

TRAVEL SECTION OF THE YEAR

The Daily Telegraph

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TRAVEL



How to supersize your city break

Vineyard visits, wildlife tours and day trips to the beach can transform an urban escape into a proper holiday, says Chris Leadbeater

They sound, admittedly, like dull questions, the sort of enquiries that beg a dull answer. But what exactly constitutes a city break? And does it have to involve a city?

The second question is particularly silly. Yes, of course a city break must involve a city. It needs to include a grand main square, and the extended shadow of a cathedral tower, lit up in the afternoon light. It needs to take in museums, galleries and works of fine art. It should certainly feature luxury boutiques in side street cafes, and deca-

dent diners in busy restaurants - with the promise of the evening stretching into bars about with local chatter.

But beyond this, couldn't a city break be more than the obvious - drifting away from the main attractions and a central location into wider suburbs, outer edges and the charms of the region beyond? Why not? A city break can be so much more than the city at the heart of it, and in the case of Europe's greatest capitals and most celebrated urban hotspots - those splendid

places of knowledge, culture and repeat visits - it almost certainly should be.

The goal here isn't to look, if not quite to the horizon, then definitely to the end of the underground systems and rail networks that spider-web around some of the major cities of France, Spain, Italy et al. If you have already been to Paris three, four or seven times - or if you know the best/loved areas of Rome as well as your own postcode - then the ideas below are for you. Six Telegraph Travel experts have turned their gaze to the

peripheries of the cities they know best, giving out historic sights, country estates, general vineyards and even seaside resorts.

From the palace halls of Lisbon satellite towns to the medieval walls of Barcelona's close friend Girona and the beaches that shape the Lazio coast - tantalisingly close to the Eternal City - these are the optional extras, all within simple day-trip range, which will

add an extra delight to a long weekend in a favourite destination.

Moreover, autumn is the ideal time for a getaway to a thriving city. A happy medium between summer's more excessive fridges - always have slipped away but life is still lived outdoors, in parks and on terraces, ahead of winter's change of mood. The Christmas market will keep for now. This is the season for city break lovers to explore...

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