

# On the radar UK holidaymakers face price hike as Spain's popularity soars



Costa lot more? ... a busy beach in Torremolinos, near Málaga

With a record 18 million people visiting last year, Spain is by far the most popular foreign

destination for UK holidaymakers. But as the country "fills up" with tourists, prices look set to increase.

Much of the rise in visitor numbers has been caused by security concerns over North Africa and Turkey. Travel to Turkey suffered last year after the failed military coup, and from 2015 until July this year - when the Foreign Office updated its travel advice - British tourists were warned not to travel to Tunisia, following the terrorist attack in Sousse that killed 38 people.

In February, travel market analyst GfK reported a record number of British tourists had visited Spain in 2016, up by 12% to 17.8 million people. At the time, early bookings for summer 2017 were already up 16%.

On Tuesday, Thomas Cook chief executive Peter Fankhauser told the BBC that it has "not enough beds for the demand" in Spain. He said he expected the price of a Spanish holiday to rise by up to 10% next year, as a result of the surge in popularity combined with the weak pound.

Other industry experts agree. John Lucas, e-commerce director at loveholidays.com, said demand for summer 2018 was already higher than this time last year, with a growing number of people taking advantage of early-booking deals.

"Spain was very busy this year, so a

lot of tourists would have missed out on the best hotels, best rooms or their first-choice properties," he said. "What we're seeing now is huge interest in summer 2018. If the demand comes early, the hoteliers will be happy to hold their line on price as we get closer to next summer."

But Alexander Göransson of Euromonitor International added that although demand for accommodation would be high in 2018, putting upward pressure on prices, increased demand for travel to Spain could see flight prices dropping as airlines compete for passengers, helping keep overall package prices down.

"According to our industry sources, airlines are shifting capacity from the eastern Mediterranean to the Iberian peninsula. This increase in capacity allows tour operators to offset part of the increased accommodation costs."

Wayne Perks of Teletext Holidays, said that although capacity issues in mainland Spain and the Balearic islands were causing prices in peak season to rise, travel to Turkey was also looking more buoyant.

"Turkey has had a stronger-than-expected summer, and predictions are that 2018 will see it rise to previous levels of popularity if there are no further issues," he said.

Thomas Cook has begun selling holidays in Turkey again, with trips starting from February 2018.

The low demand for Turkey and Tunisia has put downward pressure on prices, Göransson said. He added: "This, again, is more relevant if sterling remains weak, which is likely."

Will Coldwell



## World view Diving off the edge, the Philippines

Alexander Kumar took this photograph of his brilliantly splashy shorts, and the rather more sober coral reefs below, in the uninhabited western isles of the Philippines. "At first glance, it's a colourful, clear paradise," says Alexander. "But this is coral bleaching in an area of the world not inhabited, yet already affected by mankind's footprint. Alarm bells rang. It was paradise lost."



## Japan on two wheels

Explore has a new two-week cycling trip in Japan, taking in countryside, temples and zen gardens plus Tokyo and Kyoto. From £3,749pp, including breakfast and five dinners, explore.co.uk



## Five of the best Restaurants near New York attractions



**Central Park: Amy Ruth's**  
There's a wealth of good food in Harlem. Amy Ruth's, six blocks north of Central Park, offers real southern cuisine. The Rev Al Sharpton, named after the New York civil rights activist (pictured here at the restaurant), is a chicken and waffle feast for \$15.50. 113 West 116th Street, amyruths.com



**The High Line: Friedman's**  
Duck off the mile-and-a-half-long elevated park at Chelsea Market, home to Friedman's restaurant and its good-value American fare. The buttermilk fried chicken sandwich (\$17) comes with kale slaw and habanero honey and is particularly good. 75 9th Ave, friedmansrestaurant.com



**Empire State Building: Mando Bar**  
This landmark is close to the magic of Koreatown. Mando is a narrow place with wooden booths, swift service and great food. Mando means dumpling, and here they are handmade on site, such as the mool mando, filled with pork and vegetables (\$9.24 for 10). 2 West 32nd Street, mandooobarnyc.com



**Brooklyn Bridge: Fornino**  
Piers on the Brooklyn side of the river were redeveloped into a park in the noughties. Fornino's is a rooftop pizzeria next to Pier 6, with views of lower Manhattan. Try the Lombardi pizza, with mozzarella, wild rocket, prosciutto and parmesan (\$16). Brooklyn Bridge Park, fornino.com



**Williamsburg: La Superior**  
After doing the main drag, Bedford Avenue, head south, for tacos and quesadillas at La Superior. This is a tiny, hip spot with wooden benches, and its taco de lengua, with beef tongue (\$3.50), is delicious. 295 Berry Street, lasuperiornyc.com  
Adam Gabbatt  
See the full list of 10 New York tips on Monday at theguardian.com/travel

## Free world Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

Across the water from the Doge's Palace and Saint Mark's Square, the island of San Giorgio is an integral part of the classic Venetian vista. The white facade and tall bell tower of Palladio's majestic 16th-century church were immortalised in paintings by Canaletto, Monet and Turner. The church is one of the few in Venice that does not charge an entry fee, and



inside there are paintings by Tintoretto, Jacopo Bassano and Palma Giovane.

But Palladio's masterpiece is only one of many surprising free attractions here. San Giorgio is the headquarters of the Cini foundation, whose arts centre hosts regular, free, exhibitions.

And during each Venice Biennale (ends November 26 2017) this is a prestigious "collateral venue". Tickets to the Biennale Gardens are €25, but on San Giorgio, free shows running through the autumn include an exhibition devoted to one of Murano's greatest glass makers, the artist Vittorio Zecchin.

The only paid attraction is the bell tower, a reasonable €3 to take the lift to the top, with much less of a queue than for the San Marco tower, and a much better view.

● [cini.it](#), [vaporetto stop San Giorgio](#)  
John Brunton

## Snapshots Jure Matičič in Albania



**Seaside statue**  
I'm a photographer from Ljubljana, Slovenia, and recently visited Durrës, Albania's second-largest city. Along the seafloor, kids were playing on a statue commemorating Albanian resistance to the invasion by Mussolini's Italian forces on 7 April 1939.



**Shore and simple**  
About 35km west of Tirana, Durrës is a port and among the largest cities on the Adriatic. It's also a popular seaside resort. For decades, under the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, it was just about the only holiday destination available to Albanians.



**The regeneration game**  
The city was, briefly, renamed Durrës-Enver Hoxha in the late 1980s. Then (after the fall of communism) it became the location for mass migrations to Italy. In the past couple of decades, Durrës has had a facelift. ● [instagram.com/jure\\_maticic](#)

Share your travels in Instagram pictures by sending a series of three snaps, plus captions, and by adding #guardiantravelsnaps

## The foodie traveller ... Slurps super-spicy hotpot in Chongqing, China

"Hotpot is an institution. It's about the atmosphere, not just the food," says Jordan Porter of Chengdu Food Tours.

The spiritual home of Sichuan mala (numbingly spicy) hotpot is Chongqing in south-west China - with 37 million people in its urban area it one of the world's largest cities. The dish migrated south from Mongolia hundreds of years ago, and is now synonymous with this megacity. As Chongqing develops upwards and outwards, love of hotpot is about the only thing that has stood still.

The more than 50,000 hotpot restaurants in Chongqing are almost impossible to rank, so the best advice is to look for a restaurant with a big atmosphere. Downtown Chongqing, near the Jiefangbei business district, is a good place to start.

Lin Jiangmen (2 Zhonghua Alley) has a neon flame on the shopfront, a

fridge stacked with Chongqing beer and a sack of dried chillies by the door. It's also packed with families and groups of friends pulling tasty tidbits from the steamy broth.

The hotpot's tongue-numbing sensation comes from the presence of the hydroxy alpha sanshool molecule in Sichuan peppercorns, which are added to a fiery mix of beef lard, chillies, cardamom and fennel. Into it goes anything you like: lotus root, bean sprouts, rare strips of beef, duck intestine ... but once it's dropped into the oil, anything that comes out will be way up there on the Scoville scale.

The best way to cool off is with glugs of weak Chongqing beer, served in shallow ceramic bowls. And most importantly, tuck in your napkin - hotpots are pretty splashy, too. ● [chengdufoodtours.com](#), £45pp  
Cathy Adams



Feel the heat ... Sichuan hotpot is a flammable mix of pepper and chillies

## Travel in numbers Ryanair

20,100  
Total flights cancelled since mid-September in row over pilots' leave

£44m  
Cost to the airline, including £20m in flight vouchers

1%  
Of Ryanair's 50 million passengers likely to be affected this winter  
SOURCE: BBC, RYANAIR