

Short cuts

Galicia Just off the little-visited west coast of Spain lies an idyllic archipelago of three islands, Las Islas Cíes, part of the Galician Atlantic Islands National Park and home to some of the most beautiful beaches in Spain. Apart from a campsite, there's nowhere to stay but new to the rental market this summer is Castro Baroña, an architecturally striking, award-winning four-bedroom beach house just across the water on the mainland. The wood, glass and concrete house is four minutes' drive from a little marina from which daily yacht charters to the islands can be arranged. An hour by road from Santiago de Compostela, the villa is admirably equipped right down to a teppanyaki table and a Kaldewei "float therapy" bathtub. From €2,950 per week, through SJ Villas. sjvillas.co.uk

Cirencester UK-based Steppes Travel has launched a programme of "pioneering" tours for which it is seeking intrepid travellers prepared to road-test untried itineraries. The trips on offer include going to Gabon, Tajikistan, Bangladesh and Venezuela (including an ascent of Mount Roraima). steppestravel.co.uk

Washington Thomas Jefferson may have tried to establish a vineyard at Monticello as early as 1774 but it is only recently that wines produced in Virginia have begun to be highly regarded. Now Washington's Hay-Adams Hotel (where the Obamas stayed before moving into the White House) has created a City Wine Trail with details of the best places to taste Virginian wines. Luca Paschina, chief winemaker at Barboursville, one of the best regarded of the

state's 250 vineyards, will also host tasting dinners at the hotel. hayadams.com

Greece In an effort to boost visitor numbers, the nation's 30 most popular tourist sights are extending their opening hours and will stay open till at least 8pm. Some, such as the remarkable Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion, built



Castro Baroña beach house, Galicia

around 440BC and about 70km from Athens on the southern tip of the Attica peninsula, will remain accessible till sunset. Meanwhile, Aristotle's Lyceum in Athens, where the philosopher taught 2,500 years ago, is finally due to open to the public in May after a 15-year excavation project. discovergreece.com

Mozambique Part of the Quirimbas archipelago, the private island of Vamizi is upping its inventory of fully staffed villas to a total of six. This year has already seen the opening of five-bedroom Casa Marjani, which has its own beach. Two further, similarly spectacular beach houses should be ready in August and October. Seven nights cost from \$39,795. vamizi.com

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