

Sunday Travel

DO THE MATHS

TAKING OFF

Our pick of the breaks to book now

HOLIDAY PLANNER



MAKE A SPLIT FOR ZAGREB

Those who thought Croatia was all about Dubrovnik and Split have been missing a trick. Lonely Planet has voted Zagreb – the capital, located in the northwest – the top European destination to visit in 2017. The fact that the Grič cannon is still fired from Lotrščak Tower every day at noon (and that the locals still set their watches by it) should be reason enough to visit. But then there are the quirky museums: the Museum of Torture, Museum of Illusions, the Mushroom Museum and the Museum of Broken Relationships. There are 30 theatres and numerous art galleries, and the traditional dish sounds right up our street – kotlovina (stewed meat) and štrukli (thin dough stuffed with cottage cheese). Fly from Dublin to Zagreb via Amsterdam with KLM or via Frankfurt with Lufthansa.



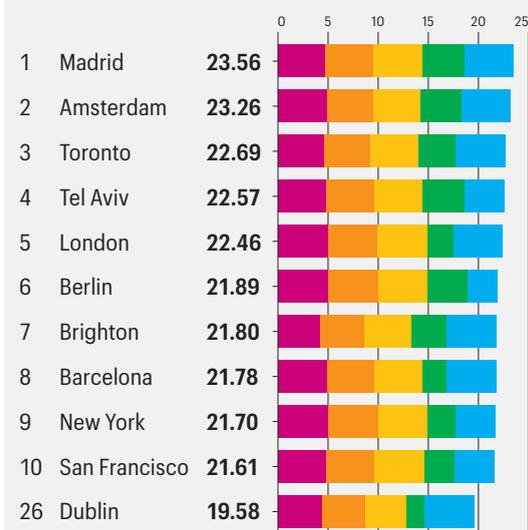
SICILY SEASON

Sicily is the largest of the Mediterranean islands, so over the centuries it attracted invaders from all walks – Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans and Spanish – all of whom have left their mark. If you haven't seen the results, rectify that this summer with an early August trip for four.

Stay at the four-star ATAHotel Naxos Beach, at the seaside resort of Giardini Naxos, just a few kilometres from Taormina where the lifestyle is traditional and laid-back. The cost per head is reduced from €1,219 to €1,020pp (based on four people sharing on a half-board basis). topflight.ie

WORLD'S BEST LGBT CITIES

◆ Dating scene ◆ Nightlife ◆ Openness
◆ Safety ◆ Rights



Source: Nestpick.com, who surveyed 2,500 people per city and attributed a maximum score of 5 points per category



STARK ROVING MAD

Ireland Luxury Travel has designed a dream holiday for fans of Game of Thrones, much of which is filmed in Ireland. The Ultimate Game of Thrones package hits the top spots: the Causeway Coastal Route; the Giant's Causeway; Larry Bane Head (Storm's End); Cushendun Caves; Dunluce Castle (the Pyke stronghold on the Iron Isles); the Dark Hedges (King's Road), pictured; and Ballintoy (Pyke) Harbour. It finishes in Belfast's Titanic exhibition. The trip includes a two-night stay at the 17th-century Ballygally Castle, afternoon tea and a steak dinner, a tour of filming locations in Co Down and a visit to the 'dire wolves', plus a goodie bag. €966pp, irelandluxurytravel.com

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES

Do your duty and take a proper holiday this year

Office presenteeism doesn't do anyone any good. Just ask the Germans

I hope you're reading this on a beach. The peak holiday season is here, and most of you should be twiddling sand between your toes, leaving just enough people at home to keep the lights burning and feed the cat.

Holidays aren't an indulgence: they make us healthier, both physically and mentally. We all know this in

our bones, but in the great tradition of researchers proving the bleedin' obvious, the issue has been investigated by scientists from the Icahn School of Medicine, University of California and Harvard: they found that just six days away triggers genetic changes which dampen stress, boost the immune system and lower levels of proteins linked to dementia and depression. And

we all look so much prettier with a tan.

Everyone enjoyed that "Angela Merkel thinks we're at work" banner at the UEFA European Championships in Poland, which took place in 2012 – at the height of recession and not long after the EU bailout. However, in Ireland, we actually work more than we probably think we do. OECD data shows that Irish people worked 1,879 hours per year last year, while the Germans worked 1,368.

The real reason for all that desk-hogging, of course, is that human beings are scared of upsetting the boss. John Lees, careers coach and author of *How To Get The Job You Love*, says, "On the one hand

managers tell you to take holidays to maintain your wellbeing and work/life balance, but on the other they insist on productivity, so employees need to learn how to negotiate their time off.

"You need to make it clear you're going to deliver what's needed, but you'll also be taking your leave allowance. If we don't learn this skill, we'll

“

Don't end up like the US, where people are scared to take a holiday

end up like the US, where most people are too scared to take a holiday."

Ireland has pretty decent paid leave enshrined in law: a minimum of four weeks, although many employee contracts allow for more. Compare that with the United States, where the total paid leave employers are legally obliged to offer is – zero. It's at the boss's discretion and most staff find themselves with a couple of weeks at best. (If time off is your priority, you might make for Mauritius, where you'll get a whopping 16 public holidays in addition to your 22 days of leave. Nearly eight weeks off, and some nice beaches to spend it on too).

So take that break. A proper

break, too. Pacing the beach to search for a signal so you can doublecheck if Mike from accounts has filed the last quarter's sales figures is, frankly, pathetic. Be strong and switch off. Lees advises: "Don't just put the out of office autoreply on your email. Do what smart bosses do and make it totally clear who is covering for you while you're away, and the specific circumstances under which you can be contacted."

These should be:

- A) You've been promoted.
- B) The firm's gone bust.
- C) Mike from accounts has been caught doing something unspeakable with the photocopier.

Enjoy your break.