

# What's your holiday style?

From cultural breaks to romantic retreats, find your perfect getaway...



One of Grand Hotel Paraiso's stunning pools

## LUXURY IBEROSTAR GRAND HOTEL PARAISO, MEXICO

**THE LOWDOWN** There's a reason the likes of Julia Roberts, Christina Aguilera and Justin Timberlake head to Cancun when they need a bit of R&R. With sun, sea and sand that stretches for miles, it's the ideal place to relax.

The five star Iberostar Grand Hotel Paraiso sits on a stunning private beach in the heart of the Maya Riviera and it screams luxury, from the gorgeous lagoon-style outdoor pool to the 24-hour butler service. What could be more extravagant than a hand-delivered cocktail to your sunlounger?! There's also a swim-up bar at this adults-only resort and a stunning indoor pool with massage jets in the spa area. There's even a shopping centre on site.

When you're feeling peckish, you've got four fantastic restaurants to choose from, including an American steakhouse where we feasted on some of the best ribs we've ever had and a Japanese Teppanyaki that had us salivating into

our sushi. The resort is all-inclusive so you can expect a lavish breakfast buffet too, with fantastic views of the Caribbean sea. Plus the evening entertainment is spot on – bring comfy shoes, you will be dancing!

**OUT AND ABOUT** We loved our trip to Xplor, a theme park like no other, where you can go rafting through caves and ziplining over the lush Mexican jungle. The spectacular Mayan ruins down the coast in Tulum are also a must-see, with temples and a castle to visit.

**NEED TO KNOW** Signature from Thomas Cook offers seven nights at Iberostar Grand Hotel Paraiso on an all-inclusive basis from £1,605 per person based on two sharing, including flights. See [thomascook.com](http://thomascook.com) or call 0844 412 5970 to book.



Julia Roberts has visited Mexico



The hotel overlooks a gorgeous sandy beach

## HOME FROM HOME VILLA VAGER, GREECE

**THE LOWDOWN** This beautiful hotel in the Peloponnese has been painstakingly restored by its owners after the mansion, built in 1843, fell into disrepair. The cosy rooms have stunning views of the mountains of Arcadia and there are wood burning stoves in case it gets chilly in the evening. There's also a sitting room where guests can relax, watch DVDs or play board games.

A delicious homemade breakfast, featuring a different Greek speciality like courgette frittata every day, is served next to the balcony. It's tempting to spend all day chilling out in the hydropool spa, but there's plenty to visit in the area. The owners are happy to advise on routes or they organise day trips on their own quad bikes to local sights in the mountains.

**OUT AND ABOUT** We'd definitely recommend hiring a car to go sightseeing. We made the

petrifying but beautiful journey to Olympia to see the ancient stadium. Closer to home, there are monasteries and the idyllic mountain towns of Dimitsana and Stemnitsa to visit, or you can just wander through the lush valleys. The hotel can provide pizzas in the evening on request, or you can try a delicious gyros pitta in the local restaurants in the town square.



The surrounding countryside is stunning

You'll be made to feel welcome at Villa Vager

**NEED TO KNOW** Doubles from £100 a night including breakfast. See [Hotelvager.gr](http://Hotelvager.gr) for details. We flew to Kalamata with easyJet (Easyjet.com), which is about two and a half hours from Levidi by car.

## HEALTHY TI SANA DETOX RETREAT, ITALY

**THE LOWDOWN** This upscale retreat in a sleepy hamlet in northern Italy is bursting with rustic charm and charisma. Ti Sana means "to take care of you", which is fitting as the peaceful setting relaxes you from the minute you arrive.

The resort focuses on revitalising your body and mind and we began our stay with a body composition analysis and a test to assess our stress levels. We were then given a programme for the duration of our stay, which included an active class such as HIIT in the morning, a walk after breakfast and a relaxing class such as yoga or t'ai chi in the early evening. Healthy meals were made up of organic and locally farmed produce and included delicious fresh juices, homemade banana bread and courgetti.

We spent most of our downtime in the outdoor hot tub or unwinding in the spa, which has three different saunas. Treatments on offer range from exfoliating scrubs and purifying baths to soothing wraps and anti-aging facials.

After three days at the retreat, we left feeling brighter, lighter, calmer and refreshed.

**OUT AND ABOUT** The scenery around Ti Sana is simply stunning. Walk, or run, up the 349 steps of Santuario Madonna del Bosco (a chapel with serious wow factor) for breathtaking mountain views. Or head to the beautiful Lake Sartirana for a scenic walk. The retreat can also organise excursions to nearby Milan and Como.



The retreat is full of rustic charm



There are daily exercise classes

**NEED TO KNOW** See [Ryanair.com](http://Ryanair.com) for direct flights from London Stansted to Milan Bergamo (from under £200 return). On arrival, it's a

45-minute drive to Ti Sana. Book your wellness break at 1711.it from £2,000 per person for four days including diagnosis tests, five spa treatments, a customised nutrition plan (full board) and takeaway food kit, fresh juices and teas, one excursion, a cooking class, airport transfers, two daily activity classes and use of all the facilities. You can choose between slimming, relaxing and energising packages.



The relaxation room in the luxury spa

## CITY BREAK ARIA HOTEL, BUDAPEST

**THE LOWDOWN** With its rich history, beautiful architecture, thermal spas and quirky nightlife, Hungary's capital has a lot to offer as a city break destination. And the Aria Hotel is the perfect base from which to explore it. The hotel's design is inspired by all things music, with rooms named after composers and musicians and each of the four wings themed on a music genre – classical, jazz, contemporary and opera.

There's a library stocked full of music DVDs, books and CDs for you to enjoy in your room. And from 4-6pm every day you can enjoy complimentary wine and cheese in the Music Garden Courtyard while listening to the pianist, who's playing a specially designed Hungarian piano of which there are only three in the world! The musical influence even carries into your dining experience – with the goat's cheese produced by a shepherd who plays jazz to his goats!

There's also an impressive year-round rooftop bar overlooking the city below, and if you're in need of some pampering you can relax in the Harmony Spa, which has a heated pool, Jacuzzi and steam rooms.

**OUT AND ABOUT** Start your sightseeing with a visit to the magnificent St Stephen's Basilica, which is opposite the hotel, then wander into the Jewish Quarter for



St Stephen's Basilica is visible from the Aria Hotel's rooftop bar

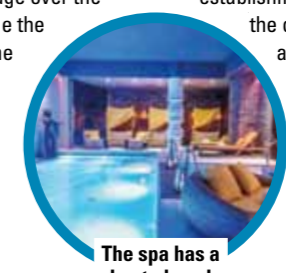


Katy Perry filmed the video for Firework in Budapest

great food and a hipster vibe. Be sure to cross the bridge over the River Danube and ride the funicular up to see the grand Parliament building and Hungarian castles. We had a fab night out at Szipmla Kert, one of

Budapest's many "ruin bars" – trendy drinking establishments that have popped up across the city in buildings that were abandoned after World War II. We loved the eclectic furnishings and buzzing atmosphere.

**NEED TO KNOW** See [BA.com](http://BA.com) for flights, from £45 each way. Rooms from £190 per night at [Ariahotelbudapest.com](http://Ariahotelbudapest.com).



The spa has a heated pool

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PHOTOS: FilmMagic, iMPhoto.com