

ZONE OUT IN ZANZIBAR

OK! VISITS THE IDYLIC INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND

Below: Relax on one of Zanzibar's white sandy beaches. **Right:** Emily and Peter Andre are island fans

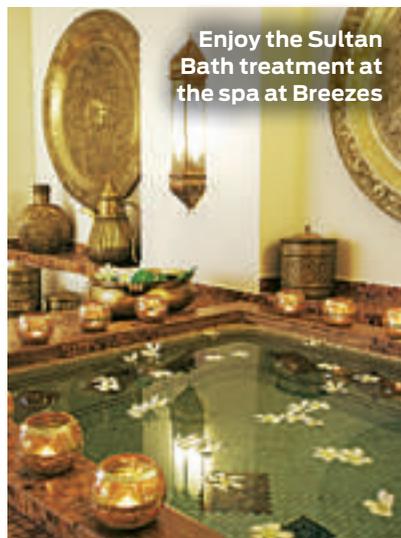


WHICH STARS WILL I SEE?

Peter and Emily Andre are island visitors. They're involved in Emily's father's medical charity, Project Zanzibar, and Emily once spent four months working there. George and Amal Clooney enjoyed a romantic holiday on the island two summers ago, while Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith were in Tanzania and Zanzibar in March this year. Model Chrissy Teigen shot a *Sports Illustrated* cover on one of the island's beaches last year, while Freddie Mercury was born in the capital Stone Town and his childhood home is now called Mercury House.

For those dreaming of a trip to the Maldives and Mauritius, we've found another idyllic Indian Ocean paradise to add to your bucket list. The unspoiled island of Zanzibar offers all the same ingredients – turquoise waters, swaying palm trees and sandy beaches, as well as year-round warm temperatures. Located just 25 miles off Tanzania's coastline, the coral reef-ringed island offers a rich mix of Arab, Omani and British colonial heritage and a fascinating history as a spice and trading centre. *OK!*'s Kirsty Hatcher headed off to explore...

Arabic in style – think white arches, ceiling fans, brass lanterns and rich fabrics – inspired by the palaces of the Omani sultans, who once ruled Zanzibar. This all-inclusive luxury resort features 30 one and two-bedroom villas and is set in 70 hectares of beautiful gardens overflowing with bougainvillea, jasmine and frangipani. *OK!*'s ocean-side villa boasted a dreamy hand-carved four-poster bed, plunge pool and a freestanding bathtub.



Enjoy the Sultan Bath treatment at the spa at Breezes

WHERE CAN I STAY?

The family-owned Zanzibar Collection comprises four hotels. Breezes, The Palms and Baraza are all dotted along Bwejuu Paje beach, while the group's newest property, the all-inclusive Zawadi Hotel, sits atop a cliff overlooking the ocean, with steps down to Mswaki beach. All nine villas at this adults-only bolthole are named after an aquatic creature, and ours – called Jodari, a local fish – featured beach-chic interiors, a sun terrace and a lush garden.

Just along this beautiful stretch of coastline is the Baraza Resort & Spa. The hotel decor is

WHERE CAN I EAT?

The fusion of African, Arabic, Indian and European cultures lends itself to an exotic cuisine which sees the island's spices – lemongrass, ginger and cinnamon – combined with local produce and seafood. One of our most memorable lunches was at The Palms, a six-villa beach retreat, where we sat under a beautiful canopy woven from palm leaves and fuchsia flowers on a deserted beach that stretched for miles. We sipped a mango daiquiri and shared grilled chicken skewers, jumbo prawns and a green banana stew, finishing off with homegrown banana, mango and cinnamon ice cream.

WHERE CAN I RELAX?

After our long plane journey, *OK!* made a beeline for the Frangipani

WHAT CAN I DO?

Kayaking, sailing and paddleboarding are all on offer at Breezes' Water Club, where you'll also find the Kite Surfing School and the Rising Sun Dive Centre, offering PADI-certified scuba diving courses. *OK!* loved snorkelling in the coral lagoon, where we saw a myriad of fish, and the Zawadi offers special reef shoes so you can explore the local marine life and spot starfishes and sea cucumbers. Another trip

highlight was our sunset cruise on a traditional Swahili dhow boat. We travelled through the mangroves before stopping for a quick dip in the ocean and then taking in the spectacular sunset.

Beach-chic interiors await at the adults-only Zawadi Hotel



OK! enjoyed lunch on the sand at The Palms



The Indian Ocean has a new jewel in its crown, gorgeous Zanzibar



Back on dry land, a good place to check out the local wildlife is in the Jozani National Park, where half the island's 2,500 endangered red colobus monkeys live. Zanzibar is often referred to as the Spice Island, and you'll learn all about this on a visit to one of the spice farms. Our guide showed us cloves, vanilla, turmeric, cardamom and lemongrass, before we smelt the leaves of a ylang-ylang tree, which he told us was used in Chanel No 5!

A visit to the charming capital Stone Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a must. Wander around the narrow winding alleyways and admire the intricately carved wooden doors, hidden courtyards and bustling



bazaars, where you can pick up spices, baskets, jewellery and ornaments.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Kenya Airways (020 8283 1818; www.kenya-airways.com) operate daily flights from London Heathrow to Nairobi, with connections to Zanzibar, from £421pp. Flights from UK regional airports connect via twice-daily flights from Amsterdam to Nairobi with KLM.

The Zanzibar Collection (www.thezanzibarcollection.com) offers room rates at the Baraza Resort & Spa, staying in a two-bedroom garden-view villa, from £526 per night; Breezes Beach Club & Spa from £75pp per night; Zawadi Hotel from £482 per villa per night; and The Palms from £615 per villa per night. **OK!**

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5 OF THE BEST AND TRAVELLER'S TALES BY NANCY BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, BACKGRID UK, CAMERA PRESS

TRAVELLER'S TALES

ELLIE TAYLOR

THE STAND-UP COMIC ON HER DREAM HOLIDAY COMPANION AND A TIME BEFORE GHDs

What's been your most memorable holiday?

When I was a teenager, my parents took me and my sister to see where they used to live in Hong Kong in the '70s. It was my first trip outside of Europe and the culture shock was huge – the sights and smells, not to mention the humidity, which played havoc with my hair at a time before GHDs. I have destroyed all photos from that trip!

Have you ever had a holiday disaster?

Probably the 'just done my A-levels and I am a grown woman' trip that my girlfriends and I took to Kavos in 2002. Everything about the holiday was awful – the hotel with the dance music blaring out around the pool from 10am, the many bars serving buckets of bright blue cocktails and the horrendous hangovers eased only by McDonald's for at least two meals out of three.

Where would you like to revisit?

Venice. I spent a few days there when my husband [Phil Black] and I first started dating. There's nowhere else I'd rather get hopelessly lost in.

Who's your perfect holiday partner in crime?

Got to be the husband. We work such crazy hours that holidays are so important to us. There's no one I'd rather hang out with more. Holidays always remind me how lucky I am to have found such a cool dude to put up with me. But if he's busy, I'd happily take Khal Drogo from *Game Of Thrones*.



ELLIE HAS TEAMED UP WITH SCOTT'S MIRACLE-GRO TO CREATE THE EXTREMELY BUSY & IMPORTANT PERSON'S GUIDE TO GARDENING. SEE WWW.LOVETHEGARDEN.COM/LITTLEGREENLIES FOR MORE INFORMATION.

5 OF THE BEST HOLIDAY HOTTIES



1 COOLA SPORT CONTINUOUS SPRAY SPF 30, £32, www.spacenk.com. Protect your skin as you sip cocktails by the pool with this SPF that smells just like a piña colada!

2 ANIMAL SIRRI WEEKEND BAG, £40, www.animal.co.uk. In shades of sea blue, this holdall is great for a last-minute dash to the coast.

3 MIRACLESUIT MADERO ONE-PIECE, £138, www.next.co.uk. This creates a perfect silhouette by offering support in all the right places.

4 CAROLINE GARDNER WASH BAG, £28 www.carolinegardner.com. Made from coated canvas and with a wipe-clean interior, this is roomy enough for all your holiday essentials.

5 CONNOCK LONDON MANUKA TRAVEL COLLECTION, £39, www.connocklondon.com. This mini kit will keep skin nourished while leaving a light honey fragrance.