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Islands in the ***Atlantic Ocean***

SÃO TOMÉ & PRÍNCIPE INDEPENDENT

Once part of Portugal's empire, close-knit twins São Tomé and Príncipe have been independent since 1975. Lying off the coast of Equatorial Guinea, they have a growing tourist industry – not least Príncipe, which has soft sands and a fair range of beach hotels. **12-day Best of São Tomé and Príncipe costs £2,690pp, including international flights,** rainbowtours.co.uk

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MADEIRA PORTUGAL

A younger generation is increasingly discovering Portugal's southerly sentinel as a venue for mountain biking, climbing and canyoning. But it retains an old-world grandeur, too – particularly in the south-coast capital, Funchal, where the Quinta da Boa Vista estate is bright with orchids and Belmond Reid's Palace hotel (right) is a haven of elegance. **Five nights at Belmond Reid's Palace, flying from Gatwick on 29 September, from £860pp, ba.com/holidays**



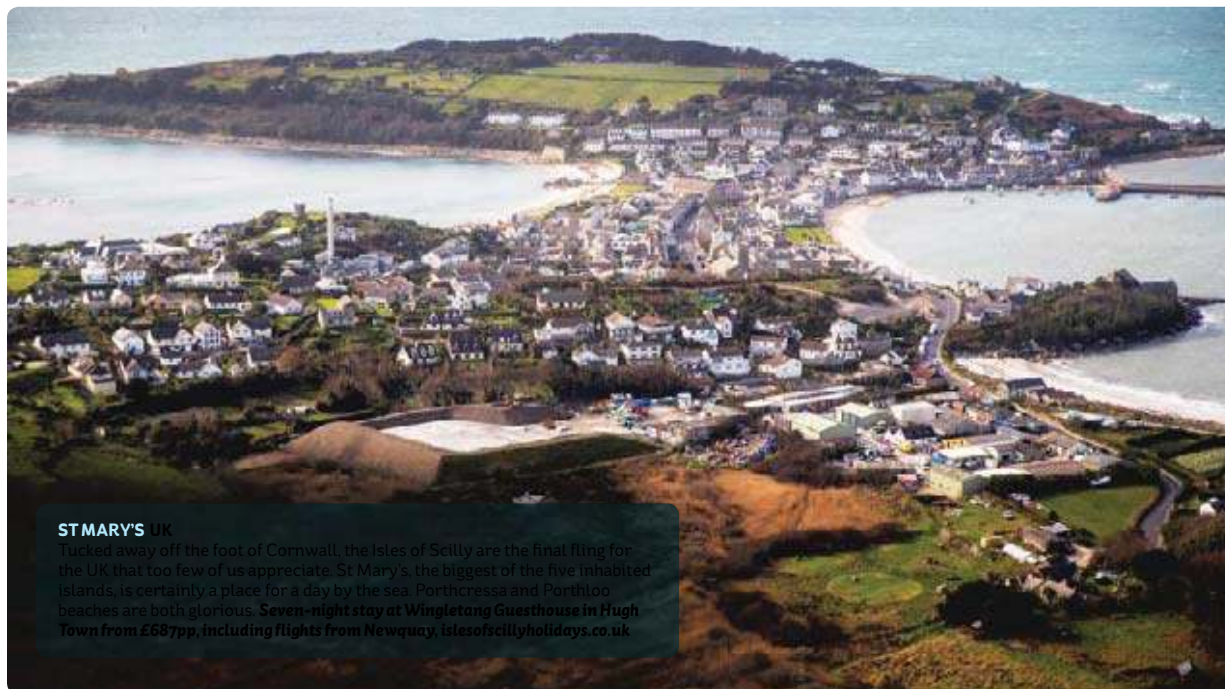
MAINLAND UK

Mainland is a deceptive name for what is the biggest of the Shetland Islands – yet is also a wave-lashed fragment in a vast blue. Here is the UK at its wildest – at Mavis Grind, a narrow isthmus where the North Sea and Atlantic are separated by metres; and at Eshaness on the north-west coast, where a lone lighthouse keeps guard on towering cliffs. **Eight-night Escape to the Edge trip taking in the Shetland and Orkney Islands from £1,025pp, including car hire and ferries, absoluteescapes.com**



[More Atlantic islands](#) »

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SAL CAPE VERDE

It takes longer to reach Cape Verde than other possibilities for

Atlantic sunshine – about six hours from the UK. But the reward

is temperatures that sit consistently in the upper twenties.

Sal has become the main island for beach breaks, and has a range of luxurious resorts on its south edge, in the little town of Santa

Maria. **Seven-night all-inclusive at five-star Riu Funana resort (right), flying from Gatwick on 14 October, from £923pp, tui.co.uk**



TENERIFE SPAIN

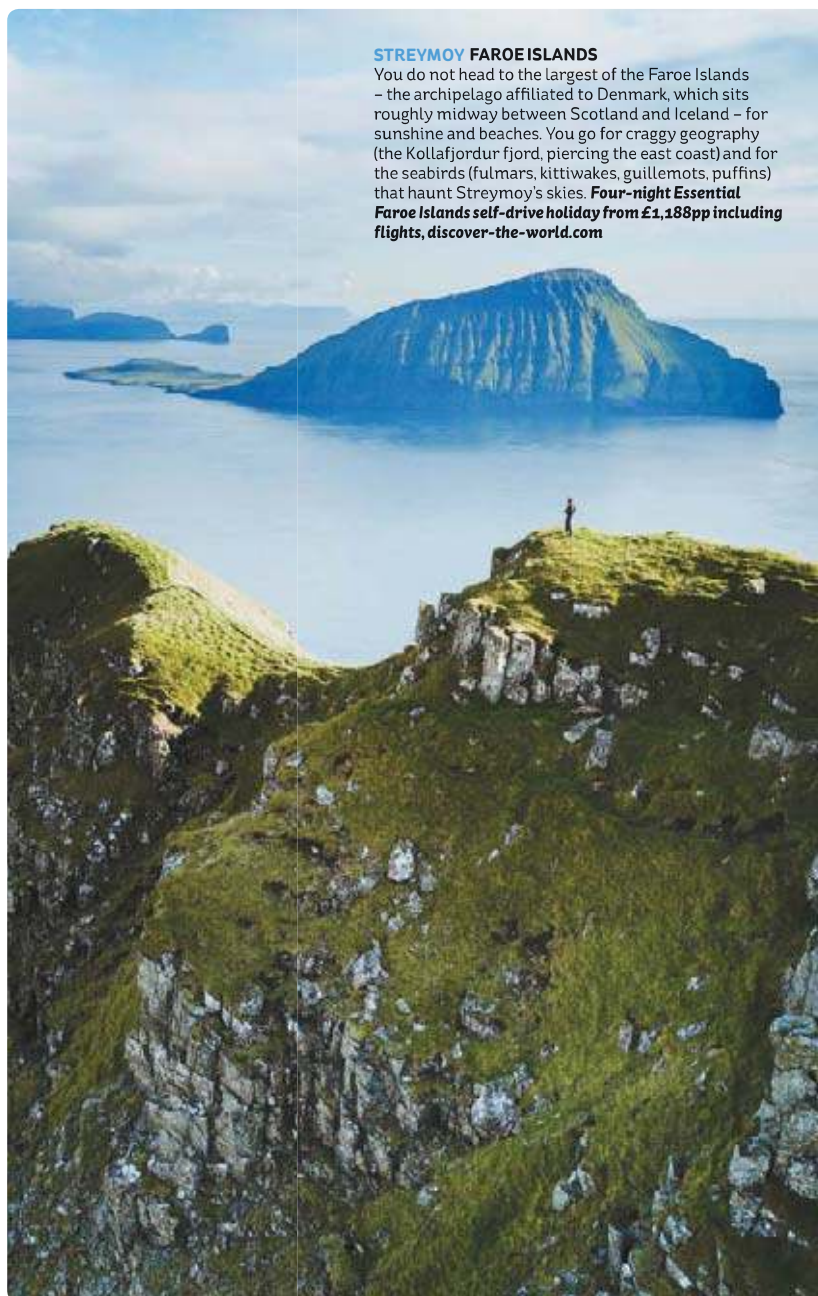
The largest of the Canary Islands is well known as a sunshine destination – whether for a bargain break at Playa de las Americas or a luxury getaway to the resorts of Costa Adeje. But it is also a place for hiking and epic views. Mount Teide, the volcano at its heart, is both a national park and the highest peak in the Atlantic.

Seven nights at five-star Hard Rock Hotel Tenerife, on Playa Paraiso, flying from Manchester on 28 September, from £986pp, sovereign.com



Compiled by Chris Leadbeater

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STREYMOY FAROE ISLANDS

You do not head to the largest of the Faroe Islands – the archipelago affiliated to Denmark, which sits roughly midway between Scotland and Iceland – for sunshine and beaches. You go for craggy geography (the Kollafjordur fjord, piercing the east coast) and for the seabirds (fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, puffins) that haunt Streymoy's skies. **Four-night Essential Faroe Islands self-drive holiday from £1,188pp including flights, discover-the-world.com**

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SÃO VICENTE CAPE VERDE

This exotic outpost in the north-west of the archipelago is considered the Cape Verdean cultural capital. This is underscored in Mindelo, where the sound of morna – the lilting national music – seeps from bars. **Seven-night Barlavento Trio island-hopping trip, taking in Sal and Santo Antão as well as São Vicente, from £1,499pp including flights, capeverde.co.uk**



LANZAROTE SPAIN

None of the Canary Islands gives a demonstration of the archipelago's volcanic backstory quite like Lanzarote. This former fire and fury is most discernible in Timanfaya National Park – a dramatic expanse of raw geology on the western coast, where pock-marked plains of congealed lava create what looks like a vision of the apocalypse. **Seven-night walking holiday on Lanzarote and its neighbour, La Graciosa, from £515pp (car hire included, flights excluded), inntravel.co.uk**

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SÃO MIGUEL PORTUGAL

There is an argument which says that the Azores are the Hawaii of Europe – not, perhaps, in quality of weather, but certainly in volcanic beauty. This latter factor is encapsulated by the Lagoa das Sete Cidades – a stunning curiosity on the largest island, São Miguel, where two lakes of different colours (green and blue) share the same enormous caldera. **Seven nights at Talisman Hotel in the island capital, Ponta Delgada, flying from Stansted in October, from £468pp, sunvil.co.uk**



GRAN CANARIA SPAIN

For all their rugged beauty, the most popular reason for a holiday in the Canary Islands is the weather – even in January, you can expect 20°C warmth. Gran Canaria has some of the archipelago's best beaches. Not least in the south, where Playa del Inglés, Playa de Puerto Rico and Playa de las Burras are options for sunbathing. **Seven-night all-inclusive holiday at four-star Parque Cristobal on Playa del Ingles, flying from Gatwick on 3 October, from £569pp, thomascook.com**



PICO PORTUGAL

If you ever had any doubt that the Azores were born of lava, one glance at Pico tells you the tale. It is, in effect, nothing more than a (dormant) volcano, rising up from the ocean floor. Though it rears to a considerable altitude (2,351m), it can be climbed (and descended) in a day without mountaineering skills. The views from the top are incredible. **Eight-day self-guided walking holiday on Pico and neighbouring Faial from £830pp excluding flights, explore.co.uk**



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BERMUDA BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORY

This celebrated sliver of land is often mistakenly thought to be a part of the Caribbean. On location alone, this is quite an error – it lies more than 900 miles north-east of the Bahamas. But, on image, Bermuda is an easy ally of Antigua et al, offering golden beaches (Elbow Beach is gorgeous), colonial heritage (its naval dockyard) and mid-twenties heat.

Seven nights at four-star Grotto Bay resort in December from £1,209pp, tropicalsky.co.uk

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SAINT HELENA BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORY

This tiny speck in the South Atlantic, 1,200 miles west of Namibia, was the scene of Napoleon's last exile – the French emperor died here in 1821. It is barely less remote two centuries on, but it finally gained an airport in 2016 – which means that its sheer cliffs and lofty hiking tracks are a little more accessible to intrepid souls. **10-night South Atlantic Secret break, including a week on St Helena (and three days in Cape Town), from £2,795pp including flights, jasmineholidays.co.uk**



FLORES PORTUGAL

Flores lies 1,180 miles from Lisbon as the westernmost island in Europe. Here, on an outcrop that is home to fewer than 4,000 people, is the Azores at its most tranquil. Fajãzinha, on the west coast – a village where waterfalls drop towards the ocean – is especially photogenic. **Seven-night Flores Activity Holiday from £1,407pp, including flights, guided hikes and jeep tours, azoreschoice.com**