

TAKE ME TO THE WATER

What could be more relaxing than a laid-back holiday by expanses of river or sea. Our suggestions all have a luxe feel good factor in spades

TURKEY Try gentle yoga... by motor yacht

✦ GOOD REASONS TO VISIT

Step aboard a traditional Turkish motor yacht for a unique holiday retreat, where you'll enjoy a week of yoga in the calm, warm waters of the Mediterranean. Spend your days relaxing in the sun, reading books, exploring the coasts and coves with your snorkel, or visiting picturesque ruins and villages; all is possible on the voyage. There's yoga twice daily on the sun deck: once in the morning and once

in the early evening. The classes are led by Kathja, a Sivananda Hatha Yoga teacher.

✦ FEEL GOOD FACTOR

Apart from the yoga, there's also the serious business of being on holiday. You'll enjoy three Mediterranean and traditional Turkish meals each day, using local ingredients, seasonal fruits and vegetables. Dining is outside on the aft deck. Then, if you fancy it, sleep under the stars on deck,

with just the gentle sound of the lapping water. A perfectly relaxing week, for sure.

✦ **GO FOR IT** A week costs €890 (around £720) per person in a shared cabin, or €1,150 (£930) for your own.

✦ **HOW TO BOOK** See yogacruise.net, 00 90 (0) 534 0206726). Return flights from Gatwick to Antalya, around £176 (easyjet.com). Transfers, €60 return.

✦ **FGY Tip**

Travelling to Europe? Make sure you have your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)*, which gives you access to state healthcare at a reduced cost. Find out which countries are included and apply for yours at ehic.org.uk/Internet/startApplication.do

FINLAND

Reflect on life in a lakeside cabin in Finland

✦ GOOD REASONS TO VISIT

Finland has 188,000 lakes, many with one or two cottages scattered on their shores. Summertime usually brings settled weather, with long, warm, sunny days and only a few brief hours of darkness. It's a magical place to be, away from the crowds, which allows you to just enjoy being by the water, or indeed on or in it.

✦ FEEL GOOD FACTOR

Stoke the sauna furnace with birch logs, which catch light easily and burn fiercely. From the sauna there's a boardwalk down to a jetty, where you can charge out and jump into the lake for a cooling dip. Drop into a wonderful routine; leisurely breakfasts, mornings spent exploring by rowing boat, lunch on the sun deck, more exploring in the afternoon and a ritual sauna later on. Evenings are so simple but perfect: just decamp

from the cottage to a little circular outhouse, 100 metres away, gather round the central fire and grill sausages and fresh fish for supper.

✦ **GO FOR IT** Time spent watching the sun's reflection brings a real sense of relaxation, especially as you're surrounded by peace and quiet. Book a week in one of Lomahuvilat's beautiful five-star cottages, Kurki and Joutsen, for €1200 (£1020). Or find your perfect lake view at Luxury Holiday or Finnish Lakeside Cabins.

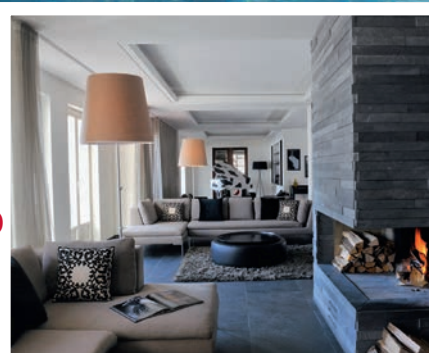
✦ **HOW TO BOOK** Book directly through the owners at lomahuvilat.fi. Or try luxholiday.fi and finnishlakesidecabins.com. Flights to Tampere in Finland from London Stansted cost from £165 (ryanair.com). A week's car hire costs £321 with holidayautos.co.uk. >>

*THIS DOES NOT REPLACE ANY INSURANCE. IT IS IN ADDITION TO IT



SWITZERLAND

Relax in an Alpine pool with a view



✚ **GOOD REASONS TO VISIT** Perfect for short break luxury, the Cambrian Hotel in the chic Swiss mountain resort of Adelboden has something of a reputation for its amazing outdoor swimming pool. It can be found high on a number of travellers' lists and "top tens" simply because of the jaw-droppingly beautiful views you get when you're in it.

✚ **FEEL GOOD FACTOR** Probably most in demand as a chichi winter retreat for the well-heeled Swiss, it's just as desirable in the summer months, where mountain life resumes at a slower, gentler pace. Check out that to-die-for pool, but don't forget there's a spa, sauna, steam bath, rain shower, and even a sleeping area for when the therapist has

done too good a job on you. All in all, it's a stunning venue for a few peaceful days in the summer. But if you feel the need for something more energetic, make the most of the more than 200 miles of hiking trails around Adelboden, which are suitable for all ages and abilities.

✚ **GO FOR IT** A deluxe room for two costs CHF 707 (around £472) for three nights, including a daily Alpine buffet breakfast and free use of the spa.

✚ **HOW TO BOOK** Visit thecambrianadelboden.com (0041 33 673 8383). Flights from London to Zurich (the closest airport) from £27.99 one way (easyjet.com). Buses and trains connect via Berne to Adelboden.



GREECE

Learn to sail in Greece

✚ **GOOD REASONS TO VISIT** If your idea of holiday heaven requires more action and adventure, then a week of varied watersports at Club Vounaki Greece is sure to hit the spot. Book a session of waterskiing, join the crew of a fast racing yacht, paddle a kayak from cove to cove, or learn to manoeuvre your own little sailing dinghy in calm waters close to shore. Take it easy by the swimming pool if you don't want to be active, or join in some of the well-organised family activities. Club Vounaki is run by Sunsail, whose childcare is highly regarded. Plus, they will look after youngsters aged from

four months to 17 years.

✚ **FEEL GOOD FACTOR** Food is good and plentiful, and the atmosphere is relaxed. Everyone will love the chance to get involved in the watersport of their choice.

✚ **GO FOR IT** A seven-night holiday at Club Vounaki in August costs £1,569 per adult and £1,429 per child, including return flights from Gatwick to Preveza, half-board accommodation for adults and full-board for children under 12. The cost of the kids' clubs is included, as are some sports activities.

✚ **HOW TO BOOK** Visit sunsail.com; 0844-4636578.

“Book a waterskiing session, join a yacht crew, paddle a kayak, or learn to manoeuvre a sailing dinghy...”

FRANCE

Chill out on a French canal cruise

✚ **GOOD REASONS TO VISIT** If Rick Stein whetted your appetite with his *French Odyssey* TV series a year or two ago, chances are it wasn't just the food that provided the attraction. The sights along the way were just as wonderful, as he chugged at 3mph from the Atlantic port of Bordeaux to the Mediterranean Sea, soaking up the stunning views and relaxed atmosphere of this south-west corner of France.

✚ **FEEL GOOD FACTOR** The idea of chilling out with a glass of plonk as you cruise along the canals and rivers at a sedate speed has inspired thousands of holidaymakers. Not forgetting the mouthwatering food you can enjoy along the way. Hire your own craft and a one-hour lesson is all you'll need to learn about mooring, using locks and

casting off from jetties along the way. Then simply adopt an easy routine. Hire bikes to keep on-board, then cycle to visit the local *boulangerie* and collect fresh croissants for breakfast and baguettes for lunch. Chug at a gentle pace along the canal through shady woods and past ancient buildings. Sample the restaurants in the villages you pass through, or buy groceries and do your cooking on-board. The beauty of it is you can do exactly as you please.

✚ **GO FOR IT** A six-berth Continentale cruiser costs £2,605 for seven days in August, starting and ending in Narbonne (around a 12-hour drive from the Channel ports).

✚ **HOW TO BOOK** See leboat.co.uk or call 0844-4633577.



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IRELAND

Fit in a fitness break in the Irish lakelands

✚ **GOOD REASONS TO VISIT** Hop across the water to Ireland and treat yourself to a break that will rejuvenate mind, body and spirit. The lovely Wineport Lodge Hotel in Athlone (60 minutes west of Dublin airport), one of Ireland's top four-star properties, promises your relaxation is its priority. The attractive, wooden-clad buildings, situated on the edge of the enormous Lough Ree, has verandas and jetties to make the most of the stunning location.

✚ **FEEL GOOD FACTOR** If you want to treat yourself, then boutique hotel Wineport Lodge in the Irish Lakelands has the answer. The Shape Up In Style package includes three nights in a deluxe room with a private balcony and lake view, a one-hour yoga session on the pavilion overlooking the water,



a sports massage in the Yon-Ka Treatment Suite, followed by a dip in the rooftop hot tub and lunch. In addition, you'll enjoy complimentary bike usage for local cycle trails and walking maps for the countryside.

✚ **GO FOR IT** Dinner on one evening in the hotel's restaurant is also included, so you'll have the opportunity to enjoy organic, locally sourced cuisine. The package costs around £270 per person, sharing, for three nights.

✚ **HOW TO BOOK** Visit wineport.ie or call 00 353 (0) 90 643 9010. Return flights from Gatwick to Dublin, from £77 (aerlingus.com).