

Travel



Bern: “almost ridiculously picturesque”

Getting the flavour of...

Bern, Göcek & Leckmelm Wood

Switzerland's charming capital

Clustered on a steep hill in a tight loop of the River Aare, Bern is “almost ridiculously picturesque” – a “metropolis in miniature” with a perfectly preserved medieval core. And Switzerland’s petite capital sees wonderfully few tourists, says William Cook in *The Daily Telegraph* – the nearest major airport is 80 minutes away by train, in Zurich. It’s a great place for a peaceful long weekend, with some fine museums, including the Kunstmuseum (a “palatial” art gallery), the “monumental” Bernisches Historisches Museum, and the Einstein House, the “humble” flat where the physicist developed his theory of special relativity. Stay longer if you can, and go skiing (Adelboden, Grindelwald, Wengen and Murren

are all nearby) or hiking (Gurten is the best starting point). Be warned, however: eating out here is expensive, thanks to the “superhuman strength” of the Swiss franc.

A rural corner of Turkey

Most visitors to Göcek come for its beaches, or to sail between the islands of the “glittering” Gulf of Fethiye. But this “small, sophisticated” Turkish resort is also a good base from which to discover the country’s rural side, says Annabelle Thorpe in *The Times*, with wonderful mountain hiking paths and unspoilt villages close at hand. You’ll meet few fellow Brits in “sleepy” Köycegiz, for instance, though its lakeside setting is idyllic, and it has a “renowned” organic bazaar. From the village of Toparlar, it’s a 15-minute walk through the forest to a beautiful waterfall with natural pools where locals come to swim. Gökçeovacık commands dazzling views from its mountain perch. And the coastal path from Göcek itself offers perfect peace for walkers and cyclists; Inlice beach, 8km away, is delightful.

A woodland cabin in Scotland

Leckmelm Wood near Ullapool was once a commercial conifer plantation – but 30 years ago, ecologists Bernard and Emma Planterose bought this 32-acre site in the Scottish Highlands and transformed it into a “diverse, wildlife-rich” habitat, clearing areas for native woodland, crofting and forest gardens. Today, you can discover their work – and support it – by staying in one of two new cabins they have built, says Jane Dunford in *The Guardian*, both with floor-to-ceiling, south-facing windows, outdoor firepits and “immaculate” interiors. A path winds down to a beach by Loch Broom. Species such as dragonflies and grey wagtails have recently returned, and you might spot red squirrels and pine martens too. Bernard offers birdwatching and guided “ecology walks”, and there’s spectacular hiking, cycling and kayaking all around. *A three-night weekend costs from £495 for two people, or £695 for four (ecotonecabins.com).*