

6 Island Escapes

BEST

Kasia Dietz on where to get away from it all.



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Prepare to engage your senses while escaping into blissful island life when you book a stay on one of these six remote islands, from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean. Your mind and body, as well as anyone you choose to bring along for the journey, will thank you.

Isla Mujeres, Mexico

Meaning 'Island of Women', Isla Mujeres provides the ideal respite from Mexico's chaotic Cancun. Once considered sacred to the Mayan goddess Ixchel, the goddess of the moon, happiness, fertility and medicine, it was named for its earliest inhabitants. Only five miles long and about a half-mile wide, the main activity on Isla Mujeres is relaxation, best accomplished at this sleek hideaway nestled on a cove. Not even its name, 'Secreto', hints at the many secrets unique to this luxurious address, including a dramatic 20-meter lap pool. Each of the nine modern, well-appointed junior suites reveals balconies overlooking the ocean, from which you can book a private spa treatment. Explore the underwater world with a snorkeling or scuba diving session or briefly leave the calm of the island to explore Mexico's history at the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza and Tulum.

Saint Barthelemy, French Caribbean

Known for its white sand beaches and casual sophistication, Saint Barthelemy island in the French West Indies, more commonly known as St. Barths, stretches into 21 kilometers of tranquility. Hire a yacht in Gustavia for a sailing expedition or skip the boating life and learn about the island's Swedish colonial era at the Wall House. Designer boutiques line the streets should you need a wardrobe upgrade. As a prelude to your French-style aperitif, dive with turtles in Saint-Jean or go horseback riding in the Anse des Flamands. As evening falls, settle into your garden bungalow at Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France for a nightcap, shoes optional. Their artful

dining options and hedonistic spa treatments will keep you from wandering too far away. Secluded beneath the sun on Flamands Beach, spend the rest of your stay elegantly disconnected.

Pamalican Island, Philippines

The serene setting of Pamalican Island in the Cuyo Archipelago of northern Palawan in the Philippines is what remote island dreams are made of. Blissfully blend into nature and lose all track of time at lavish address Amanpulo, set between sandy beaches leading to crystal clear seas and a lush forest canopy. Songbirds and lapping waves will provide the soundtrack. Amanpulo's secluded Casitas offer direct beach access while the more luxurious Villas are each staffed by a private chef and butler. A club car is also included to facilitate island exploration. Dining venues at Amanpulo include locally-caught seafood prepared with island-grown organic vegetables and herbs in a variety of cuisines including Filipino, Mediterranean and Japanese. Journey into wellness with the Pag-asa full body massage, Filipino for 'hope', or find your zen with a private yoga class.

Lombok, Indonesia

Skip the bustle of Bali in favor of its dreamy neighbor Lombok, part of Indonesia's Lesser Sunda Islands. Boasting pristine beaches and a less-developed landscape, Lombok offers a pure connection to nature. Escape into a fusion of luxury and tradition at hidden haven The Lombok Lodge. Overlooking the ocean, all nine lodges provide views of the famous volcano, Mount Rinjani. Seaside dining options include traditional Indonesian cuisine and international fare. Just 10 minutes away by boat, explore the serene island trio that makes up the Gili Islands: Gili Air, Gili Meno, and Gili Trawangan. For a deeper look at the rich biodiversity Lombok and the Gili Islands are famed for, scuba dive into crystal-clear waters. Instructors remain on hand for private lessons.

Antiparos, Greece

Set in the heart of the Aegean Sea and belonging to the Cyclades island group, Antiparos is less crowded and more cosmopolitan than many of its neighbors. While its endless sandy beaches draw sun worshippers, the most impressive site is Antiparos cave, brimming with stalactites and stalagmites. Head to the island's capital, Chora, to catch a glimpse of the Venetian castle and fortress dating back to the 15th century. Located on Livadia Beach, the Rooster is the top sleep option offering a mindful escape into slow living.

Understated luxury defines each of the 17 independent houses, breathtaking views of the sea included. Embracing a farm-to-table concept, all of the food is home-grown or locally sourced, while the fish is freshly caught. Outdoor cooking classes are also part of the program.

Corsica

Nicknamed the 'Island of Beauty' for its hidden beach coves, mountaintop villages, and dramatic landscapes composed of craggy cliffs plunging into turquoise waters, Corsica is a paradise found. With historical ties to Italy and the homeland of Napoleon, both Italian and French culture play a big role, omnipresent in the cuisine and dialect. Acquaint yourself with the island from a peaceful cove in the Gulf of Porto-Vecchio.

A family home for four decades, The Grand Hôtel de Cala Rossa blends right in with Corsica's wild coast. Sleeping options include garden suites and a treehouse. When not dining on regional delicacies at La Pinède, spend an afternoon inhaling the scents of the sea or enjoying a mountain-top picnic. And don't miss a visit to the beauty that is Bonifacio.

