

Captain CRUNCH



Beach the recession

IT IS cold, wet and miserable, STILL January and the summer holidays seem like a lifetime away.

But don't wallow in self-pity. Start thinking about the sun options ahead, and book your break now to save a small fortune.

A survey by online travel agent

Gohop.ie found that, despite our money woes, most of us – a massive 89 per cent in fact – hope to take a sunshine getaway in 2013.

And the top destinations for the weather-weary Irish are Orlando, the Algarve, Thailand, Lanzarote and Malta.

Certainly the Irish Travel Agents Association is reporting another busy start to the year after a huge 90 per cent increase in sales in 2012.

January is traditionally a time when punters rush to book their hols, and business at last weekend's Holiday World Show, at the RDS in Dublin, was said to be up considerably.

Savvy

ITAA chief Pat Dawson told how it was "a clear sign that an increased number of people will travel this year".

Research by budget bookers lowcostholidays.ie also shows we are desperate to chill out in less chilly climes, with the cold snap prompting a great number of

us to reserve our spots in the summer sun.

Irish boss of lowcostholidays, Clem Walshe, said: "I suspect that the poor summer weather we've had at home in recent years has made people more determined than ever to ensure they get away for some guaranteed sunshine in



2013.

"But there's no doubt that consumers are being a lot more savvy when it comes to the actual cost of the holiday.

"The all-inclusive option is an ideal solution for holiday makers who want to have better control of their overseas spending and is particularly popular with families.

"We understand that consumers are looking for the best possible value and families tend to be restricted as to when they can travel due to school holidays."

And the message from all the experts is clear – book now and save.

Below, **FIONA WYNNE** looks at some of the best "early bird" deals on offer.

LOWCOSTHOLIDAYS

SAVE €50 off all-inclusive one week deals for the family.

- Algarve — From €1,249/family, departing July 12.
- Majorca — From €1,475/family, departing July 3.
- Majorca — From €1,565/family, departing August 7.
- Algarve — From €1,619/family, departing August 6.

Visit lowcostholidays.ie or call 01 485 3835.

THOMAS COOK IRELAND

A SEVEN-NIGHT family break in Quateria on the Algarve, can be had from €1,969 staying at the four-star Aquashow Park Hotel and departing May 19 from Dublin or Shannon.

The B&B package deal includes unlimited free use of the hotel's waterpark during your stay and, with free child place, offers a saving of €276.

Visit thomascook.ie or call 01 514 0328 to find out more.

CONCORDE TRAVEL

SAVE €100 per person when paying in full for a one week sun break in Croatia, Montenegro or the Lisbon coast.

The offer applies to selected weekly departures between May 2 and October 2 and is valid on bookings made before the end of February.

Visit concordetravel.ie or call 01 775 9300 to find out more.

WINGSABROAD

TRUKISH hols specialist Wings Abroad is celebrating their third season with some great package deals to top resorts.

The prices include return flights out of Dublin or Cork, seven nights accommodation, airport transfers and taxes.

- Kusadasi — Stay at the 3* Carina Hotel on a B&B basis

from only €379pp, based on two adults sharing.

- Kusadasi — Stay at the Pine Club with family prices from €1,055, based on two adults and two children.

- Gumbet (Bodrum Peninsula) — Stay at the 3* Sami Beach Hotel on a B&B basis from €379pp based on two adults sharing.

- Gumbet — Stay at the 2* special category Kaseria Hotel on a B&B basis from €329pp, based on two adults sharing.

Visit wingsabroad.ie or call 01 8719444 for more information.

TOPFLIGHT

SIRMIONE, a medieval Italian town with beautiful lakeside views and cobblestoned streets, is renowned for its thermal waters and magnificent spas.

Book with Topflight before the end of February and save €150 per couple on selected properties.

- Grand Hotel Terme — a week at this 5* hotel starts at €1,049pps. Just metres from the centre of Sirmione, it offers health treatments using local thermal waters.

- Hotel Sirmione — a week at this 5* hotel starts at €849pps. Sitting by the ancient castle it

has breathtaking lake views.

Prices include seven nights B&B, return flights, transfers, generous luggage allowance and rep service.

Visit topflight.ie or call 01 2401 700 to book.

CASSIDY TRAVEL

THERE are some keen deals available for holidays in May and early June. And by booking

early you can also avail of free child places.

- Tenerife — Seven nights staying at Villa Mandi on a B&B basis from €1,879, based on two adults and two children travelling. Departs May 24.

- Portugal — Seven nights staying at Paladium on a self-catering basis from €1,580, based on two adults and two children. Departs May 26. The same deal,

departing August 25, is available for €1,690.

- Gran Canaria — Seven nights staying at Mirador Atlantico on a S/C basis from €1,579, based on two adults and two children.

Departs June 8.

- Turkey — Seven nights staying at Club Alize on all-inclusive basis for €2,109, based on two adults and two children. Departs June 10.

Visit cassidytravel.ie or call the Holiday Hotline 0818 332800 for more details.

SUNWAY

CORFU is a new Sunway destination this summer and you can currently get a seven night break on the island for €449pps — saving up to €100 per couple.

The special offer, available

until February 23, includes accommodation at the 3* Olympian Village in Kavos, flights, transfers, all taxes and charges and Sunway rep service.

Book now and only pay €50 deposit per person and €150 for families, leaving you with a few months to pay up in full. Other offers include:

- Corfu — 3* Olympian Village S/C, €449. Depart June 9 & 16.

- Morocco — 3* Intouriste Apartments S/C, €399. Depart June 21.

- Tunisia — 2* Dreams Beach Hotel B&B, €369 for all May departures.

- Cyprus — 3* Green Bungalows S/C, €599. Departs May 26.

- Fuerteventura — 2* Villa Florida Apartments S/C, €399 for all May departures.

- Turkey — 4* Sea Pearl Hotel, €399. Departs May 4 and 11.

- Lanzarote — 2*+ Puertocarmen Apartments S/C, €429 for all May departures.

- Sicily — 2* Carmen Apartments S/C, €459 for all May departures.

Visit sunway.ie or call 01 288 6828 for more information or to make a booking.

CAMINOWAYS.COM

IF you'd like to combine your sunny sojourn with some exercise, a journey along the famous Camino Way could be the ideal holiday.

Caminoways.com is offering a Valentine's weekend special which includes four nights along the route in northern Spain.



Available from €599pps, the package includes return flights, chauffeured transfers, two nights' accommodation in country houses along the route, and two nights in a four star boutique hotel in Santiago — complete with gourmet dinners, a full body massage and champagne reception.

Visit caminoways.com or call 01 525 2886 for more info or to book your place.

GOHOP.IE

FOR an all-inclusive break that takes the stress out of choosing restaurants for lunch and dinner, Gohop.ie has a selection of tempting deals.

- Malta — seven nights at the four-star Hotel Canifor, from €336 per adult. Departing March 13.

- Fuerteventura — four nights in the Blue Sea Club Caleta Dorada from €347 per adult. Departing March 5.

- Athens — four nights in the Giannoulis Hotels Almyra Hotel and Village from €726 per adult. Departing Shannon on July 13.

- Sunny Beach — seven nights in the four-star Sun Palace Hotel from €637 per adult. Departing May 4.

If there's a special occasion in 2013, mark it with an exotic holiday. Gohop.ie has a number of long-haul deals that offer luxury without breaking the bank.

- South Africa — Cape Town is the perfect base to explore Table Mountain, Robben Island, Cape Point Nature Reserve and the incredible local vineyards.

Eight nights' B&B, and daily sight-seeing tours are available from €2,579 per person, with flight prices subject to inquiry.

- Vietnam — From Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, a nine-night tour of Vietnam includes luxury accommodation, a night on a boat in the stunning Halong Bay, and a trip through the ancient port town of Hoi An.

The package, including flights, is available from €3,259, depending on departure dates.

Visit gohop.ie or call 01 241 2389 for information.



