

TRAVEL

Europe's 10 greatest city breaks – and how to do them better

Avoid the tourist traps and skip the obvious this autumn, with help from our local experts



Europe's great cities thrive in the autumn, no longer sweltering under the summer heat or bursting with holidaymakers en route to the nearest beach. As a welcome chill enters the air, locals return to favourite patios to enjoy the last moments of sunshine. Fewer crowds flood museums and galleries, and there are often bargains to be found, especially in the still-mild days late in the season.

These grand metropolises are destinations we return to again and again, favourite spots that equally reward a first visit and a fifth (or indeed fifteenth). An introductory break allows a chance to

get acquainted with the highlights, while with each return trip comes the opportunity to delve deeper, to see another side beyond the most obvious attractions. Perhaps this is a wander through a city park to enjoy the golden-tinted foliage, or a tour of a lesser-known gallery with an under-appreciated collection. You can easily wile away a weekend in a neighbourhood cafe in Athens or Prague, sipping espresso or mulled wine and enjoying the ambience.

As temperatures cool, cultural offerings proliferate. This season, select masterpieces – Matisse, Rothko, Picasso and more – from Paris' Centre Pom-

pidou (closed for renovations until 2030) are on display in Amsterdam. While crowds flock to Munich for Oktoberfest, fewer visit Vienna to sample autumnal tipples in urban beer gardens and wineries. And in Florence, buzzy new restaurants highlight seasonal ingredients and modern Italian cuisine.

So, with so much on offer, how to best fill your weekend away – and how to avoid falling into the regrettable plethora of tourist traps in each of these great cities? If your itinerary includes the likes of the Eiffel Tower or the Uffizi, each flanked by rows of middling bistros and tavernas touting plastic menus

and lacklustre plates, you'll want to counter the mainstream with insider knowledge of the most worthwhile stops.

We asked our destination experts to share their secrets to making the most of a city break this autumn, whether you select a new locale to explore or return to a personal favourite. They've shared the attractions they suggest are best avoided, the neighbourhoods locals love, and the restaurants to book now if you want to bag a coveted table. *Libby Ryan*

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▲ Go local: admire the Eiffel Tower by all means but stay in a 'liveable neighbourhood' such as the 11th or 17th arrondissements

THINK YOU KNOW SPAIN?

THINK AGAIN



#alimentos despaña

Where to stay

Château La Commaraine

Pommard, France

A grand cru wine in hotel form, this boutique beauty is set in its own vineyard and steeped in history, says Nicole Trilivas

Burgundy's best hotel sits in its own premier cru vineyard, with a vine-side pool, fine French fare and prestigious heritage harking back to the 12th century. Impressively, some of the estate's transformation was completed by the same team that restored Notre-Dame.

Location

10/10

The hotel is set within its very own *clivé* (walled vineyard), classed as premier cru, second only to grand cru in Burgundy's wine hierarchy. The surrounding village is sleepy and charming with a church, chocolate shop and a few restaurants. It's easy to explore via cycle paths on the hotel's bikes.

Style and Character

10/10

This 37-room boutique hotel is a grand cru in itself. It has pedigree, with a ducal past and an acclaimed older sibling, Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa in Epervay. It has prestige thanks to its location and wine, and it is rare – no other hotels reach this level here.

Some elements of the property's five-year transformation were done by the same team that brought Notre-Dame back to life. It is modern but romantically preserved; as light and bright as a spa hotel, but seemingly enveloped in a bygone, fairy-tale glow. An intimate lobby of white stone, gold accents and sink-in sofas sets the perfect holiday tone, with open doors overlooking in the breeze off the ever-present vines.

Service and Facilities

9/10

The staff, dressed in smart Prussian blue and brilliant white uniforms,



seem to be always present and helpful. The chatty restaurant team was especially precision-perfect (my coffee order was remembered at breakfast) and sommeliers were quick with suggestions, as you'd expect.

The hotel is a working wine estate and the newly built cuvée is one of the coolest facilities I've seen at a hotel, inviting guests to get involved in the wine-making process. There's a heated 18-metre pool, set right against the vineyards. A cave-like spa includes three treatment cabins (for therapies using myblond products), a hammam, steam room, sauna, and hot and cold plunge pools.

Telegraph expert rating

9/10

24 Grande Rue,
Pommard,
Burgundy,
France (00333
75 83 43 34;
chateau-lacommaraine.com)

Rooms

10/10

The pleasure of staying in a historic hotel is that each room is a little different, but all are soothing cocoons of luxury with a soft, calming palette. Some have exposed wood beams and balconies, the best have dual-aspect views of the vineyard and fountain courtyard. With heated tile floors, cloud-like Garnier-Thiebaut towels, and Diptyque amenities, bathrooms – some with freestanding ceramic tubs – are sanctuaries. Other things I loved in my mini-apartment suite: a real silver box for cotton buds, a Dyson hairdryer and a steamer.

To read our full collection of more than 10,000 hotel reviews, visit telegraph.co.uk/hotels.

Food

9/10

Burgundy's terror works its way into the two restaurants: indoor/outdoor all-day Le Clos, with adjoining bar; and Le VIII, a tweezer-and-blowtorch kind of place in the chapel-like, rib-vaulted former barned room of the chateau.

Bistro-like Le Clos, with interior windows peeking into the cuvée, is about Burgundian recipes reinvented (pâté en croûte with all the phenogenicity of a stained-glass window, and hahs sealed in crème de Cassis – blackcurrant being Burgundy's second most famous fruit after the grape). Le VIII hones in on ingredients such as tomato, three ways. Across the board, the wine time, housed in a leather box and listing the 10,000 bottles currently in the cellar, is as expected, precise and extraordinary. It's only polite to try a glass of the estate's flagship Clos de la Commaraine, from grapes plucked on site.

Breakfast was the best I've had in a while, with a well-curated buffet (brown-gold croissants, Bordier butter, glass cups of sliced berries and an à la carte menu, from which the avocado heaped on soft spelt stole the show).

Value for Money

8/10

Doubles from €71 (£610) in low season; €805 (£680) in high. Breakfast included.

ACCESS FOR DISABLED GUESTS? There are two fully adapted rooms within the Bourgogne and Grand Cru Junior suite categories.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY? Children of all ages are welcome, with sofa beds and cots available on request. A children's menu is available at Le Clos restaurant and there are dedicated facilities such as a kids' tent with cartoon screenings and popcorn.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Longueville Manor, Jersey

From £250 per person for a two-night stay

Two-night stay in a Superior Double Room

Full English breakfast daily

Afternoon tea

Complimentary upgrade to Deluxe Room

Travel to Jersey not included

The most prestigious hotel in Jersey, this five-star gem is a member of the Belais & Châteaux group of hotels and restaurants. It boasts a Michelin Key, three AA Rosettes and a wine cellar stocking up to 5,000 bottles.

Each of the 29 sumptuous bedrooms and suites has a character of its own, while onsite facilities include a spa, gym



and tennis court. Telegraph Travel writer Antonia Windsor says: "The intricately carved wood-paneled dining room and large medieval fireplaces tell of a grand past. Interiors are stylish and up-to-date while retaining their period appeal."

Book by October 27, 2026. Valid for stays until April 30, 2027. Blackout dates: Dec 23, 2026-Jan 20, 2027; Feb 12-14, 2027; March 26-28, 2027. Call 0333 305 9635 and quote TELP2609. See terms: telegraph.co.uk/longueville-manor

HOTEL HAPPENINGS

○ You don't have to visit the "deep dark wood" to see Julia Donaldson's classic children's book *The Gruffalo* come to life. Baffles London at the OWO has launched a new package and a themed children's afternoon tea (£50), running until January, to mark the first new Gruffalo book to be published in 20 years.

Gruffalo Grammy. A Toniebox audio player in the room will play the story to guests, and children will receive themed gifts. Rooms from £900 per night.

○ Padel, the fast-paced game played on an enclosed court and combining

elements of tennis and squash, is becoming increasingly popular – and those who want to hone their skills with a world-champion player can do so at Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa. A 10-day retreat from December 13-23 features daily classes led by Juan Miras and a full-board stay in

a sunrise overwater villa. Seaplane transfers and a 60-minute massage are included, from £6,335 for one or £7,970 for two.

○ If racquet sports sound a little too energetic, the Club Hotel & Spa in Jersey has launched a new package to mark the start of the native oyster

season on the island. Shellbound includes a guided oyster trail walk, an oyster tasting with paired wines at the hotel's restaurant, Bohemia, plus a Scaevold Slimming Mud Development treatment at the spa. The package costs from £290pp for two nights, including breakfast.

ADVERTISER CONTENT FOR AWAY HOLIDAYS

Discover Dubai's depth with Away Holidays

Cultural experiences, stylish hotels, delicious food and endless fun – all of it can be yours on your next trip to the emirate, writes Hannah Summers

With pristine beaches, plush hotels and sky-high restaurants, Dubai offers a memorable escape that combines relaxation, culture and adventure in one dynamic destination.

Holidaying in this balmy emirate is seamless with Away Holidays, one of the UK's leading tour operators specialising in luxury trips. With packages handily wrapping up accommodation, flights and experiences – all at pause-friendly prices – this extensive knowledge of the destination, Away Holidays removes all the hassle that's often associated with planning a trip.

Dubai offers an array of holiday options, whether you're a couple, a solo traveller, a family or a group of friends who loves to be entertained.

Tempted? Find out why Away Holidays will always recommend Dubai.

World-class hotels at an affordable price

Dubai does hotels spectacularly well, and whatever type of stay you're craving, you'll find it here. Perhaps it's a huge beach-side resort with free-fall slides and epic wave pools. Or maybe it's a serene stay with

a sprawling spa complete with bubbling Jacuzzis, sauna, steam rooms and couples' treatment rooms. It could be a glittering Downtown stay or a remote desert escape surrounded by endless dunes. Whatever your fancy, Away Holidays' thoughtful curation of hotels in Dubai – all with a variety of styles and working at different budgets – means you'll only ever be checking in to the best of the best.

And by combining competitive airfares with its hand-picked roster of hotels, your money goes further, allowing you to experience Dubai's most luxurious stays at an affordable price.

Culture-rich experiences

Alongside the glorious weather and blissful beaches, there are plenty of cultural experiences that await you. That could mean you explore the desert by 4x4, gliding over expansive golden-sand dunes before settling tea beneath star-studded skies. Or perhaps you'd prefer to stroll through the souks, surrounded by the heady scent of spices and picking out a hand-embroidered souvenir.

In the alleyways of the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood you can learn about the city's pearl-diving history, hop on an abra boat at Dubai Creek or peruse the art galleries and the independent designer stores in the Dubai Design District.

Beyond the city you can kayak at the foot of mountains in Hatta or explore the Dubai Miracle Garden, the world's largest natural flower garden. Whether you're a party of one seeking adventure, travelling as a couple or with a group of friends for a city break, Dubai welcomes every type of holidaymaker. What's more, your round sunshine means you can holiday here

on any day of the year and still reap the benefits of bluesky and vitamin D.

Endless fun for all ages

Few places in the world deliver such a thrilling array of activities, and for families looking for endless thrills there's no better place. Check out the always-popular water parks (or even opt for a beach with a water

Oasis Five-star indulgence at Bab Al Sham Desert Resort, above; family time on wheels at Kite Beach, right

Peace of mind at affordable prices

Booking your Dubai getaway with UK travel specialist Away Holidays gives you peace of mind, expert guidance and reliable customer support from beginning to end. It's all about well-planned travel that frees you from stress, arrangements and logistical difficulties. That could be advice on the best flights, assistance choosing the most suitable hotel or perhaps helping you plot your time in Dubai.

What's more, Away Holidays' established partnerships with airlines, hotels and on-the-ground handlers mean it can offer attractive prices on its escapes, with a commitment to keep costs down while delivering a high-quality experience. Every holiday is Atoi protected from the moment you book and there's 24/7 customer support, giving you the reassurance that you're in good hands.

park or vice versa, before heading to Dubai's incredible theme parks, including Legoland, Motiongate and Real Madrid World.

Grown-ups will also be taken by what's on offer in Dubai, whether it's a night at the races, a round or two on a world-class golf course, a day of shopping or pampering, or a night at the opera. Away Holidays' unbeatable prices mean you can treat yourself to pampering spa treatments, splurging on tickets and tick off every single theme park.

A second-to-none food scene Peckish? You're in the right place. Dubai's food scene is one of the best in the world. Feast on colourful brunches or savour

multi-course tasting menus at Michelin-starred restaurants, or tuck into delicious local Emirati cuisine and family favourites. Follow that with refreshments at sunset on the shoreline or late-night catch-ups with a cityscape view. Some of Dubai's best lounges and restaurants are located right there in your hotel, meaning you never need to travel far to experience culinary excellence.

The extraordinary variety that Dubai offers means you'll be spoilt for choice, but Away Holidays' expert knowledge of Dubai and commitment to giving you the very best service means that every suggestion is perfectly aligned with your wants, needs and budgets. The result? Your dream holiday in Dubai is within reach.

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