

TOP 25 *Mediterranean Experiences*

Natarsha Brown shares her top picks of the most exclusive and exhilarating experiences to enjoy across the Mediterranean.





1 HIDE IN MALLORCA'S MOUNTAINS

Located in the village of Deià, Belmond La Residencia is one of Europe's most idyllic hideaways. Owned by Richard Branson in the 1980s and a preferred refuge of Princess Diana and (today) Leonardo DiCaprio, the secluded resort is flanked by steep hillsides terraced with vegetable gardens and orchards. belmond.com

2 CHARTER A QUEEN

For \$2.9 million a week, affluent travellers can charter the 92-metre *Queen Miri* to cruise the Med. Sleeping 36 guests, the boat boasts marbled bathrooms, pools, a Jacuzzi, gym, baby grand piano, six jet skis, a movie theatre, library and a helicopter pad that converts into a party deck. yachtcharterfleet.com

3 CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE ROLEX RACE

One of the world's finest offshore regattas, the Rolex Middle Sea Race (from 17 October 2020) covers 606 nautical miles, from Malta's Grand Harbour then anti-clockwise around Sicily. Sailors seeking pure adrenaline can circumnavigate the entire route without stops on *viviSail's* Class40 yacht. vivisail.com

4 EAT TO EXCESS

Among Europe's most expensive restaurants, Ibiza's *Sublimotion* is a multi-sensory adventure. The one-table dining experience combines a Michelin-starred 20-course menu by Chef Paco Roncero, with whimsical elements like laser projections and self-mixing drinks. The aim? To tickle your dining senses and enhance the meal. sublimotionibiza.com

5 REVIVE IN TURKEY

Straddling an isolated cove above the Aegean Sea, *Six Senses Kaplankaya* resembles a superyacht carved into the hillside. Here, the focus is on pioneering wellness initiatives that make the most of hydrothermal facilities, innovative spa treatments, an outdoor meditation and yoga platform, a mud chamber, *hammam* and salt grotto. sixsenses.com

6 TEE OFF IN ITALY

Verdura Resort's three golf courses (one nine-hole, two 18-holes) are surrounded by olive and orange groves, all with ravishing views of the Med. After a round, guests can enjoy the private beach, wellness centre or the resort's four restaurants, run by Michelin-starred chef Fulvio Pierangelini. roccofortehotels.com

7 SIP WINE IN PROVENCE

Grape Escapes' close-knit ties with some of France's most exclusive vineyards equate to unrivalled bespoke tours across French wine regions. The two-night Provence experience includes a stay at *Château de Berne*, dinner at the on-site Michelin-starred restaurant, wine blending, cooking classes and a helicopter ride over the vineyards. grapeescapes.net

8 LIVE LIKE ROYALTY

On the Cote d'Azur in the exclusive La Californie 'hood, *Villa Alang Alang* can be yours for \$415,000 a month. The fully staffed nine-bedroom retreat has been engineered for delight, with cabanas cut into the hillside, a stone-walled sand area built adjacent to a waterfall, an Olympic-sized pool and a dinosaur skull overseeing the grand staircase. villa-alangalang.com



01 Quiet moments at Belmond La Residencia 02 Romantic meals await at the same hotel 03 The steam room at Six Senses Kaplankaya 04 Aman Sveti Stefan in Montenegro 05 Croatia's coast is best explored by boat © Shutterstock

9 STEP BACK IN TIME

A fortified private island village turned into a hotel, *Aman Sveti Stefan's* warren of 15th-century stone villas is off limits to all but paying guests. Connected to the mainland by a causeway and with views of a quiet pink-sand beach, Montenegro's most photographed sight was once a sleepy fishing village. Now, the cottages house luxe suites and a spa, with a clifftop pool, vine-draped courtyards and an open-air piazza lined with dining venues serving up local fare. aman.com

10 WATCH THE GRAND PRIX FROM A YACHT

Royalty, celebrities, billionaires, hedonists and speed junkies alike descend upon the French Riviera every summer to witness 1,000-horsepower Formula 1 race cars barrelling around Monaco's iconic harbour-front. It's a place to see and be seen, and the ultimate perch to do both is on a trackside yacht. Watch the high-octane action unfold from the boat's top deck, flute of the finest French champagne in hand, of course. amber-lounge.com



11 MARVEL AT MICHELIN STARS IN SAN SEBASTIAN

With the second-most Michelin stars per capita, San Sebastian is one of the world's great foodie cities. Father and daughter Juan Mari and Elena set a worldwide standard at *Arzak*, a Basque restaurant with traditional cooking at its soul, while the 24-course tasting menu at *Mugaritz* is trailblazing when it comes to avant-garde cuisine. arzak.es mugaritz.com

12 CHOPPER OVER THE AMALFI COAST

In Amalfi, the world's most beautiful coastline plunges to the ocean in a nail-biting panorama of sheer mountains and cliff-clinging pastel houses. On board *PrivateFly's* 50-minute helicopter flight, sightseers will gain a new perspective of this magnificent landscape, soaring over the craggy island of Capri, the turquoise sea and the historic remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum. privatefly.com.au

13 OGLE TEL AVIV'S STREET ART

A street art guided tour of Tel Aviv is somewhat of a crash course in Israeli society. Launching at *Café Levinsky* before perusing the shabby-chic neighbourhood of Florentin, this two-hour walk is an insightful and creative look at the cosmopolitan city's constantly evolving subcultures and political movements. touristisrael.com

14 ENJOY A FOODIE CRUISE IN CROATIA

If your Med fantasies feature balmy days filled with lazy seafood lunches, wine tastings and dips in crystal-clear waters in the shade of historic walled towns, then an expert-led *gulet* cruise in Croatia is for you. *Peter Sommer Travels'* eight-day 'Gastronomic Gulet Cruise' samples the best the Dalmatian Coast, from Ston's famous oysters to the celebrated wines of the Peljesac Peninsula. petersommer.com

15 SLEEP IN A PENTHOUSE

Sardinia's most prestigious suite – one of the most expensive of its kind in the world – the Penthouse at Cala di Volpe Hotel features three bedrooms, a gym, two living rooms, a wine cellar, a solarium and a rooftop pool with views of the Costa Smeralda. Decorative flourishes include hand-painted furnishings and bright ceramic floors. marriott.com.au

16 COOK WITH A MICHELIN CHEF

From 25 April to 2 May 2020, Sicily's Rocca delle Tre Contrade will host a foodie fête led by chef Christian F. Puglisi of Copenhagen's Relae. The course will cover masterclasses in charcuterie, vermouth preparation, bread and cheese making and lemon harvesting. trecontrade.com

17 EXPLORE ITALY BY MEGAYACHT

Cruise Italy's coast in style on Abercrombie & Kent's 13-day 'Italy Cruise: Hidden Treasures from Florence to Venice'. Your chariot is the *Le Bougainville* megayacht, with diversions such as truffle hunting in Tuscany, a Corsican choir performance in Bastia and a 4WD excursion to the craters of Mount Etna. abercrombiekent.com.au

18 PARTY WITH THE GLITTERATI

Cannes' Hôtel Martinez has a long history playing host to the glitterati's elite, cocooning many a star in luxury during film festivals. The Penthouse Suite, one of the largest in Europe, offers spectacular vistas of Boulevard de la Croisette, the Bay of Cannes and the hotel's private beach. hyatt.com

19 SAIL THE SEAS WITH RITZ-CARLTON

Launching in February 2020, the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's ships only hold 298 guests, yet there are 10 dining experiences – one by chef Sven Elverfeld of three-Michelin-starred Acqua. Med voyages for 2021/22 include departures from Barcelona, Athens, Dubrovnik, Venice and Valletta. ritzcarlton.com

20 ZOOM INTO SICILY

Sicily's varied landscapes make for a thrilling road trip. Wind along the precipitous coast, past volcanoes and through meadows peppered with orchards and olive groves, in the comfort of a Porsche 718 Boxter GTS with Gran Tour. The high-end operator offers sports-car tours across the island, taking in legendary roads such as the Monte Pellegrino Hill Climb in Palermo. gtsicily.com

21 JUMP IN A PRIVATE JET

From walking beneath the falls of Krka National Park to feasting on kofta in the Albanian city of Berat, the 23-day 'Istrian Peninsula & The Balkans' journey by Captain's Choice takes guests to the lesser-known reaches of the Mediterranean by private jet. Covering five destinations, the itinerary features stays at Venice's Baglioni Hotel Luna and nights aboard the newly built *Queen Eleganza*. captainschoice.com.au

22 WALK THE ALGARVE

From its sea caves and golden beaches to its scalloped bays and coves, the wild landscapes of Portugal's Algarve remain refreshingly untouched. On Exodus Travels' seven-night self-guided walking tour, adventurers hike the entirety of its cliff-strewn coastline, starting in the quiet, end-of-the-world town of Sagres and finishing in the City of Churches, the charming Tavira. exodustravels.com

23 CYCLE THROUGH MALLORCA

Pedal your way through Binissalem wine country near Mount Randa and climb to the hilltop Ermita de Betlem monastery on Butterfield & Robinson's six-day Mallorca private biking tour. Signature B&R guides and local experts accompany guests as they pass through the island's remote mountains, meadows of flowering almond trees and honey-stone villages. butterfield.com

**24 DINE IN A CAVE**

Carved into a jagged cliff in Italy's Puglia region, Grotta Palazzese's restaurant sits 22 metres above the sea, its vaulted limestone cavern giving diners sparkling Adriatic views. Nobility have hosted banquets here since the 1700s; today, visitors enjoy a menu of traditional Apulian cuisine, with wines and romantic lighting – much of which comes from reflections off the water. grottapalazzese.it

25 WAKE UP ON A PRIVATE ISLAND

A brisk boat ride from Ibiza, Tagomago Private Island's only visitors are researchers and guests of the sole abode that sits atop it. The five-bedroom villa is a favourite of many a celebrity (including Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo) and boasts sweeping sea views, an outdoor whirlpool, two alfresco dining terraces, yacht charter and a party-perfect terrace. tagomago-island.com ♦



06 A meal at Grotto Palazzese in Italy's Puglia region is one you'll never forget 07 You won't want to leave Tagomago Private Island, a short boat ride from Ibiza © Leonardo D'Angelo Fernandez