

SUMMER SURFIN'

NO SNOW? HEAD FOR THE BEACH AND HIT THE BREAKS – THEY'RE THE NEXT BEST THING. SURF AUTHOR ALEX WADE PICKS HIS SIX TOP SPOTS ACROSS THE GLOBE

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant." So said Robert Louis Stevenson and the Scottish poet's wise words, all the way from the Victorian era, remain good advice to this day. If you start planning now, you might just find yourself spending the summer riding waves on a beach, and what's more, you don't have to go all the way to Hawaii. Here are six of the best places to find your slice of summer surf heaven.



Sennen Cove

1 Sennen Cove, Cornwall
Talk to the average tourist and they'll cite last summer as cast-iron evidence that you really do need to head overseas for the sun. Talk to surfers, and they'll tell you that if the sun didn't shine, the swell pumped. Not least at Sennen Cove, mainland England's most westerly beach. At the edge of Britain, the cove is little more than a stone's throw from Land's End, and it picks up any swell going. It's beautiful and packed with marine life – chances are you'll be sharing the water with dolphins and seals – but better still, it has a reputation for being more chilled than most of the West



Country's surf spots. Head here if you want to keep your carbon footprint down and snag some decent beachbreak waves. Just don't bank on getting that all-over tan.

2 Santa Cruz, California

Make no mistake: Californian line-ups are

crowded. But Santa Cruz, just over an hour's drive south of San Francisco, boasts a seemingly endless selection of surf spots catering for surfers of all abilities. If you know that you rip, there's Steamer Lane, a world-class right hand point break, while intermediate-to-good

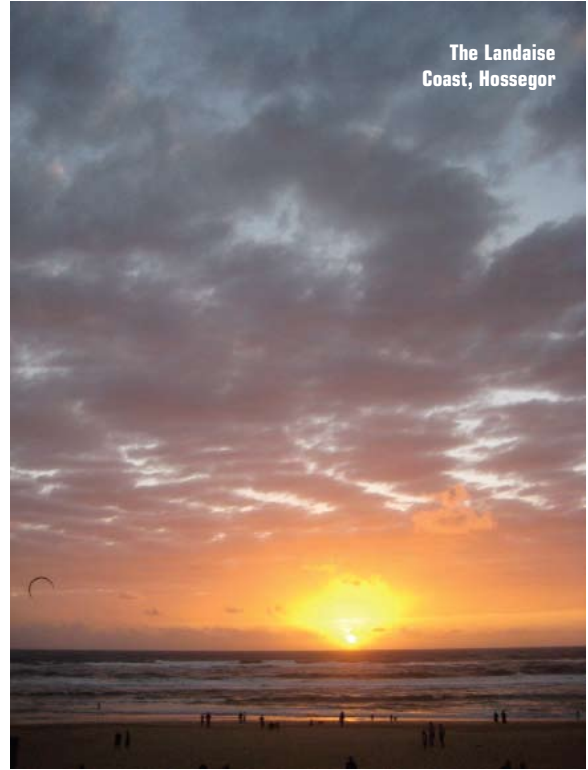
surfers will love Pleasure Point and The Hook, two nearby right handers. If you're an outright beginner, there are easy waves at Cowell's, while along the coast Waddell Creek can provide almost empty, though sometimes sharky, surf. The water temperature has a decidedly British feel but on land it'll usually be sunny and hot. Check out downtown Santa Cruz for eccentric Americana – not to mention some quality skate parks.



Steamer Lane, Santa Cruz

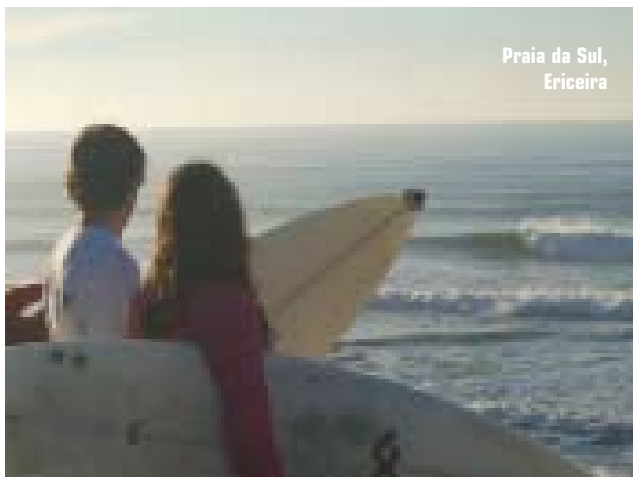


The Landaise
Coast, Hossegor



2 Hossegor, France

A trip to Hossegor, on the Landaise coast in southwest France, is a rite of passage for any self-respecting British surfer. With just about every major surf brand crammed into the small, pretty town, Hossegor is indisputably Europe's surf capital. The reason? Miles and miles of golden sand and some of the best beach breaks in the world. Better yet, this is boardshorts territory, with warm water and baking hot air temperatures. You'll want to surf to cool off, and when you've had enough, Hossegor has an array of lively bars and laid-back cafes. Campsites are plentiful, and the food and wine from supermarkets is affordable. Given also its proximity to the UK, Hossegor is a good budget option.



Praia da Sul,
Ericeira

3 Ericeira, Portugal

Portugal's first-ever surf competition took place in Ericeira in 1977, and the idyllic fishing town hasn't looked back since. It's within easy reach of Portugal's wonderful capital city, Lisbon, and has grown in the last 30 years to become the country's surfing Mecca. No wonder, given the selection of breaks on its doorstep, from the fast and super-hollow Coxos to the big wave spot of Sao Lorenzo, not forgetting Crazy Left, a bodyboarders' favourite. The town of Sintra, with its Moorish castle, makes for a great diversion if there's no swell, but perhaps the most notable thing about this area is the innate courtesy of the Portuguese. Return this with a respectful attitude to their line-ups and this could be one of the best surf trips you'll ever have.

4 The Gold Coast, Australia

It's a long way to go but you're guaranteed quality surf on Australia's Gold Coast. Seasonal work can easily be found and while the area's epic point breaks – the world famous Superbank, Kirra and Burleigh Heads – will always be crowded (and not all that welcoming), there are beach breaks galore. What with the Superbank boasting some of the longest rideable waves in the world, it's no surprise that a town called Surfer's



The Soup Bowl,
Barbados

Paradise is here, but it's tacky and best avoided. Concentrate on getting some waves and remember to pack the sunscreen.

5 Barbados

If money's no object this is the place. The air temperature is 28°C – every day. The water temperature never drops below 25°C. The Trade Winds keep things cool, a characteristic which the blessed Caribbean island's inhabitants positively ooze. Remarkably however, despite some of the best surf in the Atlantic, the Bajan surf population is small. Uncrowded sessions can be had even when the swell is pumping. When it does pump, breaks like The Soup Bowl, at the exquisite village of Bathsheba, come alive to offer reeling walls of crystalline water and barrels made in heaven. Kelly Slater, nine times the world surfing champion, rates Barbados as one of his favourite surf destinations, and top UK surfers Russell Winter, Sam Lamiroy and Sam Bleakley are regular visitors, too. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for you. But save up first – the air fare isn't cheap, and nor, once you're there, is the cost of living. 📍

For more information on these surf spots and tailor-made packages to them, check out www.errantsurf.com and www.surfholidays.com. Alex Wade is the author of Surf Nation, available from www.a1surf.com