

Travel
INSIDE

UK or abroad? It's the great big summer gamble 14

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Get me out of here!

As border controls lift, Europe beckons: our guide to houses

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Home

This €2.5m farmhouse in Tuscany, Italy, within easy reach of San Gimignano and Volterra, has an infinity pool from where you can soak up panoramic views casaandcountry.com

CONTINENTAL DRIET

Fed up with lockdown? As borders open tomorrow, join the Brits viewing a second home in the sun.

By Carol Lewis, Emanuele Midolo and Ben Clatworthy

Britons are dreaming of an escape to the chalet... or a gite, finca or palazzo... somewhere in the sun and anywhere but the UK. During lockdown, estate agencies and websites advertising homes abroad have reported a huge increase in traffic while we were stuck at home unable to travel. Visits to Rightmove Overseas were a third higher this May than during the same month last year: the top destinations are the Costa del Sol in Spain, the Dordogne in France and the Algarve in Portugal. It's no mere lockdown fantasy, Chris

France; although one in eight said they wanted to move before the Brexit transition period ends on December 31. UK citizens who buy a second home in Europe before the transition period ends will have the same rights and benefits as the 1.3 million or so British people already living in the European Union. Meanwhile, Brits living abroad will have until June 30, 2021, to apply for residency. Even if the UK leaves the union without a deal, British citizens resident in the EU before January 1, 2021, will be able to continue to live, work and travel there. Brits may be lining up to view homes as soon as Covid-19 restrictions lift, but travel

Below, this €3.5m villa on Paxos, a Greek island south of Corfu, has six bedrooms and an outdoor swimming pool inoginto.com

development near Palma, where there is one villa left for sale at €11.7m. He has sold his home in the development and is now househunting. He says: "I am looking for something more rustic, more inland." There are plenty of other Brits keen to make a base in the Balearics too, despite the high cost: Palma de Mallorca province has an average price per sq m of €2,301 and Ibiza €3,470 compared with a Spanish average of €1,383, according to mimove.com. Hans Lenz, managing director for Engel & Völkers estate agency in southwest Mallorca, says he has sold to "a handful" of British buyers during lockdown, adding that he is waiting on "three high-end British buyers to come in July to complete their purchases". On the mainland, golf resorts are a big hit. Iain Michael Tozer, the sales director at PGA Catalunya near Girona, says there has been a surge of interest during lockdown from British buyers looking for large open spaces and the ability to play 18 holes while social distancing. He has just sold a plot of land

to a buyer from four to five years predicts the

greater home working post-Covid. Although Spanish buyers have been able to view properties for a couple of weeks, sales in resorts popular with Brits such as Marbella, the Costa Brava and Ibiza are stymied by the inability of potential buyers to travel.

However, Alex Vaughan, from Lucas Fox, says his wealthy buyers (average sale are €1m) are "motivated, driven by the same reasons as before, with a lot of talk about Brexit". Although Marc Pritchard, from Taylor Wimpey Spain, says British buyers for his homes (which start at €200,000) in the Costa del Sol "have barely mentioned Brexit since Covid-19". Borders are due to reopen gradually to tourists from July, but authorities have said that British coronavirus figures "have to improve" before Spain will welcome tourists from the UK. It will not look to set up an air bridge with the UK.

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ross the Channel and his wife, Gill, lls in Kent, who the sale of me near ast. "We hope vernment 've been to now this area ble and the

My French House, an estate agency, says: "There's a real urge for people to get back to basics and a simpler life, usually looking to be self-sufficient and definitely with some outdoor space."

Particularly popular are Normandy and the Vendée, where you can find value for money and the convenience of being close to ferry ports for access by road and the ability to travel in one's own car. However, although borders open to EU and Schengen countries tomorrow, British tourists will have to quarantine for 14 days on arrival.

I WANT TO BUY IN...

ITALY

Northern Italy was one of the hardest-hit regions when the coronavirus raged through Europe. The Italian borders have already reopened and there is no requirement for UK arrivals to quarantine. Bars, restaurants, non-essential shops, parks and museums are open. Hotels are also reopening slowly. So too is the

housing market. "We have people who are keen to view properties, but they don't want to commit with the uncertainty of quarantine in Britain," says Gemma Bruce of Casa & Country estate agency.

They now want properties outside cities – within 30-45 minutes of Florence, for example – and rural properties that offer the chance to farm anything from wine and olive oil to saffron and sunflower oil.

Luxury Villa Italy in Milan, says that the country's "flat tax" of €100,000 for wealthy buyers, regardless of how much they earn, continues to drive demand in the *bel paese*. "We've already had three Russian oligarchs who have moved to Italy since the start of the year."

Turrini says the most popular locations with his clientele are: Tuscany, lakes Como, Maggiore and Garda in the north, and Porto Cervo and Porto Rotondo in Sardinia. Tuscany is also a top choice, with prices to match. Properties in May cost an average of €2,208 per sq m compared with a national median of €1,702, although hop to Umbria and prices are €1,081, according to Idealista.

Dolphin Capital Partners is building two to five-bedroom private villas on the Greek island of Kea in the Cyclades. Prices start from €2.7m oneandonlyresorts.com

Below, in the heart of Lisbon, Portugal, D'Apartments are on sale from £333,000 to £1,288m knightrfrank.com

Below right, this stone-built three-bedroom property in the Dordogne, France, is on for £590,640 savills.com