



**T**he southwest coast of Turkey might be the most magical stretch of the Aegean Sea. And that's not an overexaggeration; it isn't described as the Turquoise Coast just to keep the travel agents happy. This section of the Mediterranean (between Turkey and Greece), with its fantasy-blue ocean and little islands surrounded by sea, is bucket-list stuff. But before you think it's just for Zen-seeking travellers, the area's myriad historic sights and rich culture make for a diverse and interesting holiday. Turkey also comes with an administrative bonus for South Africans: no visa required. You'll need to fill out an online version – and take a copy with you – but that's as taxing as it gets (visit [evisa.gov.tr/en/info/](http://evisa.gov.tr/en/info/)).

So, why holiday aboard a gulet? Especially if you're already clocking up so many hours of sailing. Basically, it's *the* way to see Turkey, says Loes Douze, owner of ScicSailing. 'Turkey has such a great coastline, full of hidden bays and coves where you can safely anchor for the night,' she says. 'You can still find spots far away from mass tourism, plus, the water is crystal clear.' As if you need any further convincing, the ScicSailing experience aboard a gulet seems to be a magnet for industry

# CASTAWAY

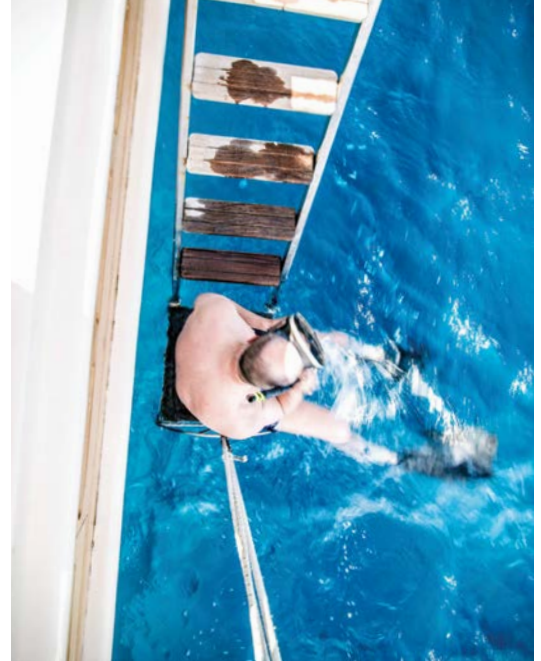
Combine the perfect European summer holiday with a special-occasion break that's all about chic sailing.

By *Helen Clemson*









professionals. 'We've had professional sailors onboard who sail the America's Cup and a lot of regattas all over the world. They all enjoy the pleasure of "leisure" sailing, and not having to do anything themselves (although they might like to lend a hand with sailing),' laughs Douze. And most of the time, their families find it very relaxing, with no stress involved, she adds.

It's also a South African cold season solution; swap an icy Joburg or rain-sodden Cape Town (*all fingers being crossed*) for this perpetually sunny region. While the Turkish sailing season kicks off in April – seemingly early for the European summer – things don't wind down till the end of October with temperate sea swimming right through. The secret month to visit is May (expect highs in the mid-to-late 20s), but June, September and October are deliciously balmy and free from peak European summer holiday chaos.

ScicSailing (the name stands for Sailing Cruises in Comfort, by the way) is a luxe yet relaxed gulet sailing option (think a floating boutique hotel) from which to explore Turkey's exclusive Turquoise Coast. And because ScicSailing's Turkish gulets accommodate a select group of fellow travellers, chartering a yacht with family or friends (charter one or two yachts with a maximum of 12 guests per gulet) for a special celebration holiday means the boat is all yours. And why shouldn't it be? All cruises are child-friendly, so there's no need to join the bucket-and-spade brigade at yet another characterless beach resort. Each yacht sails to its own itinerary, so where you go (and that includes some of the Greek islands if you wish) is up to you, the captain and, of course, the weather. The company is very proud to be one of the few that favours sails rather than engines, so for the most



**TOP  
TIPS****THE COST**

The price for one week per person ranges from €951 up to €1 071, depending

on the season. The cost includes breakfast, lunch and five dinners onboard and all snacks and drinks (including alcohol). Excursions and some activities (like waterskiing) aren't included. An exclusive yacht charter for one week (excluding meals and drinks onboard) ranges from €3 875 to €8 080, depending on the season and the size of the yacht. The cost for meals and drinks onboard is €396 per person per week. This includes breakfast, lunch, as well as snacks, five dinners onboard and all drinks (such as tea, coffee, mineral water, soft drinks, fruit juices, wine, beer, raki and some spirits). This amount will be charged for the number of people that stay onboard. Email [info@scicsailing.eu](mailto:info@scicsailing.eu) for more information.

**THE CREW**

Each yacht has a captain, chef and one or two sailors. This is sufficient to sail the yacht without the passengers' assistance. There's always at least one crew member who speaks English.

**TO BOOK**

Visit [scicsailing.eu](http://scicsailing.eu) or call +31 62 906 3180.

part, sailing is done to a soundtrack of creaking wood and slapping waves.

Essentially, this is a 'do-nothing' type of holiday but there are bursts of activity for those wanting to partake in more than sunbathing and swimming. Your journey will begin in the fashionable holiday town of Bodrum (the yachts also set sail from Marmaris and Göcek or the Greek Islands of Kos and Rhodes, depending on where you're headed). When departing in Turkey (which is often the case), you'll do so to the sound of the morning call to prayer, which pours out over the water at dawn. As the gulet sails away, civilization disappears and it's all secluded rocky bays and peaceful coastlines. In other words, pure Instagram holiday envy. While this backdrop is just made for R&R, a slothful holiday is not for everyone. So ScicSailing got clever. They are now known for their themed cruises, active, fitness-based trips, and accommodating single travellers, for whom sailing cruises are becoming increasingly popular. In addition, for guests chartering a yacht, special interests can be weaved into the holiday, such as culinary workshops, hiking trails, archaeological expeditions and cycling tours (on the Greek islands). If you don't want to commit to something specific (but just be a little bit of a tourist), we recommend stop-offs, such as the ruins at Knidos, once an ancient Greek settlement, as well as St Nicholas Island, dotted with the remains of churches built between the

fourth and sixth centuries. For shoppers, an hour's stroll through one of the small village markets is quite enough time to stockpile Turkish delight (in every flavour imaginable) and spices to take home.

And, speaking of which, what's a holiday without moreish food? Mealtimes are a highlight, and although healthy fare is served, say goodbye to Banting, Atkins and Dukan. Traditional Turkish food cooked by your yacht's chef is a lovingly prepared feast – and comes complete with (delicious) carbs. From the fruit, cheeses and breads served at breakfast to the lunches and dinners infused with Mediterranean flavours, each meal is a delight.

There's plenty of seafood – grilled fish, prawns and calamari – and tasty vegetable dishes like garlicky tomatoes and grilled aubergine and red peppers infused with the region's famous olive oil. Ask for plenty of sides of yoghurt laced with interesting mixes of carrot, beetroot and zucchini (plus loads of garlic and herbs of course) and smear generously onto chunks of baguette. And, yes, sailing may be a chance detox from your iPad but we don't suggest total austerity. Delicious local wines (try the rosé by producer Pamukkale Senfoni) are plentiful onboard.

S+L