



LANZAROTE There is plenty of fun to be had at its beaches

Late deals

Thomson offers seven night holidays to Lanzarote, staying at the 4T Flamingo Oasis, on an all inclusive board basis, from £395 per person. Price is based on two adults sharing, departing from Glasgow airport on February 14

and includes return flights and transfers. For more information visit thomson.co.uk or call 0871 200 7799. First Choice offers seven night holidays to Cape Verde, staying at the RIU Touareg, on an

all inclusive basis from £1029 per person. Price is based on two adults sharing, departing from Glasgow airport on February 12 and includes return flights and transfers. To find out more visit firstchoice.co.uk or call 0871 200 4455.



News..

VIETNAM can seem an unknown quantity for UK holidaymakers, but there's nothing to be scared of.

This is a nation of genuinely gentle and welcoming people, and as a destination, it will enchant you with its unique sights.

Although Vietnam is a long, thin country, it is conveniently divided into three main sections. The capital, Hanoi, is in the north, and visitors should take in the must-see old city near Hoan Kiem Lake. Hanoi is a short distance from



CAPITAL Hanoi

back for sure

Halong Bay. Jutting rock formations tower over the bay, and boat trips in junks are popular.

Further south is the city of Hue, which sits on the exotically-named Perfume River, and is lined with royal tombs and temples filled with statues.

Nearby Hoi An has traditional merchants' houses hidden behind great ornate doors on narrow streets, hung with brightly-coloured silk lanterns.

The arts and crafts shops make great places to pick up some traditional souvenirs, and with more than 100 tailors here, anyone staying overnight can have suits and dresses made to measure.

Once a month, at full moon, the citizens of the town light lanterns and float them down the river.

In the south is the cosmopolitan Ho Chi Minh City, with many restaurants and bars as well as markets, temples and palaces.

It's a place where anyone interested in the Vietnam War can get a feel for that period in history, visiting sights and museums. The city is also the jumping-off point for visits to the Mekong Delta, an area where rivers criss-cross rice paddies, fish farms and orchards, and where you can enjoy cruising alongside stilted villages and bartering at floating markets.

Vietnam also has a range of beach options along its coast. Danang is a burgeoning resort and home to Asia's first all-inclusive spa resort, Fusion Maia.



GEOMETRIC Drummond Castle Gardens is a 17th Century wonder

starter of local duck with a prune and artichoke puree for £8 and feared we had no room left in our stomachs for pudding.

But purely for the sake of journalistic investigation, you understand, we shared a delicious apple tarte with ice cream for £6 after an unhurried break.

Service, by the way, was extremely good. Efficient but easy-going. We've rarely felt as welcome anywhere.

We were not disappointed by the breakfast next morning, either.

Great local sausages, bacon, black pudding, the works.

After eating so well a good stroll is in order to walk it off.

Muthill is a blink-and-you-miss

village for most motorists, but if you are stopping at the Barley Bree it's well worth exploring.

There is an ancient church tower dating back 1000 years, now in the care of Historic Scotland.

A little museum tells the story of how the original village was destroyed in January 1716 by Jacobites retreating after the Battle of Sheriffmuir.

It was eventually rebuilt towards the end of the 17th Century and today it is listed as a conservation village thanks to its uniform red sandstone buildings that date from that period.

A mile up the road lies the magnificent Drummond Castle Gardens, with its extraordinary

geometrical design that dates back to the 17th Century.

It is open to the public at Easter and then from the start of May to the end of October.

Crieff, which boasts a smattering of interesting independent shops, delis and art galleries, is just three miles up the road.

Comrie, only slightly further afield, is also worth a detour.

The village sits on the geological fault line that divides the Highlands and Lowlands and frequent tremors have earned it the nickname "The Shaky Toun".

There is no need to panic but it might be wise to hold on to your pint if you venture into one of the town's welcoming pubs.

Facts Magnus stayed courtesy of

The Barley Bree, 6 Willoughby Street, Muthill, Perthshire, PH5 2AB. Tel: 01764 681451. Web: www.barleybree.com. B&B costs from £70 per person.

