OUR FAVOURITE HOTELS
UNDER £150
A NIGHT

BAREFOOT MEXICO
THE NEXT TULUM: HERE'S THIS YEAR'S CARIBBEAN BEACH BEAUTY

ON THE ROAD WITH
MARK RONSON
IN MEMPHIS
MARY J. BLIGE
IN PARIS
NUNO MENDES
IN LISBON

SIX GREAT
INDIAN RETREATS

MARCH 2015 £4.50
With Chiltern Firehouse just out of reservation lockdown, Nuno Mendes is the most talked-about chef in London, but he hasn’t forgotten his roots. Just back from Lisbon, the city where he was born, he dished up his latest local favourites.

**THE RESTAURANTS**

- Taipera Nova das Flores: An amazing little restaurant that showcases creative cooking and local produce in a relaxed, rustic way. It has had a massive impact on the new, less formal gastro scene in the city. Some of the world’s best chefs have stopped by and learnt tips from the fantastic chef, André Magalhães.

**THE CHEF**

José Avillez: One of Portugal’s most established names, Avillez has several restaurants, including Belcanto – Lisbon’s first winner of two Michelin stars. Now he has launched Mini Bar in the Chiado area, where the concept is delicious mini-dishes, such as fine-gras “Ferrero Rocher” bonbons or tuna-tartare temaki cones. The cocktails are also fantastic, and it’s open late.

**THE DRINKS SPOT**

Café à Gôis: For as long as I can remember, Goan cooking has been part of Lisbon. My friend, Jesus Lee owns this hole-in-the-wall place, which serves the best Goan food outside Goa.

**THE RISING STARS**

Manuel Lino: This young chef has just opened Tabak, part of a movement towards more casual restaurants serving very serious food, which is set to become the next big place in Portugal. Having spent the past eight years working in some of the world’s best restaurants, he decided to return home, start his own place and focus on Portuguese cooking and ingredients. Expect great things.

João Rodrigues: An up-and-coming chef who is really pushing the boundaries with his fantastic tasting menu at Feliciana in the beautiful riverside hotel Alto Belém.

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**FOLLOWERS**

Now worth actual – as well as social – currency, The Nordic Light Hotel in Stockholm and 3888 Hotel in Sydney offer discounted stays based on guests’ Instagram numbers, and travel website Skifted turns social-media presence into deals at US hotels.

**BREAKFAST**

Early-morning classics are back on the menu at Oakhaas and Brooklyn Porridge Co in New York, and in London, Cereal Killer Cafe dishes up Rice Krispies and Lucky Charms.

**HOLIDAY NETWORKING**

Delta is launching Innovation Class, where flyers apply to sit next to music producers, chefs and start-up founders; on KLM, flying mates can be chosen from their LinkedIn profiles.

**BEACH LIT**

Back away from the trendy thrillers in WHSmith: bookish website TripFiction selects novels set in your destination for a more engrossing read.

**CLAUSTROPHOBICS**

They’re missing out on the global trend for “escape games,” where the aim is to bust out of locked rooms by solving puzzles. Make a bid for freedom at Hong Kong’s Freckled HK, Escape the Room NYC, or EXIT Game Berlin.

**THE SUN**

The total solar eclipse on 20 March – a rare chance to catch the phenomenon in Europe – gained a whole new meaning to the winter sun break. Best spot to see it? The Faroe Islands.

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A selection of our favourite Vancouver holidays:

**CITY BREAK**

4 NIGHTS FROM £979

- Soak up the sights, sounds and flavor of Vancouver, Canada’s favorite city, followed by a unique working ranch experience.
- Direct flights, 4 nights 5★ Lusso Vancouver, 3 nights 4★ Echo Valley Ranch with full board & car hire.

**CITY & RANCH**

7 NIGHTS FROM £1,349

- Soak up the sights, sounds and flavor of Vancouver, Canada’s favorite city, followed by a unique working ranch experience.
- Direct flights, 4 nights 5★ Lusso Vancouver, 3 nights 4★ Echo Valley Ranch with full board & car hire.

**5★ CITY & WILDNERSSS**

7 NIGHTS FROM £1,475

- Combine one of four hotels in vibrant downtown Vancouver with the breathtaking natural beauty of the wilderness – a complete luxury package including airfare, city hotel and a luxury 4-night stay in a top-rated wilderness lodge.
- Direct flights, 4 nights 5★ Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver, 3 nights 5★ Clayoquot Wilderness Resort.

Tailormade Travel Worldwide 020 7368 1354
First & Business Class Travel 020 7368 1355
trailfinders.com

Price is per person based on double share & subject to availability for selected May departures.
NEW ZEALAND HOKIANGA
KOKOHUIJA LODGE

Steve Hallam and Suzanne Quilt’s new, self-contained B&B is set
high on a wooded hill three hours’ drive up the coast from
Auckland. At this intensely private eco-
sustainability-built almost entirely of timber and glass,
self-sufficiency is key. The most is made of off-grid
power and recycled rainwater, as well as an organic
orchard and thriving kitchen garden down the slope
in a shady dell. There are also beehives, working
wrens and local fishermen and farmers on tap.
In the suite, the king-size bed’s dressed in cotton and
silk; cedar doors open onto a glass-fronted terrace
with butterfly tea views, and an enormous egg-shaped
bathtub stands unashamedly in front of an
uncurtained window. The owners’ personalities are
everywhere: a nifty wall clock strikes on the half hour
with native bird-calls, and quirky artworks display a
regional take on New Zealand culture. Simplicity may
be fundamental: order a hot Hokianga supper in
advance for supper and it’s delivered to your suite on
a handmade tray — and even the timber floors are
walked on in a thick natural oil to provide protection
from the elements. But there is nothing austere about
the place. In the morning there’s fresh seasonal fruit
and a juiced citrus juice in the fridge, and the cooked
breakfasts — organic, free-range scrambled eggs with
smoked salmon; toasted bagel with pesto, bacon and
avocado — are reassuringly indulgent. +64 21 7799577;
www.kokohuijalodge.co.nz. Double room £120

ITALY FLORENCE
SOPRANO SUITES

The creative Oltrarno district was strangely devoid of interesting
places to stay before this recent opening in a handsome
16th-century palazzo on one of the city’s most elegant streets. The
owners, calligrapher and graphic designer Betty Solari and her lawyer
husband Matteo Perduca, are magpies with a taste for the quirky
and unusual, and they’ve scavenged junk shops, Reuse markets and
salvage yards for objects to reclaim, recondition and upcycle. There
are lamps made from old fire extinguishers; a dining table cut from
a zinc water tank; a church confessional turned bookcase. Not to
mention the odd vintage design classic and examples of Betty’s
equisite calligraphy and Matteo’s own kooky artwork. Many of the
11 bedrooms are huge, with glossy frescoed ceilings, tall windows,
hardwood floors and free-standing baths. Others are more intimate,
but all have gorgeous bathrooms and are loosely themed around a
particular feature: Violagrotto has framed maps and a bright,
beaded Kenyan throne; the sleek and sexy, Sixties-inspired
Colonnina has a double shower and black suede armchairs; Fun
Girand has bright green, Uffielven-style floral upholstery, Lego
shelves and a vintage PlayStation; and the whimsical Paper Room
is decorated with books and pretty paper cut-outs. At breakfast (fruit
salad, warm croissants, proper mocha coffee), guests sit around
communal tables on wooden chairs rescued from a school
classroom and catch up on the previous day’s adventures. +39 055
046 8723; www.sopranosuites.com. Doubles from €112

REVIEWS BY Peter Browne, Eimear Lynch, Lauren Holmes,
Rodney Bolt, Emily Matheson, Mary Lussiana, Karen Buntelein, Lanie
Goodman, Kate Spicer, Sophie Deming, Ralph Bestic, Aoife O’Riordan

PORTUGAL LISBON
MEMMO ALFAMA

This is the second property from Memmo Hotels. The first, Memmo Bacieira
in the Algarve, sums up the laid-back surf side of Portugal. This one is
all about the city’s soul, above the meandering, heady strains of back
street alleyways. It’s a 42-room hotel in the old Alfama district of the
city, and the single-storey building sits at the end of a tiny street of a street.
The bedrooms are calm, crisp and white, with contemporary lines cleverly
incorporated into these ancient walls by the architect Samuel Torres de Carvalho. There are views of the flower-filled Moorish trams and Lisbon’s rooftops, and the Tagus beyond. Breakfast is
served in the downstairs dining room where there’s a 24-hour honesty bar.
Upstairs there’s a terrace with a little wine bar serving octopus salad
and smoked meat platters, and a separate terrace with a fire pit for winter
and a real-fuel swimming pool for summer. But the whole point is that
everything here is very simple, very warm and very Portuguese. +351 210
406 600; www.memmoalfama.com. Doubles from £102