

news MOST pictures of our holidays are being snapped on mobile phones, according to Swiss International Air Lines. They found that 67.3 per cent of holiday photos are captured on the devices as travellers worry about forgetting their trip highlights — meaning we don't rely on our own memories as much. Neuropsychologist Professor Lutz Jäncke from the University of Zurich's Department of Psychology said: "As a result of the intensive use of mobile phones, with constant access to the internet, it is becoming less and less necessary to retrieve information stored in our memories. "This means that we start to lose trust in our own memory skills."



SECRETS OF SAFARI

KARKLOOF Safari Villas is a luxury safari lodge just 30 minutes from Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and has been labelled 'Africa's best kept secret'. Each villa offers a private viewing deck to experience sunsets, birdsong and wildlife. They are fitted with a seating area, a minibar, underfloor heating and satellite TV. The bathroom includes a grand bath with a view, and all are connected to the spa and dining areas through stylish wooden walkways. Explore wildlife with private guides, in luxury game vehicles or on foot. There are rhinos, giraffes and wildebeests and no predators. A night at Karkloof Safari Villas is from £230pp B&B and includes a game drive. See karkloofsafarivillas.com

news DISNEY Cruise Line will use New Orleans as a home port in 2020 and return to the Hawaiian Islands. They will also return to Puerto Rico for a limited time and continue itineraries to tropical destinations from Florida and California. Before or after cruises from New Orleans, guests can explore the city. The Disney Wonder will embark on six cruises — in the Western Caribbean sailings, Bahamas and 14-night Panama Canal voyage. Disney Wonder will return to Hawaii in early 2020 for a nine-night voyage to Honolulu from Vancouver on April 29 and a 10-night sailing back to Vancouver on May 8. See disneycruise.com or call 0800 171 2317.



GO GREEN ON HOL

ECO fans can now head off on hols without feeling guilty thanks to Premier Cottages who have launched a collection of over 70 luxury boltholes with Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points on site — ideal for those stationery ones who want to their holiday to be environmentally friendly. Spread throughout the UK, properties include Churchdale Farm Cottages in the Peak District. A three-night stay for three starts from £465 with a seven-night stay from £715. Little Hare Barns, above, in the Brecon Beacons National Park in Wales also has an onsite EV universal socket charging point. A two-night stay for two guests in Little Hare Barn starts from £250 and a two-night stay for five guests in Long Hare Barn starts from £480. See premiercottages.co.uk or call 01873 81120.

bargain TRAVEL Republic has a week self-catering at the 4* Tropical Sol Apartments, Algarve, from £148pp, leaving Glasgow on November 24. Seven nights' all-inclusive at the 4* Marconfort Beach Club Hotel in Torremolinos is from £446pp, from Glasgow on November 18. Five nights' half-board at the 5* Conrad Dubai hotel is from £874pp on the new Emirates flight from Edinburgh. A week B&B at the 4* Centara Blue Marine Resort & Spa in Phuket, Thailand, is £774pp with flights from Edinburgh on November 4. Three nights' B&B at the 4* Eurostars Budapest Center Hotel, including flights from Edinburgh on November 15, is from £355pp. See travelrepublic.co.uk or call 020 8974 7200.

AUTUMNAL TRIP TO SPAIN'S LESS FAMOUS COSTA

IT'S fantastic when you discover a new holiday spot — and then completely fall in love with it.

I've just had that exact experience with the beautiful Costa Calida.

This costa — which means warm coast — isn't as well known as the more famous Costa del Sol, Costa Dorada or Costa Brava but don't let that put you off.

It boasts over 300 days of sunshine, so it's not just a summer destination. Temperatures remain warm in spring and autumn.

And there's another upside to avoiding it in peak season — you'll miss the hordes of tourists who descend during the school holidays.

But I didn't pick Costa Calida to topping up my tan. I wanted to experience some fantastic culture. The region is famous for its sport and leisure with golf especially a big attraction.

After a three-hour flight from Prestwick to Murcia, I discovered there is more — much more — to Murcia.

For starters, the architecture is stunning. The pick of the bunch is the 400-year-old cathedral which is the centre point of the city.

It's surrounded by a fantastic cafe culture and restaurants to die for. We took our time exploring the lovely cobbled streets and people watched while enjoying some traditional tapas and a vino or two.

Suitably refreshed, we headed, quite literally, for the hills.

After an hour-long drive, we checked in to the fantastic Jardines de La Santa hotel in Totana.

My room was HUGE and came with a big balcony where I sipped on a cold drink taking in the peace and quiet, not to mention the stunning view.

The noise and hustle of bustle of the city seemed like a million miles away as we walked around the area, with crisp, clean air.

There was zero traffic or noise, and being set near to the Sierra Espuna National Park, there are some stunning forests and walkways for nature-lovers.

All that strolling makes you hungry. Cue the La Perdiz restaurant nearby.

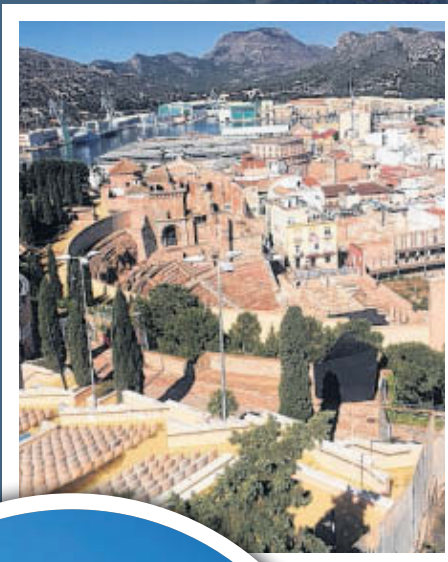
An ice-cold beer quenched our thirst before we had genuinely one of the best paellas EVER.

It's claimed people travel from across the whole area to sample this fabulous restaurant's traditional food in sublime picturesque surroundings. As relaxing as our two-day retreat was, it was soon time for something just a bit more lively and a quick journey to the coastal town of Aguilas certainly gave us that.

The stunning Hotel Puerto Juan Montiel was our next base and it absolutely gave us everything we needed. It's flanked by palm trees and overlooks a stunning harbour, packed with beautiful boats and yachts. No surprises that it's popular for its watersports



MURCIA THE MERRIER... town's stunning cathedral, Roman theatre at Cartagena, below, and picturesque harbour at Cabo de Palos, bottom



GO: MURCIA

GETTING THERE: Ryanair fly from Prestwick to San Javier Airport in Murcia. **STAYING THERE:** Rooms at the Puerto Juan Montiel Hotel start from £92 a night. See hotelpuertojuanmontiel.com. The NH Cartagena hotel has rooms from £108 per night. See nh-hotels.com and The Jardines de La Santa Hotel, right, has rooms from £41 a night. See hoteljardinesdelasanta.com. **MORE INFO:** For all you need to know about visiting Murcia and the Costa Calida, see murciaturistica.com



and even a giant wuss like me managed to get on the act. I'd never even heard of paddle-boarding but before I knew it I was riding the waves like a cool surfer dude — well, I did for around ten seconds before I was blown off by a giant wave and crashed screaming into the sand as my pals looked on laughing. After my exertions in the water, I decided a couple of drinks and a snooze by the

idyllic pool at the hotel was just what was required. A cool breeze made sure the afternoon temperature didn't get too high and was absolutely perfect. Then it was serious pampering time and a trip upstairs to the Spaxión Don Juan spa. You can enjoy the sauna and Jacuzzis while the wall-to-wall windows allow a spectacular view of the Med. Next day we headed to nearby Cartagena —

and this was definitely my favourite place of the trip. It's quite simply stunning. In comparison it's fairly small compared to other cities, but the beauty is you can get around it in a few days. There were plenty of coach-trip tourists during the day soaking up the culture but at night the place came alive with a host of funky bars. We stayed at the NH Cartagena hotel which couldn't have been more central — yet you didn't hear a peep at night. This extremely modern establishment was spot on. A really smart and good sized room with all the mod cons you need and one of the largest, comfiest



ALL SMILES... Gerry soaking up the sun

Living Calida loca

beds I've had in a hotel. We were a few minutes' walk from the city centre and also from the river where we enjoyed a great boat trip to see the sights in the fantastic afternoon sunshine. There's even a small beach ten minutes' drive away if you really do need that tan topping up. But if you are a bit of a history buff like me, you'll get a massive education here and you can't help but be blown away by the remains of the incredible Roman theatre which goes back to the first century BC. Even when you are eating, you can't get away from the city's culture. The La Catedral restaurant has intimate lighting and even see-through glass sections of flooring which let you inspect some ancient artefacts and ruins below as you dine. It serves up the freshest salad and wonderful meats. As if that wasn't enough, the servings of bread, cheese and locally cure ham had us stuffed. Before long it was time to hit the coast again. Cabo de Palos is another hidden secret, a stunning seaside town surrounded by amazing restaurants and classy pubs serving up traditional food and favourites from across the Med. It's picturesque harbour and giant stretch of beach is fabulous for winding down and with a cracking chiringuito — beach bar — I quickly settled into the Spanish pace of life. But if you are looking for something a bit more active, the rocky coastline is excellent for exploring and the weekly market is always popular. This is definitely not your Brits abroad type of place. We had a lovely lunch at the seaside restaurant El Pez Rojo, which has been run by the same family for generations. We even got a tour of the kitchen and got a look at how they make their dishes. And it was pleasure to eat their specialist dish of unique rice cooked in fish stock with the white wine flowing. The area is full of Cabo's — coves — which provide stunning areas to swim and swim we did. Water babes were us for sure. I couldn't have asked for any more from the region and I was gutted when I had to leave. If you fancy trying somewhere different in Spain, head for Murcia, you'll definitely get a warm welcome any time of the year.



GERRY DUFFY

YOUR HOLS FOR UNDER...

£100 Stay at the 4* Hotel Indigo in Edinburgh from £92pp per night. Find out more at edinburgh.hotelindigo.com or call 0131 556 557.

OR take in the beautiful autumn countryside with an overnight at the 4* The Angel Hotel Abergavenny in Wales from £96.50pp, including a bottle of wine, dinner and free upgrade. See angela-bergavenny.com

£250 Take the kids to Thomasland at Drayton Manor and enjoy the other onsite theme rides and zoo too with a stay at the nearby Brook Marston Farm Hotel on October 24, including full breakfast and entry to Drayton Manor Park on the day of arrival. Costs from £224 for family of four. See superbreak.com or call 0800 042 0288.

OR two nights' room-only at the 4* Mercure Budapest City Centre hotel is from £218pp, leaving Edinburgh on November 12. Find out more at lastminute.com

£500 A week half-board at the 3* Tsokkos Holiday Apartments in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, is from £382pp, leaving Glasgow on October 17. See

alpharooms.com for more info or call 0114 407 0241.

OR seven nights' self-catering at the 3* Silchoro Apartments in Albufeira, Portugal, is priced from £289pp, leaving Glasgow on October 25. See jet2holidays.com or call 0800 408 5594.

£750 Seven nights' B&B at the 4* Hilton Garden Inn is from £671pp with flights from Glasgow on October 23. Find out more at southall-travel.co.uk or call 0208 705 0086.

OR a week all-inclusive at the 5* Mitsis Blue Domes Resort & Spa in Kardamena, Kos, is from £729pp, leaving Glasgow on October 22. See loveholidays.com or call 0203 870 6844.

£1000 Four nights at the 3* Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in Toronto, Canada, is from £790, leaving Glasgow on October 24. See traveltrolley.co.uk or call on 0208 843 4400.

OR seven nights' all-inclusive at the 4* Kalithea Horizon Royal Hotel in Kalithea, Rhodes, pictured, is from £824pp, leaving Edinburgh on October 20. See firstchoice.co.uk or visit your local TUI store.

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