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Paradise Found: 5 Amazing Beach Holidays

by Fiona Harper



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As winter descends, long summer days and lazy beach holidays seem a distant memory. To keep the winter chills at bay, here are some enticing salt-encrusted adventures bathed in golden sunshine.

Travel writer Fiona Harper shares five of the best beach holidays to suit all budgets - from camping to lapping it up in luxury.

1. Lady Musgrave Island

Barely rising above the Great Barrier Reef, Lady Musgrave Island is a tiny coral cay off the coast of the smal town 1770. It's the ultimate Robinson Crusoe getaway. With no facilities beyond a couple of compost toilets this is a bare bones castaway adventure. Campers share the island with nesting turtles and seabirds, with visitor numbers limited by the number of campsites. A ranger is stationed on the island during turtle nesting season to monitor their movements. Campers will need to be totally self-sufficient carrying in all food and water, and taking out all of their rubbish.

Travel: Ferry from 1770 (\$340 pp return)
Information: www.lmcruises.com.au

2. Samoa

Samoans are friendly folk, who literally wear their culture and pride on their sleeve in the form of fascinating tribal tattoos. Visit during the annual Teuila Festival for a cultural extravaganza when traditions like tattooing, dance, song, carving and handcrafts are on display. Bed down in a simple beach 'fale', which is a raised covered platform with roll up walls. Homestay hosts provide meals, or you can eat at nearby restaurants. Traffic in Samoa is light to non-existent with mostly dogs, pigs and chooks on the road. Leave the glitzy resort wear at home: dress is tropical casual.

Travel: Fly from Brisbane or Sydney (prices vary)
Information: www.samoa.travel

3. Rottnest Island

Approximately 20 km west of Perth, Rottnest Island is famous for gorgeous sun-drenched bays and coves bookended by weathered limestone outcrops. The ocean only comes in one shade which is a ridiculously bright turquoise. It's every bit as divine in the flesh as it appears on those drool-worthy postcards. Cars are banned, so holidaymakers get around by bike, bus or foot. Snorkelling, diving and fishing are superb.

Accommodation varies from shady tent sites, heritage cottages or premium ocean view units. Avoid the crowds by visiting outside of school holidays when the island gets a little overrun with tourists.

Travel: Ferry from Fremantle (\$83 return)
Information: www.rottnestisland.com

4. Gold Coast

The Gold Coast is no shrinking violet with sassy Surfers Paradise confirmed as the entertainment hub of the region. Surfers, sun-worshippers and beach walkers are spoilt for choice. So too are fun-seekers and adrenaline junkies. If you want to go low-key, stay at one of Australia's best located caravan parks at Main Beach. In fact, there are holidays to suit all styles and budgets on the Gold Coast.

Check into a modern apartment at Soul Surfers Paradise or pack the gold sandals and shiny bling and rub shoulders with celebrities at Palazzo Versace.

Travel: Fly to Coolangatta Airport from major or minor airports (prices vary)
Information: www.palazzoversace.com.au

5. Fiji

Jean Michel Cousteau Resort - a short drive from SavuSavu on the island of Vanua Levu - is a notch above your average luxury Fijian resort. Every child has their own nanny, allowing parents to indulge in massages, diving, sailing, poolside relaxing and fine dining. But JMC is equally suited to loved-up couples looking for romantic relaxation in idyllic surrounds. Like everywhere in Fiji, the staff are fabulous, offering big 'Bula' smiles from the moment you arrive until the tear-inducing departure ceremony when the mournful Isa Lei is sung in farewell.

Traditional thatched roof bures - either beachfront or within the garden - are the norm, but for pure indulgence book The Villa, probably the most desirable villa in the South Pacific.

Travel: Fly from Brisbane or Sydney (prices vary)
Information: www.fijiresort.com

Fiona Harper is a travel writer specialising in cruising, active and soft adventures. Follow her at [Travel Boating Lifestyle](#).

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