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Flavours of Asia A chef's guide to Singapore

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Find a beach to call your own

Avoid the summer crowds and seek out sunshine in the month of May, when Europe's shores are at their best, says *Chris Leadbeater*

Cover story

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splendid soaring red cliffs.
 ● Home Away (0843 504 7259; homeaway.co.uk) offers a two-bedroom cottage (ref 869679) in Aljezur, from £674 a week during May. British Airways (0344 493 0787; ba.com) flies to Faro, 70 miles east.

Playa de Dunas, Ferrel

£22C

Squirrelled in the ocean-front town of Ferrel, 60 miles north of Lisbon in the Oeste region, Playa de Dunas is also a magnet for surfers due to the shape of the land – which presents three different angled faces to the sea, making for waves galore.

Like most Portuguese beaches not on Faro's doorstep, it is not on speed-dial for British tourists, but it has a splendid hotel in Surfers Lodge Peniche.

● A week in a double room at Surfers Lodge Peniche (00351 262 700 030; surferslodgepeniche.com) in May starts at £440 per person, with breakfast, but not flights.

Albania

Ksamil Beach, near Saranda

£23C

Albania shows its best side at this delicious cove in the village of Ksamil, nine miles south of the resort town of Saranda. You can swim out to three islands near the bay, admire the outline of Corfu, or slumber after a morning at the Roman site Butrint.

● Regent Holidays (020 3811 5160; regent-holidays.co.uk) offers a private eight-day Coast & Culture Tour which spends three nights in Ksamil. From £1765 per person, including flights.

Channel islands

Belvoir Beach, Hermit

£15C

Guernsey's boy-next-door cannot compete with the Adriatic for May temperatures, but it gives an impression of warmth – and even a visual hint of the Caribbean – in

Aphrodite's Rock, Paphos, above; the Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum, below; and Butrint, Albania, far right



Playa de Dunas is a surfer magnet due to the shape of the land



hides immediately south of (and yet is far less busy than) the hotel area of Golden Bay – reached only by a flight of steps, and overlooked by a 17th-century watchtower.
 ● A seven-night break at the five-star Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Golden Sands, flying from Stansted on May 21, costs from £520 per person – including breakfast – through Expedia (020 3564 5165; expedia.co.uk).

Montenegro

Velika Plaza, Ulcinj

£23C

Albania's Adriatic neighbour to the north, Montenegro has gained a reputation for chichi accommodation. But the yacht set has yet to make it to the town of Ulcinj, in the south – or to Velika Plaza, its eight-mile sandy miracle, which is as underdeveloped as it is pretty.

● A seven-night stay (with breakfast) at the four-star Hotel Palata Venezia in the old town, arriving on May 6, is £267 per person via Booking.com (020 3564 6725). Ulcinj is 55 miles from Tivat, which welcomes easyJet flights from Gatwick and Manchester.

Turkey

Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum

£25C

The tranquillity of Bodrum is often unrecognised. The peninsula that holds this resort town, at Turkey's south-west corner, is a forested nugget whose northern edge is blessed with a range of five-star properties. Among them is the Mandarin Oriental which boasts two private beaches (plus 109 rooms and a spa) on the aptly titled Paradise Bay.

● A seven-night stay with breakfast, starting May 13, at the Mandarin Oriental (telegraph.co.uk/tt-mandarin-orientalbodrum), costs from £1,359 per person. EasyJet (0330 365 5000; easyjet.com) flies to Bodrum.

its unlikely palm-fringed majesty. The absence of cars on Herm ensures Belvoir Beach is rarely busy – the ferry from St Peter Port moors on the far side of what is a pastoral isle, meaning you must hike for 20 minutes to find the sand.

● The White House Hotel (telegraph.co.uk/tt-thewhitehousehotel), the outcrop's prime lodge, has double rooms from £144, with breakfast.

west of the Istria peninsula. The east side of the biggest outcrop, Veliki Brijun, offers Verige Bay – a narrow cove that accessorises its clear, sparkling waters and solitude with the remains of a first-century BC Roman villa.

● Hotel Istra-Neptun (00385 52 525807; istra.hr/en) – on the harbour where the ferry docks from Fazana – has double rooms from £53, with breakfast. EasyJet flies to nearby Pula.

Specifically, it lurks 17 miles to the north – a horseshoe bay protected as a nesting site for green turtles, and naked of all development but for its car park. You need a four-wheel-drive to reach it, but any such dash is worth it.

● A week at the chic Annabelle (telegraph.co.uk/tt-theannabelle) spa hotel, arriving on May 20, costs £580 per person – with breakfast. EasyJet flies to Paphos.

Croatia

Verige Bay, Brijuni archipelago

£21C

Croatia can arguably claim Europe's loveliest tranche of coastline. Especially so upon the largely uninhabited Brijuni islands, just

Cyprus

Lara Beach, near Paphos

£24C

A glorious swathe of sand on the Cypriot west coast, Lara Beach floats within Paphos's orbit, but also keeps its distance from this sunshine city.

Malta

Ghajn Tuffieha, Golden Sands

£23C

Away on the north-west coast, on the far side of the main island from the holiday staples St Julian's and Sliema, Ghajn Tuffieha is a Maltese jewel. It

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