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# HOLIDAYS

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## DREAM DESTINATIONS

8 pages of inspirational getaways  
to indulge your love of luxury

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# Paradise – and the kids can come too

Once the preserve of honeymooning couples, luxury resorts are going family-friendly, with five-star thrills to keep children entertained, says **Ruby Carter**

**P**arenthood used to mean giving up a good night's sleep, the sports car and any hope of a posh holiday. In the case of travel, at least, things are looking up. Luxury hotels no longer regard children as they might an unclipped hand grenade. Interconnecting rooms, excellent childcare and child-friendly mealtimes are now standard for a growing band of top-class hotels. Now, it's kids' clubs that are being reinvented, with activities and adventures so good, the adults want to join in too.

Many hotels are forming alliances with the world's leading sports clubs and stars to provide expert coaching in all sorts of activities. Forte Village (from £5,249 per family, half-board), in Sardinia, has one of the most impressive sports set-ups for families, offering tuition in everything from cycling and tennis to netball and cricket. It also has a Chelsea football academy, where 4- to 14-year-olds learn tactics and techniques from former CFC players, such as Tore Andre Flo; and a rugby academy where former internationals such as Martin Johnson take boys and girls through tackles and scrums. Mum and dad get a look in too, as the week's training concludes with a barbecue and awards ceremony.

The new wave of kids' clubs are not just about physical exercise – youngsters are also given plenty of scope for artistic expression. One of the most ambitious programmes is at the Principe Yaiza Suite Hotel Resort, in Lanzarote (from £3,425 per family, B&B), which has a striking 1,200-seat amphitheatre that holds daily shows for budding performers during the summer season. The stage is part of Kikoland, a huge entertainment park with pools,



All together now: there's more to do than simply sunbathe at resorts that put the family first

tennis and basketball courts, climbing walls and a football pitch where families have the option to play together.

The Martinhal Sagres (from £3,539 per family, B&B), on Portugal's Algarve coast, recognises that families still treasure a shared experience. The resort offers joint sessions for surfing, biking and fishing, and its indulgent spa has treatments for the whole family, including children's manicures and teenage facials as well as a full range of wraps, slaps, rubs and scrubs for grown-ups.

**Subsix, in the Maldives,  
is an underwater chillout  
lounge where kids can hang  
out with a marine biologist**

Like the Martinhal Sagres, the Almyra (from £2,799 per family, half-board), in Paphos, Cyprus, takes a thoughtful approach to family holidays. Both hotels offer the Baby Go Lightly service that lets parents pre-book everything from potties to Harry Potter storybooks to be waiting in their room on arrival, perfect for taking the stress out of unpacking.

Increasingly, parents are looking for five-star hotels that help children make a connection with nature or gain an insight into other cultures. The Maldives were once seen as the preserve of honeymooners, but now the archipelago

actively courts families, providing a secure environment with safe, shallow swimming conditions. PER AQUUM Niyama (from £7,639 per family, half-board), has Subsix, a chillout lounge sunk six metres underwater and 500 metres out to sea. It doubles as a classroom, allowing youngsters to experience the Maldives' incredible aquatic world with a marine biologist, without having to snorkel or dive.

Mauritius, probably the Indian Ocean's most child-friendly island, has its low season between June and September – despite the warm, dry weather – so makes a perfect destination for the school holidays. Most of the hotels have invested in children's facilities – for example, the Residence Mauritius (from £4,855 per family, half-board) keeps its kids' club open from 9am until 10pm daily and offers cooking classes with the resort's chefs.

Looking for adventure? Vietnam has your child's inner Indiana Jones covered. The Hyatt Regency Danang Resort and Spa (from £5,179 per family, B&B) brings ancient history alive for kids with tours to sites such as the My Son ruins, the country's religious and political capital from the 4th to the 13th centuries.

● Prices are for a family of three during school summer holidays and include flights and transfers. To find out more, visit [itluxurytravel.co.uk](http://itluxurytravel.co.uk)