

# AITO Inspiration - Cities and Short Breaks



3 September 2018

Those in need of an escape but short on time will love these unique short break experiences from travel specialist members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)).

From sailing the Dalmatian Coast in Croatia to browsing the Christmas markets of Helsinki, and from discovering the bathing culture of Hungary to pampering yourself in Marrakech, these quick trips are guaranteed to scratch beneath the surface of each destination.

*Travellers can book directly through the AITO members featured in this newsletter. AITO members marked \* can also be booked through a local, trusted [AITO Specialist Travel Agency](#).*

## **Adventure sailing on the Dalmatian Coast, Croatia – from £585 pp with Artisan Travel\***

Escape to [Croatia's Dalmatian Coast](#) for a weekend of sailing on the crystal-blue waters of the Adriatic. Explore the picturesque islands of the Elaphiti archipelago by both land and sea, and discover such delights as the 12<sup>th</sup> century monastery on St. Mary island, seawater lakes in Mljet's stunning national parks, the spectacular walled town of Ston and views of the serene Pelješac Peninsula countryside and Dinaric Alps. Watch the sun set behind the horizon on board your spacious catamaran, while enjoying local seafood. **Departing between now and 24 October 2018**, the trip costs from £585 pp (two sharing), including three nights' B&B accommodation on board a professionally-skipped catamaran, paddle boarding, cycling, snorkelling, plus all equipment, training and supervision from expert local guides. Flights extra. Call Artisan Travel on 01670 785 085 ([www.artisantravel.co.uk](http://www.artisantravel.co.uk)).

## **Prague: Sightseeing, Beer and Trams – from £1,660 pp with Ffestiniog Travel\***

Sample the delights of Prague, as well as the locally-crafted beer for which it is renowned, on this new [six-night break](#) that also includes a comprehensive tour of the city, a visit to Prague's Museum of Public Transport, private tram ride, river cruise and beer tasting... plus plenty of free time to explore the neighbouring spa town of Karlovy Vary or the South Bohemia city of Český Krumlov, with its 13<sup>th</sup> century castle. **Departing 15 May 2019**, the price is from £1,660 pp (two sharing), including travel from your home station to London pre- and post-tour, half-board accommodation (four nights in Prague, one night each in Essen and Berlin), a standard class Global InterRail Pass, a three-day Prague Public Transport Pass, one lunch and the services of a tour leader throughout. Call Ffestiniog Travel on 01766 512 400 ([www.ffestiniogtravel.com](http://www.ffestiniogtravel.com)).

## **Unwind and bathe in Budapest – from £255 pp with Fleewinter**

Immerse yourself in Hungary's spa culture by 'taking the waters', a 2,000-year-old tradition typically used by Hungarians to cure all manner of ailments, from poor circulation and aching muscles to psoriasis and insomnia. Known for its long spa tradition, Budapest has an array of thermal spas ranging from historic Turkish and medieval baths to the more modern. Visit two of the most popular spas in the city - the medicinal Széchenyi Baths and the art-deco style Gellert Spa. While in Budapest, make the most of the wealth of historical and cultural attractions by cruising down the Danube or spending a night at the opera. **Departing between now and 31 December 2019**, [Thermal Experience Budapest](#) costs from £255 pp (two sharing), including three nights' B&B accommodation, one dinner on an evening of your choice, aroma massage and entrance to the baths. Flights extra. Call Fleewinter on 020 7112 0019 ([www.fleewinter.com](http://www.fleewinter.com)).

## **Festive fun at the Christmas Markets of Helsinki, Finland – from £465 pp with Inntravel\***

See the creative capital of Finland come alive this holiday season with its annual exhibition of Christmas Markets. Held in the city centre, this spectacle sees 120 Christmas-themed stalls line the twinkling streets as the smell of *glögi* (mulled wine) perfumes the air. Guests can explore Helsinki's many museums by day, including the fascinating National Museum of Finland, before wandering around the markets in the evening. Those after more festivities can take the ferry across the Baltic to the Estonian capital of Tallinn and find even more atmospheric Christmas markets there too. **Departing between 1 – 20 December 2018**, [Helsinki Christmas Market Break](#) costs from £465 pp (two sharing), including flights (London) three nights' B&B accommodation and Helsinki city card. Call Inntravel on 01653 617 000 ([www.inntravel.co.uk](http://www.inntravel.co.uk)).

## **Leonardo 500: Da Vinci in Florence - from £698 pp with Kirker Holidays\***

Birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence's cultural credentials step even further into the spotlight in 2019 as the city marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death. At the Uffizi Gallery, a new room hosting his paintings opened in July and an exhibition of the Codex Leicester (a collection of his scientific writings, on loan from Bill Gates) runs from **29 October until 20 January 2019**, with further displays planned at the Galileo Museum. Celebrate the life of one of the world's most important thinkers, inventors and artists during a three-night stay just a few minutes from the Duomo. The price is from £698 pp (two sharing), including flights (Gatwick), private car transfers, B&B accommodation, a guaranteed entrance ticket to the Uffizi, Kirker's Guide Notes to restaurants, museums & sightseeing, and the services of the Kirker Concierge. Call Kirker Holidays on 020 7593 2283 ([www.kirkerholidays.com](http://www.kirkerholidays.com)).

#### **Sarajevo: The link between East and West Bosnia – from £720 pp with Kudu Travel\***

Explore Bosnia's enchanting capital, Sarajevo, on the fascinating walking tour, Sarajevo and Mostar, where you can learn about the city's complex history from a specialist local guide over a cup of Bosnian coffee, before a tour of the historical city centre, passing through the many multi-cultural monuments and ancient bazaars. Visit Baščaršija, the centre of the old Ottoman town, with its 16<sup>th</sup> Century Gazi Husrey Beg Mosque, the renovated *caravanserai* (roadside inn) Morića Han, and the spot where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, an event widely acknowledged as sparking the First World War. Enjoy day trips to the highland village of Lukomir and home of the world-famous fully-restored medieval bridge, Mostar. **Departing between 1 May and 30 September 2019**, this trip costs from £720 pp (two sharing), including four nights' accommodation, guide, transfers and activities. Flights extra. Call Kudu Travel on 020 8150 3367 ([www.kudutravel.com](http://www.kudutravel.com)).

#### **Attend the Conservation and Heritage Symposium in Liverpool – from £580 pp with Martin Randall**

With more listed buildings than any other UK city outside of London, Liverpool is the perfect location for Martin Randall Travel's 2018 symposium; Conservation and Heritage: Champions and Challenges. Taking place over three days (**7–9 November**), this ambitious symposium brings together movers and shakers in the world of architectural conservation to examine the impact of tourism and new developments, as well as celebrating the skills and scholarship that make restoration and regeneration possible. Topics range from the triumphant preservation of Alvar Aalto's Viipuri library in Russia and managing monuments in the conflict zones of the Middle East, to saving Wentworth Woodhouse and other stars of England's northern architectural heritage. The symposium costs from £580 pp (two sharing), including two nights' hotel accommodation, talks, meals and an evening reception. Flights extra. Call Martin Randall on 020 8472 3355 ([www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com)).

#### **Enjoy the Magic of Marrakech – from £695 pp with Pettitts\***

Experience the best of the Moroccan capital, Marrakech, on this five-day short break. Enjoy a private tour of the majestic city with a local guide, visiting fascinating sites including Morocco's largest mosque, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Koutoubia Minaret, the splendid carvings of the Saadian Tombs and the beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> century Bahia Palace, famous for its fine architecture. Make the most of the excellent shopping at the labyrinth of markets and bazaars surrounding the famous Jemaa el Fna Square. After experiencing the bustling city, enjoy an authentic Moroccan pampering with a visit to a hammam (Turkish bath) for a traditional exfoliation and mud mask. **Departing between now and 31 December 2019**, Magical Marrakech costs from £695 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), four nights' hotel accommodation, private car and driver, sightseeing with local English-speaking guides and taxes. Call Pettitts on 01892 516 966 ([www.pettitts.co.uk](http://www.pettitts.co.uk)).

#### **Discover the heart of Spain by foot – from £1,665 pp with Ramblers Walking Holidays'**

##### **Adagio programme**

Walk in the footsteps of Spanish kings, explorers, authors and artists on a trip with Adagio, the programme of leisurely and cultural tours from Ramblers Walking Holidays. The Romantic Heart of Spain journeys through two of the country's most interesting UNESCO World Heritage listed medieval cities, Segovia and Toledo, where the architecture and cuisine conveys perfectly the history of Jewish, Muslim and Christian cultures. These cities offer much exploration, including Gothic cathedrals, *Alcázares* (Moorish castles), Baroque-style palaces and beautiful gardens. **Departing 23 September and 14 October 2018**, the trips costs from £1,665 pp (two sharing), including flights (Manchester or London), seven nights' B&B accommodation, dinners, guides and entrance fees as per itinerary, local transport and services of an Adagio leader. Call Ramblers Walking Holidays on 01707 818 169 ([www.ramblersholidays.co.uk](http://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk)).

#### **Discover Gothenburg and its many islands – from £804 pp with Sunvil\***

Explore the Swedish city of Gothenburg and its nearby southern archipelago, Södra Skärgården, on this short escape. Spend the first few days exploring the culture of Gothenburg, wandering around the old Haga district, lined with cosy cafés and boutique shops, visit Oscar Fredrick, the city's most decorated church, and take a ride on the Gothenburg Wheel. Later, stay on the island of Styrösö, just 20 minutes from the city centre, with its beautiful woodland, sandy bays, fishing villages and sailing harbours making it the perfect base from which to explore the nearby islands of Vargö, Köpstadsö and Vrångö. **Departing between now and 1 November 2018**, A short break in Gothenburg costs from £804 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), five nights' B&B accommodation, private transfers and a 48-hour Gothenburg Pass. Call Sunvil on 020 8758 4722 ([www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)).

## Ends

### Note to Editors:

AITO, [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com), is an alliance of over 120 of the best travel specialists. AITO members collectively provide an unrivalled range of holidays to every corner of the world. They are passionate about what they do and pride themselves on their attention to every detail of their customers' holidays.

AITO members' joint aim is to offer personal, caring service, to look after the environment in the places in which they work and to provide holidays that deliver both good value and high standards. All AITO holiday companies are required, as a condition of membership, to take full financial protection measures on behalf of their clients via the appropriate industry bonding schemes.

**Travel PR will happily email all AITO members with any queries that travel writers may have – it's a great way to receive speedy feedback or information from AITO experts via just one email request.**

For further information on AITO, please contact Travel PR on 020 8891 4440 or email Sue Ockwell ([s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk)) or Jackie Franklin ([j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk)).

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