

Agenda

Your next holiday now ★ Turkey ★ France ★ Greece ★ Italy

LOCATION IS everything for property investors, but those in search of bargain holiday villas have to be more broad-minded. For this summer in particular, given the state of the economy, it may be wise to consider first what you and your family or friends need from a villa, and only then decide on a location. This doesn't mean, however, that you must compromise on your choice of country. Because even expensive, eurozone destinations such as Italy and France offer good value to those prepared to head away from favoured areas such as 'Chiantishire' and the Côte d'Azur.

A potential problem with going off the beaten track is that where prices are generally low, standards may be low too. This can make it tricky to assess the saving accurately, because you are not comparing like with like. The solution is to consider properties from agencies and operators that have a reputation for ensuring a consistent standard throughout their portfolio.

We considered a dozen such companies, all of which specialise in fashionable areas but also have a selection of properties elsewhere. We asked them to suggest villas from the latter category which offer a significant saving compared with those in better-known destinations. Prices given below are for a week's rental for the whole property in August. All the villas listed have private pools.

TURKEY

Generally, villas in Turkey cost much less than comparable properties in France and Italy, although more expensive flights and car hire – and



GREAT-VALUE EUROPEAN VILLAS

Book now

Looking for a good-quality holiday property to rent at a reasonable price? Then you must go beyond the most popular areas, says Nick Trend

an increasing cost of living – compromise the advantage somewhat. Price differences reflect proximity to particular villages and resorts, notably Göcek, Fethiye and Kalkan on the Lycian coast.

AKYAKA: SAVE £350 PER PERSON ON A VILLA FOR EIGHT

Akyaka is a small resort north of Marmaris, with its own sandy beach and nearby bays. Simpson

Travel (020 8392 5858; www.simpsontravel.com) has the five-bedroom Villa Kale there at £620 per person (including flights and car hire, based on eight sharing). A similar villa ➤



Le Vieux Biac in Bordeaux. Below, from left: Villa Sedir Evi in Islamlar, Turkey; Le Masgrès in Tarn

BORDEAUX: SAVE ALMOST £1,200 ON A VILLA FOR FOUR

The Bordeaux region is not quite as scenic as parts of Provence, but its compensations include a beautiful coastline and, of course, the excellent wines. SJ Villas (020 7801 4010; www.sjvillas.co.uk) has a keenly priced, restored farmhouse, Le Vieux Biac, on the wine estate of Château Biac. Its cost of £2,724 compares favourably with the £3,900 you would pay for a similar villa near St Tropez.



➤ in Kalkan works out at £970 per person.

ISLAMLAR: SAVE MORE THAN £200 ON A VILLA FOR FOUR

For a good-value alternative to Kalkan, the Turkey specialist Tapestry Holidays (020 8995 7787; www.tapestryholidays.com) points to nearby Islamlar, a sleepy mountain village not far from the beach at Patara. The Villa Hosgor is a traditional stone house and has a pool terrace with spectacular views of the coast. It has three bedrooms, so there is plenty of room for a family of four. It costs £2,720 including a hire car; in Kalkan a smaller,

two-bedroom villa would be £2,940, excluding the car.

ISLAMLAR: SAVE £800 ON A VILLA FOR SIX

Vintage Travel (01954 261431; www.vintagetravel.co.uk) also recommends Islamlar, but makes its price comparison with Fethiye. Its modern Villa Sedir Evi, which has landscaped gardens including shaded and open terraces, costs £1,495. A similar property in Fethiye would be around £2,295.

FRANCE

The choice of property in France is unparalleled. In general, the cost of a villa or cottage increases the further south you



go – although this is partly because good-quality properties in the south tend to have pools, while those in the north do not. But there is also a huge inflationary effect caused by the popularity of Provence and the Côte d'Azur. The areas to go for good value are on the same latitude, but further west.

at £2,060. But through the same company, a comparable, tastefully renovated stone barn with private pool, set in a sleepy village in the heart of rural Languedoc, near Carcassonne, costs £1,540.

TARN: SAVE £3,500 ON A VILLA FOR 12

Dominique's Villas (020 7738 8772; www.dominiquesvillas.co.uk) has an excellent selection of villas in premium areas of Provence, but its properties in the south-west of France are much more affordable. Le Masgrès is an 18th-century country house on a hilltop in a deeply rural part of Tarn-et-Garonne close to the medieval village of ➤