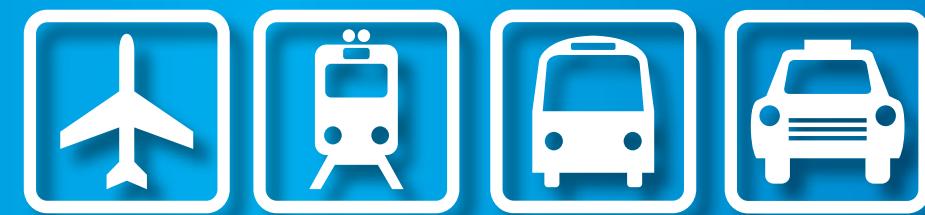




GO FOR IT

Edited by VICKY LISSAMAN



+ LATES & BREAKS + LATES & BREAKS +

AMSTERDAM: Leave from Liverpool, March 26, for three nights B&B at four-star Hampshire Hotel for £250. Check out easyjet.com/holidays or call 020 3499 5232.

LINCOLNSHIRE: A three-night Absolute 80s Weekender break at Butlin's Skegness Resort features Sonia, Roachford, Go West, Pat Sharp and more. £189 per person based on four sharing a gold self-catering apartment. Book by March 28. Arrive May 5. Hit bigweekends.com or call 0330 102 5295.

IRELAND FERRY DEAL: Book by Tuesday and save 20% on all crossings until December 15. With the deal, fares for a car and two adults start at £170.40 return.

Phone 08717 300 400 or visit irishferries.com

WALES: Trysor Y Mor is a seafront Edwardian townhouse in the coastal village of Borth. It sleeps six and is available for seven nights for £399. Arrive on dates from April 1 to April 8. Visit sykescottages.co.uk or phone 01244 617 667. Property Reference 28596.

THAILAND: Explore Koh Samui, pictured left, on 10-night B&B holiday at the four-star Chaba Cabana Beach Resort for £827. Fly from Manchester April 5. Book at southalltravel.co.uk or ring on 0208 705 0086.

DISNEYLAND PARIS: Fly from Birmingham on April 3 for a two-night/three-day holiday

to Disney's three-star Hotel Santa Fe on a half-board basis. Pay £1,337 for two adults and two children sharing including park tickets. Visit disneylandparis.com or call 08448 008 111 to book.

CYPRUS: A week all-inclusive at three-star Smartline Protaras Hotel in Protaras for £405. Jet out from Birmingham on April 5. Book at airtours.co.uk or phone 0844 412 5970.

ESSEX: Sea Folly is a property in the seaside town of Brightlingsea. Sleeps five in three bedrooms with two pets welcome. Seven nights for £507. Arrive on April 7. Visit welcomecottages.com or ring 0345 268 0816. Ref. UKC472.

FRANCE SKI: Seven nights chalet catered at the four-star Chalet Des Deux Domaines in Macot-la-Plagne in Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, £625 per person.

Based on two adults and two children sharing. Depart Stansted on April 9. See espritski.com

JEWEL ON THE MED: View of the city from Parc Guell. Inset, food market

High life!

BARCELONA'S TOP OF TRAVEL LEAGUE

by JOEY MILLAR

SOARING over Barcelona in a tiny four-person helicopter, it was easy to see why the Catalan capital has become Europe's latest travel success story.

Far below, squeezed between the Mediterranean and the mountains, was a mosaic of some of the world's most famous sights.

BLAGGERS can forget trying to bag an upgrade on Monarch flights using old tricks like honeymoons and birthdays.

The airline is to offer complimentary perks to customers for simply being nice.

In a year-long campaign to promote chivalry, courtesy and respect, 10 passengers per week will be rewarded with extra leg-room and priority check-in for polite behaviour. See monarch.co.uk

HOUSE music legend Roger Sanchez, pictured, is set to headline Ministry of Sound Presents Titanium at Blackpool Pleasure Beach on May 6.

Late-night opening to 11pm will give revellers the chance to get their adrenaline fix on the rides before heading to the Arena until 3am.

Tickets cost £25. VIP tables of six including a reserved seat in the VIP area plus a bottle of Grey Goose or Hendricks and mixers, are available for £300. Book at blackpoolpleasurebeach.com/ministry-of-sound-night.



FACT FILE

GETTING THERE: Vueling Airlines operates year-round flights to Barcelona from Gatwick, Heathrow and Luton with fares, including taxes, starting from £43 one way. Book at vueling.com

WHERE TO STAY: Rates at Barcelo Sants start from £104 per night based on two sharing a room on a B&B basis. For more information or to book visit barcelosants.com or call +34 93 503 53 00.



SOARING: Sagrada Familia church. Left, our Joey in a chopper and yummy Catalan sea food

station, this property is out of this world. Themed on space travel, guests are welcomed at a "boarding desk" by staff wearing Star Trek-style uniforms.

After making our way past a life-sized astronaut statue in the lobby, we inspected the hotel's stylish bars and restaurants – named Orbital, Oxygen, Hydrogen and Nitrogen.

Next we headed to Placa Reial – a square so perfectly framed by balconies and charmingly lit by flickering lanterns it could have been created with Instagram in mind.

One of its star attractions is Restaurante Oceana, a gloriously decadent venue decked out in shades of coral and rose.

We were shown to our table by an eccentric maître d', whose outfit resembled one of Gaudi's more creative mosaics.

A procession of colourful Catalan-inspired dishes, fused with Asian and North African flavours, began to arrive.

Perfect

Raspberry-tinted charcuterie, blueberry-hued dips and fish fillets on bruschetta sprinkled with lavender flowers were as eye-catching as the restaurant.

Up early next day, we went to the harbour for a boat ride and swim in the Med – the perfect way to blow away the cobwebs.

Then we spread around the city, browsing Spanish cigars in the wide shopping boulevard of Las Ramblas, tasting cheese, olives and oysters in Mercat de La Boqueria, a cavernous food market, and hunting for bargains on the beach-front souvenir stalls.

To toast our final night in the city, we headed to Barcelo Raval, located not far from Las Ramblas and run by the same team as our hotel. With its 360-degree view of the city, open air swimming pool and a performance area for bands and DJs, this exceptional rooftop bar has to be the best place in the city to catch those perfect Catalan sunsets.

well as beautiful arches, viaducts and mosaics designed by the man himself, it is the perfect way to satisfy your cultural urges.

Our base for the weekend was Barcelo Sants. A sleek four-star hotel handily located above the city's biggest train

DAILY STAR

PARTY WEEKEND

Saturday Night Bee Gees



Abba's Angels

+ TRAVEL NEWS +



ALL ABOARD: Be nice for a Monarch upgrade

BLAGGERS can forget trying to bag an upgrade on Monarch flights using old tricks like honeymoons and birthdays.

Kids can take on the challenge of making a survival bracelet and a personalised dreamcatcher as well as shelter-building, fire-lighting and pond-dipping.

There will also be bug hunt safaris and nature trails. Book at haven.com or call 0333 202 5305.

HOLIDAYS' 36 resorts all over the UK.

Kids can take on the challenge of making a survival bracelet and a personalised dreamcatcher as well as shelter-building, fire-lighting and pond-dipping.

They ranged from the flabbergasting architecture of Antoni Gaudi to the footballing cathedral of the Nou Camp.

Nearly 10 million people visited Catalonia in north-eastern Spain last summer – that's an 11 per cent increase on the previous year.

Judging by the size of the crowds enjoying the beaches and shopping streets hundreds of feet beneath me, most of them still appeared to be there.

Scenic

As our pilot looped back towards the harbour, the afternoon sun, which shines for an average of 10 hours a day during the summer months, glinted off the Med.

Balcelona, as everyone from taxi drivers to waiters will tell you, has never looked better.

For those who would rather spend the price of a Cat Helicopter ticket (from £53 per person for a six-minute flight to £300 for 40 minutes in the sky) on seeing the sights up close, Barcelona is just as scenic at street level.

Top of any visitor's to-do list is Gaudi's Sagrada Familia, arguably the most recognisable church in the world (basic tickets start at £13 and rise to £25 for access to the tower – well worth it for the views).

When Gaudi died, around four decades after construction first began, the mammoth project was still only a quarter completed. Even today, 136

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