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Active holidays



Score a hole in one with a top-class golf break

From stunning coastal Scottish links to Portugal's golfing capital, you can play at some of the world's best courses on these sure-shot holidays, says Tim Southwell

great golf holiday is the defining event of any golfer's year. Whether you're embarking on an intrepid jaunt through the wild, rolling contours of the UK's finest seaside links courses or strolling your way round a classic, pristine European resort, it's what we live for.

Accommodation can vary from a modest B&B to the luxury of a five-star resort. But for most, it doesn't really matter where you stay. The only thing that truly matters is that there is a high-quality – and if you're lucky – world-class golf course waiting for you each morning.

This list of golfing gems encapsulates all of the above. Get ready to drool, golfers.

Lap it up: Costa Navarino, in Greece, combines first-rate leisure facilities with

world-class golf

Dundonald Links, Scotland

Located in the heart of this coastal golfing capital, Dundonald Links is a spectacular venue, host to both the Women's Scottish Open and Final Qualifying for the Open Championship. The layout is known for its imaginative greens and challenging bunkers, earning a place among the star names of western Scotland. Under the owner, Darwin Escapes, heavy investment has seen Dundonald Links evolve into a fully-fledged resort. Guests can stay in either the premium rooms or a collection of luxurious, self-catering lodges with putting greens out front.

Stay Dundonald Links (dundonald links.com) offers packages from £175pp per night, including two rounds of golf and breakfast. Fly to



Costa Navarino, Greece

Offering an outstanding combination Terras da Comporta, of world-class golf, five-star accommodation and numerous leisure and lifestyle facilities, Costa Navarino is regarded as one of the world's premier golfing venues. Situated in southern Peloponnese, the destination features four signature 18-hole courses and was at last year's World Golf Awards. Away from the fairways, guests have a choice of four five-star hotels – including Greece's first Mandarin Oriental – as well as more than 40 dining and entertainment venues, state-of-the-art sports facilities, world-class spas and engagement with the region's culture, history and nature.

Stay Costa Navarino (costanavarino. com) offers five nights at the Westin Resort from £955pp, including breakfast and three rounds on any course. Fly to Kalamata with British Airways (ba.com) from £221 return.



The Dunas Course, **Portugal**

Set on the edge of the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve, the par-71 layout has been created over 84 hectares of natural, sandy terrain and has the look and feel of named as the World's Best Golf Venue a course much, much older. The venue will open its second 18-hole championship course, the Torre Course, this summer. Designed by Sergio Garcia and inspired by the 2017 Masters champion's favourite track, Valderrama, the course will be the first major layout for which the Spaniard has been responsible for the overall design.

Stay Terras da Comporta (comporta. com) offers green fees on The Dunas Course from £200pp. Quinta Da Comporta (quintadacomporta.com) has junior suites from £334pp, for two people. Fly to Lisbon with TAP (flytap. com) from £200 return.



Old Head of Kinsale, Ireland

If it's good enough for Tiger Woods, it's good enough for us. When the 15-time major winner first walked on to the 12th tee at Old Head his reaction was priceless: "Holy crap!" He was faced with a monstrous vision - 564-yards on a tightrope hugging the Atlantic Ocean. You play this hole by aiming, not at the fairway, but out to sea at a 90-degree angle. If you hit a good one, the ball will dutifully sail back from the middle of the ocean and on to the fairway. No wonder Old Head has been called "Pebble Beach on steroids" - a breathtaking, must-visit golf destination.

Stay YourGolfTravel.com offers a night's stay at Kinsale Hotel and Spa from £383pp, including breakfast, one round at Old Head Golf Links and one round at Castlemartyr Resort. Fly to Cork with Aer Lingus (aerlingus.com) from £83 one way

The second course: relive your best shots over lunch at The Club Cafe, Camiral Golf

Featuring 46 holes of world-class golf, as well as a collection of luxury private and contemporary accommodation and extensive lifestyle facilities, Les Bordes is regarded among the game's most prestigious golf venues. The site provided the ideal setting for world number one Scottie Scheffler to put the finishing touches to his game on his way to gold medal glory at last sum· mer's Olympics. Serious golf aficionados can follow in Scheffler's footsteps this summer with the recent launch of Les Bordes' Once in a Lifetime experiences, which provide a limited onetime chance to immerse themselves in daily life on the 1,400-acre private estate to successful applicants. Stay Les Bordes (esbordesestate.com)

Les Bordes, France

offers a Once In A Lifetime experience, including full board and daily golf on the Old Course or spa activities for two people, prices on application. Fly to Paris Orly with British Airways from £140 return.

Monte Rei Golf & Country Club, Portugal

If you talk to a golfer who has played at Monte Rei, you will notice they all have a quiet, confident assertion that the Jack Nicklaus-designed Signature Course – the North Course – is the best golf course they have ever played. Situated among the picturesque foothills of the Eastern Algarve, Monte Rei has become one of Portugal's most famous names – many people regard it as the number-one golf venue in the Algarve, such is the quality of its facilities. Monte Rei has also begun construction on a second 18-hole layout, with the South Course also being designed by 18-time Major winner, Nicklaus.

Stay Monte Rei (monte-rei.com) offers three nights from £58pp, in a three-bedroom Miradouro Linked Villa based on six guests sharing, including breakfast, two rounds of golf and access to leisure facilities. Fly to Faro with easyJet from £110 return.

Camiral Golf & Wellness, Spain

There is a beguiling, welcome calm about Camiral. Set among the rolling contours and pine forests of Catalonia, Camiral Golf & Wellness is synonymous with tournament-quality golf courses and luxury accommodation, including a range of beautifully designed villas, townhouses and apartments. With two acclaimed golf courses, including the Stadium Course, ranked among the best in Europe, firstclass sports facilities and wellness offerings, Camiral provides everything you'd need for an active (or relaxing) break. Located 10 minutes from the historic city of Girona and only an hour from bustling Barcelona, Camiral offers something to suit all tastes in a truly exceptional setting. Stay Camiral Golf & Wellness

(camiral.com) offers three nights from £1,000, including breakfast, one round at the Stadium Golf Course and two rounds at Tour Golf Course for two people. Fly to Barcelona or Girona with Ryanair (ryanair.com) from £85 return.

▲ To the fore: Catalonia's Camiral Golf & Wellness offers tournamentquality golf courses

✓ Eat, swing, repeat: Camiral Golf & Wellness entices both on and off

> Local sights: Pitigliano, in Italy's wild Maremma region, is in easy reach of Argentario Golf & Wellness Resort; far right, Trump International Golf Links & Hotel in Doonbeg, Ireland has an owner who needs no

introduction







courses. Fly to Lisbon with easyJet

Trump International Golf Links & Hotel Ireland, Doonbeg, Ireland

from £78 one way.

When you arrive at Doonbeg, you are immediately gripped with a delightful sense of isolation. In the middle of nowhere, you can feel the weight of life sliding off your shoulders and into the Atlantic. That serenity may be challenged somewhat when you're standing on the famous 111-yard, par-3 14th hole, where you'll be playing anything from a wedge to a driver depending on the wind, Trump International Golf Links & Hotel Doonbeg is a coastal haven, hidden on a sheltered corner of the Wild Atlantic Way where world-class golf meets an intimate spa, amazing food and access to the best activities, culture **Stay** Praia D'El Rey (praia-del-rey.com) and heritage on offer in West Clare. offers two-night packages from £210pp Stay Trump International Ireland's

with breakfast, including two rounds on Praia D'El Rey and West Cliffs golf hotels.com) offers a one-night stay from £850 per room, including breakfast and one round of Championship Links Golf. Fly to Shannon Airport with Aer Lingus from £40 return.

Sotogrande, Spain

Three elite golf courses within one destination - that's hard to beat. Known for its quiet luxury, Sotogrande, situated on the spectacular Andalusian coast, offers an idyllic mix of world-class golf, Mediterranean beaches, fine dining and wellness. And the golf courses? How does Real Club Valderrama, La Reserva Club and Real Club Sotogrande sound? To access them all stay at the Sotogrande Spa & Golf Resort, a chic, five-star destination known for its holistic offerings and panoramic Mediterranean views. **Stay** Sotogrande Spa & Golf Resort (so-hotels.com) offers three nights from €604 (£510)pp, including one round at Almenara Golf Club and one round at La Reserva Golf Club. Fly to either Malaga (from £100 return) or Gibraltar (from £160) with easyJet.

A Nice shot: rooms Royal Porthcawl, Wales at Argentario Golf & Wellness Resort look out over a

verdant valley

Widely regarded as the finest golf course in Wales (Masters champion Freddy Couples is a huge fan), Royal Porthcawl is a dramatic test of your links golfing prowess. The opening few holes are truly breathtaking - running fairways, deep bunkers and raised greens that are hard to hit and even more difficult to hold. Most importantly, there are sea views aplenty. Not every links course gives you a good look at the ocean and the surrounding beaches, which are often shielded by large imposing dunes. One of Royal Porthcawl's claims to fame is that you can see the ocean from every hole on the course.

Stay Royal Porthcawl Golf Club (royalporthcawl.com) offers rooms in the on-site dormitory-style accommodation from £145 per night for two in a twin room, including breakfast. Golf passes cost £225 in off-season (October to April) and £250 during peak season with its long evening light. Trains from Cardiff to Bridgend run regularly.

Lofoten Links, Norway

There can be no more mesmerising or magical place for a golf holiday than Lofoten Links. Located above the Arctic Circle in northern Norway and set against dramatic backdrops of ocean, fjords, mountains and beaches, experience the midnight sun in summer and even potential views of the northern lights in early or late season. Lofoten Links is a spectacular 18-hole seaside course combining wild, rugged scenery with pure links play. This pristine golf course is a true bucket-list experience for golfers from around the world, offering 24-hour daylight golf for a month either side of June's sum mer solstice.

Stay Lofoten Links (lofotenlinks.no) offers three nights from £640pp, including accommodation in on-site lodges and three rounds of golf. Fly to Bodø via Oslo with SAS (flysas.com) from £191.

Princes, England

Ah, Princes. What a gem. Nestled along the stunning Kent coastline, Prince's Golf Club offers an authentic links golf experience steeped in history and challenge. Once host to The Open Championship in 1932 (won by Gene Sarazen), this 27-hole championship venue combines the character of traditional links with modern refinement, including on-site, top-class accommodation, restaurant and bar. It has recently been announced that Princes will host the 2030 Walker Cup for the first time. Popular with both seasoned golfers and links enthusiasts, the course offers year-round playabil ity with its sandy soil and sea breeze. Stay Princes Golf Club (princes golfclub.co.uk) offers a night's stay in The Lodge from £325pp, including half board and two rounds. Trains from Charing Cross to Sandwich run every hour (southeasternrailway

Argentario Golf & Wellness Resort, *Italy*

Argentario Golf & Wellness Resort, Autograph Collection is nestled in a verdant valley on Monte Argentario. one of the most exclusive locations in Tuscany's wild territory of Maremma. The resort is surrounded by cork-oak woods and gnarled, centuries-old olive trees, home to hares, deer, squirrels, wild boars and various bird species to keep twitchers entertained. The private estate extends across 77 hectares, protected by environmental certification. It's a pristine paradise without any cars, just electric golf carts. The resort's PGA National golf course is one of the finest in Europe, and will host this year's Italian Open on June 26.

Stay Your Golf Travel (yourgolftravel. com) offers four nights at The Argentario Golf & Wellness Resort from £897pp, including breakfast and (here's the real bonus) unlimited rounds. Fly to Rome with Wizzair (wizzair.com) from £92 return.

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and offers incredible dining at The Cliff at Cap & The Naked Fisherman restaurants.

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