

email traveldesk@reachplc.com
twitter @MirrorTravel
@TravelEdNigel
@marjorieyue @LissamanVicky
online mirror.co.uk/travel

TRAVEL



Edited by
NIGEL THOMPSON

email traveldesk@reachplc.com
twitter @TravelEdNigel
@marjorieyue @LissamanVicky
online dailystar.co.uk/travel/

TIME TRAVEL

BY VICKY LISSAMAN



Turkey celebrates its centenary

Turkey marked its 100-year anniversary as a modern republic last month with fireworks over the Bosphorus Strait, lighting up the Istanbul skyline.

Forged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, the new republic was created by general-turned-politician Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, following threats of invasion from Europeans and Russia.

During his 15-year reign as president he implemented huge political, social and cultural reforms. He replaced the Arabic script with the Latin alphabet and enshrined women's right to vote, years before most European nations.

In 1935, when surnames were introduced in Turkey, he was given the name Atatürk, meaning 'Father of the Turks'. Commemorative ceremonies are still held throughout the country each year to mark his death in 1938.

One of the few countries that straddles two continents, Turkey has soared in popularity as a tourist destination. Ancient temples, spice-laden bazaars, designer shopping and cool nightlife offer the best of east meets west.

Plus, there's 500 Blue Flag beaches, a mild climate and beautiful resorts. Favourites such as Bodrum on its Aegean coast offer hotels for all budgets along with a lively resort town.

Meanwhile, up-and-coming Izmir boasts miles of fabulous coastline and historic sights.

Heading south to its Mediterranean coast, Marmaris and Fethiye draw the crowds to sandy beaches, historic ruins and the Taurus Mountains backdrop.

Brits are now Turkey's third largest inbound tourism market. And next year, Turkey is set to overtake France as the second most popular European destination after Spain, according to a report from World Travel Market.

Tourism minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy said: "Turkey and the UK have deep-rooted relations."

The growth of all-inclusive resorts and water parks has attracted families.

And its cities, such as Istanbul with the Blue Mosque, and Antalya with its old-city district of Kaleiçi, draw in the culture vultures too. goturkiye.com

Travellers arriving at Heathrow, Birmingham and Manchester airports can now reserve an Uber up to 90 days in advance. Drivers will use live flight tracking to adjust their collection time, with wait times extended to 60 minutes to allow for immigration queues. uber.com/qb/en



SMART Playa Garden Selection Hotel



FRESH Harvesting vegetables for Playa Garden



SWEET Figs are on a roll

Douglas Patient spots a growing trend of sustainable tourism in the Balearics

Unable to resist the delicious smell any longer, I dive into the fresh piece of monkfish in front of me. It's certainly the tastiest piece of fish I've ever had, served with pine nuts and green tomatoes. What makes this food really special, though, is not the incredible flavour, but where it comes from.

Each of the tomatoes on my plate were handpicked by the kitchen staff while I watched – all part of the experience here at the Andreu Genestra Restaurant, at the Zoetry hotel hidden in the rolling countryside, just a 25-minute drive from the Majorcan capital Palma.

With its own market garden of more than 26,910 sq ft, its own vineyards and fresh fish sourced from the nearby islands, it's easy to see why chef Andreu Genestra was awarded a green Michelin star for the restaurant recently.

This isn't the only restaurant in Majorca that's directing its focus towards sustainability either. In fact, it's a growing theme across all of the Balearic Islands. With millions of visitors flocking to Majorca, and Jupiter through a telescope at the Formentera Astronomical Association – based in Gecko Hotel & Beach Club – while the moonlight shimmered on the sea.

Another perk of Formentera's small size is its wine. The vines here do not require treatment thanks to the island's favourable conditions: high temperatures, low rainfall and high salinity. The vineyards remain

untouched and today it is one of the few places in the whole of Europe that the International Organisation of Vine and Wine has declared free of the phylloxera plague.

I was able to sample some of the top-notch grapes at Bodega Cap de Barbaria, which produces exquisite whites, reds and sparkling wines. If you're looking for a place to stay, then just 250 yards from Platja del Puig beach sits the easygoing Hotel Casbah which was awarded an honorary tourism award in 2022 from the local government for its sustainability.

Owner Juan Vicente Boned has invested in a machine which turns all the hotel's waste into compost

– and the fruit trees and the vegetable gardens within the hotel grounds provide fresh produce for the onsite restaurant.

Make sure to stroll along the coast and take a dip in the clear sea while you're here too. The reason Formentera's waters are so translucent is down to the seagrass which acts as a carbon sink and provides a habitat for marine life.

A boat trip with Daisee Aguilera Fletcher, head of the Save Posidonia Project and chief executive of Whitesand Solutions, will show you exactly how they are protecting this patch of sea. As we sailed through the waters, we learned how visiting boats

dropping anchor on the grass cause much local ire. Because of this there is now a patrolling team and systems in place to make sure all anchors go on the sand to prevent damage to the delicate ecosystem.

It isn't only Formentera working hard on sustainability, Majorca is the biggest of the Balearic Islands and it is hugely popular with British families and kids.

That was on show in the busy Playa Garden Selection Hotel in Playa de Muro on the east of the island which is aiming to teach the next generation of eco-warriors.

The resort's Woogi Nature children's programme revolves around the four elements of nature: fire, water, air and earth. The 'My Eco Garden' activity educates children on how to love and respect the planet. It's not all about the kids though.

The hotel also has an organic garden and BioCorner in its restaurant which only uses produce sourced from nearby – and let's not forget the after-hours live singing and dancing

We found out there is nothing you cannot put figs into. Fig coffee, fig liqueur and even fig mustard – I purchased two jars to take home. Just a 40-minute drive away is another delight for the culinary senses – Joan Marc Restaurant in the busy



ROCK IT Laidback Hotel Casbah



CLASSY Son Bunyola Virgin Limited Edition hotel



IDYLLIC Balearic Island of Formentera

On top Form

entertainment for the adults.

For a more relaxed and exclusive setting away from the crowds, check into Sir Richard Branson's new five-star Son Bunyola Virgin Limited Edition hotel, set in untouched landscape. It's a sight to behold in the valley with rolling mountains and sunsets kissing the distant sea.

The hotel opened in June after being converted into a luxury property while preserving the historic 16th century elements such as the main tower. It took Branson more than 20 years to obtain the planning permissions but the result does not disappoint.

When you're not admiring the impressive architecture, walking in the 1,300 acres of land or dining on local produce in the hotel, it's worth making the one-hour drive to a vast farm and fig plantation in Son Mut Nou in Llucmajor.

It can only be traversed in a rickety golf buggy and with fig trees from all over the world, it was a thrill to try the fruit straight from the source, tasting sweet and fresh.

We found out there is nothing you cannot put figs into. Fig coffee, fig liqueur and even fig mustard – I purchased two jars to take home. Just a 40-minute drive away is another delight for the culinary senses – Joan Marc Restaurant in the busy

town of Inca. Here foodies can gorge on local seafood such as squid and hake, as well as dill soup and pork loin served with cabbage.

Or, for active holidaymakers, Galatzó in Es Capdellà, Calvià, is home to some excellent walking trails.

Hiking is one of many elements of sustainability that the Majorca tourist tax is being invested back into and this UNESCO world heritage site is the best place to do it.

During our short trek we passed the Ses Porqueres de Galatzó which has been purposely built as a hostel for hikers.

Seven huts have been built across the northwest of the island using money from the tourist tax.

Just another way that the Balearics are taking impressive steps to showcase their sustainability.



GET THERE

Flights to Majorca and Ibiza are available from up to 23 airports across the UK.

Trasmapi operates a 35min ferry service between Ibiza and Formentera with departures every half-hour. Adult return around £41. trasmapi.com

BOOK IT

Rooms at the Hotel Casbah in Playa de Migjorn, Formentera, start at around £122 a night room-only. hotelcasbahformentera.com

Rooms at the Playa Garden Selection Hotel & Spa in Playa de Muro, Majorca, start at around £69 a night room-only; £181 all-inclusive. gardenhotels.com

MORE INFO

illesbalears.travel
sustainableislands.travel

“It was a thrill to try the fruit straight from the source, sweet and fresh”

NATURAL

Vineyards in Formentera



Save 25% on Caledonian Sleeper train fares from January 4 to February 7 on all routes between London and Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Fort William or Aberdeen, and all room types and seats. Book by midnight on November 30 using discount code SLEEPER25 at sleeper.scot

TUI breaks tours record

Travel giant TUI has unveiled its biggest ever tour programme for summer 2025, featuring new itineraries in destinations such as Kenya and Crete.

Twenty-two hotspots are now on sale with stays ranging from four to 21 nights offering authentic experiences, and covering guided groups, and private and self-drive tours. A spokesman said: "Our expertise across the globe means we have the best people on the ground delivering tours and experiences, with variety to suit different travellers."

"In particular, our flying options with trusted partners means even more flexibility for our customers, with more durations and more airports to choose from across the UK. We know there is demand for tour experiences without the fuss, that's why we sort everything, including flights, hotels, transfers and even tickets."

Holidays include an 11-night Highlights of Kenya tour in search of the Big Five animals with views of Kilimanjaro and a beach stay from £2,639 per person. There's a seven-night Incredible Crete itinerary with a 4X4 adventure drive and visits to Knossos Palace and the former Spinalonga leper colony, starting at £1,084 each.

TUI will also be offering almost 100 multi-centre getaways for 2025 in hotspots such as Jamaica, Mexico and Thailand. tui.co.uk

BUY OF THE WEEK

BY NIGEL THOMPSON



A planet-friendly way to freshen up on your travels, each zero waste kit includes two handcrafted natural soaps, a shampoo bar and a conditioner bar.

It's small batch UK-made, cruelty free and vegan, the organic cotton facecloth will compost, as will the label, and the aluminium tin it all comes in recyclable or reusable.

Amazon Earth Zero Waste Travel Kit, £9.95, amazon.co.uk/SmallBusinessXmas