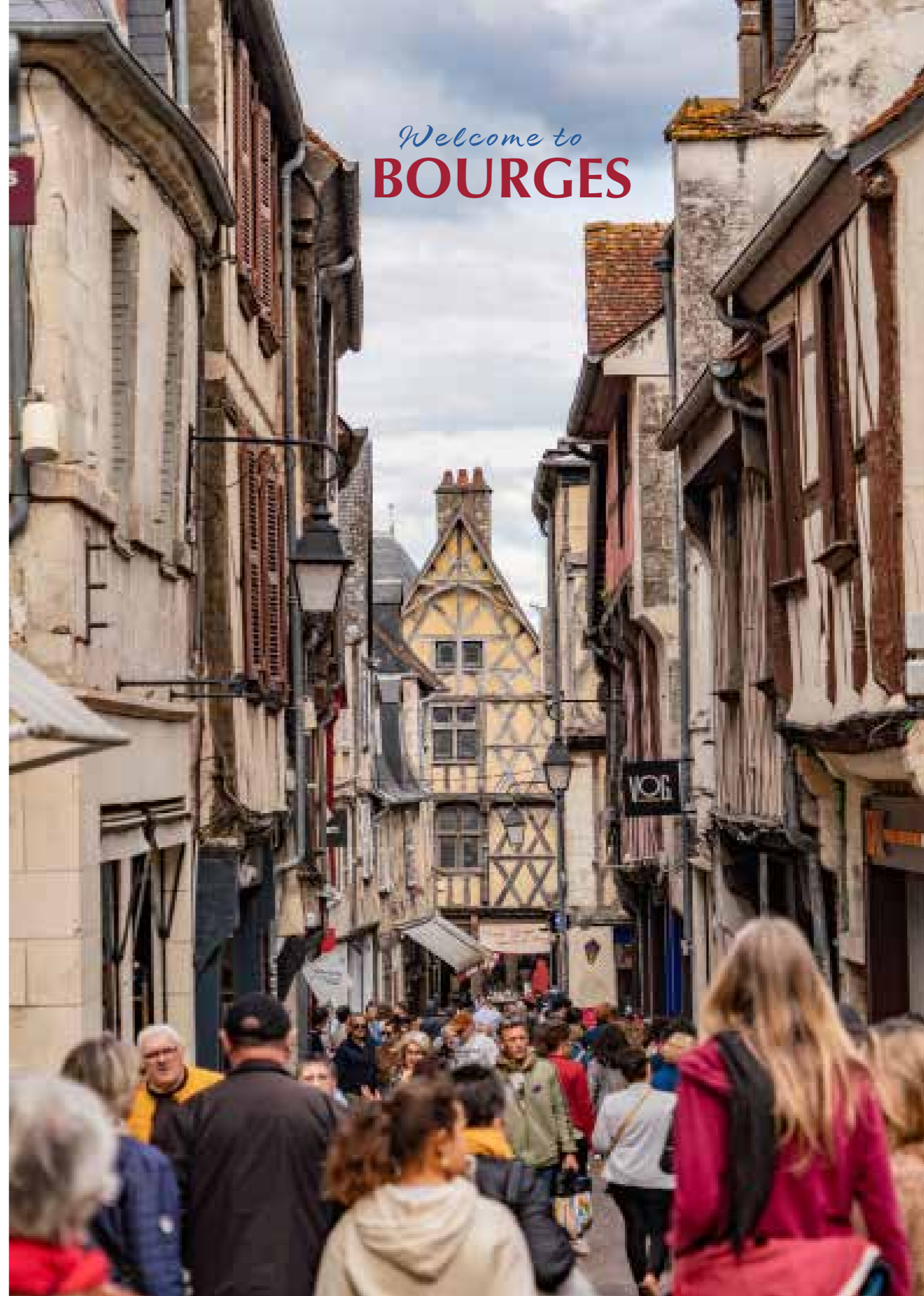
The fully packaged holiday combines a 12-night full board cruise with four nights in an ocean front Fort Lauderdale hotel, from where there are guided day trips to Miami Beach and Little Havana, and the option of tours to the Everglades and Palm Beach.

The cruise continues to the Bahamas and on to the Colombian port city of Cartagena, and then into the Panama Canal passing through the canal's impressive series of locks on to Gatun Lake, once the world's largest man-made body of water and now home to an array of wildlife.

The return journey takes in Costa Rica's rich Caribbean coast, and George Town, the capital of the Cayman Islands, before arriving back at Fort Lauderdale.

Prices start from £3,875 per person, saving £430, and include return flights from Heathrow, four nights room-only accommodation in Fort Lauderdale, 12 nights' full-board accommodation onboard the Holland America Line cruise ship, seven excursions, transfers and a tour manager throughout, with departures in February 2026 and March 2027 (newmarketholidays.co.uk, 0330 341 1927).

Welcome to
BOURGES



The captivating city of Bourges

by David Pike

Taking a leisurely stroll around the streets of Bourges - life is definitely laid back in this beguiling city - you get the impression that there's a story around every corner.

For those looking for exceptional history, culture and hospitality, Bourges, for a time the capital of France under Charles VII (1403-1461), ticks all the boxes.

Located in the Loire Valley region, it is at France's top table when it comes to tourism appeal and is currently counting down to becoming the country's European Capital of Culture for 2028

At the heart of those celebrations will be Bourges' magnificent Saint-Etienne Cathedral dating back to 1195 and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site a little over 30 years ago.

Overlooking the historic heart of the city, Saint-Etienne enshrines the spirit of the city and attracts 600,000 visitors a year.

No doubt, like me, they will marvel at the sheer scale of the building (it's the widest cathedral in France) and the exceptional display of 13th century stained glass windows.

In 1424 the cathedral was furnished with a technological novelty, the Bourges astronomical clock - still working.

The view of the building from the Archbishop's gardens, with its flying buttresses is simply breathtaking and in September the cathedral provided the perfect backdrop for a new film, Quasimodo.

The delights of Bourges continue as you wander through historic streets where over 400 timbered homes have been conserved and complement a vibrant cafe culture.

From Julius Caesar onwards, Bourges' strategic location in central France has seen it play an intrinsic part in the country's history down the centuries.

One name that stands out is that of Jacques Coeur (1395-1456) the son of a Bourges furrier who climbed the social ladder in spectacular fashion.

Ennobled by Charles VII for whom he served as Finance Minister, he built a commercial and maritime empire and paid for the armies that supported Joan of Arc.

Wealth brought enemies and a jail sentence for Jacques but, ever resourceful, he escaped and fled to Rome where he was welcomed by Nicholas V.

He joined an expedition against the Turks and led a fleet of galleys sent to the relief of Rhodes. He died on the island of Chios in 1456.

His legacy lives on in Bourges where the Palace of Jacques Coeur is a major tourist attraction.

As you explore Bourges you will notice golden coloured metal scallop shells fixed into pathways. These relate to the Vezelay Route, one of four pilgrimage trails that eventually lead to Camino de Santiago in northern Spain.

Museums, monuments, art galleries and fun discovery trails all add up to making Bourges a great place to visit.

It's also the perfect stop to explore the surrounding region.

More

Check out more about Bourges at ...

www.bourgesberrytourisme.com

With thanks to Jennifer Desille and David Ledrich for their help in making this feature possible.



Hotel d'Angleterre



In step with the surrounding city of Bourges, the Hotel d'Angleterre has its own fascinating story to tell.

It stands on the site of a former royal inn and a tennis court that doubled as a ballroom and theatre attracting entertainers from the 1500 and 1600's.

In 1808 it hosted generals and officers of Napoleon's 'Grande Armee' on their way from Germany to Spain.

And in 1912 the hotel was renamed Hôtel d'Angleterre in honour of the Prince of Wales, who stayed there and was later to become King Edward VIII.

Ideally located in the historic city centre, we rated our room, breakfast and general service as excellent.

Hotel d'Angleterre
Best Western Plus - Bourges
1 Place des 4 Piliers
18000 Bourges
02 48 24 68 51

www.bestwestern-angleterre-bourges.com

We Recommend

Forward planning

One of the primary aims of Exploring More is to provide information that helps travellers plan ahead.

They want to know what's on offer, where to stay, get a decent meal and places of interest.

It's a menu we'll be serving up in this and future issues of Exploring More magazine...and at www.exploringmore.co.uk

Corsica and Sardinia are calling

Corsican Places, the UK's specialist for holidays to the captivating French island of Corsica, has announced that its 2026 holidays are now on sale, giving customers the chance to secure their preferred accommodation and flights early.

A carefully chosen selection of accommodation showcases a wide range of villas and apartments — from romantic boltholes for two to spacious, family-friendly options.

Featured hotels include romantic boutique retreats and luxurious larger resorts — all offering comfort, convenience and a relaxing stay in prime locations.

With many of Corsican Places' most popular properties in high demand year after year, early booking is strongly recommended to secure preferred dates and accommodation.

Standout properties include L'Ancre Bleue, a four-bedroom premium villa boasting unbeatable views over the bay of St Florent and exquisitely decorated with a blend of antique and designer furnishings.

To view all properties currently on sale, visit: corsica.co.uk/offers/2026-holidays. More are to be released in the coming weeks, giving customers even greater choice across Corsica's scenic coastline, countryside and mountain villages.

For those whose favourite property is not yet available, Corsican Places offers the opportunity to pre-register or reserve preferred dates in advance, ensuring they don't miss out when further options are released.

In addition to Corsica, Sardinian Places — also part of Serenity Holidays — is pleased to announce that a hand-picked selection of its Sardinia holidays for summer 2026 are now available to book.

Featured properties include the ever popular Hotel Villa Margherita in Golf Aranci, North East Sardinia.

This small, family-run hotel, positioned directly by the sea, has charmed guests for decades with its intimate atmosphere, stunning sea views from every room, and outstanding cuisine and staff. With only 41 rooms, it books up quickly — so early booking is strongly recommended.

More properties will be released soon, and if a preferred property is not yet available, it can be reserved now to ensure no opportunities are missed.

View the full list of hotels and self-catering options currently on sale at <https://www.sardinianplaces.co.uk/offers/2026-holidays>

For more information and to secure a 2026 holiday to Corsica or Sardinia, visit Corsica.co.uk or Sardinianplaces.co.uk.



Turkey's amazing underwater history

A remarkably well-preserved shipwreck from the late Hellenistic - early Roman period has been discovered off Antalya's coast near Adrasan in Turkey.

Found at a depth of 33–46 meters, it marks a major breakthrough in global underwater archaeology.

Dubbed the 'Ceramic Shipwreck,' it carried a cargo of hundreds of Eastern sigillata pottery pieces - a type of fine, red slip tableware widely produced in the Mediterranean.

Around 25 distinct ceramic designs have been identified and were carefully coated with raw clay as a protective layer during transport before being stacked on top of each other. This ancient technique helped them remain preserved in near-perfect condition beneath layers of sand, even after 2,000 years.

Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, Turkey's Minister of Culture and Tourism, who made a special dive to inspect the shipwreck, said: "The plates and bowls have survived with their original colour and surface texture, offering valuable information about production and packaging techniques from ancient times."

Ersoy described the wreck as "a discovery of immense value not only for Turkey but for the shared

cultural heritage of the world," and stated that the artefacts are now being meticulously preserved at the regional Restoration and Conservation Laboratory.

To share the discovery with the world, Turkey is to begin construction of a Mediterranean Underwater Archaeology Museum in the Kemer-Idyros area.

Minister Ersoy said the new museum reflects Turkey's long-term vision for cultural sustainability.

Each new wreck enriches Turkey's maritime narrative. With year-round favourable water temperatures, hundreds of certified dive centres, and world-class instructors, the country is rapidly becoming a global hub for diving and marine exploration.

Highlights include Kas in Antalya—ranked among the world's top 10 dive sites—Mugla's Fethiye and Bodrum, where the Aegean meets the Mediterranean, and Çanakkale's Gallipoli Historical Underwater Park.

Institutions such as the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology continue to play a vital role in sharing these underwater discoveries with the public.

The Ceramic Shipwreck is poised to become both a scientific landmark and a new must-see attraction for visitors drawn to the mysteries of the deep.

Sweet dreams are made of this...

by David Pike

Aphrodite would have approved.

Twenty miles along the coast from the birthplace of the Greek goddess of love, beauty and pleasure, a modern day phenomenon is earning adulation from holidaymakers to Cyprus.

City of Dreams Mediterranean a five-star, 500-room, award-winning resort in Limassol is setting the standard for a new era in premium comfort, elegance and unrivalled leisure facilities.

Europe's first integrated resort, City of Dreams, located near Limassol and the crystal calm waters of Lady's Mile beach, offers breathtaking views of the Akrotiri Salt Lake and the Troodos mountain range.

Add another major plus-point, Cyprus's year-round temperate climate, and you have let's visit reasons for all seasons.

Two years on from its grand opening, City of Dreams is emerging as a go-to destination for British travellers; a resort that is a magnet for those on luxury group holidays or matching major celebrations to a five-star finish.

The 14-storey hotel has 500 deluxe rooms and suites, each designed to provide the ultimate sanctuary of comfort and exclusivity.

A selection of premier, superior and family rooms, all have balconies with magnificent mountain or scenic views.

In addition, there are elevated accommodation options offering premium private facilities and elegant interiors.

The complex has dedicated conference, exhibition and meeting space for the corporate sector in addition to a first class leisure portfolio that includes an outdoor amphitheatre, a family adventure park and a variety of premium dining outlets and designer shops and boutiques.

A landmark for Cyprus and for the wider region, it is significantly contributing to the tourism offer and establishing the island as a year-round all-season destination.

For those in search of rest and relaxation, Renu, the resort's opulent spa has a wide-reaching list of treatments and therapies.

Guests can unwind with massage and holistic rejuvenation therapies

designed to restore mental and physical well-being.

A state-of-the-art fitness centre, health club with saunas, steam room and jacuzzi, alongside a welcoming indoor pool are open year-round.

City of Dreams Mediterranean has the largest pool complex on the island of Cyprus so plenty of options for guests to relax poolside.

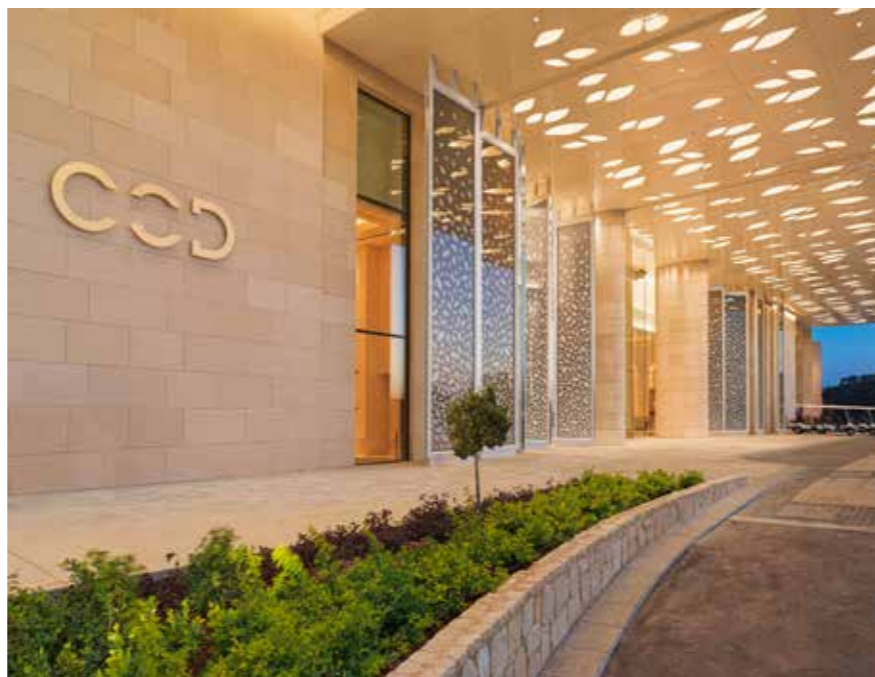
There's even a pool dedicated solely to relaxation with three jacuzzi sunbeds providing the ultimate spot to unwind.

The entertainment facilities at City of Dreams are second to none. Guests will find an exclusive expo center, a Roman-style amphitheatre and a grand ballroom – all of which provide a backdrop for vibrant entertainment, endless parties with in-house resident DJ, legendary global acts, concerts, dance shows and more.

A grand casino flags up a centrepiece that features 100 table games, poker tables and 1,000 slot machines.

City of Dreams Mediterranean is easily accessed from Paphos International Airport (45-minute transfer) and Larnaca International Airport (50-minute transfer).

With direct flights from all major UK airports, this new property is a must-visit destination for those seeking a luxurious sun-filled getaway at any time of year.



Outside of the resort

Limassol itself is a vibrant and welcoming city that hosts the annual Limassol Carnival, a spectacular event that is second only to Rio in terms of local participation.

The area is also a prolific wine producer with a host of vineyards open for tourists and visitors and an annual wine festival each September.

Excursion Programme

Guests can join complimentary excursions from the hotel, running through to the end of the year:

- Fridays: Food & Culture: Timios Stavros Monastery & Omodos Square.
- Saturdays: History & Crafts: Pano Lefkara Village.
- Fridays and Saturdays: Lady's Mile Beach Shuttle.

"We've seen a real shift in what UK guests are looking for in their break away. They want luxury, entertainment and a strong sense of occasion."

Whether it's a high-end pre-wedding getaway, a special birthday celebration or just an unforgettable weekend with friends, this is where it all comes together."

Grant Johnson, City of Dreams Mediterranean Senior Vice President

For more information visit:
www.cityofdreamsmed.com.cy

For all accommodation options at the hotel visit:
www.cityofdreamsmed.com.cy/en/accommodation

Nova Scotia and exciting new horizons

For travellers constantly seeking to broaden their horizons in the search for new adventures and experiences, many are arriving at Nova Scotia.

Marketed as the gateway to Atlantic Canada and a convenient six-hour flight from the UK, Nova Scotia has plenty on offer.

More than 8,000 miles of coastline is matched by a province of outstanding natural beauty and a fascinating mix of cultures.

It's a combination that serves up a vibrant mix of attractions and annual festivals with high tourist friendly appeal.

Capital city Halifax offers fine dining, seaside views, the best shopping in eastern Canada, live music as well as being the perfect base to explore Nova Scotia.

Here's a taste of what's on offer...

Tidal Bore Rafting - Suit up aboard a Zodiac boat and sail onto the Shubenacadie River to wait for the tide to turn and create white water roller coaster and waves of up to 13ft.

Lunenburg - One of only two urban communities in North America designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Take a close look at this charming historic town with the Lunenburg Walking Tour taking in the Fisheries Museum the Atlantic.

And don't miss dining on fresh seafood...the famous Lunenburg hamburger is topped with lobster and finished with bacon wrapped in scallop.

Visit the wine country - Home to the majority of Nova Scotia's wineries, the Annapolis Valley rolling green farmlands and vineyards offer tours and accommodation.

Lawrencetown Beach - Head towards to Provincial Park for surfing lessons and kayak along towering cliffs and secluded coves at Cape Breton Island.

On the festival front the Celtic International Festival takes

place from October 10 - 18 celebrating Cape Breton Islands living traditional culture.

It has grown to become one of Canada's premiere musical events.

The Nova Scotia Lobster Crawl Festival takes place from February 1 - 28, 2026. For the entire month the province throws this fantastically tasty event.

Taste of Birchtown - A guided museum tour & craft beer tasting through the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre mapping the incredible journey of the Black loyalists.

They arrived at Birchtown Bay in 1783, and their struggle for freedom and survival in what was once the largest free black community in British North America.

• **The stunning photograph we carry from Nova Scotia on our contents page is of the lighthouse at Peggy's Cove, another recommended visit.**

More

We have barely scratched the surface in this article on what Nova Scotia has to offer.

Find out lots more at...

www.NovaScotia.com



Quality drives major UK expansion

JA Resorts & Hotels has added Mar Hall Golf & Spa Resort, a historic 240-acre estate outside Glasgow, and The Bruntsfield – a boutique hotel in the heart of Edinburgh, to its portfolio.

These additions mark a significant milestone for JA Resorts & Hotels and its parent company, Dutco Group, representing the brand's entry into the UK market and a meaningful step in its international growth journey, rooted in distinctive, nurturing hospitality.

The UK expansion reflects a bold diversification beyond the UAE and Indian Ocean.



Mar Hall (above) and The Bruntsfield were chosen for their strong heritage and deep connection to their Scottish settings.

Originally designed and built in 1828 by Sir Robert Smirke, the architect of London's British Museum, Mar Hall Golf & Spa Resort is a historic 5-star hotel set within a 240-acre estate on the banks of the River Clyde.

In 2024, Mar Hall was acquired by Dutco Group and underwent a refurbishment in excess of £25 million before officially re-opening in May 2025. Mar Hall now houses 74 beautifully-restored guest rooms and suites, two restaurants, two bars and an enticing collection of grand public spaces.

Tucked in Edinburgh's historic city centre, The Bruntsfield (below) is a charming boutique town house hotel just a short stroll from iconic landmarks like Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile, and Princes Street Gardens.



Built as a Baronial-style residence on Borough Muir in 1861, the hotel boasts an impressive heritage. Following a £1 million refurbishment completed in 2022, the hotel now features 72 stylish rooms, a vibrant restaurant and bar, a heated secret garden and spacious event facilities – all with sustainability at heart, holding a Gold Green Tourism accreditation.

New distilleries to boost the whisky coast

Plans for over 13 new distilleries, as well as a number of innovative new whisky experiences and hotels, have been unveiled across Argyll and the Isles.

It's an area which encompasses four of Scotland's leading whisky regions - Campbeltown (once known as the Whisky Capital of the World), Islay, Highlands (Oban and Loch Lomond) and Islands (Jura and Tobermory).

Now leading tourism and whisky experts have joined forces to deliver an enriching and sustainable revival of Scotland's legendary Whisky Coast.

Argyll and the Isles is currently home to 20 distilleries | producing world-class whisky and gin products.

At its peak in the nineteenth century, Argyll was home to more than 30 distilleries, figure could be matched if all the proposed developments go ahead.

Cathy Craig, CEO of the Argyll and Isles Tourism Cooperative said: "Whisky, or Uisge Beatha (water of life), has shaped communities and culture throughout Argyll and the Isles for centuries.

"So, it is incredibly exciting to hear it could continue to do so in the future with so many planned new developments offering a world-class whisky experience across the region and existing businesses diversifying to offer new visitor experiences.

These will be a fantastic addition to our year-round whisky calendar," she said.

Renowned whisky author and Master of the Quaich, Charlie Maclean added: "These developments are potentially massively significant for Argyll and the Isles. Whisky production in Argyll peaked in the nineteenth century when there were thirty-four distilleries producing some two-hundred thousand gallons a year, so with all the new developments, the

area could be reaching or at least matching an all-time high."

New whisky themed visitor experiences in Argyll & the Isles include:

Ardbeg House - Offering visitors 'the ultimate whisky and hospitality experience' on the Isle of Islay. Inspired by the island's wild and untamed landscape, this stunning new hotel celebrates the spirit of Islay and the legendary stories of Ardbeg and its whiskies

Whisky and Waves (new for 2026) - This new sailing tour operator is launching a wide range of whisky and sailing cruises aboard their 40ft yacht.

Sailing from Oban's North Pier and Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, each cruise will feature a complimentary whisky tasting experience showcasing some of the very best single malts that Scotland's Whisky Coast has to offer.

Speaking about his new venture, founder Michael Sharkey said: "We're thrilled to be setting sail with our new whisky adventures in 2026.

"It will be a fantastic year for Scotland's Whisky Coast as we see some of the new distilleries take shape and The Clipper Race returning to Oban."

More at <https://wildaboutargyll.co.uk>



Autumn in Glasgow - stories, spooks and spectacle

As the leaves turn and the nights draw in, Glasgow transforms into a city alive with colour, culture, and captivating experiences.

This autumn, visitors are invited to explore a vibrant programme of seasonal events. From Halloween happenings, literary delights, and fresh new places to eat, drink, and discover.

Whether you're seeking family fun, spine-tingling stories, or cosy corners to curl up with a book, Glasgow is the ultimate autumn city break.

Provan Hall hosts a series of eerie events in one of Glasgow's oldest buildings, where family-friendly frights meet paranormal activity. Choose from ghost tours, a Witchcraft afternoon, and paranormal investigations. Be sure to check out Provan Hall's latest exhibition: Folklore and Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland too.

Step into the world of Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the Mackintosh at the Willow, where autumn activities include engaging family workshops such as, bake your own pumpkin pie and designing a spooky afternoon tea stand.

For more inspiration and to plan your trip, visit: visitglasgow.com



Swapping snow for sunshine

As the sound of jingle bells grows louder many are looking for a warmer alternative to celebrate the festive season.

Storrington Collective offers an enticing selection of their clients' festive offerings and activities – perfect for multi-generational families, couples, or solo travellers.



So, the question is, where to go...

To the Raat Atoll with Heritage Aarah's fantastic Christmas packages. Curated for the UK, families booking the Family Getaway Package this festive period can revel in having one child under 12 years of age staying and dining for free at this five-star resort,

More: <https://www.heritagehotels.com/aarah/>

Even though Cora Cora Maldives is located in the pristine Raat Atoll in the Maldives, this festive season, it is transforming into the North Pole. A magical destination where travellers can enjoy the vibes from DJ Carol Fernandez (returning for her 5th island Christmas) and DJ Zhasha, turning every beach into a festive spark of fun!

More: <https://www.coracoraresorts.com>

Where better to spend a solo Christmas than at Desert & Delta Safaris with no single supplement and sensational surroundings for self-reflection? December is the prime time to travel to Botswana as it is in the heart of the Green Season.

Solo travellers are invited to enjoy a safari adventure in one of the world's most magnificent environments and join the Desert & Delta Safaris community.

More: <https://desertdelta.com>

Storrington Collective - www.storringtoncollective.com - is a member of PRCA and a full-service public relations agency, catering exclusively to the luxury travel and hospitality sector.

Unforgettable road trips in Spain

From dramatic mountain ranges to glorious beaches and endless olive groves, Spain is a camper's paradise.

Recent booking figures from the **roadsurfer** spots platform, the world's leading provider of campervan rentals, charts the most popular parking spots in Spain – from the Basque Country to Catalonia and Valencia to Andalusia and Galicia.

With average temperatures hovering around 25°C in September and a pleasant 22°C in October, Spain offers one of Europe's warmest climates for an 'Indian Summer' road trip.

Autumn brings with it a wealth of cultural experiences and events across Spain.

Susanne Dickhardt, co-founder and CXO at roadsurfer said: "Our spots are designed to offer authentic stays away from the crowds, with welcoming hosts and the flexibility that campervan holidays are all about".

Here are a selection of **roadsurfer** top camping spots across Spain:

Durango – Camping in a Nature Park (Basque Country)

Nestled in the Urkiola Nature Park, surrounded by forests and mountains, this peaceful campsite is a haven for hikers and those seeking tranquility.

Camarles – Secret Seeds Farm (Catalonia)

A charming, organic farm stay just a few kilometers from the Ebro Delta, offering a slice of the good life.

Urretxu - Limusín Baserria Camping (Basque Country)

A family-friendly farm campsite where little ones can get hands-on experiences with animals and discover traditional Basque country life.

Prío – El Pedroso (Asturias)

Surrounded by rolling green hills, this quiet spot is perfect for reconnecting with nature.

Cangas de Onís – Agroturismo Granja Paraíso (Asturias)

A lovingly run agrotourism campsite near the Picos de Europa, ideal for nature and culture lovers alike.

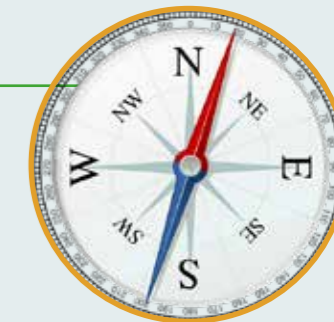
Ribadeo – Casa Secundino y Charo 'Casecha' (Galicia)

A spacious, secluded site bordered by forests, offering peace and privacy in abundance.

roadsurfer has rental stations in various Spanish cities including Málaga, Seville, Bilbao, Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, making it easier than ever to plan a Spanish road trip.

For more information, and to book visit: <https://roadsurfer.com/uk/>

For helpful tips and tricks on your journey, visit: <https://roadsurfer.com/uk/blog/>



New worlds new views

Travel opens the door to new experiences, to meeting people, expanding knowledge on new cultures and developing an appreciation of the amazing world we live in. In our New worlds -new views column we invite young people to share their travelogues.

from Alex Martin

The magic of Disney

Since its opening in 1971, Walt Disney World, Florida has gained a reputation as one of the world's best theme parks, whisking its millions of visitors off into the wondrous worlds of Walt Disney's films and imagination, and stunning children and adults alike.

As is the core of any theme park, there are a great selection of rides, but something about Disney's rides that sets it apart from every other theme park is that there is no ride too childish for adults, nor is there a ride too mature for children.

Each and every ride at Disney World is built to accommodate for all of the family. Whether it be a thrill ride like the mortifying Tower of Terror or the more leisurely Winnie the Pooh ride, one thing you can guarantee is that all members of your party will enjoy it, regardless of age.

It isn't just the rides that are of the highest quality at Disney World, the food is too.

You can dine on authentic dishes from ten different countries at Epcot's World Showcase, which houses ten incredibly detailed snapshots of nations from across the world.

You can dine at a retro drive-in theatre at Hollywood Studios, inside a princess's castle at Magic Kingdom or even alongside animals at Animal Kingdom, but where the best food is at is Disney Springs, an area specifically for quality dining and shopping. Here you can also go to the cinema, bowling alley or just walk around and have a look at the wide range of Disney-themed shops.

However my favourite aspect of Disney World isn't the food or the rides, its the immersion.

At Disney World, you can be whisked off anywhere, whether it be onto Pandora from the Avatar films to see its floating mountains or into Star Wars to fly the Millennium Falcon. Every land has had an immense amount of detail put into it, making you feel like you are in a film.

Even back at the hotel there is always music playing, giving you your own backing track, characters occasionally showing up to meet guests and a great amount of detail making you feel like you're in the Caribbean, New Orleans or on a safari.

There is a reason why Disney World is called 'The Most Magical Place on Earth'.



Holiday cottage specialists Premier Cottages is the perfect partner for those seeking to enjoy an autumnal break in style.

A portfolio of over 900 outstanding properties throughout the UK and Ireland offer the chance to explore the countryside and take up the challenge of walking and biking trails.

“As a professional collective of independent holiday cottage owners, we have more award-winning luxury cottages than any other UK website. All our member properties have officially gained four or five star status, so when you book with Premier Cottages, you know you’re booking quality. Put simply, excellence is what we do best.”

Here’s a sample of what to look forward to...



Peacock Cottage, Devon - Tel: 07867971517



Shepherds, Cornwall - Tel: 07774 211039



Bray Cottage, Yorkshire - Tel: 01484 681369



Great Western Lodge, Shropshire Tel: 01694 724814

For more information and getting in touch

Email: feedback@premiercottages.co.uk

Website: www.premiercottages.co.uk



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