

The 30 best last-minute spring holidays in Britain and abroad



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Considering how sweetly it sings to the human soul – a period of rebirth following the deprivations of winter – spring can be an inconsistent season. Officially, meteorological spring came upon Great Britain yesterday, yet sometimes – as in this year – it saunters in unexpectedly while February is still packing up. Equally, you can occasionally be checking your diary late in March, hoping it hasn't forgotten. But it stays for April, and often into May. Unless, of course, summer arrives with undue haste – and spring has to make its excuses.

Along with the ill-defined “when”, there is also the uncertain matter of where. Spring lends its tender touch to large swathes of Asia and North America – and dances elegantly across most of Europe. But it becomes vague where Africa drifts down towards the dust of the Sahara, only to reappear at the base of the continent, and in the lower latitudes of Australasia – in a different segment of the calendar, evicting the dreariness that swamps some of the Southern Hemisphere in August, and telling September and October to smile.

And yet, if you can pin it down, spring is a glorious time for travel. It has flowers, food and festivals. It has blossom and brightness. It has animals at play. And it has, many say, temperatures perfect for any sort of journey – neither too hot nor too cold. The following 30 holiday suggestions find their feet in places as varied as Mull, Guernsey, Madeira, Perth and Kyoto, but all echo with the joy of renewal – and the feel of the sun once more.

Australasia

Otago wild

One of the many joys of spring is that, if you somehow miss it when it is reinvigorating the Northern Hemisphere, you can make it the reason for a long journey later in the year – when it has thrown its arms around the Southern. The meadows of New Zealand are resurrected in September and October, not least in Otago, at the heart of the South Island, where the fields between Queenstown and Dunedin are awash with daffodils, daisies and the scent of thyme. Discover The World (01737 886 155; discover-the-world.com) sells a nine-night “Wildsouth Discovery” privately guided tour from £6,621 a head, with flights.