

EUROPE

Best Mediterranean islands to visit

Whether you're looking for culture, beaches or some world-class partying, here's where to find your island idyll



James Litston | Wednesday November 17 2021, 19:09pm

From Saint-Tropez to Bodrum, Barcelona and the Cinque Terre, the Mediterranean coastline isn't short of dazzling destinations. But in many ways, it's the region's many islands that steal the show. Be they obvious spots such as Mallorca, the largest Spanish island in the Mediterranean basin, or lesser-known archipelagos such as the Princes' Islands near Istanbul or Sardinia's Isola della Maddalena, these offshore outposts are guaranteed holiday gold.

Beyond beautiful beaches and sunny skies, a Mediterranean island escape might bring anything from ancient history to hiking, sailing or scuba diving. Ferry connections give rise to the joy of island-hopping, effectively blending several holidays into one. Bear in mind that some more touristy islands can become ghost towns outside the summer season; but if sunbathing is not a priority, a Palma de Mallorca city break, for example, is a year-round delight. This is our pick of the best islands to visit.

5. Santorini, Greece

Rivalling Mykonos for its cosmopolitan edge, [Santorini](#) is perhaps the most iconic Greek island of them all. Its white-painted villages and blue-domed churches gaze down at the cobalt Aegean from the sweeping rim of an ancient volcanic crater — the remnants of a cataclysmic eruption some 3,500 years ago. Of its villages, Oia is the go-to spot for sunsets, Fira is brilliant for clubs, bars and restaurants, and Imerovigli is more chilled out. Take in all three with a lovely hike along the crater's-edge footpath.

Where to stay Andronis Concept, a sea-facing spa retreat in Imerovigli where all rooms have private terraces and plunge pools.