



Hitting the surf in Coffee Bay, South Africa

board of summer?

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE SUMMER? EVER THOUGHT OF SURFING? CHECK OUT OUR GUIDE TO WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE 'BOARD' OF SUMMER...

We know the feeling; spring skiing commences, the rocks and the trees start to re-appear, sunbathing through lunch, uneven tan marks, and that contented feeling of tiredness as the season starts winding down.

And then, suddenly, it hits you. THE SEASON IS WINDING DOWN. Talk switches to beaches, clubbing and (gulp!) swimwear (all those days spent eating cheese and drinking beer have done you no good). And that perennial question hits you – what do you do in the summer?

Surfing is an increasingly popular choice for summer. The sport has long been associated with the golden beaches of Australia, and postcard perfect golden tanned men and women. Europe is a top surfing base, with warmer spots of Portugal, Southern France and Spain. But why not think

outside the box and try a couple of less common destinations?

A little closer to home, Scotland, although known for its rolling hills and rocky mountains, heather and haggis holds a hidden gem for wave riders of the UK. Think rolling waves and craggy reefs. Yes, it's cold. Yes, it's probably going to rain. And yes, you won't have to worry about someone else dropping in on your wave. And hey, on that rare occasion that it doesn't rain, you'll get clear skies and crisp air.

Head North to Thurso, which has one of the fastest barreling waves in the world and was recently voted one of the top ten waves in Europe. The weather can be as temperamental as the swell. When it is good, it's very, very good. And when it is bad it's horrid. You want to make sure you are well prepared kit wise, no matter what the season. You'll

feel an ice cream headache like no other when that North Sea dumps on your head, so a hood is essential, along with your wetsuit, full booties and gloves too.

If it's good enough for the pros, who compete every year in the O'Neill Highland Open then it's good enough for the rest of us and there's a small extremely friendly group of local surfers who may just let you in on a few of their secret spots.

Another jewel in Northern Europe's crown is that magical green one, the Emerald Isle. Those Northern Atlantic swells pound the whole of the West coast; almost guaranteeing you will be able to find a good wave somewhere (car is a necessity). Bundoran, in Donegal is a brilliant little town in the North of Ireland and in the right conditions it really goes off. Even if you're not getting in the water, then watching from

the sidelines on a brilliant day when there's a great reef break is truly a sight to behold. Or if you can stand the drive (6 hours from Dublin) then head to Keem Bay on Achill Island where you can surf with basking sharks. Just behind you is an awesome lake for those days when there's no swell and you fancy picking up a windsurfer (board that is).

Ok, ok, we hear you say, 'these places sound great, but I CAN'T SURF'. Easy peasy – get yourself into surf school. Almost any desirable surf spot will have a host of schools just dying to teach you how to shred it up. Not only will they tutor you but they will also provide you with the kit so... a) don't have to spend your money on the stuff before you know how much you love the sport, and b) you won't be that punter out there with "all the gear and no idea" – you didn't think they were just reserved for the slopes did you?! ►

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If you feel like heading further afield while you learn to surf, then Ticket to Ride offers great options. Starting just after the season ends, they run a 3-week adventure giving you a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore the little known country of Mozambique, whilst taking your surfing to a new level.

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For those of you too shy to set foot in the water but are keen to 'fake it' or for those of you who basically are just in it for the totty (we don't blame you, those bronzed surf gods/esses are mighty appealing after the blinding whiteness of most season staff) then slap on your shades and slip into your boardies and head for the nearest surf comp.

The ASP tour (Association of Surfing Professionals) hits Europe in loads of different locations to have a look on the website - www.aspeurope.com and start planning your travels.

Slacklining – learning the ropes

If surfing isn't your adrenaline sport of choice, consider 'Slacklining'. Part core muscle conditioning, part circus act; it is the evolution of balance sports like wire walking. And it's bloody hard. On top of everything it's fun too and if you've been using your balance board for training, this is the next step!

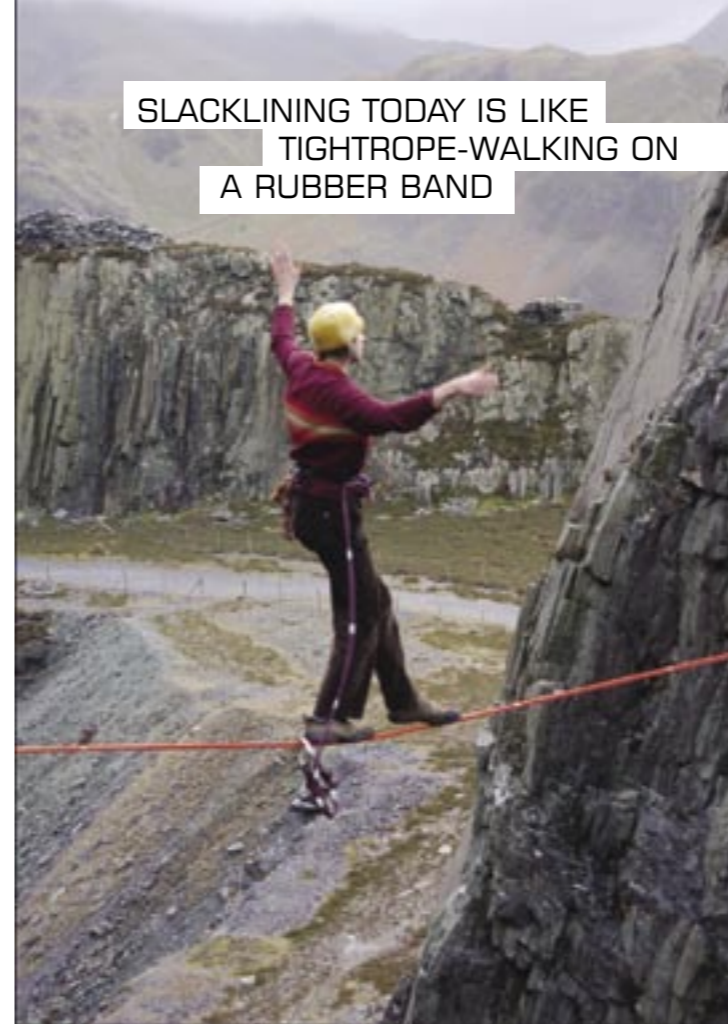
**Slacklining:
walking the
wire**



Legend has it that two climbers were messing around in the Yosemite Valley, USA in the 80s. They were balancing on a chain in a car park, when they used their climbing gear and knots to string up a similar set up. Slacklining has now spread from the climbing community to other communities such as skiing and snowboarding, surfing, rowing and martial arts.

Slacklining today is like tightrope-walking on a rubber band. The band being a length of slightly loose flat nylon webbing stretched between two fixed points: trees, rocks, cars etc. The line is flat and about two inches wide generally allowing

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the slacker to keep his footing rather than roll off as normal rope would. Because the line is not taut like a tight-rope – it's dynamic, stretching and bouncing - this allows for impressive tricks and stunts.

Usually the nylon is fixed low, a few feet about the ground. Sometimes called tricklining, it removes the fear of breaking your neck and allows a no holds barred approach to inventing new tricks. An expert trickster will have you doing a double-take when you see the tricks they can pull: backflips (landing back on the line!) moonwalking, jump starts and handstands.

Slacking isn't for everyone, granted, but really it's something that you need to see to believe. Have a look on YouTube. Alternatively if you're in Morzine there's quite a community of slackliners who are more than willing to show newbies the ropes (pardon the pun).¹



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