Sail away into the sunset

Leave land far behind and take to the seas for a truly exotic break. Emma Dance takes a look at some of the best off-shore trips around.

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Indonesia

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From April to November she sails in Indonesia before repositioning up the West Coast of Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar from December to March.

No expense has been spared to ensure that guests have a truly memorable experience, whether it is visiting the tribes of Irian Jaya (Papua), attending the Asmat Auction for their art, visiting the remote and rich Spice Islands and discovering the trading posts and beautiful islands visited during the height of the spice trade, or experiencing a quiet beach and dive trip in the Andaman Sea and Komodo National Park.

Silolona includes five spacious cabin suites, a teak lounge and dining area surrounded by large windows, on deck dining and a well-equipped dive facility. And with a crew of 15 (including a chef specialising in international cuisine with an Asian flair), plus an Expedition leader and diving instructor, you won’t have to lift a finger.

Silolona Private Charter is available through Private Label Worldwide (www.privatelabelww.com; 01628 771 171) from £9,750 per day. Price based on exclusive charter for up to 10 guests including all food and non-alcoholic beverages and services of the dedicated crew.

Indian Ocean

Experience island hopping at its very best sailing the Indian Ocean in a traditional Arab Dhow.

Under the expert leadership of a pro guide and local crew you can explore the tropical islands of the Quirimbas Archipelago in northern Mozambique.

Spend the days sea kayaking or sail up wide coastal river mouths teeming with red listed bird species and pristine mangrove forests or snorkel off deserted white sandbanks and into turquoise sea.

Enjoy fresh seafood meals prepared by a chef before bedding down for the night in mobile eco camps on uninhabited tropical islands. All mobile safaris end at the mystical and ancient Ibo Island which is zoned for World Heritage Status and is the head quarters of the Quirimbas National Park.

For 8 days the price starts at £1,345 (excluding International flights and based on 6 people, but departs with a minimum of two which would cost £1,795 pp). For more information visit www.aardvarksafaris.co.uk.

Thailand

Explore the mysteries of the East on a sailing adventure around Thailand.

Departing from Phuket, Intrepid’s seven-day Andaman Sea itinerary explores the island of Ko Ping Kan, made famous as the location for the James Bond film, The Man with the Golden Gun, the mysterious caves of Ko Hong, the lively restaurant and bar scene of Railay, the tropical jungle of Ko Lanta, the colourful marine life off Ko Phi Phi, the island-studded bays of Ko Racha, the forest trails of Ko Yao Yai, and the stilted village of Ko Pan Yi.

Prices for the seven-day trip start from £935 per person excluding flights. For more information visit www.intrepidtravel.com.
Côte d’Azur

Cruise the glitzy Côte d’Azur combining sailing with gastronomy and sightseeing in three superb locations: Italy’s Ligurian coast, the French Riviera and the Canaries (Tenerife and La Gomera).

With a maximum of six guests on board at any one time, spend a week in the lap of luxury, being taken from place to place on a luxury 50-foot Beneteau Oceanis yacht.

Itinerary highlights include admiring spectacular views from the hill-top village of Èze, sampling local produce from the colourful markets in Vieux Antibes and getting your fix of French culture in cities such as Nice, Cannes and Monaco. Sample Provençal and Niçois dishes including bouillabaisse (fish stew), pissaladière (olive and onion pizza) and olive tapenades. Delicious cheeses, cold meats and freshly-baked bread are all also served onboard.

A week on the French Riviera this July or August costs from £1,745 pp (six sharing) and includes chauffeur-driven transfers (Nice), breakfast, lunch, two dinners, drinks and en-suite accommodation. For more information call Essential Sailing on 0845 653 0126 or visit www.essentialsailing.com.

Scotland

Why not charter a yacht and discover the beauty of the islands around Scotland? A private sailing yacht charter is the perfect way to escape with friends or family, offering the freedom and flexibility with no fixed itineraries.

Discover the beauty of the West Coast, exploring the southern Highlands, Inner Hebrides or Outer Hebrides - or even venturing out to St Kilda. Learn the ropes or develop sailing skills, spend time exploring the islands in the company of an experienced walking guide, or just sit back and relax and let the crew do the work. The yacht is crewed by a skipper and first mate / chef who will offer a customised menu throughout the charter - a Michelin-starred chef can be arranged on request. The yachts are all well-equipped, offering comfortable accommodation with all modern facilities. Choose from 5 yachts, each of which has its own character and style, with options for various group sizes and budgets - from classic wooden yachts to the luxury Swan 68. No previous experience of sailing is required.

Prices start from £500 per day, per group with Wilderness Scotland. For more information call 01479 420020 or visit www.wildernessscotland.com.

Alaska

Take a trip on the wild side and explore Southeast Alaska via its fjords and shores.

The area is home to grizzly bears, black bears, mountain goats, bald eagles and wolves. There is the chance to view Alaska’s massive glaciers whilst travelling via some of the world’s deepest fjords and there is the opportunity to go hiking and kayaking whilst other vessels’ guests stay shipside. In the still of the evening, you can watch bears ambling along the shore, whilst below, whales forage in the bountiful waters.

A trip including flights from the UK and 7 nights on board the Safari Quest costs from £5,385 in May 2013 (per person, based on two sharing) with Frontier Canada (www.frontier-canada.co.uk; 020 8776 8709). This price includes local taxes and port fees; All onboard meals; Premium spirits, fine wines and beer throughout your cruise, along with from-the-yacht adventure activities and equipment, plus expertise and guidance from onboard Expedition Leader / naturalist guides.

Belize

Home to the Mesoamerican barrier reef which stretches 350 nautical miles, more than 400 islands and cays, and around 500 different species of tropical fish, Belize can offer spectacular sailing itineraries.

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Turkey

Take a traditional Turkish wooden gulet and follow the paths of early cartographers and great explorers, setting sail from Bodrum to discover the ancient wonders of Caria and Rhodes (October 14-26), often best accessed by sea. Highlights include the Crusader Castle in Hallikarnassos; Knidos, perhaps the most spectacularly sited of all the ancient coastal cities of Asia Minor, and Rhodes – visiting Kameiros and the acropolis at Lindos.

Each afternoon the gulet will moor in beautiful natural harbours and bays (Symi boasts one of the best natural harbours in The Mediterranean), and there will be plenty of time for a swim before dining under the stars.

The tour is accompanied by John Gaskin, formerly professor of Naturalistic Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin, and Jeremy Barnett, a former Director of the British Council in Turkey. Tour Price: £2,350 per person including all meals, drinks and tours. Flights to/from Bodrum are not included. Single supplement £400.

Alternatively find 9 pals, charter the whole boat and create a tailor made itinerary along Croatia’s Dalmatian Coast, the Turkish Coast and the Greek islands of the East Aegean. Prices for private charters start from £15,000 (based on a party of 10) for an eight day tour of the Carian Coast, including full board and the services of an expert, but excluding flights. Highlights include: The ancient city of Knidos with its Temple of Aphrodite; the important site of Kaunos where archaeologists continue to make discoveries; rock tombs high in the cliffs above the Dalyan river; spectacular coastline and glorious bays for swimming, with the option to add a one night visit to the beautiful Greek Island of Symi.

For more information visit www.westminsterclassictours.com or call 0208 286 7842.

Esma Sultan

Based in Montenegro, Esma Sultan is considered as one of the most beautiful ketches in the world. Sail Montenegro’s dramatic coastline and discover ancient towns and sleepy villages.

The ancient city of Budva offers a wide variety of beaches, the famous Queen’s beach on your way to Budva is accessible only by sea.

The marina in Budva is located in front of the walls of the old town of Budva, built during the Venetian rule. Founded in 1382 ‘The city of the Sun’ Herceg Novi is one of the most attractive summer places in Montenegro. The area around Herceg Novi offers one of the best sailing spots in Montenegro, while the coves of Zanjic and Mirista are known for having the cleanest waters in this part of the Adriatic. The Old town of Herceg Novi has many historical sites, two fortresses Spanjola and Forte Mare are amongst them.

Rich in mythology, the town of Kotor is situated at the foot of Mt. Lovcen, at the end of the Boka Kotorska Bay which is, by its beauty and appearance, unique in the whole of the Mediterranean. It’s one of the best-preserved medieval towns in this part of the Mediterranean. Kotor is placed on the UNESCO-list of world heritage. The old town is surrounded by city walls. The fortification system of Kotor, which protects it from the sea, is actually a wall 4.5 km long, 20 m high and 15 m wide, and is preserved as one of the world’s historic sites. Kotor was first settled during the Roman times, when it was known as Acruvium and was part of the Roman province of Dalmatia.

The Esma Sultan is the ultimate choice for those looking for luxury and comfort. She features 7 double ensuite cabins, all beautifully appointed. Her best feature is a spacious deck ideal for dining al fresco with a further spacious sun deck. She is attended by crew of 7 including an excellent chef. Price starts from €21,000 for a week charter. For more information visit www.saildalmatia.com/schooners/ketch-esma-sultan.