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15 brilliant holidays in Spain for summer

Luxury hotel launches, festivals and new wellness and adventure trips show our favourite holiday destination is hotting up

Monfrague National Park, Extremadura
ALAMY

Sarah Gordon | Saturday May 08 2021, 12.01am, The Times

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The announcement last month by Fernando Valdés Verelst, Spain's tourism minister, that the country will be ready to welcome tourists again from June was the news the country had been waiting for. Chiringuito bars are popping up along the beaches and hotels are hiring staff and preparing rooms. Cities such as Seville, which have been strangely silent for months, are spruced up and ready for the buzz of alfresco dining and the slap of sandals on cobbled streets.

In Spain we've long been confined to our regions and under curfew, eating dinner at the unholy hour of 8pm instead of the usual 10pm. But Valdés's announcement came just as the country began opening up for locals. Caution remains, though; masks are still obligatory at all times outside.

Tourism hasn't slumbered entirely these past months. Locals have been exploring their own regions and glamorous new hotels have been quietly launching, treating this time as the softest of soft openings. There are plenty of new experiences planned for the summer too: tailored wellbeing escapes; trips to discover Spain's lesser-known spots; exciting new cultural openings. By June Spain's numbers could be good enough to welcome British holidaymakers, quarantine-free. Here are 15 ideas to inspire you.

7Pines, Ibiza

1. Eco adventure for kids in Ibiza

The luxurious, all-suite 7Pines Resort on the west coast of Ibiza has created a kids' club designed to inspire a sustainable lifestyle: beach cleaning, creating a sculpture from recycled materials and lessons about marine life are among the activities for children aged from 1 to 14. Families staying at the clifftop resort can also enjoy hiking, paddleboarding, kayaking and snorkelling.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £5,095 for a family of four, including flights and transfers (inspiringtravelcompany.co.uk)

City of Arts and Sciences, Valencia
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2. Discover Valencia

Spain's third city, which has been named World Design Capital 2022, has been sprucing up its elegant modernista and gothic buildings and the futuristic City of Arts and Sciences. A new interactive map (downloadable at mapadeldissenyvalencia.com) takes you from the historic centre to the modern seafront via impressive buildings, galleries, museums and shops. Stay at the 19th-century Palacio Vallier tastefully restored with 31 sumptuous art deco rooms, a glamorous restaurant and cocktail bar, and a roof terrace with views across the city.
Details B&B doubles from £156 (myrhotels.com). Fly to Valencia

Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago
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3. Walk the Way of St James

When the Feast of St James falls on a Sunday — just 14 times a century, including 2021 — it heralds a "Holy Year", a very special time for pilgrims walking the Ways of St James to Santiago, where the apostle is said to be buried. Pura Aventura is marking the big year with a self-guided walking trip along parts of three of the ancient pilgrimage routes, taking in the Picos de Europa mountains, fishing villages and medieval towns, with private transport for your luggage.
Details Eleven nights' half-board from £3,560pp, including transfers (pura-aventura.com). Fly to Bilbao

Vejer de la Frontera, Andalusia
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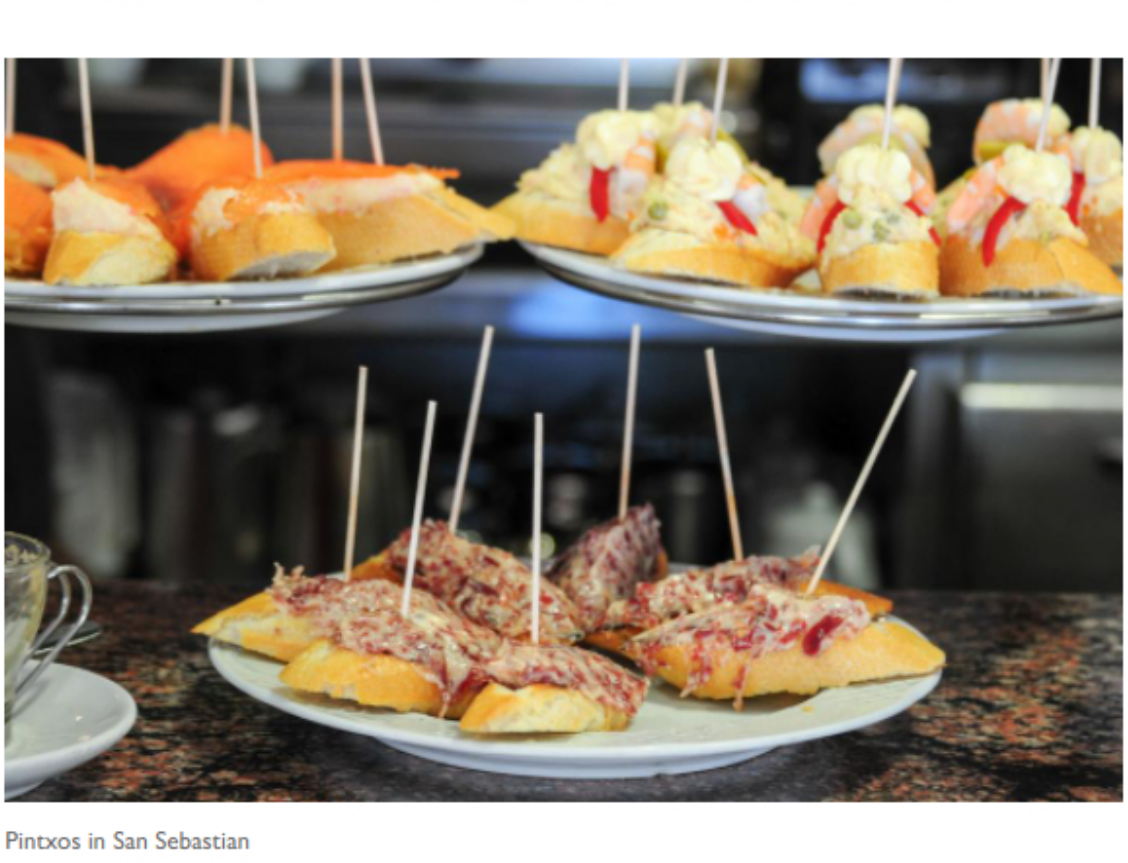
4. Cooking and hiking in Andalusia

The Scottish cookery teacher and sherry expert Annie B welcomes guests to Vejer de la Frontera, one of Andalusia's most beautiful whitewashed towns, for culinary experiences that celebrate local produce. Her new Terrain and Terroir tour combines guided hiking in the mountains, tapas tastings, market visits and cooking classes. You'll stay in the charming Casa del Califa boutique hotel, with afternoons free to explore the Costa de la Luz and Vejer's Moorish-influenced old town.
Details Five nights' B&B from £1,511pp (anniebspain.com). Fly to Jerez or Seville

A room at Casa Pacha Formentera

5. Formentera's hippy hideaway

Like a 12-mile slice of the Caribbean off the coast of Ibiza, tiny Formentera is all about spending languid days on pristine beaches and pootling around by bike. Embrace the hippy-chic lifestyle and stay at the new Casa Pacha Formentera, a grown-up retreat from the people behind Ibiza's legendary nightclub. Opening on May 20 with 14 rooms, Casa Pacha is all polished concrete and dreamy views of Migjorn, the island's longest beach. Check out the new "slow food map" from visitformentera.com to fill your stay with plenty of local produce.
Details B&B doubles from £173 (casapacha.com). Fly to Ibiza



Pintxos in San Sebastian
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6. Basque Country bites

The elegant Basque resort of San Sebastian is a winner for food lovers because the culinary scene is at once cutting-edge and deeply traditional. Blend fine dining with bar-hopping, grand architecture and glorious beaches. On this foodie tour, based at the swish Hotel Maria Cristina, you'll visit markets where top chefs buy their produce each morning and learn to make squid-ink calamari and creamy croquetas. Consider adding on a trip to La Rioja to pair delicious food with fine wines at the Marques de Riscal hotel and winery, designed by Frank Gehry.
Details Two nights' half-board from £1,800pp, including activities (abercrombiekent.co.uk). Fly to Bilbao

Mountain views from SHA Wellness Clinic

7. Alicante wellness break

On a new gut-health programme at SHA Wellness Clinic on the Alicante coast, overseen by Dr Amina Alani, a digestive health expert, you'll enjoy the trappings of a luxurious holiday — infinity pools paired with soothing mountain and sea views — as well as treatments tailored to help to improve your gut health and immune system. The programme includes a personalised plan and a blend of natural therapies, yoga, meditation and stress management.
Details Seven nights' all-inclusive Gut Health & Detox programme from £4,834pp (shawellnessclinic.com). Fly to Alicante

Menorca Binibeca hotel

8. Art in Menorca

The latest Hauser & Wirth art gallery outpost is due to open on July 17 in an 18th-century former naval hospital perched on an island in Mahon's harbour. The exhibition space has eight galleries, a sculpture trail, a garden and a restaurant, bringing a new and very fashionable cultural experience to Menorca. Just south of the art centre, which will open with an exhibition of work by the US artist Mark Bradford, the adults-only hotel Menorca Binibeca is set on a clifftop and has three swimming pools and sweeping sea views.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £319pp (pierreetvacances.com). Fly to Mahon

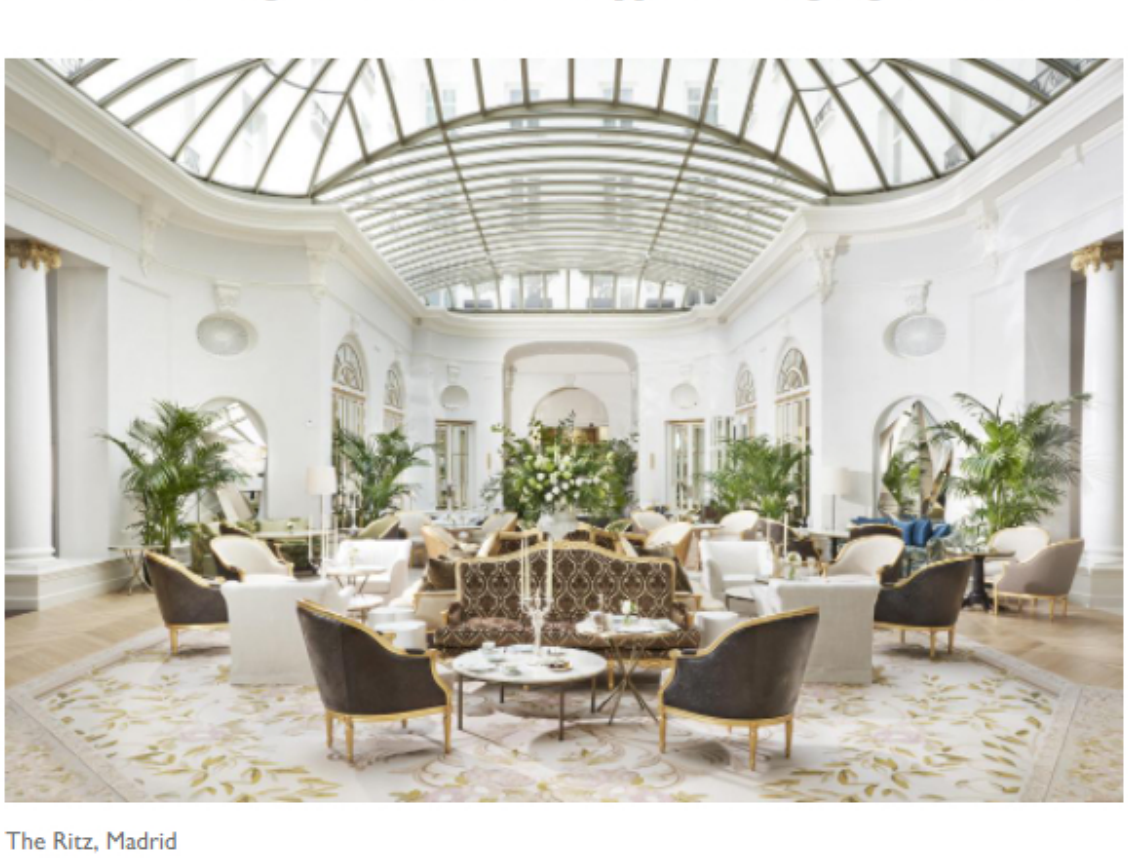
Ikos Andalusia

9. Greek chic comes to the Costa del Sol

The sleek, Greek Ikos hotel group just opened its first outpost in Spain, bringing all-inclusive luxury to the Costa del Sol. Ikos Andalusia is set in 21 acres of landscaped gardens with terraced pools leading down to the beach. Seven restaurants serve menus created by assorted top-flight chefs, and activities range from yoga and paddleboarding to tennis and mountain biking. The rate even includes local dining and a day's exploration in a Mini Cooper. Anne Semonin Paris spa treatments offer a spot of indulgence and there are fun clubs for children.
Details Seven nights' all-inclusive from £1,210pp, including flights and transfers (ba.com)

10. Luxury on Lanzarote

The volcanic island's newest five-star hotel, Fariones, is all sleek white decor and rustic-chic Bali beds, with a rooftop infinity pool and cocktail bar, palm-filled gardens and even a nightclub tucked into a cave. It sits on a golden beach a short hop from lively Puerto del Carmen. The hotel will arrange excursions so that you can explore the volcanic island, go sailing on a private yacht, or play a round at the nearby golf course.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,099pp, including flights (ba.com)



The Ritz, Madrid

11. Madrid's legendary hotel reborn

The Ritz, Madrid's grande dame, has presided over the city from its prime spot on the Paseo del Prado for more than a century. After a three-year renovation by Mandarin Oriental, the hotel has been restored to its former belle époque glory, with the elegant restaurant Palm Court at its heart. Five restaurants and bars are overseen by the Spanish celebrity chef Quique Dacosta, and a new spa and wellness area has been added — you'll get a £130 spa credit and a free city tour if you stay before the end of August.
Details B&B doubles from £553 (mandarinoriental.com). Fly to Madrid

12. Mallorca's rural hinterland

Finca Can Beneit, a farmhouse turned boutique hotel in Mallorca's Tramuntana mountains, is a new agroturismo project that might just keep you from the beach. Rooms — ten in all — feature exposed honeyed stone, wooden beams and tiled floors. Terraces are draped in wisteria, the pool offers lovely mountain views, and you have 200 acres to explore; wander among the olive and almond trees or cycle to nearby villages. The restaurant serves Mallorcan delicacies, and wine tasting, picnics and stargazing are on offer, as well as meditation and yoga.
Details B&B doubles from £169 (fincacanbeneit.com). Fly to Palma

San Sebastian harbour, La Gomera
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13. Undiscovered Canaries

La Gomera's dramatic landscape of peaks, cliffs and lush valleys radiates out from a dormant volcano in the centre of the island. Spend your days hiking in the ancient laurel forests of the Garajonay National Park and explore the pretty capital, San Sebastian. Stay at the Parador Conde de la Gomera, clinging to a clifftop 800ft above the sea with views across the water to Tenerife.
Details Seven nights' B&B from £899pp, including flights and transfers (prestigeholidays.co.uk)

Monfrague National Park, Extremadura
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14. Explore Extremadura

Discover the tranquillity of one of Spain's least-visited regions with a stay in Extremadura, right on the Portuguese border. This new twin-centre trip takes you from the pretty town of Llerena, where you'll stay in a 19th-century manor house, to a guesthouse in the wilds of the Unesco Monfrague National Park, with visits to the medieval towns of Caceres, Plasencia and Trujillo. On a wildlife tour you might spot deer and even a lynx.
Details Fourteen nights' B&B from £1,210pp, including flights and car hire (sunvil.co.uk)

Es Vedra, Ibiza

15. Spiritual Ibiza

Before all the parties, Ibiza was known for its mysticism and spirituality. This new wellness experience takes you back to the island's roots with daily yoga and meditation and time spent on the mysterious rocky islet Es Vedra. During your stay you'll enjoy a tailored macrobiotic diet, sessions with wellness experts, nutrition workshops and wellness discussions. A cookery session with a high-end chef teaches you how to prepare fresh, healthy meals at home.
Details Seven nights' all-inclusive Bring It Back experience from £6,100pp (blacktomato.com). Fly to Ibiza

Where is your favourite place in Spain? Let us know in the comments below

Europe Spain