

take 3
OUR Take Three column offers a trio of cut-out-and-keep holiday suggestions. This week, we're looking at self-catering villas offering winter sunshine, all with their own private heated pools and with availability from January to March 2023.

VILLA YOU OR WON'T YOU?



BUDGET - Villa Bezanilla, Lanzarote: If you're after guaranteed warmth, Lanzarote is a comfortable 20C this month and at Villa Bezanilla there's a private pool, table tennis and barbecue area. The three-bedroom property is just a few minutes' drive from Playa Blanca, home to some great-value restaurants like Plaza Churreria that does top-notch tapas. You're also close to the beach and sun-kissed coast. Seven nights' self-catering costs from £88pp, based on six sharing.



BARGAIN - Rafael II, Portugal: This modern, two-storey townhouse in Portugal feels exclusive, with breathtaking views of the ocean from the pool and balconies. It sleeps four people in two double bedrooms, both with en-suites and balconies, plus it's just a short drive to the former fishing village of Albufeira with excellent beaches and nightlife. If you don't drive, there are plenty of cafes and restaurants within walking distance, including a terrific Italian steakhouse. Seven nights' self-catering costs from £225pp, based on four people sharing.



BLOWOUT - Villa Insignia, Lanzarote: Everything in this chic villa, on the southern coast of Lanzarote, simply sparkles - from the marble kitchen to the swimming-pool lights at night. You'll probably spend most of your time on the sun terrace, which features a dining area, 12-metre pool with waterfall, and hot-springs jacuzzi, all overlooking the mountains. If you can tear yourself away from the eight-person home, you're a short way from the pretty town of Puerto del Carmen, with beaches and a lively night scene. Seven nights from £417pp, based on eight people sharing. Book these villas at: jamesvillas.co.uk

EASYJET has released a new holiday-friendly get-fit regime swapping gym equipment for luggage. The workouts, which are available via YouTube, have been devised by cabin crew and personal trainer Aimee Corry. She based them on the daily routine of the cabin crew, who clock up half a million steps a year on the job. Passengers can follow routines like the Travel Bag Body Blast and exercises such as "landing lunges"

and "the pilot's press". Each routine in the HIT-style programme is performed for 40 seconds. You then rest for 20 seconds before moving on to the next one. Three to four rounds can burn up to 100 calories. Georgia Phelan, a cabin crew member with easyJet, said: "Looking after our customers is a fast-paced, dynamic job. So we all really enjoyed bringing that energy to these creative get-fit routines to help make getting active easy and enjoyable - all from your own home."

HOLIDAYMAKERS on a budget should look to Travel Republic to bag their next bargain. The online travel agent has recently been commended by consumer watchdog Which? for its great value. It was also one of only three providers to be awarded a full five stars for value for money in Which's beach/resort holiday category, with an average short-haul price of less than £100pp per night.



lates
CYPRUS: Seven nights' B&B at the 3* Theo Sunset Bay hotel is from £279pp, including flights from Manchester on January 18. See jet2holidays.com or call 0800 408 5594.
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: A one-night Winter Warmer Spa Break at the 4* Horwood House is from £183.20pp, including breakfast, dinner (£30pp) and spa access. Selected dates in January and February. See horwoodhouse.co.uk.
PORTUGAL: Seven nights' B&B at the 4* Real Bellavista Hotel & Spa is from £290pp, including Manchester flights on February 4. See easyjet.com/en/holidays or call 0330 365 5005.

BRITISH Airways has added new short-haul routes to its Gatwick-based subsidiary, BA Euroflyer. Flights to Montpellier in France will launch three times weekly on May 27 for the summer period, while a new service to Innsbruck in Austria will run eight times weekly for the winter ski season. Customers will also have even more choice when it comes to holidaying in Greece, with Corfu and Mykonos added to the Gatwick subsidiary on top of current routes from Heathrow. BA Euroflyer's Tom Stoddart said: "It is exciting to see our short-haul schedule at Gatwick grow."

ITALIAN PARADISE JUST GOT CHEAPER



TEE-HEE... kids' club fun for young ones

PICTURESQUE... historic town of Castelsardo



Food, sun, beaches... it's a Sardinian life

AS we wind through rugged, green hills toward the glittering Med, the landscape shimmers in 30C sunshine.

The 90-minute drive from Sardinia's Olbia airport twists and turns through spectacular scenery.

Northern Sardinia has always been a hidden gem with its white-sand beaches and rocky coves but, with limited flights from the UK, prices were always high.

Now, though, budget airlines easyJet, Ryanair, Jet2 and Tui, fly direct to this Italian paradise isle, as well as British Airways - and this has seen prices fall.

Spring and autumn are also cheaper than peak season, yet beautifully warm.

Our home from home in September was Resort Le Dune on the island's north-west coast, overlooking the Gulf of Asinara.

Spread over 170 hectares, the resort feels like a continuation of the local countryside. Everything there - its five hotels, ten restaurants and six pools - is enclosed by lush foliage. Walking through the resort, you are always immersed in greenery - from

GO: SARDINIA

GETTING THERE: Direct flights from Gatwick to Olbia are available from May with easyJet, from £55 return. See easyjet.com.

STAYING THERE: Le Dune opens on May 19, 2023 and there is an early-booking discount of ten per cent on all stays booked before February 28. Prices for a family of three in a standard room, half-board and including free mini-club, are from £155 per night. For a family of four staying in a family suite, prices are from £240 per night. See delphinahotels.co.uk.

juniper trees dating to the 18th century, to giant reeds and cacti, while lantana flowers bring splashes of colour.

It makes for a tranquil haven for those looking to recharge, as well as offering shade during the hottest bits of the day.

My partner and I were staying at the resort's Le Sabine hotel, where a walk-in lagoon-style pool was perfect for our two-year-old daughter to splash about in.

Its 94 rooms are decorated in calm, pastel colours and with traditional Sardinian fabrics. A poolside bar serves tasty caprese

salads and ice-cold drinks when you need a break from the sun - still going strong when we visited.

If you want to really unwind, the spa is just a short stroll away. Its three hydro-therapy pools were a treat for our weary limbs and there are plenty of treatments if you want to splash out.

Stunning Li Junchi Beach is also bang on your doorstep. Its soft sand and turquoise water make the perfect picture for a smug Instagram account. It's no wonder the beach recently won a coveted Blue Flag award.

Octopus stew

While our daughter built sandcastles in front of the gently lapping surf, we enjoyed some rare sunbathing time.

Later, as the gorgeous tangerine sun set, we grabbed a spritz at the beach bar before dinner at the hotel's beachfront restaurant.

There are all sorts of treats, from grilled lamb chops to fried red mullet, plus enough pasta options to keep everyone happy - including our little one who tucked into a simple penne in tomato sauce.

We also dined at three other restaurants during our stay. Our half-board plan included access to all five of the resort's

THANKS TO BUDGET FLIGHTS



GOLLY SPLASH... having fun in the pool



FEAST YOUR EYES... seaside dining at Resort Le Dune



MED IN HEAVEN... Poros has a traditional vibe and is not without nightlife

GO THE EXTRA ISLE TO FIND THE REAL GREECE

LOOKING for some inspiration for your next Greek escape?

While Corfu, Rhodes and Crete are longtime favourites, there are more than 227 inhabited islands - and now Olympic Holidays has handpicked a selection of alternatives spanning the Cyclades, Ionian and Saronic islands.

Tinos is best for an experience of authentic village life, with its many tavernas. The island has some superb walking trails connecting the villages and there are several beaches. Stay at Mr & Mrs White Tinos, a stone's throw from St. John's beach and a few minutes' drive from the centre. With traditional Cycladic and contemporary architecture, all bedrooms enjoy an impressive view of the gardens and pool. Seven nights' B&B is from £822pp including June flights and transfers.

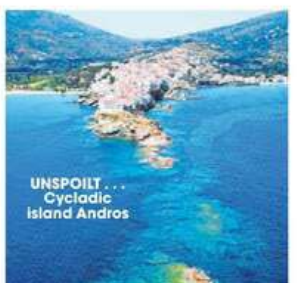
Andros is an unspoilt natural gem. Unusually for a Cycladic island, it is lush and green and has escaped mass tourism. The island's main settlement, Chora, is a draw for history buffs with a fascinating blend of Venetian, Byzantine and Ottoman architecture.

For culture vultures, there are archaeological museums in Chora and Paleopolis, the ancient capital of Andros. Its interior features forests, streams, waterfalls and unique habitat for flora and wildlife.

Stay at the 5* Micra Anglia Boutique Hotel & Spa - three 18th-century mansions, Micra Anglia means Little England in Greek - the island's nickname that came from its significant heritage as a naval and merchant shipping power - and with an air of nostalgia, the hotel's design captures the romance of the island's past grandeur.

Seven nights' B&B is from £903pp this May, including flights and transfers. Kefalonia is another must for nature lovers. Mount Ainos National Park is teeming with wildlife including wild ponies, golden eagles, ospreys and other protected species.

The largest of the Ionian islands, it was the setting for the film Captain Correlli's Mandolin and is an ideal destination to pair with a stop



UNSPOILT... Cycladic island Andros

on the better-known Corfu. Stay at the 5* Ionian Emerald Resort Hotel in Karavomylos, a boutique property on the seafloor close to some lovely beaches.

With a large pool and great views, seven nights' B&B is from 850pp including flights and transfers in May.

The Saronic islands of Spetses, Aegina and Poros are a fantastic island-hopping combination.

Spetses is a traditional little place with a history stretching back 10,000 years and has been able to retain a true sense of the old Greece.

Aegina is the closest island to Athens, so a favourite with natives for short breaks. The island's highlight is the famous Aphaia Temple, with views across the Saronic Gulf.

Lively nightspots, cafes and shops line the waterfront on Poros island, a charming blend of traditional and modern.

The Authentic Greece Island Hopping Experience starts from £1,439pp for nine nights travelling this summer, including all accommodation, flights and on the ground transfers. For all details, see olympicholidays.com.



BAY OF SUNSHINE... Spetses is taste of old Greece, with 10,000-year history

MIKE ANSTEAD