

THAT SUMMER FEELING

Whether you want to stroll through cobbled side streets, dive into clear Maldivian waters, explore Europe's 'Capital of Culture', or unwind with yoga in Bali, these perfect summer escapes suit any style of wanderlust

MALLORCA

Great for dramatic scenery, sleepy towns, and delicious seafood, the beautiful 'Pearl of the Mediterranean' suits any coastal wanderlust. Wander through Palma, the island's capital, or take a short drive to Soller, Mallorca's hidden gem. There you will find winding backstreets filled with character. Boats bob in the harbour, and the smell of oranges, the area's most popular fruit, permeate the air.

Where to stay: Rest your head at Jumeirah Port Soller Hotel and Spa. This luxurious property overlooks the port, surrounded by the sea and the striking UNESCO-protected Tramuntana Mountains. It is perched atop a cliff, meaning you can enjoy panoramic views of Mallorca's beauty.

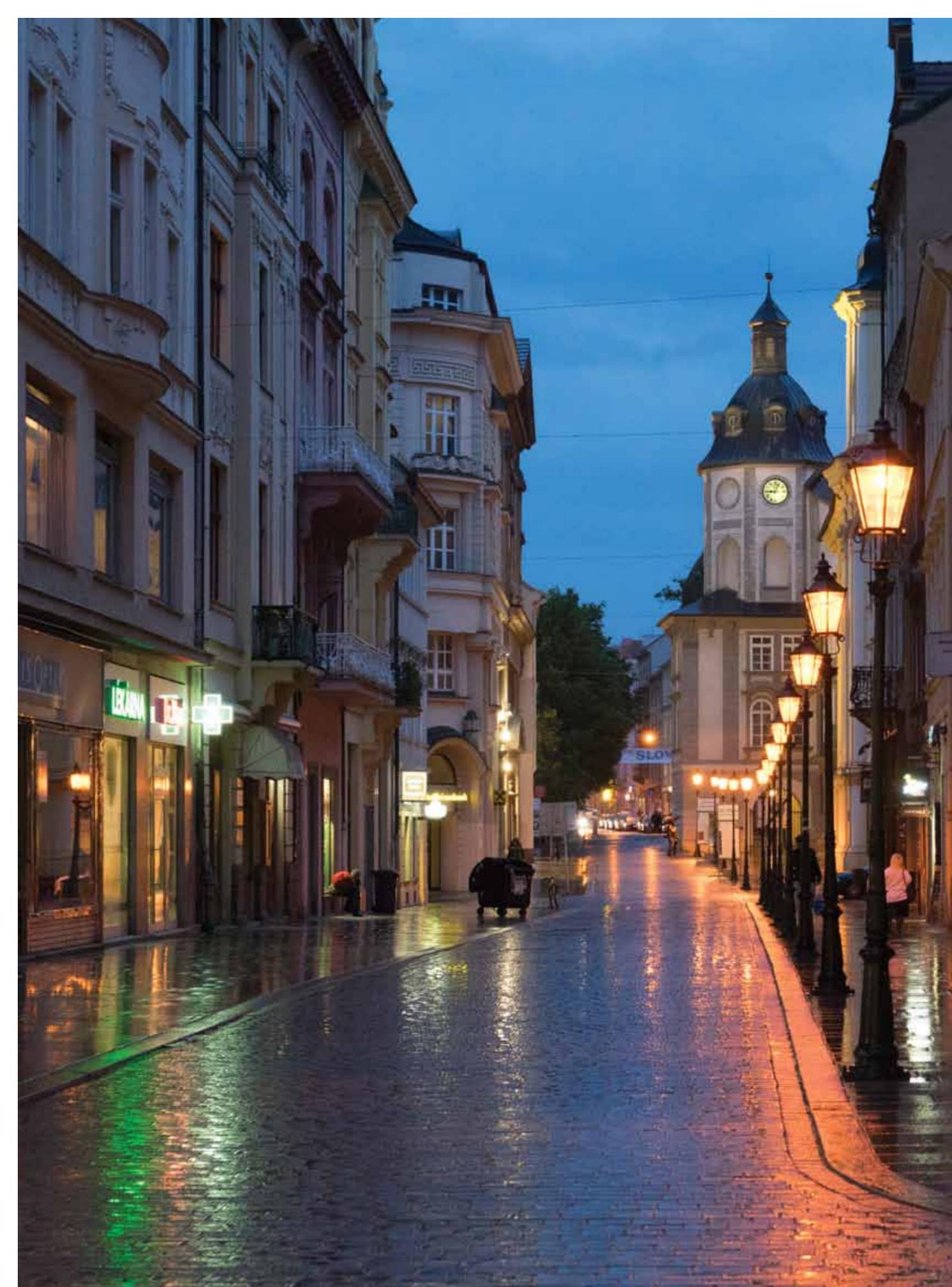
Insider's advice: Bring the book *Joan Miró*, by Rosa Malet and Joan Miró. The modernist artist once lived in Palma, where today you will find a foundation housing his works. This book includes over 100 of Miró's most famed pieces.

BODRUM

Glamorous and decadent, Bodrum is a city that comes alive in the summer. Located on the south-western tip of Turkey's Aegean Region, Bodrum has recently been called both 'the new Ibiza' and a 'fresh St. Tropez'. If you like high-heels and yachts during the day, and five-star restaurants at night, this is the summer escape for you. Bodrum Peninsula also offers its own sleepier charm. Drive around the coast to find small towns with ocean-front cafés and windmills crumbling into grass-covered hills.

Where to stay: Jumeirah Bodrum Palace is the height of luxury. Within the spacious property you will find beauty, tranquillity, and splendour all on the Aegean Sea. Interiors are decorated in marble and gold, while many rooms feature their own private pools. Unwind during the day with a traditional Turkish bath or an outdoor massage in one of several Maldivian style treatment spaces.

Insider's advice: Yalikavak, a popular Bodrum port town, is hailed as the place to go for a glamorous evening. There you'll find numerous high-end shops nestled against delicious restaurants.



SPOTLIGHT ON: PLZEŇ

This charming Czech city, declared the 2015 European Capital of Culture, is worth a visit. International journalist **Joseph Reaney** reports

The city: Located in the the heart of Bohemia, 90 miles from Prague, Plzeň has long had its reputation for beverages, specifically rich beers. But, according to Jana Komišová, Head of Marketing for this year's event, this city has more to offer. "We intend to adapt the view of Plzeň as an industrial city to a cultural, open and inspiring metropolis... to make Plzeň more visible in Europe, to create new cultural trends and to involve the public in the cultural life of the city."

In the five years since its announcement as 2015 ECC (alongside the Belgian city of Lens) city authorities have invested more than USD19 million in the project: half spent on travel infrastructure, new buildings (including a beautiful new theatre) and marketing efforts; the other half on assembling the spectacular events calendar.

The festival: There are 50 principal cultural events scheduled in 2015, as well as over 600 other events, and these will all aim to make the most of Plzeň's appealing architecture, from its beautiful baroque square to its vast, Gothic synagogue. The public will even be afforded rare access to private interiors by modernist master Adolf Loos.

The 2015 party began with a bang back in January, with a magnificent opening ceremony bringing together classical music, lively processions, fireworks and the first peels of newly-forged bells in the city's towering medieval cathedral. This has been followed by events such as February's Festival of Light, where interactive lighting

installations were placed all along the riverside. However, the best events of 2015 are still to come.

The events: Cirque Nouveau Season (until November) will see daring acrobatics, nail-biting tightrope walks and modern clowning in 60 shows taking place through the year. Then the Gottfried Lindauer Exhibition (6 May to 20 September) will see artworks by the Plzeň-born 19th century artist, renowned for his portraits of Maori people, displayed outside New Zealand for the first time. Later in the year, visitors can enjoy the Nine Weeks of Baroque (an event between 29 June and 30 August celebrating Baroque music, art, theatre and food) and, making their debut in Eastern Europe, the Royal de Luxe (a French theatre company that operates giant mechanical marionettes, playing from 28 to 30 August).

The legacy: Without doubt, 2015 is a big year for Plzeň, but will events this year have a long-term impact? Director Jiří Suchánek believes it will put the city on the tourism radar long into the future – and have a creative legacy too. "As well as [projecting] the image of the city as an attractive tourist destination... it will also promote Plzeň as a place for creative industries, where students of art and design and local artists can execute their projects. One of our biggest goals is to create new places for people to be employed in creative businesses."

"This exacting cultural and marketing project has already made a contribution to the image transformation of Plzeň," adds Jana Komišová. "2015 is one giant step towards moving this city forward." plzen2015.cz

ISTANBUL

Historic, cultural, Istanbul is the perfect fusion of East and West. Enjoy walking through cobblestone streets while sampling the sticky sweet flavours of Turkish Delight. Then explore some of the world's most famous landmarks, including the Topkapi Imperial Palace, built in the 1400s for Ottoman sultans and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1985; and the Hagia Sophia, a stunning example of Byzantine and Ottoman architecture.

Where to stay: The Pera Palace Hotel Jumeirah is replete with historical charm. Inside you'll find Istanbul's oldest elevator, a classic afternoon tea, and interiors decorated in heavy velvets and marble. The property was designed originally to house all the glamorous travellers of the Orient Express. Today it is a fully renovated landmark, the most luxurious historical hotel in the region.

Insider's advice: Visit Turquaz Sahaf, an antique book shop filled with collectable wonders. Nearby you will find Orhan Pamuk's 'Museum of Innocence' - which is itself another book worthy of a read.





SPOTLIGHT ON: BALI

Known for its beautiful beaches and lush interiors, Bali is a tropical destination perfect for summer – particularly for those looking to unwind with yoga. Here certified yoga instructor **Kathleen Stavert** highlights Bali's best places to reach up, rebalance your chakras, and find that inner peace.

VILLA MALAATHINA

What: The grounds of Villa Malaathina are immaculately detailed and sophisticated. Locally sourced art and eye-catching furniture are strategically placed to contribute to this flow. The owner, a woman named Amanda, runs around 20 retreats a year.

My programme: I brave the 'Journey to Wellness' retreat that features two daily yoga sessions, the option of a four-day juice detox or three daily gourmet meals organically and locally sourced, two complimentary massages and an optional day trip to Ubud.

The yoga: Nestled behind an inviting central pool is the yoga shala, where a wonderful teacher stresses how yoga retreats suit any level. During the meditation and yoga practices, I feel soothed by the teacher's expertise. It helps me let go of things I no longer needed (while enjoying some fantastic music).

What else: The week of wellness is rounded off by workshops on wellbeing and holistic health. During these, the virtues of organic eating, proper sleep, and alkalising our bodies is highlighted. On the final night, in the spirit of letting go, we release Chinese lanterns into to the night's sky, symbolic of a refreshed and renewed outlook.

Good for: The yogi who wants something immersive, intense, and holistically focused.

theseventhsealretreat.com, lisaallwellyoga.com

OLOP ARPIPI

What: Amongst the mocha-java-spirulina smoothie shops and the overpriced Seminyak martini rooms hides a little secret: a stunning yoga shala. The doors leading to the secret path are painted with sevens for good luck. Inside, I find a gathering of attractive Westerners and those who love Olop, the guru.

My programme: The classes here are simple but demanding – don't expect an online schedule or fancy publicity. I do yoga on a day-by-day basis.

The yoga: The first thing to know is that Olop Arpipi studied under the late B.K.S. Iyengar. His courses are filled with wisdom. During practice, I am encouraged to question my body against the architecture of each pose, with an emphasis on remaining curious. After such dedicated classes, I emerge feeling expansive in my body and fairly 'wrung out'.

What else: To ease us out of class, tea is offered amidst lush vegetation as chickens roamed nearby. Olop lingers talking with students.

Good for: The yogi who wants to know the instructor face-to-face off the beaten track.

HEAVENLY SPA

What: With a focus on the finer things in a yogis life, I visit the 'Heavenly Spa' in Nusa Dua. The spa won the 'Luxury Spa of the Year' in 2014. The venue is filled with a gentle floral scent.

My programme: It isn't really a 'programme' so much as it is a one-off class.

The yoga: A lovely yoga teacher from Bali leads me through a 30-minute introduction to meditation, incorporating a sequence of deep breathing to 'retain energy'. Then comes mudras (hand movements) supporting the energy of the heart and a series of sun salutations. The class helps



me ease out of a funk caused by a bit of a late night.

Good for: The vacationing yogi who wants something soothing and relaxed.

Extras: The spa itself is certainly a highlight. After yoga, I relax in the steam room and salt wall sauna. A soothing series of massages are also available. westinhiltonheadspa.com

DESA SENI

What: One of Bali's leading yoga centres, Desa Seni is wrapped in beautiful palm trees and colourful vegetation. Sun-lounging bunnies mix with keen yoga-goers. As a teacher, this is a place for education. As a traveller, it's a place for escape.

My programme: I attend a one-off class, but the venue regularly offers workshops with select teachers and yoga retreats.

The yoga: With a focus on Kundalini yoga (the yoga termed by some as 'the more spiritual yoga'), I work through strength and flexibility, experiencing a full physical (and, yes, spiritual) practice.

Good for: The seasoned yogi who wants to practice in beautiful surroundings.

Extras: After class, enjoy a delicious breakfast sourced from the organic garden. Numerous events are offered throughout the year, including the Desa Seni collective yoga teacher training.

Desaseni.com/yoga.htm

VILLA FLOW

What: Situated in Seraya, Villa Flow enhances its yoga offerings with the most beautiful garden. Neem, pomello, coffee and turmeric mix with kale, mangoes, and avocados. I am handed a passion fruit deliciously fragrant. Little Buddha figurines dot the venue. There's definitely a feeling of luxury, but also of quiet relaxation.

My programme: A fresh outdoor morning class taught by a Balinese yoga teacher

The yoga: Classes happen each morning in an outdoor venue overlooking the garden. Sessions capture humour and focus on gentleness. I do partner work with numerous variations of tree pose, a deep-breathing balancing position.

Good for: Someone who wants gentle R&R. For an avid practitioner, the classes might be a bit too relaxing (or simply work as a warm-up to a more intense session).

Extras: Alongside daily yoga sessions, there are regular tailor-made retreats. The group also focuses on numerous charitable activities. villaflowbali.com

BALI FLOATING LEAF

What: A yoga centre with stunning architecture, where all the materials used to build the villa are recycled. Everything in the villa is for sale, with all proceeds going back to the artist or community.

My programme: A private yoga teacher can visit on demand. There are also extensive retreats. Retreats are tailored so that each individual receives private assessments with a yoga teacher, a nutritionist/naturopath, a kinesiologist (someone focused on human movement), a traditional Balinese healer, and more.

The yoga: This yoga isn't for the faint of heart. My instructor leads me through a challenging practice. I am told to fall out of one of the scariest poses, which teaches me, as was intended, that I would be absolutely fine when I land. The practice is strong, fluid, and intense, incorporating handstands with restorative poses.

Good for: The eco-conscious yogi traveller who doesn't want to skimp on luxury, and is ready to be educated, humbled, and rejuvenated

Extras: You can access the on-site natural pharmacy containing herbal concoctions that have been passed down from (the property notes) Balinese royalty. There are also massages, and an online community is in place for continuous support once your retreat is over.

balifloatingleaf.com

ROME

In the summer, Rome comes alive. Within Italy's capital, explore ancient streets and centuries-old attractions. Wander through the Colosseum's 2000-year-old amphitheatre, then stroll through the nearby Roman Forum to understand the area's ancient government. Then there are stops like the majestic Trevi Fountain, the impressive Spanish Steps, and more cultural sites than could ever be seen in a day.

Where to stay: Visit Jumeirah Grand Hotel Via Veneto. Located in the heart of historic Rome, this beautiful property spans across two renovated and restored 19th century villas. Décor inspired by the 1920s mixes with handmade furniture for a fascinating atmosphere.

Insider's advice: Certain luxury travel agents can arrange for a private visit of the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel, allowing you to view Michelangelo's frescoes without any obstructions.



THE MALDIVES

Boats. Water. Islands with ocean so delightfully clear you feel like you can stare into the soul of the sea. In The Maldives, you will enjoy pristine beaches unspoiled by throngs of tourists. This is a holiday that suits the active and the sun-lounger alike. Enjoy diving to explore sunken shipwrecks and exotic ocean creatures. Sample yoga as the sun sets. Then unwind listening to the gentle sound of quiet waves.

Where to stay: Choose from one of two luxury resorts in the Maldives for an unparalleled experience. Both Jumeirah Dhevanafushi and Jumeirah Vittaveli offer the ideal retreat; and given that so much of Maldivian tourism is built around private luxury stays, whichever small island you choose, it will be an exclusive bit of paradise.

Insider's advice: Explore the wonders of the deep by diving in the Indian Ocean. As you swim through underwater caves, caverns, and overhangs, you will discover tropical fish in coral reefs and beautiful wonders. The region is popular with both beginners and experts.

BAKU

Throughout June, this hidden Azerbaijan gem is hosting the first ever European Games. Whether you're a sports fan or not, stunning Baku is perfect for a summer escape. Inside Baku you will find a UNESCO World Heritage site, The Walled City, which hosts the 12th century Maiden Tower and 15th century Shirvanshah's Palace. Buildings in limestone frame a waterfront promenade, making for the perfect evening leisurely stroll. At night, the town lights up.

Where to stay: Only a short drive from Baku's city centre is the sea-side resort of Jumeirah Bilgah Beach Hotel. Here you'll find a private olive grove, breakfast with warm homemade jams, a luxurious spa, and restaurants decorated in gold.

Insider's advice: Sample Baku's caviar. With the Caspian Sea so close, this is the place to try the fresh and luxurious dish.



For information about any of the Jumeirah properties mentioned, visit [jumeirah.com](https://www.jumeirah.com)