

When it comes to a European holiday, one stop just isn't enough. To add a little laidback luxury to your autumn itinerary, opt for a spot of Europe island hopping on-board a private yacht sans the crowds.

While the likes of Mykonos and Hvar are often the first islands to come to mind, there are plenty of others that deliver it all, minus the crowds – we're talking sun-kissed beaches, breathtaking scenery and a little intrepid adventuring, if you're so inclined.

Porto Montenegro, Montenegro

When it comes to Adriatic island-hopping, travellers in the know set course for Montenegro – specifically, the glitzy Porto Montenegro marina, which juts out over shimmering Boka Bay. Spend a few days soaking up the Monaco-style atmosphere of the marina's restaurants, shopping strips and bars (charcuterie and sundowners at Crush wine bar is a must).

From Porto Montenegro you can sail out of Boka and around the peninsula before dropping anchor in Luštica Bay, the newest gem added to Montenegro luxe travel crown. Here you can expect more jaw-dropping natural beauty ripe for exploring, as well as a slew of new hotels including The Chedi, should you want to spend a night on dry land.

Cruise mode



Image: Skyfall / supplied

Montenegro's picture-perfect coastline dotted with glittering marinas certainly looks like something out of a James Bond film, so it only seems appropriate to explore on board Skyfall. Twelve guests can chill out across three decks comprising six cabins, sumptuous living spaces and a sundeck complete with Jacuzzi and plunge pool.

Princes Islands, Turkey



Image: Go Turkey / supplied

Sure, the Princes Islands are so close to Istanbul they're considered neighbourhoods of the city, but trust us, once you arrive they feel like a world away. And are top spots for Europe island hopping.

A visit to any of the four islands open to the public will expose you to a seamless blend of quintessential Turkish culture and island living, from beautiful historic villages and Byzantine palaces that take full advantage of sea views, to the zealous hospitality of locals and delicious local seafood prepared as dishes designed for grazing. Büyükada is the biggest of the islands and the best place to start your adventure.

Fuel up with a traditional Turkish breakfast of locally made cheeses, fresh breads, olives and condiments galore at Ada Kahvaltı before hiring a bike – the preferred mode of transport around these parts – to find a private cove to while away the day.

Cruise mode

A more compact cruiser is ideal for the short journey to and around the Princes Islands. The curiously named Tacos of the Seas can comfortably accommodate you and 11 guests across five cabins, with room to spare for an open-plan dining and living space. This vessel even

comes with its own signature ‘Tacos’ cocktail, which can be prepared for you to enjoy on the sprawling sundeck.

Ionian Islands, Greece

Move over, Cyclades – if Greece is on your summer to-visit list, make for its western coastline, home to the Ionian Islands. A total of 12 isles and islets make up the archipelago, which means that your itinerary can be pretty busy if that’s what floats your boat.

While the likes of Corfu, Lefkada and Paxi deliver everything you’d expect from a Greek island holiday – sun-kissed beaches, atmospheric resorts and friendly locals – there’s also a unique Italian influence thanks to the archipelago’s geographic position, which also means Venetian-inspired villages and deliciously uncomplicated cuisine that takes the best of both cultures.

Cruise mode

It seems only fitting to charter a vessel named for Ithaca, the Ionian home of Greek hero Odysseus. Ithaki is equipped with all the mod cons for 12 guests to relax in luxury plus a mini-fleet of jet skis, Seabobs and other water toys to inspire an odyssey of your own.

Balearic Islands, Spain



Image: Peter Muller / Pixabay

While you may not have heard of the collective name for this chain of islands of Spain's west coast, you will have certainly heard of two of its biggest players: Ibiza and Mallorca. It feels as though summer vibes never really leave the Balearics, and – in the case of Ibiza, anyway – neither does the party.

While Ibiza is almost a 24/7 situation, its smaller neighbour, Formentera, serves as the ideal recovery. From either island, it's an easy cruise to Menorca and Mallorca for nature, historic Gothic towns and a rustic but vibrant foodie scene.

Cruise mode

Think the Balearics are home to some of Europe's best beach clubs? The six-cabin, four-deck Andiamo comes with a pop-up one of its own. Of course, there's also plenty of space to relax and unwind if you're seeking some serenity, with the sundeck an ideal spot for a post-exploring siesta.

Faroe Islands, Denmark

It's hard to decide whether the beauty of the Faroe Islands is better appreciated from land or sea. A sailing holiday through this North Atlantic archipelago affords both. This isn't your stock-standard Euro island destination – you won't find bustling beach clubs or warm Mediterranean sun; rather, untouched, otherworldly landscapes, small but colourful townships, and a summer season that rarely cracks 13 degrees Celcius.

Places to dock around the islands is limited, so your best bet is to hire cars and explore where you can, as most of the islands are also connected by bridges and tunnels.

The Faroe Islands are technically a part of Denmark, so, like its sovereign, boasts an impressive dining scene. Drive 30-minutes north of capital Tórshavn to Michelin-starred KOKS, where the adventurous degustation mixes traditional Faronese cooking practices (think: fermented seafood, smoked meats), with modern fine dining.

Cruise mode

Given their remote location and unpredictable climate, the Faroe Islands are often explored as a stop on a larger luxury cruise to or from surrounding destinations including Iceland, northern Denmark and the Hebrides in Scotland.

(Lead image: Andiamo / supplied)

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A few short hours from the coast, yet a world away – Ubud truly is Bali's capital of cool. And the chill-out kind, at that.

As the unofficial gateway to the island's rice terraces, temples and tranquility (read: a photographer's paradise), Ubud is rich in high-end cultural experiences. From fusion fine-dining to traditional spa treatments and 'beach' club sessions – you're in Bali, after all – whatever you're after, you'll find it here.

Overwhelmed, and not sure where to start? Read on.

Where to wine and dine



Image: Bridges Bali / supplied

Ubud is a culinary gem of Bali, with local and expat chefs getting experimental with fusion cuisine that certainly pays off on the taste buds. The multi-level Bridges is something of a culinary icon in Ubud, famed as much for its dramatic riverside setting as its traditional *Rijsttafel* tasting menu.

However, as the only local rep on the 2019 Asia's Top 50 Best Restaurants List, Locavore is the top name on the gastronomic bucket list.

Locavore has been a premier dining experience since opening in 2013, headed up by Dutch chef Eelke Plasmeijer, who opened the eatery with a simple vision: "We simply wanted to have some fun, cooking the food we would like to cook, playing the music we like to listen to and work with the people we like to work with."

This carefree approach pays off, with a menu that pushes boundaries yet still allows local ingredients to shine in dishes such as 'Into the Sawah': heritage Galah rice porridge with duck, egg yolk, snails, frog leg abon, fern tips and wildflowers.



Image: Night Rooster / supplied

Before your lunch or dinner reservation, make a pit-stop at Team Locavore's newly opened Night Rooster cocktail bar a few doors down, which was opened to give Locavore's resident (and experimental) mixologist, Raka, a stage of his own.

Whet your appetite with a few inventive cocktails that showcase local liquors, herbs and spices, with spectacular views down bustling Jalan Dewisita.

Where to pamper yourself



Image: Four Seasons Resort / supplied

The serenity of Bali is oft best enjoyed from a spa bed, and in Ubud you're spoilt for choice. In these parts, it's not so much a matter of how you want to unwind, but where. Fancy a traditional Balinese massage in the heart of lush jungle? Head to the spa at Four Seasons Resort.



Image: Amandari Spa / supplied

A top-to-toe rejuvenation treatment by a serene lotus pond sounds more down your street? Then book in for the Village Spa Journey at Amandari Spa, where you'll be exfoliated head to toe using black rice and then wrapped in soothing volcanic clay. Wherever your spa adventure, your biggest dilemma will be trying not to fall asleep.

Where to swim



Image: Jungle Fish / supplied

It's an unwritten law that when in Bali one must be near the water, be it the ocean, an infinity pool or beach club. Tucked away among Ubud's rice terraces and jungle valley is the non-beach-beach-club, Jungle Fish. Here, you'll find everything you'd expect from the coastal Potato Heads and Ku De Tas: cool cocktails, a large pool, chill-out tunes, and nothing but jaw-dropping jungle views ahead.

For a photo-ready poolside experience, it's got to be Padma Ubud. Make an afternoon of it with lunch or afternoon tea, so you can float away your food coma in the infinity pool – the longest in the region – while watching the sun set. Bliss.

Where to stay



Image: Viceroy Bali / supplied

If Bali runs on island time then Ubud is a couple of hours behind that, so you'll want to make the most of the relaxed vibes – and the incredible views – by staying a few nights. Viceroy Bali is a luxe sanctuary overlooking the verdant Petanu Valley (also known as the Valley of the Kings), so it makes sense to check into a villa fit for royalty.

That's where the Viceroy Villa comes in: two bedrooms, each with marble ensuites that lead into the main communal living area, that flow out onto a 15-metre heated pool and private garden. And if you're feeling like mixing up the poolside vistas a little bit, it's worth venturing out for a cocktail by the stunning main infinity pool, which seemingly sits over the jungle landscape.



Image: Como Uma Ubud / supplied

If exploration is more your holiday vibe, base yourself at Como Uma Ubud, which is close to the popular trekking spots of Tjampuhan's Sacred Hills and Campuhan Ridge Walk. After a morning's hike, retreat back to your Uma Pool Villa for lunch on the sundrenched deck and a swim to the soundtrack of the river valley below.

(Lead image: Locavore / supplied)

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