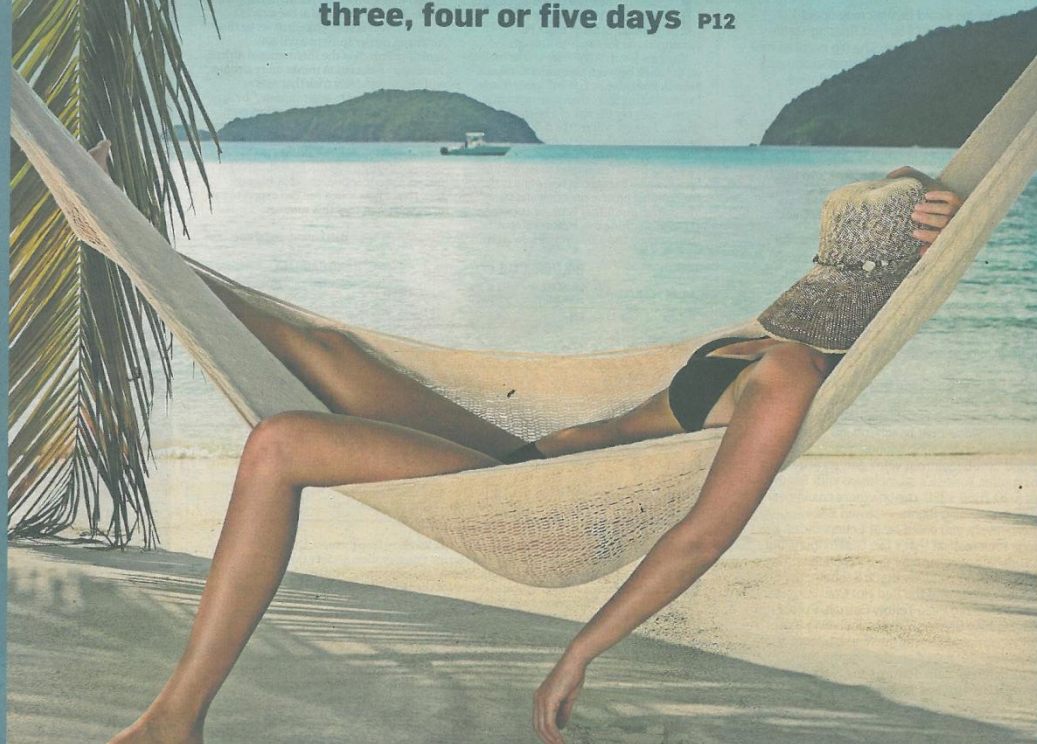


NOW, THAT'S BETTER

Last-minute sunshine breaks of three, four or five days P12

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travel

GO FOR
IT...



Wouldn't you rather be on holiday? Here are five good reasons just to pack up and go...

In one week: you could be watching opera performed on the world's largest floating stage, on Lake Constance in Austria. The big event at this year's Bregenz Festival (bregenzfestspiele.com) is Umberto Giordano's *André Chénier*, played against a gigantic 3D representation of David's *The Death of Marat*. A two-night stay at the Hotel Weisses Kreuz Feldkirch, with tickets to the show, starts at £214, B&B, from Bodensee-Vorarlberg Tourism (bodensee-vorarlberg.com). Fly to Memmingen with Ryanair (0871 246 0000, ryanair.com).

In two weeks: you could be embracing the weather rather than resenting it, by heading for the second International Cloud Festival. Hosted by the Irish Cloud Appreciation Society (ticas.ie), the event takes place across Sligo and Leitrim, with workshops on weather forecasting, cloud poetry and cloud painting. Stay at the Mount Edward Lodge B&B (00 353 71 916 3263, mountedwardlodge.com), where doubles start at £56.

In three weeks: you could be on Pemba Island, off the Tanzanian coast, where the Manta Resort has reopened after a refurbishment. Apart from the new driftwood-built beach lounge — the lemon-grass ginger sling sounds nice — there are six brand new beachfront villas and an attractive opening offer. A week's all-inclusive with Rainbow Tours (020 7666 1250, rainbowtours.co.uk) costs £2,195pp, including flights — saving £324.

Alternatively, you could be at Lollapalooza, the Chicago rock festival that's like Glastonbury, but with sunshine, weaker beer and Americans. The colourful line-up includes Black Sabbath, the Black Keys, Jack White and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, as well as the Big Pink, Yellow Ostrich, Purple Apple and Milo Greene. Tickets, including three nights' accommodation at the Marriott, cost £542 per person based on two sharing, from cidentertainment.com. Returns to Chicago start at £660 with US Airways (skyscanner.net).

In four weeks: you could be surrounded by hundreds of 40-ton humpback whales performing all those photogenic cetacean stunts, including breaching, spyhopping, lobtailing and spouting. They congregate off Australia's Fraser Island at this time of year on their way back south to Antarctic feeding grounds, and Wexas Travel (020 7838 5892, wexas.com) has a 10-night trip, with two nights in Brisbane, four in Noosa and four on Fraser Island, including flights and whale-watching, for £2,465.