

Four of the best European resorts for families with under-fives, by Francesca Syz

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SANI RESORT GREECE The child-friendliness of this family-run resort on the Halkidiki Peninsula in northern Greece is legendary. Of its five hotels, Porto Sani Village, which overlooks a lovely sandy Blue Flag beach, wins hands down for accommodation with great facilities for tots. The resort's creche is second to none. Taking babies of six months up to children of four years, it has a varied and creative programme to keep everyone stimulated. One part is designed specifically for babies while the other, for toddlers and preschoolers, is more active and includes water and ball games and singalongs. Both feature posh baby food and toddler menus (poached chicken breast with carrots, pumpkin and fennel, anyone?), Baby Room Service (the above, in-room) and Breakfast Babysitting, where children are whisked off to do sketching and painting specifically so parents can enjoy a leisurely breakfast. There is also the daytime Babe Watch service, which allows parents to go off for a swim, to the bar or simply to finish the last chapter of that book you started a year ago (you get 30 minutes per day free of charge). **The details** ITC Classics offers seven nights at Porto Sani Village from £1,760 for a family of four (01244-355550; itcclassics.co.uk; saniresort.gr).



COLUMBIA BEACH RESORT CYPRUS While the bright lights and banana boats of Paphos are only a half-hour drive away, the intimate, exclusive-feeling Columbia Beach Resort is an entirely different creature. At the foot of a winding mountain road on its own secluded sandy beach at Pissouri Bay, the stylish, all-suite resort is ideal for families with toddlers. Its low-rise layout means all rooms are close to the long central pool, and its smooth, relatively flat pathways are easily navigable with buggies. Every room comes with a kitchenette, good for late-night snacks or heating up bottles, and the hotel can provide everything from cots and babysitters to high-chairs and baby-listening devices. Secluded Pissouri Bay is clean, quiet, calm and perfect for both paddling and swimming. During school holidays, there's a complimentary Sailor's Club aimed at two-to-12-year-olds, and babies and children are guaranteed a warm welcome year round from the family-orientated Cypriots. **The details** A&K offers one week from £995 per person based on two sharing a garden view junior suite (plus one child free if sharing the room), including flights, transfers and breakfast (0845-618 2213; abercrombiekent.co.uk; columbia-hotels.com).

LE MAS PANDIT FRANCE Tracey and Stuart Scher's inspired 'Country Kids' concept offers week-long holidays for up to six families at a time at their 17th-century converted dairy farm in France's balmy Languedoc-Roussillon region. A safe, fun, creative environment for children from just three months to teenagers, it gives parents a bit of down time in a laidback environment with a central alfresco bar and barbecue area. For under-fives, there is a fully regulated complimentary creche open six days a week, with a soft play area, a heated toddler pool and more. For older children there are trampolines, a tree house, a football field, an outdoor theatre, a pool and activities from horse riding, canoeing and treetop climbing to French lessons. Accommodation is in five beautifully furnished apartments and one cottage, all stocked with wooden cots, night-lights, sterilisers, etc. There's an excellent on-site deli and a delightful restaurant (La Palombe) 15 minutes' walk away. A highlight is feeding time (goats, llamas, rabbits, pigs and horses) on the farm. **The details** One week from €2,890 for a family of four (00 33 4 67 97 18 94; country-kids.fr).



LYKIAWORLD VILLAGE ÖLÜDENİZ TURKEY At the foot of the dramatic Lycian mountains, elegant LykiaWorld Village Ölüdeniz sits on a beach fringing the turquoise Aegean Sea. The resort is divided into two sections, the Residence, ideal for singles and couples, and the Village, perfect for families. While older children will enjoy Children's Paradise, which has eight swimming-pools, 20 water slides, playgrounds with names like Treasure Island, and a children's theatre, judo centre, trampoline, table tennis and lessons in belly dancing, you can take your very little ones to a special babies' beach with sun loungers for grown-ups and lots of shallow water for safe splashing. There is also a Baby Club for up to three-year-olds, featuring a 24-hour Baby Kitchen with a sterilising machine, microwave and fridge stocked with fresh milk, a soft play area with cots for naps and free babysitting for babies of six months or older. There are 10 restaurants scattered around the resort, including two exclusively for children. **The details** Thomas Cook offers seven nights from £1,916 per family of four in a family room on a full-board basis, including flights (0844-412 5970; thomascook.com; lykiagroup.com). **Next week: Nordic log cabins**